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CPI Comments on [redacted] Report, "Economic Survey of Africa South of the Sahara"

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In view of the short period of time available to [redacted] for completing the Economic Survey of Africa South of the Sahara, the report is surprisingly comprehensive in scope and detail, but, not surprisingly, varies considerably in level of performance. Volume I, entitled "Arithmetic of Economic Growth" is essentially a compendium of those facts usually considered relevant to a problem of economic growth which are available for the case of Africa. This entire volume suffers an air of superficiality because here the data relating to Africa are forced into the mold of the generally accepted conceptual scheme of economic development, rather than a reverse procedure which would involve a tailoring of the accepted analytic framework to fit the particular case of Africa.

It is not until midway in volume II that the distinctive aspects of African economic development are discussed, and here the statement appears that, "Standard models have an air of unreality in the African situation. The underlying social substructures differ markedly from those underlying the economies for which such models were developed." (II, 98). In fact the implicit burden of volume II is the fact that the main problems of Africa's economic development are social rather than economic in nature. The essence of the development problem lies in the melding of the "subsistence" and the "money" economies, or of the economic activities of the black and the white races.

Volume II, which discusses "The African Setting and Its Limitations on Rate and Direction of Growth" and "Economic Development: Problems and Resources" is largely concerned with the cultural milieu which has and will determine the course of development. The reader of the entire survey is left with the impression that time did not permit the undertaking of the last logical step in survey—the integrating of the economic facts presented in volume I with the cultural background discussed in volume II. Apart from this lacuna, the survey seems to treat adequately the problems of economic development in the entity, Africa south of the Sahara. More definitive work in this field must consider, not the entire area as a whole, but rather each country or colony separately.

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