

talks with the leaders (only!) of fourteen non-governmental organizations operating in Sri Lanka (most of them relying on Western "aid") out of which they condensed short descriptions of the organizations and their performance, which I would not dare to recommend even as a hand-out for briefing a foreign delegation. Even more unsatisfactory is the "theoretical" chapter on p. 68 ff. where the development potential of self-help organizations is discussed within the wider framework of community development and cooperative systems. Here the authors rely on two studies from the late sixties to back up their generalizations. Our congratulations to the publishers for having printed a text which is certainly below the standard of an average MA-thesis. But they did it in Duncker and Humblot style, i. e. at the cost of nearly DM 0,60 per page whereas the five publications brought out in the same series of "Sozialwissenschaftliche Schriften" in 1983 figure at an average of DM 0,39 per page "only".

Detlef Kantowsky

VOLKER KASCH: Agrarpolitik in Malaysia - Zur Rolle des Staates im Entwicklungsprozeß. (Darstellungen zur internationalen Politik und Entwicklungspolitik, Vol. 13). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984. XVII, 300 pages; 54 tabs.; 5 graphs. DM 63.-

Book title and year of publication arouse expectations. One would like to learn more about a subject that presents a superabundance of pressing problems - opening up of new land, settlement, forest-destruction, rural exodus, scarcity of manpower to name only a few. Since the proclamation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971, revolutionary things have indeed taken place. We know, to be sure, a good deal about the objectives, institutions and means of this policy, less, however, about how it is put into practice and more or less nothing about the unwelcome side-effects. One thus hopes for new and reliable insights. That the author confines his study to the Malaysian peninsula is quite understandable - if it were to include the Borneo territories as well, it would doubtless come to conclusions that cannot easily be generalized. So far so good.

However, the study takes quite a different direction. It joins company with innumerable other such works that seek to champion a particular dogma. The "thesis" seems to be "... that underdevelopment (?) is reproduced in peripheral countries (!) through the existing class and power structures as reflected in the institution of the state" (p.2). We are, so it would seem, confronted with one of those fashionable global theories, applicable at random to all "underdeveloped countries" that are fundamentally open to criticism as long as they do not fulfill a - not clearly defined-egalitarian ideal.

"This theoretical perspective forms the basis of the method here adopted for defining the role of the Malaysian state in the development process with the help of an empirically orientated (!) country study" (ibid.). The simple fact that no geographical region can possibly wholly resemble another, is hereby overlooked. And this is the cardinal error: if this study is to remain "empirically orientated", then it must restrict itself to merely ascertaining facts and connecting them in a plausible manner, even if reality is embarrassing to theory.

But instead of this we are confronted with a "fiacre", in the words of Max Weber: with a fiacre that one can stop, mount and leave at will for the sake of "proving" one's argument: half and quarter truths, strained interpretations, distortion and tendentious arrangement are presented in such abundance that a volume several times as bulky as the text would be necessary to rectify them - the usual method of rendering all objective criticism well nigh impossible through a spate of assertions. The author conveys the impression of being well-read when it is a matter of finding evidence for "underdevelopment", "class-conflict", "repression" etc. Second - and even third-hand opinions (e.g. Far Eastern Economic Review) are cited en masse wherever it seems expedient. The careful selection of appropriate informants is striking. Still more striking is the obvious lack of real knowledge of the country and of the subject. As a result the genuine problems are, at best, only mentioned in passing (insofar as they are not completely ignored).

This may well be politically effective propaganda. From the point of view of an "empirically orientated" country study it is not only sterile - the author's reputation as a scholar is at stake. All in all: the chance of putting an end to inadmissible generalizations and replacing them with illuminating insights was thrown away. That is regrettable for it was urgently needed.

Dietrich Kühne

ECKART DEGE: Die Entwicklungsdisparitäten der Agrarregionen Südkoreas. (Kielser Geographische Schriften, Vol. 55). Kiel: Geographisches Institut der Universität Kiel, 1982. XXII, 332 pages; 19 maps. DM 49.-. (Obtainable from: Geographisches Institut, Olshausenstr. 40, 2800 Kiel 1, FRG)

In this agrogeographical study of South Korea, Eckart Degé tries to analyze the intersectoral and interregional disparities which have resulted from the rapid world-market oriented industrialization and urbanization for about two decades now. Through analyzing official statistics such as Farm Household Economy Survey, Yearbook of Agricultural and Forestry Statistics etc., he seems to have succeeded in finding out the disparities which have proceeded