

publish the papers presented more or less in the form they were submitted and to add summaries of the discussions. The disadvantage is a lack of homogeneity of the final product and the inclusion of much material that could be dispensed with. Summarizing the discussion entails judgments of the relative importance of various contributions. This means publishing all comments irrespective of merit, or reducing the summary of discussion to vague generalizations.

Praipol has clearly taken the latter course, that is, to print all the papers presented in substantially unaltered form and to add largely unspecified summaries of the discussion that ensued, such as the statement: "Then participants took turns in the discussion on the possibility of alternative sources of energy and oil pricing policy." Since these summaries were distributed during the conference itself, it is inconceivable why three years were needed to bring out this volume.

As in many preceding conferences of the Federation of ASEAN Economic Associations, the Philippine delegate, Jesus P. Estanislao, presents an overview of the development of ASEAN in the current year. It is interesting to note that the projections made by Estanislao in 1981 turned out to be largely correct. However, in calculating weighted ASEAN averages, he has introduced a novel but dubious method. Although it must be conceded that some form of weighting is required in obtaining figures for ASEAN as a whole, the weights used by Estanislao appear inappropriate. The point, although discussed at some length at the conference, is not mentioned in the summary of discussions, nor has it been taken account of by a revision of the paper.

Hadi Soesastro has done an excellent analysis of the resource transfers between the OPEC countries and the non-OPEC developing countries. The pricing of petroleum products in Malaysia and Thailand is examined by S. Meyanathan and R.J.G. Wells for Malaysia and Praipol Koomsup for Thailand. Francis Chan examines the role of Singapore as ASEAN's refining centre for petroleum products, while an

analysis of the economic prospects for alternative sources of energy in the ASEAN region is undertaken by Gary S. Makasiar.

The volume contains an appendix with the conference programme, the list of participants and observers, and so on. Unfortunately, the very readable address by the President of the Thai Economic Society, Dr Snoh Unakul, on "The Energy Plan and Natural Gas Utilization Programme of Thailand" has also been relegated to this appendix.

All in all, this is a useful volume for all persons interested in ASEAN's energy problems. Its main purpose, however, is as a souvenir for those who attended the conference.

HANS CHRISTOPH RIEGER  
*Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*

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***Socialism in a Subsistence Economy: The Laotian Way: An Analysis of Development Patterns in Laos after 1975.* By Hans U. Luther. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1983. Pp. 65.**

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Luther's paper comprises three parts in addition to 35 pages of footnotes, bibliography, and two appendices. Part One, entitled "Country profile of Laos", depicts the social and economic aspects of underdeveloped Laos: a rural economy with the preponderance of subsistence agriculture, weak manpower, low productivity, and lack of unity.

Part Two deals with the socialist transformation and development policies in post-war Laos. It emphasizes the difficulties in carrying out a socialist policy due to the lack of experienced cadres in administrative and productive sectors. Non-experienced cadres of the Laotian Communist Party took to coercion instead of relying on "the gentle way" in the mobilization of the peasants. The process of collectivization encountered insuperable difficulties. The Laotian communist regime was thus unable to reach the main target prescribed by its successive plans since 1976, that is, self-sufficiency in rice and

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other basic foodstuffs. In order to resolve these difficulties, the Laotian communist regime was forced to liberalize its economic policy by the mid-1980s, by reducing agricultural taxes, increasing wages and salaries of officials and workers, and allowing free trade and the operation of market forces. This led to increasing rice and foodstuff production. Luther notices that the liberalization measures implemented by the Laotian communist regime were based on the advice of the Soviet Government. According to Luther, a Soviet Planning Commission visited Vientiane in February 1979. Its advice was "to slow down the drastic rural policy in order to stop the exodus of refugees and to broaden the mass support". The Soviet Commission promised to provide Laos with assistance of US\$40 million including military aid.

The evaluation of development policies in post-war Laos in Part Three includes statistics on external trade and the budget of Laos. In Luther's assertion, "the new economic policy of opening up the country and the deliberate liberalization of agricultural policies have shown some promising results since the turning point in 1979". Moreover, Luther notes increasing state revenue and a decreasing budget deficit in Laos.

In his conclusion, Luther points out that, by linking the Laotian economy to those of the Soviet Union, Vietnam and the other socialist countries, the Laotian communist leaders have brought Laos under their domination and transformed the country into a mere supplier of crude raw materials, thus reducing the chances of setting up an appropriate industrial and mining sector.

In spite of several difficulties, such as inaccessibility of Laotian official documents, Luther has tried to provide an objective analysis in his paper. Should he have access to Laotian sources in the future, he could surely present an excellent study. Even so, this study contains much of interest and gives us a good view of the evolution of Laos after the take-over of power by Laotian communists.

We cannot but agree with Luther when he asserts "From this perspective the gentle road to

socialism in Laos appears to be both long and winding". The Lao communist regime has failed in attaining its main economic targets prescribed by its successive plans.

CHOU NORINDR

*Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*

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*Aspects of ASEAN.* Edited by Werner Pfennig and Mark M.B. Suh. Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum, Vol. 2. Munich, Cologne: Weltforum Verlag, and London, 1984. Pp. 395.

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"Written by Asian and European specialists from different fields and with diverse views, this book offers an indepth [sic] and comprehensive examination of co-operation among ASEAN countries. Detailed investigation of social, economic, political and security questions is provided, accompanied by an inquiry how to deal with ASEAN as a topic for research and an assessment of that Association's performance. Emphasis is also put on ASEAN's relations with Japan and the EEC. Numerous tables and a selection of documents make the volume a valuable work of reference." This is the blurb on the back cover of the book under review. We have long become used to excessive claims on the packaging of consumer items, and, unfortunately it is becoming increasingly necessary to exercise caution when purchasing books. In the case of scholarly works, however, this should not be necessary.

The papers collected in this volume have indeed been written by "Asian and European specialists from different fields and with diverse views". Since nowadays all studies seem to be done "in depth", we cannot quarrel with the book's claim on this score either. But the claim of being "comprehensive" in the sense of all-inclusive is less difficult to refute. The approaches range from the philosophical through historical, sociological, and political to economic analysis, with the odd Marxist paper thrown in for