



WORKS

Access to state power was key to the growth of the new African elite: frustrated under colonialism, it used state salaries, contracts and corrupt deals to enrich itself. Reports of wrongdoing were widespread.

The more that state wealth helped the elite, the more the elite clung feverishly to office, suppressing rivals and protests, and pushing for more state ownership of resources.

1964 saw the CPP became the only legal party, centred on a personality cult and network around Nkrumah, now President-for-Life. CPP party branches and related organisations like youth groups enforced control across the country. The CPP ensured its people were in key positions in various government agencies.

As anarchists we know the state cannot be used by the mass of the people. It is a top-down institution that always puts power in the hands of a small elite. As the old British elite and African chiefs moved out of the new state, the CPP-centred new elite moved in. The nature of the state meant that the new elite, just like the old, looked on the people as a source of labour, money, and taxes – and a threat to be controlled, with guns if needed.

Moving to State-Capitalism

Nkrumah correctly saw Ghana would remain an economic “colony” of Britain (or the USA) if its economy did not change. He started efforts to industrialise the economy (building factories and infrastructure) so it could move beyond raw materials and create jobs. At first this meant encouraging foreign (mainly British and US) investment, but this left colonial-era relations in place, and did not work.

The difference with the past was that the new Ghanaian political elite benefited more. But the effects on industry were small.

So Nkrumah’s CPP started to push state-led industrialisation. This included efforts like setting up a massive hydro-electrical scheme at Volta dam, state-run industries, and trade protection, called “import- substitution-industrialisation.”

But although Nkrumah called the system “socialism” (and was partly inspired by the Marxist system in Russia), the reality was the new state industries were, as elsewhere, just state capitalism. They were based on wage labour and on producing goods and services for sale. And, again, the new state elite milked the new projects for its benefit.

The growing role of the state was not socialism, it was just the expanding grab of the new elite to access wealth and build capitalist industries. The top-down

