

ULASAN BUKU/BOOK REVIEWS

The Modern Plantation in the Third World by E. Graham and I. Floering, edited with a Foreword by D.K. Fieldhouse. 1984, Croom Helm, London. 231 pp. UK Hardback £ 25.00.

This challengingly entitled book by a former Unilever director, plantation manager and Governor of the London School of Oriental and African Studies should have been interesting. Instead it slips into a series of confused assertions and rambling attacks on selected rival theorists of plantations.

Promisingly, Graham begins by advancing a case that the modern plantation has changed fundamentally from its counterpart in colonial times because of the effects of independence and new technology. However, this potentially fruitful thesis is overlaid and frankly contradicted by his next theme: even in colonial times there was little wrong with the plantation system and their post-colonial development problems stem from a bad image. Either plantations were rather a bad show once but are different now or they always have been exemplary models of growth. Graham seems unaware that he cannot have it both ways. His attempt to do so makes for much confusion although eventually the real aim (I think) of the book emerges – the presentation of criticism of those radical writers (such as Beckford) whose erroneous views on plantations have, according to Graham, so dominated development economics that planners and administrators have been deterred unduly from promoting plantations.

Whilst a critique of “radical” theories would be welcome, here it is totally misdirected,. First, development economics has not really been positively influenced by radical theory. Secondly, it seems, to the reviewer at any rate, that development economics has been quite remarkably unaffected by anyone’s views on plantation systems. Thirdly, where those concerned with development issues have concerned themselves with plantations their analyses do not fall neatly into “radical” and “conservative” groupings. After all, Myrdhal (1968, Vol. 1 pp. 445, 448) speaks approvingly of them. Even more surprising, so does Dumont (1957 p. 153). On the other hand, economists with impeccable neo-classical qualifications like Bauer (1946) and Myint (1964/1980) have expressed grave doubts. For example, Myint (p. 52)

“Our analysis has, however, suggested that the failure of the mines and plantations to become ‘the leading sector’ in the underdeveloped countries was due.....to their cheap labour policy which has perpetuated the pattern of low wages and low productivity.”

(Barlow (1978) whilst generally favourable about Malaysian rubber raises serious questions in Chapter 9 that cannot be overlooked. Young (1970) on Latin America concludes "whatever it is, the plantation is not part of a modern agricultural pattern." Should not these immanently respectable views be refuted or at least considered before going on to tackle the wild men from the Caribbean?)

The reader's confidence in the book's capacity seriously to analyse opposing views is further shaken in the "Foreword" by D.K. Fieldhouse, the imperialist historian, author of an official Unilever history and Graham's collaborator and editor after the latter's unfortunate death. "The plantation has played a leading role in the demonology of writers on 'Third World' economic development..... the myths of the past live on." (p. xiv) Demonology, perhaps is combatted by exorcism rather than by serious arguments. This may explain the offhand and selective treatment of opposing views in the book.

Consider the important statement on page 12;

"There has been little formal analysis of the modern plantation estate and no detailed attempt to describe assess and improve it. Even less has any effort been made to develop a form of presentation that might make it better understood, better accepted and more used than it is now;"

From the outset Graham appears to insist that a genuine theory of plantation must lead to approval and assist their acceptance. Hardly the best basis for a scholarly discussion.

Secondly, his assertion about the lack of analysis is surprising. After all Graham had read the standard text by Courtenay (1980) which in refering to the survey by Higman (1969) points out (p. 10) that there were at least 21 definitions of plantations, one third of which mention the significance of metropolitan domination. Possibly all 21 are in error but surely a little argumentation would be in order. And perhaps something on the role of colonialism which Graham resolutely ignores.

It is true, of course, that chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 7-48) are involved in an attempt at forming a new definition. But since the author fails to distinguish between, plantation systems as part of an overall socio-economic system, the plantation as a unit of production, and the plantation as a unit of management the outcome is not enlightening.

The criticism of the radical, Beckford's work (1972-1982) is marginally better. His historical limitations are pointed out (p. 17) the geographical limitations (p. 39) and the limitations of his view of metropolitan trade monopolies (p. 80). However, we did not need to wait a decade to find out

these shortcomings. The early review by Bernstein and Pitt (1974), themselves radicals, is infinitely more valuable and much shorter.

Ironically, this book misses completely Beckford's weakest point because both are actually agreed in their definition of a plantation! Both Beckford (p. 6) and Graham (pp. 15, 17-18) base themselves on the standard neo-classical definition given in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* by Jones (1968) Vol. 12 p. 154) Briefly this says that a plantation is a big exporting farm in the tropics. A starting point that gets us nowhere.

It neglects the historical basis of cheap labour and land for the plantation in the colonial state. Jones, to his credit, later wrestles with the contradictions of his position. Beckford too spends much of his time describing effects of colonialism that are omitted in his initial standpoint. But I believe these remain purely at the level of description and for that reason he fails to elaborate a convincing theory. If only the pre-war *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* had been used. There McBride (1934, Vol. XII p. 148) states;

"Plantations accordingly are a form of great landed estate, usually in colonial or semicolonial countries.... with a laboring class kept in economic if not political servitude.... Plantations are intimately bound up with colonial and imperialist conquest are exploitation."

Of course by itself this does not constitute a theory although McBride adds much detail to it. But it is a beginning, which is precisely what the other is not.

Floering's contribution comprises nicely compressed descriptions of smallholder tea production in Kenya, sugar marketing, and the sugar organisation on three growing countries. The section on FELDA is less satisfactory and on the evidence the sweeping conclusion that it had been "successful" is unacceptable especially as her main source appears to have been FELDA itself. Besides, the "success" of FELDA has depended on political intervention and massive government activity, which rather contradicts earlier parts of the book. However, in general the connection between this "applied" section and earlier parts of the book is none too clear.

This is a sorry end for a book on which much time has been lavished by Graham and much support given by SOAS and Oxford University. The author must have known a great deal about plantation management. A less ambitious book on that topic might have produced better results.

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Pengantar Komunikasi oleh Mansor Ahmad Saman, Ramli Mohamed dan Shawaluddin Anis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang 1984.

Sebagai buku pengenalan, penulis-penulis telah berjaya memenuhi tujuan asasnya, iaitu memperkenalkan bidang ini dengan jelas dan tersusun kepada pelajar-pelajar tahun pertama serta orangramai yang menaruh minat terhadap ilmu dan proses komunikasi, dalam satu buku yang mengandungi hanya 133 halaman.

Walaupun buku ini ditulis oleh tiga orang pensyaran komunikasi, gaya tulisan serta susunan fakta diolah begitu rupa hinggalah tidak dapat dikesan bahawa usaha ini adalah usaha tiga orang berasingan. Tahniah perlu diberi kepada penyunting utama buku ini yang telah memastikan penyatuan yang jelas.

Pengenalan dimulakan dengan berbagai contoh komunikasi yang berlaku dalam kehidupan seharian manusia dalam beraneka bentuk dan rupa. Sebagai satu keperluan hidup bermasyarakat, komunikasi didefinisikan sebagai:

“Satu proses di mana sesuatu ide, nilai, sikap dan sebagainya disalurkan dan dipindahkan serta dikongsikan oleh seorang individu dengan orang lain. Perhubungan didalam diri sendiri juga kami istilahkan sebagai komunikasi.” (ms. 3)

Dalam huraian definisi, petikan definisi-definisi yang dikemukakan oleh penulis-penulis dan pemikir-pemikir terkenal bidang ini seperti Emery, Ault dan Agee, Schramm dan Roberts dan Berlo dibincang dan dibandingkan.

Penerangan mengenai proses dan model komunikasi biasanya adalah amat sukar untuk diuraikan. Buku ini cuba memberi penerangan yang jelas tentang kesan, punca dan penerima, mesej serta saluran komunikasi. D.K. Berlo diberi penjelasan yang terang. Kekurangan bab ini adalah dari segi “comprehensiveness” di mana difikirkan bahawa dengan tertinggalnya

beberapa model lain yang menekankan betapa kompleksnya proses komunikasi ini, maka proses sebenar tidak dapat ditangkap dengan baik oleh pembaca. Model-model seperti yang diutarakan oleh Gerbnee, Newcomb, Westley dan Maclean, Riley dan Riley, Maletzke, M. De Fleur dan Ball-Rokeach patut diberi perhatian.

Bidang-bidang komunikasi yang disebutkan pada peringkat awal tadi diberi perhatian yang teliti bagi beberapa bidang sahaja, seperti komunikasi

interpersonal, interpersonal, kumpulan, antara-budaya, antarabangsa dan komunikasi massa. Mungkin bidang-bidang komunikasi seperti komunikasi pembangunan, pengiklanan dan perhubungan awam boleh dihuraiakan dalam bab ini, tetapi diberikan bab khusus kemudian, satu pilihan yang kurang nyata sebabnya.

Bab yang meneliti penonton-penonton komunikasi menghuraikan sifat-sifat penonton komunikasi interpersonal berbanding dengan penonton komunikasi massa dan juga meninjau beberapa aspek psikologi penonton seperti pemilihan dalam pendedahan, penanggapan dan pengingatan. Yang ketinggalan adalah aspek-aspek sosiologi penonton dari segi keahliannya dalam berbagai kumpulan primary dan sekunder yang turut mempengaruhi kejayaannya dalam berkomunikasi. Penggunaan istilah penonton yang biasanya dimaksudkan sebagai pemerhati, mungkin dapat digunakan dalam konteks komunikasi massa tetapi untuk komunikasi intra atau interpersonal, amat janggal.

Seterusnya buku ini membincangkan kesan-kesan komunikasi ke atas masyarakat, peranan mekanisme mempertahankan diri, dan kesan-kesan media ke atas kanak-kanak citarasa masyarakat. Peranan sosial oleh media massa juga dibicarakan. Lagi sekali kekurangan bab ini adalah dari segi ruang lingkup kajian mengenai kesan kerana beberapa model telahpun diperkenalkan untuk mengkaji kesan seperti oleh Melvin de Fleur dan Ball-Rokeach antara yang lain. Juga model-model yang memperlihatkan peranan media massa dalam pembangunan terutama sekali dalam penerapan inovasi seperti yang dikemukakan oleh Rogers dan Shoemaker boleh juga dimasukkan dalam bab ini. Ini akan memperkayakan lagi maklumat.

Bab Ketujuh merangkumi propaganda dan pemujukan. Bahagian ini dihuraiakan dengan begitu teliti dan menyakinkan. Antara lain bab ini membincangkan penyaluran proses propaganda, teknik-teknik propaganda, strategi-strategi propaganda dan pemujukan dalam proses penukaran sikap. Namun, penulis-penulis mengakui bahawa konsep serta bahan yang terkumpul setakat ini masih daripada dunia barat dan mungkin kurang tepat dengan sosio-budaya kita sendiri.

Perbincangan mengenai pengiklanan sebagai satu lanjutan dari proses pemujukan dihuraiakan dengan terang dengan bantuan beberapa rajah. Bab ini diakhiri dengan perbincangan mengenai iklan dan masyarakat seperti cara-cara bagaimana kita membeli barang yang tidak diperlukan, pengaruh negatif terhadap kanak-kanak, pencabulan tatasusila dan maruah masyarakat; penipuan kandungan media berasaskan pembelian ruang iklan.

Perbincangan mengenai hubungan awam hanya mendapat empat halaman. Oleh kerana perhubungan awam bergantung besar kepada pendapat umum, maka setiap kegiatan perhubungan awam perlu membincangkan jenis-jenis **audien** (khalyak) yang biasanya dihadapi oleh pengamal hubungan awam seperti kerajaan, pekerja, pemegang saham, pres, analisis kewangan dan sebagainya. Media dan saluran bergantung kepada pengenalan dan pemastian terhadap audien sasaran ini. Tanpanya, segala perancangan media tidak bermakna.

Bab terakhir mengenai komunikasi dan pembangunan dihuraikan dengan jelas dan sistematik. Pemetikan kajian-kajian oleh Schramm, D. Lerner, Rogers dan Svenning, Rao dan sebagainya memperkukuhkan hujah-hujah. Penulis juga menekankan bahawa komunikasi massa perlu digunakan dengan saluran-saluran media yang berbentuk tradisional dan interpersonal untuk tujuan pembangunan, satu saranan yang memang tepat.

Sebagai buku teks pengantar, ia memang memenuhi satu keperluan yang terlalu amat lama ujud. Ujudnya buku ini dalam Bahasa Malaysia merupakan satu sumbangan yang nyata terhadap pengajaran dan pembelajaran komunikasi di negara ini.

Sebagai buku teks, ia ditulis dalam bahasa yang amat mudah difahami sehinggakan konsep-konsep serta teori-teori yang begitu kompleks dapat dikemukakan dengan jelas dan terang. Ada kalanya, diselitkan penerangan yang agak lucu demi untuk mempermudah fahaman dan memantapkan minat. Ini adalah amat penting dalam buku bercorak akademik dan sirius.

Penulis-penulis nyata memahami keperluan pembaca dan bagi mereka yang ingin mendalami pengetahuan mereka dalam beberapa aspek komunikasi, mereka telah menyediakan senarai bacaan tambahan bagi setiap bab. Indeks yang terang bagi memudahkan rujukan secara pantas juga disediakan.

Sebagai buku pengantar, buku ini ketinggalan aspek-aspek penting seperti perbincangan mengenai komunikasi yang terdapat di negara kita, kekuatan dan batasannya, penggunaannya, kuasa dan pengaruhnya, yang ada cuma pandangan seimbis sahaja. Sejarah media pula hanya diselesaikan dalam empat perenggan sahaja.

Pada keseluruhannya, saya anggapkan buku ini sebagai satu kemajuan yang nyata dalam pendidikan komunikasi di negara ini. Sebagai buku perintis, ia telah membuka jalan bagi pengeluaran buku-buku komunikasi dalam Bahasa Malaysia untuk kegunaan akademik ataupun untuk pembaca

yang berminat yang dapat menekankan aspek-aspek tertentu dari bidang yang luas ini seperti buku mengenai sejarah dan pembangunan komunikasi di negara ini, buku teori komunikasi antara manusia, buku mengenai komunikasi massa dan masyarakat Malaysia dan sebagainya. Kalaupun kurang mampu untuk menghasilkan buku, ia sekurang-kurangnya dalam bentuk kajian kes-kes tempatan yang dapat dikumpulkan. Ini akan memperkayakan khazanah bahan bacaan & maklumat dalam bidang komunikasi di negara ini.

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Minah Karan: The Truth About Malaysian Factory Girls, by Fatimah Daud, Berita Publishing, Kuala Lumpur, 1985, 168 pp. M\$11

This is a confusing book. It is confusing both in what it intends and in what it contains. Wavering between an overtly descriptive account of life in a Free Trade Zone factory, and an analysis of the many implications — economic, technological, cultural, social and personal — such factory work carries for women, the book fails to offer incisive satisfaction on either level. To be fair to the author, the importance and immensity of these implications on countries and women around the world has resulted in a mountain of detailed research conducted by literally hundreds of researchers in first world and third world countries. To expect a slim volume as this one to deal adequately with all the ramifications of factory employment on women is then unrealistic (although the author, by her sub-title, would seem to indicate she had this expectation of herself).

The subject areas Dr. Fatimah outlines for us are extensive. The general contexts of women's work, the reasons for Free Trade Zones, the working conditions of women workers, their aspirations and backgrounds, their motivations, their inter-ethnic relationships, their migratory patterns are all tackled; it is hardly surprising that each treatment suffers in comparison to more detailed work elsewhere. This possibly would not have mattered if the descriptive content which the author was in a unique position to offer us (she spent over six months working in a factory) was strong enough, but it is not.

One reason that her material is not strong enough to sustain the inevitable superficiality of analysis is that there is little coherence in arrangement or argument. What extrapolation there is from the concrete content of factory workers' everyday experience (and there is not nearly enough of that) is seriously impaired by a lack of focus, a lack of sustainability, imprecision, and, too often, contradiction. To give one example: in the discussion of ethnic polarisation within the factory, the author confuses the reader by arguing, on the one hand, that ethnic boundaries are maintained and enhanced among factory workers, but on the other, that this varies according to circumstances and that ethnic delineations may become blurred. The same can be said, to a greater or lesser degree, about her discussion of workers' aspirations (claiming on the one hand the workers had low education standards resulting in low aspirations, while a page later noting women workers had high job aspirations and wanted 'upward mobility'), motivations for work, and women's roles.

The fact that the book is a distillation of a Ph.D. thesis may explain some of the editorial and analytical inconsistencies and deficiencies, and even the lack of in-depth evidence for a number of points. Discussions of a theory of labour utility in relation to FTZ factory work, 'alienation', 'class consciousness' and 'pluralistic integration' are simply not given enough space nor are the terms properly defined or analysed.

Nevertheless, implicit in the book are many of the important consequences of factory work on women. The effects of FTZ development on women's development, on migration, the conflict of rural and urban values, resulting suspicion and hostility of both village and host community, consequent isolation, the temporariness and insecurity of work, the economic necessity for women workers' participation, are all mentioned. The work situation which includes low pay, lack of promotion opportunities, little skill accumulation, a paternalistic management, no regular free-time, few opportunities for self-development and no worker-representative organisations, are also described. There could have been more exploration of further important themes, including government ideology towards women and work, government/management/worker attitudes and knowledge of labour rights and legislation, and the role of emerging worker-concerned organisations (unions, welfare boards, political bodies, voluntary groups) in seeking either to unite or divide the workers, depending on their *raison d'être*. All of these are essential aspects and are most relevant to a necessary reevaluation of the Free Trade Zones, given the problems of job insecurity, and (women) worker redundancy, shown by the present retrenchment exercises. The anger and frustration of workers of all ethnic groups, male and female, at their situation now that the MNCs have no use for their labour, should alert us all to the woeful lack of provision made for these workers hitherto, and the dire economic situation which now confronts them and their families.

At this point, one cannot help recalling the official statement made at the time the government introduced the population policy: "In times of unemployment, women should stay at home and have babies, and let the men do the work". It is in the Free Trade Zone factories that the contradictions and countervailing demands made on women, both by this society and by the world economy, are starkly shown. But the complexity of the many pulls and pushes on the psyche of the woman worker, the clarity with which she is used or discarded depending on the economic situation, and the difficulty she has in winning acceptance and dignity, as a worker, or indeed, as an individual, are only sketchily captured by 'Minah Karan'.

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