

do what every cartographer does as a matter of principle – he must generalize.

The fact that Uhlig has succeeded in providing the reader with such a comprehensive mine of information – and such is this little volume on South-east Asia – places it on a par with the 2 classical accounts of E.H.G. Dobby and Ch.A. Fisher (both entitled "South-East Asia"), which do admittedly have a larger format and therefore make easier reading, though they do not necessarily have the same broad spectrum and certainly not the topicality of Uhlig's pocket-book.

Dietrich Kühne

BERNHARD DAHM, *José Rizal. Der Nationalheld der Filipinos.* (Persönlichkeit und Geschichte, 134). Göttingen, Zürich: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 1988. 88 pages, DM 14,80

The author and publishers are to be congratulated on this first presentation of the Philippine doctor, writer and national hero, José Rizal, to a German public. His biography appears in a series called *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* along with the great names of European politics and humanities.

Rizal studied for a while in Heidelberg and was friendly with German scientists and intellectuals. He published what is probably his most important novel *Noli me tangere* in Berlin in 1887. Nevertheless, Rizal is practically unknown in Germany. Bernhard Dahm's important and most welcome book extends the extremely limited contribution in the German language to Rizal and his times. Up to now, the only literature available were mainly Bernhard Dahm's own works and a biography by Harry Sichrovsky about Rizal's friend Ferdinand Blumentritt, himself a specialist on the Philippines.

Dahm tells the story of Rizal's life in the context of Spanish colonial government during which the Filipinos were subject to discrimination and prejudice. It was the suppression in his home country as well as the ideas of the enlightenment and liberalism which he got to know as a student of medicine and the arts in Madrid, Paris and Heidelberg, that made Rizal criticize the Spanish rule and become a protagonist of Philippine nationalism. He used political clubs, newspapers and magazines, speeches and mainly his novels as platforms for propagating his reform ideas. Yet he did not aim at secession from Spain, but at assimilation. Although he was a deeply religious man, he particularly criticized the unlimited power of the Catholic Church and its orders.

In his novels *Noli me tangere* (first published in German in 1987) and *El Filibusterismo* we find a medical doctor's sociological and political diagnosis of his society. He discovers a malignant ulcer called *frailocracia*, the political, economic and spiritual despotism of the monks. Rizal is not sure whether this ulcer can be cured by medication or whether an operation is necessary. Dahm interprets the protagonist's different and changing positions concerning reforms and violence as Rizal's own inner conflict. Finally, however, Rizal concludes – in Dahm's opinion – that violence must not be met by violence. Oppression has to be met by unselfish idealists willing to give up their lives for their convictions. On the other hand, there exist notes where Rizal does not reject violence in general, but rather "postpones" it as being tactically unwise at a specific point in time. Rizal does not support a revolution carried out by the majority of the people, but favours reforms by the rulers of his country.

This is why he rejected the 1896 rebellion of the secret organization called Katipunan, which was based partly on his ideas. Unlike Rizal and his political friends, the Katipuneros were members of the lower classes. Philippine historians like Agoncillo have interpreted the upheaval as a proletarian and socio-revolutionary movement. Dahm is doubtful about such an interpretation because of the absence of ideas of class-conflict and socialist ideology. In Dahm's opinion, the movement only differed from Rizal in the use of violence. Nevertheless, the administration considered Rizal to be the intellectual head of the rebellion, imprisoned him, sentenced him to death and shot him on 30th December 1896, aged 35.

Dahm regards Rizal as a westernized intellectual who had stronger ties in Europe than in Asia, due to the Hispanization of his country. It is amazing, however, that he did not notice the rise of Meiji Japan. Rizal knew the Japanese politician, author and journalist Suehiro Tetchō, who also fought for political reforms and published his ideas in his novels. The Japanese at least was so impressed by Rizal that he wrote about him in his novels *Nan'yō no daiharan* (Great Storm in the South Seas) and *Arashi no nagari* (After the Storm).

It would have been interesting to learn more about the economic situation of Rizal's family. They leased land from the monks, and thus belonged to the Inquilinos, who let it to tenants, making considerable profit. They belonged to the middle class and could have prospered, had not the monks retarded such a process. Does that explain Rizal's attack on the monks, his willingness to assimilate with secular Spain and his differences with the Katipunan?

Experts on the Philippines probably will ask these questions, but Bernhard Dahm's aim is to present José Rizal to a larger German audience. He cer-



tainly is very successful in this. This book provides the reader not only with a well written biography of Rizal but also with a good and informative introduction to the Philippines and its history.

Reinhard Wendt

WERNER MEISSNER, *Philosophie und Politik in China. Die Kontroverse über den dialektischen Materialismus in den dreißiger Jahren*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1986. 260 pp., DM 32,-

A spectre has been haunting the West for several decades: the "sinization of Marxism". Profound speculations about, for instance, the heritage of "dialectical" yin-yang philosophy within the Holy scriptures of Chinese Marxism, fill entire libraries. Such theories were superficially justified by a speech made by Mao Zedong at the 6th plenum of the 6th Central Committee (what a remarkable magic of numbers!) in 1938, and were openly proclaimed by the Chinese communists from 1943 onwards.

Werner Meißner has done away with this spectre. The thorough analysis of essential writings of Chinese Marxism gives access to the true sources of what was believed to be unique in Chinese dialectical materialism. Meißner's book reveals them as merely political issues. According to him the examination of several basic writings has neither been satisfactory from the point of formal logic nor has it revealed any noticeable innovation in any field of contemporary philosophy. In spite of their alleged purely "philosophical" content, the publications of the period in question (the 1930s) prove to be but a hidden reflection of political issues with which the Chinese Communist Party was concerned at that time.

Meißner concentrates his study on a crucial event of the history of modern China: the debate on the "united front" with the Kuomintang during the years 1934-1939, with a climax between 1936 and 1937. Although, in all the writings analysed by Meißner, no direct mention is made of this problem which seems to be the most urgent of the period, the question of whether there should be a united front with the Kuomintang or not, pervades all "philosophical" literature in a way which, at first glance, is invisible to the naked eye of the professional China watcher who is used to taking all utterances of Communist Party leaders seriously.

In order to decode statements about "the law of identity in formal logic" or the "unification of sensorial and theoretical cognition" and "mechanistic epistemology" with regard to their actual (i.e. political) meaning, Meißner