

Obafemi Awolowo Political Theory: A Philosophical Critique.

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Abstract:

A number of Scholars have argued that no African Politicians can be said to have formulated anything that can be regarded as a 'Political theory' that is worth academic study. This line of argument is often based on the inconsistent incoherent and sometimes eclectic nature of the political writings and utterances of African Political Leaders.

In this study therefore, it is argued that Chief Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria can be properly credited with a precise political theory which is 'Democratic Socialism'. It is also argued that though Awolowo's democratic Socialism be regarded as somehow unique considering his rejection of most of the basic presuppositions of both the Marxist and African variants of Socialism, there is no reason for his total rejection of the incorporation of some aspects of African traditional Communalism into his 'Scientific' Socialism.

Awolowo's advocacy for non-violent transition of Nigeria from Capitalism to Socialism is here rejected. It is not argued that revolution is inevitable to Socialism, however, it is believed that some element of force or violence may be required in breaking the resistance of the agents of exploitation, if any, when this is noticed. In addition, it is pointed out that Awolowo's argument in favour of the rule of the enlightened or articulate few (that is, those who have cultivated the regime of Mental Magnitude and have thereby banished negative emotions), makes the whole theory not truly democratic. It is argued that Awolowo's attempt to marry religion with Socialism (Political) appears to negate the scientific pretensions of his theory. It is submitted that a truly scientific politics must be separated from religion which deals with the supernatural.

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