

JOCHEN SIEMENS: *Abhängigkeit und Unterentwicklung von Ceylon / Sri Lanka. Eine strukturell historische Untersuchung. (Münchner Studien zur internationalen Entwicklung, Bd. 1).* Frankfurt u.a.: Peter D.Lang, 1980. 338 pages, sFr. 54.-

The author of this case-study aims firstly to test the validity of the Dependency Theory using as his example a country outside of Latin America. Furthermore, he outlines the historical reasons for the present barriers to development in Ceylon and finally, provides suggestions for further theories on the subject (pp.28-29).

In the introductory chapter both the Soviet-Marxist and the modernisation theories are criticized and rejected. The author then proceeds to outline his particular interpretation of the Dependency Theory (hereby referring especially to the standard texts on the subject) and concludes that Ceylon's development demands a structural historical analysis.

Chapter 2 which constitutes the main part of the book concentrates on giving an account of the process whereby Ceylon became more and more dependent upon various foreign powers. The author approaches this from four different periods:

- Firstly, the "auto-centred" development of Ceylon up to colonial times is looked at and classified as a phase of homogeneous social conditions. At that time the country had a sufficient food supply of its own, not like the situation today. The Hindu cultures which particularly influenced Ceylon never dominated it. It was much more a period of exchange and cultural enrichment.
- However, the arrival of the Portuguese and later of the Dutch colonialists marked the beginning of an external decision-making process. It was during these 300 years that the island of Ceylon was separated from India's cultural influence and the alienation of an elite which had adopted values foreign to the rest of the population began to take place.
- The real period of development controlled by outsiders began, however, with British colonialism at the end of the 18th Century. It was a combination of the development of an export-orientated plantation economy, the introduction of Tamil workers from South India and the development of the infrastructure which led to the destruction of the village economy and to a state of "structural heterogeneity".
- A result of this disintegration is the economic and cultural dependence which marks Ceylon's post-colonial development. The author declines, however, to go into a detailed analysis of modern cases of dependence, because, he claims, this has been covered in enough studies already (p.29). Instead, he restricts himself to individual events of importance in the recent past, for example, the left coalition government of 1970 to 1977 and the revolt of 1971. He concludes with a comment on the negative consequences of tourism and

on the free trade zones set up a few years ago. The connection between these aspects, however, seems somewhat arbitrary.

In the final chapter the author admits the continued existence of historically-based dependence even after Independence from England. He sees a chance for a reduction in dependence, nevertheless, and as an example quotes the huge irrigation project "Mahaweli Ganga" which could perhaps increase the production of food.

The conclusion of the study is somewhat surprising. The author states that the method applied in the Dependency Theory had proved itself in the case-study to be "perfectly right" (p.291); at the same time, however, the possibility of "auto-centred development" for the country is ruled out. He goes on to recommend "industrialisation of the island" with the help of international capital and expert advice.

One of the achievements of the book is that it provides for the first time an account in German of the dependent development process of Ceylon. Some of the Dependency Theory's weaknesses are, nevertheless, made obvious through the study. For example, political forms of dominance are only dealt with briefly, the Singhalese kings being portrayed as understanding princes (pp.66-67) while the parliamentary system imposed on Ceylon by the English colonialist rule is seen as "a perfect instrument of structural dominance" (p.223). The reader is left wondering whether the difference between the homogeneous and self-sufficient society of pre-colonial times on the one hand and the present state of the country with its structural heterogeneity and social inequality on the other, is not perhaps an idealisation of the past. Pre-colonial Ceylon was an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous society with a caste-system similar to that of India.

Furthermore, not all of the somewhat ambitious aims of the author of this study can be said to have been achieved. The initial intention to provide new impulses for further theoretical discussion was, unfortunately, forgotten or abandoned. The same applies to the final discussion in the space of a mere three pages of the relevance of the Dependency Theory and of other possible development strategies. This only further illustrates where the strength of this theory lies, namely in the description of historical and economic processes. Concrete suggestions for overcoming the problem of under-development should not be expected.

Nikolaus Werz

KARL HELBIG: Eine Durchquerung der Insel Borneo (Kalimantan). Nach den Tagebüchern aus dem Jahre 1937. 2 Vols. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1982. 784 pages, DM 224.- (paperback DM 196.-)

During the spring of 1937 Karl Helbig left Jakarta for Pontianak where he