

The strength of the book lies in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, which trace the emergence of Bamba and Maam Cerno, to whom Bamba entrusted the care of the burgeoning community during his long years of exile, and then the rise to prominence of Maam Cerno as the leader of Darou Mousty, one of the directions of expansion of the Muridiyya. Here Glover is at his best in putting to use his interviews with members of the community, including a few early settlers, and combining these with occasional archival references. We see the community's adaptation to the changing economy; production of food as well as cash crops; and the diplomatic and political skills used to avoid incorporation into the main Murid centers of Baol and Diourbel and the political and religious leaders who dominated them.

In this book, John Glover adds important new dimensions to the understanding of the emergence of the Muridiyya, and carries the story of Darou Mousty well beyond that of his mentor Searing.

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KWAME NKRUMAH AS AFRICA'S 'BLACK STAR'

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Black Star: A View of The Life & Times of Kwame Nkrumah. By BASIL DAVIDSON. Oxford: James Currey, 2007. Pp. 225. £14.90, paperback (ISBN 978-1-84701-010-0).

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Basil Davidson, author of *Black Star: A View of The Life & Times of Kwame Nkrumah*, is a distinguished public historian, who has written some of the most readable, and very valuable, books about Africa. The 2007 edition of the author's classic book on Kwame Nkrumah (first published in 1973) has benefitted tremendously from a new and impressive foreword written by Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong, as well as a four-page laudable oration given by Dr. M. C. Horton, Orator of the University of Bristol, from where Davidson received the Doctor of Letters degree (*honori causa*) in 1999. Apart from Davidson's very detailed discussion of the life and times of Nkrumah, as contained in his re-issued book, Akyeampong's new foreword provides readers with a fresh overview of some of the Ghanaian leader's salient attributes, all of which combined to make him stand out as a great Pan-Africanist in the realm of world politics and history, and includes Akyeampong's assessment that Nkrumah, as a true visionary, was indeed ahead of his times. Additionally, he describes Davidson's book as 'an inspired portrait of Nkrumah as Davidson shares Nkrumah's vision for Africa and Nkrumah's diagnosis of the systemic liabilities of colonialism and the burden of the colonial legacy on the post-colonial state' (p. 2).

Akyeampong agrees with Davidson's prediction, which was published a few years after Nkrumah's 24 February 1966 overthrow in a police-cum-army *coup d'état*, 'that historians would judge Nkrumah more favorably and appreciate his stature and overall importance' (pp. 2–3). He succinctly sums up: 'Nkrumah comes alive in *Black Star*: his bookishness, charming personality, his unease with women, intense loyalty to close friends, his enormous capacity for work ... *Black Star* humanizes Nkrumah in important ways, and the reader gains a new understanding of a great man, but still a man' (p. 5).

In six lively sections, Davidson's book provides a prologue; covers dreams and visions (Chapter 1); grappling with reality (Chapter 2); moves towards independence (Chapter 3); victors and victims (Chapter 4); and provides an epilogue; there is also a very useful index at the end of the book. On these pages, readers have been given abbreviated accounts of Nkrumah being born in September 1909 to the senior wife of a goldsmith from Ghana's Nzima ethnic group; his elementary and teacher education in the then Gold Coast; his teaching years; his academic sojourn in the USA and, later, United Kingdom; and how, in 1947, Nkrumah was to return, on a steamship, to dabble in nationalist politics in the Gold Coast, which was to be renamed Ghana on the country's 6 March 1957 independence day.

Black Star is interwoven with biographical details of Nkrumah and historical anecdotes of the country that he ruled. Davidson uses Chapter 4 – which is subtitled as 'Victor and victim' – to discuss several aspects of Ghanaian politics, its realities and illusions. In the end, as a result of economic hardships and political repression, as the author points out poignantly, it became obvious (with 'the writing [being] on the wall' [p. 172]) that the United States, the UK and other Western nations, as economic benefactors of Ghana, started to suspect Nkrumah's country of being a communist enclave. Opposition leaders like University of Oxford-educated Professor Kofi Abrefa Busia were globe-trotting to Washington, DC, and other Western capitals, to drum out the notion that Ghana was a subversive nation. Connecticut Senator Dodd, in a US Senate hearing, sought a confirmation from Dr. Busia: 'I take it [to mean] that it is your opinion that Ghana is the center for subversive Communist activities in Western Africa, is that right?' In response, the Ghanaian opposition leader (Busia) answered: 'Mr. Chairman, I have stated this many times before' (p. 173).

For a *coup* plot to succeed in Ghana, and also for the citizenry to avoid bloodshed, as Davidson wrote unequivocally, Nkrumah had to be out of the country. Therefore, when the US government was informed officially by the Ghana government that Nkrumah planned to visit Vietnam to promote peace, then President Lyndon B. Johnson assured the Ghanaian leader, in what Davidson describes as a terse message from Johnson: 'If you go to Hanoi, Mr. President, you will be in no danger of American military action in Vietnam' (p. 202).

Nkrumah left on 21 February 1966, 'and the military *coup* followed three days later, resisted only by a small unit of Ghana troops garrisoned at Flagstaff House' (p. 203). Nkrumah went into exile in Guinea, during which, as Davidson describes in his epilogue, he became ill and, in 1972, eventually died in Bucharest, Romania. When his remains were returned to Ghana, the new leaders gave the deposed leader a state funeral, with then Ghanaian leader, General Ignatius K. Acheampong, presiding over the burial ceremony. Davidson writes that Acheampong's words included the following: 'Like all of us, Dr. Nkrumah had his shortcomings. Perhaps the problems of Africa and the world loomed so large that in his horizon he overlooked certain serious difficulties and irregularities at home' (p. 206). In the opinions of many Ghanaians, some of what General Acheampong pointed out in his graveside eulogy played a part in provoking the military overthrow, in February 1966, of Nkrumah and his CPP regime in Ghana.

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