

historical essay by Sarkar "Some Anomalies and Points of Confusion in Present-Day Researches on Southeast Asia" is followed by an article by Ravindra K. Jain (Prof. of Social Anthropology, Jawaharlal Nehru University) on "Caste, Estate and Class: The Dynamics of Social Stratification among Indian Malaysians". The essay is a summary of various works on the subject without the addition of any new data from research by the author. The following two essays on Bali are probably of greater interest since both the authors utilize their knowledge of Hinduism to interpret observations made in Bali from an Indian viewpoint. The articles concerned are "Hinduism in Bali" by I.G.P. Phalgunadi and "Bali-Aga and Bali-Mula: Indigenous Cultures in Bali" by L.K. Mahapatra. A book review and a news section round off this first issue, 74 pages in all.

This new periodical doubtless addresses itself mainly to Indian readers. It is thus an expression of the increasing interest of Indian scholars in South-east Asia, the tendency being to draw attention to the originality of Southeast Asian culture and society.

Hans-Dieter Evers

ROGER KELLER: *Agrarpolitik im unabhängigen Malaya, 1957-1982. Erfolge und Probleme einer kapitalistischen Entwicklungsstrategie.* (Beiträge zur Kolonial- und Überseegeschichte, Vol. 30). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984. XIV, 375 pages; 66 tabs.; 2 graphs; 9 maps; 8 illustrations. DM 58.-

This dissertation (Zürich, 1984) has remarkable qualities in more than one respect. Its highly topical theme, its clear arrangement and easy linkage of complicated facts, its scrupulous description of Malaysia's agro-political practices make this book worth reading. In addition, the abstinence from fashionable theories may be felt as a blessing.

The author strongly doubts that "colonialism" with its export-oriented agricultural production can be blamed for having seriously affected Peninsular Malaysia's (formerly Malaya's) food situation then and now. This view is absolutely correct. Thus, the approach of analysing the historical background as well as the recent political "strategies", their measures and counter-effects, has a solid foundation as do the author's efforts to elucidate the interior and exterior conditions of the agricultural economy. Besides this, an account is given of the activities of the public and private agents involved, and of the performance of farmers and other agricultural producers operating in a rapidly changing context.

Within this framework the analysis mainly concentrates on rubber, oil-palm, coconut and padi, by far the most important pillars of Peninsular Malaysia's agricultural potential. The basic facts, political and social, are

also discussed in detail, occasionally rectifying popular misconceptions (such as, for instance, false conjectures on the tenancy problem, p.181 ff.).

All the more irritating is the one or other remark in cases where fact and (political) fiction obviously contradict each other. This occurs when e.g. the labour market situation is severely criticized (p.228) despite contrary findings a few pages before (p.225). On similar lines is the repeated mention of "poverty" (pp.229, 230, 295-297, and elsewhere) - a grossly misleading term if rural self-sufficiency is meant. No less satisfying is the allegation that Malay farmers were "badly neglected" by rural development measures of the British administration (p.325). Likewise unacceptable are sweeping statements which claim a lack in "quality of life" for Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu (p.331) without any explanation of what is meant by the term. Very dubious is also the insinuation of widespread unemployment (pp.313-315) in face of substantial immigrant labour, mainly from Indonesia, to fill the rank and file of rural (and urban) occupations wherever blue-collar jobs are offered without due response, in particular on plantations and new land-development schemes. The catalogue of questions could be continued.

Nonetheless, a useful compendium for readers interested in Peninsular Malaysia's agricultural problems and their implications.

Dietrich Kühne

KEEBET VON BENDA-BECKMANN: *The Broken Stairways to Consensus; Village Justice and State Courts in Minangkabau.* (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Vol.106). Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1984. XVIII, 210 pages.

The majority of the papers collected in this dissertation have been published earlier as articles. In collected form it was accepted by the University of Nijmegen / Netherlands as Ph.D. Thesis.

The book deals with dispute management in a Minangkabau village of Sumatra, Indonesia; more specifically it focuses on the relationship between village justice and the role of State Court decisions in everyday social life. It aims to find out how people manage to cope with the effects of contradictions within a pluralistic law environment between folk law (adat), statutory law, and Islamic Law. Research was confined to civil cases and fieldwork (together with her husband Franz v. Benda-Beckmann) covered a period of about 10 months in 1974-75.

Since University regulations forced this dissertation to be presented as a separate entity although research was done in close cooperation with her husband some overlapping results are hardly to be avoided, while others are in-