

Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Post-Independence Africa: Focus on Central African Republic

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Abstract: *The current structure of the world economic order is an artificial creation by the advanced nations of the world in their bids to achieve their imperialistic desires. As a result, there exists a dichotomy in the global system evidential in the categorization of the nations of the world as north, and south, respectively. While the north constitutes the highly industrialized nations, otherwise known as the developed nations, the south comprises of the underdeveloped nations where African nations are categorized. The hit of this dichotomy which is more evident in their relations creates more deleterious effects on the southern countries hence underdevelopment becomes a common feature of these polities. This represents the views of the Afro-centric School which blames Africa's economic developmental woes on imperialism. On this axiom, thus, this study appraises the various means through which imperialism has been perpetuating underdevelopment in post-independence Africa, focusing on Central African Republic. Adopting historical methodology which encouraged ample utilization of primary and secondary sources in the study, findings however revealed that imperialism has remained a major challenge to the economic development of the African polity. Recommendations were therefore provided on how to solve the problems posed by imperialism in the African Republic.*

Keywords: *Imperialism, Underdevelopment, Africa, Central African Republic*

1. INTRODUCTION

Unarguably, Africa is one of the continents of the world blessed with abundant natural resources. Covering about 23 percent of the world's total land area and 13 percent of the population, the continent is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, Indian and the red sea on the east, and the Mediterranean Sea on the north. It is connected with Asia by the Sinai Peninsula (Africa, 2014).

Africa has a long and diverse history of contact with the outside world. As a result of the contacts, the activities of the Muslims, Christian missionaries, and the European traders were felt in the continent in different times of history (Ikenga, 2014). The establishment of trade contact with Africa by the Europeans following the need to establish overseas markets for European finished goods during the period of Industrial Revolution marked the commencement of European imperialism in Africa. In the bids to actualize their imperialistic goals, thus, Africa was subsequently partitioned, thereby paving way for the eventual colonization of the continent. Under colonial administration, the Europeans made different policies which were aimed at achieving their imperialistic desires on African soil. Consequently, problems ensued in their various colonies resulting in the anti-colonial agitations by their African subjects.

Imperialism persisted in the post-colonial Africa, and the adverse effects of this phenomenon have continued to be felt in African countries. Operating with agents, this phenomenon constitutes one of the major challenges facing African nations in that it perpetuates underdevelopment. It is on this premise that this study sets to appraise the various means through which Imperialism has been contributing to the underdevelopment of post-colonial African nations, focusing on Central African Republic. Comprising of seven sections, section one embodies the introduction, and section two did a conceptual and theoretical explanations of imperialism. Similarly, the concepts and theories of underdevelopment were explained in the third section, while the fourth section took a glance at the country, Central African Republic, divulging the necessary features of the African polity. In section five, information on European imperialism in pre-independence Central African Republic was provided, while the activities of imperialism and their impacts on the

African polity in the post-independence era were appraised in the sixth section. Recommendations were provided in the seventh section on the possible way to solve the problems engendered by the activities of imperialism in the post-independence Central African Republic.

2. CONCEPTS AND THEORIES OF IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is the political or economic, direct or indirect rule or control of one state, nation or people over other similar groups. It is the disposition, urge or strive by one group aimed at establishing control over other group. According to Hobson (in Chikendu, 2004:2), imperialism is:

The endeavour of the great controllers of industry to broaden the channel for the flow of their surplus wealth by seeking foreign markets and foreign investments to take off the goods and capital they cannot sell or use at home.

This is the root of European imperialism (Njoku, 1998). Brown (1974:22), on the other hand, defined imperialism as:

The outward drive of certain peoples...to build empire – both formal colonies and privileged positions in markets, protected sources of materials and extended opportunities for profitable employment of labour...an unequal economic relationship between states, not simply the inequality of large and small, rich and poor trading partners, but the inequality of political and economic dependence of the latter or the former.

The concept could equally be seen as the "...domination of non-European native races by totally dissimilar European nations" (Moon, 1976:33). Its motives thus include economic gain, national prestige, the white man's burden, national defence, and surplus population (Palmer and Perkins, 2010).

The possible reasons for imperialism have been explained by the exponents of some of the recognized theories of imperialism. In his theory, Hobson considers psychological motives of the Europeans as an explanation of imperialism. These motives are found in their quests for glory, national pride, and bellicosity. He also saw economic interest engendered by the "quest for markets as well as opportunities for higher returns on investments" (Ake, 1981:21), as one of the reasons for imperialism. Schumpeter, on the other hand, explains imperialism as an atavism. In his opinion, the phenomenon is an aggressive expansionism pursued specifically with military might. He further opined that imperialism is not served by any interest be it economic or otherwise. The phenomenon, according to him has no objective beyond itself (Ake, 1981).

In line with Hobson, Marx and Lenin believed that economic interests explain imperialism. While Marx maintained that imperialism was an offshoot of capitalism, Lenin equally maintained that capitalist system was responsible for the existence of imperialism. Lenin further sees imperialism to signify a particular stage in the progression of capitalism. He saw monopoly which exists in the capitalist environment as the foundation of imperialism.

3. CONCEPTS AND THEORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

The term underdevelopment is associated with economic underdevelopment. It involves a situation where resources are inadequately utilized to meet their full socio-economic potentials, which in turn poses adverse effect on local or regional development. As a phenomenon, underdevelopment stems from the colonial and/or neo-colonial forms of economic exploitation which still imposes itself in many regions of the world. It results from the complex interplay of internal and external factors which allow less developed countries only an asymmetrical development progression. These countries are characterized by a wide disparity between their rich and poor populations, and insalubrious balance of trade. Symptomatically, lack of access to job opportunities, health care, drinkable water, food, education, and housing indicate under development.

The most widely known theories of underdevelopment are the conflicting theories of modernization, and dependency. Also known as the development theory, the modernization theory highlights the positive role played by the developed world in modernizing and facilitating sustainable development in the underdeveloped nations. As a pro-western theory, modernization theory establishes that Euro-African contact was the best thing that ever happened to Africans.

The theory blames Africa's (and other third world countries') economic developmental woes on "traditionalism, the irrational glorification of traditional values and beliefs, which are incompatible with modernity" (Offiong, 2001:39). According to the theory, these underdeveloped countries of the world will not find themselves among the industrialized nations until "... they abandon traditionalism and embrace the Calvinist cult" (Offiong, 2001:39).

Dependency theory, on the other hand, is antithesis to modernization theory. Unlike modernization theory, dependency theory blames the economic developmental woes of Africa (and other underdeveloped nations) on the wealthy nations of the world who need the peripheral or poor states in order to remain wealthy. Thus, the theory states that the poverty of the countries in the periphery is not because they are integrated into the world system, but because of how they were integrated into the world system. This is decipherable from the Europeans' monetization of African economies which led to the annihilation of the pre-colonial currencies (Ake, 1981).

Dependency theory sees in African nations, providers of natural resources, cheap labour, a destination for obsolete technology, and markets to the wealthy nations without which they could not have the standard of living they enjoy. The wealthy nations, according to the theory, actively perpetuate a state of dependency through various policies and initiatives. Dissimilar to modernization theory, dependency theory believes that the African-European contact has been beneficial to the Europeans and detrimental to Africans.

4. A GLANCE AT CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

A landlocked country in Central Africa, Central African Republic is bordered to the north by Chad, to the northeast by Sudan, to the east by South Sudan, to the south by the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo, and to the west by Cameroon. The country covers a land area of about 620,000 square kilometres, and has an estimated population of about 4.4 million as of 2008 (Central African Republic, 2014).

With Bangui as the capital and the largest city, Central African Republic's borders were established by France which ruled the country as a colony starting from the 19th century. However, after independence on August 13, 1960, the African Republic was ruled by a series of autocratic leaders, such as Jean-Bédél Bokassa, a cousin to David Dacko (the first president of the Republic) whom he overthrew and seized power. Subsequently, he was luxuriantly crowned an emperor (Emperor Bokassa I).

5. PRE-INDEPENDENCE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

During the B.Cs, the Bantu, Central *Sudanic* speaking people migrated and settled in the Central African Republic. While the former, upon migration, settled in the south-western region of the country, the latter settled along the *Ubangi* River and engaged in the production of copper, salt, dried fish, and textiles. With this, they dominated the economic trade of the country, during this period (Central African Republic, 2014).

The penetration of the Europeans into what is today known as the Central African Republic began in the late 19th century during the Scramble for Africa. Formerly known as *Ubangi-Shari*, the territory was occupied by France after competing with Germany, Belgium, and Britain over its acquisition. This was achieved with the establishment of French Congo by Count Savorgnan de Brazza; he had sent various expeditions up to the *Ubangi* River from Brazzaville in an effort to consolidate France's claim to the territory in Central Africa. This resulted in the establishment of a French post on the river at Bangui in 1889. Subsequently, French Congo was renamed French Equatorial Africa (alongside Chad, Gabon, and Middle Congo – Congo Brazzaville), with its capital at Brazzaville. It was designated the Territory of *Ubangi-Shari* in 1894 – a name it was known with until 1958 when preparations for independence were in progress.

The activities of the European private companies during the period of French occupation were highly deleterious to the local indigenes. These firms had been leased large tracts of lands by the French as a way of avoiding been responsible for the costs of the development of its Central African possessions. In return for the rights to exploit these lands by buying local products and selling European goods, these firms promised to pay rents annually to France as well as promote the development of their concessions. Consequently, they exploited and dominated the indigenous

peoples of the Central African Republic. Men and women were forced to pay taxes, gather wild rubber, hunt for ivory and animal skins, and work on plantations, by the agents of these firms. They experienced food shortages and famine as a result of their inability to cultivate their own fields – a situation produced by the demands of the European firms. There was also high death rate among the indigenous people caused by sleeping sickness, new strains of malaria, and other diseases, in the new environments where they were forced to work. The oppression of indigenous peoples resulted in the outbreak of various violent protests experienced during this period.

Following the establishment of frontiers for the Central African Republic (*Ubangi-Shari* colony as it was known) by the Europeans in the early part of the 20th century, many Africans began resisting French control hence military expeditions became imperative in crushing the opposition. There was the famous *Kongo-Wara* rebellion (1928–31) which was also known as the war of the Hoe Handle (Giles-Vernick, 2002). A rural, anti-colonial rebellion, *Kongo-Wara* uprising was instigated by the incessant deaths of the native population as a result of poor working conditions. This population had been recruited to work in railway construction and rubber tapping (Fage and Oliver, 1986). However, the insurrection could not achieve its aims following its suppression by the Europeans. Subsequently, the rebel leaders were overran, imprisoned, and executed, while the general population were placed under strict supervision.

Plantation-style economy was introduced with cash crops production gaining significant increase in Central African Republic under French colonial administration. Consequently, cotton and tea emerged as important cash crops. Mining of diamonds and gold equally began in earnest. Purchasing monopolies were granted as rights to several cotton companies over large areas of cotton production. These companies fixed the prices paid for cotton production.

Mobile health services and a network of roads were equally built during this period to augment cash crops production. For instance, while the roads (in conjunction with the railways) were built to ease the transportation of these cash crops from the areas of production to the coast (just as in the other European dominated African territories), mobile health services were established in order to improve the health conditions of African labourers which has the effect of retaining manpower and encouraging further the production of cash crops. Additionally, protestant missions were set up in different parts of the territory with the aim of serving the purpose of European imperialism. Also, there was introduced in the territory new forms of forced labour as the local indigenes were substantially conscripted as labourers in railway construction.

6. APPRAISING EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON POST-INDEPENDENCE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The process of decolonization in the Central African Republic began on August 10, 1940, following the call of General Charles de Gaulle on the French Equatorial Africa to fight on the side of France in World War II (Ikwuano, 2014). The subjects, just like those of the other African territories in the French Equatorial Africa, had been promised self-rule by France should they assist in fighting the allied course. The implementation of this promise which was also embodied in the Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, started after the war with the introduction of various reforms through the instrumentality of the French constitution of 1946. These reforms were instrumental in the completion of independence for the French territories, and some of them included, granting French citizenship to the inhabitants of French Equatorial Africa, encouraging the establishment of local assemblies in each of the French Equatorial Africa territories, elimination of voting inequalities, and creating opportunity for the formation of organs of self-government in each of the territories. In addition was the dissolution in September 1958 of the French Equatorial Africa, hence the birth of the autonomous Central African Republic. Barthélemy Boganda – a catholic priest who had led the local assembly in the territory of *Ubangi-Shari* – became the Head of Government. He was succeeded by his cousin, David Dacko, following his death on March 29, 1959. At full independence, Dacko became the first president of the Central African Republic.

Akin to colonial era, French imperialism persisted in the post-independence Central African Republic. This is because, as discovered in the colonial era, the African Republic contains undeniable riches, which remained unexploited, due to its landlocked nature and lack of Capital. Besides diamonds and tropical timber, the Central African Republic has deposits of copper, and

uranium. Uranium is an important resource to France which depends on nuclear power for all its domestic energy. This thus explains the activities of the French company, *Areva*, at the *Bakouma* mines where there are deposits of uranium. The African polity also has oil fields. But perhaps more important is the country's strategic location in the heart of Africa, which had been the reason for its colonization by France in the nineteenth century. Consequently, at independence, France signed agreements with the country, alongside the other ex-territories of French Equatorial Africa. The agreement which borders on Financial, technical, and military assistance was signed with the primary purpose of ensuring maximum protection of French interest in the Central African Republic. Meredith (2005:70) corroborates this in his affirmation on the aim of France in African territories. In his words:

To ensure that the new states (of Africa) survived and that French interests ... were protected, de Gaulle adopted a benevolent stand, signing agreements covering a wide range of financial and technical assistance. (Consequently,) France supplied presidential aides, military advisers and civil servants to staff government ministries. The French treasury supported a monetary union, underwriting a stable and convertible currency. French troops were stationed permanently in several African capitals under defence agreements designed to provide a guarantee on internal security.

In his early stage of governance, David Dacko enjoyed the full support of France after signing the treaty. This was evidential in the active support he enjoyed from France against his rival, Abel Goumba. Abel Goumba had challenged Dacko in 1959 for the presidential position in the newly emerging sovereign African state.

Subsequently, David Dacko fell out of favour with France as a result of his first tenure policies which tended to threaten the interest of the European nation in the African Republic. He had increased significantly the production of diamonds by eliminating the monopoly held by the concessionary companies which mostly were French companies. Through decree, Dacko mandated Central Africans to dig diamond, and this was detrimental to the interests of the French companies. His policy of *Centralafricanizing* the country's administration and civil service led to the mass dismissal of French nationals from the civil service; it also proliferated corruption and inefficiency in the civil service due to the presence of incompetent Africans. In his foreign relations, he tends to cultivate closer relations with the Peoples Republic of China. Consequently, when he was overthrown on December 31, 1965, by his cousin, Jean-Bédél Bokassa (with the support of France; and Captain Alexandre Banza, an ambitious and intelligent officer commanding the camp *Kassai* military base in northeast Bangui), the new government was backed by France.

Having ascended to power, Jean-Bédél Bokassa promoted himself to a full general, proclaimed himself president for life (Kalck, 2005) and survived several coup attempts. He formed a government known as the Revolutionary Council, abolished the constitution, and dissolved the National Assembly (Jean-Bédél Bokassa, 2014). In 1976, he instituted a new constitution and declared the republic monarchy - the Central African Empire, subsequently issued an imperial constitution, and on December 4, 1977 crowned himself *Sa Majesté Impériale 1^{er}* (His Imperial Majesty I) in a formal coronation where he spent roughly 20 million US Dollars (Lentz, 1994). His idea of an empire was inspired by Napoleon I of France who had converted the French Republic where he was the first consul into the French Empire. His full title was *Empereur de Centrafrique par la volonté du peuple Centrafricain, uni au sien du parti politique national, le MESAN* (Emperor of Central Africa by the will of the Central African people, united within the national political party, the MESAN) (Jean-Bédél Bokassa, 2014). MESAN, an acronym for *Mouvement pour l'Évolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire* (Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa) had been promoted as the only political party under his regime.

Like his predecessor, the regime of Bokassa enjoyed good relations with France. On November 17, 1966, President Charles de Gaulle made an official visit to the Central African Republic, an event which marked France's recognition of the regime (Tittley, 1997). To ensure that Central Africa remains within the orbit of the European nation, France sped up its financial and military support to Bokassa disregarding the dictatorial and unfavourable features of his regime. Meredith (2005:225-226) reveals some of the features of Bokassa's regime. In his words:

His (Bokassa's) every whim (was) ... government policy. He himself held twelve portfolios and interfered in all the others. He controlled all decision-making, every promotion or demotion, every reward or punishment. Ministers were shuffled with monotonous regularity, as often as six times a year, to ensure that they did not become a threat. (All) ... the telephone system in Bangui hardly functioned, (and) all government offices were required to keep their radios switched on in order to hear intermittent instructions sent directly from the presidential office. Development projects were sometimes started with sudden enthusiasm, then abandoned when Bokassa's interest dwindled and the money was needed for another new idea. In a fit of pique about Bangui's poor airline connections, he decided that a national airline be established: Air Centrafrique was duly set up, then promptly collapsed after a few flights.

Despite these glaring features, France continued to underwrite and back his regime. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing supported his coronation as an emperor by providing him with all the trappings of a monarchy at his order: a crown of diamonds; an imperial throne shaped like a golden eagle; an antique coach; thoroughly bred horses; coronation robes; brass helmets and breastplates for the imperial guard; assorted food and French wines, fireworks and flowers, and cars for the guests (Meredith, 2005). In turn, he benefited immensely from Bokassa. For instance, apart from receiving a gift of diamonds worth around a quarter of a million dollars, President d'Estaing was designated the post of Finance minister of the Central African Empire.

Jean-Bédél Bokassa lost the support of France following his desire to be independent from France in his political affairs, the food riots in Bangui which led to the killing of many civilians, and the arrests in April 1979 of school students who protested against paying for and wearing expensive school uniforms. The government had been responsible for this by compelling the children to purchase school uniforms from a factory owned by one of the leader's wives. Most of the children were subsequently killed. To save its face following worldwide press coverage of the deaths of the students, as well as retain its interest in the African Republic, France deemed it imperative to remove Bokassa from power, hence the Operation Barracuda carried out on September 20, 1979. Consequently, David Dacko was restored by France as president, and the country was renamed Central African Republic.

France further maintained its influence in the regime of André-Dieudonné Kolingba who led the country having seized power in a bloodless coup that toppled the government of David Dacko in 1981. The regime enjoyed maximum support of France until the fall of the Berlin wall. The activities of France in this regime brought about the growing influence of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank vis-à-vis financial support and management of the Central African Republic. The influence of France was so strong that a French colonel named Jean-Claude Manton served as the head of his presidential guard for years (Agomuoh, 2014). In the presidential election conducted in 1993, he lost power to Ange-Félix Patassé. Kolingba's administration was also seen to be ethnic centred as he continued to fill lucrative posts in the public and private parastatals with members of his ethnic group, the *Yakoma* people – an act supported by France. This would lead to the ethnic violence between the southerners including the riverine *Yakoma*, and the northerners including the *Gbaya* ethnicity in the country during the reign of Patassé.

A cousin to Bokassa's principal wife, Catherine Denguiade (Ahanene, 2014), Patassé's government experienced strong influence of France, and the donor countries of the IMF who had contributed in pressuring for the election that saw his emergence as president. France continued to back the regime until François Bozize's coup of 2003 which brought about a change of government in the Central African Republic. France assisted Patassé in regaining control of his government following the mutinies that had occurred from 1996-1997 which had adverse impact on the economy. His persistent political romance with socialist Libya under Muammar al-Gaddafi, however, made him unpopular before France, and the donor community of the IMF including the United States (who temporarily closed her embassy in the country during this period) as the Libyan leader was not in the good books of the West. The new development in the foreign relations of Patassé capable of marring the interests of France and the IMF donor community including the United States made a change of government imperative to these western players. Consequently, Bozize had the backing of France when he toppled the government of

Patassé in 2003. Patassé's government had been toppled in his absence; he had attended a conference in Niger.

Likewise his predecessors, the regime of François Bozize enjoyed the backing of France to a certain period. French support was evidential in their contribution to halting the Central African Republic Bush War (2004-2007) which had commenced one year after the ascension to power of Bozize. The war which commenced with the rebellion launched by the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity led by Mitchel Djotodia in North-East Central Africa, was equally fought by other rebel groups to include the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPFP), the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD), the Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ), and the Front *Démocratique Centrafricain* (FDC), located in other parts of the country (Ikwuano, 2014). The suspicion that Bozize had a long term ambition evidential in his suspension of the constitution, and his various activities aimed at ensuring that the result of the upcoming election turns out in his favour (such as nullifying the presidential candidature of Ange-Félix Patassé whom he considered threat to his ambition), was one of the major factors that led to the outbreak of the Bush War (Ahanene, 2014). Peace agreements supported by France, was however signed between the rebel groups and the government on April 13, 2007.

The subsequent activities of Bozize dented his relations with France, and made the coup to his removal imminent. Refusing to be the puppet that his French backers had expected of him, Bozize's government mounted obstacles in the way of French corporation *Areva's* attempts to secure the rights to mine uranium. In addition were the Chinese incursion, and her growing influence in the Central African Republic. Bozize's engagement in a political romance with the Asian giant had been encouraged by the terms of Chinese demands to be involved in the resources of the African Republic which were more favourable than the terms of the western imperialist companies. Consequently, he tilted towards China in his foreign relations. This was apparent in his engagement in an oil deal with the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), and his reliance on the Asian giant for the training of his military officers – developments which threatened the interest of the west in the country, particularly France.

By this period, a rebel group made up of the Muslim minority had been emerging. Known as *Séléka*, the group was an alliance of rebel militia factions of the Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK), the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR). Upon emergence on September 15, 2012, its full name was *Séléka* CPSK-CPJP-UFDR. Other rebel groups whose names did not appear in the title but were part of the alliance include the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), and the newly originated Alliance for Revival and Rebuilding (A2R) (Orji, 2014).

The inability of Bozize to follow the terms of 2007 agreement and his continued rendering of political abuses which was more obvious in the northern part of the country was one of the primary rationales behind the emergence of the aforementioned group in the political terrain of the Central African Republic (Sayare, 2013). In addition was the aim of the Muslim group to take over the political affairs of the country (Ikenga, 2014). Feeling marginalized, the Muslim deemed it imperative to end the monopoly since independence of the Christian majority in the presidential position of the country, hence, the demand for the resignation of Bozize. France, however, saw in the new development a veritable opportunity to sustain its interest in the African Republic. As a result, it backed the *Séléka* group and its leader, Mitchel Djotodia, in their course against the government of François Bozize.

With French support, the *Séléka* group formally rebelled against the government on December 10, 2012 (Central African Republic Conflict, 2014). Bozize requested international assistance from France and the United States. While President François Hollande of France turned down the request, the United States expedited action in evacuating her nationals. Subsequently (precisely on March 24, 2013), Bozize was forced to relinquish power favouring Mitchel Djotodia who headed the interim national government. In January 2014, he was succeeded by Catherine Samba-Panza.

The thesis above reveals that European imperialism has not been favourable to the Central African Republic in the post-independence era. The activities of France in the attempt to protect

her interest in the polity have produced different chaotic situations which contribute to the African nation's economic developmental woes. There had been since independence incessant coups masterminded by France aimed at installing a puppet in the corridors of power. Having been installed, these individuals plunder the country's resources, and through their political activities create unfavourable atmosphere which have adverse effects on the economy, hence underdevelopment. Typical examples were the activities of Andre Kolingba which led to the ethnic violence between the southerners, and the northerners, in the succeeding government; and François Bozize which led to the outbreak of the Central African Republic Bush War, and the subsequent emergence of the *Séléka* insurgents whose campaign against the government and by extension the civilian population (constituting of the Christian majority) threw the country into conflict, and led to the emergence of a Christian counter-militia group, the *anti-balaka*. As a result, many people were killed, and displaced resulting in the shortage of manpower in various aspects of the economy; government properties and installations were destroyed; and foreign investors were often discouraged to invest in the country as the situation would not guarantee adequate security for their investments. France also encouraged the presence of the Breton Woods institutions whose predatory policies contributed to the underdevelopment of the Central African Republic, hence, the existence of poverty, illiteracy, inadequate health facilities, de-industrialization, unemployment, underemployment, etc, as various aspects of the economy are adversely affected by austerity measures.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the preceding sections, the study did show that imperialism has remained a major challenge facing the Central African Republic in her economic development. The activities of France in trying to protect her interest have not been favourable to the African polity in that their effects are deleterious to the economy. These activities, as stated elsewhere in the study, were mostly found in the incessant change of government through France's backed coups which had been a trend in the political terrain of the country since independence, the rise of rebels, and ethnic violence which have been responsible for the miasma of conflicts encrusting the political atmosphere of the African nation. The effects of these activities impinges on the country's economy, hence, underdevelopment becomes a common feature of the African polity. With this therefore, it is obvious that concerted efforts must be put in place towards salvaging the Central African Republic from the imperialistic activities of her former colonial power.

On this standpoint, the study calls for the synergy of African leaders in salvaging their sister country (the Central African Republic) from the nefarious claws of French imperialism which contributes to the country's post-independence economic developmental leukaemia. Anti-imperialist campaigns in respect of the Central African Republic should be encouraged by these African leaders in their respective polities. With African voices heard through these campaigns, the attention of the international community will be drawn to the grievances of Africans. This could be potent in liberating the Central African Republic from the grips of European (French) imperialism, as well as contribute immensely in ensuring sustainable economic development in the African polity.

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