



PETER ANYANG' NYONG'O
(Editor)

Popular Struggles
for Democracy in
Africa

Studies in African Political Economy

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Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa

edited by
Peter Anyang' Nyong'o



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**Popular Struggles
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General Editor: Samir Amin

The United Nations University's Project on Transnationalization or Nation-Building in Africa (1982-1986) was undertaken by a network of African scholars under the co-ordination of Samir Amin. The purpose of the Project was to study the possibilities of and constraints on national autocentric development of African countries in the context of the world-system into which they have been integrated. Since the 1970s the world-system has been in a crisis of a severity and complexity unprecedented since the end of the Second World War; the Project examines the impact of this contemporary crisis on the political, economic and cultural situation of Africa today. Focusing on the complex relationship between transnationalization (namely, the dynamics of the world-system) and nation-building, which is seen as a precondition for national development, the Project explores a wide range of problems besetting Africa today and outlines possible alternatives to the prevailing development models which have proved to be inadequate.

TITLES IN THIS SERIES

M. L. Gakou

The Crisis in African Agriculture

1987

Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (editor)

Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa

1987

Samir Amin, Derrick Chitala, Ibbo Mandaza (editors)

SADCC: Prospects for Disengagement and Development in Southern Africa

1987

Faysal Yachir

The World Steel Industry: Dynamics of Decline

1987

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Peter Anyang' Nyong'o

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List of Abbreviations

ABAKO	<i>Alliance des Bakongo</i>
ACP	Action Congress Party of Ghana
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council of Ghana
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour – Congress of International Organisations
ANC	African National Congress of South Africa
ANC	<i>Armée Nationale Congolaise</i>
APL	<i>Armée Populaire de Libération (Congo)</i>
ARMSCOR	Armaments Development Production Corporation
AYC	African Youth Command (Ghana)
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation (South Africa)
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement (South Africa)
CDC	Commonwealth Development Corporation
CEREA	<i>Centre de Regroupement Africain</i>
CGAT	African General Confederation of Labour (Congo)
CMP	Military Committee of Congolese Party
CNL	<i>Conseil National de Libération (Congo)</i>
CNR	<i>Conseil National de la Révolution</i>
CONAKAT	<i>Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga</i>
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COTU	Central Organisation of Trade Unions (South Africa)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
EJCSK	<i>Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la terre parte prophète Simon Kimbangu</i>
ERP	Economic Rehabilitation Plan (Ghana)
FDR	Democratic Revolutionary Front (El Salvador)
FLNC	<i>Front de Libération Nationale du Congo</i>
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
GIHOC	Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation
HCP	<i>Huileries du Congo Belge</i>
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation

IMF	International Monetary Fund
INM	Imbokodvo National Movement (Swaziland)
JFM	June 4th Movement
JMNR	National Revolutionary Youth Movement (Congo)
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAWC	Kenya African Workers Congress
KFL	Kenya Federation of Labour
KNRG	Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guard
KUSPW	Kenya Union of Sugar Plant Workers
LAP	Liberian Action Party
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
LUP	Liberian Unification Party
MNC/K	<i>Mouvement National Congolais – Kalonji</i>
MNC/L	<i>Mouvement National Congolais – Lumumba</i>
MNR	National Revolutionary Movement (Congo)
MOAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives
MOJA	Movement for Justice in Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDC	National Defence Committee (Ghana)
NDM	New Democratic Movement (Ghana)
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NIC	National Investigation Committee (Ghana)
NNLC	Ngwame National Liberatory Congress (Swaziland)
NRC	National Redemption Council (Liberia)
NUGS	National Union of Ghana Students
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania
PANYMO	Pan African Youth Movement
PDC	People's Defence Committee (Ghana)
PEBCO	Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation
PFP	Popular Front Party (Ghana)
PME	Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises
PNP	<i>Parti National du Progrès (Congo)</i>
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council (Ghana)
PPP	Progressive People's Party (Liberia)
PRLG	People's Revolutionary League of Ghana
PRP	<i>Parti de la Révolution Populaire (Zaire)</i>
PSA	<i>Parti Solidaire Africain (Congo)</i>
RDA/P	Rural Development Area/Programme
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SASOL	South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation
SECOM	Special Election Commission (Liberia)

SEDCO	Small Enterprises Development Corporation (Swaziland)
SNL	Swazi Nation Land
SOWETO	South Western Townships (South Africa)
TANU	Tanganyikan African National Union
TWP	True Whig Party (Liberia)
UDC	Uganda Development Corporation
UDDIA	Union for the Defence of African Interests
UDF	United Democratic Front of South Africa
UDPL	United Democratic Party of Liberia
UGEC	<i>Union Générale des Etudiants Congolaise</i>
UJC	Union of Congolese Youth
UNC	<i>Union Nationale Congolaise</i>
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UNOC	United Nations Congo Mission
UP	United Party (Liberia)
UPP	United People's Party (Liberia)
USA	United Swaziland Association
WDC	Workers' Defence Committees
WIGMO	Western International Ground Maintenance Organisation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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Preface: The State and the Question of 'Development'

by Samir Amin

This book that ZED is publishing in our 'Studies in African Political Economy' series is the fruit of a collective endeavour directed by our Kenyan colleague Peter Anyang' Nyong'o with his well-known verve. The dozen case studies of the nature of the African state give a detailed and subtle idea of the variety of histories and situations as well as of the problematic that they share. In the general introduction to the book, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o brings out what seems to him — as indeed it does to me — to be the essential lesson of what we are indeed obliged to call the failure of the 'development' of independent Africa: the impossibility of achieving anything significant economically in the absence of a popular national state, that is one that is both strong (to resist the negative pressures coming from the world system and their internal ramifications) and democratic. The experience of independent Africa demonstrates the narrow limits of attempts at a national bourgeois development; the crisis of this form of development has demonstrated how vulnerable it is to pressures whose purpose is to subordinate its development to the demands of the redeployment of globalised capital, by means of so-called adjustment policies advocated by the West (and particularly by its collective instruments for intervening, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank).

This is not the place to deal at length with this failure of 'development'. In brief it can be said that Africa as a whole has not even begun the essential agricultural revolution, which is the prerequisite to any other development, of whatever form; and that, concomitantly, it has not yet entered the industrial era. We have analysed this African tragedy elsewhere; responsibility for it undoubtedly goes back to the brutal and primitive forms of colonial pillage, which was satisfied to have Africa produce and then cream off an agricultural surplus without technological and social transformations that would make it possible to move from extensive to intensive forms of farming the land. Independent Africa's responsibility lies in having pursued this policy; it is true that it did so with the blessing and on the urgent advice of all those who, today, from the World Bank to the agencies of Western states, deplore its wretched results, foreseeable though these results were.¹

Overcoming this wretched heritage poses all sorts of problems, some apparently technical, others more directly political. There are at least two sets of questions: (i) can the agricultural revolution be accomplished without industrialisation, and (ii) is there any hope of being able to resolve the inheritance of underdevelopment

without systematic intervention by the state, and by what sort of state?

On the first set of questions, we have also given our views elsewhere, arguing against the demagogic proposals of the World Bank which dares to criticise Africa for an alleged preference for industrialisation to the detriment of agriculture.² Poor Africa! It is hard to see how it could have committed this additional crime, given that up until now it has not even begun to embark on any industrial development! Contrary to these arguments, we demonstrated that the agricultural revolution was impossible without industrialisation, on condition, of course, that this industrialisation be of neither the import substitution nor the export-oriented industry type (the only two models known to the World Bank), but an industry articulated on giving absolute priority to the agricultural revolution (and that is precisely the form of industrialisation that the World Bank knows absolutely nothing about).

The papers collected in this volume concern the second set of questions, and it is about them that we would like to add a few additional general remarks.

Conventional economic theory was built on the deliberate exclusion of the question of the state, which was ignored in the analysis of 'economic mechanisms'. This omission is, of course, ideological. For *laissez-faire* or *laissez-aller* has never actually happened in reality, and itself presupposes the state and its intervention (to outlaw trade unions for example). As a result, even the best economic theory has only a limited scope. At best it makes it possible to grasp the rationality of the conjunctural behaviour of economic actors and to foresee its short-term consequences. It makes it possible, therefore, to rationalise the eventual collective strategies of these agents and the state. But it is powerless to account for the profound evolution of societies, structural changes, and it is powerless to account for unequal development in world capitalist expansion (the problem of 'development' and 'underdevelopment').

The (limited) validity of economic theory lies in two factors, specific to capitalism, two factors that are indeed closely linked to one another: economic alienation which defines the dominant ideology appropriate to capitalism on the one hand and the specificity of capitalist civil society on the other.³

The capitalist mode of production is in fact the only mode of production that is directly governed by economic laws; these laws result from the generalisation of the commodity form of social relations (in turn, this is the product of the generalisation of the commodity form to every product of social labour and to the labour force itself). The obscuring of social relations by the market for goods and labour power, which is specific to capitalism, gives the economic laws their objective status specific to this mode of production. Commodity alienation, its expression in the ideological domain, gives the functioning of these laws the appearance of being laws of nature. In contrast, in all precapitalist modes, the determination in the last instance by the material base operates only indirectly. It is so because the transparency of relations of exploitation and production involves the direct active intervention of political-ideological relations.

As a result, the very concept of civil society is peculiar to capitalism, precisely in that the very existence of civil society implies an autonomy of economic relations *vis-à-vis* the political. Bourgeois democracy — with all the historical limitations that it involves — is based on this separation of civil society and the state. This

separation, which is of course only relative, is portrayed in bourgeois ideology as absolute; this makes it possible to eliminate the very existence of the state from economic theory — which it would be better, for this very reason, to call, more accurately, economic ideology.

Comparative analysis of the state/economic life (civil society) relationship in the central ('developed') forms of capitalism and in its peripheral ('underdeveloped') ones throws a most instructive light on the nature of this relationship.

In the central capitalist societies, the state is of course present, and its intervention is even decisive. We shall describe this presence below: it defines capitalism in its completed form, that is mastery of accumulation by the bourgeois national state. But this presence is not directly experienced; it is even eliminated from the ideological self-image that the system produces, in order to play up civil society and economic life, as if these existed and functioned without the state. Conversely, in the societies of peripheral capitalism, precisely because that capitalism is not completed capitalism, civil society is feeble or even non-existent. Economic life is sickly and seems little more than an appendage to the exercise of state functions, which directly and visibly occupies the front of the stage. But that is only an illusion since the state here is in reality weak (in contrast to the true strong state, the state of the developed centre). At the same time, economic life is reduced to being a process of adjustment to the demands of accumulation at the centre (it is its appendage).

In a fine study of the relations between the African state and the peasant world, Mahmood Mamdani has brought out this subordination of the economic to the political, which is peculiar to peripheral systems.⁴ The absence of any economic life autonomous in relation to state power, and the concomitant absence of any autonomy of expression on the part of social forces in relation to this power, renders any talk of democracy meaningless, for democracy is truly impossible in these conditions. This subordination is also the expression of the narrow limits of 'development'; it is simply the means by which it reproduces itself. In the final analysis, the subordination expresses the specificity of capitalist expansion in the periphery — the 'adjustment' of the latter to the demands of global accumulation. This domain (of relations between state and peasantry) is certainly not the only one in which this characteristic of 'underdevelopment' is found. It is well known, for example, that governments in Africa are not at all tolerant of national 'private enterprise'. They see in enrichment outside their control a threat to their own stability. Such an attitude is proof of the real weakness of the states in question. The infatuation with the public sector, even in countries which officially profess 'liberalism', and proclaim their membership of 'the Western camp', is the expression of this fear of civil society on the part of a state that is weak because it is peripheral.

Why is this so? Is it possible to 'go beyond this stage' by imitating the institutions of the developed West, i.e. by throwing open some areas of economic life to 'private initiative'? We shall explain below why that is not possible, precisely because this specificity is an essential condition of the reproduction of inequality in capitalist expansion (the polarisation between centres and peripheries), and because this inequality is itself immanent in capitalist expansion. In other words, it is a