Crisis and Neoliberal Reforms in Africa
Crisis and Neoliberal Reforms in Africa
Civil Society and Agro-Industry in Anglophone Cameroon’s Plantation Economy

Piet Konings
## Contents

*Acknowledgements* ................................................................. vii  
*List of Tables* ........................................................................ ix  
*Abbreviations* ....................................................................... xi  
*Map of the Republic of Cameroon* ............................................ xiv  

1 Civil society and Anglophone Cameroon’s agro-industrial crisis and reforms  
   Introduction .............................................................................. 1  
   Major theories on plantation production .................................. 3  
   Civil society, the agro-industrial crisis and reforms ................ 15  
   Organisation of the book and research methodology .............. 40  

2 Ethno-regional groups and associations in the South West Province and the agro-industrial crisis  
   Introduction ........................................................................... 43  
   The liquidation and sale of Pamol .......................................... 43  
   State withdrawal and privatisation of the CDC ...................... 59  
   Conclusion ............................................................................ 65  

3 CDC workers and the agro-industrial crisis  
   Introduction ........................................................................... 69  
   Trade unionism in the CDC and the agro-industrial crisis ....... 71  
   Tea pluckers and the agro-industrial crisis ............................. 77  
   Tea pluckers and managerial efforts to maximise labour productivity ................................................................. 86  
   Tea pluckers and managerial efforts to strengthen control over the labour process ......................................................... 89  
   Tea pluckers and managerial efforts to minimise wages and conditions of service ...................................................... 90  
   Conclusion ............................................................................ 91  

4 Trade unions and Pamol’s crisis and liquidation  
   Introduction ........................................................................... 95  
   The birth and development of trade unionism on the Pamol estates ................................................................. 95  
   The role of trade unionism during Pamol’s crisis and liquidation ................................................................. 105  
   Conclusion ............................................................................ 119
5 Chieftaincy and the privatisation of the CDC
   Introduction ................................................................. 125
   Bakweri chiefs and the retrieval of CDC lands .............. 127
   Bakweri chiefs and the privatisation of the CDC .......... 133
   Conclusion ....................................................................... 143

6 Privatisation and labour militancy: The case of Cameroon’s tea estates
   Introduction ................................................................. 147
   The privatisation of the CDC tea estates ..................... 149
   Growing labour militancy on the Tole Tea Estate .......... 153
   Growing labour militancy on the Ndu Tea Estate .......... 162
   Conclusion ....................................................................... 167

7 CDC smallholder development and the agro-industrial crisis
   Introduction ..................................................................... 173
   Smallholder development at the CDC, 1946/47-1977/78 .... 176
   Smallholder development at the CDC, 1977/78-1994/95 .... 186
   Conclusion ....................................................................... 196

8 Pamol’s contract farmers and cooperatives: Their development in response to the agro-industrial crisis
   Introduction ..................................................................... 201
   The emergence and development of Pamol’s contract farming scheme ............................................. 202
   Contract farmers’ cooperatives and Pamol’s crisis and liquidation ....................................................... 208
   Conclusion ....................................................................... 214

References ...................................................................... 219
Acknowledgements

This volume is the result of extensive research I have done over many years on the most important agro-industrial enterprises in Anglophone Cameroon’s plantation economy. From the very start, I was able to benefit from previous studies on these enterprises, notably the outstanding work of Edwin and Shirley Ardener on the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Georges Courade on Pamol.

During my fieldwork, I became indebted to a great number of people and, unfortunately, there is only room to mention a few of them here. I am particularly grateful to old colleagues at the former Institute of Human Sciences in Yaoundé, in particular Nantang Jua, Joseph Ngu, Cyprian Fisiy and the late N’Sangou Arouna who all helped me to feel at home in Cameroon and who were always prepared to give me advice.

I am also grateful for the hospitality and assistance I received from various institutions in Anglophone Cameroon, including the Head Offices of the CDC and Pamol, the Buea National Archives, the provincial and divisional offices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, and the divisional unions of agricultural workers. My greatest debt in Cameroon, however, is to the members and leaders of the regional civil-society groups and associations who were always willing to answer my numerous questions.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the African Studies Centre in Leiden that funded the entire project. Two ASC members have been particularly helpful. I wish to thank Ann Reeves for copy-editing the text and Dick Foeken for his advice and assistance in the production process.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable role played by Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh in my research projects in Cameroon over the years. They have been a constant source of friendship and intellectual stimulation and I thank them for this.
List of Tables

Table 1.1 Regional composition of the CDC and Pamol labour forces (%) ................................................................. 31

Table 3.1 Demographic characteristics of tea estate workers in Cameroon (%) ................................................................. 81

Table 7.1 Output of CDC estates and smallholders, 1971-1995 (M.T) ........................................................................... 181

Table 7.2 CDC smallholders’ development scheme, 1978/79-1994/95 ...................................................................... 190

Table 8.1 Pamol contract farmers: Number, cultivated area and output, 1980-1993.......................................................... 204
Abbreviations

AAC All Anglophone Congress
BAT British American Tobacco
BCCI Bank of Credit and Commerce International
BCUF Bakweri Co-operative Union of Farmers
BLC Bakweri Land Committee
BLCC Bakweri Land Claims Committee
BNA Buea National Archives
CAM Cameroon Anglophone Movement
CAMAGRIC Cameroon Agro-Industrial Company Ltd
CCCE Caisse Centrale de Coopération Économique
CDC Cameroon Development Corporation
CDCWU Cameroon Development Corporation Workers’ Union
CNU Cameroon National Union
COMDEV Commonwealth Development Corporation
CPDM Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement
CTE Cameroon Tea Estates
CTUC Cameroon Trade Union Congress
CYL Cameroon Youth League
DO District Officer
DUAW D/M Divisional Union of Agricultural Workers of Donga-Mantung
EAC Estates and Agency Company Ltd
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EKOSCOOP</td>
<td>Ekondo Titi Oil Palm Smallholder Cooperative Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Fonds Européen de Développement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FONADER</td>
<td>Fonds National de Développement Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>(United Nations) Economic and Social Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWU</td>
<td>Fako Agricultural Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCFA</td>
<td>Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFB</td>
<td>Fresh Fruit Bunches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCC</td>
<td>Joint Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTDA</td>
<td>Kenya Tea Development Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAWU</td>
<td>Meme Agricultural Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAWU</td>
<td>Ndian Agricultural Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUCW</td>
<td>National Union of Cameroon Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONCPB</td>
<td>Office National de Commercialisation des Produits de Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCWU</td>
<td>Pamol Cameroon Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCNC</td>
<td>Southern Cameroons National Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>Smallholder Development Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDF</td>
<td>Social Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>Senior Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOCAPALM  Société Camerounaise de Palmeraies
SODECOTON  Société de Développement du Coton
SONEL  Société Nationale d’Électricité
SOSUCAM  Société Sucrière du Cameroun
SWECC  South West Chiefs’ Conference
SWELA  South West Elites Association
UAC  United Africa Company
UN  United Nations
WCTUC  West Cameroon Trades Union Congress
Map of the Republic of Cameroon