

## Reviews

**Gerald Braun:** Nord-Süd-Konflikt und Entwicklungspolitik. (Studienbücher zur Sozialwissenschaft, Bd. 51). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985. 332 pages, DM 29,80

"North-South-Conflict and Politics of Development", Gerald Braun's latest book in the field of international relations, appeals to both political scientists and economists dealing with the Third World. While the former point out that political factors, being themselves determined by the economic basis, may well be responsible for a state of 'underdevelopment', the latter blame the underlying (deficient) political system for the failures in economic development. If solutions to development problems could be formulated on the basis of an integrated theory of underdevelopment, this would not necessarily mean a better life for western social scientists, but certainly for the peoples of the countries concerned. The question is whether Gerald Braun takes the lead in this direction.

Chapters one, "Problems and Dimension of the North-South-Conflict", and two, "Definition and Dynamic of the North-South-Conflict", are intended to delineate the field covered in the rest of the book. But all the author does is to demonstrate the complexity of international relations by giving an example each for conflicts (unbalanced development in the world), their causes (unequal distribution of wealth and political power), and for their solutions (by armed force). Thus it becomes clear from the start that neither conflicts nor their causes can ever be avoided completely, but that new, less violent solutions have to be found.

For this purpose the parties involved have to be identified. The simple image of a developed North and an underdeveloped South is replaced by a more elaborate set of distinctions. The associated question of proper indicators of development is dealt with in detail.

The third chapter, "Theories of the North-South-Conflict", concentrates on the introduction of approaches generally known as theories of underdevelopment. Interpreting these theories as a product of their historical background is interesting especially to non-political scientists, but the selection of theories reflects the introductory character of the book. This is true for this chapter's summary, too. Readers expecting some hints on how to solve international conflicts without violence must be patient.

Chapter four, "Developing Countries in the International Economy", shows that the classical theory of international trade does not suffice to explain a reality in

which there are no free markets; the existing division of production and consumption of goods does not lead to an increase in the welfare of all participants of the international trading system. As an alternative to free trade, UNCTAD's proposal for a New International Economic Order and the strategy of dissociation are introduced. Although the disadvantages of both free and regulated trade are mentioned, there seems to be no way out of this dilemma. A more detailed discussion of international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank would have been helpful at this point.

Chapter five deals with a different kind of institution: "Multinational Corporations – promoter of or hindrance to development?". Gerald Braun is right in pointing out that MNCs cannot be considered to be an element of development aid. Still, the analysis seems to have a general anti-MNC bias. Development economics have worked out a set of criteria which enable one to evaluate the net economic effect of a specific MNC. So, general suspicions of a MNC exploiting a country are more of a political nature – it is the host country's political structure that is responsible, too, for giving a MNC the opportunity to interfere with national (development) goals.

Chapter six, "German Development Aid between Safeguarding Raw Material Imports and Worldwide Social Policy", gives a good account of the political intention underlying German development policy. Starting from the (in-)famous Hallstein doctrine which linked aid to political good-will, aid was, in the author's opinion, politically liberalized in the seventies and again subordinated to foreign policy in the mid-eighties. A large part of this chapter is confined to the examination of the Basic-Needs approach, a concept that no longer reflects current thinking of the German development administration. The chapter's conclusion that development policy is always torn between humanitarian goals and national interest, is correct – and not only for Germany.

Chapter seven, "German Arms Sales to the Third World", analyses what is sometimes called 'the military-industrial complex'. Although arms exports are certainly consuming the scarce resources of poor countries, a prohibition on arms exports in one country will most likely only soothe the conscience of its own population. Negotiating the arms imports of developing countries might prove more effective.

The final chapter, "Models and Perspectives of a Global Peace Order", presents and refutes two models which emphasize the military supremacy of industrialized countries and the attempt to develop countries through growing economic activities, respectively. The third approach, favoured and characterized as utopian by Gerald Braun, is called a socio-political distribution model. It incorporates elements of the development aims of the various churches as well as elements of Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker's concept of a world domestic policy. If national interest is replaced by a worldwide feeling of responsibility for the less developed members of the international community, the North-South Conflict will still be there, but at a lower cost.

Gerald Braun gives a very good idea of how development policy and the North-South Conflict are interrelated. The fact that he is sometimes not unbiased in his analysis stimulates a silent but lively discussion between author and reader. The book offers the opportunity of either getting the essential information quickly by reading the main text only or of going into more detail by studying the numerous and very interesting original texts inserted wherever necessary.

*Wolfgang Veit*

**John D'Arcy May:** *Meaning, Consensus and Dialogue in Buddhist-Christian Communication. A Study in the Construction of Meaning.* (Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums, Bd. 31). Bern: Peter Lang, 1984. XI, 348 p. SFr 59.-

There are books that must be read from the first page to the last as with the detective novel; others one must read like an encyclopaedia; a third category you have to read from the end (and here I am referring neither to Arabic books nor to the bad habit of first taking a look at the bibliography in order to evaluate a publication according to the works cited there). What I mean is that one gets the idea from the conclusion, so one can now read the book with a new understanding from the beginning. May's book seems to me to belong to this third category. One should first read the preliminary notes, then the table of contents and the introduction and afterwards part III. If you have then understood the problem you should read the book from the beginning to the end. A prospective reader is of course under no compulsion to read the book in the order I have suggested, but reading it is a must for anyone engaged in the problems of dialogue between 'world religions'.

I think the present study is the most exhaustive on this subject. The author remarks that "the dialogue between 'world religions' has had rather a bad press in European academic circles" (p. 245); and from the beginning "there have been tensions between those wishing to uphold the standards of 'objective' scholarship and the idealists enthusiastically working for pan-religious harmony" (*ibid.*).

The reason for treating the problem of dialogue is "because it's there" (p. IV). The author who is experienced in this field intended his publication for English-speaking Buddhists and Christians. Both Buddhism and Christianity are all-embracing world-views and "each of them constitutes an autonomous and self-sufficient 'world of meaning' within which people have succeeded in living their lives for generations" (p. 256) and "in terms of what each states about the nature of the world and human destiny they are as radically different as any two comprehen-