

Khmer leaders including Sihanouk, Lon Nol, and Pol Pot, have been misled by an overconfidence emanating from Angkor's "greatness" (p.244). Burma's military dictators, perhaps less sincerely, have shrouded themselves in a fantasy of the past as well, in this case to justify military authoritarian rule. I suspect these commonalities stem from Burma and Cambodia's similar experience under Western colonial rule more than anything else, but a good comparative study is needed before we can begin to make any conclusions.

Thankfully, Chandler pulls no punches and is quite frank about the many faults of Cambodia's series of political regimes since the end of the Second World War. This honesty allows the reader to see the very real problems that Cambodia has faced and still faces today. This book is well worth its modest price and will be a valuable contribution to any academic library.

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BEN KIERNAN, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*. New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1996. 477 pp., \$ 35.00. ISBN 0-300-06113-7

Anyone who has studied modern Cambodia should be familiar with the numerous contributions that Ben Kiernan has made to our understanding of the history and plight of the country. Fortunately, his fairness and the consistently high quality of his work have carried into this, the latest of his investigations and analyses of Cambodia's often tragic past.

Kiernan's book is by far the most detailed history of the Khmer Rouge revolution that this reader has yet come across. It provides extensive biographical information on all of the major participants in this historical 'event', granting new insights into the mind of the Khmer Rouge and its victims. In addition to assembling the accounts of one hundred refugees from the Khmer Rouge period now resident in France, and of four hundred Khmer survivors of the period living in Cambodia, Kiernan has also painstakingly analyzed the numerous 'confessions' of the political prisoners at Tuol Sleng, the Khmer Rouge's interrogation center (1975-1979).

Kiernan emphasises two main aspects of the Democratic Kampuchea regime in Cambodia. First, he argues that race, not class, predominated in Khmer Rouge thinking. As evidence, Kiernan points to the upward mobility within the higher echelons of the Khmer Rouge of French-educated elite Khmers, while non-Khmers, such as the Chams, who perhaps fit the Khmer

Rouge's ideal peasant type were decimated. Second, the author suggests that the Khmer Rouge pursuit of total central control contained the seeds of Democratic Kampuchea's demise, as increasing Khmer Rouge success in achieving this aim alienated more people and produced new enemies. Both of these observations are important to an understanding of the Democratic Kampuchea regime, and shed light on some activities of the Khmer Rouge that have previously been misrepresented in secondary literature which could not bridge the gap between Khmer Rouge ideology and the reality of their program. In this reality, the Khmer Rouge wreaked terror among and suppressed not only ethnic minorities within Cambodia, but also the majority Khmer population as well.

Kiernan's book contributes significantly to an understanding of the role of racist ideology and the pursuit of totalitarianism in the Khmer Rouge revolution, thereby providing useful points of comparison with other cases of genocide and ultra-nationalism that have occurred elsewhere in the twentieth century. Relevant in this context is Kiernan's reassessment of the peasant element in the Khmer Revolution. He argues, for example, against Michael Vickery's opinion that Democratic Kampuchea was the result of a "complete peasant revolution", also mentioning Kate Frieson's view that peasants were "unwitting participants" in the Khmer Rouge revolution and were really only engaging in strategies of survival due to the adverse effects of war. Instead, Kiernan adopts a position somewhere in between, arguing that Khmer peasants reacted to and were involved in the revolution for a variety of reasons and on both sides, both for and against it, though they, especially from 1977, opposed the Democratic Kampuchea regime.

A weakness, if it can be called that in light of the many strengths of this book, is the failure on Kiernan's part to specifically discuss Khmer Rouge conceptions of race. What, for example, were the chief components of the conception of Khmer ethnic identity? While Kiernan occasionally hints that language or religion or locale may have formed bonds of group identity, at least for the purposes of Pol Pot and his supporters, no in-depth discussion of ethnicity as a concept in Khmer Rouge political discourse and planning is evident, despite the author's suggestion that "Khmer Rouge conceptions of race overshadowed those of class" (26). If such conceptions of "race" were so important to the Khmer Rouge, what then constituted these conceptions? This is especially important as Kiernan's reference to the White Scarves, a group of Khmer Krom executed early in the Democratic Kampuchea period, suggest that, within the population Kiernan assumes at face value as "Khmer", conceptions of Khmer ethnic identity and nationalism stemming from it were actually quite varied and often at odds with one another.

This oversight aside, Kiernan's book not only offers a useful case study for comparative historians of twentieth century revolution, genocide, and nationalism, but also offers an ominous background to the Khmer Rouge, who once again have a clear presence in the new Cambodia.

Michael W. Charney

CARSTEN HERRMANN-PILLATH (ed.), *Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Chinas Provinzen und Regionen, 1978-1992. Ein Statistisches Handbuch.* (Schriftenreihe des BIOS, Köln, Bd. 27). Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995. CXVI, 367 pp., DM 72,-. ISBN 3-7890-3923-3

This statistical handbook provides an analytic introduction to the problematic of Chinese statistics and presents some preliminary conclusions deriving from the data. Everybody working on China knows about the problems with Chinese statistics, and many scholars doubt that the data published by Chinese authorities provide a reliable basis. Herrmann-Pillath is quite aware of this. It is remarkable and surprising what he figures out from the data of the Chinese Statistical Yearbook.

His main interest is the provincial and regional level. In a systematic way he compiles data on population and employment, production, consumption, investment, productivity, prices and retail sales, foreign trade and investment, transportation, public health, education, research and development as well as regional data ("Greater China"). In two further chapters he presents the data in form of selected figures for provinces, regions and for China as a whole.

In the first part of his introduction the author argues that China is not a homogeneous unit that can be characterized in terms of an entirety. Statements on China as a whole, he suggests, are not very helpful, as they combine quite diverging development processes, e.g. between the provinces. And it is precisely this divergency as well as the reciprocity of such processes which are typical of Chinese development. To understand ongoing processes in China - so Herrmann-Pillath - one has to refer to developments in the provinces and regions, to processes of regionalism and discourses between center and provinces. Data on a national level merely conceal such phenomena.

A data analysis on a provincial level faces various difficulties, e.g. the problems of differentiation (rural-urban, nominal and real quantities), the incompleteness of data, different quality of data at provincial level as well