

failure of the land reform movement as practised from above with the more encouraging experience of West Bengal under the CPI(M). He sees how the nexus of caste-class oppression does not change through moral exhortation or a bureaucratic quota system and presents the very real problems Dalits have to realize their identity by either joining with all sections of the exploited or opting for a secessionist stance. The political and economic interests which underlie religious conflicts are also brought out. Likewise the author can show how international debt and dependency grow with capitalist ventures like 'operation flood' and how essential factors like land, prices, power and social structure are not touched by such innovations.

One can hardly demand that an introductory book of this kind can exhaust all facets of India. With the exception of a brief piece on the Bombay film industry for instance, cultural aspects are missing. Since these are usually responsible for mystifications of India, a critical discussion in this area may well be considered relevant for future presentations of this kind. A useful appendix with a chronology of Independent India, facts and figures, glossary of Indian terms and a brief bibliography enhance the utility of this commendable introduction.

Anil Bhatti

KIRSTEN WESTERGAARD: *State and Rural Society in Bangladesh - A Study in Relationship*. (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Monograph Series No.49). London and Malmö: Curzon Press, 1985. 190 pages, £ 6.50

Social justice is a moral and political imperative if Bangladesh is to be able to cope with the future. This is the central theme of "State and Rural Society in Bangladesh" by Kirsten Westergaard. The study is a result of some fifteen years' work on the political development of Bangladesh. The data for this study was gathered during repeated visits to Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, between 1970 and 1981. A center-piece of her research is a seven months' empirical study in a village in Bogra, North Bangladesh.

K. Westergaard has chosen two basic approaches to the study of the political system. Firstly and originally, the study was conceived within the "mobilization/centre-periphery model". According to the author's definition mobilization is a process related to social change and social development with a focus on the relationship between the state and society. This relationship is analysed in a centre-periphery frame of reference, based on theories of imperialism and structural dependency relations.

Secondly, the final analysis came to focus on the evaluation of rural social structure according to concepts of mode of production.

The study consists of nine chapters, not including the introduction. As the two theoretical approaches already indicate, there are two main parts to the book: Firstly, chapter II presents a theoretical discourse on the "Nature of the State", which is meant to be the introduction to the historical analysis of the structure and evolution of the Bangladesh State. From the time of colonial domination (chapter III) through the Pakistan period (chapter IV) to the new Bangladesh State (chapter V) the political developments are described in terms of the dependency concept.

Secondly, the nature of rural society is explained. Chapter VI presents a general overview of "Bangladesh Rural Society", which is the introduction to a local-level empirical case study (chapter VII). In the following chapter VIII the empirical findings are discussed according to the "mode of production" approach. Then again there is a switch back to the "local-level power structure" (chapter IX) as it was observed in the case study, based on 1971 local-level elections.

In the final chapter X Kirsten Westergaard gathers up the loose ends, summarizing her findings on the persistent power of the dominant village groups, the influence of the statal development strategies, the "mode of production" in agriculture, the relationship between agrarian classes and other classes, the dependency of the Bangladesh state on foreign powers and the need for political mobilization.

The book presents data, facts, insights and theoretical conclusions on mainly two different levels, the state and the village. In the first part it presents ample data on the politico-economic history of Bangladesh, giving a fairly complex and general picture of the political situation of the country. It is a very good introduction to the statal superstructure and it should be read by anyone concerned with politics in Bangladesh.

The case study findings presented in the second part focus on another aspect of the socio-political structure of Bangladesh. As far as the political aspects of Bangladesh villages are concerned it is one of the most detailed studies available.

Since the study explicitly presents the data in the light of dependency theory and the concept of mode of production, it also proves to be a good exercise in the application and an example of the applicability of those two approaches. This aspect of the study is not completely satisfactory though, because the many and complex details presented show at the same time that these general and very abstract approaches are made meaningful only by historical and empirical facts, thus showing the relative and reduced explanatory value of the concepts. Furthermore, the approach is bound to reproduce itself, since it explicitly claims to know the relevant aspects beforehand. Thus, it does not touch on the difficult problems of demographical development in Bangladesh and the lack of material resources, skilled manpower and organizational and infrastructural capacities, problems which are difficult to deal with. To claim that these problems are merely consequences of inequality and injustice does not really indicate the solution. To realize

this, however, may help to find it.

Dietmar Herbon

MALCOM DUNN: Kampf um Malakka. Eine wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Studie über den portugiesischen und niederländischen Kolonialismus in Südostasien. (Beiträge zur Südasienforschung, Bd.91). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984. 275 pages, DM 52.-

This book presents an economical analysis of Malaya under Malayan (1400-1511), Portuguese (1511-1641) and Dutch (1641-1799) dominion.

In the first section of the historical part the author describes the dominant features of Malayan feudal society and the system of trade, in the second part the coming of the Portuguese and the nature of "Estado da India", and in the third part the characteristics of the Dutch V.O.C. trading empire. In order to obtain the most relevant facts and to work out the changes that occurred within the three successive stages the author has only used literary material. That is why the reader who is familiar with the works of C.R.Boxer, K.Glammann, N.Steensgaard and P.Wheatley won't find many new aspects in M.Dunn's book. But this is not meant as a criticism for it is something the author himself admits (Introduction p.XIII).

New is the theoretical approach. The question is how one should analyze economic systems, how one can understand the protagonists and where and who are the driving forces or principles.

One answer to these questions is offered by the "neoclassical theory of economics", a theory that - as the author explains - tends to reduce human beings to rationally acting economical types who aim at maximization of profit and whose economical attitude must be quantified as far as possible.

M.Dunn understands man as an ensemble of his psychic, social and cultural context, so he has to criticize the approach of the neoclassical school. He opts for the following: an adequate analysis of economic systems must ask about the motivation of the acting groups (i.e. the interests and aims), the competence (i.e. the capacity to realize the interests and aims) and the property rights (i.e. the all-embracing complex of social rights and norms of a society).

Following this scheme one does not view history according to principles and types but gets closer to the acting groups and their historical conditions, i.e. in this case the development and changes of the Malayan peninsula under precolonial and colonial control.

Besides some minor points which I have to criticize - the author underestimates the nautical knowledge of the Portuguese (p.130) and he does not mention C.H.H.Wake's article on the European import of pepper (Journal of European Economic Transport, Vol.8, No.2, 1979) - the most problematical aspect of the book lies in its theoretical approach.

Although one can hardly criticize the value of the theoretical pattern, it un-