

assurance; but this is very different from the proclaimed purpose to 'provide sociological insight into a scene already over-charged with emotional stereotypes, as well as stimulating a

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closer relationship between sociology and history' (p. xvi). In fact, this work contributes little to either discipline.

K. MAGUIRE

HARRIS, P. B. 1970 *Studies in African Politics*. London, Hutchinson, 181 pp. 13s.

Political change in Africa during the twentieth century has often been as rapid as it has been varied. Keeping abreast of developments is therefore a difficult task for any scholar or author. By his *Studies in African Politics* Professor Harris has demonstrated his scholarship and his skill as an author. The field he has tackled is an enormous one, ranging from pocket histories of the processes of decolonisation to a study of democracy in independent Africa, from detailed analyses of East and Central African attempts at closer union, politics in South Africa and Rhodesia to the luxury of 'pointers to the future'; and all this in little more than 150 pages. The product is a work of value to students and scholars for the knowledge it demonstrates and the insight it contains.

A brief introductory chapter considers 'The Process of Decolonisation in Africa'. Despite its brevity, this contains much interesting comment. For example, Professor Harris explains the withdrawal of the major European powers from Africa as not a retreat but 'a process of political disengagement' (p. 9). Thus he warns 'colonialism does not end merely because we have very obvious external signs removed. Decolonisation has simply meant that the ex-colony now takes its own sovereign decisions . . . In fact it may be wrong to see a simple dichotomy between pre-colonial and post-colonial phases in recent African politics' (p. 30). A reminder to search for continuity as much as change in African history must always be valuable.

Yet it is because of the complexity of the African situation, the unique features of every exercise in decolonisation, and the need for extreme caution in generalisation, that the reader may be unhappy about another of Professor Harris' comments: 'The French appear to have been generally the most successful decolonisers . . . the Belgians had least success and the British have had mixed fortunes' (p. 31). The basis for this judgement is not explained, whether that of bloodshed spared or goodwill preserved, of

economic interest maintained or institutions continued, or a score of other factors that merit consideration. Perhaps Professor Harris' rating may even run counter to his own 'theme' that 'Africa's problems can best be understood . . . in African terms without reference to norms and concepts derived from other sources' (p. 7).

Similarly a more detailed analytical study of the internal Congo crisis would be more useful than the comment of one observer that 'when externally imposed authority, the only element of order and cohesion in the vast expanse of a territory as large as Western Europe, was abruptly withdrawn, the endemic centrifugal forces of tribalism, regionalism, and conflicting political ambitions asserted themselves. Chaos and violence followed' (p. 26). So too Professor Harris leaves the reader to assess for himself the comment: 'One of the most remarkable conferences of recent times was the so-called Round Table Conference of January and February 1960' (p. 27). With the difficulties of the Paris Peace Talks only recent history this reader is fascinated by the possible shape of the table, but on the other hand does not find remarkable the removal from prison of a future prime minister to attend a constitutional conference.

By his analysis of democracy in Africa, Professor Harris has again a valuable contribution to make, especially with regard to the study of politics. For example, he comments: 'African politics is oligarchical, i.e., political power tends to be concentrated in the hands of a few persons' (p. 37). And, according to Professor Harris, 'the notion opposite to democracy is not dictatorship but oligarchy' (p. 37). Moreover African politics is party politics for 'the party is the supreme, political organisation in modern Africa and the legislative body appears in many cases to be no more than an unnecessary intermediary' (p. 37).

Yet when Professor Harris introduces 'tribe' to his analysis the picture becomes at once confused. For example, the suggestion that 'the

simplest way to consider the single-party state would be to regard party, tribe and state as three circles which overlap exactly' (p. 50) certainly would require the reader to overlook at least the Malawi experience where Chewa, Tumbuka, Yao, Ngoni, Mang'anja and Tonga are contained within a single party and one state. So too, while the concept of 'in' tribes and 'out' tribes may be a valuable one, it is excessive generalisation to suggest that everywhere 'those tribes which may be regarded as "out" are "cut off from power and perquisites down to the village level"' (p. 44).

When he discusses the pre-colonial African situation Professor Harris shows a curious weakness. For example, he equates the Central African *nganga* with a witchdoctor (p. 53) which can only serve to confuse the reader on account of the multiplicity of interpretations that the words 'witchcraft' and 'witchdoctor' bear. So too it may be misleading to assess from the standpoint of 'post-independence Africa' the statement of Ndabaningi Sithole that 'it is bad history and bad civics to say that Africa never had democracy until the coming of the white man to Africa' and that Africans are not fighting for 'the things of the white man' but for 'the things which the white man stole away from them' (p. 56). Certainly it is widely accepted that many African societies had forms of traditional government that included representation in council and at court, wide consultation of opinion and decision based upon popular consensus. This would apply especially to the regions of southern Africa of which Sithole has experience. Moreover Professor Harris' quotation of Sithole's opinions do not derive from K. A. Busia, *Africa in Search of Democracy* (1967), p. 140, as his footnote suggests it does.

Once he engages himself in his studies of South African and Rhodesian politics Professor Harris demonstrates his close knowledge and his perspicacity. Recent South African foreign policy is accounted for in that 'South Africa stood in the same relationship to the rest of Africa as did the United States to Latin America' (p. 66). Professor Harris shows valuable insight into the *verkrampste-verligte* split within the National Party in South Africa, and his studies of the United and Progressive parties are extremely useful.

On Rhodesian politics Professor Harris shows a similar insight but much has been omitted that might qualify the impression obtained by

the reader. For example, although it is true that the Bledisloe Commission of 1938 'advocated an amalgamation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland' (p. 92) as feasible and possibly beneficial, it also doubted 'the practical wisdom' of uniting the three territories as long as the African populations could 'prejudice the prospect of cooperation in ordered development' by their suspicions towards amalgamation. In 1948 Sir Godfrey Huggins was no longer pressing for 'amalgamation' (p. 92) but already for its successor scheme of federation, suggested by the British Colonial Office in 1945. It may also be misleading to refer to 'any objections which the British Government might have had' after the September 1951 Victoria Falls Conference (p. 92) when both the Colonial Secretary James Griffiths and the Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Patrick Gordon-Walker, had declared that they were 'in no doubt that African opinion was overwhelmingly hostile to the federal scheme,' and the main object of the Conference had been to sound African opinion. So too the British 'checks' on Southern Rhodesia's internal government after 1923 did not include a check on 'African advancement' (p. 94) but rather one on legislation considered discriminatory against African interests.

Rhodesia, Professor Harris considers, provides a case of 'White African Nationalism', just another 'variant of black nationalism (white African nationalism) and consequently Mr. Ian Smith may be represented as an African nationalist' (p. 127). However attractive this approach may be, it ignores decades of Rhodesian history and political development. Since 1923 Rhodesia has had not only responsible government, it has also had minority rule. On the basis of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 these minority rulers built a whole apparatus of discrimination, in industrial conciliation, grain marketing, personal registration. To overlook this is to miss the essence of the Rhodesian situation and the irreconcilability of the division of power. To ignore the question of race is to commit the same error as the British Government in 1923, which considered the transfer of responsibility to the colonies as a means of forestalling rebellion on the American model and which saw no complications arising from minority rule, by an oligarchy that had control of skills and wealth and the group-interest that race and privilege may produce.

Questions arise from the 'Studies' of Professor Harris, which are themselves tribute to his author-

ship. This is a work that should be read closely by students of history and political science and by all interested in modern African affairs. The Hutchinson University Library must be con-

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WIDSTRAND, C. G. ed. 1970 *Co-operatives and Rural Development in East Africa*. New York, Africana Publishing Corporation for the Scandinavian Institute of African Affairs, 271 pp. no price stated.

The publication comprises papers read at a seminar on 'Co-operatives and Rural Development' together with an introduction by the editor and some observations on the seminar, by Nyanjom. The seminar, organised by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, was held at the University of Uppsala in 1970 and the papers were contributed by officials and research workers either currently or previously engaged in research on co-operative problems in East Africa. This was important in ensuring intimate knowledge of the subject and in dictating the particularistic approach of the study which yields insights of wider validity than more ambitious attempts to achieve universality.

The paper by Migot-Adholla effectively disposes of the popular myth that the communal structure in traditional society (or that modified by colonialism) is conducive to the development of modern co-operative organisation. The 'ideology of traditionalism' is also shown to have little value other than as a rallying point for co-operative interest with subsequent success or failure of co-operative ventures being dependent on specific economic and environmental factors. The same viewpoint is advanced by Cliffe in his evaluation of the prospects for village producer co-operatives in relation to the 'traditional *ujamaa* system'. It is contended that even in areas where a significant degree of economic and social differentiation has not been created by exposure to capitalist influence the success of the *Ujamaa Vijijini* policy will be closely related to economic advantage governed in turn by the appropriateness of the new form of production organisation in any given situation. The argument concerning the value of traditional organisation is taken a further stage by Hyden who delineates the positive barriers created by the socio-political environment in East Africa to the introduction of a European-type organisation.

gratulated on its superb presentation. The only irritant this reader found was the custom of collecting all footnotes at the end of each chapter.

A. J. DACHS

Both here and in other papers attention is drawn to the unfortunate consequences of the imposition of co-operative marketing organisation in all three territories, though in Kenya it would appear that the ideological commitment is being abandoned. This raises the question of the extent to which governments can overcome environmental obstacles through the popular remedy of a combination of legislative control and co-operative education, the former being necessary as an imposition from above to combat inefficiency and corruption while the latter should in time provide the essential element of membership participation; or is the collective will and philosophy of co-operation dependent on the evolution of the 'right' economic and social conditions? The drastic control measures introduced in Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, Kenya, are shown to have resulted in a marked increase in overhead costs and, more significantly for the future, in a drastic loss of co-operative spirit and leadership. The two papers by Okereke and Kasfir on Uganda also indicate that the solution adopted by that country of granting monopoly processing powers to co-operatives is proving costly to the supposed beneficiaries, the ordinary peasants.

The closely related problems of economic efficiency and democratic control are further discussed in papers by McAuslan, Westergaard, Aphorpe and Widstrand. The deficiencies in the legal framework pinpointed by McAuslan could be remedied by government but other weaknesses of co-operative organisation call for more far-reaching changes in governmental attitudes and policies. It is appropriate that the two concluding papers should be devoted to problems of evaluation for as Aphorpe points out, 'Any internationally and historically complex social organisation with spiritual as well as practical ramifications that have become ends in themselves tends, frankly, to defy "evaluation" as in "project evaluation" ...'.