

REVIEWS

The Reviews in Internationales Asienforum try to give a brief evaluation of recent German publications.

Werner Keller, *Strukturen der Unterentwicklung, Indien 1757-1914. Eine Fallstudie über abhängige Reproduktion*, Zürich/Freiburg i. Br. : Atlantis, 1977, 286 pages, DM 29. -

It requires a certain amount of courage to surprise the fatigued scientific community with yet another reappraisal of the process of colonial underdevelopment in India.

W. Keller's book has the advantage of presenting a penetrating summary of most of the specialised literature in this field and it adds the additional flavour of presenting its material in a new framework.

Keller refuses to enter into an argument running along the well known lines of "British imperialism impeded Hindu-capitalist growth" vs. "Hindu-economic mentality failed to face the new market stimulus".

By omitting this old controversy with highly political overtones - nationalist historians vs. British economists - he equally refuses to center his arguments on the devastating influence of British piece-goods on the Indian craftsman and the importance of India as an outlet for British capital growth.

A short summary might run as follows.

The introduction of moneyrelations in landtaxation and in city economy created an already high amount of indebtedness both in the villages and amongst the urban craftsmen. The colonial rule carried on this trend in the agrarian sector and the British manufactures easily ruined the urban working class.

In this way Keller derives his two central problem-areas:

First the lack of an Indian industrial development, second the stagnant features in the agrarian sector.

First: The mode of India's integration into the British economic system easily explains the first. After the political ruin of its chief clientele, the Moghul upper classes, the Indian manufactures rapidly withered under the impact of the import of British manufactures. The mere existence of free trade explains the edge in productivity that helped the British industry to secure a firm foothold in the Indian market. By monopolising all the spin-off effects of its new technology in the English industrial context, the Indian economy very early lost the chance to compete with the new British technology.

Second: The stagnant features of the Indian agriculture cannot be derived from this process of subdued integration. An expanding agriculture would have been very much in the British economic interest as it would have generated an increased purchasing power. Instead, the stagnant features developed in the same measure as a denominator of common interest developed between the colonial administration and the old feudal classes. In this way the Moghul trend of peasant

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exploitation and peasant indebtedness was carried on in a highly intensive manner as the British conceded this traditional sector to the old landholding upper-classes. The stagnation of the rural sector was the price that the government was eagerly paying to stabilise a cheap and effective rule.

In this way the political precondition for colonial rule at all times hampered the full realisation of its economic objectives: increased sales of British goods, increased export of raw material and increased chances for lucrative investments.

Jacob Rösel

Oskar Weggel, Wehrverfassung und Volkskriegsdenken in der Volksrepublik China. Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1977. 195 pages, DM 36

Although there are quite a number of publications on the Chinese Army and Chinese military affairs in general, the important institution of the Chinese militia has not yet received such treatment. Comprehensive information on this subject is still lacking, which is one good reason for welcoming Oscar Weggel's book.

The author starts with a short introduction to ten periods, in chronological order, in the development of the Chinese militia. A short description of the relationship between the militia and People's War is followed by chapters on geographical and topographical aspects as well as a discussion of the discipline, training and equipment of the Militia. The author further concentrates on the tasks and organization of the Militia, the relationship towards the People's Liberation Army, and the role of the Militia for agricultural and industrial production. We also find some reflections on the Militia and the character of Chinese society. A translation of the Militia's statute of July 1961 is followed by some closing remarks on whether there is a military or a militia dictatorship in China. Here the reader might wonder at the logic of the order of succession. Why is the text interrupted by the document?

In the introduction we find some sweeping statements, such as the assertion that Mao Tse-tung personally organized the Peasant Movement Training Institute within the Kuomintang apparatus (p. 1). The late chairman did not in fact do so: that is not to deny Mao Tse-tung's role in the peasant movement, but the first director of the institute was P'eng P'ai. From May to October 1926 Mao was the institute's last director. On the other hand the author takes care to mention the problems of making generalizations when giving particulars based on a single example (p. 95).

Those who are familiar with Oskar Weggel's work will know his artistic skill in creating new words. In this book again he is not the man to disappoint us. We get acquainted with "Anthropogeographischem Rauminhalt" (anthropogeographic capacity or volume) and the lovely word "Ppropfstelle". But what does he mean by Propfstelle? Sai-tzu ti-fang? On page 78 we get no enlightenment, just some insignificant remarks on organizational principles according to the number of members in the respective bodies. This principle we are told, however, should