

REVIEW ARTICLE

RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

E. ELLIS CASHMORE, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1984. xiv, 288pp., Index. £16.95.

Many of the palpable errors and serious omissions in this well-intentioned but extravagantly assertive compilation might have been avoided if Ellis Cashmore had sought the comments and advice of a few more colleagues. As it is, the claims that this so-called Dictionary captures 'the full complexity' and covers 'all the established areas of race and ethnic relations' are very misleading, as are those which assert that 'crucial concepts', 'influential theories', 'significant research projects', 'important historical figures' - 'all are dealt with'. The intended readership of 'practitioners, academics, journalists and anyone seriously interested in race and ethnic relations' must be warned that this volume falls very far short of what one normally expects from a publication designated a 'Dictionary'. Accuracy, precision, indication of a cautious regard for evidence, detached scholarship, comprehensiveness, universality, appropriate comparative examples, historical depth, contextual significance, thoroughness and care in the selection of bibliographical references are some of the criteria which dictionaries are reasonably expected to satisfy. There *are* entries of interest and value in this assemblage, but too many important weaknesses undermine the whole ambitious project.

Reliability and adequate, if not total, completeness are essential requirements for references in a dictionary. Users, not least serious students, tend to rely on dictionary entries which, if inaccurate, lead to the perpetuation of avoidable errors in a whole series of subsequent studies - theses, essays, monographs and the like. Sub-titles are also important: they often make plain the content. Thus, in the entry on 'Pluralism', readers are told that *Netherlands India* by J.S. Furnivall 'first published in 1947...is a very early account of plural societies'. Apart from the extraordinary view of 'very early', the information is inaccurate, misleading and incomplete. Furnivall's *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* was first published in 1939. His *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* was published in 1948. The works are complement-

ary, both deal with plural societies, both are essential; the second, comparative, study published a decade after the first naturally contains the fruit of subsequent study and reflection on the structure and dynamics of plural societies in Southeast Asia as well as in other regions of the world. It is unfortunate that the 1948 study is not mentioned and that Furnivall's own vivid words are not quoted instead of the editor's gloss. Nothing could be more effective than these sentences:

In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples - European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix, but do not combine. Each group holds its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit.

Again, in the references to J. Ashley Montagu there is nowhere mention of his *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, first published in 1942, a key text in race and ethnic relations. It was in this book that Ashley Montagu drew on the seminal writings of three outstanding British scholars and scientists, Julian Huxley, A.C. Haddon and A.M. Carr-Saunders who, in 1935, in response to the challenge of Nazi 'racial science', published *We Europeans: A Survey of Racial Problems*. This work rejected the *Herrenvolkism* of Hitler and his associates and in its concluding paragraph declared that 'Racialism is a myth, and a dangerous myth at that'. But it also drew on a deep and rich historical background, including ancient Greece, in its analysis of key terms, and unhesitatingly advocated the general adoption of the term ethnic (including *ethnos*, *ethnea* etc.), a recommendation subsequently endorsed by Ashley Montagu in his Appendix A entitled "'Ethnic Group" and "Race"'. Other biological anthropologists and scientists have added their views to the debate on terminology, not least Professor Geoffrey Ainsworth Harrison in his lecture 'The Race Concept in Human Biology', printed in *Biosocial Aspects of Race*, which was published in 1969 as a supplement to the *Journal of Biosocial Science*.

Readers and purchasers of a dictionary are entitled to expect that they will be guided to such important sources, fundamental to the whole subject. But there are other extraordinary omissions and inadequacies, indicative of a strange lack of awareness, of a cultural blindness, indeed of ethnocentrism. The sketchy note headed 'Native Peoples' is wholly inadequate and it is significant in this context that while there is an entry 'Labour', there is not one on 'Land', despite a reference to Maoris and New Zealand under 'Native Peoples'. Professor Hugh Kawharu, for example, has published major studies which have made abundantly plain the fundamental significance of land to the Maori peoples, and he has closely analysed their conceptions of land tenure. On Malaysia and Fiji, other

studies have brought out the primary importance of land to 'native' Malays and Fijians including urgent contemporary issues of political and 'race' relations. In both South and North America, the land factor remains of great significance, as it does throughout Africa, in virtually all states and in every zone of the continent. Within Ethiopia, Uganda, the Sudan and elsewhere, there are urgent, unresolved land and ethnic issues. South Africa's land apportionment naturally demands and rightly receives emphasis, but it is an extreme example and even here the treatment is inadequate. Land, labour and political representation have long been acknowledged to be of central significance in 'plural societies', 'multi-racial states', 'polyethnic states'. Each of these topics - land, labour and political representation - requires more significant attention than is given here, and it is deplorable that African, Amerindian, Asian and Pacific scholars and scholarship are not represented when 'non-Western' perceptions and perspectives are fundamental to their proper understanding. The Sioux political scientist Dr Siyakunin Ogle Lute (Dr Frances Svensson), Dr Walter Kunijwok Gwado-Ayoker (Shilluk-Sudan), Nana Agyemang Badu (Akan-Ghana) and other students of government and politics, writing from within their understanding of their own traditional institutions, have made contributions which must be incorporated into any universal science of politics, and inter-ethnic political relations.

Africa receives an entry, but not Asia, Europe or any other continent or sub-continent as such. Differential treatment of this kind is unfortunate, misleading, restrictive and warping. The Africa entry itself is very limited, with virtually no reminder of the philosophic, religious, artistic and other heritages of the peoples of Africa, nor of pre-European encounters or relationships between them, which represent vital constituent elements of Africa's cultures and which influence Africans' views of others. In a review of Michael Banton's *Race Relations* (1967), Julian Pitt-Rivers strongly criticised the book's over-emphasis on Africa and African/non-African relations and forcefully made the point that such relationships did not comprise the whole field of 'race relations'. Pitt-Rivers has illuminated the point with his own writings on ideas such as 'race' and 'caste' in Latin American contexts, as other scholars have done with Arabian, Central Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific examples. Before and since 1967 there have been important studies of the peoples of Europe and their inter-relations which should be incorporated in any *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* if understanding is to be deepened.

Arbitrary exclusions and a lack of a sense of historical continuity, perhaps even an impatience with the past, seem to account for weaknesses and omissions in the consideration of subjects such as 'Minorities'. It is extraordinary in a so-called *Dictionary* produced in Europe to find scarcely any reference to the several valuable studies of the ethnic minorities of Central and Eastern Europe which so preoccupied leading scholars and statesmen between the two world wars, and after 1945, and which are still very relevant. The analyses of several leading British scholars seem to have been forgotten in the subsequent arbitrary delineation of the field of race and ethnic relations by many Western sociologists,

even though Emerich K. Francis, very conscious of the highly significant Austro-Hungarian background, has incorporated Central and Eastern Europe into his major study of *Interethnic Relations: An Essay in Sociological Theory* (1976). Under an entry entitled 'Conquest' in the *Dictionary*, Pierre van den Berghe does at least cite this book, but that is all. The clear, balanced publications of Ben Whitaker's Minority Rights Group on the definition of 'minority' and on the rights and problems of minorities throughout the world also merit attention.

The entries on the British Isles, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South Africa, seemingly the main areas of focus, are themselves very inadequate. It is extraordinary to find under 'Irish in the U.K.' no mention of Northern Ireland, an integral part of the United Kingdom. Nor is there discussion of events in and after 1969 and the several valuable studies of inter-group relations there. Under 'Scarman Report', one might have expected a reference to Lord Scarman's report, *Violence and Civil Disturbances in Northern Ireland in 1969* (Cmd 566 of 1972).

Carelessness and insensitivity should not characterise any book on race and ethnic relations, let alone a dictionary. 'The U.K.', Britain and Great Britain are not synonymous and scholars must keep in mind the susceptibilities of all population groups, as well as the history, especially the sensitive constitutional history, and the contemporary political relationships of all the peoples involved - those in the Republic of Ireland as well as those in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Welsh and the Scots also deserve consideration, before and since 1707, to cite but one important date. The partition of the British Isles is a fact of the utmost significance to students of ethnic relations, as are all manifestations of Welsh and Scottish nationalism. Lord Scarman's work in Northern Ireland was deemed to have prepared him for his investigations in Great Britain in 1981 when he was appointed to report on the Brixton disorders in London (Cmd 8427 of 1981). 'Riots: U.K. 1981', 'Riots: U.S.A. 1965-67', 'Riots: U.S.A. (Miami) 1980', are entries in the *Dictionary* which reflect a highly selective and excessively narrow approach. Riots, disturbances and rebellions have been and continue to be very significant events in race and ethnic relations, and there is immense value in being made aware of the deeper historical background - for example, the Liverpool and Glasgow riots of 1919, the Detroit riots of 1919, and the numerous significant riots and rebellions in overseas territories of the Empire and Commonwealth, and in South Africa, before and since 1948.

The selection of 'religious' items is strange. 'Nation of Islam, in the U.S.A.', 'Pentecostalism', 'People's Temple' are given a place, the last-mentioned despite a comment that the mass suicide of the People's Temple adherents in Guyana in 1978 is unique in the modern world. But the main faiths, their precepts in race and ethnic relations and their practices are not included. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, together with other faiths, and at least an indication of their denominational diversity, require understanding, even in the most secular or professedly atheistic states. The principles of state philosophies

such as Marxism-Leninism in their relation to ethnic and racial questions should also be stated, as should evidence of actual policy and practice.

Despite the assurance about important historical figures being dealt with, the reader must again be prepared for strange anomalies and extraordinary, even offensive, omissions. There is nowhere a heading 'King, Martin Luther, Junior', but if one searches the index, one can find aspects of his life and thought, i.e. under 'Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand (1869-1948)', 'Black Power', 'Civil Rights Movement'. 'Nkrumah, Kwame' and 'Kenyatta, Jomo' are given their alphabetical places, but not Senghor, Leopold Sédar, nor Nyerere, Julius, nor Kaunda, Kenneth, still less Luthuli, Albert, Nobel Laureate or Biko, Stephen. Dubois, W.E.B., should surely appear with 'Garvey, Marcus', who does receive his entry. Washington, Booker T., and Bunche, Ralph, should have their places. If 'Mosley, Oswald (1896-1980)' and 'Powell, Enoch (1912-)' appear, one would hope that Huxley, Julian, Scott, Michael Guthrie (Revd.) and Jenkins, Roy, might do so also, to name but a few other important figures, dead and living, in Britain. Mandela, Nelson and Mugabe, Robert, are other African leaders who certainly deserve an adequate note under their own names, as do Mondlane, Eduardo, and Mboya, Tom.

Robert Mugabe is inaccurately described at the end of 'Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)' as 'the first president under majority rule elections', an unfortunate error since he, as prime minister, deliberately though vainly, invited Joshua Nkomo to become the first president in an attempt to reconcile ethnic and regional differences. Such cavalier disregard for accuracy over important details is most regrettable, and errors of this kind are likely to be perpetuated by readers. The opening sentence, which could have easily been corrected by changing 'ranks' to 'ranked', is less likely to mislead - 'this country ranks with South Africa' - but it is another mark of the carelessness which recurs, for example, in the article on 'Apartheid', not least in the misspelling of key words and names.

To conclude, one must confess real puzzlement as to the criteria which governed the choice of topics - why 'Creole' is included, but not 'Language' in general, or other examples of particular languages which have special importance in inter-ethnic situations; why 'Blues' and 'Reggae' appear, but not 'Music' in general, nor particular musics deeply significant to other populations in Britain and elsewhere. Several of the articles have some real interest and one does appreciate the motives, especially the enthusiastic desire to spread enlightenment. But this *Dictionary* is not only disappointing, it is seriously defective and can be dangerous. The author was wise to secure specialist contributions from a few colleagues, but it is not clear how fully they were involved in the overall planning and composition and in the scrutiny of the actual texts. Meticulous checking and cross-checking are essential. Many errors and omissions could have been corrected even by very hasty cross-checking. But for a worthy dictionary in an established subject of great and growing signifi-

cance one must start with a team of scholars and scientists, bringing the contributions of all appropriate disciplines - archaeological anthropology, biological anthropology, social anthropology, ethnology, economics, social geography, urban geography, history, linguistics, musicology, political science, religious studies, philosophy, psychology, social psychology - to name but some which have central relevance. I fear that this book in its present form may do a serious disservice to the subject of 'race relations' - that is, of ethnic, cultural and race relations - for several reasons which I have tried to indicate. My chief regret is that it is so very limited in its scope and focus - cultural, historical, territorial - and that it fails to reflect the rich, total universe which must be incorporated into the subject if it is to advance as it must.

Virtually all 'social studies' or 'social sciences' are blighted because they remain so profoundly ethnocentric. The conceptualization and analysis of inter-ethnic relations are difficult, and the basic intellectual tasks have scarcely begun. 'Pre-Linnaen' is a not inaccurate description of the present stage of scientific and scholarly development. The idea of a dictionary is praiseworthy, but the planning and execution must be more thorough.

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