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Book Review: Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah

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THE ARTS



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Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah

By Basil Davidson
F. Praeger Publishers, New York
225 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by K. Pobbi-Asamani

Among the various literature on the late Kwame Nkrumah, Basil Davidson's book reflects the most valuable contribution to Nkrumah's philosophy of life, leadership, and understanding of the real political world. This book depicts Nkrumah's personality as an ordinary person—not necessarily as former Prime Minister or President of the Republic of Ghana.

It did not take very long after independence for Nkrumah to realize that foreign policy may also be used to promote the goals and objectives of the independence struggle. Unfortunately, the division of independent Africa into rival blocks had been affected by the conditions of the cold-war which highlighted a demand for the objective and rationality for the achievement of African unity. To some extent the realities of independence provided a fertile ground for this ideological dispute. Independence also articulated the balkanization of Africa by Europeans and subsequently led to economic dependence.

Historically, the early days of the European common market and the Treaty of Rome made former French overseas territories associate members of the European Economic Community. Nkrumah raised his concern against this emerging phenomenon of colonialism, because he believed it was based on the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small states—non-viable states incapable of independent development and ones that must rely on the former imperial power for defense

and even internal security (Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism* London: 1965 pxiii).

Davidson's book points out that Nkrumah's thoughts on non-alignment were based on co-operation with all states, whether they be capitalist, socialist, or have mixed economy. Because such a policy allowed for the coexistence of diverse ideologies in private and public sectors of the economy, it also involved foreign investment from capitalist countries in accordance with a national plan drawn up by the host government.

Nkrumah's political ideology contained three important elements: 1) European states divided Africa in their own interests, and continued the process after independence; 2) this left many African states with the appearance of independence, made them vulnerable to neo-colonial manipulation and control; 3) it is not necessary to accept this state of dependence. He saw neo-colonialism as imperialism at its most dangerous stage and thus a policy of non-alignment as the only solution for Africans to control their own development and break away from the vicious circle of neo-colonialism. Nkrumah further states "neo-colonialism is also the worst imperialism. . . . For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress." He postulated that to break this vicious circle . . . the solution is African unity.

Some scholars of African political development may be tempted to characterize Nkrumah's thoughts and writings as fashioned after Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history and society. The fact is, he perceived himself as an ideological leader of Africans in order to gain the position of a populist political hero among African political leaders.

Davidson's book, therefore, is a valuable contribution to the political literature

on Africa in general and in promoting better understanding of Nkrumah's views on political ideology, economic organization and international cooperation. □

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Faculty Tenure

A Report and Recommendations by the Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education.
276 pp., \$8.75

Reviewed by Charles E. Donegan

Few issues in higher education burn with a greater intensity than does that of tenure with its virtual guarantee of life time contracts. The concept of tenure is under strong attack; many of its critics argue that it should be completely abolished.

In 1971, the Association of American Colleges (AAC) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), created the Commission on Academic Tenure as a separate, autonomous unit. The Commission was financed by a grant from the Ford Foundation. The Commission's task was to design and carry out its independent program of investigation and report directly to the academic community and the general public. *Faculty Tenure* presents the views solely of the Commission and not those of the AAC or AAUP.

The mandate of the Commission was to consider how the tenure system operates in higher education, to evaluate recent criticisms of academic tenure, consider alternatives to tenure presently in effect or proposed for adoption and to recommend changes or improvements in the system if it should be retained. The Commission completed its work in June 1972.