

as the author was able to relate to when he wrote - and he certainly did not write for you! But this is of course a general problem of verbal interaction that goes beyond the "Neue Indische Bibliothek" and its attempts at inter-cultural communication. "We have the atmosphere that you have in mind" is the warning that greets the visitor to the main building of the "Island Hermitage" in Polgasduwa lake in Sri Lanka.

The publisher has promised to bring out four books per annum, a very ambitious target indeed. Let us hope that he and the editor are able to fulfill it; and let us for the time being imagine that the NIB will help us to come closer to South Asian realities as they are experienced by all those who re-create them through daily acts of personally meaningful behaviour.

The next titles to be brought out in autumn 1984 are:

Keshav Meshram, *Jatayu. Zwei Erzählungen, aus dem Marathi übertragen und mit Erläuterungen versehen von Günther D. Sontheimer.*
 Biharilal, *Liebesgedichte. Eine Auswahl aus der Satsai. Aus der Braj-bhasha übersetzt von Lothar Lutze.*

Detlef Kantowsky

JOACHIM BETZ: *Wirtschafts- und Entwicklungspolitik in Sri Lanka seit 1977.* (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, Nr. 129). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1982. 108 pages, DM 18.-

The author of this little study on 'Sri Lanka's Economic and Development Policies since 1977' is a political scientist by training. He completed his manuscript around 1981, i.e. it would be unfair to judge his work by the most recent developments on the 'Island of Righteousness', as Sri Lanka's Sinhalese politicians like to describe 'their' country. Yet even so one wonders why a political scientist dealt with the socio-cultural context, in (or against?) which any development policy has to be implemented only in the most general way. The reader is led to believe that Sri Lanka is a kind of neutral and value-free laboratory for testing liberal policies.

Joachim Betz's aim was to evaluate ex post the fact that four years after the UNDP came to power (1977) and opened the country to foreign investors and consumer goods, its economy has become entirely dependent upon foreign aid (p. 13). He looks for the answers within the frame of reference of liberal economics, since he believes that an export-oriented country like Sri Lanka has no alternative but to adhere to the rules of that game. Accordingly he looks into the traditional export sector to find out whether there is some hope that it might regain its colonial strength; he then discusses the performance of the modern export industries and compares both these sectors with the import bills that have been piling up. Then comes the government sector and its ambitious projects, i.e. among others the Free Trade Zone, the Mahaweli Irrigation Scheme, the Housing and Urban Renewal Project and other minor

undertakings.

The findings, mainly based on literature and unpublished material from Sri Lanka itself, in all the sub-chapters and throughout the entire booklet, are plain and simple: a plan and a project design is one thing, its realization another. This message is of course not new to members of the development set. But what gives Sri Lanka's "capacity to resist" the common good - as it was planned by the World Bank, the IMF, and the Aid Donor Consortium - some strategic importance is the fact that it only followed the path recommended by many advisers. So we might indeed call the development from 1977 onwards a test - but not only of Sri Lanka!

Having been in Sri Lanka several times during the period evaluated in the study I often discussed with friends and colleagues the ambitious targets that kept being propagated by the UNDP Government. And I remember how profoundly amused our group often was when reflecting upon Western naivety that took these declarations of good intent at their face value: All these brave and stalwart advisers that kept rushing through the country to report back the feasibility of projects to their respective headquarters and who grasped only the "modern" symbols of the first layer of the multi-dimensional palimpsest of codes to which "native behaviour" relates.

It is exactly this quality of South Asia's Hindu and Buddhist societies to absorb layer upon layer of "new codes" and its corresponding both/and logic that we are unable to understand and to make fit into the either/or logic of Western types of thinking. This is why we are misled by data which show us only the modern and most recent text of the palimpsest's so many messages. The superficial image of South Asian realities which we thereby get is one consequence - the failure of development policies based on them another. Evaluations of such failures can certainly be made - but they do not add to our understanding of South Asian realities if they remain confined to the terms of reference of misconceived policies as such.

Detlef Kantowsky

ALFRED KRAFT: Aspekte der regionalen wirtschaftlichen Integration zwischen Entwicklungsländern. Das Beispiel der ASEAN. (Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Bd. 68). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982. 298 pages, DM 68.-

Among ASEAN experts there is a general consensus that the ASEAN member countries have not yet actually started the process of real economic integration. Therefore differences in the assessment of ASEAN's progress reflect mainly different points of view about the opportunities and strategies for overcoming ASEAN's fundamental sources of disintegration.