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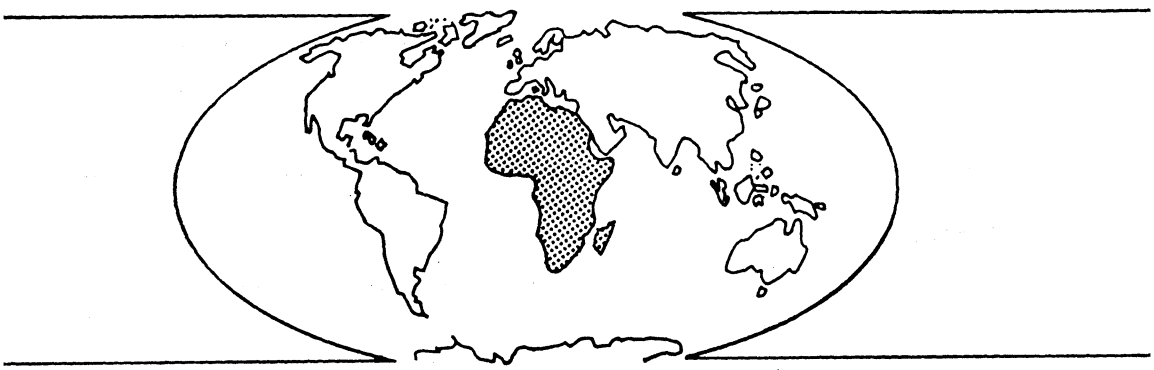


CASSA DI RISPARMIO DELLE PROVINCIE LOMBARDE

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Book reviews

Revue bibliographique

Subsistence to Commercial Farming in Present-Day Buganda - An economic and anthropological survey, edited by Audrey I. Richards, Ford Sturrock, Jean M. Fortt (contributors D.A. Hougham, A.B.M. Mafeje, A.F. Robertson), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Subsistence to Commercial Farming in Present-Day Buganda, as stated in the sub-title, is an "economic and anthropological survey" concerning a selected sample of farmers. The purpose of this research is to find out what type of individuals, under which conditions, given which factors, following which motivations and with what success the sample elements abandoned subsistence agriculture to turn into commercial farmers.

The distinction between subsistence cultivators and commercial farmers is not the same as the one between cash-crop farmers and subistence farmers, the factor of differentiation being the degree of their participation in the market economy, rather than in the money economy. Thus a division between peasant cultivators and farmers is seen as more appropriate, on the basis not simply of size but of a constellation of related characteristics: among them, objectives and targets and the way they are conceptualized and measured; the concept of economic security; the need for and the control over a supply of labour.

The research attempts to prove that for the peasant cultivator to abandon a traditional attitude toward the above mentioned elements, he must perceive the possibility of a dramatic change in his social situation. Rather than the "inevitability of gradualness" in social change, the authors point out the "unpalatability of gradualness".

The book is divided in three parts. The first one deals with the social and economic background of Buganda. Particular attention is given to the physical environment, to the characteristics of population including immigration flows, to the transportation network, and to the economic history of Buganda starting with the declaration of a British protectorate in 1894. The traditional administrative structure, a highly centralized system of government, is described in detail especially in relation to its effects on attitude of constant calculation of profit and loss, on the high social and geographical mobility, and on the traditional consideration of land in terms of security, social status and political opportunities. Then the analysis shows how the land tenure system was critically affected by the 1900 Agreement, which established a system of individual freehold, and by the 1928 Law, regulating both the rights and the duties of tenants (giving them a virtual security of tenure in perpetuity in return of a yearly fixed payment and making it unprofitable for the landowner to turn into a traditional 'landlord'). Finally, a chapter is devoted to the Government policy toward the commercial farmer.

The second part of the book is devoted to the survey itself, which has been developed through the history of selected farms from the economist's point of view and through the analysis of farmers as

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a social category from the anthropologist's point of view.

This has been done by means of large scale surveys, smaller scale economic surveys, and case-histories. First there is an analysis of how the selected farms were originated and grew: in particular, to what uses the land is allocated, and the underlying attitudes to land holding, the degree of fragmentation of single holdings, and their trend in size, the main routes followed in acquiring the land. Two chapters are dedicated to the present-day organization of the selected farms (crops, yields, costs, incomes) and to the labour supply (with reference to the immigration flows, to the family and Ganda labour, to their management and costs, and to the problems of mechanization and of labour bottlenecks). The chapter on the economic and social differentiation of the farmers brings about the important distinction between "men of affairs" and the new "men of profit" (holding modest amounts of land, using capital raised from varied activities, with no tenants, not politically involved, showing no interaction among themselves, perceived by the local community as "businessmen" rather than as farmers). The conditions through which the « man of affairs » emerges are analized, pointing out how the break with kinship obligations, and traditional attitudes in general, will occur only if this allows a big jump ahead in the social condition of the farmer: it is a matter of motivation, along with specific market conditions, rather than of other factors often mentioned, like contact with commercial ideas in towns or education (these are shown to be respectively an outcome and a negative reaction factor with respect to motivation).

After a county case-history, the last part of the book draws the conclusions from the elements of analysis scattered throughout the research and attempts a comparison with alternative ways of agricultural development to which political preferences and the absence of clear titles to land have been more conducive in other countries (e.g., large-scale plantations, grouped settlements with common services). The authors consider the emergence of large African commercial farmers an asset to the community, mainly because of their role as innovators and because they make little or no call (e.g. in the way of subsidies) on scarce national resources of capital, while saving and investing on land more of their income than the majority of the population.

This brief summary gives a partial account of the many positive features of the research: in particular, the richness of data, the historical perspective, the attention to dynamic aspects, and the breadth of approach. Also the attempt to develop an interdisciplinary survey has been successful, the various chapters are well integrated and manage to give an accurate and in depth picture of the emergent commercial farmers of Buganda. More analysis would have been of interest for what concerns the institutional set-up within which these farmers are working, especially for what concerns the financial and marketing arrangements.

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Where this work is lacking is in the perspective in which the conclusions are drawn: as it is often the case for specialized surveys, too little is said about the weight of this limited sample in the national agricultural context. This is a datum of relevance if support has to be given to the authors' conclusions about alternative ways of agricultural development. Furthermore, these conclusions should not be based on merely economic calculations of efficiency: the issue is the political choice among alternative ways through which the resource allocation process has to be performed, keeping in mind their implications on all aspects of social life.

Mario Masini

RAYMOND F. HOPKINS, *Les rôles politiques dans un nouvel état. Les premières dix années de la Tanzanie.* New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1971 (en anglais).

L'Auteur se propose d'analyser le système politique de la Tanzanie à travers l'étude du comportement de son élite politique; la recherche se base sur une vaste documentation empirique élaborée selon les principes théoriques de l'analyse sociologique des rôles. Notamment, l'Auteur se proposait, à l'origine, d'étudier les conflits entre les rôles qui peuvent se manifester dans un climat de changements politiques et sociaux. Cependant, en considération des événements qui eurent lieu après la compilation de ces données, l'Auteur même croit qu'il a plutôt contribué à illustrer le processus d'institutionalisation de règles et modèles de comportement nouveaux dans un pays d'indépendance récente.

L'oeuvre est divisée en sept chapitres. Les deux premiers ont un caractère introductif et traitent l'un de l'évolution du système politique et économique de la Tanzanie du point de vue de la présence de conflits et d'éléments d'instabilité, et l'autre de la définition des principes théoriques et méthodologiques fondamentaux qui sont à la base de la recherche.

Dans le troisième chapitre, on trouve une analyse générale des caractères et des attitudes de l'élite politique de la Tanzanie d'où l'on tire une image assez significative: un membre typique du Parlement ou un haut fonctionnaire du gouvernement semblent être caractérisés par un considérable respect, du moins apparent, pour les règles démocratiques, par un certain degré de confiance dans le peuple, par le désir d'éliminer les disparités économiques existant dans le pays, par une immense admiration pour le Président Nyerere; en même temps on y retrouve aussi une claire propension latente à l'autoritarisme, un certain degré d'anomie et une insuffisante compréhension, et parfois une nette opposition, des principes du « socialisme africain » (les entrevues ont eu lieu avant 1967 et pourtant ne tiennent pas compte des éclaircissements de la Déclaration d'Arusha).

Le quatrième et le cinquième chapitre analysent les détails du rôle des parlementaires et des hauts fonctionnaires de

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