

MECHTHILD LEUTNER: *Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Politik und Wissenschaft. Zur Herausbildung der chinesischen marxistischen Geschichtswissenschaft in den 30er und 40er Jahren.* (Veröffentlichungen des Ostasien-Instituts der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bd. 28). Wiesbaden: Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1982. XIV + 379 pages, DM 58. -

In reading this work one is often reminded of the comment made by Feuerwerker and Kahn to the effect that history for Chinese Communists "begins to look more like propaganda than science". The intention of the authoress, however, is to show instead how a Marxist interpretation of history in China arose, caught between the demands of political thought on the one hand and scientific method on the other. Although Marxist historiography in China, positioned as it is between the poles of politics and science, takes up the tradition of historiography found in Imperial China, the authoress nonetheless sees a fundamental difference: while the traditional interpretation of history had the function of legitimizing the individual ruling dynasty, the Marxist interpretation of history serves considerations of strategy as well as the shaping of ideological and political ideas in the revolution.

The authoress explains certain characteristic features of the Chinese Marxist interpretation of history by the specific course taken by the reception of Marxist ideas in China. 1. Whereas Marxism was conceived by its creators as a scientific theory of the working class for carrying through the revolution against the rule of the bourgeoisie, its reception in China was only possible in a "utilitarian" form owing to the particular socio-economic features of the country, that is, Marxism was viewed as a weapon in the struggle of an oppressed nation against foreign aggressors and as a universal means of combat used by the oppressed against the ruling class, independent of the stage of historical development. 2. Marxist concepts were received in an eclectic, syncretic fashion, just as the Western ideas from the bourgeois traditions had been. It is here, in the view of the authoress, that the reasons for the specific characteristics of Marxist theory in China are to be sought.

The book outlines the emergence of a new interpretation of history in China, triggered by confrontation with the West. It examines in greater detail the beginnings of the Marxist conception of history in the writing of Li Dazhao as well as the debates on the character of society and social history which developed after the collapse of the 1st united front in 1927, debates which were led by the historians with leanings towards the Chinese Communist Party. The main objective of the book, however, is the study of the process of crystallization of Chinese Marxist historiography in the 30s and 40s, particularly from the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War to the founding of the People's Republic of China. For the authoress the establishment of the 2nd national united front and the beginning of the war of resistance against Japan ushered in a new phase in the development of the Marxist interpretation of history insofar as both events brought an interest in national tradition. Whereas the Marxist

historians at the beginning of the 1930s were confronted with the necessity of breaking with the continuity of tradition and placing Chinese history within the evolution of world history, tradition as a "historical heritage" now appeared in a new light and the challenge of dealing with this new situation was set.

For her study the authoress selected seven representative Marxist historians who were active in the war, some in the Guomindang area, some in the Communist Yan'an region: Lü Zhenyü, Jian Bozan, Hou Wailu, Fan Wenlan, Hu Sheng, Chen Boda and He Ganzhi. With this choice she has covered the hard core of the group of Communist historians who for a very long time also defined the conception of historiography in the People's Republic of China. We become acquainted with them at the beginning of the study through biographical sketches; later their individual standpoints on the major questions of that time are explored: the problem of a new understanding of culture and ideology, the question of the laws governing historical development, and the question of accepting and adopting the heritage of the nation's history. In Section 6.1, "The laws governing historical development as seen in Chinese history", it becomes clear how arduous the task was for historians to force Chinese history into the Procrustean bed of the Eurocentric five-stage-model which Stalin had elevated to the level of dogma. Even Marx's meager reference to the category of the "Asiatic mode of production" offered no escape route and fueled the scholastic dispute even more. The discussion by the historians on the Marxist categories of the general and the particular (*Besonderes*) are dealt with in detail. Here it would be good to clarify where the terminology of the historians originated. The founders of Marxism-Leninism talk more of a dialectical relationship of the general to the individual (*Einzelnes*) or of the general to the concrete.

What is also very important is the following observation on methodology, which is discussed in Section 6.2, "Acceptance and adoption of history as a historical heritage": The historians work not only with the method of historical comparison based on historical-materialistic analysis, but also - even up to most recent times - with the method of historical analogy which stems from the traditional interpretation of history, a method which reveals a pre-scientific understanding of historiography.

The study, which has been very clearly laid out, derives its high quality from the fact that it is based on an extensive study of source material. One of its most valuable results can be seen in the evidence that the endeavour to apply the Marxist concept of history by no means leads to identical positions for all of the historians considered, that in fact they are often very far apart from and in some cases contradict each other. This work on the Chinese Marxist historiography of the 30s and 40s thus confirms a statement made by Feuerwerker and Kahn in reference to history in the People's Republic of China: "... the historical situation in China today seems in some ways more fluid than in the past. This is not because dogma is less strict but rather because it has not yet gained the absolute approbation which comes of old age. For the moment the new scholasticism is still in flux".

The study is a fundamentally important contribution to the clarification of the development of Marxist thinking in China before the founding of the People's Republic.

Wolfgang Lippert

JÜRGEN OSTERHAMMEL: *Britischer Imperialismus im Fernen Osten. Strukturen der Durchdringung und einheimischer Widerstand auf dem chinesischen Markt 1932-1937.* (Chinathemen Bd. 10). Bochum: Brockmeyer 1983. 631 pages, DM 64.80

A crucial problem of social scientific and economic analysis based on development theories concerns the role of foreign capital in the economic development of China in the first half of the nineteenth century. Authors whose ideas are based explicitly or implicitly on modernisation theory (Hou Chi-ming, Ramon Myers) emphasise the positive impetus given to development by foreign involvement. On the other hand, authors influenced by dependency theory and contemporary critical Chinese writers (such as Chen Han-seng), as well as current commentators in the People's Republic of China, regard foreign investment as a cause of the blocking of independent industrialisation and of the destruction of domestic handicrafts, i.e. as a factor in the development of underdevelopment (e.g. Victor D. Lippit). Both hypotheses are problematic. As regards the former position it may be argued that foreign powers and economic interest groups were able to obtain control over significant parts of the industrial and commercial sectors, and to use them in their own interests, ever since the "opening" of China. The other position overemphasises the dependency paradigm in a form which is not permissible in the case of China, where foreign penetration was, unlike in the Caribbean or Latin America, restricted in area and duration. Too little account is taken of internal societal factors which hindered modernisation.

Jürgen Osterhammel has made a valuable contribution to resolving this controversy in his thorough and empirically well-founded work. His investigation is concerned for the most part with the activities of the five major British firms operating in China: Jardine, Matheson and Co., Butterfield and Swire, Asiatic Petroleum, British-American Tobacco and Imperial Chemical Industries, in the period from 1932-37. The topic is well chosen, since Britain, in the form of these five firms, had by far the strongest position in the China market and more or less controlled production and trade in certain sectors: kerosine, cigarettes, artificial fertilisers, sugar, and cotton textiles. Moreover, this period leading up to the Sino-Japanese War was marked by a first upsurge of industrialisation, in which the Chinese central government was able to develop considerable efficiency.