Alvin Coox’s essay on Shigemitsu Mamoru effectively argues that the Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. used his position to try to moderate the adventure some Japanese army from committing itself to a disastrous war with the Soviets over the 1938 Changkufen Incident. Coox convincingly shows how unlikely a candidate for war criminal Shigemitsu should have been.

For a diplomat like Matsuoka Yosuke who keeps appearing in so many of these essays, Barbara Teeter’s treatment of him is a bit disappointing. Teeter’s, in amply showing the insane side of this Foreign minister, has ignored the fact that Matsuoka’s pro-Axis policies in 1940-1941 were in many ways quite justified and rational.

Lee Farnsworth begins his essay on Hirota Koki by saying this Foreign Minister is “an historical figure in search of a niche,” but Farnsworth does little to help his subject find it. Professor Farnsworth does, however, effectively argue that Hirota did not deserve being among the seven war criminals hanged after the war. The author does a good job of discussing the effect of Shinto nationalist education and Hirota’s marriage ties to the Genyosha society on his subject, but fails to supply a strong conclusion to his essay and so Hirota must still search for his niche.

This most helpful book to students of East Asian diplomacy would have been even more helpful if a section on British diplomats had been included and some of the marginal diplomats covered left out. The book does contain, however, an excellent appendix of all major diplomatic officials in each country for the period discussed and the concise listing of the confusing Chinese government alone is worth the price of the book.

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As the title indicates this book attacks a complex and difficult problem and as one would expect the results are somewhat uneven. The author states that the book will attempt to set out what is known of the political, social, and economic history of the Indonesian people from the earliest times down to the present with a view to understanding the present day prospects for economic development. In fact, as Sievers notes, he focuses primarily on Java. From his work three main points emerge. The first is that the Indonesian social character is mystical, as opposed to rational as we understand that term in the West. Secondly, the Indonesian economy must be seen as dualistic as the term is used by Furnivall. The implication of the combination of mysticism and economic dualism is that the prospects for economic development in the foreseeable future are not good. Sievers feels Indonesia would have to transform its social values into rational western ones if they hope to achieve full development of the economy. He stresses that the decision as to whether or not to do this must be left to the Indonesians and he recognizes that a choice for lesser development would be a reasonable decision. His third point is that regardless of which path is chosen the social welfare of the people can only be achieved by assigning top priority to village reconstruction and the establishment of village autonomy and democracy. Siever does an excellent job, in the main body of the text, of setting out the problems which Indonesia faces. If he had pursued this analysis and told us in detail how the reconstruction of the village would have
assisted the development of welfare he would have added a step that, as the text stands, is largely implicit. Do not misunderstand me. I strongly support his contention that strengthening village structure is crucial to Indonesia's development. I also feel he has the knowledge to give strong support to his case. I only wish he had given more space to spelling out in detail how this would work. This would have been an invaluable guide to planners and a real contribution to the theory of rural development. Let us hope that Dr. Sievers pursues this in further publications.

The main body of the book is given to a compact summary of the economic and political history of Indonesia. Current archaeological work is drastically altering our understanding of the earliest stages of the development of the cultures of Southeast Asia and it is unfortunate that this book, like so many other such brief summaries, repeats outmoded interpretations. Obviously this era is peripheral to Sievers main interests and no author has time to research all the details of this sort in a book which handles as large a slice of time and as complex a topic as this one. But it makes archaeologists tear their hair, misinforms the general public, and adds nothing to the main thrust of the argument, and in my opinion it would be much better left out.

The significant part of the book is the compact review of the history of the area which is now the Indonesian nation, focusing on Java, from the time of earliest Portuguese contact up to the early 1970's. Sievers takes the reader through the extremely complex political and economic events with admirable clarity. The presentation of the events, the development programs, and their successes and failures in the post-Sukarno era is particularly valuable. The enormous problems faced are clearly laid out, and praise is given for the achievements. It seems an extremely fair and appreciative assessment. Into this fine piece of work Sievers periodically inserts the assertion that however insurmountable the problems faced may seem the true reason for the ultimate failure of modernization must be laid at the door of the mystic nature of the Indonesian character.

The argument for the importance of mysticism is in all ways the weakest part of the book. Mysticism is initially defined at a very abstract level using definitions drawn from such authorities as Hegel, Jung, Malraux, and Bertrand Russell. Very briefly Western thought is said to separate man from nature and to free him from it, (a dubious proposition in our ecology minded age), and in freeing him from it man is made rational. Eastern mysticism, on the other hand, merges man with nature and relies on inspiration and insight, rather than analytical knowledge and rationality. It could be argued that this is not a distinction between Eastern and Western thought, but a distinction between metaphysical thought and pragmatic, scientific thought in whatever culture they be found. This however need not be argued here.

The view of mysticism taken by Sievers seems most pointedly expressed when he says (page 4) "For our concerns, mysticism as a generic social phenomena signifies above all unpredictable, contradictory, illogical, and paradoxically, sometimes violent patterns of behavior. For the mystical outlook of the Orient is the contrary of the rationalistic outlook of the West." If Sievers accepts this as a true definition of mysticism and further accepts as fact that the Javanese (page 26) have an "unquenchable thirst for the mystic," then it follows without need of further proof that rational action will virtually be impossible. Here again the problem of whether or not this is a valid definition of some human phenomena which can be labeled mysticism is a matter too vast for the scope of this review. But for Sievers argument concerning Indonesian economic development to be accepted he must prove that what has been called mysticism in Java is the same phenomena defined here. To do this he would have to analyze Javanese...