

tion“) alter Verhaltensmuster in eine moderne, zeitgemäße Form und die „mobilisation“, die Übernahme alter Wertbegriffe mit neuem Inhalt. Der Leser vermisst bei dieser Aufzählung von Beispielen, welche die These des Verfassers von der evolutionären Entwicklung der Familien in Tunesien verdeutlichen sollen, ein tieferes Eingehen auf die Gründe, warum es in Tunesien zu dieser und nicht zu einer anderen Entwicklung gekommen ist, warum es nicht wie andere islamische Länder wie z. B. Libyen dem orthodoxen Islam verhaftet blieb oder wie Saudi-Arabien einen sehr konservativen Weg eingeschlagen hat. Welche Rolle das islamische Kulturgut in der Entwicklung der tunesischen Familie spielt, ob es retardierendes oder förderndes Moment ist, bleibt bedauerlicherweise unbeantwortet.

D. Hohberger

BASIL DAVIDSON

Can Africa Survive? Arguments Against Growth Without Development

Heineman, London, 1974, pp. 207

The disastrous performance of the economies of most African countries has led various scholars and non-scholars to ponder over the means by which these countries can solve their problems. The general view, shared by both specialists and non-specialists in the Western European countries and in the United States of America, seems to be that all that the Africans have to do is to follow the patterns set by the European countries which are generally believed to have solved their basic problems. The failure of the Africans is attributed to their unwillingness or inability to follow the traced path. The colonial regimes, it is argued by some, left perfectly viable systems and all that had to be done, was to improve and expand them.

This way of seeing things is of course, completely wrong. The experience of most African countries has shown that the more they try to follow Western European patterns, the less able they are to solve their problems. From the socialist experiments of Nkrumah to the capitalist restoration of Busia, the economy of Ghana, for example, has suffered from the same weaknesses. In other words, the task of creating healthy social and economic structures lies beyond the personalities of the various rulers and even their forms of government. The root cause of the inability of the African countries to solve their basic problems lies in the centuries of colonial frustration. It would have been more than miraculous if these countries emerged from centuries of colonial domination and solved their problems within a short period. What the years of formal independence and neo-colonialism have brought, as Davidson rightly emphasises, is “a new clarity of thought about the realities of Africa’s condition and predicament” (p. 18) and the realization that no half-hearted reform would do.

Those who argue that what is needed in the African economies is an increase in production will have to explain why the increase in the production of cocoa and other export products has not improved the lot of the African peoples. In fact, concentration on these products has reached such a point that agricultural countries such as Ghana and Nigeria have to spend millions of pounds in importing food. Nor will foreign aid help much. As Davidson states, the net effect of foreign aid within the existing international system is to reinforce the system and not to change it: “The productivity of the whole system and relationship grow;

they do not develop into a different system and relationship. And the major gains from this higher productivity continue, as before, to flow into the 'developed' part of the system, making the latter once again comparatively stronger, more powerful, and with larger access to usable wealth. This is what Gunder Frank, and others after him, have called 'the development of underdevelopment'." (p. 28)

Though the causes of persistent difficulties lay in the system installed during the colonial period, the African élite is partly to blame for the present state of affairs. With few exceptions, the élite has only been too willing to seize whatever means would allow it to enrich itself, no matter the cost or the consequences for the rest of the African peoples. Thus for instance, it has never been united enough to fight the balkanization plans of the colonialists. The classic example is the former Federation of French West Africa which (consisting of eight French colonies and Togo, as United Nations Trust Territory) was a single administrative unit until 1956 when the chance for the local élites to set up their own small states became irresistible. The African bourgeoisie, like their counterparts elsewhere, preferred the certainty of leadership and control of a small state to the uncertainties of a large federation or union of states.

The deceptive images in a few African capitals, luxurious presidential palaces, imposing ministerial buildings, etc are the outward manifestations of what is generally called, growth without development. Another example of this phenomenon, is the sort of neo-colonial arrangement which enables foreign interests to support the construction of an aluminum smelter in Ghana but not to process the bauxite available in Ghana; it is imported from elsewhere (p. 98). Such economic arrangements which do not involve structural changes in the economy of the country are the hall-marks of the new "partnership between dominant foreign interests and convenient local élites" (p. 85). This prevents the African élite from becoming an independent bourgeoisie. A way out of this situation could be the creation of larger economic units, capable of resisting foreign interests. Unfortunately, attempts at unity by African countries have not been many nor successful and the idea of the nation state seems to have been accepted as inevitable by many African leaders. But if the African countries are unable to form successful unions, they seem to have been united in their desire to submit to the rule of the European Economic Community which in the nature of the present international system cannot be anything other than the prolongation of the colonial economic exploitation.

The only sign of hope on the continent may be seen in the type of leadership provided by the national liberation movements in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola (M.P.L.A.). Moving away from reformist bourgeois leadership, they have evolved qualitatively new forms of leadership in which the masses, through active and direct participation in the decision making processes of their movements, are determining the conditions in which power and authority may be exercised. Whether these movements will succeed in solving the basic problems in their countries, is not for us to decide now. What is clear, is that they point to the way ahead: a route which will not lead to the enrichment of a few but to the development of all.

Kwame Opoku