

HARRO VON SENGER / MARCEL SENN (eds), *Maoismus oder Sinomarxismus? Rechtswissenschaftlich-sinologische Tagung an der Universität Zürich, 5. und 6. Dezember 2014*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016. 300 pages, €54.00. ISBN 978-3-515-11028-0

Within a short period of time, China has become the second largest economic power in the world after the USA, and the second largest recipient of foreign direct investments. About 50 million private companies have been set up since Deng Xiaoping introduced the socialist market economy at the beginning of the 1990s, accounting for about 80 per cent of the Chinese companies today.

How is this possible in a Maoist country? Could the developments of the last decades have been achieved if the Chinese Communist Party were still officially upholding Marxist doctrine? Has the CCP in reality silently transformed itself into a “Chinese Capitalist Party” and abandoned Marxism? These questions were the subject of a conference organised by the University of Zurich, held on 5 and 6 December 2014, the results of which are compiled in the present volume. The scope of the book renders it impossible for a detailed analysis of all of the excellent topics and interesting discussion materials contained within. Therefore, I will concentrate on the paper of one of the two co-editors of the book, Harro von Senger, followed by a brief overview of the main topics of the remaining contributors.

Harro von Senger’s paper “Der Sinomarxismus zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts” (“Sinomarxism at the beginning of the 21st century”) deals with the alleged deviation from the initial Marxism of Chinese ideology. He quotes the Statute of the Communist Party of China of 14 November 2012, which states that: “The theory of Deng Xiaoping is [...] the Marxism of today’s China” (p. 122). Based on this statement and other Chinese assertions, von Senger maintains the notion of the persistence of some kind of Marxism in China – a point of view in contrast to that of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, for example, which announced a farewell to Marxism in China. Von Senger sustains his thesis through two lines of approach – the phenomenological and the normative – and suggests that these two approaches should be combined in order to describe the current state ideology of China. The ideology of the CCP has been Marxism from the very beginning, even after Mao Zedong’s death in 1976. All the party leaders who followed, such as Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang and Xi Jinping, have praised Marxism, emphasising that China will only be successful as long as it adheres to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The sinisation of Marxism thus has two developmental phases: the creation of Mao Zedong Thought and the development of Marxism after Mao’s death.

According to Harro von Senger, Mao Zedong did not contribute anything essential to Marxism and therefore the notion of “Maoism” is not used in China at all. But the documents of the CCP evoke not only the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin but also elements from Chinese politicians, such as “Mao Zedong Thought”, the “Theory of Deng Xiaoping”, the

concept of “Three Represents” and others. Therefore, the denomination of the current Chinese ideology may correctly be called “Sinomarxism” – an amalgamation of Western Marxism and Chinese components – and not “Maoism”, which is a Western construction. The contribution of the second co-editor, Marcel Senn, deals with Marxism as a philosophy that historically derived from the methodology of Western European Enlightenment. He, too, understands Sinomarxism as a specific Chinese interpretation of Marxism.

Daniel Leese analyses the history and contemporary relevance of the concepts of “Maoism” and “Mao Zedong Thought” in Chinese politics and Western academia. He states that the notion of “Maoism” is avoided in official statements of the CCP for both philosophical and political reasons. The use of the notion of “Maoism” in scientific discourse can be understood in three senses: as the designation of an epoch, mostly from 1949 to 1976; as the totality of Mao Zedong’s theories; and, finally, as a form of exercise of rule or concentration of power.

Another contribution, by Beat U. Wieser, deals with Chinese pragmatism, which has created significant economic success. This pragmatism oscillates, the author shows, between openness and closedness according to the political agenda – which is not always correctly understood by Western observers.

Hans van Ess’s paper evokes the renaissance of Confucianism in the PRC. When Hu Jintao came to power in 2002, he emphasised the idea of a “harmonious society”, considered by many as “Confucian”: “Confucian” harmony has been considered as a bulwark against the social differentiation engendered by capitalist processes since Deng Xiaoping. “But should Confucianism replace socialism in China?” Harro von Senger asks, and answers that Confucianism should not be understood as a replacement of Marxism-Leninism.

The presentation of Heiner Roetz discusses the concept of “Legalism”, a state doctrine at the time of the Warring States (475–221 BC). Legalism had been created at that time as an answer to one of the deepest crises of Chinese civilisation and held that this crisis could only be resolved through the institutional power of a centrally organised state. It aimed to terminate personal dependences and commitments, replacing them with impersonal laws. Heiner Roetz explores whether the application of aspects of Legalism may have contributed to the successful establishment of an authoritarian system in the PRC.

The Second Discussion Round presents the contribution by Anja D. Senz on the relevance and function of experiments in Post-Mao China such as, for example, the introduction of foreign direct investment regulations in 1978, the creation of Special Economic Zones starting in the 1980s, the deregulation of some sectors of the economy, the privatisation of a part of economy and the integration of the Chinese economy into the world market. These political changes have not been interpreted as “shock therapy” in China, but rather as a “trial and error” method on the part of the government.

The contribution of Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler opens the Third Discussion Round and Panel Discussion. It investigates Nepal as an example of the spread, diffusion and even adoption of Mao Zedong Thought outside of China, beginning in 1996 and originating – interestingly enough – not from China but from India. The long-festering Maoist insurgency in the heart of India, which has been challenging the Indian state itself for more than forty years, is the focus of Jens Rosenmeyer’s contribution. The last presentation of this round, the only contribution in English, starts with the question: “How does one come to understand China?” Roland Boer stresses in his answer the importance of a knowledge of Marxism – in addition to knowing the Chinese language and classics or Confucianism. According to Boer, it is a great mistake to dismiss Marxism in China and neglect what is arguably one of the most important factors in an understanding of China.

The second contribution by Harro von Senger – “‘Pragmatismus’ und ‘Maoismus’: Rückblick auf die Tagung ‘Maoismus oder Sinomarxismus?’” (“‘Pragmatism’ and ‘Maoism’: A Retrospective of the Conference ‘Maoism or Sinomarxism?’”) – summarises the discussion of Round Four, thereby providing a useful resume of the two concepts as analysed by several contributors during the symposium.

The CCP continues to espouse Mao Zedong Thought until today, with the exception of a few ideas propagated by Mao during the Cultural Revolution. The party thus takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, the Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important concept of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development as its guiding principles. For this reason, as the book clearly evidences, one should not always focus either on Maoism or Mao Zedong Thought alone, but rather maintain a broader overview of the multiple components guiding the CCP’s governing principles. This concept of political theory is best described with the term “Sinomarxism”, the contributors/editors suggest. The arguments seem plausible and the name appropriate. “Sinomarxism” can thus become a fundamental term for better understanding the Chinese political system.

Stefan Messmann

CHRISTL KESSLER / STEFAN ROTHER, *Democratization through Migration? Political Remittances and Participation of Philippine Return Migrants*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016. 196 pages, \$80.00. ISBN 978-1-4985-1421-7

The Philippines is one of the top labor exporters worldwide. Besides the economic benefits this brings home, there is the widespread hope among Philippine pundits that outward migration will serve as a trigger for a more active citizenship in the political life of the country. This stems from their perception that