



WORKS

Obstacles to the Development of Anarchism in Africa & Anarchism's Future in Africa [Excerpt]

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(1997)

Obstacles to the Development of Anarchism in Africa

Anarchist theory, to put it mildly, is seen in Africa as a fringe, leftist ideology; one indication of this is that anarchism usually receives no more than a passing nod in the syllabi of African university classes. This is paradoxical because in no other continent have anarchist tendencies been as strong as in Africa, and because in modern times the prospect of turning mass action into class struggle remains brightest in Africa. We shall now consider some of the factors that have worked against the development of anarchism in Africa.

Colonial Education

One of the unpleasant realities we encountered while writing this book was how little the contemporary African, including the African political or social scientist (who has probably taken a course or two on comparative political ideologies), knows about anarchism. In terms of literature, virtually nothing is to be found on the bookshelves of universities and bookstores. This is not surprising, however; in his critique of marxism, Ron Taber points out that for over 70 years, anarchism was eclipsed by marxism. Nowhere has this subordination of anarchism to marxist "socialism" been more profound than in Africa.

Much of the dearth of anarchist literature in Africa is a result of the colonial educational system and the concomitant hegemony of Western imperialist literature in Africa. Colonial education in Africa did not seek to educate large numbers of students; rather, European educators selected what they considered the cream of the crop for advanced schooling. One result of this is that only a relatively small proportion of Africa's population has been and is literate. A corollary of this was the emergence of an academic elite who considered themselves superior to the rest of the people. Because its philosophical and ideological assumptions were taken from European class societies, and not from communal and relatively unstratified African societies, colonial education was disintegrative rather than unifying.

Traditional African education, in contrast, emphasized the interdependence of individuals within the community rather than competition between them.

