

ERICH PILZ, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte und Theoriebildung in der marxistischen chinesischen Historiographie*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1991, 355 pages, DM 70.-/öS 490 (ISBN 3-7001-1918-6)

Erich Pilz's study is a very thorough and diligent work. He describes the development of Chinese Marxist historiography, the discussions about the *Asiatische Produktionsweise* (Asian mode of production), the socio-economic structures during the Han-period, and the different attempts at periodisation of Chinese history, under the influence of mainly Soviet schemes in the 1930s and 1950s. The author has analysed numerous original sources on Chinese communist historiography. The book is well documented and written in a solid and clear style.

Erich Pilz is right in saying that in the late 1920s and 1930s there were attempts at scientific research in Marxist historiography outside the party. One example seems to have been Ch'en Hsiao-chiang (Chen Xiaojiang). Though devoted to historical materialism, he even criticised Kuo Mo-jo's and T'ao Hsi-sheng's historical studies as shallow. But the discussions about the character of Chinese society (feudal, semifeudal or even capitalist) very soon became drawn into the intra-party struggles, since an "exact" definition was necessary to legitimize the appropriate tactic in the second united front with the nationalists.

However, the withering away of "real-existing socialism" within a few years (though projected for eternity) has made the Marxist theoretical approach to society and history more suspect than ever. The deficiency of this study therefore lies mainly in the author's methodological approach to the sources. He treats the numerous articles and books of Chinese Marxist authors more or less as results of scientific research. He does not see that in communist historiography research findings have to follow the guidelines given by the party or to provide evidence of the political standpoint in the intra-party struggle. Under these conditions the scientific spirit withers away or has to wait for better times. Ch'en Po-ta, the ideological adviser to Mao Tse-tung, was no scientist. He was the propagandist of a certain faction in the party, clothing his arguments (and those of the faction he belonged to) on specific topics such as the second united front in philosophical and historical concepts. Fan Wen-lan, the famous historian, in the foreword of one of his books, expressed his gratitude to the wise party, for having corrected his false thinking and giving him the right understanding of Chinese history. Thanks to the party, he changed large parts of his manuscript. Hou Wai-lu advocated

the Comintern-line in the party, close to Stalinist historiography. His "History of Chinese Philosophy" is mainly a Chinese communist propaganda-manual for the intellectuals, in which he arranged the historical facts according to the official party-line. One can therefore only agree with the statement made by Ch'ien Mu in 1939 that the Marxist historians abused historical slogans as a means of propaganda for the reform of the present (quoted in Pilz, p. 38). Historiography as well as Marxist philosophy in general had become the handmaiden of party politics. I cannot, however, agree with the very optimistic view on Chinese Marxist historiography expressed by the author on the last pages of his study. For him historiography had become the handmaiden of the party only in the 1960s, while the scientific *Errungenschaften* (achievements) of historical materialism in the 1930s and 1950s were undeniable.

Now, looking at the present situation of historiography (as well as other social sciences) in the People's Republic of China: Anyone who has anything to do with Chinese communist historians is deeply concerned about the low standard of research and facilities, due to the rule of communist historiography in the last 40 years and of its foundations laid down in the 1930s. It will take decades to do away with the consequences.

Nevertheless, Erich Pilz has provided a solid description of the development of historiography, especially for the 1950s, a period little researched so far. His book is a useful survey of the materials published by Chinese Marxist historians.

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THOMAS HEBERER, *Korruption in China. Analyse eines politischen, ökonomischen und sozialen Problems. Mit einem Anhang "Gesetze, Kommentare und Falldarstellungen zur Bekämpfung der Korruption in China"*, bearbeitet von Konrad Wegmann. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1991, 363 pages, DM 54.- (ISBN 3-531-12271-1)

Slogans against the corruptness of privileged cadres were one of the foremost criticisms during the Chinese protest movement of 1989. They have to be seen against the background of two developments during the 1980s in the People's Republic of China (PRC): After years of accusing each other of corruption, conservatives as well as reformers within the Communist Party were confronted with something that neither had been striving for: More and more Chinese were losing faith in the credibility of