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REVIEW ESSAY

Marx, Orientalism, and the Nation State

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Jie-Hyun Lim. *Global Easts. Remembering, Imagining, Mobilizing*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022, xii, 328 pp.

Kolja Lindner. *Marx, Marxism and the Question of Eurocentrism*. Cham: Palgrave, 2022, xxiii, 168 pp.

Abstract

The two books discussed in this review essay speak to issues of projections implied in Western political thinking in the distinction between the "West" and the "East". This includes a tradition in "Western" discourse to project features with negative connotations, such as "despotism", onto a construed "Eastern other", thus obliterating comparable structures of hierarchy in the "own", and it is also linked to the heavy ideological load that concepts of "East" carry when it comes to geopolitical projections of otherness, and often enmity. In *Global Easts: Remembering, Imagining, Mobilizing*, Jie-Hyun Lim undertakes a sweeping critique of the projections just mentioned and links this with a critique of nationalism as well as current mass politics. In *Marx, Marxism and the Question of Eurocentrism*, Kolja Lindner is concerned with reconciling postcolonial perspectives with at least some of Karl Marx's work, insofar as it has been criticized for Orientalist and modernist bias.

The distinction between the "West" and the "East" has marked Western political thinking since antiquity. This hallowed tradition links the "West" with features and values such as individual freedom and human rights, as well as with free market economics and, on a global scale, a domineering approach. The latter also harks back to discourses disparaging the "East" as despotic. In liberal and modernist discourses, liberty and human rights are endowed with a normative aura that appears beyond question. From a colonial perspective, the idea of the "West" has for a long time come under severe criticism. Such criticism predates the arrival of discourses dubbed postcolonial by decades. Yet, under the heading of postcolonial studies and theory, the issues of normative impositions, but also of double standards and, finally, the projection of the Other in Orientalism as well as Eurocentrism have been prominent points of critique. Again, these points are linked to a critical political economy which demonstrates

historically the linkages between Western Europe's colonial expansion and its industrialization, while at the level of theory they refute the promises of modernization theory about some kind of globalizing the "Western" model. Conversely, the "East" is then cast in various forms of deviance from the Western model, be it backwardness or despotism.

The idea that the world falls into large regions marked by the four points of the compass has deep roots, not least in radical social thought. Inevitably, such a division presupposes fundamental differences and, almost habitually, valuation. One of the perennial problems is connected with a tradition in "Western" discourse that projects features with negative connotations, such as "despotism", onto a construed "Eastern other", thus obliterating comparable structures of hierarchy in the "own".[1] This is linked to the heavy ideological load that concepts of East carry also when it comes to geopolitical projections of otherness, and often enmity.

In quite diverse ways, the two books discussed here shed light on these issues. Jie-Hyun Lim undertakes a sweeping critique of the projections just mentioned and links this with a critique of nationalism as well as current mass politics. Kolja Lindner is concerned with reconciling postcolonial perspectives with at least some of Karl Marx's work, insofar as it has been criticized for Orientalist and modernist bias.

Lim positions himself explicitly as a historian turned "memory activist" (p. 15) who grapples with a multiplicity of perspectives on large-scale violence during the first half of the twentieth century. The author refers mainly, but not exclusively, to four regions: Poland, with important side glances at the rest of Europe as well as Israel; his native Korea; Japan; and East Asia at large. Lim's widely noted earlier work has focused on issues of "victim nationalism", again based largely on the experiences of Poland, Korea, and Japan.[2] This perspective remains present in the argument of this book.

Decisively, Lim exposes the relational content of "East" and "West". While Germany is "East" to France or Britain – which in the German context stands for an erstwhile widely detested, then coveted "West" – Germany is "West" to Poland, which in turn is "East" to Germany, all of which is reflected in ideas about civilizational inequalities, in aspirations and fears. A seeming paradox unveils evolutionist or developmental approaches behind such thinking. From the perspective of Imperial Japan, colonized Korea and semi-colonized China were construed as "East". In Lim's conception, these mutual projections are linked both to national self-images as victims and to images of the nation and of differences between nations. Basically, such differences refer to Eurocentric visions of unilinear historical trajectories. This has implications for hallowed issues of historiography, which Lim explores in three thematic blocks: on memorializing the mass crimes of the twentieth century; historical imagining; and the dynamics of mass politics in the early twenty-first century.

As Lim makes clear, the issue of victimhood is not exhausted in casting the national self-image in the victim role. In many cases, traumatizing experiences of victimization do serve as points where national self-images coalesce. Not accidentally, Poland, with its long history of partitions and, more recently, a brutal Nazi occupation, forms one

[1] See Reinhart Kössler, *Despotie in der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993).

[2] See most recently his collection *Opfernationalismus. Erinnerung und Herrschaft in der postkolonialen Welt* (Berlin, 2024).

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of Lim's chief references; another prominent case is Japan on account of the secular experience of atomic bombings in 1945. However, the position is much more ambiguous, since such experiences, while of course germane, also serve as screen memories to shroud or repress historical circumstances where the "victim" nation was in fact implicated in large-scale violence.[3] In the case of Japan, the reference is Japan's war in Asia during the 1930s and 1940s, including genocidal crimes such as the Rape of Nanking. For a long time, this criminal war has been obliterated by the self-image of a pacifist nation, victim to the atomic bombings of August 1945. Comparable ambivalences are also found in Lim's native Korea, while Polish collaboration with the Nazi occupiers and antisemitic incidents (*homo Jedwabnicus*) are largely kept out of the public discourse.

As mentioned, national images and self-images are closely linked to conceptions of historical trajectories, particularly when it comes to the extensive debate about standard and ostensibly deviant paths of development. One of the most notable concerns the West German "specific trajectory", or *Sonderweg*. Lim's main point is that the world abounds with *Sonderwege*, once considered deviations from a set road of development in the image of the "West", more precisely the Whig and also important Marxist interpretations of British and French history in the age of revolutions (pp. 132–133). In particular, the idea of a German *Sonderweg* offered a pivotal way to account for the abomination of Nazism. However, as Lim shows, the argument about deviations and deficiencies abounds also with references to other cases, including Poland and Korea. The basic tenet implicit in the idea of such "deviating paths" is a normative idea that "there's the West and then the rest" (p. 130), while the Western path is considered as exemplary. This conception resonates with notions such as Lenin's distinction of the "American" from the "Prussian" path, but also with more recent debates on "underdevelopment", all speaking to "the Marxist schema of the world economy", with capital as "the universal, while other local conditions equal the particular" (p. 130). Significantly, the logic of *Sonderweg* thinking is also found in postcolonial reasoning, such as in the idea that Korea was caused "to swerve from the usual capitalist course" (p. 142) by the impact of Japanese colonialism. Similar treatments of Indian history underscore a tendency of "jumping voluntarily into the orbit of the capitalocentric world history" (p. 143), and thus underwriting the idea of the West's exemplary position – or, as Lim's references to Asia-centric conceptions make clear, the privileged position of any "centre". This is a call for a thorough rethinking of the interrelated ideas of world history and progress. Lim points to an array of networks that linked together, for instance, the production and consumption of cotton, encompassing regions spanning East and Southeast as well as South Asia and also Europe, and, one may add, the Caribbean. As Lim notes, such "cultural interconnectedness" has made a recent entry into Japanese textbooks of world history which emphasize "horizontal networks" rather than the conventional triad of ancient–medieval–modern. Such "'worlding' history" involves also "decentering world history" and exposing "genealogies of Global Easts in the sense of tracing the origins of the East/West distinction" (pp. 200–201).

[3]On the concept of "implication" generally, see Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford, CA, 2019).

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Lim explores difficulties along these lines in his evaluation of recent Chinese, Japanese, and Korean textbooks on "World History". These include national projects as well as an effort at a joint textbook. Yet, apparently, a kind of path dependency kept authors enthralled and made them hold fast to "the national history paradigm" even when aspiring to write "transnational history" (p. 195). Little progress can be expected without a "change of episteme" (p. 198), to overcome fixation on the nation state and its legitimation by rendering history. As Lim reminds us further, such a "nationalist approach" tends to obliterate historic processes that do not fit the national narrative. This concerns, not least, movements by subaltern groups, and thus nationalist history "swallows up 'people's history' or 'history from below'" (p. 215). Another serious problem concerns the claims of "autochthonism", which involve projecting the nation state of the present back into even the earliest phases of history (pp. 219–222). Again, these issues replicate the problems with East/West binaries as well as the impasse of "the Marxist unilinear schema of the development of socioeconomic formations" (p. 192).

In his third major section, Lim only apparently takes on a different topic, "mobilizing". This section looks at the means by which dictatorships of the twentieth century drew legitimacy, not only and in significant cases not even so much from outright repression and violence, but from mass mobilization. In fact, Lim identifies reliance on "mass support" as the decisive feature that sets "modern dictatorship" apart from "premodern despotism" (p. 259). Such practices rely on orchestrated displays of the masses, exemplified especially by North Korean experiences. At the same time, such practices appeal to "a history of martyrdom made possible only by ironing crooked histories and memories into a neat history" (p. 251). Relevant strategies are discussed in the preceding chapters. Resonating Zygmunt Bauman's critical conception of modernity, Lim here once again refutes Eurocentric views attributing mass dictatorship to some *Sonderweg* trajectory rather than facing up to the sobering idea that it is "one of the normal paths of the modern" (p. 254). Harking back to Hannah Arendt, this perspective also pertains to atrocities of European colonialism, including Nazi colonial schemes in occupied Eastern Europe, as well as "Stalinist political genocide", all of which hinge on "categorical murder" spurred by the essentialist tendency to categorize others based on race, ethnicity, class, and any other arbitrary boundary (p. 256). "Rituals of legitimacy" help to bring people into line in mass dictatorship, but also mass democracies rely on a "relentless buildup of pressure on the individual to conform" (p. 258). Turning specifically to Bolshevism, Lim reminds us of the national tint of the Comintern's anticolonial strategy, which eventually fed into an authoritarian "Marxist pan-Asianism" (p. 290), epitomized by the Indian Subhas Chandra Bose, who eventually entered into an alliance with the fascist bloc during World War II, but also by Korean Marxist Yi Sun-tak, an admirer of Mussolini's Italy, or Sukarno, the first president of independent Indonesia, all of whom "turned Marxist ideology upside down […] mobilz[ing] labor for reasons of national greatness" instead of pursuing its emancipation (p. 291).[4] Again, Lim points to Antonio Gramsci's underrated considerations on the employment of hegemonic politics in Italian fascism (pp. 259–260).

[4]For African instances, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

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As Lim underlines in his closing remarks, his analysis of mass mobilization applies in particular to the current rise of mass demagogy, widely labelled as "populism". Within the context of Lim's argument, the gist of this goes well beyond current relevance. The convergence he observes between different world regions as well as "democracies" and "dictatorships" when it comes, for instance, to systematic, wholesale surveillance also means that "the global divide between East and West is disturbed" and the Global East can no longer be construed as "the constitutive outside in the unilinear developmental scheme of history" (p. 306) – which does not mean that it will be discarded in everyday discourse and consciousness.

Certainly, Karl Marx's thinking on world history was bound up with the idea of an East–West divide and he bequeathed this to subsequent critical social thinking. In particular, Marx's texts on India, and here especially the newspaper articles of 1853, that are seen to presage twentieth-century modernization theory and reveal an Orientalist bend have been well-rehearsed by now. Critics tend to take up an array of catch phrases without much notice of their import for the substance of the author's work. Nevertheless, the debates triggered by these texts have addressed germane issues of social theory, and, above all, of conceptions of world history, and may illustrate some of the vagaries of thinking in East–West categories.

Kolja Lindner reflects the literature just mentioned. He presents his argument in five chapters, mainly unedited reprints of papers published over several years. This makes for a good measure of repetitiveness. However, the book's merit lies in Lindner's plea for a more nuanced view of Marx in the face of – partly justified – postcolonial criticism. He stresses the significant change Marx's perspective underwent over several decades when engaging intermittently with non-Western societies and colonialism. Turning points are marked by Marx's engagements with the Irish question and with Russian populism, as well as by the turn towards a more thorough study of agrarian relations in India.

In his 1853 texts, Marx adhered to the Hegelian notion of world history, which assigned to India secular structural stagnation, despite dramatic fluctuations on the surface. From this perspective, British colonialism was assigned the objective role of breaking up stagnation, opening up the way to capitalist development and ultimately to socialism/communism as the goal of history. Lindner does not reference Marx's Hegelian pedigree but stresses uncritical overreliance on Western sources, besides a lack of a "discriminating, non-Eurocentric perspective on colonialism" (p. 12), as root causes of Marx's Orientalist bend. However, it should be noted that this did not keep Marx from vehemently opposing colonialism even at the time in question.[5] In any case, Lindner argues that Marx did not stop at the emphatic modernism of his 1853 articles, but in his later years turned towards much more precise and empathic views on colonized societies.

In a joint chapter with Lindner's unrelated namesake Urs, the authors propose a refinement of Louis Althusser's notion of an epistemological break in the development of Marx's ideas. The Lindners claim that during the 1850s Marx overcame "historical materialism", which in their view comprises a functionalist developmental

[5]See Thierry Drapeau, "'Look at our Colonial Struggles': Ernest Jones and the Anti-Colonialist Challenge to Marx's Conception of History", *Critical Sociology*, 45:7–8 (2019), pp. 1195–1208.

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teleology[6] and inherent Eurocentrism along with an eschewal of ethics. Subsequently, they see Marx attaining the stage of "historical social science" (pp. 46–52), which in the Lindners' view entailed closer attention to historical specificities and also an ethical stance. Before, Marx had subordinated attention to human suffering to the idea of humanity's progress towards its ultimate aim, communism, such as in the India articles. One may note that this somewhat idiosyncratic reading does not address the pervasive materialist approach in Marx's work. Thus, reading *Capital* may show that Marx's materialist epistemology is not so much about Hegelian teleology but contained in the methodological question about "the mode in which [people] gained their livelihood"[7] in various periods of history as a key to understanding any society.

Furthermore, the claim that only late Marx submitted "explicit ethical considerations" (p. 55) refers to his sketches of the *Paris Commune* of 1871 and to the discussions of distributive principles in a projected socialist/communist society when critiquing the 1875 German social democratic programme. Lindner refers these pronouncements to equalitarian principles and radical democracy but ignores their consonance with earlier and consistent statements that refer to a summum bonum, the indispensable vanishing point of any ethics: the perspective of "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" in the *Manifesto* (1848);[8] the vision of at last closing "the prehistory of human society", in the Preface of 1859;[9] or the insistence of Engels, working in close conjunction with Marx, in 1882: "We must cooperate in the work of setting the western European proletariat free and subordinate everything to that goal" – which according to Engels must take absolute precedence, for instance to national aspirations on the Balkans – "they can go hang for all I care" – if conflicting with the proletarian struggle.[10] While at least the latter quote may be read as Eurocentric, this does not make it unethical. Elsewhere, Marx stated quite clearly a need for an objective, "stoic" approach that still, where appropriate, would not obliterate compassion.[11] All of this is certainly infused with a teleology that harks back to Hegel and can be traced further in Western thinking and social movements.[12] There are valid reasons for dispensing with such a teleology,[13] but it is hard to see how it would not inform a specific ethics.

[6]More persuasively, Michael Krätke stresses Marx's lifelong intense engagement with a wide array of historical processes and a multi-dimensional approach as the indispensable basis of "historical materialism". See Michael Krätke, "Marx and World History", *International Review of Social History*, 63:1 (2018), pp. 91–125, 91, 104.

[7]Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, Book One, *The Process of Production of Capital*, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* [henceforth *MECW*], vol. 35 (New York, 1996), p. 92n.

[8]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party, MECW*, vol. 26 (Moscow, 1990), p. 506.

[9]Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, MECW*, vol. 39 (Moscow, 1983), p. 264.

[10]Friedrich Engels to Eduard Bernstein, 22 and 23 February 1882, *MECW*, vol. 46 (London, 1992), p. 205.

[11]Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value: Volume IV of Capital*, Part II (Moscow, 1975), pp. 117–119.

[12]See, for instance, Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, IL, 1949).

[13]See Reinhart Kössler, "Entwicklung. Zur Genealogie einer toten Metapher und den Folgen", in Franziska Müller *et al*. (eds), *Entwicklungstheorien. Weltgesellschaftliche Transformationen, entwicklungspolitische Herausforderungen, theoretische Innovationen*, PVS-Sonderheft 48 (Baden-Baden, 2014), pp. 435–463.

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For Marx's overcoming of "functionalist teleology" (p. 54) in favour of a more "context receptive" approach (p. 104), Lindner cites as examples the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1851) and *Capital* (1867). Apart from issues of chronology – the *Brumaire* obviously precedes the incriminated India articles – this view of Marx as an "empirically" working "social scientist" relies on a reading of *Capital* as though it were purely a work of social history and not above all a conceptual critique of political economy. Elsewhere, Lindner presents a florilegium of "orientalist themes" from this magnum opus (pp. 18–19), without considering widely discussed methodological issues. The central and conspicuous category of value is not mentioned even once. Accordingly, in his further argument, Lindner takes "abstract labour" as "ambivalent" (p. 133), since it does not address work which is not commodified; thus, along with many others, Lindner ignores Marx's careful qualifications about the purview of his critique of political economy, which pointedly does not disown but, noting the perspective of capital, excludes use value from the analysis of the commodity.[14]

Lindner notes that analysing the Indian rebellion of 1857 and especially British colonialism in Ireland and subsequently responding to Russian populism (*narodnichestvo*), Marx engaged more deeply with internal struggles within the respective societies. In the case of Ireland, he linked such resistance squarely to the prospect of revolutionizing England, i.e., the centre of the capitalist world economy. On the basis of intense studies on Indian social and above all agrarian relations, Marx discarded the idea of overarching state property in land which had been germane to the idea of Oriental despotism; he arrived at "a finely shaded discussion of land ownership in the extra-European world" (p. 22). Overcoming Eurocentrism, Marx now stressed solely the destructive effects of colonialism and sought ways in which non-Western societies might map autochthonous trajectories. He thus arrived at "an exchange with the colonized, their experiences and organizations" (p. 107). This would apply hardly to India, certainly to Ireland, and in particular to Marx's shifting attitudes towards Russia. Here, Marx entered an intense conversation with Russian populists. Upon their inquiries about the prospects of the celebrated Russian peasant commune, Marx drafted answers that convey a vision that transcends the idea that capitalism was the absolute prerequisite for a passage to socialism. Lindner sees in the reasoning about the Russian village commune (*obshchina*) Marx's shift towards "cosmopolitan thinking" (p. 90) or "cosmopolitan communism" (p. 59).

Again, Marx never discarded teleology in the sense of seeing world history leading up to the final goal of socialism/communism. This emerges precisely from his engagement with Russian populists. Contrary to Lindner's interpretation, Marx and Engels stated their rationale clearly: "the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development", if revolutions both in the "West" and in Russia would "complement each other".[15] Such published statements must be weighed against three lengthy drafts to answer Vera Zasulich's query, which

[14]See Marx, *Contribution*, p. 270; Reinhart Kössler and Hanns Wienold, "Der Wert in der Warengesellschaft. Gedankending oder Realabstraktion", in Uwe H. Bittlingmayer, Alex Demirović, and Tatjana Freytag (eds), *Handbuch Kritische Theorie* (Wiesbaden, 2019), pp. 942–944.

[15]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Preface to the Second Russian Edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1881), *MECW*, vol. 24 (Moscow, 1989), p. 426.

were discarded however. These form the bulk of Marx's texts about the fate of *obshchina* that Lindner and many others attach such significance to. The end result was a curt letter which repeats the above-cited view.[16]

Earlier, Marx had insisted that the trajectory of capitalism in England was not obligatory for the rest of the world and confirmed that it was possible for Russia to "acquire all the fruits of this [capitalist] system without suffering its torments".[17] This does not question the world-historical necessity of capitalism; rather, regionally varied trajectories are envisioned.[18] Such possibilities hinge on world-historical conjunctures and contingency, including the will to grasp such opportunities. Ironically, such a vision of variations between world regions is quite akin to concepts that have been put forward at various times in connection with the notion of an Asian mode of production.[19] Lindner condemns such concepts for their Orientalist leanings, in part because they tend to ascribe secular stagnation to certain societies. However, things are more complex when we consider that peculiar societal traits make for differentiated trajectories. Linked to attempts at moving beyond the Procrustean five-stage schema of social formations enshrined in Stalinist orthodoxy, such ideas informed the revival of the "Asiatic" conceptions in the 1950s–1970s.[20]

Apart from the pitfalls of formation theory, these experiences point to serious dilemmas which found expression in the Soviet debates of the 1920s–1930s in mutual accusations of Asiatic chauvinism and Eurocentrism.[21] In a similar vein, Vivek Chibber has pointed to "Orientalist" implications in some of the arguments of subaltern studies, ascribing specific traits to Indian peasants and workers.[22] Again, such implications resonate with problems connected with the *obshchina*, which was marshalled as a mark of Russia's exceptionalism, not only by *narodniki* of various shades, but also by many Slavophiles, their seeming ultra-conservative opponents. When Lindner talks of Marx's still "problematic sources" (p. 90), this opaque pointer may refer to the seminal work of the Prussian romantic August von Haxthausen, but also to the fact that shortly later those arguments were refuted by empirical research.[23] Much of the literature relating to the *obshchina* was in fact made up of romantic projections that featured within Slavophile occidentalism and can be characterized as fictional ethnography.

Again, much of Marx's Eurocentrism/Orientalism, as critiqued by Lindner and others, is linked to the emphatically progressivist stance he pursued for most of his life. One

[16] See *MECW*, vol. 24, pp. 346–371.

[17] Karl Marx, "Letter to the Otetschstwennyje Sapiski" (1877), *MECW*, vol. 24, p. 199.

[18] See Reinhart Kößler, "Auf der Suche nach Alternativen zur kapitalistischen Entwicklung. Russische Dorfgemeinde, Gandhi und Fallstricke der Solidarität", *Peripherie*, 150/151 (2018), pp. 273–289, 279–280.

[19] For the 1920s and 1930s, see Reinhart Kößler, *Dritte Internationale und Bauernrevolution. Die Herausbildung des sowjetischen Marxismus in der Debatte um die „asiatische" Produktionsweise* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), pp. 247–248.

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 267–268; Centre d'Études et de Recherches Marxistes, *Sur le "mode de production asiatique"* (Paris, 1969).

[21] See Kößler, *Dritte Internationale*, pp. 248–250.

[22] Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (London, 2013), ch. 8.

[23] See Carsten Goehrke, *Die Theorien über Entstehung und Entwicklung des "Mir"* (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. 152–163.

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actual break in "late Marx" which Lindner does not address concerns Marx's debunking of his former "optimist Prometheanism" on account of new insights into the actual limits of available natural resources. This made him qualify certainly not the goal of socialist revolution but his optimistic outlook on unlimited progress in productivity and material benefits.[24]

The main question, however, that is raised by this sort of literature is why it should be so important to us what Marx actually said. Among the many Marxian impulses, his global vision[25] figures prominently, even if shrouded at times in modernist or Orientalist language. Yet, the search for slippages tends to lose sight of the main issues. Besides his critique of political economy, one main theme in Marx's work is his strategic vision as a consequence of the defeat of revolution in Europe in 1848–1849 at the hands of Tsarism. The concern to overcome the *gendarme* of Europe gave singular relevance to Polish nationalism but also fostered some unabashedly Russophobe writing.[26] Once a visible movement of resistance to Tsarism had risen in Russia, Russian populism (*narodnichestvo*) could count on support and advice from London. Much of this, as also Marx's ecological turn of later years, is contained in unpublished material or texts that were – such as the letters to Vera Zasulich[27] – forgotten for decades even by their addressees. These texts therefore impacted only tenuously, if at all, on the quite marginal attention colonial issues enjoyed in the Marxist-inspired labour movement of the closing years of the nineteenth and during the early twentieth century.[28]

Generally, such issues pertain not so much to orthodoxy and scholasticism, or to constructions of world history, as they concern narratives about diversity among coeval societies. Moreover, with their little noticed Slavophile underpinnings in the case of the *obshchina*, as well as with the concern about "Western" and "divergent" paths of history particularly among Indian Marx critics,[29] such discourses speak to conceptions of national narratives, at least once accounts of regional trajectories are projected onto the contexts of present-day nation states. Thus, not only do these considerations factor into the problematic drift of politics with an emancipatory impulse towards nationalism observed over the twentieth century,[30] even though of a left-wing

[24]Kohei Saito, "Marx' Fraas-Exzerpt und die neue Horizont des Stoffwechsels", *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 2014*, pp. 117–140; see *idem, Natur gegen Kapital. Marx' Ökologie in seiner unvollendeten Kritik des Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2016), pp. 294–299.

[25]See Manuela Boatcă, "The Many Non-Wests: Marx's Global Modernity and the Coloniality of Labor", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 34 (2013), pp. 209–225, 213–215.

[26]See Reinhart Kößler, "Zur Kritik des Mythos vom 'asiatischen' Rußland", *Prokla*, 9 (1979), pp. 106–113.

[27]See D.B. Ryazanov, "Predislovie redaktora" for "Iz perepiski Marksa i Engel'sa. V. Zasulich i Karl Marks", *Archiv Marksa i Engel'sa*, I (1924), pp. 265–258.

[28]See Reinhart Kößler, "Socialism and Colonialism", in Marcel van der Linden (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Socialism*, vol. II (Cambridge, 2023), pp. 617–638, 620–624.

[29]See Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory*, ch. 10.

[30]See Reinhart Kößler, "Von der sozialen Revolution zur nationalen Befreiung? Gedanken zum Verhältnis zwischen Sozialismus, antikolonialen Bewegungen und Nationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert", in Wladislaw Hedeler, Mario Keßler, and Gert Schäfer (eds), *Ausblicke auf das vergangene Jahrhundert. Die Politik der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung von 1900 bis 2000. Festschrift für Theodor Bergmann* (Hamburg, 1996), pp. 324–337.

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bent;[31] they also speak to essentialist visions of "East" and "West" that tend both to further mass mobilizations addressed by Lim, but also to obliterate in the public view real-life problems of the present, be it social inequality or the approaching ecological cataclysm.

[31] On which see Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 144–153.

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