

## BOOK REVIEWS

## DIRECTIONS IN GEOGRAPHY

Edited by R.J. Chorley, London, Methuens, 1973, 33p. U.K. Price (Softback) £1.95.

This book is for the initiated. Mercifully it is not yet another directive to jump on the 'new geography' bandwagon. It is rather, again mercifully, a book designed for those who, having followed the leaders, are now on the verge of falling off the wagon in the midst of a wilderness and who are now seeking the direction out. Unfortunately it is those self-same leaders who had got the party lost that are now being consulted as soothsayers. One solution seems to be to re-read the old masters. Berry, for instance, revives the Galton-Taylor diffusionist controversy of the 1890s; Chorley renews interest in Rousseau, Perkins Marsh and Vidal de la Blache; whilst Bunge revives Engels. Refreshingly one can detect a resuscitation of environmental interests. Haggett writes on ecology, Chorley writes on resource management, Hare invokes an energy-based climatology (a bit hard-going for the non-scientist), and White has a chapter on natural hazards. The spatial organisation wagoners are here in force - Dacey, Haggett, Garrison, Gould, Berry, Hagerstrand and Warntz. Some of them seem a little self-effacing at having got the party lost, groping into the morass, and hoping that the by now disillusioned trekkers will follow their particular trail to a 'future geography'. But the going will be hard whoever one follows. The environmental/ecological clique and the spatial organisation pundits are all expected to guide the way by consulting the celestial firmament of geographical theory. Anuchin's theory of geography here is reasonably acceptable since it does not seem so very different from Mackinderism anyway. If new stars are required to hitch one's wagon to, then Berry's "process metageography" or Bartel's "metatheoretical nominalism" and "ontologisation", may appeal (!)

The book makes an unfortunate start. Not only does it presume a heavy commitment to new courses in geography, it also presupposes a deep understanding of philosophy. Alas, your reviewer, not skilled in either of these is able to understand only a few sentences of the first forty pages. However, here and there, in later sections the going becomes easier and one recognises the movement of the wheels over firm ground again. Nor should one be frightened by Bunge's title 'ethics and logic'. This is a straight-forward appeal for social (not to say socialistic) relevance.

For the most part the book is aimed (so far as one can tell) at researchers and academics (but doubtless the book will sell to undergraduates aspiring to these positions). Gould's case for new syllabi devoted entirely to human spatial organisation may appeal to Makerere's new generation of lecturers. That is, if they understand what Langrangians are (p.255) - or are they Langrangians (p. 259)? For the school-teacher there is a valuable essay on 'discovery learning' and the American High School Geography Project by McNee.

Individual readers may find their direction out of the wilderness, possibly even by switching houses, and following one or other of the many routes on offer. It must, however, be a rarely gifted traveller who can understand more than two or three of the oracles presented in this collection.

B.W. Langlands  
Professor of Geography,  
Makerere University, Kampala

## EVALUATING THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: ESSAYS IN APPLIED GEOGRAPHY

John A. Dawson and John C. Doornkamp. Published by Edward Arnold, London, 1973; 288 pages; £4 net hard cover; £2 net, paperback.

After the 'new geography' comes the 'relevant geography' and the publication of this volume co-edited by J.A. Dawson and J.C. Doornkamp, seems well-timed to catch yet another rising fashion in the discipline before it peaks. The co-editors claim in a brief introduction that their purpose is to "illustrate the usefulness and relevance of the geographer's approach to some of the issues which concern man and are related to his environment" (p. 1) - 'relevance' and 'the environment' are caught in one net.

Three basic themes are said to emerge from the collection of eleven essays presented: the value of geography in the assessment of many contemporary problems, the interdependence of human and physical geography, and the value of the geographer's contribution to interdisciplinary investigation. These themes do indeed consistently stand out in the contributions even although the authors range over fields as diverse as water resource inventories, marketing systems, and demand/supply relationships in recreation, and the editors are to be congratulated for the uniformly high standard of presentation in the volume given this diversity.

There is, however, always a danger in such compilations that the individual contributor will opt for one of two approaches: he can either survey the entire field assigned to him, briefly touching on the main trends but at risk of producing a rather pedestrian outline; or he can discuss in detail only a limited aspect of a particular problem in order to illustrate the geographer's role at the expense of considering wider issues. Such dichotomy is apparent in *Evaluating the Human Environment*. The essays on recreation and air pollution, for example, are rather restricted in their approaches, while the discussion of urban land evaluation is basically a summary of progress in this branch of urban geography. But several contributors are successful in marrying a general overview with carefully chosen illustrations, as in the two chapters on rural land use and planning, and the essay on water resources.

This book, then, is primarily of value as an introduction to trends and advances in the branches of applied geography. It is difficult to see it being adopted as a standard text for any particular teaching course, but individually several of the chapters provide excellent introductions to particular topics which can be pursued further with the help of useful bibliographies. Thus the recent and belated methodological development of political geography is nicely summarised by J.N.H. Douglas, and N.D. McGlashan illustrates the value of the quantitative approach to the spatial analysis of medical statistics.

At a more general level *Evaluating the Human Environment* is the geographer's answer to frequent questioning of the discipline's practical worth in a developing country. It should be clear to even the most sceptical reader that geographers can and do contribute positively to the solution of problems as diverse as locating an industry dependent on female labour, siting a new hospital and the more efficient use of a river. A copy should be sent to every Permanent Secretary in East Africa.

The East African student of geography may well be disappointed, however, to find that several of the contributors rely almost entirely on west European and north American examples, reflecting their own limited experiences and geographical horizons. The chapter on recreation is almost solely concerned with the special problems of densely populated Britain, while the following essay on conservation completely ignores the conflicting demands of wild life preservation, tourism and agriculture common in Africa. Likewise manpower planning is considered largely in terms of labour for manufacturing and service industries in highly urbanised societies. Seasonal labour migrations, rural underemployment, deficiencies of skilled labour which are major issues in developing economies are at best only mentioned in passing. Deficiencies such as these detract from the overall value of this timely volume.

D. Roden

*Oxford Progressive Geography Junior Series II, The New Lands: America, Australia and New Zealand*, by F.C.A. McBain (3rd ed). London: Oxford University Press, 1972. pp. 127.

In this book, F.C.A. McBain makes a vivid survey of the geography and development of the New Lands, (North and South America, Australia and New Zealand). The book has twelve short chapters. In the first chapter McBain discusses, briefly, the factors which led to the discovery of the New Lands and the order in which they were discovered. In the other chapters, McBain compares what is happening in the New Lands and other parts, of the world. Each of the major economic activities in the New Lands are examined and discussion on the physical environment, basic natural resources and industry made. McBain then explores more specifically each of the regions noted for production of the major commodities of the New Lands, e.g. cotton, wheat, maize, and timber. This examination is then linked up with a survey of the ways of life of the people in these regions. McBain clearly illustrates how industry is becoming important in the New Lands especially in North America though agriculture is still an important source of wealth.

The text has ample illustrations both in the form of distribution maps, graphs and photographs. These would certainly help the student to understand what is being discussed in each chapter. The bar graphs in particular, are very useful. They show, for each commodity type, the level of production in the New Lands and how this compares with world production. The photographs illustrate clearly certain processes in the course of producing commodities and the extent to which agriculture has become mechanized.

A significant section of each of the chapters is the section 'Around Your Country', comprising questions. These should help the student to relate what is happening in his country to activities in the New Lands. The questions are on the whole well selected and besides aiding the student to think about what he has read, they should also encourage him to make use of his atlas.

John Were  
Lecturer in Geography,  
Makerere University, Kampala.

RECENT HISTORY OF AN ETHIOPIAN DELTA: THE OMO RIVER AND THE LEVEL OF LAKE RUDOLF

Karl W. Butzer. Published 1971 by Department of Geography, University of Chicago as Research Paper No. 136. Paperback, lithotype, 184 pages, 81 figures, price \$4.50.

"Lake Rudolf, the last of the great African lakes to be discovered by European explorers, is also the least understood", and in particular the Omo delta, formed where "a great river merges with a great lake", remained until recently largely undescribed and unexplained. The present period of intensive research in the Lake Rudolf area began in 1959 with T. Whitworth's study of Late Quaternary deposits there. This has been followed by several interdisciplinary expeditions sponsored by American and European institutions, and now beginning to produce an increasing flow of published findings.

K.W. Butzer's monography has been prepared as contribution number 25 of the Omo Research Expedition based on the University of Chicago, and is partly a write-up of field observations made between 1967 and 1969. The author was fortunate in that as a member of a large expedition he had access to a wide range of facilities available to few African geographers. His task was eased by use of a chartered aircraft and a helicopter, and in fact helicopter runs and motor boat traverses of open waterways were vital parts of the field survey. The resulting report is in the traditional, essentially descriptive mould (i.e., it is readable), but differs from most others of its type in that field technique has been combined with evaluation of travellers' accounts as a source of geomorphological information. The result is an interesting mixture of historical geomorphology and historical geography, illustrating the synthesising abilities of the competent geographer.

The core of the study is a description of the main geomorphological units (mapped in Fig. 2-1) and features (mapped in Fig. 2-2) of the Omo Delta together with an outline of the postulated history of each. The units identified are the meander belt, the eastern flood basin, the delta flats with their network of huge cracks, the sub-deltas, the delta fringe, beach ridge plains, and also the Murle Lake Plain and the mud flats of Sanderson's Gulf which are marginal to the delta proper. This is followed by an attempt to trace fluctuating lake levels over the last hundred years from travellers' descriptions and sketch maps.

The main features of the delta are reconstructed cartographically for several cross-sections in time - 1888, 1896, 1908 and 1933-70 - and a hypothesis of delta evolution before 1888 suggested on the basis of known fluctuations since then. Human re-adjustment to changing shore-lines is considered only briefly in a separate chapter, and largely from travellers' comments and the view from a helicopter seat rather than from detailed field work on the ground. The implications of the transgression of 1962, for example, warrants only ten lines. This cursory treatment is perhaps excusable in view of the fact that work on the human ecology of the area by C.J. Carr is being prepared for publication.

In his introduction the author points out that while river deltas in tidal waters have been studied intensively, little is known about the geomorphology of lake deltas and virtually nothing about deltas built-up in lakes with no outlets. Butzer's study is therefore a pioneer work in this respect, and as such a model against which future research of a similar nature can be compared. Its value as a model would have been enhanced by inclusion of a concise summary of the more important

components of the inland delta, and an outline of the more significant differences to be expected between tidal water deltas and those in enclosed lakes.

For the general reader, as distinct from the specialist geomorphologist, probably the most useful chapters are the first and the last. The final chapter links fluctuations in the level of Lake Rudolf with the wider climatological conditions of East Africa and correlates these fluctuations with variations in the levels of other East African lakes and discharge levels on the Nile and Sobat rivers. The tentative conclusion reached is that "there is good reason to believe that the level of Lake Rudolf serves as a useful index of East African climate, in particular of precipitation patterns over periods measured in terms of decades and centuries, and probably over longer intervals of time". Chapter one - a consideration of the broader geographical setting of the Ono Delta - draws together a wide range of information concerning geology, vegetation, soils, climate and hydrography to present a concise physical geography of a little known corner of northeastern Africa which is divided between Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. Indeed so little is known about some of the essential characteristics of the region that the author had to carry out some basic field work, such as a soil sampling around Addis Ababa, simply to prepare his general introduction. For this on its own his monograph is worth reading.

D. Roden,  
Senior Lecturer in Geography,  
Makerere University, Kampala.

## BOOK REVIEWS

## "THE NEW AFRICA"

By Gladys Hickman, University of London Press

This textbook has been written mainly for G.C.E. (E.A.C.E. level) students in British schools. Its title "The New Africa" is appropriate as it tries consciously and necessarily to write about the reality of Africa today, with an emphasis on the economic, social and political problems and potentialities of present day development. The book therefore, studies such problems as prices and markets, urbanization and the migration of labour to areas of opportunity as well as the more traditional topics such as subsistence farming and the development of cash crops. Dr. Hickman has obviously travelled widely in Africa and she makes excellent use of her personal knowledge to create a real feeling of what it is like to live in the areas she described, rather than simply contenting herself with a factual summary. She is concerned with what it is like to live in a mine compound as much as with the mere location of mining areas; with the problems people face during a long drought rather than a description of a savannah climate. She does this in a vivid and lively style which makes the book far more interesting to read than almost any comparable book on Africa.

The book is based on a case-study approach, as is fashionable at present, but at the same time maintains a basic regional structure by grouping the case-studies according to regions. I certainly agree that this approach makes a much more interesting and useful book than the usual factual compendium, region by region. However, in trying to include a number of case-studies from every region in a book of only 160 pages, I feel Dr. Hickman may have included too many studies and lost some of the advantages of study in depth which this approach can give. Although this depth is achieved in some studies these, such as that of Cameroon, are really no more than short summaries of particular problems in particular areas and some, such as that on a farm in Buganda, ask some admirable questions but do not stop to supply the answers. I would have preferred fewer studies, but greater depth. Locally there is a conflict between the case-study and the regional approach which, in a short book like this, must be resolved in favour of one or the other rather than trying to preserve both at the same time. Similarly, because the case-studies are grouped regionally the topics of the studies do not seem to follow enough of a logical progression. A very useful concept, however, which does give the book some unity and does draw together many of the themes of the studies is that of "areas of opportunity".

The book contains a large number of very useful maps and photographs, including 4 coloured survey map extracts, and these are integrated fairly well into the text. There are many useful services within the text, many linking up with the map and photographs. Perhaps some of these could have been expanded rather than stating, for instance, that "Figure 16 that..." and then making a list which pupils might feel they should learn by heart. Most photographs are well reproduced, although it is a pity some could not have been larger. The maps are clearly drawn and not too crowded, although I would have preferred a plainer form of lettering and avoidance at this level, of the pictorial style of symbols found on some. Each chapter also contains trade figures for all the countries dealt with and I found this constant use of the same kind of statistics rather monotonous especially since, in many African countries, like Zambia, the exports are produced and the imports consumed by such a small minority of the population that trade figures may give a distorted impression of the real life of the country.

In its style, its selection of topics, its interest to pupils and teachers and its variety of stimulating material, this book is undoubtedly far superior to any textbook on Africa at present used in East African schools at this level. However, it was obviously written mainly for British students; its price is prohibitive for schools in East Africa, and a brief glance at "*Africa: studies for East African students*", specially written for the new E.A.C.E. syllabus, suggests that Mr. White has used the case study approach rather more successfully. I would, therefore, very strongly recommend this book for all school libraries (perhaps a number of copies in a library) and to teachers, but do not feel it will have much place as a pupils textbook in East Africa.

Julian Treadaway,  
Lecturer in Geography,  
National Teachers' College, Kyambogo.

HARGRAVE, K. J. - AREA STUDIES IN EAST AFRICAN GEOGRAPHY

Sample Study work on maps and photographs in preparation for the East African Certificate of Education (E.A.C.E.) - Textbook (21½ cms by 28 cms): 94 pp and the accompanying Map-book (21 cms by 29½ cms): 16 maps.  
Publisher: Heinemann, Nairobi, 1972. Price - Not quoted.

The introduction of the new East African Certificate of Education Geography Syllabus 273 has inevitably created demand for new textbooks and other related source-materials whose scope, content and approaches must be in line with the modern techniques of teaching and studying Geography. The arrival of this work is thus a welcome feature.

Using the sample-study approach, the author has selected five sample areas from Uganda, six from Kenya and six from Tanzania. A wide range of the major socio-economic activities and developments within East Africa is presented through the use of a fairly easy-to-understand and nicely laid-out text. This text is amply supplemented by 17 maps (12 of these are on the 1:50,000 scale: 3 on the 1:250,000 scale: one on the 1/63,360 scale) and 30 photographs taken in the

sample study areas. With this kind of content, the book therefore attempts to cover material required for Section A - *Mapwork and Photograph Interpretation*; and Section B - *East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)* of Paper I of the Syllabus.

One of the most important features of this book is the way in which material has been arranged for the benefit of the students. The chapters are organised in such a way that they can either be used in full to give a comprehensive understanding of a particular area. The first part of each chapter can be used to develop the techniques of map and photograph interpretation while the second part concentrates on developing the students' knowledge of the geography of East Africa. All these are achieved through the use of carefully selected questions.

The themes, which are all relevant areas of geographical interest, are carefully selected to include:

- (a) Rapidly developing areas of East Africa, exemplified in the study of Jinja, Tororo, Mombasa and Arusha;
- (b) Traditional agrarian and pastoral communities through the study of Kigezi, the Turkana and the Masai;
- (c) Plantation agriculture through the Kano Plains, Kericho and Bukoba studies;
- (d) Small holder cash crop farming in those of West Nile, Mwanza, Njombe and Pemba Island;
- (e) Large-scale farming in the Njoro and Masai studies;
- (f) The major mining activities are covered through the study of the Copper of Kileleshwa, the Soda of Lake Magadi, the Tin of Kyerwa, the Diamonds of Mwadui and the coal and iron ore of the Southern Highlands Tanzania; and
- (g) The functions of a capital city and a Port which are seen through the study of Dar-es-Salaam and to some extent that of Mombasa.

One can easily criticise this work on the ground that since it has been published after the East African States "went metric" in all forms of measurements, all the maps ought to have had all their contours and spot-heights presented in metric form. This, unfortunately, cannot at the moment be the case as the process of changing over to the new system is being undertaken by the Lands and Surveys Department in the respective states and is likely to take some time. Nevertheless, the author is commended for the effort he has made to try wherever possible in the textbook to give the metric equivalents of the measurements where these appear. This I feel, will encourage the users of the book to make similar attempts to "think metric" while using the book material for studying the Geography of East Africa.

As is usually the case with such publications, much of the statistical data used is already out of date and I would thus caution and advise the students and other users of the book to check on the most recent records available. There may not be very significant changes, but the exercise is worth the effort since Geography is itself as much a dynamic discipline as it deals with dynamic phenomena. Generally, the book is a welcome addition to the library of geography students and teachers, and one hopes the price will not be so high as to discourage the users to purchase the book.

James Lwanga-Lukwago  
Lecturer in Education (Geography Methods)  
Makerere University, Kampala.