means to promote economic growth and food security at the national level. The notion that there has been a gradual shift of emphasis in donor policies, from mere surplus disposal to concern over developmental issues, underlies this perspective. The alleged shift is expressed in programmes and projects for the benefit of 'underprivileged' target groups. For food aid to succeed, the authors argue, it has 'to work itself out of a job', via actions that increase 'agricultural production, income generation, infrastructural improvement, access to market, and so forth' (p. 173).

The book introduces the non-expert (for whom the book is intended) to the technical jargon of food aid, and explores the conditions under which such aid can be effective. Opportunities and constraints are outlined in clear language, and the non-expert becomes familiar with concepts such as 'programme aid', 'project aid', 'disincentive effects', 'import substitution', to name but a few. *Food aid* is an informative document which brings home the message that such aid is definitely 'more complex than simply feeding hungry people' (p. 37). Several simplistic assumptions are skilfully diffused: for example, the erroneous idea that food aid does not require a cash component, that the cash requirement is invariably borne by the donor, that a drop in producer prices must result in decreased availability of marketed surpluses. Another concern which the authors handle well is the need to impress upon readers that easy solutions do not exist. In this context, they challenge the widespread notion that a Marshall Plan-type programme could be reproduced in the Third World. Also exposed are problems related to uneven development, transport and storage, final distribution, and monitoring controls.

The book has many merits, not least because of the authors' determination to concentrate on the positive side of international food aid. The position is a worthwhile counter to the tendency in much media coverage to focus on what goes wrong. I also applaud the frankness which is occasionally introduced. Pitfalls do not remain hidden—the authors admit, for instance, that surplus disposal is still a powerful force in the US economy (p. 38), as it is within the EEC (p. 194), and that the remedies required to overcome problems of structural underdevelopment 'are frequently impalatable or politically inexpedient' in the eyes of recipient governments (p. 9).

The authors of *Food aid* are, however, committed to the cause of market liberalization. This commitment, unfortunately, leads to an all too hasty dismissal of some very serious criticisms of aid. The dependency view, for instance, is said to have no validity today, since 'surplus disposal has been progressively replaced by the programme and project concept, with clearly defined terms between donor and recipient' (p. 184). This taking sides is very unconvincing, surprising even, in the light of arguments presented elsewhere in the book—e.g. the debate which shows that 'the last link in the delivery chain, the distribution of food aid to the intended beneficiaries, is the component over which the donors have least control' (p. 144). How then can donors be sure that long-term food aid (with the attractive budgetary support it provides) is not something consciously sought by recipients? In fact, the book contains some splendid case material, in relation to the management of refugee camps, where it is shown how recipient governments (in this case Djibouti) may manipulate definitions of refugee status to boost the flow of emergency aid (p. 85).

Another hastily debunked argument is the criticism that food aid stifles the production effort of local farmers. The argument is dismissed in just a few lines:

> 'where the food aid enters into the general system of food distribution and food trade, ... much of this bulk food substitutes for commercial imports, and this means that there is no additionality and hence no disincentive effect' (p. 198).

This is as unconvincing as the argument that donors and recipients operate on 'clearly defined terms'.

A further shortcoming of the book, unforgivable in my opinion, is its failure to live up to the promise that 'there are plenty of success stories to testify' to the thesis that food aid 'can be a vital instrument of development' (Preface). I do not dispute the thesis itself, but *satisfactorily detailed* case studies are not provided in the book. Except where they relate to recent success stories that have yet to face the test of time, the so-called positive illustrations boil down to the repeated assurance (pp. 10, 43, 77, 174, 203) that India, South Korea, and Taiwan have overcome the trap of dependency on food aid, in spite of massive food inputs over long periods of time, some two decades on average. India today, we are told, 'is not only self-sufficient in cereals, but even has some exportable surpluses' (p. 174). There is no discussion of how India freed itself of this dependency, and no discussion of the significant inter-state differences that still linger on. Surely aggregate figures very rarely tell the full story. Such figures must be broken down and *challenged*. That the authors of *Food aid: the challenge and the opportunity* decided not to detail what they hold to be the 'most successful food aid programmes' must go down as an opportunity missed.

JOHAN POTTIER

RICHARD A. JOSEPH: *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: the rise and fall of the Second Republic.* (African Studies Series, 56). ix, 237 pp. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1987. £27.50, $42.50.

There is surprisingly little literature on recent Nigerian politics which combines a reasonably detailed account and analysis of the major developments with adequate explanatory theory. There is, to be sure, plenty of theory, much of it of a neo-Marxist variety, but its ability to explain political developments in any detail is rarely illustrated very persuasively. The most common missing ingredient is a suitably realistic and sensitive, but also theoretically coherent political sociology.

As Richard Joseph rightly perceives, when

reasonably free and fair elections are held, as they were in Nigeria in 1979, their study offers the prospect of an improved understanding of major socio-political dynamics—of popular political attitudes, prevailing social identities and their influence on political processes—significant beyond the immediate outcome. In the third of the four parts of his new book—subtitled 'The rise and fall of the Second Republic'—he provides an illuminating and richly illustrated analysis of those elections. Rightly perceiving also the need to link such particular insights to a coherent body of theory, he provides in Part Two a well-argued general political sociology of ethnicity and clientelism with reference to the case of Nigeria.

The core of the book, thus constituted, is an important contribution to our understanding of Nigerian politics and will be especially useful for teaching purposes. Joseph introduces the term 'prebendalism' here to denote the centrality to the Nigerian polity of the intense struggle between opposing clientelist groups, most often ethno-clientelist groups, to control and exploit the offices of the state. This seems to me a useful term, serving to illumine the links between, on the one side, the political mobilization of ethnicity and, on the other, 'corruption' or what some have termed the 'neo-patrimonial' operation of many African administrations. Arguably, however, Joseph does not sufficiently explore the discontinuities between these phenomena, more especially the prevalence in Nigeria of narrowly self-interested embezzlement of a kind which is not sanctioned even by members of the embezzler's own ethnic community. Also, his portrayal of Nigerian 'ethnicity' sometimes seems—at odds, really with his main explanatory principle—excessively static. He suggests, for example, that there is a 'relentless geographical logic to Nigerian politics that condemns the country to a triangular contest of North-versus West-versus East'. Things were surely not so simple by 1979, constitutional changes having made a real difference to the logic of electoral choice; and they will probably be even less simple with the departure of Awolowo and Azikiwe from the Nigerian political scene.

The first and fourth parts of the book together provide an additional argument and dimension. Joseph suggests that there is an inherent tension between, on the one hand, the Nigerian impulse to democratic, representative government and, on the other, the unacceptability and instability of the mode of political conflict which the underlying socio-political dynamics of Nigerian society—more especially, 'prebendalism'—tend to generate. There is clearly something to this. The two most obvious examples are the Nigerian Civil War and the 1983 elections. Joseph treats the electoral fraud and violence of the latter as part of the sharp political practice to which the Shagari regime was impelled by its own sources of support, and as the main reason for the decay of its legitimacy prior to the military coup which followed just three months later. More generally in Nigeria, he asserts, 'party politics as a relentless struggle to procure individual and group benefits via the temporary appropriation of public offices eventually reduces the electoral process to a Hobbesian state-of-war'.

I cannot help thinking that he's exaggerating a little, and that he's prone to an excessive sociological determinism here. In any case, an adequate explanation of the January 1984 military coup must accord major importance to a factor barely mentioned—the Shagari government's refusal to adopt a responsible economic policy in the face of sharply declining oil revenues. In this as in other respects, a study of the 1979 and 1983 elections cannot amount to an adequate account of the Second Republic. Despite such flaws and omissions, however, this is an excellent, stimulating book on which Richard Joseph is very much to be congratulated.

RICHARD JEFFRIES

TOMAS HÄGG (ed.): *Nubian culture past and present. Main papers presented at the sixth International Conference for Nubian Studies in Uppsala, 11–16 August 1986.* 438 pp. Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell [1987]. Skr. 195.

The published papers from the sixth International Conference for Nubian Studies in Uppsala, August 1986, amply confirm Jean Vercoutter's belief, expressed in his opening address, that the balance sheet for the activities of scholars in this field still remains very much on the positive side. He does, however, note the need for continued work in the zones less well-known archaeologically, and particularly points out that perennial 'important et délicat problème': publication. I will return to this below.

The conference had an underlying theme, that of comparing or contrasting, where appropriate or useful, developments in the northern and southern regions of Nubia. The conference papers presented in the book, only a selection from a stimulating list of titles detailed on pp. 434 ff., range from a discussion of the climatic and environmental conditions which acted upon the origins of agriculture in the Nile Valley (Hassan), and the later Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic in the Sudan (Elamin, Håland, Mohammed Ali), to a number of very interesting contributions on the subject of Nubian life and culture in our own times (Fernea and Rouchdy, Kronenberg and Osman). There is some useful discussion about the results of recent work at Kerma (Bonnet) and about the C-Group and Pan-Grave cultures (Bietak), and isolated papers on Greek/Old Nubian studies (Browne) and the Islamic period in Nubia (Adams). This latter survey of the archaeology of the post-Christian/Islamic/Ottoman period is particularly interesting as it is perhaps the most neglected and least rewarding archaeologically since, as Adams points out, it lacks such distinctive features as major architecture and fine examples of material goods.

The greater part of the book is, however, as might be expected, devoted to the section 'Nubian Christianity, north and south'. However, even here there is not an overwhelming emphasis on the Christian period as about half of the section is devoted to Török's long discussion of the situation in Lower Nubia, with some reference to the question of the differences