

lorries and dumping them on a far away relocation site have been collected here for the first time. And still the lesson is not understood by all administrators, namely that this type of measure is unsuccessful as far as its objectives are concerned and disastrous for the people affected.

The two studies do not fully complement each other. It is a pity that the authors did not discuss their ideas in Manila, where they could have met in 1979. But this inspires new questions: The threatened community and the finally resettled community, are they the same? What are their responses to the challenges coming from outside? What is their potential? How are they organised and how do they articulate their needs? Under what conditions would they voluntarily accept advice? And so on.

As an introduction to the problems of urbanization on the one hand, and to the problems of Manila on the other, both studies are recommendable.

Jürgen Oestereich

JÜRGEN HOHNHOLZ (ed.): Thailand. Geographie, Geschichte, Kultur, Religion, Staat, Gesellschaft, Bildungswesen, Politik, Wirtschaft. (Ländermonographien, Vol. 13). Tübingen: Erdmann Verlag 1980. 518 pages, illustr., DM 58.-.

Advertisements for the Philippines, Ceylon or Thailand always portray a colourful "tropical paradise" where people live in harmony with nature and with each other. This, however, no longer corresponds to the socio-economic and political reality of these countries. Thailand, that "peaceful, Buddhist country", the topic of this reader, is no exception. The evergreen forests, for example, are being quickly cut down, the fish poisoned by industrial waste and chemical fertilizers. Furthermore, according to the physician Dr. Schelp, "Thailand has become a haven for exotic bacteria and diseases and thus an ideal studying-ground for parasitologists and specialists in tropical diseases" (p. 69).

This collection of essays on Thailand is written in the great tradition and style of country-studies. Unfortunately, it lacks discussion of problems presently facing Thailand and also up-to-date statistics and references to recent Thai literature. Thus, the book is useful as a source of information for the historical and cultural background but an interested reader should also be introduced to the vast amount of detailed studies, particularly those written by Thai scholars themselves. Moreover, the enormous influence which the USA has had on Thailand's recent development, not only in the economic, but also in the political and cultural spheres, was given little attention, and the same holds true for the Japanese influence. This applies also to the topic dealing with the "agents of change" like farmers' associations, the student movement, the professions, as well as the body of technocrats both in politics

and in the army. In fact, the living conditions of the 'hidden' majority of the people, the many different obstacles preventing the advent of real democracy and the traditionally rigid bureaucratic system, all typical aspects of Thai society, are either mentioned only descriptively or are excluded altogether (unconsciously?) by the authors.

It is claimed on the book cover that Thailand "was never subjected to colonial rule, in contrast to the neighbouring states". This is correct. However, it is incorrect to deduce from this that "Thailand was able to determine its own destiny down through history". Such a statement is in conflict with the situation since the Bowring Treaty of 1855, a historical event dealt with in some detail later in the text. Despite its abundant supply of natural resources, Thailand is meanwhile totally dependent on export trade and on world market prices. Even though the kingdom was never formally colonised, the state of poverty and underdevelopment in the country is more or less identical with that in neighbouring states which did suffer for a long time under French or British colonialism. One might even put forward the hypothesis that "non-colonised" Thailand suffered more from (indirect) colonial influences than Laos, its landlocked and 'forgotten' neighbour which was subjected to a loose colonial system for almost 100 years. That Thailand was able to protect its political independence was due to two major facts: the rivalry of the French and British and the Thai government's eagerness to become part and parcel of the colonial design by supplying cheap food and raw materials for the adjacent colonial economies.

Certain other statements in this reader also appear very questionable, particularly the claim that it was the "indifference of the people" which, together with other factors, prevented the improvement of the human rights situation (p. 265). On the contrary, it was state and para-state repression which systematically put down the broad-based struggle for democracy in October 1976 with a military coup and the ensuing martial law. The economic development of Thailand is described by M. Buchmann who uses W.W. Rostow's famous paradigm of the five stages of development. However, this modernization approach is too simplistic for the subject and thus excludes by definition other development alternatives which may put more emphasis on concepts of self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of basic needs of the majority of the population. K. Schönberg describes social change in an informative manner although the results of his study unfortunately have no bearings on the other chapters which reflects the lack of cooperation between the authors of this book.

In the section on rural living conditions, F. Fuhs makes the common claim that "Thailand's rural society is marked by the dominance of farmer-owners. Large landed property is rare" (p. 400). This is backed up by statistics from 1970 which are not only 10 years out-of-date as far as this publication is concerned, but were very unreliable even in the early 70's. On top of this, Fuhs ignores major problems which plague the rural sector in Thailand, like the "absentee landlords" (very often high military officers and civil servants) and

the important "scissors-effect" which rural cultivators have to face and which is due to the unfavourable relation between high farm input prices and low farm output prices.

According to the editor, the collection of essays is intended "to give an objective picture of this country and its people" (p. VII). The reviewer feels that this aim has not been - or only partly - achieved. The reason is that this collection lacks a comprehensive introduction which points out the major problems and conflicts, an introduction indispensable for such an interdisciplinary exercise in that it would provide a theoretical framework and some important linkages between the different topics and sections. In my view, a new edition of this collection which would not only do away with some of the basic errors but also include an up-to-date list of references and the latest statistics, is badly needed. In addition, it would be a great improvement if the cooperation of some other authors (from Thailand perhaps?) could be encouraged so that the modernization-theory oriented scholars do not predominate to the extent they do. These 'local' authors, and I refer in particular to scholars like Chatthip Nartsupha, Preecha Piengpongsam, Prof. Chettana and Saneh Chamarik, represent the critical and socially-conscious school in Thailand and their contribution would help to ensure a more balanced account of the situation.

In his chapter on the history of the kingdom of Thailand K. Wenk writes: "In accordance with the character of the Thai people, historical accounts of their country are more like chronicles. These include every little detail to the last but fail to criticize or evaluate" (p. 126). Thus, after reading this collection on Thailand by a majority of German experts, one question keeps recurring: "Have these foreign scholars perhaps adapted themselves too well already to the so-called "character" of their object of study?"

Hans-Ulrich Luther

ALMUT MEY: Untersuchungen zur Wirtschaft in den Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh). Bremen: Überseemuseum, 1979. 368 pages, DM 58.-.

WOLFGANG MEY: Politische Systeme in den Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Bremen: Überseemuseum, 1980. 289 pages, DM 41.-.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are one of four districts of the Chittagong Division in Bangladesh. Bordering on Indian Tripura and Mizo Hill District and on the Burmese province Arakan, this area of about 5 000 square miles is different in many ways from Bengal Bangladesh: the population of about half a million consists mainly of tribespeople of Mongol origin who are predominantly Buddhists, with some Christian and in particular animist influence. The most