

development of the military-fiscal states in Europe. For him "timing" becomes the main feature of this historical process.

Latecomers had a definite advantage compared with the pioneers. Joanna Innes takes a closer look at the internal development of the military-fiscal state in England. Whilst the fiscal and military apparatus was strengthened and continually centralised during the "long 18th century", political institutions were decentralised and local authorities became more important. No continental power witnessed a similar development, leading Innes to the conclusion that England's singularity lies in the features of British government and society.

Daniel Bangh contributes an interesting article on the supply of the military-fiscal state through maritime trade. The British state was embedded in a maritime-imperial system which derived its value from maritime commerce rather than from territory and dominion. Baugh's thesis of Britain's "blue water strategy" is exemplified by transatlantic trade. The combination of trading ports and naval bases connected by shipments of various goods over different distances was the backbone of transoceanic trade. Similarly, the flexibility of this system was the source of its success. It was only the "mercantilist" policy in the third quarter of the 18th century which almost destroyed the maritime-imperial system. After the independence of the American Colonies the "Old Colonial System" persisted in a modified form, based on the notion that this trading system had to be considered as a whole and not just as individual colonial commodities. The attempt to establish territorial rule or "direct rule" in North America by the British government finally destroyed the political ties between Great Britain and its North American colonies. India can be seen as the exception to the rule.

Though all the contributions to this volume refer to John Brewer's thesis, hardly any deal with the imperial state at war. Many articles are descriptive rather than analytical. The most innovative is without doubt C.A. Bayly's contribution. The connecting issue seems to be the military-fiscal state, but the general subjects of the volume are the internal situation and the external relations of the British state in the 18th century.

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K.K. BHARGAVA, H. BONGARTZ, F. SOBHAN (eds.), *Shaping South Asia's Future. Role of Regional Cooperation*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1995. ISBN 0-7069-9994-0

L.L. MEHROTRA, H.S. CHOPRA, G.W. KUECK (eds.), *SAARC 2000 and Beyond*. New Delhi: Omega Scientific Publishers, 1995. XVI, 420 pp, Rs 600/US-\$ 60. ISBN 81-85399-31-X

In December 1985 the Heads of State of seven South Asian countries met for the first time in Dhaka and founded the *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation* (SAARC). Since then SAARC has been the subject of many consultations between politicians, high ranking bureaucrats, economists and social scientists from national research institutions. Because of the various conflicts between India and her neighbours, the idea of regional cooperation was not very prominent in the region. It is therefore not astonishing that the promotion of regional cooperation was fostered by Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as two German political foundations, the *Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation* (FES) and the *Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation* (KAS). Both have sponsored various activities including two conferences in 1994 and 1995 which aimed at discussing the present state of regional cooperation and an agenda for further action.

Bhargava, Bongartz and Sobhan edited the proceedings of the FES conference "Shaping South Asia's Future: Role of Regional Cooperation", held in Kathmandu in May 1994. The main emphasis is not on contributions by individual authors, but on the presentation of studies conducted by the *Coordinating Group for Studies on South Asian Perspectives* (CGSSAP), which incorporates a number of prominent South Asian scholars. These studies which have already been published separately, highlight the problems and prospects of regional cooperation in South Asia in various areas. These include socio-political problems, the role of political parties and parliamentarians, the role of the media, capacity-building through institutional mechanisms, the involvement of labour and non-governmental organisations, developing opportunities of socio-economic cooperation, and the fostering of economic and financial cooperation. The Kathmandu Statement included a Programme of Action aimed at strengthening regional collaboration in the respective areas. Besides the presentation of the research studies and the various addresses given during all conferences, the book also contains various detailed recommendations for policy makers. These chapters, for instance the *SAARC Study on Trade, Manufactures and Services*, include detailed information and empirical data which is of great interest to scholars.

Mehrotra, Chopra and Kueck's volume follows a more traditional approach. It contains 26 contributions made at the International Seminar "SAARC 2000 and Beyond" organised jointly by the Indian International

Centre, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and KAS in New Delhi in March 1995. Besides future perspectives of the 21st century, high ranking South Asian scholars also deal with political questions like the arms build-up, with contentious issues in the region, economic changes and challenges, the possibilities of closer collaboration in the field of technology, environment and development, social issues like poverty eradication, the rights of minorities and the experiences of regional organizations in Europe and South East Asia. These issues are addressed by recommendations which, amongst other things, aim at further strengthening SAARC institutions and at improving people-to-people contacts.

While Bhargava, Bongartz, and Sobhan's book and the studies of the CGSSAP follow a sectoral approach, the individual contributions in Mehrotra, Chopra and Kueck's volume deal mostly with specific topics. Both books present many facts and figures enabling understanding of the on-going process of regional cooperation in South Asia, and their main target groups are not so much scholars but high-level bureaucrats and decision-makers. Detailed indices facilitate the search for specific topics.

The major political problem in South Asia, the permanent crisis between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, which is at the same time the biggest obstacle for any progress in the field of regional collaboration is omnipresent in both publications, even if only paraphrased. "Unfortunately, however, it is bilateral positions on contentious political issues which exacerbate their tensions to the detriment of peace, stability and development in the South Asian region." (Mehrotra et al., p. ix). But all participants would certainly agree with the statement, that the costs of "Non-SAARC", i.e. non-cooperation, are very much higher in the long run and will have negative consequences for the region as a whole (Bhargava et al., p. 82).

A critical point which could be raised is the fact that both volumes show that SAARC seems to be more a topic of research institutions and national bureaucracies, thus producing reports, not results. But conferences like those mentioned above have helped a lot in recent years to create a confidential atmosphere among policy-makers, bureaucrats and scholars. In addition, SAARC has entered a new stage in its development with the introduction of the *SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement* (SAPTA) in December 1995, even though the improvement of regional trade is only modest.

Given the specific constellation in South Asia with the permanent conflict between India and Pakistan, any improvement in the field of regional cooperation will be slower and much more difficult than in other parts of the world. Both volumes are a very valuable source of background

information, providing a fine analysis and a well balanced overview of the problems and prospects of regional cooperation. One can only hope that the participants will use their academic and political positions in order to foster the idea of regional collaboration in their respective countries. For the strengthening of regional institutions like SAARC will become increasingly necessary, if the region is not to be further marginalized in the process of globalization.

Christian Wagner

DIETMAR ROTHERMUND (Hrsg.), *Indien. Kultur, Geschichte, Politik, Wirtschaft, Umwelt. Ein Handbuch*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1995. 682 Seiten, DM 78,—. ISBN 3-406-39661-5

Mit dem Indien-Handbuch versucht Dietmar Rothermund, sowohl Interessenten am „Alten Indien“ als auch am „Modernen Indien“ anzusprechen. Das Sammelwerk soll umfassende Informationen liefern, um den deutschen Leser in die Lage zu versetzen, die Hintergründe des Tagesgeschehens in Indien zu verstehen und aktuelle Nachrichten entsprechend einordnen zu können. Diesem hohen Anspruch wird das Indienhandbuch nur teilweise gerecht. Trotz einigen anders lautenden Überschriften beschäftigt sich ein nicht geringer Teil des Handbuchs mit der Vergangenheit und eben nicht mit der Gegenwart. Aktuelle Themen wie Frauenbewegung, Slums, hinduistischer Fundamentalismus, soziale Bewegungen, Umweltschutz (obwohl das Thema ‚Umwelt‘ schon im Titel als Schwerpunkt angekündigt wird), kaufkräftige Mittelschicht oder moderne Jugend finden vergleichsweise wenig bis gar keine Berücksichtigung. Ebenso fehlt eine eingehende Behandlung der Landwirtschaft, die nach wie vor die Lebensgrundlage der Mehrheit der Inder bildet.

Das Sammelwerk teilt sich in sieben Teile, die überblicksartig ein Grundverständnis der sehr komplexen indischen Kultur, Geschichte, Politik, Wirtschaft und Umwelt zu vermitteln versuchen. Die Beiträge namhafter Autoren werden durch begleitende bzw. ergänzende Artikel Dietmar Rothermunds zusammengefügt. Der erste Abschnitt *Umwelt und Bevölkerung* befaßt sich in einer recht nüchtern gehaltenen Darstellung mit dem „Naturraum und Klima“, einem deskriptiven Abschnitt über die „Siedlungsformen“, in dem das Slum-Problem leider nur kurz angesprochen wird, und je einem leicht verständlichen Abschnitt über das „Bevölkerungswachstum“ sowie über die „Regionalen Diskrepanzen“ in Indien.