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Modern Migrations in West Africa by Samir Amin

Review by: R. Mansell Prothero

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Although the book fails badly to live up to its intriguing title, and is very uneven, there are some excellent individual contributions. Some people, especially the young, who are not yet guaranteed publication, still attempt to write a paper of significance for a conference, sometimes admittedly with scant regard for the advertised theme. Fage spells out the implications for Africa of Curtin's slave trade estimates; though he probably places too much confidence in his own retrospective estimates. Tiffen reports on an excellent study of population movements in a single small Nigerian emirate, and shows how much material from colonial administrations still remains in African countries waiting to be used intelligently. The linguists spoke to their own, although Ardener did so well and Spencer produced an interesting viewpoint on the 'progress ideology' and the resultant pressures on resources. Weeks once again made one introspective over using modern-traditional dichotomies and usefully stressed 'the fundamental reality of urbanisation—privileged access to strategic resources'. Morgan provided a very useful analysis of West Africa's food imports. Clearly, any consideration of agricultural change, and indeed of economic development as such, must grapple with the astonishing rise in food imports over the last quarter of a century. It is now common for imported food to make up one-tenth of all consumption—indeed in Senegal it is close to one-third—and to constitute a similar fraction of the total import bill.

The demographers kept to their last with a useful summary from Brass, a valuable analysis on mortality decline and some suggestive data on possible fertility rises in East Africa from Hill, and some insights into disease and its measurements from Ajaegbu, Mann and Ayeni. Here population was discussed as it must be, but the elusive population factor was not. We need another book to tell us what change population movements have wrought, although this book does provide sufficient material in some papers to suggest the extent to which change in other factors has directed population movements. Presumably, however, the editors had hoped to throw some light, or even most light, on the former.

J. C. CALDWELL

Modern Migrations in West Africa. Edited by SAMIR AMIN. London: OUP for International African Institute, 1974. Pp. xiv + 426. £5.00.

THE Eleventh International African Seminar was held at the Institute of Development Planning at Dakar. From the accounts of those present it was dominated by the Institute's Director, Samir Amin, who chaired its sessions. His dominance continues in the volume under review which is the product of the seminar. More than a quarter of its length is taken up with his editorial introduction in French and English. The remaining 300 pages consist of 16 'Special Studies' selected from papers presented at the Dakar meeting, 7 in French and 9 in English. There are a wide range of contributions at different scales from a variety of disciplines, but they have been no more imaginatively presented than in the alphabetical order of their authors' surnames. They are not shown to relate in any way to the themes for discussion at the conference which Daryll Forde outlined in his Foreword to the book. He tells us that the papers were selected by the Editor as 'representative of the range of research and of problems which would be of interest and value to a wider audience'. Would that the Editor had told us something more of the reasons for and logic in his selection and had presented the papers in some more systematic fashion. This they deserve for there is no reason for particular criticism of individual papers; they vary in interest and in quality but so much more could have been made of them if they had been related to themes and to one another. But if this is to be achieved it must be by the effort of the reader.

The Editor is concerned for the most part with propounding his own points of view and with pressing them home. In his long introductory essay there are passing references to the seminar discussion and to the papers which follow in the volume but there is not much. Daryll

Forde was understating (a rare thing for him!) when he says that Amin 'offers his own analysis of the main economic and political factors and of the socio-economic consequences and problems of the still accelerating intra and inter-territorial population movements in West Africa'. Amin's ideological views are well known. Colonial capitalism and more recently neo-colonialism are the villains of the piece which have contributed to the inequalities in economic development in West Africa with the transference of large numbers of people from one part of this sub-continental area to another, particularly from the north to the south. The basic factors which have in the past and which in the future will continue to disadvantage the interior parts of West Africa and favour those of the coastal region receive scant attention. Irrespective of political factors, amount of rainfall, lengths of wet and dry seasons, distance (which Amin seems to think is only important in international migration) and relative accessibility are unchanging imperatives. Types and patterns of movements were in many instances established before the colonial impact, though with it they may have developed and adapted. Amin's approach lacks historical perspective and, while he makes reference to Mabogunje's work on *Regional Mobility and Resource Development in West Africa* (1972), he has taken little note of its more positive views on migration. To him migrants are, at least potentially, an exploited and impoverished proletariat; they are not positive socio-economic entrepreneurs and innovators as Mabogunje and others have shown them in many instances to be. No one would deny that there are circumstances in which people are under pressure to move but in the majority of these it is the minority who move and they are able to exercise a considerable measure of free will as to how and where they move. What is the evidence for Amin's claim that 'the rural exodus has become uncontrolled, uncontrollable and explosive', even though these things might be said of the urban influx? In this as in other matters his statistics are either non-existent or unsubstantiated and when one reads that 'if we further accept that the civil war [in Nigeria] was responsible for the disappearance of 800,000 people' more than an eyebrow must be raised. One agrees with some of his tilts at sociologists and economists who apply cost-benefit analysis to migration and attempt to quantify the unquantifiable. At all times he provokes reaction, but his monocular viewpoint by which everything is measured is over-done. Not only is there evidence from the 'Special Studies' which contradicts some of Amin's views but there are some internal contradictions in his own discussion. There is not space to deal with these, let alone to dispute his contention that 'the pattern of migration in Nigeria is *totally different* from that which characterizes *all* other countries to the west of its borders' (my italics). This reviewer would have preferred a more objective introduction to the papers from the Dakar seminar. The intensely interesting though highly subjective essay of Amin is not appropriate for he seems rather to have hogged the volume. To his essay in these circumstances it is impossible to say 'Amen'.

R. MANSELL PROTHERO

Inter-Regional Migration in Tropical Africa. By L. MASSER and W. T. S. GOULD. London: Institute of British Geographers, 1975. Pp. iv + 107. (Institute of British Geographers Special Publication, No. 8).

THIS latest publication in the African Population Mobility Project at the University of Liverpool examines some of the main methodological and substantive issues in the analysis of inter-regional migration in tropical Africa, both in general terms and in a detailed case study of a particular country, Uganda. The analysis proceeds in three steps. In the first of these, the nature of the data used in migration analysis and the way in which their collection, manipulation and presentation influences the results of such analysis are scrutinized. This is followed by a critical examination of the migration patterns as revealed by the birth-place data from the 1969 Uganda census. Two important findings emerge from this examination: the