



It instilled a group social consciousness and fostered an egalitarian spirit; this in turn naturally led to an emphasis on common endeavors and the sharing of the products they generated. On the other hand, colonial education emphasized individualism and made social existence competitive. The communal spirit was supplanted by the concept of the isolated self and greed, materialism, and an unbridled desire for domination. Consequently, Africa has become a continent of atomistic, antagonistic, and competitive groups strongly committed to tribal loyalties and dominated by ethnocentric views.

In sum, colonial education has led to a high level of illiteracy in Africa combined with very low political consciousness, even among the educated. Neither Eurocentric nor Afrocentric scholars have researched anarchism as it relates to Africa. This has ensured that anarchism as a systematic body of thought remains an esoteric, if not unknown, subject to many Africans.

The Legal System

African legal systems are a hangover from the colonial past. For example, as in other former British colonies, the legal system in Nigeria is simply an imitation of British common law and equity. It views native laws and customs as barbarous to the extent that they do not reflect European standards and value systems.

Colonial laws were formulated essentially to maintain “law and order,” and this remains the cardinal aim of post-colonial African laws. This contrasts sharply with the pre-colonial African system of rights and freedoms. Traditional African societies had an intense sense of humanity and respect for human dignity. Pre-colonial Africans enjoyed most of the rights that today would fall under the rubric of civil and political rights, such as freedom of association, freedom of movement, and freedom of expression. Basic economic and social rights, like the right to the use of a piece of land, the right to work, and the right to an education, were also common in traditional African societies. And these rights were recognized and protected. “Adjudication,” if it can be called such, typically consisted of a fair “hearing” for opposing parties before the entire village or a council from it; the decision reached was respected and usually considered final. Post-colonial African legal systems, though, conceive of law as a body of rules for the preservation of the state and the perpetuation of order and stability. In many places any advocacy of the overthrow of the state is considered treason and is punishable by death.

In an attempt to humanize African legal systems, in June 1981 the 18th assembly of heads of state and government of the Organization of African Unity adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. (Their collective conscience had been pricked by Idi Amin’s Uganda, Jean Bedel Bokassa’s Central African

