

support of the political system by local élites in order to acquire and maintain privileges.

The comparison of economic processes within the five communities studied enables the author to draw conclusions in the final part of the book. Heiko Schrader sees the motivation for starting indigenous trade in the inability to subsist in the home region, due to the low productivity of the soil because of high attitudes rather than to scarce arable and pastoral land. Even though the author is probably right, one could raise the question as to what was first: trading or agriculture? – Since the author convincingly argues that the access of commoners to trade has been limited by local élites, the question arises whether their taking to agriculture in low-productivity areas too, was a consequence of internal group relations of political and economic dominance.

The state's role in trading activities appears to be crucial. Heiko Schrader stresses the fact that during the 19th century, Nepal successfully defended her monopolistic position as an intermediary in trans-Himalayan trade. While he argues that rulers should have a direct interest in, or be agents of various types of foreign trade, ranging from direct organisation and management of trade to mercantilist economic policies, he comes to the conclusion that national economic integration in Nepal has been impeded by the attitude of the Rana-rulers who were more interested in increasing their personal wealth than, for instance, in promoting the transportation system.

Having introduced a variety of crucial and very interesting topics the author nevertheless leaves many questions open. Especially his discussion of the very difficult topic of "national economic integration" would have benefited from a more detailed analysis of the connection between long-distance trade and other sectors of the economy. Perhaps Heiko Schrader will develop his theory on the trading patterns in the Nepal Himalayas in future publications.

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KAMAL SIDDIQUI, SAYEDA ROWSHAN QADIR, SITARA ALAMGIR, SAYEEDUL HUQ: *Social Formation in Dhaka City. A Study in Third World Urban Sociology*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited. 1990. vi, 456 pp. 450 Taka

Dhaka, or Dacca as it used to be spelled, the capital of Bangladesh, has become one of the fastest growing cities of the world. After 400 years of a

"chequered history" (p. 2) Dhaka gained importance only after Bangladesh won its independence in 1971. With c. six million inhabitants today (p. 2) it was the 31st largest city in the world in 1985 and is expected to occupy the 15th position by the year 2000. With a population of 900,000, it must have been one of the largest cities in the world during its golden era in the latter half of the 17th century (p. 7), but it lost its importance with the beginning of the 18th century, when the capital was shifted to Murshidabad. It further declined in the 19th century; in the first census of 1872, the population was recorded as being just below 70,000. With the first partition of Bengal, Dhaka became the provincial headquarters and the seat of the government of East Bengal for a few years, i.e. until 1911, when the division was annulled. With the creation of Pakistan in 1947 Bengal was divided again and Dhaka became the centre of the later province of East Pakistan. In the years before, and especially after, partition, most of the Hindu population fled to India, above all the members of the upper castes. In exchange, many of the Muslims who migrated from the eastern parts of India, decided for the eastern 'wing' of Pakistan. Feeling neglected and exploited by the western 'wing', the language movement for an equal treatment of Bengali and Urdu gained momentum right from the beginning, and Dhaka became the centre of the quest for a regional cultural identity and political and economic autonomy and finally independence. The civil war of 1971 ended after the Indian intervention with a total defeat of the Pakistani armed forces and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state with Dhaka as its capital. Millions were uprooted during the civil war. An unprecedented international relief programme for the restoration of Bangladesh's economy became centered in Dhaka, since this city was almost the only place in the country with some basic infrastructure. Because of the tremendous 'push' in the impoverished countryside, Dhaka was not surprisingly the natural destiny of the rural exodus, especially during and after the 1974 famine; "the growth of Dhaka city has been predominantly the result of net migration, which accounted for 62.9 per cent of population growth between 1961 and 1974 and 70.5 percent between 1974 and 1981 ..., about 60 percent of Dhaka's population growth between 1981 and 2000 is anticipated to be the result of net migration ... The push factors in connection with migration include over-population, floods and natural disasters, erosion, growing landlessness and exploitation by the rural elites and money lenders. The pull factors are employment opportunities in the informal sectors, relief activities and the statutory ration system in Dhaka city under which, until recently, foodstuffs were sold at substantially subsidised prices." (p. 16).

It is the merit of the authors to have gone into the social structure of the city in depth, basically through an evaluation of over 10,000 households with

the help of a detailed questionnaire and structured interviews. In addition to this, selected groups were interviewed, i.e. the residents of Dhaka city's government colonies, the "richest people" of Dhaka city, the formal sector poor, the informal sector poor, beggars, prostitutes and criminals, and, finally, the "change agents". Dhaka Cantonment, i.e. the military garrison of Dhaka, was not covered by the study, because it was assumed that no survey would have been possible. No attempt was, however, made to give any information about this vital part of the city on the basis of secondary sources, despite its military dominance of the last two decades. Maybe for similar reasons, there is almost no reference to the tens – if not hundreds – of thousands of 'Biharis', the Urdu speaking population, mainly from Bihar, who came into the country after the partition of India in 1947, who are accused of having sided with the West Pakistani troops during the 'liberation war', and who opted for Pakistan after the secession of Bangladesh, and who are still awaiting shipment to Pakistan. Many of them live in camps in and around Dhaka.

One does not expect to find any substantial manufacturing industry in a poor country like Bangladesh, and thus wonders how such a large urban population can exist. The answer is a surprisingly large services sector, and a very low average living standard. 43 per cent of the household heads served in government, semi-government or autonomous corporation services, another 37 percent were engaged in trade and commerce, 12.5 per cent had occupations involving low or intermediate skills and techniques, and 7.4 per cent had occupations involving no formal employment (p. 62f). Only 0.4 per cent said they were unemployed, but up to one million may live either directly or indirectly from rickshaw pulling (p. 267). When it comes to Dhaka, one is prepared for the worst imaginable living conditions, and thus I was comforted by the information that no less than 74 per cent of the household heads "had access" to all the three amenities, i.e. electricity, water and gas, and that only 4.4 per cent had access to none of them. 56 percent have "pucca", i.e. solidly built, latrines without a flush, 10 per cent had flush system latrines, 9 per cent had "service latrines" and 17 per cent had "kachha", i.e. not solidly built, latrines. The report, however, does not go much beyond such statistical interpretation. Those not too familiar with Dhaka and its sampling techniques are not informed as to what, for example, "having access" means, especially when we learn that only 0.4 per cent of all households are sharing a water tap with one or more households, but 32.6 per cent have to share a "bathroom", 35.1 per cent have to share a "latrine", and 22.2 per cent a "kitchen". The in-depth studies of the selected groups (see above) help to form a picture, but they have to be supplemented by case studies, which are at least listed in the extended bibliography.

I am not aware of any more detailed social surveys of Dhaka, and there are probably few on other cities of South Asia. The book, therefore, is highly recommended to all those working on the socio-economics of Bangladesh, and not just to those working on urban affairs, since the study shows the many and intensive linkages between this major centre and the rural areas.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

DAVID A. ABLING & MARLOWE HOOD (eds.), *The Cambodian Agony*. Armonk/London: M.E. Sharpe, 1987. 418 pages, \$ 35.00

This selection of articles emanates from an international conference "Kampuchea in the 1980s: Prospects and Problems" which was held in November 1982 at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. Although the conference papers were obviously updated and expanded for this publication, one might still think that such a collection would be out of date by now. But this is (unfortunately) not the case, which in itself demonstrates the continuing agony of the Khmer people.

There is hardly a country in this world that has, in such a short time, gone through so much radical upheaval and socio-political transformation in its recent history. From the days of the overthrow in 1970 of Prince Sihanouk, who had ruled the country in his own flamboyant and patronizing feudal style to the victory of the Cambodian Communist Party, Cambodia suffered massive saturation bombing by the US-Air Force and an unusually violent civil war. But this was not the end of the Khmer tragedy. Whereas the other two ex-Indochina countries, Vietnam and Laos, could recover from two devastating wars, after three years of brutal "class struggle" under the leadership of the Pol Pot-group, Kampuchea's already decimated population had to face a third Indochina War beginning with the invasion by Vietnamese troops in December 1978. Twelve years later there is still no *realistic* solution in sight, since this conflict combines the worst aspects of a civil war with a die-hard international confrontation involving Thailand, Vietnam, the US, China and the Soviet Union in an unholy alliance against a peaceful settlement in Kampuchea.

This collection of papers provides the scholar of Khmer affairs with a solid background and some in-depth research. The book contains the works of prominent experts like Michael Vickery who writes on refugee politics and the "volag" (voluntary agencies) camps, David W.P. Elliot with an article on deadlock diplomacy (Thai and Vietnamese interests in Kampuchea) and John