

ten-year age group (G, p. 34), which could either be the successful result of family planning (rather unlikely) or age mis-reporting in the census (not uncommon).

All in all, however, the study is a valuable contribution to understanding the rural exchange system not only of the country studied, providing an excellent insight into rural Bangladesh. It is recommended to economists, sociologists and anthropologists, especially those working on Bangladesh.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

Florian Steinberg: Die städtische Wohnungsfrage in Sri Lanka. Perspektiven der Wohnungspolitik für die Armen. Saarbrücken/Fort Lauderdale: Verlag Breitenbach 1982. 458 pp, DM 40.-

The book (the title of which recalls that of a famous collection of articles written around 1860 by Friedrich Engels on the housing situation of the British working class) is a fairly scholarly dissertation with a fine bibliography and more than 700 footnotes on 66 pages only.

It starts with a short description of the living conditions of the poor of Colombo based on the available relevant figures for the city and, in particular, for two small low-income quarters, a run-down workers' tenement complex and a squatter compound. Subsequently it summarizes the country's economic development and the resulting unbalanced distribution of population and wealth despite some welfare state efforts on the part of the government. The main section of the book is devoted to the topics more directly connected with housing: the construction sector of Sri Lanka, the land market of Colombo, the country-wide house construction programs and, in more detail, the low-cost housing, self-help and upgrading projects in Colombo itself. At the time of assessment, in 1981, only a few of these projects had been partly successful (transfer of land-ownership), others had more or less failed (construction), and many just stood on paper.

Since these data, although interesting in themselves, were not consistent enough for an evaluation of the country's housing policy in terms of inductive reasoning, the author chose, in order to come to an assessment at all, to switch to a kind of deductive argument. Instead of taking the facts presented he concluded from Marx' and Engels' quotations and neo-marxist views including those of his Ph. D. supervisors that a reformist housing policy, which may have inspired the one or the other of the low-income housing projects in Colombo, is principally unable to solve the housing problem of the poor. However, in the last paragraphs of his text, the author modifies his stand and declares that " – in view of the prevailing conditions – there are few operational alternatives to the reformist housing policies criticized above".

Jürgen Oestereich