

leading native nationalists like Soewardi Soerjaningrat, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Tjipto's brother Goenawan Mangoenkoesoemo or Abdoel Moeis joined his party, it did not attract as many members as, e.g., the "Sarekat Islam" party, which was founded in the same year and became the first Indonesian nationalist mass movement, because of its too strong Indo-European element in the party. Douwes Dekker already wandered in the footsteps of his great-uncle Multatuli as he also published an anticolonial novel under the title "Het boek van Siman den Javaan" in 1908 which was discussed in the Dutch parliament (99).

The Dutch authorities reacted quickly: although its colonial "Ethische Politiek" pronounced a policy more oriented on the needs of the native population since 1901, the "Indische Partij" was immediately forbidden after a critical essay written by Soerjaningrat in 1913, its party leaders Douwes Dekker, Soerjaningrat, and Mangoenkoesoemo were interned to Europe. After Douwes Dekker was allowed to return to Indonesia after the First World War, other actors became active in Indonesian nationalism like the young engineer Soekarno who in 1945 became the first president of the independent Republic of Indonesia. Douwes Dekker was still close to many early nationalist leaders including Soerjaningrat, Mangoenkoesoemo, or Soekarno, but concentrated his work on nationalist educational matters by founding an elementary and secondary school for native children in Bandung which he named "Ksatrian Instituut" ("Warrior's Institute") (487 ff.). It was established in 1924 and formally alleged in 1926, and although it suffered from many financial difficulties it was run by Douwes Dekker until the beginning of the Second World War. Douwes Dekker ventured, just like his friend Soerjaningrat who found the "Taman Siswa" school system around the same time, into a combination of the traditional education of the natives with the modern Dutch education system and/or add something new, namely nationalism to both. He also partly wrote the teaching books and materials himself. Several former pupils of the "Ksatrian Instituut" later became well-known Indonesian politicians or diplomats.

Here cannot be the place to go into deep details of this voluminous book. Van der Veur delivered a well-written and well-edited biography of one of the most important figures of early Indonesian nationalism which will remain authoritative for probably many decades. What about some critical remarks? The reviewer culled through the over 800 pages in his search for something to criticise and found – nothing. Holger Warnk

Wadley, Reed L. (ed.): *Histories of the Borneo Environment. Economic, Political, and Social Dimensions of Change and Continuity*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2005. 315 pp. ISBN 978-90-6781-254-6. (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 231) Price: € 35.00

Over the last decade in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, we have witnessed to a polarization of views on what is distinctively "indigenous" and what is not, benign human

ecology versus colonial/national extractive and unsustainable approaches, local trade networks versus global markets, and so on and so forth. A detailed look at the environmental history of Borneo is a useful start to move beyond and away from these simplistic dichotomies. This volume shows how local communities are embedded within larger systems at the regional, national, and international levels and how their perceptions, as well as dominant images about them and their environment, have evolved over the long term in response to new production, a more specialized division of labour, population pressure, the creation of national boundaries, and post-colonial states policies followed by modernization and globalization.

It also reveals that we can no longer talk of "hegemonic" and "colonial" discourses shaping local events, without taking into account that people's microresponses, coping strategies, and forms of resistance are also pivotal in shaping state programmes and attitudes. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach is required to take into account the economic, political, and social dimensions of change and continuity, as well as the multiplicity of voices and perceptions of local actors through time. Along these lines, ten well-known scholars coming from different disciplines (history, anthropology, geography, social forestry, etc.) have compiled this concise and vibrating account of the "Histories of the Borneo Environment." The volume covers eleven centuries of histories and it shifts the focus between local events and wider contexts, merging together both archival data and field research.

In chapter 1, Eric Tagliacozzo provides a lucid examination of the most important trade patterns from premodern to late colonial times with a particular focus on the impact of Chinese trade. Clearly as it appears, the larger history of regional commerce could not be fully understood without taking into account the essential and long-standing role that Borneo has played over the centuries. Particularly relevant is Bernard Sellato's (chapter 2) examination of, and distinction between resources with local subsistence value and those with long-distance trade value. He shows how the commercial exploitation of forest products for the external market and with no local use has led to unsustainable and opportunistic extractivism. From this it follows that the romanticised image of indigenous peoples portrayed as wise custodians of natural resources needs to be reassessed in the context of external trade and market demands. This also entails, as Cristina Eghenter argues (chapter 3), that we should discard those dichotomous views seeing indigenous people's practices either as "destructive" or "conservative." Her contextual approach, and the comparison between two historically distant cases of exploitation (gutta-percha in early 20th century and *gaharu* in the 1990s), indicates how social factors, as well as the choice environment of individuals, can have significant repercussions on either under-use or over-use of forest resources.

Prevailing environmental ideas rising from colonial writings (from 1870 to 1930) are examined by Lesley Potter in chapter 4. These provide a unique insight on

the symbolic, geographical, ecological, social, and political dimensions of colonizers in their attempt of modifying the landscape. This argument is further developed by Amity Doolittle (chapter 6). She describes how attitudes and the practices of colonizers towards forest and their uses have persisted until present time, especially in the context of national politics and policies. Thus, both colonial and postcolonial states share importantly common features: an imposition of Western notions of “private property” over traditional customary practices and a strong emphasis on commercialization of forest resources benefiting local elites. As Doolittle makes clear, today – as in the colonial past – forest-dependent people continue to be blamed for the dramatic changes occurring in the landscape and for the progressive decline of forest cover.

Reed Wadley (chapter 5) explores the creation and maintenance of boundaries as an integral component of territoriality, with a special focus on the upper Kapuas River over the last two centuries. Such boundaries do not only set off a state’s territory from other states, they also include more intangible boundaries, ethnicity, notions and perceptions of the environment that are constantly being rethought. State boundaries establish rights of access to land and natural resources, set off national territories, and are meant to control the movement of local people, who – nevertheless – tend to ignore them. On the other hand, challenges to state-level boundaries may come in the form of inter- and intracommunities disputes that redesign patterns of land use and exploitation of forest products. Interestingly enough, as Wadley reminds us, “the earlier colonial attempts to divide rival tribes and kingdoms are still remembered in fuzzy fashion by today’s local people, and they use these memories in their on-going competition over resource access with one another” (153).

The colonial construction of knowledge about local peoples and their environment is further taken on board by Michael Dove and Carol Carpenter (chapter 7). In their analysis of the “poisonous” *upas* tree of the East Indies, they show how the shifting image of this plant (seen in the early colonial era as a metaphor of the challenges that forest and their people posed to colonial project) have slowly been modified over the centuries, especially in response to the changes of nature and direction in the colonial project.

The volume’s part three is mainly concerned with the social-political transformations that have taken place in Borneo in recent historical times. Drawing on his 40 years of research amongst the Rungus of Sabah, George Appell provides a detailed account of how Western ideologies and a distorted understanding of people’s cultural practices have led to the progressive exhaustion of vital natural resources. For the Rungus, the transformation of the landscape has not only produced spatial disorientation, but also the dislocation of memories of the past – hence badly affecting communities’ internal cohesion, solidarity networks, and traditional livelihood. Compared to the Rungus of Sabah, the Kelabit of Sarawak described by Monica Janowski (chapter 9)

appear to have been more successful in coping with the new transformations and externally induced contingencies. For instance, they have been able to increasingly adopt permanent wet rice agriculture by migrating to nearby areas best suited for wet rice cultivation while reducing the production of upland rice. Overall, this strategic switch has led to surpluses in rice production. On the other hand, the Kelabit have been able to retain both the older symbolic economy of rice (a central ceremonial ingredient at *irau* “naming” feasts) as well as a modern symbolic economy where rice features as cash crop. In both cases, rice is a source of prestige and cultural reproduction, and – in fact – its sale allows people to sponsor *irau* feasts. In his concluding chapter, Graham Saunders brings together different points of view and perceptions of the Borneo environment (indigenous, Arab, Chinese, and European). As he cautions, there is no doubt that the Borneo environment will continue to change in future years and “whether this will be regarded as ‘development’ or ‘exploitation’ will depend largely on one’s point of view and whether it brings benefits or not to those affected” (289).

This scholarly, yet accessible book, will be of value to practitioners in the social and political sciences, as well as to informed generalists interested in Southeast Asia history and dynamics of change. It is also an essential reading to anyone working beyond academia in the field of development, conservation, and property rights.

Dario Novellino

Whitaker, Mark P.: Learning Politics from Sivaram. The Life and Death of a Revolutionary Tamil Journalist in Sri Lanka. London: Pluto Press, 2007. 251 pp. ISBN 978-0-7453-2353-4. Price: £ 19.99

Sivaram Dharmaratnam, perhaps the best-known journalist in Sri Lanka under his pen-name “Taraki,” was abducted by gunmen in Colombo on 28 April 2005, and found dead the next morning. As a former militant, expert on counter-insurgency, founder and editor of the highly influential TamilNet website, and columnist in the Colombo *Daily Mirror*, Sivaram’s uncompromising coverage of the political and military situation had placed him in particular danger following the emergence on his native East Coast of the progovernment Tamil militia led by Colonel Karuna, as a breakaway faction of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Describing him as “a brilliant journalist,” Reporters Sans Frontières recorded in its 2006 annual report that “After arresting one suspect, police abandoned the investigation.”

Sivaram, who knew all the key figures in Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict and seemed to have sources of information unrivalled by other political commentators, had told friends that he feared for his safety after police raided his house in 2004, and progovernment media accused him of being a spy for the Tigers. One of those friends, the American anthropologist Mark Whitaker, had been working for years on this unusual book, planned as an “intellectual history” (3) of Sivaram, but which has proved in the event to be his extended obituary.

Anthropos 103.2008