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AFRICA**
BY
WILLIAM A.
HANCE

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

THE GEOGRAPHY OF MODERN AFRICA. W. A. HANCE, xiv, 653 pp.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1964. U.S. Price \$12.00. U.K. Price 84s.

Students and teachers in all parts of the world have for some years been keenly awaiting a new book on the geography of Africa for use at university level. Such a work has now been provided by Professor Hance of Columbia University, and many people within Africa and elsewhere have cause to be grateful to him for this. *The Geography of Modern Africa* is a very substantial piece of work, containing a vast array of facts; yet it is by no means a mere compendium, since the author seeks not only to record facts but also to evaluate their significance. The book is well written and profusely illustrated; the maps are in many cases both original and successful, and add considerably to the value of the work. A striking feature is the speed at which the volume has been produced; in some cases the situation described in both text and maps is that prevailing in January, 1964.

Criticism can, of course, be made of this book as of any other. The most disturbing feature for many readers will be the lack of balance in the treatment given to the various aspects of the African scene. Following five introductory chapters on the historical, physical, economic, demographic and political background of the whole continent, the author discusses individual countries or groups of countries in the remaining twenty-one chapters, and in every case there is a very heavy emphasis on the pattern of economic activity. Some attention is generally given to political conditions, but the treatment of the physical environment is very scanty. The chapter on the Congo Republic, for example, is divided into sections on the political background, the present economic position, requirements for economic stability, economic-geographic keynotes and the various economic activities.

However, instead of criticising the balance of the book one could suggest merely that the title should have been 'The Economic Geography of Modern Africa'. The author himself states: 'The purposes of this book are to present the major features of the economy of Africa, to analyze the handicaps and attributes that affect economic development, and to assess some of the potentialities for growth'. (p. vii). The book is more strictly geographical than this quotation might suggest, but attention is focused throughout on economic activities, and other phenomena considered in so far as they affect these. Judged as a work of economic geography, the book suffers most from its neglect of the subsistence economy. In contrast, the author's special field of study, transport, perhaps receives more than its due share of attention. The examination of the patterns of commercial agriculture, mining and industry in each part of the continent is first class, while the attempt to pick out 'keynotes' is often very successful. The method of approach differs considerably from one country to another, and while this may hinder the use of the book for reference, it makes it more interesting to read. It also provides a useful illustration of the different ways in which the study of economic geography may be tackled.

East African readers may be disappointed to find that Professor Hance opens his survey of this region with a discussion of Mau Mau, even though the greater part is concerned with the economic characteristics of each part of East Africa. It is in this chapter that he states: "As the main focus is on commercial activities,

little attention will be paid to subsistence economies". (p. 379). This inevitably leads to a somewhat distorted view of the present-day economic geography of the region. But on the whole the East African section is up to the standard of the rest of the book, which cannot be said of some recent British works on the geography of Africa. There are few factual errors, although certain figures, such as some of those on sisal, are astray; and the author's assessment of the problems and potentialities of the region and its parts seems very fair.

The Geography of Modern Africa is a book that should be on the shelves of every library used by university, training college or sixth-form students. The purchase of personal copies may be hindered by its high price, but if this obstacle is overcome the reader is unlikely to be disappointed with the book. A.M.O.C.

AFRICA AND THE ISLANDS. R. J. HARRISON CHURCH, J. I. CLARKE, P. J. H. CLARKE, H. J. R. HENDERSON. Xvi, 494 pp., 108 maps and diagrams, 72 plates. London; Longmans (Geographies; an intermediate series, ed. R. W. Steel). 1964. U.K. price: 40s.

One of the many problems of writing regional geography on a continental scale is that no one author can be expected to be equally familiar with all parts of the area. An attempt has been made in this useful new book to overcome this problem by bringing together under one cover the knowledge of four geographers, each of whom contributes chapters on areas within his own first-hand experience. This method is successful in so far as the material in many sections of the book is admirably presented and is clearly the fruit of long experience in African environments. The method breaks down, however, in that the level of treatment and accuracy of presentation vary considerably from one section of the book to another.

Four introductory chapters deal concisely with the continent as a whole from the viewpoints of historical development, physical environment, population and modes of life. The main part of the book is composed of a series of regional studies dealing with north-west Africa (including the Sahara), north-east Africa (including a discussion of the Nile basin as a geographical unit), West Africa, west-central Africa (from Chad to Angola), East Africa, southern Africa, and the African islands of the Indian Ocean. In this last-named chapter are included Madagascar, Réunion, Mauritius, the Seychelles and the Comoro Islands; Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia are included within the treatment of East Africa. The book concludes with an interesting statement on 'political, social and economic characteristics and trends'.

East African readers will find this book chiefly useful for its treatment of general themes and for the up-to-date accounts which are presented of areas other than the local environment. Professor Clarke's chapters on North Africa, and Professor Harrison Church's chapters on West Africa, are clearly recognizable as successful distillations of long-continued research experience in these areas. H. J. R. Henderson provides a useful though somewhat lighter treatment of southern Africa. It is unfortunate that the section on East Africa, by P. J. H. Clarke, contains a considerable number of errors of fact and emphasis; unlike other sections of the book, the East African chapters cannot be recommended for use in schools and colleges, in East Africa or elsewhere, without thorough revision.

A special effort has been made to illustrate the book with many pleasing and informative photographs and maps. Bearing in mind the reservations made above

the book is, on balance, to be welcomed as a useful addition to the material on Africa readily available to Higher School Certificate and first year university students. — B. S. H.

GEOGRAPHERS AND THE TROPICS: LIVERPOOL ESSAYS. Edited by R. W. Steel and R. M. Prothero. vii, 375 pp. London: Longmans, 1964. U.K. price 47s. 6d.

The great port and city of Liverpool has had a connection with the tropics extending over centuries which is reflected in the interests of the Department of Geography of its University. All fourteen contributors to this collection have associations with that Department. Professor Steel himself denies the validity of the concept of "tropical geography" but gives a wide-ranging view of the work of geographers in the tropics, more particularly of that published in English. He is especially fitted to give such a review, which will be most valuable to new entrants to the field and enables gaps in our attack to be recognised. Seven of the essays refer to Africa and the three on East Africa will have particular interest. From his important work on the evidences of lake-level changes of Lake Victoria, P. H. Temple presents a precise and thorough account of the coastal topography from Entebbe to the Kenya border with raised beaches at three levels with no indication of warping. Miss Kenworthy's account of the rainfall and water resources of East Africa will be the most useful contribution for those who teach East Africa or who want a concise account of this fundamental aspect of the local environment. In contrast S. Gregory's analysis of rainfall in Mozambique is an exercise in the statistical manipulation of minimal data. The resulting factual material will be an invaluable starting point for cause-and-effect investigations of the sort which Miss Kenworthy has brought together. The third essay on an East African topic is an account of Chinese knowledge of East Africa prior to 1500 A.D. by P. Wheatley, from which it appears that first-hand knowledge of the coast south of Somalia was very small. The continuing fascination of this topic suffers from the general ignorance of Chinese, and Professor Wheatley's erudite exposition is a welcome and authoritative statement. R. M. Prothero is able to discuss and compare migration movements across Africa, some being traditional and others in response to modern needs but all having social effects. By contrast, Kay gives a detailed "grass-roots" account of settlement in a small area of Zambia in which the interests of chiefs is shown as an influencing factor as well as roads, water supplies, or swamps. A natural interest in our own continent should not blind us to the value of the essays on Australian land forms, land use in Trinidad, Chinese settlement in Malaya and problems of regional planning in India. The recurring problems of regional boundaries in India described by L. S. Bhat has an ominous ring in Kenya. Professor Learmonth describes how applied geographical analysis provided the basis for sound regional planning in Mysore state. This demonstrates the practical contribution which geographers might make towards national development in East Africa. They must be prepared for disappointments, however: as in Mysore, implementation does not necessarily follow on survey or plan. — W. T. W. M.

RECORDS OF THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION, 1788-1831. Edited with an introduction by ROBIN HALLETT for the Royal Geographical Society. vii, 318 pp., 2 maps. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd. 1964. U.K. price 70s.

The foundation of the Uganda Geographical Association is one of the distant results of the decision made in 1788 by a small group of wealthy aristocrats, led by

Sir Joseph Banks, to form the African Association which stands as "the progenitor of all those learned societies devoted to the study of geography that are now found in almost every country of the world." The history of Africa was also affected by this private initiative: Europe and Africa were to be drawn closer together.

The published *Proceedings* of the Association cease in 1810. Mr. Hallett, by printing copies of records acquired by the body which absorbed the Association in 1831 — the Royal Geographical Society — enables us to appreciate the full range of its activities. Geographers will be interested in the rejection of the crude determinism of the usual explanation for Africa's previous isolation in the editor's excellent introduction. Each of the Association's explorers has a chapter devoted to him in which relevant extracts from papers of the Association and of Banks are blended with material from the *Proceedings*. The Association first sent explorers to West Africa, notably Mungo Park. From 1805, with the British government taking over the sponsorship of West African ventures, the Association, as these records now make clear, shifted its interest to N.E. Africa and the Nile. One member, Henry Salt, provided information on East Africa. All this cost about £13,000 — a cheaper price than that in lives: only four of the eleven principal travellers survived.

There are further chapters and appendices on finance and organisation, the significance of Major Rennell's "geographical elucidations", Banks' African interests and so on. A surprising fault is that the publication by the Association in 1828 of Linant de Bellefond's *Journal of Navigation on the Bahr el Abiad* has been overlooked. Apart from this, no significant fact about the Association is omitted. There are many fascinating sidelights, such as Burckhardt training for his expedition by "sleeping upon the ground, and living on vegetables and water." Altogether this is a satisfying volume and one's only regret concerns the price.

— R. C. B.

THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANDFORMS OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOMORPHOLOGY. Vol. I Geomorphology before Davis. R. J. CHORLEY, A. J. DUNN, and R. P. BECKINSALE. XVI, 648 pp. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1964. U.K. price 4 gns.

This book, as the authors state, is the first real history of landform study or of the evolution of ideas relating to the development of the physical landscape. As such it is very welcome, fulfilling a long-felt need. Geomorphology, once the major part of the whole study of Geology, is now shared between Geology and Geography. The authors correctly attribute the subject's lack of development along more scientific lines to its association with Geography. What their book shows, with a fascinating consistency, is the extent to which the development of Geomorphology has been linked to geographical exploration. The need to explain new landscapes brings about the re-thinking and re-evaluation of old concepts and ideas.

The authors rightly see the real scientific beginnings of the subject in the early nineteenth century and this first volume of the series deals with the implications of Huttonian rationalism upon the hostile theological concepts of the age, the marine/fluvial controversy and the growth of Geomorphology in America, particularly the work of Powell, Gilbert and Dutton.

In a short review of this nature, it is impossible to comment in detail on a book of this length and comprehensiveness. Because of its weight, size and price, it will have a limited market. This is unfortunate, for here we have a balanced, thorough, reliable source book, relatively free for its length of minor errors. The abundance of quotation and illustration give the reader a fascinating glimpse of many inaccessible classics. Particularly delightful and exciting is the section dealing with the exploration of the American West. The quality of the linking text is variable and the triple authorship of the volume is very evident in the reading of it. Parts are quite excellent, full of illuminating comment and suggestions; parts are dull and without significance; shortening the text by a hundred pages would have made a much better and more readable book. The sententious obtrusion of one author's opinions is evident in the tedious and unnecessary emphasis upon early quantitative studies; fortunately this is a small part of a generally well-balanced whole.

Some minor points require mention, such as location maps without scales, latitudes or longitudes, but these are a petty irritation. It will be very interesting to see the next volume of the series where the authors will attempt to show "that Davis was more wrong than right", an exercise that consistently defeated the doughtiest of their colleagues. Their admirable method of extensive original quotation may very well end up showing exactly the reverse. — P. H. T.

VEGETATION AND SOILS. S. R. EYRE. xvi, 324 pp. 32 plates, 30 figs., 10 maps. London: Arnold, 1963. U.K. price 36s.

This study of vegetation and soils has rapidly found itself established as an essential undergraduate text for courses in biogeography and world regional geography. Its success clearly demonstrates the need for such a book — more advanced than the now dated studies of Hardy and less biological in its focus than Polunin. The value of the book lies in its strong emphasis on the distribution of major vegetation types; and in the presentation of vegetation as a phenomenon undergoing constant change. The treatment of soils is very much briefer and scarcely justifies the prominence given in the title.

In essence the author has presented a valuable summary of a limited number of standard works (with a considerable debt to Schimper) and has supported this with a critical appraisal of a few specialist papers. This process, so far as Africa is concerned, has led to a dependence on Shantz and to a neglect of recent analyses on a continental scale such as those of Keay, Phillips and Rattray. Keay's map of the distribution of vegetation in Africa has now become generally accepted; but it is extremely difficult to equate the terminology and distributions of Eyre with it. In particular it would seem that the "tropical" as distinct from the "equatorial" regions of the world have received short shrift. The terminology concerning savanna vegetation is even more confused than before, largely due to the use of terms in the text different from those of the map. The extent of the confusion is most apparent when an attempt is made to compare the savanna vegetation of one continent with that of another. Thus from the text (p. 240) one is clearly invited to equate the "campos" of South America with the "acacia — tall grass savanna" of Africa, whereas on the maps the latter is plotted as "thorn tree — tall grass savanna" and the former as "broad-leaved tree savanna". This may seem only a small point; but it is characteristic of the difficulty one faces in using this section of the book. To turn to areas outside the tropics, one would have appre-

ciated a fuller discussion of the use of common vegetation terms such as steppe, prairie and taiga.

An important feature of the book is the appendix of ten maps. Unfortunately these are all drawn to different scales and present some awkward divisions of continents. The mapping of Asia, for instance, is particularly inconvenient. As a further small point of criticism it is a weakness of the book that in spite of two indices the only useful indication of the location of material in the book is the contents list. — B. W. L.

A GEOGRAPHY OF MALAWI. A. & D. YOUNG. 72 pp., numerous maps, diagrams and photographs. London: Dent, 1964. U.K. price 4s. 6d.

A GEOGRAPHY OF SIERRA LEONE. K. G. DALTON. 63 pp., numerous maps, diagrams and photographs. London: Cambridge, 1965. U.K. price 6s.

These are both text books written as introductions to the geography of their respective countries at upper primary or junior secondary level. They are written with students in those countries very much in mind and would not be of general use in East Africa except perhaps as library books for background reading. They are both well-illustrated and have good maps but the writing shows contrasted styles and approaches.

In *A Geography of Malawi* the approach is systematic and factual and the authors work from the general to the particular. The book starts with generalisations about some of the fundamental concepts of physical geography, but at this level such generalisations, if they are to be taught at all, will surely be understood only if they grow out of specific examples. The regional and economic sections which follow are very comprehensive but too often take the form of a dryly-presented lists of important facts. The language is a little difficult for primary level where English is a second language and an attempt to cover too much ground in a short space has led to inadequate explanations and the introduction of some concepts which are too difficult at this level. The book cannot be recommended either as a text or as a library book for the use of East African students, but it would, however, make a very useful teacher's reference book.

A Geography of Sierra Leone, on the other hand, seeks to "arouse interest and curiosity in the pupils" and succeeds well. It studies in some details particular regions or aspects of the human geography of Sierra Leone and the generalisations it uses always come out of specific examples. It is written in an interesting style and concentrates on specific places and people rather than on generalisations. As a series of short sample studies of Sierra Leone it could certainly find a place in the library at junior secondary or S. 1-2 level. — J. T.

A COURSE IN WORLD GEOGRAPHY: E. W. YOUNG and J. H. LOWRY. Book I: PEOPLE IN BRITAIN, 191 pp. Book II: PEOPLE ROUND THE WORLD, 221 pp. London: Edward Arnold, 2nd Edition, 1964. U.K. prices: 9s., 10s.

FIRST LESSONS IN MAP READING FOR EAST AFRICA: J. M. PRITCHARD 33 pp. London: Dent, 1964. U.K. price: 4s. 6d.

A SCHOOL CERTIFICATE MAP READING COURSE FOR EAST AFRICA: J. M. PRITCHARD. 36 pp., 6 maps. London: Dent, 1964. U.K. price 7s. 6d.

THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE IN PICTURES: A. V. HARDY and F.J. MONKHOUSE. 92 pp. London, Cambridge, 1964. U.K. price: 8s.

AFRICA: L. S. SUGGATE. London: Harrap, 1964. 496 pp. and an index. 203 maps. 7th (revised) edition.

Books I and II of *A Course in World Geography* have a new and realistic approach and contain a variety of photographs, maps and diagrams. The questions and exercises incorporated into the text demand research and understanding on the part of the student. In this new edition statistics are brought up to date and temperature readings in degrees centigrade included. Book II: *People Round the World* gives a bird's eye view of the important aspects of life in selected regions. The environmental influence is stressed and basic principles of world geography introduced. Its value as a text book is questionable if it is used in isolation. Book I would only be useful in East Africa for reference purposes.

First Lessons in Map Reading is an excellent little book with a useful approach to the subject. In *A School Certificate Map Reading Course* all aspects of elementary map reading are covered. The book follows the same pattern as the already familiar *Map Reading* (Pickles) and is well illustrated with diagrams and maps. For slower students it would meet all the requirements of the Cambridge examination but brighter students would benefit from the more scholarly approach of McMaster's *Map Reading for East Africa*.

Most teachers agree that the best way to study geography is in the field. The limited opportunities need to be supplemented by a close study of landscape photographs and *The Physical Landscape in Pictures* meets this need. Photographs of major features of the landscape are arranged to follow its development from rock types through erosion to landforms and vegetation. The photographs, accompanied by explanatory notes, could form the basis of useful exercises and discussions. It is a book which would prove very useful throughout the Senior School.

The revised edition of Suggate's *Africa* has been produced to cover the many changes in Africa over the past four years. — M. E. E. I.

STATISTICAL MAPPING AND THE PRESENTATION OF STATISTICS. G. C. DICKINSON. 160 pp. London: Edward Arnold Ltd. 1963. U.K. price 21s.

British opinion on this book has ranged from "exceedingly profitable reading" (*Geography*) to "ammunition for the critics of modern geographical teaching" (*Scottish Geographical Magazine*). Many details can be criticised, but it is a useful book, especially because its clear and lively style makes interesting reading on what some people consider an unexciting subject. Notable features include a chapter on sources of statistics, unfortunately largely confined to British sources, and a chapter of worked examples, of more value to those living elsewhere.

— A.M. O'C.