

Book Reviews

ling are infant mortality figures from rural parts of South Africa itself. The housing shortage for Africans, contrasted with the surplus for whites, is an eloquent indictment of apartheid. Well researched with Carnegie funds (one author is Dr. Mamphele Ramphele, the striking personality in the Biko film *Cry Freedom*), the booklet is attractively produced with tables, maps and neat quotations. It also highlights the outstanding needs of the front-line states; from its list, Canada has a useful part to play in focusing on transport and power supplies.

A better way

John Warnock, who has taught political economy at universities in British Columbia, dedicates his book *The Politics of Hunger* to his great-great-grandfather who fled County Donegal at the height of the Irish famine in 1846. Effectively he draws a parallel between the fate of Ireland where two million starved to death and the food issues of today. But perhaps more useful is the fact that he goes beyond most studies, which concentrate on questions of food production and distribution, and brings in ecological concerns. He is more ideological than the Brundtland Commission, which avoids talking about the world food system as capitalistic, but he is asking the same question: can a sustainable system be developed? Warnock argues for a diminution (he can hardly expect elimination) of corporate farming and agribusiness. For ecological reasons, he calls for a reintroduction of polyculture and a mix of crops and animals (which is what a great British Columbian, John Bene, spent some of his last years promoting through the International Council for Research in Agro-Forestry). In social terms, Warnock has no nostalgia for the small family farm, no admiration for the state farms which consume energy and capital; his hopes lie in a new form of collective farming with fine community facilities. It sounds a little bit like Julius Nyerere's first vision of *ujamaa* villages, which has lost its splendor. But his arguments are well supported, and who would assert — as the dispute over agricultural subsidies is raised in the Uruguay round of GATT negotiations, and millions face famine in Africa — that the present system is the best that can be devised?

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Strategic mineral blues

by David G. Haglund

OPEC, Its Member States and the World Energy Market by John Evans. Detroit: Gale Research Co. (original publisher Longman of Harlow, England), 1986, 679 pages, US\$90.00.

Strategic Minerals and International Security edited by Uri Ra'anani and Charles M. Derry, Toronto: Pergamon of Canada, 1985, 90 pages, US\$9.95.

It is not often one encounters two books, on more or less the same theme, that display such a sharp contrast as those under review here. The compilation on OPEC is long, exhaustive, authoritative, balanced and expensive. Its partner in review, on the other hand, is short, limited in scope, of uncertain credibility, feverish and inexpensive; in reading it, I at last have come to understand what Alfred E. Newman meant when he used to remind readers of his magazine, *Mad*, that it was "cheap at half the price."

What John Evans does is to provide a singular service to those analysts and policy makers who want and need comprehensive data and reliable analysis concerning the most important strategic mineral in international trade during the last fifty years, oil. The book is one of a series of Keesing's Reference Publications, and it lives up to the high standards set by the producers of *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (or, as it is now being titled, *Keesing's Record of World Events*), with whom Evans was an associate editor. This book is so magisterial in substance and tone that it is no more possible to review it adequately in such a brief space than it would be to do justice to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, or the *OED*; nor shall I try. What can be said is that the book will prove an indispensable reference tool, that it is intelligently written, and that it displays a highly organized, not to say taxonomical, approach to the major topics it covers: an overview of the world oil and gas industry; an analysis of the structure and workings of OPEC; a survey of each of the organization's member countries; and a chronological account of the changing balance of power in the global oil regime and of OPEC's role therein.

Whereas the Evans book represents the successful attempt of one man to cultivate a vast terrain, the Ra'anani and Perry book constitutes the fruit of a minor multitude, who have labored in a fairly small, and often rocky, vineyard. It is composed of papers delivered at a conference that the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis co-sponsored in September 1984. A good deal has happened in world mineral markets since then, and it would be tempting, though incorrect, to ascribe this book's defects to its being outdated. Unfortunately, it is not the passage of time, but rather something more disturbing, that mars this work.

It has two fundamental flaws. The first concerns a crucial matter of analytical imprecision; the second relates to the tendency of many (but, thankfully, not all) of the chapter writers to be guided more by ideological conviction than by logic and evidence. I shall deal with these in turn.

It has become common for reflective students of raw material dependence to insist that an analytical distinction be drawn between two categories of import reliance: dependence and vulnerability. The former condition is less serious in policy terms than the latter; indeed, dependence upon foreign sources of supply may (and often does) reflect nothing more than convenience, not necessity. Before one can conclude that import reliance *per se* (i.e., dependence) constitutes a potentially troublesome dilemma, one would have to inquire about certain other conditions, particularly: the political reliability of major exporters; the diversification (including domestic production) options of importers; the opportunities for substitution and conservation available to consumers; the essentiality of the mineral in question; and whether there exist stockpiles of the mineral.

The book's tendency to slide over such concerns is reflected in, and magnified by, its second major deficiency. Too many of the contributors subscribe to the superficially plausible, but not very credible, idea that the Soviet Union has embarked upon a "resource war" with the West—a war that it hopes to win without the same risks that it would run in pursuing armed confrontation with the West. There is something touching about neo-conservatives (as are many of the contributors) subscribing to one of the tenets of Leninism, namely that conflict among states occurs primarily over economic interests, one of the most impor-