

not be resolved by force of arms, but only by social reforms.

6) Decisions about arms exports are among the best kept secrets in Bonn. Statistics are either not disclosed at all, or, if they are, they are incomplete. The basis for decisions remains vague and unclear. Questions by members of parliament about arms deals are dismissed by the executive, the excuse being that they are business secrets.

For the insider these conclusions are not necessarily new. Nonetheless, the hearing (and the publication of its conclusions) reveals important information and helps to put the discussion on a factual basis - and in this respect the abundance of empirical data contained in this volume makes it a veritable storehouse.

Unfortunately there is no guarantee that this hearing will not share the same fate as its predecessors - i.e. it will be without effect. At any rate, it is worth noting that the German arms industry did not participate in the hearing.

On 27th Sept. 1985 it was reported in the papers that Great Britain will supply Saudi-Arabia with 72 Tornados - with German participation.

Gerald Braun

BEATRIX PFLEIDERER/WOLFGANG BICHMANN: *Krankheit und Kultur: Eine Einführung in die Ethnomedizin.* (Ethnologische Paperbacks). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1985. 263 pages, DM 26.-

The authors present the first overview of Medical Anthropology in the German language. This book was overdue, since interest in the field has risen extraordinarily in Germany during the past decade. It is designed to serve as a basic textbook in introductory courses for medical as well as anthropology students, and also as a guide to interdisciplinary discussion and to solving actual problems of medicine in cross-cultural contexts for health practitioners and ethnomedical field-workers.

The preface was written by Thomas W. Maretzki, who relates German ethnomedicine to historical and conceptual contexts.

The first part defines the German term "Ethnomedizin" as a translation of "Medical Anthropology" and links it up with related sciences. A profound knowledge of international medical anthropological literature enables the authors to precisely analyse the field and to place it in its historical context. Exact references are cited for sources of concepts, ideas and the most important publications in the field.

Part two occupies the largest part of the volume. It presents examples mostly from Africa and Asia, which are the continents where the authors gained most of their personal experience.

Chapter one outlines the history of medicine in Africa and South Asia,

with some data on earlier times and a detailed description of present pluralism.

Chapter two offers a comprehensive introduction to the concept of culture - specific disease classifications, starting from semiotic theory, and giving many detailed examples of important paradigms like "wind", "hot and cold" and "holy" diseases. The integrative view of the human body in medical anthropology is explained by setting it against the scientific reductionist model.

The following chapter provides an introduction to the medical systems approach as well as to health seeking behavior, with extensive illustration by way of many examples.

The main part of the book ends with two chapters on medical pluralism and Primary Health Care. Bichmann's high competence in the latter field provides a sound basis for a thorough understanding of its development and many aspects.

The final third part presents a short glossary, a detailed bibliography and some notes on ethnomedical journals and institutions.

As they stress from the beginning, the authors do not aspire to give a comprehensive outline of ethnomedicine. Rather do they aim at an exemplary approach, drawing on their own field research. This does not mean that central concepts are missing. It is certainly one of the strengths of this volume that it approaches the most influential theories from a number of different angles. The thoroughly documented case studies immediately demonstrate the practical application of the concepts.

The authors are an anthropologist and a physician; they have cooperated very well, and there is no gap between social science theory and a focus on practical help for the suffering. The book successfully avoids the sometimes fruitless discussions on shamanism and the meaning of magic.

The authors' intimate familiarity with their field, however, sometimes lures them a bit too deeply into theoretical and practical detail, thus making the book more valuable for the informed reader, while the beginner may miss a clearer separation of successive steps in the argumentation.

The authors often point out the applicability of medical anthropology to the situation in the Western World. This aspect, however, is less represented than might be desired by our own health practitioners.

This introduction is fascinating reading for anyone looking for a deeper understanding of medical anthropology, or "Ethnomedizin", and it is a valuable source for all those interested in African and South Asian problems.

Winfried Effelsberg