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## Book Review: Faculty Tenure: A Report and Recommendations by the Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education

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## THE ARTS



## Books

26

## 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.

This book consists of seven sections which are divided into three parts. Part one, *Current Status And Recommendations For The Future*, contains sections on academic tenure, present and future. Part two, *Special Topics*, deals with academic tenure in America and includes a historical essay by Walter P. Metzger, professor of history at Columbia University; legal dimensions of tenure by Victor G. Rosenblum, professor of law at Northwestern University, and faculty unionism and tenure by William F. McHugh, professor of law at The American University. Part three, *Supporting Documents*, contains sections on academic tenure and contract systems; faculty attitudes and tenure; plus an appendix reprinting the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, a glossary of terms; selected bibliography; guide to recommendations and an index.

Some of the arguments most often made against tenure are:

- Since academic freedom must be assured to all teachers, academic tenure cannot be essential to academic freedom. What is essential is academic due process.

- Tenure imposes a rigid financial burden upon institutions.

- The tenure system, especially in times of recession, reduces the institution's capacity to recruit and retain younger faculty. This makes it difficult for new entrants into the profession such as minority group members and women.

- Tenure by ensuring permanent appointments, promotes mediocrity and "deadwood" and makes it extremely difficult for an institution to remove an incompetent or irresponsible faculty member.

- Tenure encourages controversy and litigation over non-renewal of probationary contracts and denial of tenure. Contests of this nature are

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becoming increasingly more frequent. Today's recession and the consequent diminution in the opportunities for employment is a major contributor to such strife and litigation. As Professor Metzger points out:

"In many faculties a new antipathy between seniors and juniors has developed, an antipathy that is generational and ideological in rhetoric, but largely economic at its base."

The goals, purposes and quality of all education will be more easily achieved and the quality improved if performance and merit are the paramount bases of tenure and contract renewal instead of favoritism, prejudice, politics, and personal aggrandizement. Faculty performance must be measured by stated objective criteria, not to do so will undoubtedly result in increased litigation, strife and discord within the academic community.

The following arguments are frequently made in support of tenure:

- Tenure is an essential condition of academic freedom: it assures the teacher that his professional findings or utterances will not be circumscribed or directed by outside pressures, and it assures students and the public that the teacher's statements are influenced only by his/her best professional judgment and not by fear of losing his/her job.

- Academic tenure creates an atmosphere favorable to academic freedom for all because the tenured faculty members form an independent body capable of vigilant action to protect the freedom of their nontenured colleagues.

- Academic tenure, by creating a faculty with a strong long-term commitment to the institution, contributes to institutional stability and esprit. It thus promotes collegiality, joint responsibility for professional and institutional

standards, and effective institutional governance.

- By forcing institutions at a definite time to decide on whom to confer tenure and whom to let go, the tenure system helps institutions avoid continuing on faculty members whose term appointments might otherwise be renewed regularly out of generosity, friendship, or neglect.

- Tenure has an economic value that helps offset the generally lower financial rewards of higher education, thus enabling institutions to compete for professional talent—especially in such fields as law and medicine, which have highly developed markets outside the colleges and universities.

The book contains 47 thoroughly explained and detailed recommendations. It is, in the reviewer's opinion, a must reading for anyone genuinely interested in academic tenure and quality education whether at the higher education, secondary or elementary school level. The Commission on Academic Tenure deserves special commendation for conducting and issuing such a significant and useful study. □

*The reviewer is associate professor of law, Howard University School of Law. New Directions review, courtesy of the American Bar Association and its Section of Local Government Law.*