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An End to Hunger? The Social Origins of Food Strategies

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manifested. Rituals acted out are symbolic of the degrees of power involved, as well as contradictions involving culture and order. The culmination is resolution and acknowledgment of the king's central power, manifested via sacrifices to the Ogun shrine. Two essays on the meaning of Ogun through Yoruba chants are presented by Babalola and Ajuwon. Babalola's rendition and analyses of Ijala poetic chants saluting Ogun epitomize the contradictory qualities of the deity – just and unjust, strong and frail – symbolic of human nature. Ajuwon's discussion concentrates on Iremaje funeral chants for deceased hunters. The tenets of Iremaje depicting Ogun philosophy are solitude, leadership, and service. The two final essays move even further, beyond the creative / destructive motif of Ogun to power personified. Dreval explores the meaning of Ogun through performance movement and compares Yorubaland and Brazil. Poetic chants, performance, and carrying of instruments representing Ogun are conduits of spiritual force in both situations. Dreval analyzes the reification of God in Yoruba sacrifice, demonstrating the importance of iron tools and the meaning of body marks in Yoruba culture. Iron implements used by the body artists and some marks themselves invoke Ogun. The body artist, then, is an extension of Ogun since his skill is significant in bringing order through curative measures, aesthetic embellishment, patience, and self-control.

These essays convincingly discuss the meaning and role of Ogun in various African cultures, although some of the arguments, such as Armstrong's, lack full development. The introduction impressively sets the volume's tone and provides a theoretical framework for understanding Ogun's significance. The uneven quality of some essays is most evident in the New World perspectives. While the treatments of Haiti and Brazil are provocative, the major points are unclear. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of Ogun in the New World is represented by only two New World examples. But wherever Ogun exists, he is a major spiritual force with demonstrable power. In general, *Africa's Ogun* is fascinating interpretive reading. The volume offers illuminating ways of understanding meaning and ritual as expressed in the character of this ancient deity and how its complex longevity has been maintained and strengthened.

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Solon L. Barraclough. *An End to Hunger? The Social Origins of Food Strategies*. A Report Prepared for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and for the South Commission based on UNRISD Research on Food Systems and Society. London and New Jersey: Zed Books for UNRISD and The South Centre, 1991.

This book on hunger and mass food insecurity incorporates the findings of extensive research into "food systems and society" carried out since 1979 by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) of which Solon Barraclough was a former director. The Institute's study examined food security issues in ten selected countries, widely differing in socio-economic structure and political history, in Latin America, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. A guiding research hypothesis was that country-specific socio-economic, political, and environmental processes largely determine the nature of the prevailing food system in a country.

Barraclough likewise stresses the need for a "comprehensive systems research approach." He criticizes partial analyses of farming systems, marketing and price policies, and agricultural technologies because, not being a part of a broader systematic analysis, they fail to focus on the key questions of food insecurity. Throughout the book, he emphasizes that food security problems can only be fully understood after a profound examination of the country's social class relations and economic production structure.

In the first part of the book, the implications of "modernization processes" for food security in three dominant types of socio-economic structure are discussed. The evidence suggests that modernization as reflected in, for example, cash crop expansion, new technologies, and market integration has led to increased socio-economic polarization and landlessness in the bimodal agrarian structure of Latin American countries which are characterized by large inequalities in land ownership. The same development occurred in the "clientelistic" small scale cultivator systems typical of Asia, although to a lesser extent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the negative marginalization aspects of modernization tend to be mitigated by the still prevailing communal land tenure systems. The arguments, however, are presented in a sketchy manner, discussing the agrarian structure of a staggering number of countries in all three developing continents at breakneck speed. Consequently, there are many statements, but little thorough analysis.

The second part discusses the outcome of national state policies aimed at augmenting food production and improving food security. Again, a wide range of policies dealing, among others, with investment, trade, pricing, foreign exchange, interest, and technology are reviewed. Also interventions by the state in the form of food subsidies, food rationing, food for work programs, and complementary feeding schemes are examined. Many would agree (including the World Bank) that an "agricultural based development strategy" is a necessary condition for improved overall food security. But Barraclough's point is that such a renewed appreciation for the agricultural sector should be combined with an effective industrial strategy which aims at producing for the needs of the majority of the population, including the poor and food insecure. Of crucial importance is that these groups actively participate in the economic and political decision-making processes of the country. If these conditions are not met, "productive agricultural investment may accelerate degenerative development that increases rural poverty instead of diminishing it" (73). One example is Bolivia, where three-quarters of agricultural investment favoured large agro-industrial enterprises in the lowlands, and only two percent of investments benefited smallholders, who produce seventy-five percent of the country's food supply. Not surprisingly, Barraclough then discusses extensively the role of land reforms, popular participation, and political will.

In the third and final part of the book, attention shifts beyond national boundaries and once again a range of issues in global South-South and North-South relations is dealt with. For example, in the South the economic advantages of better regional cooperation in the form of common markets are generally acknowledged. But examining the experience of SADCC in Southern Africa and the Central American Common Market, the conclusion is that substantial differences in income levels, in socio-economic structure, in political orientation, and development strategies have all impeded successful cooperation. The chapter on North-South relations also covers numerous widely debated issues, including environmental degradation, population growth,

science and technology, food aid, unstable international commodity prices, deteriorating terms of trade, an unstable world monetary system, burdensome foreign debts, and the huge sums the world spends on armaments. As expected, Barraclough concludes that an effective food security policy not only requires radical reforms in national socio-economic structures and social relations, but also far reaching changes in the world economic system.

The book ends with a sobering chapter, bringing to light the messy real-world dilemmas in which those who attempt to contribute to improved food security find themselves. The chapter provides an admirably honest and highly instructive discussion of the numerous man-made obstacles that a "popular-based development strategy" is bound to encounter. For example, once low-income, food insecure population groups have obtained greater control over resources and institutions, they most likely will press for immediate increases in their consumption level. The (new) government however, while adhering to those needs, should also raise investment levels and improve productive infrastructure in order to safeguard future consumption needs and curb inflation pressures. Moreover, the poor and food insecure are not a homogeneous group. Peasants producing (small) surpluses of food want higher food prices, whereas landless labourers and the urban poor would prefer cheap food. Furthermore, a popular based strategy will require the importation of agrarian and industrial inputs and technology. The needed foreign exchange can only be obtained through exports or aid. But as Barraclough puts it, "the kinds of industry and agriculture required to meet popular needs are not the same as those required to penetrate world markets" (249).

Another dilemma is the need for economic growth without continuing environmental degradation. The achievement of the latter aim, however, implies very high costs in the short run which again is not compatible with fast satisfaction of urgent consumption needs. Barraclough also indicates "pseudo-dilemmas" around which much debate has revolved but which have often met with dogmatic answers. An example is the question as to whether the state should rely on "free markets" or opt for state regulations and interventions. This poses a false dilemma (258). The state in rich "market economies" intervenes substantially, especially in agricultural markets. According to Barraclough, "there will always have to be state intervention in markets. The real issue is how to devise economic policies and interventions which direct market forces towards social goals, such as poverty alleviation and food security" (258).

The book is essentially a strong plea for a "holistic, political-economy approach of the hunger and food insecurity problems in the world." What makes this book different and more valuable from previous studies along these lines, however, is the undogmatic treatment of relevant issues, Barraclough's admirable integrity and great expertise, and his open willingness to address the thorny and uneasy dilemmas of his otherwise deep commitment to a "popular-based development strategy."

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