

## Ngũgĩ (2)

year	general history	Ngũgĩ's life
1856	Sultanate of Zanzibar est.	
1895	British E. Africa Protectorate est.	
1920	Kenya Colony est.	
1938		James Ngugi b. <a href="#">Limuru</a> , near Nairobi
1944	Kenya Africa Union (anticolonial organization) est.	
1952	Kenya Land Freedom Army fights War of Independence (Mau Mau Rebellion)	Ngugi's mother tortured and his village destroyed
1963	Kenyan independence; Jomo Kenyatta becomes president	BA Makerere University College, Kampala, Uganda
1964	economic growth and increasing inequality; foreign investment and foreign profits	<i>Weep Not, Child</i> (London: Heinemann)
1967		teaches English literature, University College, Nairobi
1970		adopts Gikũyũ-style name Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
1977		<i>Petals of Blood</i> (partly drafted in USSR) <i>Ngaabika Ndeenda</i> (Gikũyũ play) leads to Ngũgĩ's imprisonment for a year
1978	Daniel arap Moi becomes president, declares state of emergency, arrests dissidents	abandons English as language of first composition; drafts <i>Devil on the Cross</i> in Gikũyũ in prison
1982	attempted coup suppressed; opposition parties outlawed	exiled under death threat, moves to London
1989		moves to US; academic positions
2002	Mwai Kibaki elected president; continuing political violence	
2006		<i>Wizard of the Crow</i> (New York: Pantheon)

Sources: *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vols. 5–7; “[Kenya \(1963–present\)](#),” in Mark Mullenbach, ed., Dynamic Analysis of Dispute Management Project, [uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project](http://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project); “[Kenya country profile](#),” [BBC.com](http://BBC.com); “[Profile of a Literary and Social Activist](http://ngugiwathiongo.com/about),” [ngugiwathiongo.com/about](http://ngugiwathiongo.com/about).

This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*: that imperialism can never develop our country or develop us, Kenyans. In doing so, I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers and peasants have always realised as shown by their historical struggles since 1895....

Hopefully out of *Petals of Blood* we might gather petals of revolutionary love.

Ngũgĩ, "Petals of Love," 97, 98.

My mother and all the peasant characters there represented were never going to be in a position to read the novels, and so what was the point of writing in English? I knew about whom I wrote: but for whom did I write?

"A Novel in Politics: The Launching of *Petals of Blood*," in *Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature and Society* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997), 84, [JSTOR](#).