

last works, *Political Economy in Vietnam* ultimately reads from the vantage point of 1992 as a poignant chronicle of Vietnam's attempts during the late 1970s and 1980s to maintain and develop a socialist economy and simultaneously to increase incomes in the face of unremitting domestic and external pressures.

Outside Vietnam it is too often assumed by nonspecialists and policymakers (often the same groups) that the Vietnamese Party did not begin to consider economic reform until the Sixth Party Congress in 1986. Various works describe the tentative, sometimes ambivalent reform steps taken in the early 1980s, and the reform discussions and policies of the early 1980s, but Gough's volume is at its strongest when it describes the contours of these hesitant economic reform steps and the progression — formal and informal — of economic policy phases, especially in the early 1980s.

In a Vietnamese era of joint ventures, golf courses, World Bank microeconomic training courses, prostitution, Hanoi bookstores with new expensive titles and few customers and other symbols of the rapid marketization of Vietnam, it is useful, however infrequently, to return to now unpopular basic questions about the origins of the Vietnamese struggle against foreign domination and its attempts to construct socialism. This Gough does at times, most notably in a brief but useful and interesting discussion of debates in Vietnamese history over stages and modes of production.

There are problems in this work. It tries to cover too many sectors of Vietnamese development, in too many time periods. The broad coverage intended and attempted subjects the volume to a certain inevitable superficiality. That superficiality is exacerbated by a frequent and disturbing willingness to accept Vietnamese explanations without criticism or evaluation, a disconcerting use of official rhetoric, and a distressing lack of candour and analysis in discussing such topics as the role and status of women, the struggles of ethnic minorities and of intellectuals, stunted Party-state and Party-NLF relations, corruption, post-1975 executions, political prisoners, a singularly one-sided acceptance of Vietnam's (1976 and 1982) views of its relationship with China and the region, a particularly infuriating explication of the supposed superiorities of Vietnamese-style democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and other issues.

All these problems mar what can be, in its best chapters, a touching survey of the tortuous course Vietnamese socialism has faced and has now largely abandoned. That many in Vietnam and abroad once believed in that course and its goals is, from the perspective of 1993, a haunting theme of this flawed but at times moving work outlining a time and a world gone now only seven years, but already long past. Equitable and prosperous socialist development has never seemed a more elusive goal for Vietnam than it appears today.

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ERRATA

D.M. Roskies' review of *A Study of the Evolution of the Malay Language* and *An Introduction to the Development of Modern Malay Language and Literature*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1993):

Page 194, line 2, "sad" should read "ad"; line 9, "seriation" should read "seriatim"; line 16, "same" should read "said".

Page 195, line 11 from bottom, "them" should read "it"; line 10 from bottom, "Promythean" should read "promethean".

Page 196, line 5, "write" should read "wrote"; line 18 from bottom, insert comma after "on".