HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
EST. 1837

Ph.D Thesis

Department of History and Philosophy of Science

The influence and interpretation of the work of Karl Marx in the Japanese economic thought of the early 20th century

Theoretical study, and comparison with the parallel "trend" in Poland

Filis Maria Goungor

This research is co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund-ESF) through the Operational Programme «Human Resources Development, Education andLifelong Learning» in the context of the project “Strengthening Human Resources ResearchPotential via Doctorate Research – 2nd Cycle” (MIS-5000432), implemented by the StateScholarships Foundation (IKY).

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Supervising Committee:

Professor Stavros A. Drakopoulos
Department of Philosophy and History of Science,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Professor Georgios Gotsis
Department of Philosophy and History of Science,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Professor Nikolaos Theocarakis
Department of Economics,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

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Abstract

This study focuses on the influence of Marxism on Japanese economic thought in the early 20th century. Marxism was particularly influential in the development of Japanese economic thought during the period under study, and many thinkers turned to it for solutions to the problems that emerged in the country. Japan, having only opened its borders in 1856, found itself, during the Meiji period (1868-1912), experiencing rapid social, political and economic changes and challenges, which became particularly evident during the Taishō (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-1989) periods. In this context, Japanese thinkers dealt with a wide range of issues, producing analyses of a high theoretical level. This study examines some of the arguments developed within three broad themes. The first concerns the arguments developed in the context of the so-called "Debate on Japanese capitalism", which took place in the late 1920s and continued through the 1930s. The Debate is considered the apex of pre-WWII Marxist Japanese economic thought. The second theme refers to the attempt of some thinkers to link morality with Marxism. A key figure here is Kawakami Hajime, who, considering himself a "special Marxist", tried to analyze Marxist theory while accepting the existence of what he called "religious truth". Finally, the third theme concerns the "National Question", which is analyzed mainly from the examples of Takahashi Kamekichi and Takabatake Motoyuki. These two thinkers developed their theories, which present nationalist elements, based on aspects of Marxist theory. Beyond these issues, the research presents a brief comparative study of the examples of Japan and Poland. The spread of Marxism in the two countries, and the "similarity" of the challenges (economic, national, social and political) that the two countries were facing during the study period, makes such an analysis possible.

Keywords

Japan, history of economic thought, Marxism, socialism, Poland, debate on Japanese capitalism, morality, national question, social problems, Soviet Russia, imperialism

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα μελέτη εστιάζει στην επιρροή του Μαρξισμού στην ιαπωνική οικονομική σκέψη, στις αρχές του 20ου αιώνα. Ο Μαρξισμός υπήρξε ιδιαίτερα επιδραστικός στην ανάπτυξη της ιαπωνικής οικονομικής σκέψης κατά την περίοδο που μελετάται και πολλοί ήταν οι στοχαστές που αναζήτησαν σε αυτόν λύσεις στα προβλήματα που ανέκυπταν στη χώρα. Η Ιαπωνία, έχοντας ανοίξει τα σύνορά της μόλις το 1856, βρέθηκε κατά την εποχή Μέιτζι (1868-1912) να γνωρίζει ραγδαίες κοινωνικές, πολιτικές και οικονομικές αλλαγές, αλλά και προκλήσεις, οι οποίες έγιναν ιδιαίτερα εμφανείς κατά τι; περιόδους Τάισο (1912-1926) και Σόουα (1926-1989). Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, οι στοχαστές καταπιάστηκαν με ένα μεγάλο εύρος θεμάτων, παράγοντας αναλύσεις υψηλού θεωρητικού επιπέδου. Η έρευνα εξετάζει κάποια από τα επιχειρήματα που αναπτύχθηκαν στο πλαίσιο τριών ευρύτερων θεματικών. Η πρώτη αφορά τα επιχειρήματα που αναπτύχθηκαν στο πλαίσιο της λεγόμενης «Διαμάχης για τον ιαπωνικό καπιταλισμό», η οποία έλαβε χώρα στα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1920 και συνεχίστηκε τα χρόνια της δεκαετίας του 1930. Η Διαμάχη θεωρείται το αποκορύφωμά της προπολεμικής μαρξιστικής ιαπωνικής οικονομικής σκέψης. Η δεύτερη θεματική αναφέρεται στην προσπάθεια κάποιων στοχαστών να συνδέσουν την ηθική με τον Μαρξισμό. Βασική φιγούρα εδώ είναι ο Καουακάμι Χάτζιμε, ο οποίος θεωρώντας τον εαυτό του ως έναν «ιδιαίτερο μαρξιστή», προσπάθησε να αναλύσει τη μαρξιστική θεωρία, αποδεχόμενος

ταυτοχρόνως την ύπαρξη αυτού που ονόμαζε «θρησκευτική αλήθεια». Τέλος, η τρίτη θεματική αφορά το «Εθνικό Πρόβλημα» (The National Question), το οποίο αναλύεται κυρίως από τα παραδείγματα των Τακαχάσι Καμέκίτσι και Τακάμπατάκε Μοτογιούκι. Οι δύο αυτοί στοχαστές ανέπτυξαν τις θεωρίες τους, οι οποίες παρουσιάζουν εθνικιστικά στοιχεία, βασιζόμενοι σε πτυχές της μαρξιστικής θεωρίας. Πέρα από αυτά τα ζητήματα, η έρευνα παρουσιάζει μια σύντομη συγκριτική μελέτη των παραδειγμάτων της Ιαπωνία και της Πολωνίας. Η διάδοση του μαρξισμού στις δύο χώρες, και η «ομοιότητα» των προκλήσεων (οικονομικών, εθνικών, κοινωνικών και πολιτικών) που οι δύο χώρες καλούνταν να αντιμετωπίσουν κατά την περίοδο μελέτης, κάνει μια τέτοια ανάλυση δυνατή.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Ιαπωνία, ιστορία της οικονομικής σκέψης, μαρξισμός, σοσιαλισμός, Πολωνία, διαμάχη για τον ιαπωνικό καπιταλισμό, ηθική, εθνικό ζήτημα, κοινωνικά προβλήματα, Σοβιετική Ρωσία, ιμπεριαλισμός

Introduction

This dissertation studies the theoretical analysis and works on economics of Japanese "Marxists" thinkers and scholars, during the beginning of the 20th century and until the period before the World War II years[1]. The research focuses mainly on the Japanese economic interpretations and theories, and on the way Japanese thinkers approached economic issues. Criticism is to be avoided, as much as possible. Finally, a comparative analysis is made, between the examples of Japan and Poland, where the "production" of economic analysis was both significant and influenced by Marxist ideas.

The subject's choice

What can Japanese economic thinkers of the prewar 20th century tell us? This question this dissertation tries to answer. Without accepting or rejecting in advance, theories and ideas, this research will try to focus on their content, and how Marxian theory in particular, found fertile ground to express itself through the Japanese approaches, and through the concerns of a society that was changing, trying to understand them in the context in which they existed, in which they were formed. In addition to that, in the last section, due to the previous study by the author of the ideas of Polish economists such as Michał Kalecki (1899-1970) and Oskar Lange (1904-1965), a brief comparative analysis of those "two" cases is included, as in both countries Marx's work played an important role in the formation of their distinctive economic thinking.

The research thus will contribute to the study of East Asian thought in the West, considering its importance to still be overlooked. East Asia is a geographical area characterized by rich history and cultural tradition, and apart from the contemporary necessity of its study, in the globalized context of today's reality, the contact with approaches coming from this region can only be positive for the development of economic (and not only) thinking.

Simultaneously, a comparative study between Japan and Poland, will allow to discern interpretations coming from quite different backgrounds, leading to useful conclusions about the course of economic thought, science and developments, but also about the influence factors such as historical facts, geopolitical conditions, religions, customs etc. have on them. In this way, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the course of economic thought in today's developed world, and the reasons it evolved (and evolves) accordingly.

In this context, and in an era where globalization is the norm, we can examine past data and "dig up" useful information previously non-accessible to us. Geographical and cultural restrictions can be overcome today (more easily than ever) and different approaches, coming from those distinct geographical and cultural characteristics, can be examined. Characteristics of social, political, cultural and environmental nature, which drove the populations of the world to approach questions and problems related to economic (and obviously not only economic) content in many different ways.

However, how much different the answers-approaches can be, if we accept that the economic questions every society has to deal with are of the same basic content, is a matter of study. The problems of how to satisfy infinite needs with scarce sources, what to produce, for who etc. are the questions economics deal with. Therefore, on what questions can different approaches be based upon? And if there can be observed different approaches, what is the

[1] Hereafter as WWII.

content of them? What aspects of the various economic issues triggered them? Can they maybe be of practical use for us today, or have everything been already said? Is there any "new" approach hidden somewhere and overlooked?

Those are questions that this dissertation cannot answer, and do not intend to answer. However, by bringing to our "field of vision" different approaches, it hopes to enlarge the first, as well as to enrich the sources on which we base our theories and thoughts. So that when we ask ourselves "what should be done?", to have a solid knowledge of what has been already debated, and thus accepted or rejected, and why. It is exactly that "should" in the question of "what should be done?" that differentiated (and of course still does) one approach from another, and called for changes in the societies. It is exactly some of the "shoulds" of the past that are studied in this dissertation.

Japan - Poland - Karl Marx

In Japan, Marx's work was decisive in the development of thought. This was also the case in Poland. Thinkers like Hajime Kawakami and Oskar Lange studied the work of Marx and interpreted it in their own way, in a Japan that had experienced rapid industrialization in the early 20th century, after the "isolation" of the country during the Edo period, and a Poland trying to find its new position on the "map", as an independent state "à nouveau".

The choice of Japan

At the core of this dissertation is the study of Japan. Asia in general, is considered today as one of the territories with the biggest importance to the global developments. In accordance with The World Economic Forum, "the Asian bloc clearly has a larger share than anywhere else, representing just over a third (33.84%) of global GDP"[2], while according to a recent study by pwc Global, "six of the seven largest economies in the world are projected to be emerging economies in 2050 led by China (1st), India (2nd) and Indonesia (4th)"[3].

With China's economy rapidly catching up to the USA's, and potentially in the near future giving an end to its domination, and with the high development of East Asian national economies during the past decades, it is essential to get to know more about this region. The same applies from a strategic point of view. With the tensions in the area to be augmented nowadays, a deep knowledge of the sociopolitical history of the region is crucial to the response to potential future challenges. Moreover, despite the practical need to do so, the historical and cultural richness of this area is also a pretty good reason to focus into the study of it.

Provided that Japan is one of the biggest economies of the world, following a quite unique path during the ages to get into its current international position, it is a very good example to study in order to acquire and spread knowledge about East Asian economic thought. Japan has been profoundly influenced by the Chinese culture, and while integrating aspects of it with native ethics and norms, was able to adapt and develop so to shape its own distinctive civilization.

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[2] N.p. Source: The World Economic Forum (2017, Mar 9) *The world's 10 biggest economies in 2017.* Retrieved from : https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/worlds-biggest-economies-in-2017/

[3] Source: Pwc (2017, February) *The World in 2050* The long view: how will the global economic order change by 2050? Retrieved from : http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html

When the country opened its borders in 1856, after the many years of "seclusion" (1639-1854) during the so called Edo[4] period (1603-1868), goods and ideas from the West began to flow to the inside[5]. Japan went hence through what Maegawa Keiji (前川啓治)[6] introduced as "translative adaptation". Ohno (2018: 6-7) describes the concept as follows:

> "When a country in the periphery joins the world system, it may look as if the country (say, Ethiopia) is being absorbed in the dominant international order (say, the global trade system). It looks as if the country is forced to abandon its traditional culture, systems, social structure and so on, which are considered "backward," in order to embrace the "international best practice." Viewed from inside the country in the process of "being absorbed," however, the situation is not always passive. In a proper integration process, Maegawa argues that the country should take initiative in deciding the scope and speed of integration, making sure that it can retain ownership (national autonomy), social continuity and national identity. The country surely changes, but the change is managed by its government and people and not by foreign firms or international organizations. Foreign ideas and systems are introduced not in the original form but with modifications to fit local needs and context. If this is achieved, the transformed country is not really so weak or passive. It is taking advantage of external stimuli to change and grow. This is called "translative adaptation." Maegawa says that Japan since the Meiji period did just that."

The "modernization' of the country was thus rapid, especially after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Japanese intellectuals began to translate economic texts of western economic thought and to study them. Higher education reforms boosted this trend, and economists dealing with a wide range of theories and positions, whose analyses had often a strong historical orientation, emerged (the Russian Revolution also influenced the historical study of Japanese capitalism).

The transition to a capitalist economy was intense and Japan's intelligencia tried earnestly to explain the fast changing world around it, and to provide useful conclusions and theories for the national economy and its economic agents. Taking into account all these, and starting to dive into the study of related to Japan materials, someone comes quickly to notice that a specific "school" of thought seems to be especially widespread amongst the Japanese thinkers and writers. That is the Marxist one. But how much and why Marx's oeuvre influenced the Japanese economic thought? That is something that this dissertation will also examine.

Some of the most influential economists of the 20th century working on the Marxist theories were Japanese (e.g. Morishima Michio, Uno Kozo). This dissertation however, focuses on the less known thinkers of Japan, and the ideas expressed by them at the beginnings of the century until the years before WWII. This time-period was characterized by many changes in the sociopolitical scene, being rich in economic research by the Japanese scholars and thinkers, and creating an environment which is pretty interesting to study.

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[4] Edo was the previous name of Tokyo. See Appendix I.

[5] Not that they were not before, for example via the *Rangaku* (Dutch studies), and through the interaction with Dutch peoples. However, the scale was clearly different now.

[6] Professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tsukuba University.

A brief introduction to Japan

> "If the roof of a Japanese house is a parasol, the roof of a Western house is no more than a cap, with as small a visor as possible so as to allow the sunlight to penetrate directly beneath the eaves [...] The quality that we call beauty however, must always grow from the realities of life, and our ancestors, forced to live in dark rooms, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows towards beauty's ends" (Tanizaki 1977: 17-8)[7].

Japan, as a country of East Asia, has been profoundly influenced by Chinese culture and philosophy (especially Confucianism), which combined with the Buddhist and Shintoist traditions, set the framework of its social organization and perception over the centuries. The understanding thus of the Japanese thought requires the recognition of this fact and its study.

Someone can immediately for example, realize the difference in understandings in the notion of the term "economics", as it was first used in Japanese: keizai-gaku (経済学), which refers to the nation's management, and the relief of the suffering of the people. In this region, the moral side of economic choices and policies has always been considered, and economics were often linked to ethical, legal or political issues. For Kawakami, for example, economics was never just a study of the production and distribution of wealth, but their ultimate goal was to make people even more human (Morris-Suzuki, 1989). The moral nature of economic affairs has always been there.

Having been "isolated" from the rest of the world, for a considerable length of time (over two centuries) during the Edo period, Japan followed its own pace in social, political and economic developments. It maintained an indirect contact with the rest of the world, through what has been called "four portals (*yottsu no kuchi* - 四つの口)"[8], referring to the trade via the city of Nagasaki, where on the Dejima island a Dutch base was allowed to operate, the Tsushima island where the trade with Korea was undertaken, the Ryūkyū islands (for the Chinese goods), as well as the Ezo (for the trade with the Ainu, today's Hokaido). Even though, those activities allowed only a limited amount of influences and interactions between "interior" and "exterior".

Agriculture was the country's main economic sector, while an emerging merchant class steadily gained in power. It was a period of general "peace" for the country, where many of its social and economic structures were developed, accompanied by a process of urbanization. Through *rangaku* (the study of Dutch books and information received through the traders) Japanese could study western sciences and technology, while *kokugaku*[9] school of thought was established, setting the intellectual framework of the period.

As the well known Japanese economist Morishima Michio (2001: 10-1) points out:

> "Throughout Japanese history up to the present individualism has never prospered, and, as a result, a strong, serious advocacy of liberalism has been virtually non-existed. The Japanese have been required to obey their rulers, to serve their parents, to honour their elders and to act in accordance with the majority factions in society. There has been little margin left over to grapple with

[7] Tanizaki, J. (1977) In praise of shadows, New Haven, Conn, Leete's Island Books

[8] See: Arano (2013).

[9] Literally "the study of the country". For more see: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2021, June 21) *The Kokugaku (Native Japan Studies) School*. Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kokugaku-school .

problems of conscience. […] While Chinese Confucianism is one in which benevolence is of central importance, Japanese Confucianism is loyalty-centred Confucianism."

Therefore, when the country was "forced" by the spectacular "Black Ships", under the command of United States Commodore Matthew Perry, and by its esoteric misbalances, to open its borders, "waves" of foreign goods "flowed" to the inside, "flooding" the established ideas and customs. The "modernization" process was rapid. The changes were fast, especially after the 1868 "Meiji Restoration"[10], which triggered the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912), followed by the Taishō (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-1989) periods, and Japan was becoming an industrialized nation at a high pace. Japanese intellectuals began translating and studying western economic (and of course not only) texts. Reforms in the higher education reinforced this trend, while the thinkers were engaging in a wide range of activities and projects.

In the process, Japan's position as a "delayed" country in industrialization, together with the emergence of national militarism, troubled many Japanese, and for some of them the existing system was responsible for provoking "imperialist wars". The growing economic activity was accompanied by the growing militarism (leading to wars like the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese ones etc). Japan followed that path to the World War II and then to the catastrophic defeat in it. It was an intense period and pretty interesting from an observer's point of view.

At the same time, the remnants of the feudal organization, the problems of the agricultural sector, and their coexistence with the large oligopolistic industrial enterprises (zaibatsu) fueled a great deal of discussion and contributed to the growing interest for Marxist theories and arguments, concerning the capitalist system and the role of the state. An indicative example of the changes Japan underwent is the burst of the anti-treaty riot (Hibiya Riot) after the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). It is marked as the first major social protest in the country during the age of "imperial democracy" of the Meiji Period, which began with the promulgation of the Meiji constitution in 1890.

How the people living in those turmoil times interpreted those developments is really interesting. Processes that took years in other developed regions to deploy, here were introduced in an unprecedented way. Of course, the established social structures and relations played their role as well. New and old became interchanged and interesting results came out.

As for the socialist ideas, they had been introduced to Japan already since the late 19th century, and were discussed since then[11]. We can find a reference to them for example in 1872, when Nishi Amane, in a speech to the emperor about Western political thought, opposed the "communalists" (*tsūyūgaku-ha*), who suggested that all wealth should be distributed equally, to the "economists" (*keizaigaku-ha*), who argued that wealth or poverty was a consequence of

[10] The power was restored from the Shogun (military ruler of the country) to the (ruler only by name before) Emperor.

[11] "Ōuchi Hyōe, one of the leading members of the Marxist Rōnō school, later recalled that during his undergraduate years at Tokyo University from 1907 to 1910 'most new students…were quite familiar with Marx and I think that most had at least read Capital to some extent' (Ōuchi 1960: 23). But Marxist ideas at that stage remained within the walls of the faculties and had little practical impact [...] After his return from study in the United States during the First World War, however, Ōuchi found a very different atmosphere in Japan. The more democratic mood of Taishō Japan had opened the way to a freer debate of radical ideas, and the Russian Revolution inspired wider interest in Marxism" (Morris-Suzuki 1989: 64-5).

one's wisdom or madness (Morris-Suzuki 1989), while Yamamoto Katsuichi (山本 勝市, 1896-1986) composed already in 1932 a book called "Economic calculation: fundamental problems of a planned economy (経済計算：計画経済の基本問題)", in which he analyzed all the arguments surrounding the possibility of rational economic planning in a socialist economy-society, rejecting its applicability[12].

Japan - Poland

In his 1934 article[13], Oskar Lange mentioned Professor's Shibata Kei (柴田 敬, 1902-1986) theoretical research[14], as the first attempt to bridge the gap between Marxian economics and the general equilibrium theory. "In this [article] Professor Shibata has performed an exceedingly fine piece of analysis for which any serious economist should be grateful"[15], he noted.

Shibata "inspired" Lange's article. The latter came therefore into contact with the Japanese economic thought. Beyond Shibata, he could have read thinkers like Kawakami. The latter was Shibata's professor at Kyoto Imperial University, and together with Fukuda Tokuzō, was one the most prominent spokesmen for Japan's modern economic thinking. It is clear, that in both of these countries Marx's work played an important role, especially in the formation of their particular economic thinking. This example (despite giving to the author the idea of a joint analysis) shows that there could be more "contact" and common field among thinkers seemingly unrelated, and among societies seemingly "distant". So why do we know so little about such cases? Why the study of thinkers like Shibata is so limited?

From the other side, how different the interpretations and approaches of the "two sides" were and how far they were able to overcome the obstacles to which Marxist theory "stumbles"? What aspects of Marx's theory found place in those analysis, and why? etc.. In answering such questions, useful conclusions on the possibility of further analysis of this system, but also on the way we approach and interpret economic issues can be drawn.

Moreover, as mentioned above, a joint study of such paradigms, will allow to discern interpretations of thinkers coming from quite different backgrounds, leading to useful conclusions about the course of economic thought, science and developments, but also about the influence factors such as historical facts, geopolitical conditions, religions, customs etc. have on them. We could then maybe get closer to the answers of questions like the ones which thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber[16] or Hajime Kawakami dealt with.

By doing hence so, it is expected to produce a work where approaches coming from a different background than the Western one will be brought to light. East Asian civilizations has been following a distinct way of thought, based on different philosophical and moral

[12] For more on Yamamoto see: Okon, H. (n.d.) International transmission of the ideas of the impossibility of rational economic calculation under socialism to Japan: K. Yamamoto's Keizai Keisan(1932) and Japanese way of acceptance (Draft). Available at: https://studylib.net/doc/10622203/international-transmission-of-the-ideas-of-the-impossibil...

[13] Lange (1934).

[14] Shibata (1933).

[15] Lange (1934: 194).

[16] An example: "Karl Marx contended that ideology and ethics were no more than reflections of underlying material conditions -in particular economic conditions - Max Weber in his "Protestantis Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" made the case for the existence of quite the reverse relationship. He considered that it is the ethnic that is given, and any type of economy which necessitates the people's possessing an ethos incompatible with that ethic will not develop; rater the emergence of an economy compatible with this ethic is inevitable." (Morishima 2001: 7).

traditions of those the western world developed. This fact has shaped social behaviors and relations, as well as norms and life.

Focusing on Marxist influence

It should be clear by now to the reader that this dissertation is not concerned with the analysis of the Marxian system of ideas. Although, it is always useful to state it clearly, so misunderstandings to be avoided. Here, the ideas expressed by the Japanese are brought up to light, and the fact that they were often influenced (with positive or negative attitudes) by the thinkers' contact with Marx's approaches is studied. Why the Japanese of the time paid so much attention to those, or which parts of the existing theories constituted for them the core issues they had (or could) deal with? Such questions are analyzed here, and it can be said that Marxist thought is the link of the different approaches studied.

Marx's works and ideas are, someone could argue, the major antipodes to capitalist economics (or "bourgeois economics" for using the Marxists' term). In accordance to an Economist's article[17] "Marx was not a scientist, as he claimed. He founded a faith. The economic and political systems he inspired are dead or dying. But his religion is a broad church, and lives on.". And this is true. Sworn followers of Marx can be found almost everywhere, as sworn opponents as well. Yet, his economic analysis is as much "scientific" as Smith's and Ricardo's.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) succeeded in fanaticizing his "disciples" and enemies. However, where there is fanaticism, there is no logic, and human beings can easily cling to one idea without accepting objections. It is important though to try, especially in our times, to suppress that phenomenon. Only then we can truly contribute to any field. That is the reason why, having taken into consideration the fact that Marx's oeuvre had been known to a large extent in Japan, this dissertation tries to figure out the reasons behind this fact and the specific content-related parts of Marx's works that made it so appealing and applicable theory to the Japanese, so it could bring to the surface new and different visions about economic processes and challenges, or even highlight the similarities between them. Moreover, it can be shown that when keeping an open minded approach to any theory or idea, useful conclusions can be drawn[18].

The Role of the history of economic thought

The study of the history of economic thought is crucial to the evolution of societies and the need for it today, perhaps more imperative than ever. "It is anachronistic to regard history as the autobiography of heroes or as the record of wars and political incidents" (Honjō 1926: 81). When economic historian Honjō Eijirō (本庄 栄治郎, 1888-1973) wrote those lines, Japan was found in a period of dramatic changes and challenges. Honjō was very eager in historical research and his contributions to the intellect of Japan were very important.

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[17] See: The Economist (2002, December 19) *Marx after communism*. Available at: https://www.economist.com/christmas-specials/2002/12/19/marx-after-communism

[18] And tries to do so, by starting from an as more as possible freer from presuppositions position. Criticism is considered unuseful here, and it is avoided as much as possible. It is of no practical use to pose a "verdict" on theories already hyper-analyzed and over-analyzed. Taking the "truths" every theory has to offer (as anyone conceives them), we can move on. Of course, it is important to highlight where a theory falls short or where misjudgments have been made. However someone has to stop there. That approach this dissertation tries to follow.

While the future seemed to get close at a high pace, he insisted on his recordings of the past. The past is not something without importance to the present and future, but usually hides the causes behind their "deployment". You cannot anticipate the future, unless you have data of the past. And the more accurate, vast and processed the data, the better the luck for useful results.

The world is a complicated place to live, and human beings must not have delusions about their capabilities to understand it and control-manage it. So the most in economics. History can show us that we are always oscillating between the points of freedom and regulation, of the free-choice or coercion. Is there room for any break through? Have we come to some conclusions which concerning those matters? Well, as this discussion can afford infinite arguments, so it can indicate our limitations. Here hence has to come efficiency[19].

From this point of view, and in a world where globalization is a reality, the field of the history of economic thought cannot, and it is crucial to not, ignore the region of East Asia. Its historical and cultural richness are long now known, its economical performances have been discussed extensively for the last decades, while the role its countries play on the international scene, is now crucial to the global economic (and not only) actuality.

Relation to debates

The capitalist organization of the economy and its effectiveness are at the core of economic and political debates and disputes, and will probably remain as that for a long time. Those however were also the issues our societies had to deal with, in times when capitalism was establishing itself over the industrializing nations. In this framework, when Marx published the first volume of the "Capital" in 1867, he provided a basis for future analysts to develop their theories, and look for solutions to economic (and not only) problems, starting from his dynamic approach.

The controversy over whether a planned economy could be a realistic scenario, and about the "problematic nature" of capitalism, was intense and widespread. The works of economists such as Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) or Friedrich A. von Hayek (1899-1992) constituted only one part of this controversy, that prevailed mainly in the first half of the 20th century, among the free-market advocates, and critics including the Polish Oskar Lange. It could even be argued, that the extensive analysis of socialist ideas occupied (and still does so) a significant part of global economic thinking with Great Britain and the United States (where their extent was significantly smaller) to constitute the exception rather than the rule (Morris-Suzuki 1989). And obviously two typical examples are Japan and Poland, the two cases this research focuses upon.

Economic Science today needs as complete and open views as possible on economic issues. The field of the history of economic thought plays a key role in the emergence of these. The ability to try to look at the big picture, linking it and differentiating it from the "flow", while seeing through it, and the highlight of different (and sometimes underestimated) ideas, can allow the professional to contribute to the essence of current debates and discussions.

The role of economists in society is being challenged and someone can often hear people say "economists are useless". When Queen Elizabeth wondered why no one predicted

[19] Efficiency in every discipline engaging in those matters. Efficiency in providing useful results. Efficiency in a world where "hollow" talks and populism are widespread. Providing thus the reader with an immerse quantity of pages, saying nothing substantial but vague narratives is of no practical use. Therefore, that is something this dissertation tries as well to avoid.

the outbreak of the 2008 Crisis, the professionals in the field certainly did not feel comfortable with the course economic science had taken. This was not because there were few who "saw" the crisis approaching, but because they did not seemed to be part of what was happening. Now everyone has an opinion on economic issues and the functioning of the economy. "The economy works like that" people say. But is it that simple?

The development of the Neuroeconomics for example, can prove how complex processes can be developed to explain the behavior of the economic decisions of the actors. Economic Science, however, is a social science. The very nature of its object makes it very complex and inconstant. This was something Shibata and Lange recognized from the very beginning. But so did the economists of the Austrian School, like Hayek. It is hence important to focus on reality and the ways it changes or moves on.

Contemporary societies are characterized by fast and generalized financialization of their economies. Societies now "work" for their economies and not vice versa. The so called "Markets" can save or destroy economies in one day, and a world of paralogism is sustained through inefficient policies, and dangerous populism. It seems often that the simple logic of analyzing thoroughly things has been lost.

As Prof. Michael Sandel argues in his 2014 speech for the Institute of New Economic Thinking[20] "we have drifted from having a market economy to being a market society". However, moral questions concerning everyday actions that take place within it arise constantly. Are there any moral limits of markets? and if the answer is affirmative, questions like "which are they?", "who decides them?" arise as well. It is unavoidable to deal with them. But in our times, it is often considered that Economics are a "value neutral science of human behavior or social life"[21]. That they are free from moral judgments. Although everyday life proves this assumption to be wrong.

Coming back then to the rest of Honjo's passage, "[t]he need of a history which treats of the daily life of the people is never more urgently demanded as at present." (Honjō 1926: 81). And here it is where the field of the history of economic thought should play its role. By bringing to our awareness the ways by which for example, classical economic thinkers built up their theories and analysis, or by which the Japanese thinkers expressed their thoughts on economic questions and problems, and connected them often to moral ones, this "type" of thinking can be "reminded".

Especially, in the Japanese case, the moral aspect of human choices has been playing a crucial role in decision making process, and moral arguments had always central role in them. "Morality and Economics, reciprocally acting or depending upon each other, set our society in motion to its best advantage and are never incompatible with each other"(Kinji 1927: 26). Hence, despite the conclusion that this way of thinking could be an important factor in the popularity of Marxist economics in the region, it can help us also to "reconnect" economics to moral issues, while ideas worth attention can become known to us. This way, the "whys" and "hows" of our times can be more easily approached, while the perspectives from which we "rule" the world can be widened. Can maybe for example, economics turn again towards the way of moral sciences?

After all though, this study comes to narrow the gap between the existing bibliography on the economic and general history of early twentieth century Japan, and its history of economic thought. There is a satisfactory amount of works in English written

[20] Institute for New Economic Thinking (2014) *What Are the Moral Limits of Markets?* Available at: https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/videos/what-are-the-moral-limits-of-markets .
[21] Ibid.

bibliography concerned with the first, as well as analyses of its postwar progress. However, when the history of Japanese economic thought is concerned, the amount of published works is restricted. There can be found some publications[22] regarding specific or more general topics, or authors in that field, as well as some articles (often as parts of collective publications) about specific cases or thinkers. Those however, are still limited in number and content. Even more, when a joint study of European and Japanese cases is concerned. Therefore, there is plenty of space to occupy, and by doing so to contribute to the understanding of the global economic thought, its applicability and timelessness. And in this case, Marxist thought seems capable of playing the role of the intermediate.

Sources

A large number of different sources and materials were used for the president study. Those include original Japanese texts and visual materials of preWWII years, as well as international bibliography related to Japan and its history, but also economics. Direct contact with primary sources and the means to use it appropriately contributed highly in the research process, while the study of general related bibliography contributed to the enrichment of the knowledge the author acquired as the research progressed.

The first stage of the research process consisted of a careful and detailed study of English-language[23] literature on the economic thinking of Japanese thinkers of the period under study, as well as on the historical course the country and the wider area followed. Sources published during the study-period, like articles of the Kyoto University Economic Review or the The Open Court magazine were easy accessible and could offer a first contact with the way thinkers of the time approached relevant issues. Simultaneously, many articles engaging with a wide range of subjects related to the Japanese history of thought, enlarged the perspective under which the author perceived concepts and ideas. Works of writers and researchers of Japanese thought (economic and general) complemented also the first[24].

In particular, Kyoto University Economic Review, first published by the Kyoto Imperial University in 1926, was created as a means to reveal and spread the works of the Japanese economic thinkers to an international audience. Being written entirely in English, its purpose was to establish the “Japanese School of Economics” that would differentiate itself from the Western traditions, and to spread the contribution of the Japanese scholars to the Western world. It was it indeed, that enabled the theoretical research of Shibata to be “praised” by Lange. Many of the leading figures among the Japanese economic thinkers, published articles in its issues, those including Kawakami Hajime and Honjō Eijiro (both mentioned above), covering a vast thematology on economics.

As the second stage of the research process, primary research based on original Japanese texts followed. The works of many thinkers of the period under study, as well as of important Japanese scholars were analyzed. Those sources provided the material, which appropriately processed through the acquired (during the first stage) knowledge, created the

[22] Examples as: Morris-Suzuki, T. (1989) "A History of Japanese Economic Thought", London & New York: Routledge, Takenaga, S. (Ed.). (2016). Ricardo and the History of Japanese Economic Thought: A selection of Ricardo studies in Japan during the interwar period (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315642512 , Bernstein, G., L. (1990) Japanese Marxist: a portrait of Kawakami Hajime, 1879-1946. Harvard University Press.

[23] As well as French and Polish.

[24] See the last section, for a list of bibliography used.

main volume of the dissertation's text. Moreover, alongside the research process, new sources continued to emerge, enriching the text's content. Additionally, the parallel study of bibliography related to Polish economic thought and to Marxist literature allowed the deeper understanding of the evolution of relevant theories and interpretations.

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the topic of the research is the Japanese interpretations of economic issues in the early 20th century. The study of the history of Japanese economic thought requires the usage of many sources, and of different kind. Economic science is a social science and as such should be studied. Economic ideas can be found in economic brochures, books, essays, articles etc.. Although they can be even found for example, in works of literature, art, marketing. They can be also apparent in aspects of everyday life and choices.

The study thus concerned with economic ideas needs to take into consideration any material available from the period under study, and this was the aim of this plan. The access to any available material from that period was crucial. Therefore, any research facilities available were actively used. One useful source for example, was the material found in the "Research Center for International Japanese Studies" of Hosei University (like the posters of Japanese Labor and Social Movement in Pre-1945 Japan), which are available online.

As the long-term aim of this whole study is to spread the knowledge of Japanese economic thought (and East Asian in general) to the West, and encourage the study of this area, in the fields of social sciences, it is as well essential to make the best possible usage of the research "outputs". This dissertation hopes to become a part of a wider bundle of works and studies concerned with the history of East Asia region, and to contribute to the deepening of our familiarity and relevant knowledge.

Finally, it should be noted that the idea of "Japanese-ness" (Gordon 2003) as an exceptional case, is left out of this work. "As Tosaka Jun has written, 'Japaneseness' itself 'should be examined as a concrete link in the chain of the international context.' (Wigen 2000: 12-3). It is evident that every country/nation has its special features and characteristics, and those are taken into account here, analyzed together with historical facts and literature so conclusions could be drawn. However, it is clear that in the global context it is impossible to completely separate them from international facts, ways and thought. Therefore, a crucial balance should (as much as possible) be maintained.

Method, composition and bibliography

Method

As mentioned in the beginning, the method followed puts emphasis on the theoretical level of the analysis and ideas. The research focuses mainly on the emergence of Japanese interpretations, and on the way the thinkers approached economic issues. Criticism on the ideas they have expressed are avoided, as much as possible, as the aim was to highlight anything considered worth including.

Furthermore, as may be already apparent to the reader, the followed approach could not be a positivistic one, as it is considered impossible to apply such a method in this project. As has also been mentioned, economics are a social science and in particular, the history of economic thought examines ideas expressed by individuals, thus the historian presents his/her own interpretations of those expressions of thought.

Moreover, it cannot be argued that it is completely a hermeneutic approach either. It is an attempt to try to understand, as accurately as possible, the original meaning the compositors of the examined sources wanted to express, and present them to the reader, in the context of course in which they were expressed. "The world is not understood by passive reception of sense data or by immediate access to objective reality in itself. It is only understood through the active participation of interpreters, who necessarily bring questions and 'prejudices' to the text that could not have pertained to its original context." (Lavoie 1991: 2). Although, as mentioned before, any personal tendencies to comment on the substance of the theories discussed here is avoided. That is to say, the only element taken as granted is the sources available. Anything expressed in here therefore, should as well be considered the result of a possible misreading or misinterpretation. "Our prejudices and questions are the only means by which we can understand, they are what Michael Polanyi called 'spectacles' through which we can come to see the world" (ibid) after all.

The study of the history of economic thought contributes to a deeper understanding of the course and reasons of social developments, allowing us to overcome present challenges and avoid future miscalculations. This dissertation's aim is not to provide a theory or a "dogma" to the reader. It is to enrich his/her conception of the world and how it works. To make him/her more open-minded through the contact with other approaches, coming from different places and times. As the famous quote of Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) states, "[i]t is the historian's function, not to make us clever for the next time, but to make us wise forever".

Periodization

Periodization in Japanese history can take a lot of forms. The most often used norm is based on a method "introduced from China in the seventh century" according to which the usual thing do was to "mark time by divining it into eras with – what was hoped to be – propitious names" (Saaler, Szpilman 2018: xxi). Those time periods were often based on where the center of power (being political or military) was established. However often, "the main criterion for the selection of an era name was its propitiousness" (ibid). That is the main reason why it is general accepted that this division is quite arbitrary. After the Meiji Restoration (1868)[25] it was decided that the Emperor "in office" will mark henceforth a distinctive historical age -"one reign, one era name" (ibid)-. Therefore, as long as periodization is concerned, those conventional Japanese political historical divisions will be mentioned just for the sake of historical orientation purposes. The present dissertation is concerned with a large part of the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the whole Taishō (1912-26) and the preWWII Shōwa (1926-1989) years. Today, many historians use also the terms pre-modern, early modern and modern Japan to refer to the periods of pre-Tokugawa/Edo, Tokugawa/Edo and after Meiji Restoration Japan. Although, debates on whether such a division can be applied to Japan and for those eras are still ongoing, here that division is used as well (see Wigen 2000).

[25] Whose restriction to a specific date is often questioned as well. "most historians would argue that discussing the Meiji Restoration as an "event" that took place on a certain date explains very little about that particular moment in the history of Japan" for example (ibid).

Structure

As for the text's structure, the idea is for it to be the simplest and operating one. Beyond the basic components of the text (at its beginning and ending), including the cover page, contents, introduction, and so on, the first chapter follows, which introduces the reader to the development of economic thought in Japan, as well as to the basic concepts and events essential for the understanding of the main part.

The last contain the main body of the present research, and is divided into chapters according to general themes/issues discussed. Then the comparative analysis takes place, and an epilogue containing the most important arguments concludes the study. Footnotes are used (on-site on each page) where this is deemed necessary. The idea is to use simple structure, and an easy flowing text, written in a clear and concise language.

A brief presentation of Japan's history is included in Appendix I, so to introduce the reader to the framework in which the theories analyzed where born and expressed, and enable him/her to understand general historical concepts mentioned along the pages. Therefore, the reader is adviced, before proceeding to the main chapters of the current dissertation, to familiarize first with the general historical framework, as economic science comes from practical questions arising in different situations and environments in the end.

It should be also noted that the Japanese names included in this study, are written following the East Asian pattern, where the family name precedes the given name. In addition, the Hepburn Romanization system[26] is applied here, and macrons (¯) are used when needed, to express the usage of long vowels by some Japanese words. Translations used are of the author, unless otherwise mentioned.

Finally, the author is responsible for any errors in the text.

[26] See: Wkipedia. *Hepburn romanization*. Available at : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepburn_romanization

Chapter I

The Development of economic thought in Japan, and the dissemination of Marxism[27]

Before analyzing the main topics and ideas related to economic matters discussed by the Japanese thinkers under study, it is deemed useful to give firstly a brief description of the way the economic thought developed and started to be systemized in Japan, during the Edo period, and the Meiji years, after the introduction of Western thought. In the following section, a brief description of the "trends" in economic theories mainly studied-used by Japanese thinkers is given. A short reference to the means of transmission and centers of discussion of economic ideas, during the years this study is concerned with follows. Finally, it is discussed what forms and content Marxism assumed in Japan during those years.

The development of economic thought

It should be clear to anyone slightly familiar with the Japanese history, that the end of the "national seclusion" (as it has been called in the related international bibliography on Japan) during the Bakumatsu era (1853-1869)[28] resulted in a tremendous enrichment of the local intellectual knowledge at the time. In the field of economics, this was true mainly for the perception of the discipline as an independent field of study (hence discipline), and for the introduction of the schools of thought already established in the Western world. It can be argued however, that "the concerted attempt to synchronize global time in Meiji Japan failed to permeate the everyday life and historical consciousness of the majority of people, including many of Japan's leading intellectuals and cultural figures" (Konishi 2020: 6).

It seems to be the case that economic ideas in Japan followed, already from before the onset of the Meiji period, a path known to us from our European history of economic thought. "Before the Meiji Restoration, there were very marked differences between Japanese and Western approaches to economic problems, though even in the Tokugawa era (1603-1867) problems common to East and West seem to have generated some similar economic answers." (Nishizawa, Ikeo, 2008: 7073). In the process, and after the Meiji restoration (1868), Japan's contact with the Western economic canon began, and Japanese thinkers assimilated those imported ideas, integrated them into the local intellectual traditions and perceptions, and produced their own interpretations and ideas on economic issues.

In this framework, ideas that present similarities with those of Physiocracy and Mercantilism can be spotted throughout the Edo period, while economic inquiry after the Meiji Restoration (1868) can be roughly described with the sequence: dissemination of general introductory economic books, studies in German historical school, welfare economics, and Marxism. Of course, this sequence is not absolute. It is true however that the main bulk of

[27] The readers unfamiliar with the Japanese history are advised to read the Appendix before proceeding.
[28] The term refers to the final years of the Edo period (1603-1868).

scholarship produced in each stage leans toward one of these "trends" respectively. Until however "Marxian economics became dominant in the 1920s, economics in Japan was very much in a tradition of the German Historical and Social Policy School in broad sense. Japanese economists caught up with many developments very early on, and were innovators as well as consumers of foreign ideas, though they did not develop systematically or perceive the whole economy as a single system" (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008: 7075).

Edo period

It was the Meiji era, to use the words of professor Nishizawa (2012), that functioned as a "preparatory period" for the institutionalization of economic science and the systemization of economic inquiry in Japan. Economic thought in pre-modern Japan was mainly expressed in the context of devising proposals to the ruling class about wise policies, so that they could run effectively their domains, or in case of the Tokugawa rulers, the entire nation.

Scholars, mostly Confucian scholars, often took word about economic administration and policies rulers should undertake in order to bring harmony and peace into society. Poverty for example was perceived as a threat to the Tokugawa peace (Najita 1998). The scholar Ogyū Sorai (荻生 徂徠, 1666-1728) insisted on the introduction of reforms to nourish the people, and to the usage of men of talent in public administration, otherwise, he warned, "talent from below will rise to overthrow the existing order" (ibid: xlv). We see therefore that economic issues were to be dealt within the wider context of public administration, and hence that economics was part of it.

Not be overlooked are the origins of the Japanese word for economics, keizai (経済). The word was an abbreviation of the phrase "keikoku (or keisei) saimin", which can be roughly translated as "administering the nation and relieving the suffering of the people" (Morris-Suzuki 1989: 11). It was only natural for scholars like Dazai Shundai (太宰春台, 1680-1747) or Arai Hakuseki (新井 白石, 1657-1725), two of the leading economic advisers of their day, to bound up economic issues with a wide range of topics, such as crime, education, geography or interpret them with references to morality or justice (Morris Suzuki 1989). "This ethical and political vision of keizai remained essentially unchanged throughout the Tokugawa age, but the problems that individual thinkers saw as fundamental to a harmonious economic order altered as Japanese society itself evolved" (Morris Suzuki 1989: 12).

During the Tokugawa years, scholars like Kumazawa Banzan (熊沢 蕃山, 1619-1691) Dazai and Sorai expressed their economic ideas in the framework of the contemporary, Tokugawa economy. Banzan for example can be argued that expressed physiocratic ideas, as he saw agriculture as the source of all wealth (ibid). By some scholars of the period as well, merchants were often seen as immoral, self driven individuals, that corrupted society. In his "Discourse on Government (Seidan)", written in 1727, which contained some of his ideas on economics, Sorai criticized the moral deprivation competition and luxury consumption had provoked among the merchant class:

> "Sorai discusses the negative side effects of the economic growth and spread of commercialism that occurred during Tokugawa Japan. He deplores

> the lack of Neo-Confucianist[29] ethics in contemporary economic behavior, the competitive mentality within society, the bourgeois spirit of excessive consumption and the focus on "having" rather than "being" that had infiltrated society because even the warrior class did not adhere to Neo-Confucianist values"[30] (Mandach 2014: 392)

There were from the other side, voices such as that of Dazai (a student of Sorai), who suggested the extension of trade and commerce between the domains. He argued that by adopting the practices of merchants, rulers could generate wealth (Najita 1998). And as the population was rising and trade had already pretty expanded, this was the only path to follow (ibid).

Modern period

The opening of the country, gave birth to the so called Bunmei Kaika (civilization and enlightenment -文明開化) movement[31], whose supporters began to study Western economics introductory books and to engage in debates concerning issues like the freedom of trade or taxation reforms, against the more conservative intellectuals of the previous years, like Kaiseki Sada (介石 佐田, 1818-1882) who argued against any Western import (Sugiyama 1988).

In this context, "the early Meiji period was a battleground, sometimes quite literally, between the forces of 'enlightenment' (*kaika*) and 'retaining past practices' (*injun*)" (Steele 2006: 57). Figures like Sada, expressed their fears that the importation of western commodities and technologies would impoverish the ordinary Japanese, who lived by traditional means. Sada argued that "the introduction of lamps, umbrellas, and other Western goods would lead to the cultural and economic bankruptcy of Japan" (Steele 2006: 57). Sugiyama (1994: 2) finds approaches like that to share common ground with the mercantilist thought, as they represented voices expressing criticism "originating in the suffering of national industry, of levels of imports and of the resultant deficit in the balance of trade".

Either way, voices like that seem that were already the minority in economic debates, as the *Bunmei Kaika* movement "was then in fashion" (Sugiyama 1994: 1). Some of the most renowned figures of the time were passionate supporters of a modernizing process which involved high levels of westernization. "To Meiji Japan the West represented all that was modern not only in goods and institutions themselves but also in the ideas that gave birth to them." (Sugiyama 1994: 2). Mori Arinori, the first minister of education in Japan, called even to the replacement of the Japanese language by English, at least in the public and scientific spheres. The main concepts of western thought introduced in the begging of this process, constituted of German administrative policies and ideas, French notions of people's rights, British liberalism, or utilitarianism based upon it (Sugiyama 1994: 2), as well as a

[29] It should be noted that Sorai was a critic of Neo-Confucianism though.
[30] Sorai's views can be seen as similar to thinkers of the western economic thought, such as John Rae (1796-1872), who developed the concept of "conspicuous consumption" some decades later. Sorai's and Rae's critiques indeed, included a condemnation of luxury consumption based on moral terms. While Rae however, provided a critique based on economic terms as well (an economic argument), Sorai did not. For Sorai, luxury consumption threatened the established system of social hierarchy.
[31] See Appendix.

reintroduction of Christianity which played an important role for the development of socialist ideas later on. “These ideas were brought in almost at the same time and apparently at random by different people, but sometimes even by the same persons.” (Sugiyama 1994: 2). Therefore, it is not uncommon to find thinkers often contradicting themselves in their proposals or combining elements from Western doctrines with local ones.

As Sugiyama (1994) stresses, in the sphere of economic thought, it was the British liberal school that dominated the bulk of translations and economic bibliography during the formative years of this “preparatory period”. However:

> “Though Western economic liberalism awakened modern Japanese intellectuals, it is helpful to think of pre-Meiji traditions of knowledge as providing the framework that determined the types of Western ideas that were widely accepted. Japanese thinkers selected certain parts of Western knowledge as relevant to their interests and gave them a Japanese interpretation.” (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008: 7073).

Translation of economic textbooks was quite widespread during the first decades of Meiji era. Nishizawa (2012: 306) notes that, “among social sciences, economics ranked at the top for number of translations”, with British books to constitute the majority among them, followed, but not limited to, by American, French or German (including Austrian). Some of the first translations, which often were not completed -or even accurate (ibid)-, contained commentaries or were integrated into “original works”, were works by Arthur Latham Perry (1830-1905), Francis Wayland (1796-1865), Millicent (1847-1929) and Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), Thorold Rogers (1823-1890), Francis Amasa Walker (1840-1897), Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850), T.P.Thompson, Leone Levi (1821-1888), Augustus Mongredien (1807–1888), William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882), John Elliott Cairnes (1823-1875), Walter Bagehot (1826-1877), Adam Smith (1723-1790) and Henry Dunning Macleod (1821-1902) (Sugiyama 1994). It is worth also mentioning that those first “western educated” scholars came often across the challenge of rendering into Japanese terms without yet a Japanese counterpart.

Kanda Takahira’s (神田 孝平, 1830–97) translation of William Ellis’s “Outlines of Social Economy” in 1867, from a Dutch[32] copy (under the title Keizai Shōgaku -Short Study of Economics), is regarded by most scholars as the first Japanese translation of a western economic book. And his Nō-Shō Ben (On Agriculture and Trade, 1861) as probably the first introduction of western economic thought in Japan (Sugiyama 1994). There, Kanda, in the context of the debates about land reform that were then under discussion, declared that people were by nature different, and that it was only natural that those who were at the same time clever, industrious and thrifty grew rich, whereas those who were at once dull, lazy and wasteful could only become poor, and that therefore a policy of income redistribution would be an act similar to robbery, and would discourage virtue and encourage vice, leading to the impoverishment of the nation as a whole (Sugiyama 1994).

[32] Dutch still served as the international language for the Japanese, who through the Dutch base in Dejima island (in Nagasaki) often pursued there Rangaku i.e. Dutch studies. Many books therefore reached firstly Japanese hands in the Dutch language. Soon however after the Meiji Restoration (1867), many Japanese intellectuals (like Fukuzawa, Kanda or Nishi) realized the importance of the English language and studied it. Translations from Dutch disappeared after 1874 (Nishizawa 2012).

Apart from Kanda, some of the most important representatives of the Bunmei Kaika movement were intellectuals like Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤 諭吉, 1835–1901)[33], Nishi Amane (西周, 1829-1897), Tsuda Mamichi (津田 真道, 1829-1903), Taguchi Ukichi (田口 卯吉, 1855- 1905) and Amano Tameyuki (天野 為之, 1861-1938). Many of them were among the first Japanese to travel abroad, after the Restoration, for diplomatic or educational purposes. They were not interested primarily in economics, but they found necessary to study Western economics and to apply (or avoid) their theories.

Fukuzawa was a member of the first (and second) Japanese embassy to America (1860), from where he brought back a number of books, including Francis Wayland's (1796-1865) "The Elements of Political Economy" (1837) (later translated into Japanese), which he used as a textbook in his school[34] (Sugiyama 1988, Nishizawa 2012). He used concepts from it and from Robert Chambers's "Educational Course: Political Economy for Use in Schools, and for Private Instruction" in his book Seiyō Jijō (Western Things, 1867), which became a best seller (ibid). Nishi and Tsuda were among the first students that the government chose to send abroad for studies, a policy which was intensified during the following years. They were sent to the Netherlands to study political economy among others, at the University of Leiden under professor Simon Vissering (1818-1888). When they came back, many of their notes from the lecture they have attended were published and used as references.

They were thinkers that were interested not solely on economic studies and matters, but on a wide range of subjects related to the humanities and morality (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008). They offered translations of western textbooks, but they also wrote their own original books and gave (public) speeches (the so called enzetsu). They often took their role as propagators of western thought and policies as their national duty, as a personal responsibility to the enrichment and enhancement of the country. As Japan was trying to secure a place on the global stage, and to survive in an époque of colonial rule and aggression, they saw it as their patriotic mission to contribute to the modernizing and educational process, so that Japan could become a strong, wealthy and independent nation (and to remain as such). The slogan Fūkoku Kyōhei (富国強兵, Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Army) was characteristic of this spirit.

In their economic discussions, issues such as trade and tariffs were the "hot topics". Fukuzawa for example, a supporter of individual liberalism as it is often stressed, suggested a more protectionist approach for the national economy, while Nishi and Taguchi advocated free trade. In any case, it seems that liberal economic ideas and the doctrine of lessez-faire had limited influence during those years.

In this framework, it is worth to mention some of the translated titles we find during this period in Japan:

[33] Who was one of the first to use and popularize the term "Bunmei Kaika" for rendering in Japanese the words civilization and enlightenment. However, by this slogan Japanese intellectuals did not meant the enlightenment found in Europe, but a process of introduction and assimilation of the intellectual, and technological trends of the 19th century West. It represented mainly the concepts of European positivism, empiricism and utilitarianism than the French Enlightenment, which however the Japanese of the time seem to failed to completely grasp, resorting often to generalisms (Havens 2015).

[34] What later came to be the Keio University.

John Stuart Mill's "Principles of Political Economy" (1848) was translated between 1875-1885, by the statesman Hayashi Tadasu (林 董, 1850-1913) and Suzuki Shigetaka (鈴木 重孝), and later by Amano Tameyuki (天野 為之 1859-1938), a liberal economist at Waseda University (Nishizawa 2012).

Adam Smith's "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776) was translated, in the beginning as a series for the Tokyo Keizaigaku Koshukai (東京経済学講習会, Tokyo Society for the Study of Economics), between 1882 and 1888, by Taguchi Ukichi's (田口 卯吉, 1855-1905)[35] disciples, Ishikawa Eisaku (石川 暎作, 1858-1887) and (after his death) Saga Shōsaku (嵯峨正作, 1853-1890), with the Japanese title "Fukokuron" (富国論, The Doctrine of National Enrichment).

Frédéric Bastiat's "Harmonies économiques" (1850) was also translated by Tsuchiko K. between 1887-1889 (Nishizawa 2012). Thinkers like Malthus, David Ricardo (1772-1823) or Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) were also read from the Meiji era however, their works were only partly translated, until they were brought back into the scholarship after the 1910s. The first Japanese translation of Ricardo's "On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" (1817), separately by Wada Saichirō (和田佐一郎, 1894-1944) and Hori Tsuneo (堀経夫, 1896-1981) of Tōhoku University, which appear in 1921 is indicative of this (Izumo, Sato 2014).

Nishizawa (2012: 307) stresses that the most important role though "in making the Japanese people familiar with British economics was actually played by Millicent Garrett Fawcett's Political Economy for Beginners (1870; 7th edn 1889), rather than by classics like Smith and Mill", which circulated in many editions and formats between 1873-1890, and which can be said to have been the most widely disseminated textbook of political economy in the first half of the Meiji era (Sugihara 1972, Nishizawa 2012).

Approaching the end of the century however, Japanese scholars became increasingly interested in the German Historical School. "German and Austrian translations numbered only seven up to 1880, but they more then doubled between 1881 and 1889 (19 books). In 1889 the share of German and Austrian books reached one half of the total number of translations" (Nishizawa 2012: 307).

To this direction contributed translations of books such as the English translations of Luigi Cossa's (1831-1896) "Guida allo Studio dell' Economia Politica" (1876) and "Primi elementi di scienza delle finanze" (1876), the English translation of Friedlich List's (1789–1846) "Das nationale System der politischen ökonomie" (1841), by Ōshima Sadamasu (大島 貞益, 1845-1914)[36] in 1889, books by Richard.T. Ely (1854-1943).

Very important was as well as the influence of institutions such as the State Economics Association (国家経済会, Kokka Keizai Kai, established in 1890), which propagated along with these texts, the economic discourse by Henry Charles Carey (1793–1879)[37], or the Tokyo Imperial University, which became a center for the dissemination of related ideas, and whose professors, such as Wadagaki Kenzō (和田垣謙三, 1860-1919),

[35] Often called the "Japanese Smith".
[36] He translated, among others, Malthus' "An Essay on the Principle of Population"(1798) (Izumo, Sato 2014).
[37] His "Principles of Social Science" (1858) were translated by Inukai Tsuyoshi (犬養 毅, 1855–1932), between 1884-1888 (Nishizawa 2012).

Kuwata Kumazō (桑田熊蔵, 1868-1932) and Kanai Noboru (金井 延, 1865-1933)[38], were instrumental in implanting the German Historical School in Japan and promoting its theories and policies (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008, Nishizawa 2012). Kanai's "Shakai-Keizaigaku (社会経済学 -Study of Social Economics)" (1902) was highly regarded and widely read (Nishizawa 2012). Masasada Shiozawa (塩澤 昌貞, 1870-1945), who studied under Ely at the University of Wisconsin (1896), was also a central figure in this trend. John K. Ingram's (1823-1907) "A History of Political Economy" (1888) was translated by Abe Toranosuke (阿部虎之助) in 1896 (Nishizawa 2012).

Socioeconomic conditions in Japan also favored this trend. Rapid industrialization generated a series of issues and concerns Japanese intellectuals had to deal with. Japan should develop a strong nation, both economically and militarily, so that it could secure its independence. Its backwardness therefore, was a great concern for the thinkers of the time, and that is why they believed that economic policies adopted should be devised according to the phase the country was found in. Protection of infant industries, which was one of the policies advocated often by the members of this school, was one the ways to do so. The so called "Unequal treaties" for example, that has been imposed on Japan, after the Edo era, restricted its freedom of adopting freely tariff policies, until 1911.

The Japanese Association for the Study of Social Policy (社会政策学会) was set up in 1896, in the model of the German Verein für Socialpolitik. It investigated factory laws abroad and domestic labour issues, but its scope included also a wider range of economic topics, such as tariff problems, small industries, the peasantry etc. (Nishizawa Ikeo 2008). It "opposed both laissez-faire liberalism and socialism, and aimed to prevent class conflict and to sustain social and industrial peace by means of a mixture of economic freedom and state intervention", and remained close to the pre-Meiji tradition of perceiving economics, attaching to it moral and political aspects (Nishizawa 2012: 311).

Simultaneously, and on a more practical level, the existence of Commercial Higher Schools and Universities (like Hitotsubashi or Keio, see below) promoted the study of economic textbooks of a more technical scope and perspective. They focused more on topics such as business administration, financial studies and accounting. Those were institutions that mainly nurtured candidates for business and government offices, and most of them were sympathetic to "reform liberalism" and were closer to the ideas of British political economists (Nishizawa Ikeo 2008). Some of the books they used were translations, such as George Goschen's (1831-1907) "The Theory of Foreign Exchanges" (1861), Jevons' "Money and the Mechanism of Exchange" (1875), both translated by Tajiri Inajirō (田尻 稲次郎, 1850-1923) between 1882-83, and Henry Dunning Macleod's (1821-1902) "The Elements of Banking" (1858) in 1883 (Nishizawa 2012).

One of the major figures -and the greatest pioneers of modern Japanese economic science according to Nishizawa (2012)- in the study of pre-WWII economics in Japan, Fukuda Tokuzō (福田 徳三, 1874-1930), belonged to this group of thinkers. He had studied in Germany (1897-1899), under Karl Bucher (Karl Bücher, 1847-1930)[39] and Lujo Brentano

[38] Wadagaki, Kuwata and Kanai had all studied in Europe, under figures such as Foxwell, Gustav von Schmoller (1838-1917), Adolph Wagner (1835-1917), Karl Knies (1821-1898).

[39] He later wrote that he wished he could have attended at least once a lecture by Wilhelm Roscher (1817-1894) , who seems that was quite popular among the young Japanese scholars of the time.

(1844–1931)[40]. After he had studied thinkers like Alfred Marshall (1842-1924), Arthur Pigou (1877-1959), but also John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940), he developed his own approach on welfare economics, in which he talked about the welfare struggle of workers (instead of the class struggle). He was influenced also by the works of Lorenz von Stein (1815-1890) and Anton Menger (1841-1906) (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008). During his life, he encouraged and advised a great number of economists, many of whom became leading figures in the field, and played crucial roles in the development of economic thought in Japan.

Takimoto Yoshio (滝本美夫), professor at Tokyo College of Commerce (東京高等商業学校), introduced Adolph Wagner's (1835-1917) ideas through his "Wagunā-shi Zaiseigaku (ワグナー氏財政学, Mr. Wagner's Public Finance)" (1904). Tsumura Hidematsu (津村 秀松, 1876-1939), who taught at Kobe Higher Commercial School, was also a figure worth mentioning. His textbook "Kokumin Keizaigaku Genron (国民経済学原論, Principles of National Political Economy, 1907)", whose essence was based on Eugen von Philippovich's (1858-1917) economics, went through ten editions and was widely employed as a textbook (Nishizawa 2012). Nakayama Ichirō (中山 伊知郎, 1898-1980), who was a student of Fukuda at Tokyo University of Commerce, and later studied at Bonn University under Joseph Schumpeter, became one of the most prominent theoretical economists in pre-war Japan (Nishizawa 2002). His pre-war works include "Junsui Keizaigaku" (純粋経済学, Pure Economics, 1933) and "Hatten Katei no Kinkō Bunseki" (発展過程の均衡分析, Equilibrium Analysis of the Developing Process, 1939).

An important figure in this context was also Ueda Teijirō (上田貞次郎, 1879-1940). He was a student of Tokuzō Fukuda, by whom he was instructed to read Schmoller and Bücher. In the process he "became enthused with the idea of being 'taught Schmoller-like theories of enterprise development' and was attracted by the German Historical School's explanations of how progress could be discerned even in economic life" (Shionoya 2001: 158). He studied (1906) at the faculty of commerce in University of Birmingham, England, where he came in contact with William James Ashley (1860-1927) and his works. After his return to Japan in 1909, he lectured on business administration in Tokyo Higher School of Commerce, and wrote about business economics. He lectured on Business economics, and through it he developed his ideas about the difference of businesses aiming at high efficiency and businesses aiming at high profits, giving importance to those looking for efficiency. He also discussed socially efficient management similar to that established by German business economists such as Heinrich Nicklisch (1876-1946) (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008). In his lectures and books, he talked about joint stock companies, social reconstruction and the role of managers, stressing "the duties of managers", while also he advocated free trade, and was opposed to socialism, protectionism and the imperialist economic blockade in the 1930s (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008).

As Nishizawa (2012: 309) points out therefore, despite the encouragement of the study of the German Historical School, by Tokyo Imperial University and the state, "an independent tradition of studies in the line of British liberal economics was resisted mainly in private universities (such as Waseda) and in the Higher Commercial Schools (such as Hitotusbashi)", with scholars such as Taguchi Ukichi and Amano Tameyuki being among the central figures in promoting liberal economic ideas in Japan.

[40] He also published a book, Rōdō Keizairon (Labour Economics), with Lujo Brentano in 1899, which incorporated the social policy advocated by the German Historical School.

Those traditions moreover, played a key role in the study of Keynesian ideas:

> "Such a monetary economics tradition made a good basis for the introduction of Keynesian economics into Japan. Keynes's Treatise on Money was translated into Japanese in 1932–4, and the 'fever' of the General Theory took hold at Hitotsubashi soon after the book's publication, giving rise to the formation of a group of Keynesian economists." (Nishizawa Ikeo 2008: 7075)

Ishibashi Tanzan (石橋 湛山, 1884–1973), who was active in the debates on lifting the gold embargo and later became finance minister (1946-47), was one of the main advocates of John Maynard Keynes' (1883-1946) ideas, and had already, since 1937, obtained his permission to publish a Japanese translation of his "General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" (1936).

Inoue Tatsukurō (井上 辰九郎, 1868-1943), began to translate Alfred Marshall's "Elements of Economics of Industry" (1892) in 1896[41]. His translation became a best-seller and went through eight reprints by 1899, and a revised eleventh reprint was issued in 1902 (Nishizawa 2012). It is interesting to note that its introduction, which was written by Shiozawa, was a translation of Marshall's preface to his "Principles of Economics" (1890) (Nishizawa 2012).

Socialism

As now for the socialist ideas, they had been introduced to Japan already since the late 19th century. We can find a reference to this issue in 1872, when Nishi Amane, in a speech to the emperor about Western political thought, opposed the "communalists (*tsūyūgaku-ha*)", who suggested that all wealth should be distributed equally, to the "economists (*keizaigaku-ha*)", who argued that wealth or poverty was a consequence of one's wisdom or madness (Morris-Suzuki 1989: 63). Nishi's article entitled "On Socialism (*Shakaitoron no Setsu*)", though not published, along with his "*Hyakugaku Renkan* (百学連環 -Encyclopedia" (1870), are considered by Sugiyama (1994: 25) one of the earliest attempts to explain "what socialist theories are and one of the very first proposals made in Japan for the consideration of possible counter-measures".

Takeuchi (1967) positions the begging of the socialist movement in Japan at the year 1900, when the Society for the Study of Socialism (*Shakai-shugi kenkyūkai* -社会主義研究会), which was established in 1897, changed its character and name to Socialist Society *(Shakai-shugi kyōkai* -社会主義協会), becoming a group of thinkers "with the objective of putting socialism into practice in Japan"[42]. That movement however, was a movement of "'premature' socialists" according to Takeuchi (1967: 728):

> "To these men, deeply concerned with the wretched circumstances of the workers and seeking the abolition of social inequality, this law[43] seemed to close off any prospect for the resolution of these problems. Pressed to decide on

[41] Marshall's "Economics of Industry" (1879) had been translated in 1885, by the politician Takahashi Korekiyo (高橋 是清, 1854-1936). He is often referred to as Japan's Keynes, due to his economic policies during the Great Depression.
[42] As in Takeuchi (1967: 728).
[43] It refers to the 1900 Security and Police Law (治安警察法).

> a yes or no position towards a state and society which barred the possibility of democratic reform, they had to elect to take the position of socialists in order to stand up to the authority of the state. In other words, the democratic intellectuals who made up the Socialist Society, rather than having arrived at the standpoint of socialism through the internal evolution of their democratic thought, became 'premature' socialists through the force of circumstance."

As for Marxism, it became the dominant doctrine in Japan during the 1920s (Hoston 1986, Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008), as despite that "Marxism had been introduced in the late 1890s, […] it took the Russian Revolution, the Rice Riots of 1918, and related labor strikes to confirm the validity of conflict-centered notions of social progress, providing the impetus for a prolonged struggle between the anarcho-syndicalist and Marxist elements of the Japanese socialist movement." (Barshay 2004: 54)

In this framework, Hoston (1986) highlights the economic and social unrest of those years as the main factors to this increased interest in Marxism. "The Myth of the Taishō democracy" is often mentioned in historiography, as being the main force behind this shift in the country's economic thought. The Tashō era (1912-1925) is an era often referred to as the most democratic period in pre-war Japan, but at the same time it is an era that was characterized by violent events, such as the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) and the upheaval it followed, the rice riots (米騒動, 1918), political assassinations (1921), but also government oppression and censorship. The Peace Preservation Law (治安維持法) of 1925 was only the first step of authorities' efforts to pose restraints to a wider range of activities related to socialist thought and movements. The Law banned any ideas that could be considered socialist or dangerous to the government's policies. Among others, it stated that anyone who tried to deny the system of private property or to change the national essence should be punished.

Marxism offered responses to many ills of the time. Rapid industrialization and urbanization (despite that in Japan it had already reached high levels from the pre-modern era) had driven a large part of the population to poverty and desperation. Economic policies of the time posed heavy burdens on agricultural population as well. All these factors manifested in movements of dissatisfied citizens, seeking a change and better living conditions. However, as Barshay (2004: 54) notes, "[i]n the process, Marxism established itself as a synonym for social science, transcending its role as the ideology of a harried revolutionary movement and popularizing the term "social science" for the first time.".

"Contributing to the collapse of the myth of Taishō democracy were many factors congenial to Marxian analyses of the relationship between politics and economics" (Hoston 1986: 14). Taishō Japan was still a polity were elites had the upper hand in decision making processes. Capitalists were accused to manipulate the government. The so called Zaibatsu, the family-owned oligopolistic conglomerates that played a major role in Japanese economic activity, were often accused of state manipulation, and of enjoying favorable treatment by government officials, disturbing the proper functioning of the market[44]. All those issues were often the cause of protests and complaints. The accusation of serving the capitalists and not

[44] Something that as the Polish Marek Breit (1907-1942) and Oskar Lange (1904-1965) argued in their 1934 article "The Way to the Socialist Planned Economy", "created economic chaos, which manifests itself in the increasing intensity and length of crises".

the people, the increasing corruption among government officials, the antagonisms emerging in society (between capitalist and workers for example), the capitalist accumulation and its limits, were all issues of great debate during those years. Moreover, "The rising numbers of urban workers and farmers whose income was heavily consumed by high rents were effectively excluded from Taishō politics, as were, of course, women. […] party politics were also an elite matter" (Hoston 1986: 14). Marxism therefore, seems that offered a theoretical justification for anyone looking to explain those ills, and search for their remedies.

This process however, of social unrest that favored the interest in social and Marxist ideas, was already underway quite earlier. An indicative example of the changes Japan underwent during the Meiji years, is the burst of the anti-treaty riot (Hibiya Riot) after the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). It is marked as the first major social protest in the country during the age of "imperial democracy" of the Meiji Period, that began with the promulgation of the Meiji constitution in 1890 (Gordon 2010). At the same time, the remnants of the feudal organization, the problems of the agricultural sector, and their coexistence with the large oligopolistic industrial enterprises (zaibatsu) fueled a great deal of discussion, concerning the capitalist system and the role of the state, and contributed to the growing interest for Marxist theories and arguments already since the late 19th century.

In any case, to conclude this section, it is important to note that most early efforts to analyze economic issues and to propose economic policies in Japan, were developed in the framework of national prosperity. Economic inquiry was enhanced by popular slogans of the time, such as "*Fūkoku Kyōhei*". Economics, retained throughout this period the essence of its traditional Japanese notion, i.e. "administering the nation and relieving the suffering of the people". It can be argued therefore, that throughout the period this study covers, economic ideas were expressed and related (directly or not) to the national framework and benefit.

Centers of study and means of transmission

When asking the question "where economic ideas and theories were studied and discussed in Japan", during the period under examination here, the answer is not an unusual one. A number of universities, (economic) associations, research groups became centers of in-depth research and debates on economics. Moreover, a great number of publications, in a wide range of formats (from textbooks to manga), supported the dissemination of economic knowledge and ideas throughout this period. After all, as Nishizawa (2012: 305) points out, "the emergence of economics and its institutionalisation and dissemination went hand in hand with the evolution of guidebooks and textbooks of various kinds".

Article 5 of the "Imperial Oath of Five Articles" (五箇条の御誓文, Gokajō no Goseimon), promulgated by the Emperor Meiji, in 1868, stated: "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule." (Jansen 2002: 338). In this framework, the new national educational system started to be designed. The Imperial University Act of 1886, which followed the Prussian model (Kurz, Nishizawa, Tribe 2011), established the Imperial University (by merging two already existing higher institutions), which in 1897 was renamed Tokyo Imperial University, as the Kyoto Imperial University was

also founded. Until 1939 there were in total seven Imperial Universities in Japan (and one in Taiwan).

Simultaneously, a number of private and public higher institutions emerged as well. Some of them gained the status of a University, after the University Order of 1919 was issued. The Order secured also "the institutional independence of economics from state science and law, thus consolidating the 'paraphernalia' within which the economic science 'grew more in bulk than in wisdom', and promoted a rapid 'progress' in professionalisation and institutionalisation in this field (Schumpeter 1954: 754)" (Nishizawa 2012: 312).

> "The pre-war Japanese higher education system was thus characterised (but not exhaustively) by the well-organised bureaucratic administration system in governmental institutions and also by the coexistence of the three sectors of higher education institutions – governmental (national), public (local) and private, with massive investment in the national sector by the Government. […] governmental institutions, especially imperial universities, enjoyed the prerogative of acquiring abundant staff, facilities and prioritisation in other parts of budget distribution in comparison with institutions of other sectors." (Oba 2004: 1).

In addition, it is worth mentioning that some of the leading intellectuals of the Meiji period founded their own academies, some of which acquired later university status. Perhaps the most renowned example is Fukuzawa's Keio Gijūku (1858), today know as Keio University. Shibusawa Eichi, the so called father of Japanese capitalism, helped Mori Arinori to establish the Tokyo School of Commerce, in 1875, today as Hitotsubashi University. The politician Ōkuma Shigenobu (大隈 重信, 1838-1922) founded Tokyo Senmon Gakko in 1882, presently Waseda University. All these institutions played an important role in introducing contemporary economic thought, focusing in a greater extent on practical and technical economic knowledge, on business and financial economics. Nevertheless, academic research in those should not be underestimated, as important figures in economic thought were connected to them.

Universities therefore became centers for the study of economic theories. Economics were at the beginning part of the law or political faculties' programs. During the formative years, a number of foreign scholars were employed to teach economics (and other disciplines) at Japanese higher education institutions. Ernest F. Fenollosa (1853-1908) seems that was the first professor of economics in Japan, lecturing in Tokyo Imperial University from 1878.

It was in 1919 that faculties of economics, as independent departments, were firstly (in Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities) created in the above mentioned institutions. Furthermore, it can be argued that some institutions developed interest in particular trends of economic thought during specific periods. As it has been already discussed above, Tokyo Imperial University was instrumental in the dissemination of the ideas of the German Historical School during the late 19th early 20th century, and later, in the 1920s, while Marxist studies flourished in academic circles in Japan, particularly at the imperial universities (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008), Kyoto Imperial University became a hub for Marxist scholars, until the so called "March 15 incident of 1928 (三・一五事件)" occurred, which forced many scholars (like Kawakami Hajime) out of the academia.

Commercial schools were from their side, centers for the promotion of neoclassical and welfare economics. "This first decade of the twentieth century was 'the most important period in the building' of economics studies at Hitotsubashi University, and Fukuda's lectures on economic history lay at its heart" (Shionoya 2001: 158). Fukuda firstly in Tokyo School of Commerce, and later through his post at Keio Gijūku, introduced a great number of economic doctrines to his students, from Marxism to welfare economics.

As has been already mentioned, business economics and management studies also prospered, against the background of the rapid development of the corporate economy after the First World War (ibid). "Ueda's business studies were followed and developed by Y. Masuji at Tokyo and Y. Hirai at Kobe, while F. Muramoto, the first Japanese MBA from Harvard, began to lecture on scientific management at Osaka Higher Commercial School in the very early 1920s" (ibid).

In parallel with higher educational institutions, a number of associations were established, for the conduction of research in social issues, economic matters included, and the advancement of knowledge. Mori Arinori, Nishi Amane, Fukuzawa Yukichi (among others) created (1874) the "Meiji Six Society (明六社, Meirokusha)", which aimed at the education of the general public and promotion of the modernization of the Japanese society. Meirokusha played an important role in the spread of Western thought at the beginning of the Meiji period.

Keizaigaku Kyōkai (Economics Association) was founded in 1880 (Nishizawa 2012), as the State Economics Association (国家経済会, Kokka Keizai Kai) was established in 1890, becoming a place where protectionist policies by scholars such as Oshima were discussed and advocated.

The Japanese Association for the Study for Social Policy as already mentioned, was set up in 1896, by thinkers like Kuwata and Kanai, to investigate labour laws abroad, and to bacome an organ for those who were not satisfied either with conservatism and progress or with radicalism and revolution (Sugiyama 1994). It was active until 1925. "The Society comprised scholars, teachers and bureaucrats from all over the country, and had a very strong influence as 'the only society of the Japanese economics world' until the 1920s, when it was superseded by the rising popularity of Marxist ideas" (Nishizawa 2012: 311). In its "Programme of the Society for Social Policy", it was stressed characteristically:

> "We object to laissez-faire, because excessive self-interest and unlimited free competition can only add to the aforementioned inequality. We also object to socialism, because an attempt to overthrow the existing economic system and to exterminate the capitalist class can only harm the development of the nation. Our aim is to maintain the present economic order based on private ownership and, within that boundary, to prevent class antagonism and to achieve social harmony through the activities of individuals on the one hand and the power of the state on the other"[45]

[45] As in Sugiyama (1994: 13).

Iwasaburo Takano (岩三郎高野, 1871–1949), a core member of the Association who studied with Georg von Mayr (1841-1925) in German, founded a strong tradition of social statistics in Japan (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008).

For the dissemination of socialist (and utopian) ideas, important role played the Shakaigaku Kenkyūkai (Association for the Study of Sociology) and the Shakai-shugi Kenkyūkai (Association for the Study of Socialism), which was founded in 1897, by a small group of socialists thinkers, including Christians (Hoston 1986). They drew widely on the ideas of Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), as well as Marx and Engels (Hoston 1986). Moreover, the Heimin-sha (平民社, Commoner's Society), organized by Sakai Toshihiko (堺 利彦, 1871-1933)[46] and Kōtoku Shusui (幸徳 秋水, 1871-1911) in 1903, played leading role in the translation and publication of Marxist writings, drawing mainly from the writings of Lassalle, August Bebel (1840-1913), Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), and Marx and Engels (Hoston 1986).

The Ōhara Institute for Social Research was founded in 1919, by the businessman Magosaburō Ōhara (大原 孫三郎, 1880-1943). It played a great role in the development of socialist thought and research, as "The Marxists expelled from Tokyo University were to make [it] into a centre for Marxian studies before the Second World War" (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008: 7074). Among others, the Japanese Society of Business Administration (日本経営学会, Nihon Keiei Gakkai), was founded in 1926, with its original membership numbering 342 (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008).

Publishing industry also expanded greatly. Japan is a country with an important publishing tradition, already since the pre-modern period (i.e. before the Meiji era). An indicative example is that of Sada, who was mentioned above, who used to send petitions to the government expressing his worries about the economic policies of the time, but used also "the new mass media to spread his message, writing popular books, editorials for newspapers, and even resorted to humor and satire to advance his argument." (Steele 2006: 59). Japanese "publishing industry", contained a wider range of formats in which information was circulated. Humor was often evoked to criticize or comment on contemporary événements.

As literacy was rising, even more after the reforms in education (which became compulsory from 1872, firstly at elementary level), an increase in the number of book publications and the press can be seen; magazines and newspapers, many specializing in economics, business or finance. In addition, research institutions and universities published often their own bulletins, with a number of them dedicated exclusively to economic analysis. Finally, as formerly with the academies, many intellectuals took the initiative to publish their own journals and magazines, while others worked as chief editors to already existing ones.

Meirokusha's members published many articles in the Society's journal, "Meiroku Zashi (六 雜志)", in a wide range of topics, including economics, religion, education, the parliamentary system and women's empowerment. Tōyō Keizai Shinpō (Oriental Economics Newspaper, 東洋経済新報)[47] was founded in 1895, by politician Machida Chūji (町田忠治,

[46] The first to introduce Lenin's writings to Japan (Hoston 1986).

[47] In 1919 was renamed Shūkan Tōyō Keizai (週刊東洋経済) and became a weekly magazine. It is one of Japan's leading business magazines.

1863-1946). It was edited by people such as Amano and Ishibashi, and propagated the ideas and policy of new liberalism in Japan (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008).

Tokyo Imperial University published Kokka Gakkai Zasshi (国家経済雑誌, Journal for State Science) from 1887. The magazine became a central medium for the dissemination of 'German' ideas in Japan (Nishizawa 2012). Kyoto Imperial University published the Keizai-ronsō (経済論叢, Economic Review), along with the Kyoto University Economic Review (KUER)[48]. Keizai-ronsō was founded in 1915, even before the establishment of the Faculty of Economics (1919), and published academic papers on topics related to economics and public administration. The KUER, the oldest academic journal of economics in Western languages (English) in Asia[49], was founded by the Department of Economics in 1926. In its first issue is mentioned the will for the creation of a distinct Japanese school of economic thought.

Kobe Higher Commercial School (present Kobe University) used the Kokumin Keizai Zasshi (国民経済雑誌, National Economics Magazine), first issued in 1906. It was the first academic journal in the social sciences to be launched in Japan[50]. It was firstly co-edited by the staff of the Higher Commercial Schools at Hitotsubashi and Kobe, and functioned also as an organ of the Japanese Association for the Study of Social Policy (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008). Keio's Mita Gakkai Zasshi (三田学会雑誌, Mita Journal of Economics) was first published in 1909.

The Heimin-sha, issued the Heimin Shinbun (平民新聞, Commoners' newspaper), which despite its short life, played an important role in the dissemination of socialist and Marxist texts. Sakai Toshihiko (堺 利彦, 1871-1933) published there the translation of the Communist Manifesto in 1904 (Hoston 1986).

Many intellectuals and scholars, such as Kawakami Hajime, published their own journals. In his "Shakai mondai kenkyū" (社會問題研究, Studies of Social Problems) for example, Kawakami published many of his economic translations and articles. Taguchi Ukichi, is mentioned by Ikeo (2001) as the person responsible for initiating economic journalism in Japan. He founded Tokyo Keizai Zasshi (東京経済雑誌, Tokyo Economics Magazine) in 1879 (it was active until 1923), and believed that it should be impartial and deal with economic matters at large (Ikeo 2001).

It should be mentioned as well, that Japanese thinkers were all the more aware of the importance of the internationalization of scholarship, and soon they themselves looked for it. We saw the example of Kyoto Economic Review, which is the epitome, it could be argued, of this effort. Japanese often wrote in English or German, so that they could transmit their ideas to a wider readership. Moreover, some of their works got to be translated into other languages for their own merit. An example is "Teikokushugika no Taiwan (帝国主義下の台湾, Taiwan

[48] Issued until Vol.72, No. 1-2, 2003. From Vol. 73, No. 1, 2004, renamed "The Kyoto Economic Review" (KER), functioning as an open refereed international journal that welcomes submission from the outside of Kyoto University, and issued by the Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University until Vol. 86, No. 1-2, 2017. From Vol. 87, it is published by the Kyoto University Economic Society and has fully become an online journal (Information from Kyoto University's website).
[49] According to the University's website.
[50] According to Kobe University Economic and Business Association's website.

under Imperialism)" (1929) by Yanaihara Tadao (矢内原 忠雄, 1893-1961), which according to Barshay (2004) was particularly influential, and was translated into Russian among other languages. Another example is Katayama Sen, who published many articles in the International Socialist Review.

Finally, it is worth noting that many among the economic thinkers of the time were active in economic studies, as well as in political or social levels. Fukuda for example was one of the founding members of Reimeikai (黎明会, Dawn Society), established in 1918, with the objective of offering education to society, and promote democracy. Kawakami campaigned (unsuccessfully) for the Labor-Farmer Party in 1928, while some years later he supported the banned Japanese Communist Party. Kōtoku Shūsui was executed for treason (1911), for his participation in the High Treason Incident (1910), which concerns a plot to assassinate the Emperor Meiji[51].

The dissemination of Marxist and socialist ideas

The novel "The Socialist" from the famous writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke begins as follows:

> "He was a young socialist. His father, a minor official, had thus threatened to disown him. Yet he had remained true to his convictions, for he was possessed of both burning zeal and supportive friends. They formed an organization, distributed ten-page pamphlets, and held lectures. He naturally attended such meetings regularly, and from time to time his essays were included in the pamphlets they produced. Beyond their group it would appear unlikely that any of these were widely read, but he was nonetheless quite proud of one: Remembering Liebknecht. The ideas it expressed may not have been altogether precise, but it was suffused with poetic passion."[52]

Literature can often transmit the ambiance of the time it engages with. Especially in cases like that of early 20th century Japan, when literature trends like those of the I-novels or proletarian literature "swept" the nation. Socialism was a theme that seems to be present in a great number of works of the time. We can find references to it in writers like Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (芥川龍之介, 1892-1927)[53] (like the above excerpt) or Dazai Osamu (太宰 治, 1909-1948), to mention just two of the major literary figures of the time.

For them though socialism was a trend of the day, an occupation for the expression of the unrest of alienated youngsters. It was not something to devote oneself or take seriously. As for example contemporary author Murakami Haruki (2006) stresses, in the case of Akutagawa, "[h]e was far too skeptical, far too individualistic, and far too intelligent ever to believe that he could become an effective intellectual spokesman for the working class". That seems to be the case thus for a large number of authors of the time. Who were then capable of assuming the role of "effective intellectual spokesmen for the working class"? The task of

[51] Eventhough his investment is still a matter of debate.
[52] N.p. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, THE SOCIALIST, Translated by : Charles De Wolf. Available at: https://www.shortstoryproject.com/story/the-socialist/
[53] Maybe the author that best represents Tiashō era literature.

taking seriously the theory and ideas socialism contains was to occupy men (and women) interested in the inquiry of more practical questions and answers of the day. Among them were of course economic thinkers.

Japanese Literature (like any other) of course cannot be regarded as a source for inquiry in history of economic thought however, and especially when it is assuming the above mentioned literature styles, it gives us a glimpse into the society under investigation and its interests. Economic thought develops always in particular social frameworks and reflects particular [social] interests and worries. Therefore, it becomes apparent, just by reading early 20th century literature, that early 20th century Japanese society was interested in socialist thought. That intellectuals were interested in socialist thought (for and against). It cannot then be otherwise than that economic thinkers of the time were interested in socialist thought. But what is assumed here as indications of socialist thought? This section focuses on this question.

It should be made clear firstly, that this research is concerned with the part of socialist thought derived (or related to) primarily from Marxism, no matter how truly socialist it ends to be, extreme or compromised, revolutionary or peaceful. It is possible to describe the approach taken here, with the theoretical image of a series of concentric circles. First of all, Karl Marx's oeuvre is found as the center, being itself the central circle, and located at the center of the circles dealing with socialism. It is then surrounded by circles representing the works to be called Marxist. And as we get away from the center, works appear that are "inspired" (but not necessarily in accord with) by the center, but that follow their own intellectual routes. From all those works therefore, socialist (but not alone) ideas emerge. That being said, it is important to see which works, developed in this framework, were available to the Japanese economic thinkers of the period under study.

It should be mentioned here however, that this research is concerned with the analysis of ideas of the Japanese economic thinkers that belong to any of those circles. Our focus is not on Marxist thinkers alone, but on thinkers "borrowing" from Marxist concepts and ideas. Not solely advocates or critics of Marxism, but thinkers that, in spite of sometimes even assuming the role of a critic, find practical value and truths in parts of Marxist concepts.

Karl Marx's (1818-1883) first Volume of Capital was firstly published in 1867, and it is true that it is still the basis for any attempt to acquire basic knowledge about or describe capitalism's deficiencies and shortcomings. His other works, along with those of Friedrich Engel's (1820-1895) (or their "collaborations"), constitute what can be called Marx's works. Apart from those however, a great amount of works dealing with the issues Marx's work highlights and underpins has been produced. When it comes then to prewar (pre-WWII) Japan, which "Marxist" works fueled the intellectual discussions and debates, and under what form? This is the topic of this section.

Morris-Suzuki (1989) characteristically, mentions the thinker Ōuchi Hyōe (大内 兵衛, 1888-1980), remembering that prior to WWI every student had read at least one chapter of Marx's Capital[54], but that after the War's end, interest in Marx's work had increased significantly. An indication of this phenomenon is for example, the fact that fifteen thousand

[54] It is worth noting that it seems that after the 2008 crisis "Capital is being widely reread" in Japan, and that "There has been a general flourishing of Marx scholarship since the 1990s" and "Many books on Marx have appeared" (Uchida 2010: 205).

sets of the Kaizōsha edition of the collected works of Marx and Engels (1927-29)[55], which were edited by Sakisaka Itsurō (向坂 逸郎, 1897-1985), were sold in their first printing (Barshay 2004).

Many scholars date the beginning of Marx's works translations back to 1904, when Sakai Toshihiko and Shūsui Kōtoku translated the "Communist Manifesto" (Ōmura 2011, Uchida 2010). Their translation, which appeared in the "Heimin Shinbun" (nr. 53 on the 1904/11/13), was circulated in other East Asian nations as well (e.g. China) (Ōmura 2011). The first complete translation of Marx's Capital in Japanese appeared only in 1919-1925, by Takabatake Motoyūki (高畠 素之,1886-1928) however, as it is not unusual for scholars of the time to translate parts of a work, or to write commentaries along with translated texts, we can find such examples of Capital translations earlier as well. A short summary by Yamakawa Hitoshi (山川 均, 1880-1958) for example, of all three volumes of Capital, can be already found in 1907, in the Ōsaka edition of the Heimin Shinbun (Lange 2014).

According to Professor Ōmura (2011), it is possible to discern three historical periods-phases of increased levels in Japanese translations of Marx's (and Englels') works, when looking at the numbers of relative publications:

1st Period：1924～1932 (total: 367, peak year: 1927 , 67 publications)
2nd Period： 1946～1955 (total: 372, peak year: 1948 and 1949 , 54 publications)
3rd Period： 1962～1974（total: 272, peak year: 1962 and 1974, 26 publications）

The above estimation refers to the number of the total publications in magazines, pamphlets, and books in each period respectively (ibid).

When considered therefore, the first one is the period that is of interest here, as this dissertation covers the pre-WWII 20th century years. It is apparent hence, that we can find a great number of Marx's and Engels works being translated (partly or as a whole) during it. It should be noted as well, that "[b]y the time of the Fifteen Year War period (1931-45), when government censorship became very strict, most of the works of Marx and Engels had been translated into Japanese, while Marx scholars debated whether Japanese capitalism was modern or was still halffeudal." (Uchida 2010: 205).

Some additional titles mostly translated [often partly] during the peak period (1927) Professor Ōmura adds, were the "Introduction to Capitalist Theory (資本論入門)", "Wages, Prices, Profits (賃金・価格・利潤)", "Critique of the Gotha Program (ゴータ綱領批判)" (1875), "The History of Surplus Value Theory (剰余価値学説史)", "The Poverty of Philosophy (哲学の貧困)" (1847), "Deutsch–Französische Jahrbücher (German–French Annals) (独仏年誌)" (1844), "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature (デモクリットとエピクールとの自然哲学の差異)" (1841) (Ōmura 2011).

As for Engel's works, we find "Introduction to Capitalism (資本論入門)", "(German Peasants' War -ドイツ農民戦争)", "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man (猿が人間になるについての労働の役割)" (1876), "Socialism: Utopian and

[55] According to Karatani [2020], the first in the world, in any language.

Scientific (空想から科学への社会主義の発展)" (1880), "Anti-Dühring (反デューリング論)" (1878), "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (家族・私有財産および国家の起源)", "Revolution and counterrevolution in Germany (1848 年のドイツにおける革命と反革命)" (1884) (Ōmura 2011).

Hoston (1986) argues that the early Japanese Marxists scholars had no contact with the earlier "more humanistic" works of Marx, and thus were not aware of his ideas expressed in those, and thus were often struggling to find an ethical basis for their "Marxist" theories. Kawakami Hajime (河上 肇, 1879-1946), maybe the most famous economic thinker, to be called Marxist, of the time, can be said that is the best example of this "lack" in knowledge. Kawakami concern with issues of morality seem that posed burdens on his Marxian studies, throughout his life.

However, "as elsewhere, the spread of Marxism in Japan depended not only on the existence of a party-authorized, Capital-centered canon, but on its popularization in texts by Engels, Karl Kautsky, Lenin, and Bukharin" (Barshay 2004: 54). Concerning the Marxist works mostly read during the 1920s in Japan, it seems that apart from works by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Bukharin were widely circulating. George Plekhanov's (1856-1918) "Fundamental Problems of Marxism" (1908) was the first Russian socialist work to be translated before 1921 (Hoston 1986). Lenin's "Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (1918) was translated by Yamakawa Hiroshi and his wife Yamakawa Kikue (山川菊栄, 1890-1980), a Japanese socialist feminist, and Karl Kautsky's (1854-1938) "Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History" (1906), was translated by Sakai. According to Hoston (1986), during the 20s, Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938) became by far the most widely read and respected Russian Marxist, with his [and Evgenii Preobrazhensky's (1886-1937)] "The ABC of Communism" (1919) and "Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology" (1921), to be promptly translated into Japanese by mid-decade and read as basic textbooks of Marxism.

As for the scholars and the centers that conducted studies of Marxism, "Initially, Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946) at Kyoto and Fukuda were the leading figures in the study of Marxian economics, whereas Fukuda pioneered the study of welfare economics and the welfare state against Marxism" (Nishizawa, Ikeo 2008: 7075). It was Fukuda who advised his students to translate Das Kapital almost in parallel with Marshall's Principles (ibid). While Kawakami's first contact with Marxist ideas was through the book "The Economic Interpretation of History" (1902) by Edwin. R.A. Seligman (1861-1939), which he also translated to Japanese. Kawakami became later "the crucial 'apostle' to young intellectuals" for Marxism in Japan (Barshay 2004: 54). He published many articles and books on Marxism, and translated (often partly) many of Marx's works.

As previously mentioned also, Imperial Universities became centers for the study of Marxian thought during the beginning of the 20th century. A great number of scholars of Marxism emerged in those institutions, among whom were Kawakami, Kushida Tamizō (櫛田 民蔵, 1885-1934), Ōuchi Hyōe, Arisawa Hiromi (有沢 広巳, 1896-1988), Uno Kōzō (宇野 弘蔵, 1897-1977), Yamada Moritarō (山田 盛太郎, 1897-1980).

Anarchism was also introduced to Japan during this period. Japan, due to its proximity to Russia, was "visited" often by exiles in Siberia or Sakhalin island, many of

whom were embracing revolutionary paths for their lives. Among them was the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), or the Polish Bronisław Piłsudski (1866-1918)[56]. As Konishi (2020: 2-3) points out:

> "The Siberia–Japan–San Francisco path of escape for Siberian exiles first forged by Bakunin was to become a well- trodden road used by other Russian radicals and revolutionaries by the turn of the century. […] [Bakunin] was the first of a number of exiles, prison escapees, and emigres from Russia to enter Japan on their way to revolution from the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. […] that cooperatist anarchism, which involved some of the most distinctive and popular cultural phenomena during this period, was a major current in Japanese intellectual and cultural history from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century"

The major figure in this movement in Japan was undoubtedly Kōtoku Shūsui, who translated a wide range of anarchist bibliography (European/Russian) to Japanese.

Kōtoku also contributed articles to *Sekai Fujin* (Women of the World), a socialist women's newspaper, founded and edited between 1907-9, by the feminist Fukuda Hideko (福田 英子,1865-1927) (Mackie 2013). Japanese women advocating socialist ideas were active during those years as well. Women like Yamakawa Kikue (mentioned above), Fukada, Itō Noe (伊藤 野枝, 1895-1923) were leading figures during the 1920s, in what is often called women's liberation movement, but as well as in the general socialist movement of the time. The Sekirankai (赤瀾会, Red Wave Society), which was active in 1921, was a characteristic socialist women's organization of this period[57].

The question therefore, of whether there is something that can be called "Japanese Marxism" is still open, even though, Japanese contributions to the Marxist tradition, especially after WWII, point to a positive reply. Japanese Marxists have developed a great number of research materials about Marx's and Engel's work, often with a dedication to detail not found elsewhere. "Japanese Marx scholarship has probably been influenced by the tradition of philological scrutiny applied to Chinese classical literature." (Uchida 2010: 206). In addition, "Japanese Marx scholars have contributed greatly to the MEGA2 edition of Capital" and "Japanese Marx scholarship is not limited to philological research; it also addresses theoretical issues" (ibid).

In this context, through this study, it is attempted to contribute (among other things) to the drawing of a conclusion, concerning the question about the existence or not of

[56] Anthropologist and brother of the statesman Józef Piłsudski, who dominated politics in prewar Poland. Bronisław, for his involvement with a socialist plot to assassinate Alexander III of Russia, in 1887, together with Vladimir Lenin's brother Alexander Ulyanov, was sentenced to fifteen years at hard labor on Sakhalin island. He later moved to Japan, where he conducted studies on the Ainu people, and established contacts, among others with Katayama Sen (片山 潜 , 1859-1933), who was a leading spokesman for the Japanese socialist and communist movements outside Japan. Bronisław died in Paris, in 1918, while working for the Polish National Committee.

[57] The *Shin-Fujin Kyōkai* (新婦人協会, New Women's Society) was also created in 1920 however, it was criticized by women like Yamakawa, for lacking a socialist perspective.

"Japanese Marxism", when pre-WWII period is concerned. Can it be argued that "Japanese Marxism" took shape during those years?

Chapter II

The debate on Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義論争)

Kubo (2011) argues that Marxist bibliography in Japan (experiencing a "boom" the period 1919-1927), turned to the masses and the popularization of Marxist ideas, towards the end of the 1920s, culminating in the publication of the "Collected Works of Marx and Engels (マルクス・エンゲルス全集)" in 1928. It is also true however, that during this period, Marxist scholarship in Japan, by assuming a more systematic and concrete form, was able to express and develop itself further than ever before, and produce noticeable contributions to the "imported theory". In 1927, the so called Debate on Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義論争 – Nihon Shihonshugi Ronsō - hereinafter Debate) was initiated, and a great number of arguments related to Marxist theories were produced.

The Debate is often considered as the "apex" of intellectual production, in the field of social sciences, in pre-WWII Japan. According to Germaine A. Hoston (1986: x), the Debate can be described as a "vigorous controversy that grew increasingly scholarly and theoretical", with "[s]cholars on both sides of the debate [becoming] Japan's first real social scientists as they defended their positions with an impressive wealth of new data on the history of Japanese political and economic development". Yasuba Yasukichi (1975: 63) writes that the Debate "swelled into the largest, if not the most significant, controversy in Marxist economics and economic history in Japan", while it "affected virtually all Japanese intellectuals".

Gavin Walker (2016: 28-9) distinguishes the Japanese Marxist scholarship of the earlier 20s, from its later development. As he says:

> "After the formation of the Japan Communist Party (Nihon kyōsantō; JCP) in 1922, internal debate in Marxist theory centered at first around the questions of Marxist philosophy (in the major Marxist theorists of the 1910s and 1920s, such as Kawakami Hajime, Yamakawa Hitoshi, and Fukumoto Kazuo, among others)",

After attaining a deep familiarity with the Marxist canon, Japanese scholars were at a position where they could engage in a long theoretical, historical and analytical debate, concerning the country's current socioeconomic conditions, its future and potential, by analyzing complex issues from a Marxian standpoint. The main figures' contributions to this Debate are often regarded by western scholars, as a noteworthy contribution to Marxist scholarship as a whole. Bibliography on the Debate grew steadily throughout the 20th century

(and still does so in the 21st), and "today all the books written on the issue (the Debate) in those decades could easily fill a small library" (Schwentker, 2005: 80)[58].

The Debate (for the pre-WWII years) can be divided into two distinct periods, covering the decade from 1927 to 1937/8. The first period, often called the "Debate on Japanese Democratic Revolution (日本民主革命論争)", can be placed between 1927-1932, while the second one, most often referred to as the "Debate on Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義論争)", lasting until 1937/8. Other scholars (e.g. Aoki 2020) sometimes refer to the three stages of the Debate, with the last one taking place between 1937-8, when Sakisaka Itsurō (向坂逸郎, 1897-1985), of Rōnō-ha[59], published his "Various Problems of Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義の諸問題)" (1937). This period covers Sakisaka's criticism of Yamada Moritarō's (山田 盛太郎, 1897-1980)[60] "Analysis of Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義分析)" (1934), and Kōza-ha's responses to it (ibid).

The Debate then came to a halt, as suppression by the authorities increased significantly, amidst the rising of Japanese militarism. As Aoki (2020: 4) describes, "the Debate ended because the main participants were arrested by the authorities intermittently from 1936 to 1938. Japanese Marxism entered an age of suspension, and the Debate revived in the postwar period when freedom of speech was restored." (Aoki 2020). Two major incidents, where many scholars got arrested, were the second "Popular Front Incident (or Faculty Group Incident)", of summer of 1936, and the so-called "Professor Group Incident" of early 1938. After the War, the Debate was revived.

The Debate as such, can be divided into various sub-debates, with scholars developing their argumentation and focusing on particular issues raised during the greater Decade. One such example is the so called "Manufacture debate" (1933-4), the focal point of which was the discussion of "the extent to which the main causes of the [Meiji] Restoration itself were purely external or were partly the internal dynamics of Japanese capitalist development" (Hoston 1986: 38).

The Debate was initiated by the departure of a group of thinkers, "assembled' under the name "Rōnō-ha (労農派, labor-farming faction)", from the Japanese Communist Party, in 1927. The group was opposed to the Comintern Theses of 1927[61], according to which Japan should undergo a two-stage revolution; a bourgeois one, and then only, a proletarian one. The opposite group, and advocate of this approach, is known under the name "Kōza-ha (講座派, lecture faction)".

[58] As referred in Aoki (2020).

[59] The Japanese term "Ha (派)" can be translated as "group", "faction" or "clique", and will be used hereinafter to refer to the two main factions engaged in the Debate.

[60] One of the leading figures in the Kōza faction (see below).

[61] Comintern's main documents concerning the Japanese case, that could be associated with this Debate, are: the "Theses on Japan Adopted in the Session of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern" issued on July 15, 1927, the 1931 "Draft Political Theses" and "Theses on the Situation in Japan and the Tasks of the Japanese Communist Party", issued on May 20, 1932, by the West European Bureau of the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International). It should be noted that except for the 1931 Draft, the two other documents proposed a two-stage revolution strategy to Japan.

If we follow hence the above division, the first phase of the Debate, revolved around the conditions in agriculture, the persistence of feudalism in Japan, and related issues that were associated with the revolutionary strategy (one or two stage revolution) that should be adopted. Rōnō-ha, downplayed the remnants of "feudalism", while acknowledged the modernization of agriculture, and the bourgeoisification of the political system. In this context, the group called for a "socialist revolution with democratic tasks" (the so-called "one-stage revolution"). On the other side, Kōza-ha emphasized the persistence of "feudalism" in Japan, and acknowledged the rule of "semi-feudal" landlordism in agriculture, and the existence of an absolutist emperor system, whose power was based on these remnants. In this context, the group called for a bourgeois democratic revolution, which would rapidly transform into a socialist revolution (the so-called "two-stage revolution").

During the second phase, when the Comintern had already published its 1932 Theses and as the oppression of the authorities began to increase, we can notice the focus to switch more to the historical analysis of Japanese capitalist development (especially from the Kōza-ha's side). Issues such as the historical and structural characteristics of Japanese capitalism, the production relations in agriculture, the history of the Bakumatsu era[62], and Meiji era, including the question of manufacture development during the first. A wide range of controversies emerged, including methodological issues.

The questions concerning the participants of the Debate, were thus "general popular questions of politics and thought of the early twentieth century in Japan" (Walker 2016: 32), while the "centerpiece was the clarification of the essential questions of mode of production and the historical process of articulation of the social formation" (Walker 2016: 29). As it will become more clear to the reader in the process, both factions dealt with the processing of Comintern's guidelines for the Japanese left movement[63] from the one side, and the challenges Marxism posed for future action on the other.

Comintern as an organ of the Soviet state[64], promoted its views to Asian national movements according to its own programming and state of affairs (see for example Hoston 1986, Linkhoeva 2020). Different leadership or differences in the international arena provoked different "use-values" for Asian nations for the Comintern, and prescribed policies aligned with that. For many of the Japanese thinkers, this was clear, while for others sentimental attachment for the common cause seems that blurred their judgment. Even though, Kōza-ha members, which followed more closely the general Comintern's line, often criticized the lack of scholarly analysis by their Soviet peers, or went beyond their analysis and suggestions.

The issues that were mainly discussed by the participants of the Debate were related to the aspects of Marxism that could be connected, in one way or another, to the application of Marxist analysis of development to Japan, and to the forthcoming revolution, which would replace the current system. As Barshay (2004: 55) describes it, "[o]ccasioned by political

[62] The term refers to the final years of the Edo period (1603-1867).
[63] As Yasuba (1975: 64) notes, the Debate "acquired strong political overtones", as the Kōza-ha position was related to the oppressed JCP's strategy and approach (and consequently to that of the Comintern). Kōza-ha characterized "its critics as betrayers and separatists" and Rōnō-ha "ridiculed the slavish –sometimes pathological- mentality of its opponents" (ibid).
[64] If we accept it to be so.

disagreements over revolutionary goals and strategy, its [the Debate's] task was the historical characterization of the developmental process of Japanese capitalism and the modern state". Such issues were therefore, the question of the Asiatic Mode of Production (related in the case of the Debate to the periodization efforts of Japanese history), the form the Japanese state assumed (absolutist or not), and landownership relations. In this context, "[t]he Rōnō-ha was challenged to provide evidence of a significant transition to capitalism in the Japanese countryside as well as in the cities; while the Kōza-ha's feudal thesis led it to conduct extensive historical research as well on the process that had permitted Japanese capitalism to develop so rapidly while maintaining such powerful vestiges of backwardness" (Hoston 1986: xii).

Each group therefore, during those years, developed a series of arguments and works supporting their respective thesis, and contributed important insights into the Japanese economic thought of the time. In this chapter, these arguments will be presented and discussed, with the aim of bringing up some of the prominent ones to our attention. At the end of this section, conclusions will be made concerning these arguments.

Here, the Debate is studied as a whole, and our attention is placed mainly, on the ideas considered to be of the most interest to the present analysis, i.e. the ideas that contribute for the study of the extent to which Marxism was decisive in the intellectual history of preWWII Japan, in what form, and through which ideas.

The analysis will start with the presentation of the main thesis and basic arguments of each group, and then proceed with the study of the main topics arousing during the Debate, and the presentation of some of the interpretations given by members of each group. As the Debate as such, has already been studied by many Anglophone scholars (see for example Hoston 1986, Yasuba 1975, Barshay 2004, Walker 2016, Aoki 2020), it is not going to be analyzed thoroughly here. However, as it was one of the main frameworks for the expression of Marxist ideas in Japan, during the interwar years, it cannot be excluded from this dissertation.

It should be clear that the Debate touches on a wide range of topics, with more various degrees of analysis involved in each case. Japanese scholars often tried to apply Marxist theory as it was developed by Marx or/and Engels themselves, or as it was interpreted by the Soviet thinkers and the Comintern, which as has been already mentioned, often, having their own agenda to follow, promoted their views to the Japanese scholars. It should be noted here, that many among the thinkers involved in the Debate, found themselves struggling in simply using the existing theories, without involving some kind of a personal interpretation to the imported ideas. Marx's work itself allowed room for doing so.

The main challenge for the scholars involved in the Debate, was to position Japan into the historical schema Marx had developed, and then propose accordingly, a strategy to be adopted by the left. It was clear that Japan was not following the "usual" historical path, described by Marx and Engels, and its current state could not be easily interpreted by the "given" theory. However, for sustaining the credibility of Marxist theory and its applicability to Japan, the interpretations given by the Japanese, should not reject its universal character and basic principles. As Hoston argues in her article (1984), the assumption of unilinear development is often accepted, by both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars, when analyzing

late developing countries on the basis of Western conception of political-economic development.

Finally, it should be reminded to the reader that government repression grew steadily throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The so called "Peace Preservation Law" was enacted in 1925, and was revised in 1928. The Law "criminalized anyone convicted of following Bolshevik ideology", and later it went as far as to impose "the death penalty on those who intended to alter the national polity (kokutai, but gave only two years' imprisonment to those who wished to alter the capitalist system of private property)" (Linkhoeva 2020: 101).

Moreover, a series of incidents involving leftist groups and individuals associated with socialist activities took place. The "Red Flag Incident (赤旗 事件)" (1908) and the "High Treason Incident (幸徳事件)" (1911)[65], were followed by the so called "Winter period" (1911-17) for socialism in Japan. However, the Russian Revolution gave new breath to the left groups in the country, to be followed by the "Toranomon Incident (虎ノ門事件)" (1923), the "Bokuretsu Incident" (1925), the "March 15 incident (三・一五事件)" (1928), the "Sakuradamon Incident (桜田門事件)" (1932). A new wave of arrests and suppression was underway. It was clear to anyone at the time that, the so called "Taishō Democracy", was far from tolerant of any attempt-action that could not "fit" into the national narrative, and that this situation would continue (if not get stricter) during the Shōwa years. Finally, under the increasing pressure of militarism, the "Popular Front Incident" (1936), and the arrests of many professors of Tokyo Imperial University, during the "Professor Group Incident (教授グループ事件)" in 1938, "concluded" the sequence of such incidents.

As a result, a great number of scholars and activists were arrested, dismissed from their academic positions or monitored closely. Kōza-ha members, being closely related to (from some point illegal) Japanese Communist Party (hereinafter JCP), felt earlier the oppression of the state authorities, while Rōnō-ha members, by distancing themselves from the JCP, and adopting a narrative of legal activism in the framework of a bourgeois-democratic state (according to its thesis), managed to avoid, for a short period of time, such pressures. However, its "tactic" (if we can call it so) "proved to be fruitless under the pressures brought by the widening of the war in China […], and the Rōnō-ha was effectively crushed by 1940" (Hoston, 1986: 39-40).

Next, the prehistory of the debate is first briefly discussed, and then, a presentation of each group follows[66]. Having then introduced to the reader the framework of the Debate, its basic "components" are presented. Based partly on Yamamoto's (1998) article, the issues are discussed with the following order: the question of the revolutionary strategy, the question of the Asiatic Mode of Production, the question of the agrarian problem, the question of the state, and the question of manufacture. Finally, the conclusion follows.

Prehistory of the Debate

[65] In both these incidents, many activists and anarchists were arrested, and some even executed (among them the anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui) .

[66] In Appendix II the profiles of the two groups' main participants are given.

The two first decades of the 20th century therefore, found Japanese scholars interested in Marxism, to focus mainly on questions of "Marxist philosophy", like the "theoretical grasp of subjectivity, the problem of alienation, and the historical necessity of the revolutionary mission of the proletariat" (Walker 2016: 29). As had been mentioned in the previous chapter, Japanese Communist Party[67] was established in 1922, by figures such as Yamakawa Hitoshi (山川均, 1880-1958), Arahata Kanson (荒畑寒村, 1887-1981), and Sakai Toshihiko (堺利彦, 1871-1933). In 1924 however, it was decided that the party was of no practical need at that time, and it was dissolved.

With the insistence of Arahata, who opposed the party's dissolution, a small committee (Bureau - ビューロー) was immediately formed, in order to organize the remaining affairs of the party, but also to assist and monitor-organize the next steps of the movement. The Bureau founded the research journal "Marxism (マルクス主義)"[68], where many of the main figures of the Debate, would contribute their articles. It was in this framework, that two major theoretical lines emerged in the Japanese left movement.

The first one, often referred to as "Yamakawaism (山川イズム)", under the intellectual leadership of Yamakawa Hitoshi, was already formulated before the dissolution of the party. Yamakawa –and other members of the party- advocated for adoption of an open, united front policy by the socialist movement. He called for the replacement of the JCP by a broader, legal political movement, which would engage the oppressed masses of the population in a wider social movement. He was against the "vanguard party" policy, that would focus only on an "enlightened" minority, and called for a political union of any anti-bourgeois (anti-capitalist) forces (mainly workers and farmers)[69].

Yamakawa's views can be spotted already in his essay, "A change of course for the proletarian movement (無産階級運動の方向転換)" (1922)[70]. The following excerpts are indicative of his views:

> "There are two sides of the Japanese Proletarian Movement; the Socialist Movement and the Labour Unions. I do not say that there are two different Proletarian Movements but two different sides of the same movement. The Socialist Party (the political arm of the proletarian movement) and the Labour Unions (the industrial arm of the proletarian movement) are not two different movements but two different aspects of the same movement much like the palm and the back are two aspects of one's hand. […]
>
> The first step of the Japanese Proletarian Movement, the Socialist Movement and the Labour Movement was for the minority vanguard to recognize the goal we should advance to. We have recognized this goal. As for the second goal, our aim must be to learn how to mobilize the proletarian masses. The proletarian vanguard, in order to escape the mental domination of

[67] Also often referred to as the First Japanese Communist Party, being dissolved in 1924 and reestablished in 1926 (Second Japanese Communist Party), until its suppression by the authorities in 1928.
[68] It was issued between 1924-1929.
[69] It is important to note that Yamakawa's theory does not assume the establishment of a vanguard party, something that distinguishes it from the Communist Party's concept of a united front (金 2004).
[70] Written before the formation of JCP.

> Capitalism, thoroughly purified itself ideologically. For this purpose the vanguard left the masses far behind. Now, because of internal rivalry the vanguard is sadly cut apart from the masses and there is danger of them not being lead. Here the second step of the Proletarian Movement must be for the minority vanguard to take their thoroughly purified ideology back into the masses which have fallen so far behind. The first step of the movement was to pull ourselves away from the ideologically confused masses still under the mental domination of Capitalism. The second step for this independent proletariat is to go back into the masses. "Back to the masses!" must be the new slogan of the Japanese Proletarian Movement." (Yamakawa 1922)

It should be noted at this point that Yamakawaism would later become the "foundation for many elements of the Rōnō-ha's approach" (Hoston 1986: 49).

The second theoretical line that emerged, was advocated by Fukumoto Kazuo (福本和夫, 1894-1983) – hence the name Fukumotoism (福本イズム) - who called for a strictly defined movement. After his return from Europe, where he studied in Germany, England and France, Fukumoto contributed a number of articles to the journal "Marxism", where he elaborated on his theory of "separation before union (分離・結合論)" (the so-called Fukumotoism).

Fukumoto strongly criticized Yamakawaism, which had a big impact on the intellectuals and students of the time, as "eclecticism" and "unionism". He accused Yamakawa for failing to distinguish between economic and political movements. He argued that what the proletarian movement should do was to separate and then reunite the Marxist political consciousness before rallying into a political party. That is, "separation before union" was necessary, and to achieve this, a thorough theoretical struggle should be conducted against the non-Marxist elements within the proletarian class (金 2004).

Fukumoto, who regarded Leninism as the only legitimate development and inheritance of Marxism, not only happily acknowledged the necessity of an elite vanguard party, composed of professional revolutionaries, but he also believed that the prerequisite for such a party was to separate the impure Marxists who were not thoroughgoing (ibid). It was only after this separation, that is, after a fierce theoretical struggle, that true Marxists would emerge, and only then could they be united into a political party (ibid). A radical vanguard party, that would engage in theoretical struggle in order to develop the movement into a political struggle.

Fukumotoism became thus the theoretical basis for JCP's reconstruction in 1926. And although Fukumotoism was later criticized by the Comintern, and "faded away", Fukumoto's influence remained strong on the JCP afterwards. As Fukumoto (2019: 243) explains, it was Fukumoto who first introduced to young Japanese Marxist scholars a style of analysis that discussed the theory itself. Until then, Marxist scholars were busy with introducing and explaining the works of Marx and Engels, and there had been no theoretical books on Marxism, by Japanese Marxists, at the time.

Comintern therefore, through the 1927 Thesis, where it formulated its position on the JCP, harshly criticized both Yamakawaism and Fukumotoism. It accused the first for underestimation of the role of the Communist Party:

> "The idea that the communist party can be in any degree replaced by left-wing fractions in trade unions or by a broad workers' and peasants' party is basically wrong and opportunist. Without an independent, ideologically tested, disciplined, and centralized mass communist party there cannot be a victorious revolutionary movement." (27 Thesis)[71]

According to the Comintern, Fukumotoism from its side, overemphasized only the purely conscious aspects of the movement, while completely ignoring its economic, political, and organizational aspects (金 2004). This also led to an unforgivable overestimation of the intelligentsia, and to the idea that a sectarian party, that is separate from the working masses would be first and foremost an intellectual group and not a frontline organization of the working class (ibid: 22).

In this context, Yamakawa and others initially cooperated with the Bureau (and "Marxism"), but gradually, whith Fukumoto's influence growing, Yamakawa's criticism becoming more intense, they openly opposed it and severed their ties with it. When it was decided to reestablish the party, the side that supported Yamakawa's views did not follow, and kept its distance. Those thinkers established the journal "Rōnō", and with that, the Rōnō group emerged. It was not an official group, but it can be said that resembled more a "theoretical alliance".

The beginning of the Debate itself, is often associated (see for example Hoston 1986, Yamamoto 1998) with the criticism by (Kōza's) Noro Eitarō (野呂 榮太郎, 1900-1934) and (Rōnō's) Inomata Tsunao (猪俣 津南雄, 1889-1942), of Takahashi Kamekichi's theory of "Petty Imperialism"[72] .

> "shortly after Noro and Inomata began to attack Takahashi's petty imperialism thesis, Yamakawa and his followers—including Inomata and the former anarchist Arahata Kanson—officially launched the debate on Japanese capitalism by leaving the party in November 1927" (Hoston 1986: 95).

It can be argued however, that the Debate emerged in the broader framework of analysis and discussions concerning current conditions and revolutionary strategy in Marxist (mostly academic) circles.

Further, "[t]he direction of the Debate was laid out by the Comintern's Theses on Japanese capitalism and the revolution strategy" (Aoki 2020: 4). As mentioned above, the so called "27 Thesis", which was published in 15 July 1927, denounced the two approaches – Yamakawaism and Fukumotoism-[73], and began to promote a "theoretical line that emphasized the "two- stage" theory of the revolution" (Walker 2016: 29), a line that Kōza-ha members would later adopt in their works, and Rōno-ha would oppose.

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[71] As in The Communist International, 1919-1943. Documents. Volume II: 1923-1928, Selected and ed. by Jane Degras.

[72] See: Hoston, G. (1984). Marxism and Japanese Expansionism: Takahashi Kamekichi and the Theory of "Petty Imperialism". Journal of Japanese Studies, 10(1), 1-30. doi:10.2307/132180. His theory will be briefly discussed in chapter III.

[73] The JCP expelled Yamakawa and Arahata in February 1928. Members of the Rōnō-ha however, claimed that the decision to expel Yamakawa and others was meaningless, as they did not participate in the Second JCP.

Comintern's members, entrusted with the analysis of Japanese affairs, saw the country as a backward society, characterized by feudal remnants and an authoritative state. Even though Japan has initiated a bourgeois revolution with the Meiji Restoration, the first, it was asserted, had not been yet completed. Japanese bourgeoisie was weak, and the state was dominated by feudalistic-backward elements, like the emperor system (*tennō-sei*, 天皇制), the ministry of Imperial Household, the Privy Council, the *Genrō*. The document for example states:

> "As has been shown, Japan is today ruled by a bloc of capitalists and landowners, a bloc in which the capitalists predominate. Therefore any hope that the bourgeoisie can be used as a revolutionary factor, even to a limited extent and in only the first stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, must be abandoned. The analogy with China does not hold good. China was and is an object of imperialist policy, whereas the Japanese bourgeoisie are themselves an imperialist force of the first order. In China the 'national' bourgeoisie in the early stages of the revolution were themselves still striving for power, while the Japanese bourgeoisie are already in power and using the entire State machine, with all its feudal connexions and survivals, to the utmost to organize and maintain capitalist exploitation. Finally, the high level of capitalist development in Japan is of the greatest importance in this respect, for it means that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Japan will immediately turn into a socialist revolution, a revolution against capitalism as such." (27 Thesis)[74]

It was thus, deemed necessary to follow a two stage revolution; a bourgeois-democratic one and only once it is completed, a socialist one.

It is also of worth to mention that for Soviet Russia, Japan was often perceived either as a threat, or as a useful "ally". As Linkhoeva (2020: 2) explains:

> "Unlike other foreign interventionist forces, however, Japan actively interfered in the Russian Civil War, which prompted Russian Bolsheviks to declare imperial Japan to be a major threat to the survival of the Soviet state and the world proletarian revolution. "Japanese imperialism," Lenin declared in 1918, was distinguished by an "unheard of bestiality combining the most modern technical implements with downright Asiatic torture." Thus, Japan's actions in Russia contributed in a way to the shape that the Soviet regime eventually took, characterized by a civil-military ruling model and permanent fear of "capitalist encirclement." Soviet leaders, however, quickly realized that imperial Japan was Russia's most formidable neighbor of any in the east or west, and if the Soviet regime wanted to survive, cooperation rather than confrontation must become the guiding principle of Soviet-Japanese relations."

However, as she adds:

> "Although Lenin deemed Japan to be one of the worst imperialist powers, Stalin completely reversed Lenin's assessment. Stalin and other Soviet leaders attempted to vindicate Japan's foreign policy, mainly by claiming that it

[74] As in The Communist International, 1919-1943. Documents. Volume II: 1923-1928, Selected and ed. by Jane Degras.

> acted not as an independent imperialist force but as an appendage to other, economically more powerful countries. To appease Japan, Stalin even acknowledged that Japanese imperialism, and pan-Asianist ideas of regional integration under Japan's leadership, might become a positive force in the development of revolution in the East, therefore contributing to fomenting a proletarian revolution!" (Linkhoeva 2020: 97)

As it can be assumed therefore, it was only rational for Soviet Russia to restrain from advising the Japanese to follow a strategy (like in China), focusing on the national cause. It should also be noted, that Japanese scholars of the time carried out their analysis with regard to the developments in the western world (England, Germany, Russia), looking through the lens of Marx's schema of developmental stages and production relations. They used in their texts examples of those cases, and stressed how, why and in which respects the Japanese case differed or converged to theirs. The present analysis will focus mainly on their argumentation concerning the Japanese position and circumstances. However, the reader should keep in mind that comparisons like that were often involved in their analysis.

In thin framework, the need to answer questions like following arouse: "What were the causes of people's hardship, especially of peasants, and the formation of the emperor system? Is it a sign of the particular form of Japanese capitalism, or a sign of its backwardness?" (Aoki, 2020: 2). Scholars engaged in those discussions developed a great number of works, and elaborated a wide range of topics related to those questions. The Debate had begun.

Rōnō-ha (労農派)

The Rōnō-ha was formed around figures such as Yamakawa Hitoshi, Inomata Tsunao and Arahata Kanson. The group took its name from the journal "Rōnō", founded in 1927, and the writers-thinkers that were associated with it. In summary, its "members"[75] "maintained that the high level of finance capital, the rapid growth of trustification since World War I, and a powerful imperialist impulse all indicated Japan's status as an advanced capitalist power" (Hoston 1986: xi), and called for a one-stage revolution strategy.

While many among its members recognized the fact that it took some time for the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Japan -that had already occurred with the Meiji Restoration- to be completed, and that there still remained some things to be done (mainly in the democratization process, and in the presence of remnants of the past), they believed that those "peculiarities" were not of such importance (and substance on the economic sphere) as to support the view that capitalist forces were still not dominant in some spheres, and that a socialist revolution could not occur/proceed without first getting rid of those.

Rōnō-ha members argued that the Meiji Restoration was a Japanese-style bourgeois revolution, and that Japanese state and economy (which was now indeed capitalistic) was under the dominance of finance capital. The high peasant rents for example, that was one of the issues concerning the participants in the Debate, were due to competition among small

[75] There was not an official membership however, many scholars became associated with the group.

farmers, according to Rōnō-ha members, and not the result of semi-feudalistic relations in agriculture and extra-economic coercion, as the Kōza-ha asserted. Meiji Restoration was a modern bourgeois revolution and Japan had already developed as a modern capitalist society, that was entering an era of imperialism, driven by finance capital. The power structure, including the emperor system, was dominated by finance capital as well. The State, was an organ of large financial capital. Based on such an understanding, the faction made it clear that it supported a one-stage socialist revolution.

The group also identified itself as a "non-Communist Marxist party" group, which was Marxist but not Leninist in its essence, something that many scholars have associated with the group's efforts to avoid police arrests, which were numerous as has been already mentioned. It indeed succeeded in doing so (in contrary to the JCP members) until late 1930s.

The introductory essay of "Rōnō", called for "The pursuit of correct leftist views and correct leftist tactics", by the proletariat, against the bourgeoisie which was "hurrying in front of our eyes to create a large, powerful reactionary and imperialist political force" (Rōnō, Vol. 1, No.1, 1927).

The text argued that "The bourgeoisie, led by monopoly finance capital and having assimilated the feudal remnants and increased its power, is firmly united with the landlord class as its allies, with the petty bourgeoisie upper classes completely under its leadership" (ibid). Under the universal suffrage policy, it extended its political power "over a vast social stratum, including the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois underclass, and has mobilized all the elements that can be used for imperialist purposes to form it into a powerful reactionary political force" (ibid). Furthermore, "What is being done to the political front of the bourgeoisie is being carried out on the economic front as well." (ibid).

Consequently, "The proletarian-peasant vanguard can only reach a true solution when it brings these questions before the masses and solves them practically on a mass scale. Rōnō was born to cooperate with the masses of workers and peasants in this great task." (ibid)

Yamakawa, who was the leading figure of the group, charged, in 1927 the JCP and Fukumotoism for "splinterism", that promoted the strategy of the bourgeoisie, as "forces which formerly had had a reactionary character . . . [were] rapidly forming, around the forces of monopolistic finance capital, into a powerful reactionary, imperialistic force.", and now aimed "to cause the complete isolation of the proletariat and its allies, the peasants"[76]. It was therefore crucial to oppose those forces through a revolutionary strategy that would be carried out through a united front.

Rōnō-ha rejected the guidance of Comintern, as a third party, and as Hoston (1986: 40) claims, "the Comintern view invited doubt in large part because it was Russian and Soviet in origin". Finally, it is worth of mention that the group was met with various internal disputes throughout those years. Inomata for example, distanced himself from the group by 1930s.

Some among the most prominent thinkers that has been associated with the group are: Yamakawa Hitoshi, Arahata Kanson, Sakai Toshihiko, Inomata Tsunao, Sakisaka Itsurō (向

[76] As in Hoston (1986: 188-9)

坂逸郎, 1897-1985), Kushida Tamizō (櫛田民蔵, 1885-1934), Tsuchiya Takao (土屋 喬雄, 1896-1988), Ōuchi Hyōe (大内兵衛, 1888-1980), Arisawa Hiromi (有沢 広巳, 1896-1988)[77]

Apart from essays by the individuals engaged in the group, main vehicles for the expression of Rōnō-ha's ideas were the journal Rōnō and its successor "Zen'ei (Vanguard)", the journal "Senku (Pioneer)", and the magazine of the Ōhara Institute for Social Research (Hoston 1986).

Kōza-ha (講座派)

Kōza-ha developed around the JCP, and its analysis was in line with its (and Comintern's) main thesis on the route the Japanese socialist movement should follow. The group, in summary, argued "that the existence of semi-feudal remnants in Japan's political superstructure e.g., the emperor system, the Privy Council, and the dominant kokutai ideology—constituted proof that Japan's bourgeois-democratic revolution was not yet complete and would have to be finished before the JCP could embark on a socialist revolution" (Hoston 1986: xii).

Its name derived from the eight volume "Lectures on the History of the Development of Japanese Capitalism" (Nihon shihonshugi hattatsushi kōza, 日本資本主義発達史講座)[78], published in 1932-3, by the publishing company Iwanami Shoten. This work, together with Yamada Moritarō's "Analysis of Japanese capitalism" (Nihon shihon-shugi bunseki, 日本資本主義分析)[79], and Hirano Yoshitarō's "Structure of Japanese capitalist society" (Nihon Shihon-shugi Skakai no Kikō,日本資本主義社会の機構) -both published in 1934-, contained the main bulk of Kōza-ha's thesis, and that is why they are considered the group's most representative works.

The Lectures are often juxtaposed to Comintern's 1932 Thesis[80] on Japan. Despite the fact that Lectures began to take shape before the publication of the 1932 Thesis, the two adopted a similar approach to Japanese economic and political conditions and strategy to follow. Noro Eitarō is considered to be the one that contributed the most in the planning and edition of the Lectures, and as Walker (2016:33) notes, "Noro could be seen as the one who most concretely laid the groundwork for the overall conceptions of the Kōza faction".

Kōza-ha members did accept that the Meiji Restoration constituted a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but they argued that it was an incomplete one. Feudal relations were still intact in the countryside, and in the state apparatus, which was identified as an absolutist imperialist regime. As Barshay (2004: 55) puts it, for Kōza-ha:

[77] Uno Kōzō (宇野弘蔵) is often also placed among these.
[78] Hereinafter Lectures
[79] The "Bible" of the Kōza-ha, as Hoston (1986: 37) claims, and a "*text that has to be considered one of the most simultaneously celebrated, reviled, frustrating, controversial, and influential works in the history of Japanese Marxist theory and historiography*" according to Walker (2016: 46). It is often characterized as an extremely difficult text to read, and even more, to translate.
[80] And sometimes the 1927 Thesis.

> "Japanese capitalism was "special," a kind of hybrid. Bourgeois political institutions were immature or malformed, and the entire state apparatus was underlain by a vast base of semifeudal production relations among the peasantry that had been little affected by the political events of 1868. The task of social science, therefore, was to clarify the obstacles to the completion of the democratic revolution as the necessary first step in a two-stage drive toward socialism."

It was regarded therefore, necessary to follow the path proposed by the Cominterm, of a two stage revolution; a bourgeois-democratic first, and only then proceed with the socialist one.

It should be noted here, that as Kōza-ha's thesis stressed the peculiarities of capitalist development in Japan, and insisted on the persistence of semi-feudal elements in the economic structure (dual economy), their analysis early on assumed a historical perspective (Hoston 1986). "The Kōza-ha needed an approach that could unravel the combination of feudal remnants (hōken isei) and new capitalistic features that made Japan at one and the same time "backward" and "semi-feudal" as well as capable of the imperialism of advanced capitalist states in the Leninist sense" (ibid : 97).

Some among the most prominent thinkers that has been associated with the group are: Noro Eitarō, Yamada Moritarō (山田 盛太郎, 1897-1980), Hirano Yoshitarō (平野 義太郎, 1897-1980), Hani Gorō (羽仁五郎, 1901-1983), Hattori Shisō (服部之総, 1901-1956).

The Question of Revolutionary strategy

Revolutionary strategy was, eventually, at the center of the Debate, and it was the question of "what such strategy should be" that nurtured it. Each group then, starting from this question, produced its arguments and conducted its research in order to support its main standing on this issue. The initial phase of the Debate therefore, contains those first attempts to support one view or the other. Such attempts continued obviously, throughout the Debate.

In this framework, this chapter could as well have been titled "the question of the current mode of production", as the need to explain the current condition of capitalist development in the country seemed essential to the issue at hand. The thinkers involved in those attempts then, tried to answer questions like:

A. Was the Meiji Restoration a bourgeois-democtratic revolution? If so, was it a completed revolution? Why (if not)?
B. The task to follow is a one stage proletarian revolution or a two stage one?

Both groups thus, endeavored to answer those questions. For the Kōza-ha, as Walker (2016: 33) points out, Noro Eitarō's insistence on the study of the particular form the Japanese development assumed, through the study of the "'dominated' mode of production", so that to be able to "understand the particular way the development of the productive forces had necessitated a turn to imperialism", was the "backbone" of the position the group presented in the "Lectures". For the Rōnō group, the position of Yamakawa concerning the

way capitalism had manifested itself in Japanese society, and the theoretical analysis of Inomata, became the basis of the group's one-stage revolution theory thesis.

This discussion therefore, developed mainly between Inomata Tsunao for the Rōnō-ha, and Noro Eitarō for the Kōza-ha. Those two developed the most consistent analysis –until that point- concerning those issues, and engaged in a "discussion" that would later give material for new studies and analysis to take shape.

Noro put emphasis on the democratization process[81] which had clearly still not progressed significantly in Japan during the 20s. He also stressed the feudalistic and absolutist character of the Japanese state. There was an interrelationship between the pre-modern feudalistic character of capitalism, and the development of monopoly capitalism in Japan, which accounted for the continuous exploitation of the peasants and their inability to leave the land, but also, for the lagging in the prevalence of a democratic rule, as the biggest landlord, the Imperial household/Emperor, exercised its power, and the bourgeoisie, having inherited much from the warrior class, was protected and nurtured by the state's powerful apparatus of oppression of the people, and was therefore essentially opposed to political democracy (Yamamoto 1979).

In this framework, Japan should undergo a democratization process which would then bring the social change needed to the pursue of a socialist revolution to come. A bourgeois-democratic revolution therefore (and hence theabolition of the emperor system), should precede any attempt to a transition to socialism. Nevertheless, it seems that Noro did not have a clear theory of a two-stage revolution at that time (ibid). In other words, he recognized that the state -under the emperor system- was based on a semi-feudal landownership system, while at the same time, it was an absolutist state form that protected and fostered monopoly capitalist interests (ibid).

Inomata, from his side, in articles written between 1927-29, while recognizing the existence-persistence of pre-modern feudal elements in rural areas, was far less concerned about their possibility to disrupt the way to a one stage socialist revolution. The fact that this phenomenon was still apparent, could be explained by the weak capability of capitalist development to penetrate into rural areas and exercise its influence there, but even so, eventually, those elements will succumb to its ways. So it would be inconsistent, logically, to lead a democratic-bourgeois revolution in a bourgeois state. A socialist revolution was the appropriate route to take, even if some things remained to be done concerning the democratization process (ibid). Moreover, Inomata (and other Rōnō-ha theorists), argued that Russian revolution had shown that it is futile to try to separate one stage of revolution from the next one (Hoston 1986). "the bourgeois-democratic struggle of the Japanese proletariat does not precede the proletarian socialist struggle. It is not that when the first is finished the latter begins" Rather, "at the outset, the two are inextricably linked."[82] Inomata claimed.

As Yamamoto (1979) notes, the premise of Noro's argument was that what is important for understanding the secret of the essence of domination in rent theory, as it was developed by Marx in Capital Vol.3, is that domination equals economic relations, and that is

[81] Which as Yamamoto (1979:5) notes "It should be said that the basic substance of democratization here was the task of overthrowing the emperor system, which was in line with the basic view since the establishment of the Japanese Communist Party in 1922".
[82] As in (Hoston 1986: 237)

why his analysis sought to stress the feudal character of the development of Japanese economy. On the other side, Inomata, who is often charged with overgeneralization, supported his analysis by stressing the peculiarities of Japan's capitalist development, as "historical conditions in Japan" –a bourgeoisie gaining power through compromise instead of struggle, and imperialism being under pressure from both above (internationally) and below (proletariat)- prevailed (Hoston 1986:238). "Under historical conditions in Japan, the beginning of the proletarian revolution is manifested in the form of bourgeois revolution. The two are contracted into one stage instead of being dragged out into two stages"[83], and thus, the "embourgeoisement of landlords and the reactionary imperialism of the bourgeoisie combined to make the completion of bourgeois democracy" "the responsibility of the proletariat"[84].

Having developed thus, their basic analysis, thinkers from both factions endeavored to further studies that could support their separate views. Among those, and especially for the Kōza-ha's side, historical research became central in the process. Was Japan's case fitting in Marx's schema of development? Why capitalism had assumed that form in Japan, and seemed to stumble upon local particulates? To answer such questions was crucial in the efforts to o advance a socialist agenda based on Marx's analysis and conclusions.

The Question of the Asiatic Mode

The terms Asiatic Mode of production (hereinafter Asiatic Mode) and Oriental society, which Marx and Engels scarcely employed (from the 1850s onwards) in their writings, were of course found among the arguments developed by each group (especially in Kōza-ha's analysis), and the members gave them a wide range of interpretations and meanings. As Li (2020:) points out, "[t]he validity and implication of the Asiatic mode of production [AMP] has become one of the most controversial issues in Marxist theory since Marx mentioned this concept", and it was only natural that it cannot but concern the Japanese Marxist scholars of the time. However, as Marx's (and Engel's) references to pre-capitalist "economic formations" were scattered and included in manuscripts published in "convenient form" mainly after the war, "the argument from the authority of Marx could not be formulated by the original discussants in as clear-cut a way as by present-day students of the problem" (Dunn 2012: 8-9).

References to the Orient can be found in Marx's articles and letters written in early 1850s[85], in "Capital", and in "Grundrisse" (1939), as well as in Engels' letters and his "Anti-Dühring" (1878), were he elaborates on the concept. More recently, the publication of excerpt notebooks from the fourth section of MEGA② and the manuscript of Capital, Volume 3 (Sumida 2016) give new insights on the concept and the logic behind it. But obviously, the scholars of the time could not profit of those later publications.

As for the Asiatic Mode of production, Marx introduced the concept in his Preface to "A Contribution to Critique of Political Economy" (1859), where he stresses that "In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be

[83] As in (Hoston 1986: 238)
[84] As in ibid
[85] Correspondence with Engels (1853), New York Daily Tribune articles: "Revolution in China and Europe" (June 14, 1853) and "The British Rule in India" (June 25, 1853)

designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society". However, he never systematically elaborated on this concept in his published work[86] (Li, 2020), leaving space for speculations and doubts.

It can be argued that Marx's early ideas on the concept were the result of his familiarity with Hegel's approach[87], which characterized Asian nations (such as India or China) as static, where no progress occurred (Crawford, n.d.), while his later works show a more positive reflection on the idea, and present a possible role for the Asiatic Mode, even one that allows a different path to development, which would bypass the capitalist mode itself (see Li 2020, Walker 2016, Bailey & Llobera 1974). As Walker (2016: 2) argues, Marx "demonstrated carefully that capital always localizes its development as if it were a natural outgrowth of the situation.".

In his writings, Marx had expressed his conviction that the Orient was characterized by backwardness, under the rule of the Oriental despot, and that only interventions from imperialist powers could initiate the process of change and development to a next stage. In his article for the New-York Herald Tribune (1853) entitled "The British Rule in India" Marx characterically writes:

> "These small stereotype forms of social organism have been to the greater part dissolved, and are disappearing, not so much through the brutal interference of the British tax-gatherer and the British soldier, as to the working of English steam and English free trade. [...] English interference having placed the spinner in Lancashire and the weaver in Bengal, or sweeping away both Hindoo spinner and weaver, dissolved these small semi-barbarian, semi-civilized communities, by blowing up their economical basis, and thus produced the greatest, and to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard of in Asia.
>
> Now, sickening as it must be to human feeling to witness those myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organizations disorganized and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilization, and their hereditary means of subsistence, we must not forget that these idyllic village-communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. We must not forget the barbarian egotism[...]"
>
> England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindostan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever

[86] We can also find references of the concept in Capital (Vol.I, Vol. III), Grundrisse (1939), Engel's Anti-Dühring (1878), and Marx's and Engel's Correspondence on the Russian commune (1875-1894) (Bailey & Llobera, 1974).

[87] And obviously "Their study is based on the parliamentary debates of the day and also on earlier conceptions of European philosophers, travelers and historians" (ibid).

may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.*"*

It can even be argued, to borrow Hoston's (1986: 128) words, that "[i]n his discussion of oriental societies such as India and China […] Marx rejected the notion that anything of lasting humanistic value could be found in them, and he justified the exercise of dominion and repression by the European imperialist powers over them". And while Marx's references can be partly attributed to his often sarcastic style of expression, it is clear that he saw Asian nations as static, backward entities. Sumida (2016: 110-1) though, by analyzing Marx's notes and 1858-9 Tribune articles on China, argues that "Marx understood "oriental despotism" not as historical "stagnation" but as the most logically distant "necessity"from capitalism", as "Marx considered the self-supporting production of Asiatic communities as the antithesis of "reification"".

In any case, Marx attributed specific characteristics to those societies, which can be summarized as below (Bailey & Llobera, 1974):

a) Absence of private property of land.
b) Self-sustaining nature of the village community, combining agriculture and craft industry.
c) Cohesiveness of the village community which results in long term stability in spite of successive invasions.
d) Importance of irrigation and large scale public works (controlled communally, regionally or by the state).
e) In certain instances these village communities provide the "solid foundation" (Marx) for Oriental Despotism.

In those Oriented societies, we have absence of private property in land, thus community ownership, and often a central figure (despot) to undertake certain tasks (e.g. large public works) that benefit the community as a whole, and eventually, him as the "the sole and only proprietor of all the land"[88]. In such a society-community "the individual never becomes a proprietor, but only a possessor, he is au fond himself the property, the slave of that in which the unity of the commune exists"[89] . The despot, absolute ruler, received rent in kind (surplus product), and appropriated surplus labor.

Moreover, as Sumida (2016: 108) observes, the "common property (i. e., original property) underlies the Asiatic form in contrast to the real propertylessness of modern society", and therefore, "[a]lthough in the Asiatic form the autocrat is the sole proprietor, in particular communities under such an autocrat, the individuals relate to each other as possessors". In this context, Marx notes:

[88] As Hoston (1986: 134) notes, "[n]or could such private landownership arise in oriental society as it did in France, for example, because of the peculiar character of the Asiatic state, which owned its people as well as the land in the phenomenon Marx described as "general slavery." The state "stands over [the people] as their landlord and simultaneously as sovereign, [and therefore]. . . rent and taxes coincide, or rather there exists no tax which differs from this [labor] form of ground-rent. . . .Sovereignty here exists in the ownership of land concentrated on a national scale."
[89] Marx: Grundrisse. MECW. Vol. 28, p. 417 (MEGA② II/1, p. 397): as in Sumida (2016: 107)

> "Amidst oriental despotism and the propertylessness which seems juridically to exist there, this clan or communal property exists in fact as the foundation, created mostly by a combination of manufacture and agriculture within the small commune, which thus becomes altogether self-sustaining, and contains all the conditions of reproduction and surplus production within itself."[90]

As a result, a static situation/relationship is established, ignorant to class conflict (and thus, class struggle to bring the change), until something, which can not be internal to the system in question, disrupts this state of affairs and initiate change. And even then, the process of change is most often slow and gradual. Marx even argued once that it can be impossible for the case of China (see Sumida 2016).

That being said, it seemed essential to examine the existence of such conditions in Japanese history, to locate them in time and space, and finally to trace their possible remnants in the present. It is clear that the question was not whether Asiatic Mode was present at the time, but whether it existed in the past, and maybe more importantly, whether its remnants could still be found in Japanese society.

When discussing hence the concept of the Asiatic Mode, in the context of his theory of stages of development, Marx clearly states the existence of an Asiatic Mode of production, as an epoch marking progress in the "economic development" of societies. At the same time, he charges oriental societies with stagnation, and the inability to advance to other modes of production by their internal dynamics, restrained by despotism. As a result, Marxist scholars found themselves puzzled about the way they should interpret and use those concepts.

Soviet thinkers, under the "'theoretical sclerosis' induced by Stalinism" (Sawer 1977), rejected the concept of the Asiatic Mode, during the Leningrad Conference in February 1931, as "the politics of intraparty struggle took precedence over scholarship and intellectual rigor in the Leningrad discussion of the Asiatic mode of production" (Hoston 1986: 143\. However, Japanese scholars (especially the advocates of the Kōza faction) continued to employ the concept in their analysis (whilst some not always so openly as others)[91], and to try to "decipher" Marx's intentions in using it.

> "The Japanese contributors to the debate often combined lives as active Communists with dedicated scholarship, and the abrupt conclusion of the debate over the Asiatic mode in the Soviet Union had no such effect in the Japanese scholarly press. Stalinist efforts to end discussion of the Asiatic mode of production failed in Japan, as they had in China, because Japanese (and Chinese) Marxist scholars felt strongly that they had to fit Marx's generic pattern with

[90] Marx: Grundrisse. MECW. Vol. 28, p. 400 (MEGA② II/1, p. 380): as in Sumida (2016: 108)

[91] *"the Japanese Marxists […] were fully aware that the Asiatic mode of production theory had been repudiated by the Leningrad Conference in February 1931; yet many maintained that the theory was still a useful tool for analyzing the socio-economic development of Japan and its neighbors in the East. Those Japanese Marxists who did reject the Asiatic mode of production theory in general did so independently and for their own reasons, and they nonetheless often retained some elements of the original Marxist conception to reinterpret Japan's economic history*." (Hoston 1986: 140).

native historical development, and both Japanese and Chinese were committed to having a social revolution" (Fogel 1988: 564)

The Comintern scholars now, who mainly influenced on this issue the Japanese thinkers of the time[92], can be divided into two groups: those that were the proponents of the Asiatic Mode as a separate mode of production, as Lajos Magyar (1891-1940) and Eugen S. Varga (1879-1964), and scholars like Sergei M. Dubrovskii (1900-1970), Mikhail Godes and Yevgeny S. Iolk, and those who rejected the independency of the Asiatic Mode, attributing to it the role of a variant of another mode (basically feudalism or slavery)[93]. The historian, Sergei I. Kovalev (1886-1960), and the economic scholar Viktor Vladimirovich Reikhardt (1901-1949) also seem to have been widely read in Japan. As Fogel (1988) notes, all the major writings of those thinkers appeared in Japan through the first half of the 1930s, "and a full translation by Hayakawa Jirō of the Leningrad Conference papers appeared in 1933".

Plekhanov's "Fundamental Problems of Marxism" (1895) and Lenin's "Development of Capitalism in Russia" (1899) – both widely read among Japanese Marxist of the time - used the concept of Oriental society as employed by Marx, in their analysis of capitalist development in Russia, which they found bear some of its characteristics[94]. This allowed them to explain the Russian experience, which had not followed the route its western counterparts had. They thus, saw Tsar as oriental despot, under whose rule, capitalism in Russia could not develop in a similar way it did in western Europe. Each of them then, developed a theory that explained Russia's ability to break away from that path, allowing it to transit to socialism.

It is interesting also, at this point, to mention the parallel controversy on Chinese social history which took place during the 1920s and 30s[95]. It should not be forgotten as well, that the relevant discussions by Soviet scholars were closely related to Cominterm's discussions concerning the prescription of a proper course for the Chinese revolution to be followed. Was China, as an Asiatic society, a paradigm of the backward, static society associated with the Orient, as presented by Marx, or has it developed adequately, to be characterized as a (semi) feudalistic one? If the last was the case, a bourgeois-democratic revolution was the goal to aim at, and a socialist revolution led by the peasants and proletariat should then follow. In the Chinese case, "Most of the participants in the Chinese discussions were political activists first and historians second", while "Unlike their Soviet counterparts, however, the Chinese debaters soon proposed elaborate schemes and periodizations for Chinese history" (Fogel 1988: 556).

[92] And who had elaborated on the issue mainly during the controversy on the debacle of the Chinese revolution in 1927-1928 (Hoston 1986).

[93] For more on the subject of the treatment of the Asiatic mode of production by the Soviet scholars see: Bunn (2012).

[94] As Hoston (1986: 131) observes though, "Lenin was careful to distinguish Russia from fully Asiatic societies".

[95] It should be noted that many Chinese scholars of the time used (and often translated) Marxist bibliography from Japanese translations. "Because of the political commitment to the Chinese revolution, major writings from the Chinese debates, particularly books by Kuo Mo-jo and T'ao Hsi-sheng, rapidly appeared in Japanese as well" (Fogel 1988: 68). In addition, many scholars, from both countries, often (direcly or indirectly) "exchanged" views on related subjects, or discussed the views of their counterparts in the other country.

Fogel (1988: 68) thus notes: "the Japanese debaters had a more thorough training in Marxism-Leninism than their Chinese counterparts". For the participants to the Debate, the placement of the Asiatic Mode of production in the historical schema of Marx's analysis, was a crucial step in their efforts of periodization of Japanese (economic) history, undertaken by some Japanese Marxist thinkers. If Marx's schema was universal[96], and Asia was included (even barely) in his analysis, its place and role should be made clear in the analysis of the current conditions. Moreover, its impact and possible remnants should be traced, and addressed properly by the scholars.

The concept itself offered space to opinions arguing that Marxist analysis could not be applicable to Japan, or to the Orient in general, or that it was deficient as a theory, at least, and as such it needed revision. As Hoston (1986) aptly points out, the participants were already well aware of the dangers such implications entailed (like the possibility of the development of nationalistic interpretations of the theory), and thus, "Marxists in Japan in the 1930s […] had to steer a precarious course between the Scylla of an empty formalistic and mechanical application of Marxism to interwar Japan and the Charybdis of an interpretation that was so flexible that it rendered the underlying theory meaningless and deflated any real (historically valid) opportunity for successful revolution in Japan." (ibid: 130).

Concerning Japan, Marx included in Capital Vol. 1[97], the following note:

> "Japan, with its purely feudal organization of landed property and its developed small-scale agriculture, gives a much truer picture of the European Middle Ages than all our history books, dictated as these are, for the most part, by bourgeois prejudices. It is far too easy to be 'liberal' at the expense of the Middle Ages."

Japan was described therefore, as a pure feudal society by Marx. This reference however, had little to offer to the Japanese scholars who tried to identity Japan's current situation, and the path the country had followed to arrive at that point. Japan was obviously not a typical feudalistic society, much more at that time.

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[96] Marx himself seems to not see it as such, as is evident for example, from his (unpublished though until 1934) letter-reply to M./Nikolai K. Mikhailovsky (1842-1904): "In the chapter on primitive accumulation, my sole aim is to trace the path by which the capitalist economic order in western Europe emerged out of the womb of the feudal economic order." And "Now, what application to Russia could my critic draw from my historical outline? Only this: if Russia tries to become a capitalist nation, in imitation of the nations of western Europe, and in recent years she has taken a great deal of pains in this respect, she will not succeed without first having transformed a good part of her peasants into proletarians; and after that, once brought into the lap of the capitalist regime, she will be subject to its inexorable laws, like other profane nations. That is all. But this is too much for my critic. He absolutely must needs metamorphose my outline of the genesis of capitalism in western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of the general course, fatally imposed upon all peoples, regardless of the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed, in order to arrive finally at that economic formation which insures with the greatest amount of productive power of social labor the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. He does me too much honor and too much shame at the same time. " "Hence, strikingly analogical events, occurring, however, in different historical environments, led to entirely dissimilar results.
By studying each of these evolutions separately, and then comparing them, one will easily find the key to these phenomena, but one will never succeed with the master-key of a historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical.".

[97] Ch. 27 , note 3

Concerning the Debate, “virtually all controversy on the Asiatic mode of production occurred within the Kōza-ha group”, as it was Kōza-ha’s thesis that highlighted aspects of Japanese development such as backwardness and semi-feudal relations, that could mainly be associated with those notions and what they represented (Hoston 1986: 146). Rōnō-ha, advancing the view that Japanese society was already a bourgeois democratic one, was not directly interested in the subject. Hoston (1986) argues that Rōnō-ha’s tendency to avoid related discussions, was as well due to its view that the emperor system, which for the Marxist scholars represented a remnant of Japan’s feudalistic past, would naturally disappear as the revolution proceeded and socialism approached.

Periodization efforts

As Hoston (1986: 154) mentions, “if one found in Japan's past the Asiatic mode of production, then, according to Marx's analysis, there could have been no emergence of private property. Yet Japan had developed feudalism, which required the existence of private property.”. Therefore, the transition from primitive communal society to feudalism was one the main issues scholars studied in this debate.

Had Japan followed the same path of development with the western world? To answer this question, detection, and then location, of the Asiatic Mode in Japanese history was crucial for the analysis. This was the case especially for the Kōza-ha members, as it was they that attributed to Japan an economic structure characterized by remnants of the past. For Rōnō-ha members, Japan was not exception in the development path described by Marx, and therefore Asiatic Mode was not something to pay particular attention to.

For scholars therefore, such as Aikawa Haruki, Moritani Katsumi (森谷 克己, 1904-1964), and Hirano Yoshitaro, it represented a separate mode of production, while for thinkers like Akizawa Shūji and Hayakawa Jirō, and Hattori Shisō, it was but a variation of the slavery (for the first two) or feudalism in the Orient.

From the Rōnō-ha side, Inomata Tsunao, in his later writings (after his distancing from the group), discussed the issue. In his “Introduction to the Agrarian Problem (農村問題入門)” (1937), where he elaborated on the backwardness of the agrarian sector, he used the concept of the Asiatic Mode to identify some of the Asiatic characteristics of Japanese economy-society. However, by the time he published his work on the Asian mode of production, the controversy over the issue had almost come to an end, and his work did not provoke any new reactions (Fukumoto 2019). Tsuchiya Takao also discussed the concept.

An interesting fact to notice at this point, is the effort of some among the scholars to bring to the discussion the issue of internal development, internal dynamics, of the internal progress in production relations and forces in Japan.

Kōza-ha

Aikawa Haruki (相川 春喜, 1909-1953) was one of those. Aikawa, in articles published in 1933-4, criticized both Soviet interpretations (as dogmatic, geographically and stagnation orientated) of the concept of the Asiatic Mode, as well as Japanese ones (e.g.

Hayakawa Jirō's)[98]. He asked what had happened to slavery in Japan, to arrive at the conclusion that Asiatic mode was the first class formation, and that it was based on a patriarchal slaveholding society (Fogel 1988).

For Aikawa, in practice, the concept represented an era of transition, from one stage (primitive communal society) to another (class society) (Hoston 1986, 1994). By adopting a literal interpretation of Marx's passage in "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy", he placed the Asiatic Mode before any other form, "as the first form of antagonistic or class society" (ibid). Therefore, by using the terms "Asiatic" and "Orient" Marx was referring to those "social forms of the ancient East", which were "the historical bases of Greek and Roman antiquity and of ancient Germany", and as such, the concept represented a universal and not a geographically specific category (Hoston 1986: 147).

Moritani Katsumi (森谷克己, 1904-1964) adopted a similar approach to Aikawa. He also rejected many of the characteristics associated with the concept from the Soviet scholars, and saw the Asiatic Mode as a universal category[99], representing "a generic social and economic formation in the larger transition from pre-class to class society on the way to slavery and beyond" (Fogel 1988: 568)[100]. He did not see the mode as essentially a class social formation though (Hoston 1986).

According to Moritani, Asiatic Mode was characterized by the existence of the "agricultural commune" (*nōgyō kyōdōtai* -農業共同體), which had emerged from the disintegration of the lower-level, primitive commune (Fogel 1988), and the common ownership of land (Hoston 1986). This was the "the first social unit of free men unbound by blood ties"[101], and as Hoston (1986: 149) explains, it was to be distinguished from the preceding *kyōdōtai*, which was based on blood kinship ties, and which "involved cooperative labor as well as communal landownership". In the Asiatic Mode, land was held in common, and while periodically redistributed among the community members, "each member cultivated and owned the product of the land he had been given" (ibid.). He then argued that Japan (the East) had also developed the ancient and feudal modes of production, which were not able though to mature fully (Hoston 1986).

Moritani also argued that, as the economic basis of the Asiatic Mode was "a dual presence of primitive communal ownership and private ownership, which emerged as the original blood-kinship *kyōdotai* was dissolving", progress did occur in the East (Hoston 1986: 149).

It should be also noted however, that for Moritani, the Asiatic Mode would not necessarily involve slavery, and as such, his approach differs from Aikawa's. He argued that Marx had never identified "patriarchal slavery as a distinguishing characteristic of the Asiatic mode of production, nor did he see the Asiatic as the first antagonistic social formation" (Hoston 1986: 149).

Many were the scholars that used the concept, but did not support the view of the Asiatic Mode being a separate social formation. In this group we can include Kōza-ha's members, such as Hani Gorō, Hayakawa Jirō, Hattori Shisō, and Akizawa Shūji.

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[98] At that time adopting a view of Asiatic Mode as an Asian variant form of feudalism (Fogel 1988).
[99] "These arrangements had been termed "Asiatic" not because they were to be found only in Asia, but because Marx had discovered their prototype in Asia" (Hoston 1986: 149)
[100] Fogel (1988) notes Moritani's numerous usage of the above mentioned passage from Marx's "Critique".
[101] As in Hoston (1986: 149)

Hattori Shisō, was also one of the scholars that stressed the internal dynamics of Japanese development. True to his belief in the importance of the study of Japanese history, in particular late Edo period history, he argued that it was essential to properly understand the concept and locate it in the historical analysis (Hoston 1986). He developed thus, a view that perceived Asiatic Mode as a variant of feudalism, and placed it in the Edo period.

His analysis began with the publication of the essay "A history of the Meiji Restoration (明治維新史)" (1928), where he, "related Marx's notion of the Asiatic mode of production to the combination of handicraft production and small farmer agriculture in the economy of the Edo period" (Fogel 1988: 564). According to Hattori, the special character of this mode lay in "the state ownership of land and therefore the identity of rents and taxes"[102].

After 1933 though, Hattori, criticized the methodology he had adopted in his earlier writings[103]. His analysis of the history of the Restoration, having begun from the formation process of the world market, anticipated that "the contradictions for the revolution will be given from outside rather than from within" the country (Nagai 1999). He thus abandoned his previous method, endeavored in the study of internal dynamics, and initiated the sub-debate, known as a manufacture debate (discussed later).

Hani Gorō, having analyzed the characteristics associated with the Asiatic Mode by western scholars, associated it, in Japan, with slavery and serfdom, and argued that it emerged from the decline of primitive society, as "the earliest stage of class conflict in world-historical development" (Fogel 1988: 566). The Asiatic Mode was "a primitive form or metamorphosis of the two [precapitalist] modes of production," the ancient and feudal. It was the result of the incomplete emergence of the first class society, based on slavery; and 'the adhesion, stagnancy, or preservation of the relations' of primitive clan society (gentes) made the ensuing precapitalist forms, slavery and feudalism, 'more contradictory, stagnant, cruel, and oppressive'" (Hoston 1986: 150).

He wrote, "[i]n such a sense and only in this sense can we speak of an Asiatic mode of production and a society based on it. The Asiatic mode of production is nothing more than essentially the slave or serf mode of production; however, it is more cruel and plagued by levels of contradictions because of the maintenance of backward, late-clan society relations"[104] . Key to this Mode was the ancient "*be*" system of community slave ownership and the persistence of the old tribal society (Hoston 1986).

Asiatic Mode could not alone explain the stagnation Asian societies demonstrated however, and as such, it was necessary to study the cultural factors (along with economic ones) that added to this phenomenon as well (Schwentker 1998). His analysis then, went on to look for the factors that explained why characteristics of this Mode still persisted in the feudal era, and later continued to hinder capitalism's advance into Japan.

Finally, Hani argued that in the case of China, Asiatic Mode was close enough to feudalism (Fogel 1988). As Hoston (1986: 177) observers, he believed that "such an oriental society was not inconsistent with the development of feudalism and capitalism".

[102] As in Hoston (1986: 152)
[103] Hattori criticized his own position in 1928 for its reliance on Bukharinism, which at the time was a synonym for "unorthodox Marxism" or "heretical Marxism" (Nagai 1999).
[104] As in Hoston (1986:177).

For Akizawa Shūji, Asiatic Mode could not constitute a separate mode of production[105]. Its function was to just refer to the several special characteristics Asian societies presented (Hoston 1986). According to him, "if a mode of production was defined as 'the mode of the unity between labor power and the means of production" and, in class societies, "the form in which surplus labor is extracted from the direct producers and laborers,' then an Asiatic structure conceived "as an independent mode of production is not possible" (Hoston 1986: 151).

Akizawa saw slavery as the first class society (Fogel 1988, Hoston 1986)[106], and Asiatic Mode, which "prefigure" it but "postdated" primitive commune, characterized by the existence of the "village commune" (*nōson kyōdōtai* -農村共同體, or, as he translated it, Dorfgemeinsch) (Fogel 1988). Its members started to engage in individual activities (ibid), and private property gradually emerged, becoming the driving force for the transition to slavery and then feudalism (Hoston 1986).

What thus seems to be the most important factor of this formation then, was the "stubborn preservation of the agricultural *kyōdōtai*" which occurred "under the unique historical conditions of the despotic countries of Asia"[107].

He mentions "The basic characteristic of 'ancient' Asiatic society is the unique and incomplete development of slavery, constricted by the obstinate persistence of the village commune"[108]. His analysis, which often seems out of order, became the basis for his support of Japanese invasion in China. According to Akizawa, Chinese society was extremely stagnant because of its "remnant rural communities" and "intensive small farming" based on "manmade irrigation", and as such, the only way to resolve this stagnation in China, was to rely on the introduction of external forces (Tu Chenglin 2014)[109].

The case of Akizawa seems to create some confusion. Despite him rejecting the existence of an Asiatic Mode in Japan, and accepting the universality of Marx's schema of development, he came actually to the conclusion that the Asiatic Mode was a kind of "Asiatic" slavery (Fogel 1988, Hoston 1986). Referring to archaeological evidence (classical Japanese and Chinese records, tombs and burial foundings, household registers etc), he found that already from the begging of the millennium, and at least until the Asuka period (538-710), nobility had accumulated considerable wealth, and owned-managed a great number of slaves, who engaged in agricultural, handicraft and household labor. He also used Chinese texts to show that Japan exported slaves to China (circa 108 A.D.) (Hoston 1986). By analyzing further such sources, he concluded that "the growth of classes and slavery accelerated" during those years in Japan (ibid: 164). This was materialized by the *be* system that existed during the period of Taika reforms (645-649). The *be* were not serfs, but "tribute-paying clansmen privately owned by hereditary nobility"[110].

Therefore, slavery was present in Japan even thought it had not assumed the form of classical slavery (but that of "patriarchal or household slavery"). It could be assumed therefore, that Marx's schema was applicable to Japan. Akizawa's study fitted "nicely Engels's description of the collapse of the clan-based *kyōdōtai*, and the rise of private property, social classes, and slavery." (ibid: 164). Slaves emerged first as clan/tribe captives, and later

[105] In early 1930s, he was sympathetic to the view that Asiatic Mode was a tributary system [Fogel 1988].
[106] As a universal development in all societies (Hoston 1986).
[107] As in Hoston (1986: 152).
[108] As in Fogel (1988: 570).
[109] His views attracted much criticism in China.
[110] As in Hoston (1986: 163).

as private property of individuals, where used for serving households and in productive labor (ibid). And when finally, through a process of warfare, a centralized state had emerged (in the Kinai area), it continued this practice, while Imperial household owned as well great numbers of slaves. This area-specific element was characteristic of the phenomenon, as direct usage or not of slaves was depending also on local development and geography, with central developed regions (Kinai region) for example been more keen for slave labor, while more remote regions, with systems based on *kyōdōtai* relations relying mostly on *benotami* labor.

"'[T]he *benotami* system was a Japanese variant of slavery." he concluded (Hoston 1986: 165), as their role, was crucial for the Japanese economy of the time. And despite the fact that pure slaves (*dohi*) could be found, their supply shortage (and hence high cost) dictated the dependence on *benotami*, a semi-slave group, which effectively became the main driving force of economic activity, and operated as a "supplemental of slavery". "The slave economy 'was not a slave system in which a superstructure rose on the basis of huge numbers of slaves and their forced labor, as in the Athenian form of classical slavery at its height.'", Akizawa argued (Hoston 1986: 165).

Taika reforms abolished the *benotami* system (they became free men), but the group's members continued to exist, and gradually transformed into serfs. A centralized despotism thus emerged on the place of the tribute system, Akizawa argued, and "[w]hile land was declared to be state-owned and redistributed to peasants, nobles, and government workers, private landownership survived in the form of large lands owned by some nobles, temples, and shrines." (Hoston 1986: 165). And while "slavery continued to develop along with private property […] slave ownership by nobles, temples, and shrines gradually evolved toward serf relations, as the large lands owned by nobles were transformed into feudal manors during and after the Ōchō period[111]." (Hoston 1986: 165).

Therefore, despite its peculiarities regarding slaveownership formations, Japan did experiences this stage, and eventually developed the conditions necessary to allow it to transit to the feudal system. Those peculiarities though, "further hindered the growth of commodity production and exchange as well as of commercial capital" (Hoston 1986: 166).

Hayakawa Jirō, saw the Asiatic Mode "rather as a transitional phase between the dissolution of the primitive commune and the emergence of slaveholding in antiquity" (Fogel 1988). He then developed "one of the most coherent periodizations of Japanese history" (Hoston 1986: 152), where Asiatic Mode was placed after the Taika Reforms (Fogel 1988), and the collapse of the "primitive communal clan system" (Hoston 1986).

Hayakawa associated the term with state landownership, which meant "landownership not by the state, but on a national scale" (Hoston 1986: 152). He then stated Marx's line from Capital[112] : "In such a case, the state is the highest landlord, and 'sovereignty' is nothing other than landownership concentrated on a national scale", to explain that "there were no longer any forms of tax that differed from the form of ground rent", and the fact that all the members "subject to this system were directly subordinate to the state both politically and economically" (Hoston 1986: 152).

It should be noted that he did not support any view that described Asian societies as distinct examples of development, as he believed that such approach "amounted to "geographical materialism," […], and vitiated the efficacy of Marx's theory of history to guide

[111] Around 1311-2

[112] Vol.1, as translated by Hoston (1986).

Japan's revolution" (Hoston 1986: 153). Nevertheless, he did not accept Rōnō-ha's view that Japan has followed the same historical route as the western world either.

After 1934, he adopted a view that identified the Asiatic Mode as the first class society, which resembled a slaveholding society, but was not itself such (Fogel 1988). He described a dialectical as he supported, process, along which a society conquers a more primitive one and puts "an unequal system of enforced vassalage into effect", destroying hence the "pristine commune" and initiating a path toward slavery, a path along which the Asiatic Mode fell (Fogel 1988: 71). Throughout this process, private property survived and contributed for the country's transition to feudalism and eventually capitalism (Hoston 1986).

Asiatic Mode, was the result of "the collapse of primitive communal society, through warfare among individual kyōdōtai", where "dominant members of a single kyōdōtai, who collected rents and taxes from poorer members, endeavored to expand their power base by conquering neighboring communities", assuming now the role of the tributary state, and "a leading role in economic projects, when large-scale projects, such as irrigation, were necessary" (Hoston 1986: 157). Moreover, this "pattern" was not easy to [destroy]; "'tributary relations' persisted for an extremely long period because of the stagnancy of the kyōdōtai itself and the possibility of the 'retrogression' of history."[113], he claimed.

Hayakawa of course was aware of Marx's sequence in "Preface", where he places Asiatic Mode before slavery, feudalism and capitalism however, he insisted that Japan had not experienced itself, mature slavery as such. "There can be no slaveowner formation based on anything other than 'classical slavery.'", he maintained, and went on to argue that Japanese case was one of those cases (he gave three examples)[114] that could avoid the formation of classical slavery, concluding that "one cannot conceive of the 'existence' of a slaveowner formation in Eastern history" in general (Hoston 1986: 156).

This phenomenon (lack of classic slave-owner formation), was caused by the fact that commerce did not develop enough in these regions, and thus, commercial relations could not dominate. While such conditions persisted for greater periods of time in East Asia, when compared to the West, they finally collapsed and gave way to feudal relations, as the "forces of production continued to develop therein" (Hoston 1986: 158). Geographical characteristics were not relevant to this in any way (Hoston; 1986).

Furthermore, to support his views about slavery in Japan, Hayakawa discussed different forms (as he distinguished them) of slavery: domestic or household slavery (Sparta's helots), classical slavery (of Athens and Rome), and a system of state-owned slaves (the "*be*" system in Japan) (Hoston 1986). Among those groups, only mature classical slavery could be considered the basis of a social formation.

In Japan therefore, the "*be*" emerged (as property of individuals) as the process of conquest, described above, took place, and a system of (semi-)state slavery arose. Hayakawa referred to classic records of Japanese history (such as Kojiki and Nihon shōki) to claim that

[113] As in Hoston (1986: 157).

[114] According to Hoston (1986: 156-7), these were: a) "conceivably, primitive societies which might, with the support of advanced proletarian-socialist countries, attain socialism and bypass intermediate modes of production", b) the case of the German peoples, who "technically," would not have experienced a slaveowner formation directly, as was "historically evident in the German conquest of Rome, as the result of which the development of German society was "grafted" onto the development of the preceding Roman society", and c) the societies of the East, as despite that in "China and Japan slavery was not truly absent, as in the first two cases", there "was an economic system of slavery, but it remained undeveloped, containing the seeds of a completed and dominant social formation, but never reaching the point of maturing into ancient Greek and Roman slavery".

the "*be*" "were exchanged as ransom or given away rather than bought or sold", while he argued that they resembled serfs (Hoston 1986: 159). When this system gradually disintegrated -after the Taika Reforms and the [re]distribution of land-, it gave way to the so called handen peasants (Hoston 1986). Private property began to expand, and feudalism replaced the system. The "old" *be*, became feudal retainers or *burakumin* (Hoston 1986). "an extremely rapid development of the forces of production—facilitated by intercourse with China—had enabled Japan to 'leap over' or 'skip over' the era of mature slavery, and move to a system of centralized feudalism after the Taika reforms" (Hoston 1986: 160).

Hayakawa also argued that the employment of the term served only convenience purposes for Soviet scholars (Hoston 1986). "The problem was that the set of characteristics that Soviet scholars had identified in the East 'invariably collapsed when [they came] in contact with historical realities.' Hayakawa recognized that "in some Eastern countries despotic rule and irrigation were linked to 'state landownership,' [and] that in some cases the underdevelopment of cities could be explained by 'state landownership.'' What he could not support was any notion of an Asiatic mode of production that posited that these relationships always existed." (Hoston 1986: 151).

Aikawa, criticized Hayakawa's view, arguing that the latter had ignored "the internal development of forces and relations of production", and instead overestimated the role of "'the importation of production forces" and culture" (as from China) (Hoston 1986). Aikawa's attention though, was focused on the historical evidence of "patterns of landownership and production relations" for the period (Hoston 1986). According to him, Hayakawa based his argumentation on developments in China, and its influence on Japan however, Japanese history showed different things.

What had happened to slavery in Japanese history? he asked (Fogel 1988). For Aikawa, Japan did experience slavery after the Taika reforms, as the first had already began to develop under the old clan system (Hoston 1986). He described a process, according to which slavery was able to spread rapidly in Japan, where transportation was quite advanced, and wars between tribes were common phenomenon. Growth of production forces and slavery permitted the centralization of authority, and Taika Reforms "legalized this arrangement, codifying state landownership in Japan." (Hoston 1986). The Asiatic Mode was therefore, "the process of this transition from primitive communal society to class society" (ibid). "patriarchal slavery arose out of the gradual disintegration of the primitive clan kyodotai, as forces of production developed, the division of labor proceeded, and private property came into existence" (ibid).

Rōnō-ha

The idea that Japan had not experienced the stage of slave ownership was supported also by Rōnō-ha's Tsuchiya Takao. In his "Outline of Japanese Economic History" (1934), Tsuchiya argued that in ancient society someone could indeed find slavery however, its significance in production was small (Hoston 1986). What predominated was serf relations, as in the "*be*" system (ibid). He states:

> "These conditions formed the basis for the establishment of a feudal centralized state, in a sense, in the Taika reforms. Clearly slavery existed in the

> great ancient society, but generally serf relations, as in the "be", were predominant. Thus, what was established as a result of the Taika reforms, the decisive purge of class organization, was not an ancient state based on slavery. Rather it is erroneous to define the society previous to that as a slave society. It is true that at the time slavery existed, but its significance in production was not major"[115]

Inomata Tsunao, after his disassociation with Rōnō-ha, embarked on the historical analysis of Japanese development, and its dual economic structure, and it was in this framework that he examined also the notion. His main contributions however, came at a time when the debate on the issue was at its ends (Fukumoto, 2019).

Inomata's point of focus became Japanese agriculture (and the system of "the three-thousand-year tradition of 'Asiatic' wet-field cultivation"), and its "Asiatic" characteristics. He placed Asiatic Mode right after the fall of primitive communal society, and identified with it the strong remnants of the old agrarian *kyōdōtai*, which became the basis for "a despotic state that could fulfill the need for water control in such a society" (Hoston 1986: 246).

It indeed was a geographically specific formation, and its influence remained for a considerable length of time, giving finally way to feudalism[116] in the Edo period, Inomata claimed. The transition to capitalism became hence, much more difficult under such circumstances, and "The current agrarian problem, in which the relationship between the agrarian sector and the capitalistic economy as a whole was in a state of 'crisis,' was precisely 'the problem of the special Asiatic nature of [its] historical development.'" (Hoston 1986: 246).

The question of the Agrarian problem (農業問題)

Closely related to the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production, and the interpretations given to the concept by the members of the two groups (mostly of course Kōza-ha's) was the discussions on the so called agrarian problem (nōgyō mondai, 農業問題) in Japan. Japanese agriculture was clearly not following the pace of capitalist development seen in the cities and industry. Was it its "Asiatic" past, that did not allow rural development to take off? Depending on the interpretation, different approaches emerged, and once again, with ultimate purpose the theoretical enhancement of one of the two main theses of the two groups. As already mentioned, Marx described Japan in Capital Vol.1 as feudal society.

It was thus clear to both sides of the Debate, that Japanese agriculture was not following the capitalist development, and that "customs" and norms characteristic of previous periods of time were still apparent in it, but in the state apparatus as well. Most (including Comintern's representatives) called those, feudal remnants, and Japanese used the terms : 封建的–封建制.

If we accept though the approach that argue that the English term "feudal" cannot be fully employed in cases of "non-typical/non-western" (i.e. like the Japanese case) societies, as it was created to describe a socio-historical formation emerging mainly in Europe, the term cannot be used in the present analysis. However, the approach adopted here is in accord with

[115] As in Hoston (1986:160).

[116] Even though it was already collapsing after the Nara period (Hoston 1986: 246).

the view that accepts the fact that the term has semantic value, and as such, can be useful for the historical analysis. Therefore, and as there has been not established any other term that could more adequately describe the landholding conditions based on extra-economic coercion, here, the term "feudal" is employed as well, despite its deficiencies.

It should be noted that both factions (notwithstanding to a different degree), accepted the fact that agrarian sector (countryside) was characterized by a noticeable backwardness. It was clear that excessive tenancy and unreasonably high rents (as high as those of Edo years) prevailed, as well as that capitalism has not yet penetrated the sector, as much as would be expected according to the western example.

Meiji's government land reforms (1873, 地租改正) replaced the old system of land taxation with a new one. Rents, previously paid in kind (principally rice) and calculated on the basis of the yield of a given plot of land (determined through land surveys), were now paid in money form, as a proportion of the land's value (determined by the potential yield, after a process of national assessment of land values). Responsible for the tax's payment was the owner of the land, and not the cultivator as before. Many previously landless peasants were transformed into small landowners, as the abolition of *han* and the acquisition of their lands by the government opened the road to private ownership of land. The government issued the so called "Land Certificates (*chiken*)" to large numbers of peasants, recognizing them their right to land ownership. In addition, the ban on the purchase and sale of land was lifted, while land mergers and redistributions were legalized.

However, with this new system, land taxes, being now disassociated from crop fluctuation, placed a much heavier burden on peasantry, which often, unable to pay its taxes and plunged into debt, responded with insurrections and revolts. In the 1920s, still over 50% of Japanese population was engaged in agriculture[117] (Hoston 1986). Many abandoned their lands, and transformed into tenant farmers, paying excessively high rents and found themselves "deeply subject to apparently nonmarket pressures and coercions", "resulting in precisely the same practices of despotic landlordism that had previously been visited on them through the rigorous Tokugawa class system" (Walker, 2016:31).

Why was the countryside unable to follow the transformation seen in cities, and which capitalism was supposed to instigate? Why agriculture was characterized by backwardness, urban industrial sector had advanced rapidly? Such were the questions that troubled many of the scholars involved in the Debate. And while Rōnō-ha members downplayed the issue, by claiming that agrarian sector has already taken the "road" to capitalist relations and dictations, Kōza-ha included the analysis of this phenomenon in its main arguments.

Therefore, for Rōnō-ha members, while the so called agrarian problem was often accepted as a deviation from the norm, any signs of this backwardness was claimed that were fading away, while agriculture and rural life was characterized, more and more, by the laws of capitalism. Any factors associated with the feudal (and Asiatic) past, were already by then bourgeoisified, and any economic relation was now determined by the forces of the market.

For Kōza-ha on the other side, this backwardness, and those remnants were crucial for the interpretation of current conditions and the planning of future strategy and action. Feudalism had not given way to capitalism, but the two coexisted, while developing a relationship of interdependence. The dual economy that had emerged, hindered any

[117] "although agriculture produced only about 25 percent of national income, a decline from almost 40 percent from the Meiji period" (Hoston 1986: 224)

possibility for progress, and contradictions between rural – urban areas intensified. The term "semi-feudal" was often employed by scholars such as Yamada, to describe the peculiar form Japanese rural sphere had taken.

Kōza-ha

It should be clear to the reader by now, that Kōza's approach placed the feudal remnants (particularly those in the countryside) at the center of the analysis. As a matter of fact therefore, Kōza-ha's members could not but disagree with claims such as those expressed by Rōnō-ha. It is worth of mention however, that some among the Kōza-ha members (like Noro), in their earlier works, maintained positions that often seem to closely resemble that of Rōnō. And one such example was the issue of the embourgeoisemention of landlords, which they initially advocated for. In any case though, Kōza-ha's thesis was one that saw relations in Japanese agriculture as "semi-feudal", and conditions in rural areas as extremely concerning.

Hani Gōrō argued that feudal Japan was still characterized, to a large degree, by the remnants of its Asiatic past, notably a "despotic" state that constantly "opposed" any attempt for capitalist economic progress by the people. As Hoston (1986: 177) explains, "[t]his explained the peculiar form of Japanese feudalism, and the difficulty of transforming commercial capital gained from han [118]granaries and production offices into industrial capital". And this also, explained the failure of the completion of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Japan, the failure to spawn a political consciousness in people's minds that would allow them to struggle for individual freedom and pull Japan into the next stage of development.

As Walker (2011:129) notes, for Hani, "Japan was definitely part of the 'East' because it shared the quintessentially 'eastern' problem of overpopulation not in the cities, but in the rural village". Hani argued that in the East/Orient, as the cities had little capitalist development, the rural population, that found itself out of the old feudal order[119], not needed there, overpopulated the rural areas, where deprivation and underemployment prevailed Walker (2011). Moreover, as Japan was "forced" to transit to the imperialist stage, "Feudal production relations. . . under the Asiatic form . . . were now maintained in order to repress the people under imperialism."[120] . It was therefore this situation that was the key cause of the agrarian problem. And it was now, only the "newly awakened proletariat" that could complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution (Hoston 1986).

Noro Eitarō saw the backwardness in Japanese agrarian sector in the fact that the last had not yet progressed to the stage of large-scale capitalistic agriculture (Hoston 1986). As already discussed, he (like other Kōza-ha members) acknowledged that Meiji Restoration did indeed initiate a bourgeois-democratic revolution. But he argued, this was not a complete one, as in his days Japan was not yet "past that point". According to Noro, there was an "imbalance between higher and lower modes of production" which "threatened to increase with the continued development of the industrial sector at the expense of the rural sphere" (Hoston 1986: 98). The dual character of the economy could not be disregarded, and

[118] The term "Han" referred to the fiefs of pre-modern Japan.
[119] Which was [overturn] by the intervention of the forces of world capitalism (Hoston, 1986).
[120] As in Hoston (1986: 177).

countryside, where capitalism did not prevail, required an analysis that would address the causes that prevent it from transiting to the next stage of development.

Those could be traced back to the way Meiji restoration, and hence the reforms it initiated, were designed and carried on. According to Noro:

> "Pure feudal landholding relations were abolished for a time, along with the restrictions that accompanied it, by the reforms of the Meiji Restoration. Even so, this fact does not imply that it, as he [Inomata] says, 'abolished the land system of feudal agriculture as the basis of feudal absolutism.' It merely accomplished the removal of pure feudal landholding relations, i.e., abolished the relations of pure feudal landholding by the bakufu and three hundred daimyo, and in its place put unified landownership under the sovereignty of the absolute monarch…. In our country the state ['as before'] is the highest landlord, and sovereignty is landownership aggregated on a national scale. Our country's land taxes, both in their traditional conception and in reality, could not be essentially different from the form of ground rent."[121]

The state, found thus an indispensable ally in the faces of landlords. For now, as he argued, the state had reorganized the landownership conditions to its benefits, i.e. primitive capital accumulation (Hoston 1986). "Agriculture continued to be done on the basis of a noncapitalist small-scale mode of production, and landlords, in place of feudal lords, now came to extract all surplus value from tenants"[122] he claimed. In this sense, he argued that the only capitalistic action made by landlords involved the "investment of their income in capitalist industry and finance" (Hoston 1986: 241).

Hirano Yoshitarō[123], engaged with the concept of the Asiatic Mode, for his analysis of Japan's failure to make Meiji Restoration a complete bourgeois-democratic revolution. For him, Asiatic Mode referred to slavery, which was of a quite oppressive character. And it was its remnants that characterized feudalism in Edo period, and caused "of the aggravation of an already severe degree of exploitation that was inherent in feudalism itself" (Hoston 1986: 170).

In Japan a complete bourgeois-democratic revolution could not materialize, exactly because of the fact that "Asiatic elements", and especially "Asiatic despotism", still exercised their influence in Japanese society, considerably affecting Japanese feudalism and countryside life, but also the cultural and political spheres (Hoston 1986). It was the "deeply ingrained cultural patterns of submissiveness and passivity, etched by the ancient experience of "Asian despotism" that explained "the failure of the revolution launched by the Meiji Restoration to produce a liberal-democratic bourgeois society—either the ideal or the reality—in Japan" (Hoston 1986: 170).

Feudalism as a system was obviously giving way, already since the Edo years, to capitalist development however, "this process […] was 'deformed' because of the peculiarities of the feudal system in Japan", he argued (Hoston 1986: 171). "Starvation rents" was one of those. "Even after the Meiji land tax reforms, the tribute relationship persisted between peasant and landlord" Hirano claimed (Hoston 1986: 172).

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[121] As in Hoston (1986: 212).
[122] As in Hoston (1986: 241).
[123] One of the translators into Japanese, of Wittfogel's earlier works on China.

> "Japan's petty serf system, with special characteristics in an Asiatic mode of exploitation conditioned by a low-level agricultural mode of production, shrank the living resources of the petty serfs, the direct producers, to the lowest limit necessary to the body in the sense of only a vegetable existence [by starvation rents]. [In the latter Tokugawa era, this resulted from] the progression of exploitation based on the poverty of feudal lords in the period of the dissolution of feudalism that accompanied bourgeois development. Consequently, [the system] did not generally expand nation-wide its scale of production, the development of technology, agricultural implements (like threshers. . .), and commercial fertilizers; and in many instances this made agriculture solely dependent on such natural conditions as the fertility of the land and the weather."[124]

Under these circumstances, it were peasants' unrest and uprisings (to this cruel exploitation) that played a major role in the Restoration. And it was not until the late Meiji years that the civil rights movement, having allied with the burgeoning labor movement succeeded (ibid). Initially, "'the ancient Asiatic system was recalled and ancient laws [were] copied"[125]. According to Hirano, "because of the weakness of the 'indigenous industrial bourgeoisie,' the feudal system did not simply collapse but was unified in the Restoration and "immediately reorganized feudalistically vis-a-vis the peasantry" (Hoston 1986: 171).

For Hirano (as for most among the Kōza-ha) therefore, there is a continuation from the Edo period to the present. The fact that a strong bourgeois class could not be formed during the Edo years, did not permit the development of "of manufacture industry that would form a new mode of production in Japan" (Hoston 1986: 213). Commercial bourgeoisie did not see the emergence of a distinct industrial bourgeoisie, and any industries encouraged by the bakufu government (which did promote some policies in favor of commercial and industrial development) was "lost" in the "parasitic" commercial cities of the time (such as Osaka, Sakai), which "were merely entrepots for products of a serf-based agrarian economy" (Hoston 1986).

Feudal domains, and feudal relations prevailing there, did not allow the transition to capitalist development. As Hirano argued:

> "The commercial capital produced by commodity circulation in the Edo period could easily have been converted to industrial capital, if the "feudal fetters" were removed, if the domestic market were fully integrated to transcend the boundaries of feudal domains, and if other conditions of the capitalist mode of production, such as the import of technology and participation in the world market, had been present."[126].

Even in the case of the bakufu's own domain, this process failed, as the bourgeoisie was weak, and so the shogun licensed (or chartered) monopolies to the bourgeoisie of commercial cities (Hoston 1986). Shogunate's policies such as the seclusion, combined with

[124] As in Hoston (1986: 172).
[125] As in Hoston (1986: 171).
[126] As in Hoston (1986: 213).

those of the late years of Edo period, such as the imposition of miscellaneous burdens on many layers of production and distribution, also prevented this transformation.

Hirano's analysis then, stressed the need to examine the relationship between landholders (of any size) and direct producers, who according to him, in Japan, were the numerous tenant farmers themselves, who "continued to be direct producers who used their own household's labor to produce a subsistence." (Hoston 1986: 211). Consequently, this relationship was certainly a not capitalistic one.

Yamada Moritarō in his famous "Analysis of Japanese capitalism" (1934)[127], argued that:

> "While key industries were created under noneconomic coercion by the police- military state, the base of the economy remained feudalistic, composed of quasi-serfs tilling the soil under semi- feudal land tenure conditions and quasi-slaves forced to work in industry at appallingly low wages, lower even than those of India."[128]

Feudalism thus, instead of being replaced by capitalism, became a model for the development of specific capitalist relations of production found in Japanese industry, and the basis on which industrial capital rested. "Yamada essentially argued that the basic form of Japanese social and economic life could be articulated through the mantra-like formula of 'militarist semi-serf system petty subsistence cultivation'" (Walker 2016:47) which in turn, "was systematized into the paradigm of 'the militaristic semi-serf system nature of Japanese capitalism.'" (Hoston 1986: 241).

Again, the reforms carried out by the Meiji regime were the direct cause of the situation described above, a situation that actually took shape at the end of the century, when Japan's international position was determined[129].

> "the militarist, semi-serf [gunjiteki hannō doseiteki] form of Japanese capitalism as a system was finally determined just at the epochal moment of the 1890s-1900s (the thirties and forties of the Meiji era), precisely during the period of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. Specifically, the process of the establishment of industrial capital in Japanese capitalism was due to these militarist, semi-serf characteristics, a process that at the same time enabled the turn toward imperialism, and the establishment of finance capital. It was in this capitalism, which developed from its point of origin in the new reforms of the Meiji Restoration, that the Japanese form of the process of the establishment of industrial capital, as I have described it, was conclusively [shūkyokuteki ni] fixed and determined."[130]

For Yamada therefore, militaristic expansion was central in the process of the formation of Japanese capitalism, and financial capital, which eventually controlled –through the huge conglomerates zaibatsu- its "key industries".

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[127] Part also of the "Lectures".
[128] As in Walker (2016: 47).
[129] He claimed that "the "specific [*tokushuteki*] and inverted [*tentōteki*] characteristics of Japanese capitalism are grounded in its inferior world- historical position." (Walker 2016: 49).
[130] As in Walker (2016: 48-9).

According to Yamada, “the advent of Japanese capitalism was, unlike the origin of English capitalism, “not the cause for the extinction of the semi- serf, parasitic landlord relation, but conversely the cause for its permanent continuity [eizoku].” (Walker, 2016: 49).

Walker (2016: 51) summarizes Yamada’s thesis as:

> “This is the basic framework of the Analysis of Japanese Capitalism: this “semifeudal system of property ownership and semi- serf system of petty subsistence cultivation,” which was the “basic determination” of the “militarist semi- serf system” of Japanese capitalism, had been—from the period of the establishment of industrial capital (1890s– 1900s) up until the 1930s era of financialization, monopolization, and imperialism—the unchanging “basis” on which the Japanese form of capitalism emerged.”

The Meiji reforms, transformed the petty cultivating serfs into “semi-serf petty cultivating farmers who paid high rents (*kosakuryō*) of 51 to 56 percent or 58 percent to usury capitalist parasitic landlords, heirs to semi-feudal conditions of servitude that were [merely] a compromising dissolution form of large feudal land possession rights” and “directly and forcibly transformed the other major portion of petty cultivating serfs into semi-serf wage laborers” (Hoston 1986: 241).

Hattori Shisō as well, was one of those scholars who looked in the Asiatic Mode to explain the backwardness, cruelty and stubbornness of feudalism in Japan (Hoston 1986). Apart from factors such as the “starvation rents”, it was the role of the state that was decisive in maintaining –even reviving- aspects of the Asiatic Mode (ibid). As a result, feudal relations did not disintegrate, but continued to prevail, and to obstruct the development and empowerment of Japanese bourgeoisie.

Aikawa Haruki also claimed:

> “Capitalism has matured on the ground of the maintenance and preservation of landlord- based property relations, and thus had the form characteristics of semi- serfdom engraved on it—to preserve itself, capitalism arose within relations that eternally maintain this landlord system of property ownership”[131].

Rōnō-ha

As it has been already mentioned, Rōnō-ha tried to downgrade the so called agrarian problem. Many conceded that there were still things to be done, or some kinds of peculiarities in the sphere of agrarian development in Japan however, they did not suffice to deem it (semi-) feudal as the Kōza-ha asserted.

Yamakawa Hitoshi of course, as mentioned above, early on in the Rōnō journal claimed that the landlord class was already bourgeoisified. In the same manner, Inomata Tsunao, argued that “a struggle against "feudal absolutism" should not be the main thrust of Japan's revolution because in Japan "landlords and other feudal remnant forces were no longer powerful political opponents of the bourgeoisie, for they had lost the material basis necessary to act as a potent antagonistic force.” (Hoston 1986: 230). Others, such as Kushida

[131] As in Walker (2016: 51).

Tamizō, endeavored on an analysis of the conditions in Japanese agriculture. In any case though, the main arguments was the same. Capitalism in Japan was already prevailing in much of the economy, and soon it will do so entirely.

Comintern saw Japanese agriculture as static, from the late Edo period to the 1920s, while Kōza-ha was overestimating "semi-feudal landownership's" role (Hoston 1986). Moreover, it made no sense to argue that "that capitalism could have evolved on an essentially feudalistic base, since capitalism was generally built on the demise of feudalistic landownership" (Hoston 1986: 229).

Sakisaka Itsurō argued that "the capitalisms of individual countries have their respective special natures, nevertheless, such special structures are dissolved into universality or generality with the development of capitalism."[132]. Moreover, "in both Russia and Germany the feudalism that remained deeply embedded gradually disappeared with the development of capitalism", and thus, "there is no reason to expect Japan to be an exception to this [pattern]"[133].

Sakisaka was also extremely critical of Yamada's nondynamic analysis. He wrote:

> "On the one hand, capital has apparently arrived at its process of establishment of finance capital, its "essential form," and the "overwhelming role of the huge zaibatsu conglomerates, and the composition of banking capital and industrial capital" has emerged—thus, although thirty years of continual progress in the process of accumulation and concentration of capital have occurred, somehow the characteristics of landlords, peasants, and wage laborers had to remain exactly as they were in antiquity. The concentration of capital increases the number of wage laborers, and develops the proletariat both qualitatively and quantitatively. For Yamada however, capitalism's process of monopolization is something unidirectional that does not in turn develop the other various social relations. This methodology is precisely the inverse of Marxism. Perhaps feudal remnants never fully disappear in capitalist development. Perhaps on a certain level, and in certain situations, something like this "semi- feudalism" could exist. But such a sense of "semi- " is qualitatively different from that employed by Yamada and his clique"[134]

Inomata Tsunao adopted a similar approach. He also recognized that feudal remnants still could be found in Japanese society –on the economic and political spheres- at the time, they lacked though, he claimed, any material base (Hoston 1986). He criticized for example Kōza-ha's Noro Eitarō, by claiming that "Semi-feudalism is only an ideology. It has already lost its class and material base in capitalism" (Ishiko, 2008: 23)[135]. The few large landlords -as there were not many large landowners, and landholding was mainly of a small size- that maintained arable lands at the time did "not themselves manage large agricultural enterprises"[136], and "their only link with capital lay in income received from interest and dividends" (Hoston 1986: 204). Moreover, Japanese society –despite its peculiarities-, was

[132] As in Hoston (1986: 229).
[133] As in Hoston (1986: 229).
[134] As in Walker (2016: 50).
[135] As in Aoki (2020: 16, note 10).
[136] As in Hoston (1986: 204).

already a capitalist society, not significantly different from other capitalist ones. As Inomata argued "even in the countryside, peasants were now exploited by profit seeking landlords through capitalistic taxes, farm rents determined by the market forces of supply and demand, and wage labor" (Hoston 1986: 97).

In response to Kōza-ha which criticized Rōnō-ha members that they overlooked the agrarian problem, Inomata claimed that this was not true. As he wrote in 1928:

> "Capitalism in backward Japan, which has a variety of peculiarities, both made agricultural production capitalistic and raised [the level of] its forces of production. [But] before carrying out its proper historical task of transforming the majority of the rural population into proletarians, [it] has already become a link in the chain of world capitalism in the era of [its] collapse. Japanese capitalism, born late, could grow only by seizing the surplus value that peasants produced, under (reactionary) government policies."[137]

It was not therefore that Japanese agriculture had not become capitalistic (or more precisely, that it will not soon be so), but the fact that to achieve an adequate level of capitalist development, it had first to supply industrial development with its surplus value. Japan was a latecomer to the capitalist race, and as such it should advance its standing through other ways, ways that, it could be said, were different from the "usual" ones. Moreover, when Japanese economy did catch up, to some point, world capitalism was in crisis, and hence, the process of capitalist transformation could not proceed smoothly.

As a result, agrarian sector did not technically advance in pursuit of profits, something that could explain the "continued "extreme poverty" of the peasantry and "the special content of the agrarian problem" in Japan" (Hoston 1986: 230). Landlords, gradually got bourgeoisified, assumed the role of investors, supporting the development of urban industries.

> "[L]andlords, who were merely passively collecting ground rent, gradually became cash capitalists. Instead of reinvesting in land and agriculture, they turned the surplus value paid by tenants into time deposits in banks and invested in government bonds, stocks, and corporate bonds. Also, quite a few large landlords are specifically the directors of enterprise companies and bank presidents, and some of them are large-scale usurers. Thus, having lost the special character of agricultural landlords, they gradually were assimilated into bourgeois ideology and stand under the banner of finance capitalism"[138]

The only case that could be mentioned, where feudal remnants "become shackles on the development of agricultural production forces and consequently become an absolute restraint on the even higher development of capitalism itself"[139] was in capitalism's inability to develop rapidly enough in the cities to absorb the surplus labor created, Inomata argued (Hoston 1986). Moreover, the fact that Japanese agriculture continued to be of a small scale, did not leave any possibility for the peasantry to live "humanly" (Hoston 1986).

[137] As in Hoston (1986: 230).
[138] As in Hoston (1986: 231).
[139] As in Hoston (1985: 236)

In this framework, it was only through cooperation with the proletariat, and a socialist (one stage) revolution that the peasantry could advance its (bourgeois-democratic) claims and abolish capitalism, which was to blame for its sufferings and current condition, as for Inomata "the peasants are not a social stratum that can form an independent political force"[140]. Simultaneously, the bourgeoisified landlords, not having any benefit in participating in a democratic "'resolution' of the land problem", should not be expected to contribute to the process of change (Hoston 1986)[141].

Kushida Tamizō, argued that peasantry was now composed by free individuals, acting in the framework of a capitalist economy. As he claimed "no case [was] known in which a landowner . . .prohibited a change of occupation by a tenant for fear of the loss of rent"[142]. The claims of extra-economic coercion in the countryside could not be supported. The relationship between landlord and tenant had clearly changed, and "land prices and rents were now the product of supply and demand curves, not noneconomic means of coercion exercised by the feudal landlord" (Hoston 1986: 236).

On Ground rents

One of the main issues in this sub-debate (on the agrarian problem), was related to the subject of ground rents –in what was named the "Ground rent debate (jidai ronsō 時代論争)" in Japan[143]-, their size and nature. Characteristically, Kushida Tamizō (member of the Rōnō-ha), one of the main figures involved in this controversy, described the framework of relevant discussions as follows:

> "There are currently two controversies in progress in the Japanese press. One is the inquiry into the Marxist schema of differential ground rent, and the other is the discussion of the current stage of Japanese agriculture. The former is the question of how to understand the final pattern of bourgeois-democratic revolution: while it differs from country to country, generally, it is an objective of countries in which the growth of capitalism is slow. . . . The latter is the question of to what extent contemporary Japanese agriculture has approached this goal, and through what process it is approaching it."[144]

Focusing thus on the ground rent debate, it should be first noted that this sub-debate emerged from a wider debate –often called in Japanese as the "Value debate (価値論争)"-, which took place during the late 1920s[145], and was related to the problems Marx's labor theory of value presented (Fukusawa 2020, Hoston 1986\.

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[140] As in Hoston (1986: 237).

[141] As Hoston (1986: 246) notes, "[b]y 1937, after his personal foray into the countryside, Inomata was far more willing than he had been as a Rōnō-ha spokesman to attribute major significance to "feudal" attributes of the countryside".

[142] As in Hoston (1986: 236).

[143] It can be approximately said that it lasted from 1928 to 1933 (Itoh 2020).

[144] As in Hoston (1986: 236).

[145] In fact, this can be considered as the "second part" of the "value debate", as a debate on Marx's labor theory of value had already taken place before, between other scholars and commentators (Fukusawa 2020a, b).

This debate, started with Hijikata Seibi (1890-1975, 土方成美), who, in 1926, published an essay entitled "Theory of Economic Life (経済生活の理論)", where he criticized Marx's labor theory of value. When Maide Chōgorō ([] 舞出長五郎) responded to this criticism, a debate between the two began (Fukasawa 2020). And when Kushida Tamizō (of Rōnō-ha), who was often cited and criticized by Hijikata, responded to his assertions (in 1927), the controversy developed further and evolved. In the process, Kōza-ha's Yamada Moritarō, and Rōnō-ha's Ōmori Yoshitarō (1898-1940, 大森 義太郎)[146] got involved as well, criticizing (among other issues) Hijikata's claims (ibid). And it was in this framework, that Hijikata published an essay entitled "The Collapse of Marx's Theory of Value as Viewed from the Theory of Ground Rent (地代論より見たるマルクス価値論の崩壊)" (1928), and the debate gradually shifted from the theory of value to the theory of ground rent, as each side tried to advance its position[147].

As Fukusawa (2020a) stresses, Hijikata's criticism[148] developed around (among other issues) the conclusion that if we accept that Marx's fundamental proposition of his labor theory of value, i.e. that the substance of the value of a commodity is the amount of socially necessary labor in its production, this is something that cannot be proved empirically in any way. A usual criticism of Marx's abstract method, it is about the assertion that what remains after the abstraction is not only the character of the product of labor, but also its use value.

Moreover, how can, as in the case of land, products that are not products of labor, be actually bought and sold with a price? Why do these non-labor products have a price? According to the labor theory of value, land is not a labor product because it is not produced and does not have amount of invested labor (socially necessary labor) in it. However, in reality, land is actually priced and sold or rented at a price. This is a common and ordinary phenomenon. How does the theory of labor value explain this? (ibid).

Further, Hijikata (1928), adding more substance to his criticism of the labor theory of value, and in order to elaborate on it, tried to reconcile the labor theory of value with the theory of land rent (in his 1928 essay) (Fukusawa 2020b)[149]. He attacked Marx's attribution of land's value to factors such as the organic composition of capital, as well as his concept of "false social value". If we accept such a concept, he argues, is as if we accept a "value-free price", a price that is not a product of labor, and hence prove the partial failure of the labor theory of value. In the first place, the emergence of prices that exceed value, and the fact that value is not realized as price, are all the result of the action of supply and demand, he adds (Fukusawa 2020b).

Hijikata and Takada Yasuma (高田 保馬, 1883-1972) claimed also, that there were inconsistencies between Marx's labor theory of value and his theory of differential rent. Itoh (2020: 33) describes their main objection as follows:

> "Their central claim was that there is an inconsistency between Marx's labor theory of value and his theory of differential rent. In the latter, productive conditions on the worst "marginal" land are seen as the regulator of the market

[146] Economist of Imperial University of Tokyo. Arrested during the "March 15 incident (三・一五事件)".

[147] Economists Takata Yasuma (高田 保馬, 1883-1972) –with his "The Value of Marx's Value Theory"- of Kyoto Imperial University and Futatsugi Yasuki (二木 保幾, 1892-1934) of Waseda University joined as well Hijikata's critique (Fukusawa 2020b).

[148] Which is similar to Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk's.

[149] Fukisawa (2020b) notes that this is the first criticism of Marx's theory of land rent in Japan.

> value of agricultural products, whereas in the former it is the socially average amount of labor embodied in commodities which seems to determine their values. In the calculation of the values of ordinary commodities within the same industry, the surplus value obtained by capitalists with better than average technical conditions of production is to be regarded as containing transfers of surplus labor from capitalists with inferior technical conditions. In the case of the surplus profit which is transformed into differential rent, such transfers within the same industry do not exist, and Marx calls the source of differential rent a "false social value" (Capital, Vol III: 799). Is this definition consistent with the theory of surplus value?"

In this framework, as Hoston (1986: 225) points out, "[t]he ensuing debate on the theory of ground rent took on a life of its own, spiraling to increasingly abstract levels of analysis, and moving away from the immediate issues concerning the current state of agriculture in Japan".

The principal efforts of both groups members were "directed toward using Marx's theory to explain the source of differential rent and how landowners were able to obtain it." (Itoh 2020: 33). Rōnō-ha, again, saw the issue with less urgency than its Kōza-ha counterparts, and claimed that in the 1920s, rents were capitalist ground rents. Most in the Kōza-ha claimed on the other side, that despite in different form, rents remained the same in their essence, as "extra-economic coercion persisted even after the Meiji Restoration and determined high feudal ground rents" (Hoston 1986: 236). The key issue was whether Japanese rents (paid by small tenant farmers – *kosakuryō,* 小作料) were differential, absolute, or feudal in nature. According to Marx's analysis,

Kōza-ha

Let us now present some of the arguments expressed by Kōza-ha. It is evident that Kōza criticized Rōnō's arguments, and charged its scholars for failing to examine, and thus understand, the particulates associated with the agrarian sector. It was clear that agrarian ground rents, were still extremely high and pretty much feudalistic in character for Kōza. As Meiji restoration had failed to adequately play its role, as a bourgeois revolution, it had also failed to transform its economic basis. Ground-rents was another one element to prove this phenomenon. Further, Kōza sought to answer the question "why ground rents continued to be so high?". However, this was a question that could be easily answered, in the framework of the group's main approach and thesis. Feudal relations still exercised their influence in the countryside.

Concerning the issue of differential ground-rent, Moriya Fumio (守屋 典郎, 1907-1996) and Yamada Moritarō accused Kushida and Sakisaka for misunderstanding Marx's theory, and suggesting that "what Marx had seen as false social value in differential ground rent was not false at all, because it seemed to confuse absolute and differential ground rent" (Hoston 1986: 236).

Moriya argued that both, failed to understand that "absolute ground rent arises out of the limited nature of landownership and the low level of organic formation of capital in agriculture" (Hoston 1986: 236), while Yamada argued that they perceived what Marx had called as "false social value" to mean actually "improper" social value (Hoston 1986).

According to Yamada (1934), “extra-economic coercion” was the leading force in agriculture. Japanese ground rents, far higher than those of other capitalist countries, were determined by it, and a system of “quasi-serfdom, whereby tenant farmers were obliged to perform labour services in the landlord’s field or house” still survived in the countryside (Moris-Suzuki 1989: 72). Moreover, landlords, enjoyed the backing of the government and military to impose their exploitation on the peasantry (Moris-Suzuki 2010).

Finally, Hirano Yoshitarō argued that capitalistic ground rent is what “the large-scale capitalist entrepreneur pays with the objective of pursuing a profit”, while “feudalistic ground rent uses "extraeconomic coercion to drain the entire surplus labor from the direct producers, who make their own livelihood for a life of starvation" with land they are provided and their own agricultural implements” (Hoston 1986: 243). From this point of view therefore, and taking into consideration his above mentioned arguments concerning the agrarian problem, it becomes clear that for Hirano, ground rents in Japan resembled more feudalistic ground rents than capitalistic ones.

According to Hirano, this phenomenon was not restricted to Japan though. As he claimed:

> “In countries where land reform is incomplete, and there was no complete establishment of small landownership by partition, tenants who cannot become land owners remain limited to the status of semi-feudal tenants. Furthermore, since their product alone is insufficient to meet their living expenses, they form a category of' 'poor peasants" (and at the same time a semi-proletariat) dependent also on wage labor.
>
> From eastern Prussia, bounded by the Elbe to Poland, from Bulgaria and the Danube countries [Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary] to Russia, in the east, as far as Japan, the transformation of feudal petty cultivators to landowners—whose fully free and independent character was liberated—has not occurred.”[150]

It was in Western Europe only, that we can find the “normal progression” of the forms of ground rent, i.e. “Labor ground rent—> ground rent in kind —> cash ground rent (the preceding are feudal ground rents) —> ground rent in the transitional intermediate form toward free [private] landownership and capitalism —> capitalist ground rent”[151].

Rōnō-ha

Tsuchiya Takao did recognize the existence of high rents in the agrarian sector. However, it could not be supported, he argued, that they were the same kind of rents as those extracted during the pre-Meiji period –despite them being as high-. They “had changed from feudal rents in kind to capitalistic money ground rents” (Hoston 1986: 101). In addition, they were now determined by the laws of the free market, by the supply and demand of land, and not anymore by extra-economic coercion (Hoston 1986).

[150] As in Hoston (1986: 244).
[151] As in Hoston (1986: 244).

Rōnō-ha's main view had it that "[t]he feudal system of land tenure, in which the payment of tribute depended in part on customary status relations, was destroyed by the modernizing Meiji land tax reforms" and agrarian ground rents had already been stripped of traditional elements (Hoston 1986: 233). As Hoston (1986: 239) notes however, Rōnō-ha's theorists, despite their assertions, found themselves often referring to the "continued significance of "semi-feudal" elements and the need for the Japanese revolution to accomplish "bourgeois-democratic" tasks left undone by the Meiji Restoration, especially in the countryside".

Inomata attempted to reply to Hijikata's claims, by arguing that the average value was the one determining the price of agricultural products, just as it does for manufacturing ones (Itoh 2020, Hoston 1986). And as most of the cultivated land of the time constituted of exactly what could be characterized as the worst land, it was the latter the determined the market value (Hoston 1986). Of course as later scholars argue, Inomata had misinterpreted Marx's theory.

As now for Inomata's explanation of the high level of agrarian rents, it can be connected to his general approach to the agrarian problem (discussed here before), and thus focused on the "surplus rural population" . As he argued "the speed of the development of capitalism after the Meiji Restoration was not rapid enough to absorb that surplus population"[152], and consequently, demand for land in the countryside (from this large peasant population remaining from the feudal years competing for land) was far exceeding supply. Therefore, "high ground rents and land prices were the direct result of 'the too small scale agricultural system that accompanied legalized private landownership.' As agricultural labor became more productive and each peasant was driven by a desperate need to obtain land for his household to farm, fierce competition for scarce land drove rents and prices higher" (Hoston 1986: 233).

Moreover, under those circumstances, "ground rent had become the blood and bones of capitalism"[153], as landlords, who could not anymore be clearly distinguished from capitalists, used those rents to promote urban development and exploited both the peasantry and proletariat (Hoston 1986).

Inomata talked here also about the "usury ground-rent". During the late 20s the collection of rents still resembled the process that took place during the Edo period, where high ground rents in kind prevailed. For Inomata, there existed however, a qualitative difference between the ground rents of Edo years and the agrarian rents of Shōwa Japan. The collection of rents was now regulated not by "extra-economic coercion", as was the case during the feudal years, but instead by market forces as dictated by the capitalist system that had already penetrated into agriculture.

Inomata (as Rōnō-ha in general) could not deny the fact those "usury ground rents" were of a form that clearly reminded the feudal past, while to a noticeable proportion paid still in kind. However, he claimed that they were not the same thing, neither in content nor in their basis. The rents "comprised wages and average profits as well as ground rent in its original sense", and "were firmly rooted in a structure of small scale individual landownership that was capitalistic, and their excessively high levels were the result of the inequality of land distribution in a capitalist society"(Hoston 1986: 233).

[152] As in Hoston (1986: 101-1).
[153] As in Hoston (1986: 231).

Another Rōnō-ha figure which got actively involved in this sub-debate was of course Kushida Tamizō. The key concept in his analysis was surplus labor within the agrarian sector, as for Kushida, the substantial source of differential rent lay in it (Itoh 2020, Hoston 1986).

Kushida argued that agrarian rents at the time, were clearly capitalist ground-rents: "[I]n situations where the capitalist mode of production prevailed, even if a system of payment in kind was widely implemented, one could not immediately say that this was feudal ground rent and that landlord-tenant relations were feudal collection relations. Why? Because payment in kind itself was being conceptually converted into currency in the minds of landlords and tenants"[154].

Sakisaka Itsurō also engaged in those discussions, and offered [in his In "Studies in the Theory of Rent (1930)"] what is considered to be the most consistent analysis in this subject.

Sakisaka "argued that Marx's theory of differential rent in no way represents a negation of value theory but rather shows clearly how the law of market value (shown in chapter 10 of Volume III of Capital) operates in the particular context of the specific restrictions of different qualities of land. He also made it clear that differential rent was a form of the redistribution of social surplus value through commodity circulation." (Itoh 2020: 33).

The Question of the State

The next important issue in the Debate was related to the State, its form and role. As Yamamoto (1998) notes, it is self-evident that behind the debate on Japanese capitalism was the debate on the theory of the state, and the theory of its transformation. In this content, we have the absolutist approach of the Kōza-ha, which argued for a two-stage revolution, while the bourgeois development theorists of the Rōnō-ha, who argued mainly for a one-stage revolution. Again hence, the "two" approaches diverse, and again the discussions involve a variety of other subjects.

It was the character of the Japanese state at the time that was fiercely contested, but essentially, it was the question of how to democratically transform the harsh system of people's oppression and domination of the 1920s and 1930s (Yamamoto 1998). Some of the issues involved in these discussions are: the role of the State in the process of development (i.e. Meiji state) and state's role at present, the question of universality and particularity of Marxism, the [pos/a]bility of impartial analysis of the emperor system by the Japanese scholars of the time, the evaluation of international conditions-relations, Marxist theory of the state.

Rōnō-ha's thesis, consistent with its general approach, was that Japanese State can be now considered a bourgeois democracy. As it should be apparent by now, Kōza-ha's saw it as an absolutist monarchy. Each approach closely related to each group's main thesis and arguments, and of course strategy.

Crucial for the implications of these discussions, was the possibility to examine, critically, the emperor system. In addition to the development of consciousness of absolutism to Japan, was above all a criticism of the emperor system as a lagging political system in

[154] As in Hoston (1986: 233).

Japanese society (Yamamoto 1998). The emperor's power can be defined as an absolutist power that stands on the balance between the interests of the landlords, who represent the old exploitation base, and the capitalist system, or monopoly bourgeoisie (Yamamoto 1998).

It is evident that such a criticism was not obvious for Japanese Marxists. Leading figures in Rōnō-ha, such as Yamakawa and Sakai for example, from early on, had decided to not involve in their analysis a critique of the emperor system, as oppression would surely follow such attempts, rendering them futile (Fukumoto 2019)[155]. On the other side, it can be argued that from Kōza-ha's side, someone can more easily spot such a criticism. Hoston (1986) even questions contemporary's scholars ability or willingness to engage in such a criticism[156].

Taking now as starting point the definition of emperor's power –and thus of absolutist monarchy in Japan- mentioned above and given by Yamakawa (1998), we can see that crucial for the analysis was also the power and influence the "old landowner class" exerted in politics. As Hoston (1986) notes, the problem at question was the dual character of the Japanese economy and state in late Taishō and Shōwa Japan:

> "On the one hand, there appeared to be a dichotomy in the state structure—elements of both bourgeois democracy and feudal autocracy—that corresponded to the dual structure of the economy as a whole: the coexistence of a highly concentrated, capital-intensive heavy industrial and financial sector alongside a small-scale, labor-intensive agricultural and light industrial sector. At the same time, as the Comintern's '27 Theses noted, there seemed to be a disparity between the nature of the economic base—which bore many of the features of highly developed and trustified finance capitalism—and the political superstructure, which, despite the formal constitutional structure of parliamentary democracy, was characterized by remnants of an earlier era: the emperor, the Privy Council, the genro, and powerful military advisors." (Hoston 1986: 182)

Finally, closely related to the debate on the state, was the issue of Japanese imperialism.

Kōza-ha

As already mentioned, for Kōza-ha, Japanese state was an absolutist monarchy, under the emperor system (tennō-sei). This conclusion was in line with Kōza's main thesis, and its claims about feudal remnants and backwardness, and its approach that focuses on the peculiarities of Japanese capitalism, and its dual character. Hoston (1986) identifies this approach with a "structural" (*kōzō-teki*) perspective on the state and society, i.e. with a "structuralist" approach to the state.

For Kōza-ha members, feudalism never actually gave place to a bourgeois-capitalist society. "[F]eudal remnant forces were simply incorporated into the new absolutist Meiji state, which in turn encouraged the development of capitalism", but during this process "feudal

[155] Characteristically, Fukumoto [2019] mentions that after the arrest of JCP members in 1923, the biggest worry of Sakai was whether the documents confiscated by the government - especially the minutes of meetings - contained any internal discussion of the emperor system [Fukumoto 2019: 241].
[156] See for example Hoston (1986) p.184

elements […] acted to preserve their material basis in the countryside", and "feudalism disintegrated only partially, in compromise with new elements needed to promote industrial capitalism" (Hoston 1986: 210). Both therefore, "supported" each other for their own benefit.

It is clear that Kōza found a continuity in the essence of Japanese state, which preserved its absolutist character from the Meiji to the early Shōwa years. The Meiji state was an absolutist state. "It began the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Japan by undermining feudal political centers—through the abolishment of the han and the establishment of prefectures (ken)—in 1869 and by transferring sovereignty from the multiple feudal units (kuni) of the Tokugawa period to a single central head, the emperor, on a national level." (Hoston 1986: 212). The emperor and the other semi-feudal institutions were remnants of the past, absolutist in character.

Hattori Shisō, in his essay "On Absolutism (絶対主義論)" (1928), after studying the notion of "absolutism" in Marx and Engels, claimed that Japanese state was an absolutist state, from the Meiji years to his days (Hoston 1986). Absolutism characterized the transitional period from a feudal society to a bourgeois one, and its "historical role lay in nurturing and promoting the development to a still higher stage of a bourgeoisie which still had not developed to [the point of] being an independent force accumulating political power "[157]. Japanese state however, with its emperor system, had not yet completed this transition, he stressed.

Hattori related the absolutist character of the Japanese state, to the inevitable persistence of remnants of the past, as, as he claimed, "capitalism was evolved to the stage of imperialism from a structure that could develop only on the basis of semi-feudal private landownership"[158]. Japanese economy therefore could develop as it did, because it rested on such elements.

Noro Eitarō pointed out the role of the state as "the nation's highest landlord" -a characteristic that was "leftover" from Japan's Asiatic past as discussed above-, where "the absolutist state levied feudal type rents in the form of taxes on the direct producers (peasants)" (Hoston 1994: 260). He wrote:

> "Pure feudal landholding relations were abolished for a time, along with the restrictions that accompanied it, by the reforms of the Meiji Restoration. Even so, this fact does not imply that it, as he [Inomata] says, 'abolished the land system of feudal agriculture as the basis of feudal absolutism.' It merely accomplished the removal of pure feudal landholding relations, i.e., abolished the relations of pure feudal landholding by the bakufu and three hundred daimyō, and in its place put unified landownership under the sovereignty of the absolute monarch.
>
> . . . In our country the state ['as before'] is the highest landlord, and sovereignty is landownership aggregated on a national scale. Our country's land taxes, both in their traditional conception and in reality, could not be essentially different from the form of ground rent."[159]

[157] As in Hoston (1986: 208).
[158] As in Hoston (1986: 210).
[159] As in Hoston (1986: 212).

In this context, the feudal relationship remained, with the only difference that it was now the state that took the surplus from the peasantry, in the form of taxes (Hoston 1986).

According to Noro however, Japanese state, after the Meiji Restoration, could only be characterized as absolutist, as it was neither feudalistic nor bourgeois in character[160]. As the Meiji state introduced the land reforms -which “"clearly opened the path for the concentration" of landownership” (Hoston 1986: 212)-, it “pursued protectionist policies to nurture the native bourgeoisie”, as an absolutist state “that pressed onward with reforms that would make Japan an industrial capitalistic society” (Hoston 1986: 212).

Noro severely criticized Inomata's argument that only large landholdings are the material basis of absolutism (such as in the cases of Germany and Russia). The mere fact that large land ownership did not exist in Japan, where small land ownership was the norm, did not prove the loss of the material basis of absolutism (Fukumoto 2019). Inomata's argument could not explain the further despotization of the ruling class that occurred, Noro claimed. What emerged therefore - persistent semi-feudal relations of production in agriculture and growth of capitalism in the nation as a whole-, was “one of the most fundamental contradictions of Japanese capitalism”[161] (Hoston 1986).

As has already been discussed, Hirano Yoshitarō’s analysis stressed the failure of emergence of a distinct industrial bourgeoisie during the Edo period -despite the basic efforts by the shogunate to establish the conditions for the transformation of commercial capital to industrial- and the persistence of feudal relations in a “serf-based agrarian economy”. Hirano thus, argued that “it became impossible for Japan to develop a state form comparable to that in Western Europe, which had used these bourgeois as supporters against feudal lords to establish a fully centralized regime” (Hoston 1986: 213).

Again, we find Hirano to stress the Asiatic-feudal elements that prevailed during the Edo years, where domains developed “relatively equally, balancing each other's power, so that a fully centralized transitional state did not emerge until the Meiji Restoration” (ibid). During those years, a series of antagonisms came to the fore: between the Imperial Court and the shogunate, individual domains and the shogunate, but also between the peasants and feudal lords, lords and retainers (Hoston 1986: 214).

The collapse of the shogunal state, under such circumstances, but also under the pressures that external forces brought to the country, was inevitable. The system therefore, collapsed “"as when a mummy hits the air" when it made contact with the dynamic system of world capitalism"”, Hirano claimed (Hoston 1986: 214).

The Meiji state, a transitional absolutist state, did little however, to remove the feudal elements. “Not only was the traditional lord-vassal relationship retained, but as long as the general system of petty semi-serfs remained, it was possible for [the old feudal daimyō] to be made a political power supporting those forces resting on that semi-serf system”[162] .

Hirano although argued, that the new state could not do much in that direction anyway, as it had inherited a capitalism “"chipped and distorted" by its origins in a semi-serf system that had been attacked from without by more advanced capitalist countries” (Hoston 1986: 215). Nevertheless, it began the necessary process of primitive capitalist accumulation,

[160] It is often stressed (see Fukumoto 2004) that Noro, during his earlier studies, recognized Meiji Restoration as a bourgeois revolution, and Meiji state as a bourgeois state however, after the incidents of 1928 and 1929 he came to believe that the state was but an Asian-despotic state under a modern guise.

[161] As in Hoston (1986: 211).

[162] As in Hoston (1986: 215).

in place of the too weak bourgeoisie, but due to the circumstances (internal and external), the process itself was a violent one.

In response to internal conditions, and as "the Meiji state sought to accomplish in fifty years what the British had required two centuries to achieve", it was necessary for the state to "retain the semi-serf system that had nurtured Japanese capitalism at the outset", which resulted in the emergence of a "serf-landlord bourgeoisie" (ibid). Therefore, Hirano argued: "Since the nascent bourgeoisie itself was based on a serf system and reproduced it, it furthermore embossed the entire system with the form of semi-serf capitalism, and the entire basis of such an economic structure caused the political rule to be characterized in the same way."[163].

And the state that was established had a conservative character. The role of warrior class (samurai) was crucial in this aspect. Former samurai, who by then (the Meiji years) had lost their connection to the land, and often composed a big portion of the bureaucracy, opposed any "possibility of bourgeois democracy such as the civil rights movement, by reviving feudal remnants" (Hoston 1986: 216). As such, despite the fact that the political system was modeled on 18th century's Prussian system, "aspects of the ancient Asiatic despotic system were recalled, and old laws copied into new legal code" (ibid). This could be seen in the use of ""extra-economic coercion toward the peasantry and urban workers" and its strict regulation of and reliance on forced labor in accumulating capital" (ibid). In addition, the state established links and economic relations (loans) with commercial capital (and later zaibatsu conglomerates).

Further, as Fukumoto (2019) observers, the emperor's power was defined by the Kōza-ha, as an absolutist power that stands on the balance between the interests of the landlords, who represented the old exploitation base, and the capitalist system, or monopoly bourgeoisie. In accordance with this observations, Hirano argued that the emperor had exactly that role in the state apparatus. As Hoston (1986: 216) puts it, for Hirano "The emperor, […] balanced the bourgeois and feudal elements in the state structure, enabling the state to retain some autonomy from the interests of both classes". It did so through the promotion of the kokutai (国体, national body) ideology[164], and the establishment of political institutions such as the Privy Council, which were embodied by an absolutist ideology.

In regard to the external challenges on the other side, the state had to proceed rapidly with the process of primitive accumulation, and "in a manner that would strengthen the nation militarily" (Hoston 1986: 216). Hirano writes:

> "The Meiji government was not only a powerful lever in the transitional process of primitive accumulation of capital, but it could even possibly have been the parent of the birth of capitalist production itself. Because of this relationship, the protection and nurturing of capitalist production, the importation of technology, and the transplantation of industry had to be conjoined with the official patriarchic organization of the Meiji government. Thus, it was not an accident that this patriarchic tutorial protectionist bureaucratic organization (bevormundende Bureaukratie) structured the entire state system, as an indispensable framework for the establishment and

[163] As in Hoston (1986: 215).

[164] As Hoston (1986) observers, it was an ideology that dictated that the "Imperial Will", rather than the popular will, was the basis of political legitimacy.

development of capitalism. The appearance of that state structure was the process of the formation of the Meiji regime."[165]

As a result, "Japanese capitalism developed its heavy industry first, and then its light, consumer industries" (Hoston 1986: 217).

Finally, Hirano observed that Japanese case present similarities with countries such as Germany and Austria, where we can find the rise of this kind of absolutism, after the occurrence of incomplete bourgeois revolutions, as Marx and Engels had described (Hoston 1986). In the East, Hirano argued, capitalism and bourgeois ideology was brought, forcibly, from the West, but "neither the political institutions nor the ideological superstructures in these countries evolved the mature notion of bourgeois democracy" (ibid).

For Yamada Moritarō, the state was a "militaristic semi-feudal" absolutist state (Hoston 1986). This form, reflected the "militaristic semi-serf" capitalism that had been established in Japan. Japanese Meiji state, in order to suppress domestic upheavals[166], and simultaneously, promote overseas expansion and protect itself from the capitalist states of the West, supported and protected military-related industries. However, these policies aggravated even more the conditions in rural sector, by the imposition of heavy taxes to finance those industries, and in turn required the intensification of military might (Morris-Suzuki 1989). Therefore, the "relationship of mutual regulation between semiserf petty cultivation and capitalism"[167] was a key characteristic of this system.

Through a historical analysis[168], Yamada traced the form of the Japanese state to the Tokugawa years:

> "First of all, the English absolutism from the end of the fifteenth century was terminated by the great revolution of 1648 [sic]. The precisely defined age of manufacturing (mid-sixteenth to mideighteenth centuries) was followed by the industrial revolution from 1760. Thus the classical structure of British capitalism based upon modern great land ownership is established. Next comes French capitalism which started with its great revolution of 1789 . . . and in relation to its tiny peasant ownership . . . In contrast to such formations, [in Britain, France Germany, Russia and the US], the characteristics of Japanese capitalism had its pre-history in the Tokugawa feudal despotism from the seventeenth century. Forced to begin again in 1868 under the pressure of advanced capitalist countries, the basis of Japanese capitalism remains peasant agriculture of semi-serfdom; yet the wars of 1894 and 1904 transformed Japan into an industrialized and imperialistic power. Hence the military and semi-servile type/formation of Japanese capitalism has been finally defined, which is peculiar, top-heavy and one of the meanest [worst] in world history..."[169]

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[165] As in Hoston (1986: 216).

[166] In order to "'suppress the resistance of the laboring strata of semi-feudal petty cultivating peasants and semi-serf wage laborers' and to maintain intact the semi-feudal land organization that was to be the basis of its 'primitive accumulation of capital" for rapid industrialization'" (Hoston 1986: 243).

[167] As in Hoston (1986: 219).

[168] In his "Analyis of Japanese Capitalism" (1934).

[169] As in Kazuhiko (2002: 180-1).

The semi-feudal elements therefore, continued to exist and even became the basis for Japan's economic and political development during the Meiji and (early) Shōwa years.

Yamada placed also importance on the imbalance between town and countryside, which he argued provided the basis for an absolutist Meiji state, a regime that was half capitalist and half feudal (Hoston 1986)

Rōnō-ha

Let as now examine some of the arguments raised by Rōnō-ha's members. As it should be already apparent to the reader, Rōnō-ha scholars could not but treat the Japanese state as a bourgeois democracy. Such a view would support Rōnō's revolutionary strategy, according to which "political and economic situation was ripe for an immediate socialist revolution" (Hoston 1986: 186). According to Hoston (1986: 187), "[t]he premises of Yamakawaism guided the Rōnō-ha to a straightforward approach to the relationship between politics and economics that Western Marxists have […] come to label 'instrumentalist.'". The Japanese state was perceived as the mere instrument of a self-conscious, bourgeois ruling class.

To summarize Rōnō-ha's main view, the Japanese state was a democratic state, where democratic institutions (political parties, the Diet, constitutional government, elections) prevailed. The imperial institution, a bourgeois monarchy, was compared cases, such as of Britain, and was considered "relatively independent of the class conflict within the society" (Hoston 1986: 183). Remnants of the past, such as the Genrō, were considered as insignificant for the course of Japanese development in Marx's schema, and posed no problem on the realization of the next step, the proletarian, socialist revolution. Japanese capitalism has progressed enough to support this view, and bourgeoisie was already promoting its interests through the state. By 1930s, Japanese state was a capitalist state dominated by an Imperialist bourgeoisie.

It was Yamakawa again that gave the basis for Rōnō-ha's main approach[170]. The introductory article of Rōnō (1927), written by Yamakawa, calls for a "righteous leftist strategy" from the side of the proletariat, the farmers and the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie , against the all the more powerful "large, powerful reactionary and imperialist political force" which is "led by a monopoly finance capital and which by having assimilated the feudal remnants and increased its power, is firmly united with the landlord class as its allies, with the petty bourgeoisie upper classes completely under its leadership" (Rōnō 1927).

According to Yamakawa, Japan had gradually moved from feudalism to capitalism, through the Meiji Restoration, which was carried out by lower-impoverished samurai whose social position forced them to take the initiative, which "weak and immature bourgeoisie"

[170] As early as in 1922, Yamakawa was convinced about the bourgeois character of the government. In his famous essay "A change of course for the proletarian movement", he characteristically writes: "Regardless of whether current politics are controlled by the bourgeois, and they certainly are, while these bourgeois politicians actually exert control over us and while they actually have direct and serious influence on our lives we cannot afford to neglect bourgeois politics. We must fight bourgeois politics assertively. To passively deny bourgeois politics is in effect the same a positively supporting them. Ignoring bourgeois politics control because of ideological reasons is not the way to assertively fight bourgeois rule. What we should do is to fight, those who do not fight bourgeois politics are assisting the bourgeois.".

was not capable of, but which interests those samurai eventually advanced. Meiji government, a "transitional absolutist hanbatsu government […], a bureaucratic and military government that lacked any economic basis of its own and represented the interests of the still rising bourgeoisie" completed the tasks of the bourgeois revolution (Hoston 1986: 188). In the process, any "absolutist remnant forces" got assimilated during the capitalist development into the forces of the bourgeoisie (Hoston 1986), and now, the proletariat confronted an "imperialistic, reactionary, bourgeois political power which [had] assimilated and strengthened the absolutist remnant forces"[171].

Inomata's Tsunao "Political Status of Modern Japan's Bourgeoisie (現代日本ブルヂョアジーの政治的地位)" (1927)[172] began with a positive description of the development of capitalism in Japanese society since the Meiji Restoration. Inomata's essay affirmed the development of capitalism in Japanese society since the Meiji Restoration, stating that capitalism had already entered the monopoly stage, and that oligarchic control by several types of finance capital had been established, leading not only to control of production but also to political control by the bourgeoisie – "party cabinetism"[Fukumoto 2019].

In his essay, Inomata developed further Rōnō-ha's thesis on the state, and its role, and according to Hoston (1986: 190) "offered a reinterpretation of modern Japanese political history […] [and] developed an instrumentalist analysis of the state that showed how the Taishō and Shōwa state acted on behalf of the now powerful bourgeoisie". He accepted the argument "that the Meiji state had been a paternalistic, autocratic," and absolutist government that had promoted the growth of capitalism in Japan. He also conceded that the remnants of the feudal forces involved in Meiji absolutism (*zettai-shugi* [絶対主義]) continued to exercise influence in the 1930s, through institutions such as the Privy Council, the House of Peers, and the i'aku jōsō (the military's direct access to the throne), as well as in feudalistic ideology", while he (and others) "did not ascribe to the imperial institution itself a dominant feudal character" (ibid).

Inomata argued that the bourgeoisified landlords that emerged after the Meiji Restoration, who like in England had lost their economic basis, gradually, and particularly after World War I, allied with the burgeoning forces of monopoly finance capital, and rule by feudal autocratic forces gave way to a mature bourgeois state in Japan (Hoston 1986).

Japanese landlords, small in size, were not at a position to oppose the rising bourgeoisie -which although Inomata argued remained "cowardly, indecisive, and compromising"[173]-, while they were losing also political power, as landlord parties were "deprived of their old economic base" (Hoston 1986). The landlord class was for example, in its efforts to promote its claims, the one that mobilized the large numbers of peasants "that led the beleaguered civil rights (jiyū minken) movement" (Hoston 1986: 193). The weak bourgeoisie from its side, maintained a close link with the autocratic, absolutist Meiji regime (comprised of semi-feudal bureaucrats and military cliques), which, acting on its behalf, moved quickly to promote a capitalist economy (Hoston 1986: 193).

> "Faithful to this mission, the land policy of the Restoration government abolished the feudal agricultural land system, which was the basis of feudal absolutism, substantially destroyed the old privileges inherent in this system,

[171] As in Hoston (1986).
[172] Taiyō(太陽), i. 11/1927.
[173] As in Hoston (1986: 193).

> and made the establishment and development of large semi-feudal landholdings impossible. Thus, what was left over from the previous era, which was the fundamental contradiction in opposition to capitalist development, was removed. At the same time, the material basis that was to make feudal absolutism a powerful political residue was also removed, and the inevitability of a violent clash between the former and the bourgeoisie also disappeared. ” (Inomata, 1927, p. 29)[174]

However, in the process of rapid economic development (intensified further by the wars) the –already bourgeoisified- landlord class' interests began to converge to those of the bourgeoisie, and both, politically, "engaged in a struggle for constitutionalism against the hanbatsu and then the "bureaucratic-military cliques" (kanryō gunbatsu).", which "would not surrender their power" (Hoston 1986: 193).

Like that, the two joined forces and chose "a path of moderate sober-minded compromise . . . with autocratic rule and absolutist remnant forces"[175]. And "[a]s the bourgeois-democratic movement of "Taisho democracy" exploited "the political resistance of the petty bourgeois stratum," it also led' 'the labor movement, the peasant movement, the movement for social equality, and the outbreak of the rice riot incidents, and . . . the socialist movement." The labor movement flourished further, as Japan's expanding capitalism transformed peasants and petty bourgeois into proletarians and semi-proletarian agrarian workers.51" (Hoston 1986: 193).

Further, Inomata expressed the view that Japanese imperialism was, from early on, a driving force of development. This was the case "because of the scarcity of its own resources, 'the weaknesses of neighboring oriental countries and the pressures of the imperialist countries on them'" (Hoston 1986: 191). Thus, Japan engaged in expansionalist wars (seeking territorial and economic benefits), gaining "a solid position in world silk and other commodity production and was exploiting colonies and semi-colonies "capitalistically," even while it remained a net importer of foreign capital" (Hoston 1986: 191).

Consequently, as Japan's bourgeoisie "now confronted not 'the Europe of feudalistic reaction forces trying to hinder liberalism and bourgeois-democracy, [but rather] . . . the imperialist world of finance capital. Thus, Japan's bourgeoisie, which had never praised liberty from its heart, had become reactionary early on, as an imperialist bourgeoisie.'" [ibid: 193-4]. Moreover, after the WWI, as "Japan changed from a debtor country to a creditor country […] 'bureaucratic politics' gave way to the age of political party government.' Yet having gained power 'without receiving the baptism of 'liberty,' " the bourgeoisie now acted in collusion with feudal remnants to suppress the "political upsurge of the proletariat.'" (Hoston 1986: 194).

In Inomata's analysis of the state, central role is given to the absolutist character of state power which was never completely erased. As the Meiji state, through its feudal, bureaucratic and military elements led the way to capitalist development and the maturation of bourgeois forces, it retained those characteristics and an "ideology of absolutist domination and submission" was born "along with the 'imperialist bourgeoisie'", and was disseminated and imposed to the masses through the universal education system and the police (Hoston 1986).

[174] As in Fukumoto (2019: 245).
[175] As in Hoston (1986: 193).

So how did the bourgeoisie asserted domination over the state? It was true that the political actors who succeeded in the Meiji Restoration were the lower class samurai, Inomata noted, hence, the new government (established by the Meiji Restoration) was not a government of the bourgeoisie. However, it was a kind of quasi-bourgeois regime, in the sense that it succeeded in realizing a bourgeois society (Fukumoto 2019). As industrialization and concentration of capital increased, so did bourgeoisie's political power, and a bourgeois government was established. As such, "the bourgeoisie had come to 'dominate Japanese politics because they control production' in an economy that had been transformed from a 'semi-agrarian country to an industrial nation'" (Hoston 1986: 194). In the eyes of Inomata therefore, the historical development of Japan seemed to trace the historical development of Western Europe (Fukumoto 2019).

Political parties, and political institutions (such as Privy Council and House of Peers), previously associated with landowners' interests, were now, Inomata argued, dominated by the bourgeoisie , while even the remaining minority of those groups was now "frequently depend more on capital income" (Hoston 1986: 195). In this context, the state was just "the 'central committee' of the Japanese industrial club, the public organ that determines and promulgates the high-level policies of Japanese monopoly capitalists"[176]. Feudal forces, which Inomata associated with the "civil and military bureaucracy", unable –due to lack of material basis- to stand against the conducts of large capital, "remained influential in the Japanese state only insofar as they had been incorporated into the bourgeoisie" (Hoston 1986: 195). Bourgeoisie and landowners, now in pursuit of similar goals, endeavored at a race to "extend the sphere of capitalist exploitation and to mitigate the intense contradictions that accompanied the rapid growth of Japanese capitalism" (Hoston 1986: 195).

Inomata argued that after WWI, world capitalism got unstable, and its contradictions intensified, as the concentration of capital and trustification proceeded (and would continue to do so) in each country. "The contradiction between the forces of production and the market intensified, so much so that (1) monopoly capitalism, via monopoly prices, increased the scissor price gap [the scissors crisis] of agriculture, (2) monopoly capitalism produced chronic unemployment, forcing [economic] rationalization, and (3) monopoly capitalism raised tariff barriers while vigorously dumping goods abroad"[177]. In this framework, internally, "the social crisis deepened, and class conflict intensified", while internationally, "such domestic tensions also served to intensify competition among the advanced capitalist countries." (Hoston 1986: 197).

Moreover, Inomata noticed that in 1920s, "'a transformation of production relations' was occurring in Japan: capitalism was moving toward its final form, a "state capitalist trust" (kokka shihon-shugi-teki torasuto)" (Hoston 1986:196). After the War, the country had entered the monopoly stage of capitalism, with industrial production and finance capital rising significantly, rapidly and anarchically. State capital, closely tied to the capital of several huge concerns assumed significant role (Hoston 1986). "State monopoly now predominated in transport, shipbuilding, armaments, and steel making, and in mining and heavy industry it was merged with the capital of giant concerns. Most major industries became cartelized, with bank or finance capital dominating the cartels." (Hoston 1986: 197).

With those contradictions in work, and with dependence (mainly for raw materials and for export markets) on other countries (among which, practically, China was the most important), it should be expected that Japanese economy would not flourish, while it will be

[176] As in Hoston (1986: 195).
[177] As in Hoston (1986: 196).

vulnerable to crisis and financial panics. As Inomata explains for example in his “Japanese Capitalism on the Verge of Decline (没落への転向期に立つ日本資本主義)” (1930), in order to avoid the disposal of excess capital (unlike the disposal of excess commodities) after the War, the state implemented inflationary policies (export incentives, protective tariffs, tax exemptions for capitalists, civil engineering projects and railroad construction, continued ban on gold exports etc.), while on the other hand, the world capitalism was at a phase of relative stabilization, as German and British capital has restored its competitiveness against Japanese capital, and the United States has also developed its export trade. Moreover, China assumed an anti-Japanese stance which sharpened the problems for Japanese economy (Yamamoto 1979). This situation, led to a fictitious economy and accumulation of excess capital, which exhausted the domestic market. The 1927 crisis, was but the result of such policies.

In this context, resistance from the proletariat, and the peasantry was inevitable to follow, that bourgeois circles, through the state, tried to control. On the other hand, capitalist forces, by pursuing a “cooperative line”, “tried to "rationalize" domestic industry with the support of the state through the merger of weak enterprises, the disposal of surplus capital, the conclusion of price agreements, and the formation of cartels and syndicates”, achieving only to “further exacerbate the concentration of capital and development of monopoly capitalism” (Hoston 1986: 198). “The entire effort of the finance capitalist bourgeoisie now, is concentrated on the organizational construction of a strong state capitalist trust”[178], Inomata wrote, as the merge of private with state capital, and its assimilation with state power increased (Hoston 1986).

The difference in the state’s economic role (which was always big for the state in Japan) therefore, between the Meiji state and the one that we find after WWI in Japan, was that the latter was based on monopoly capitalism. Inomata for example, found that many fields were under monopoly form, while “state capital comprise[d] 34 percent of all capital”, in the fields of mining, industry, and transportation, as of late 1928 (Hoston 1986: 199). Moreover, “state capital merged with private capital in other monopolies”, “established direct control over finance capital”, and “was a huge purchaser of commodities” (ibid). Its “control expanded, furthermore, at the expense of private monopoly capital, which declined relative to state capital” (ibid). “As a result of this increasingly intimate linkage between the state and finance capital, "it has become impossible to hide the state as an organ of class rule," Inomata claimed” (Hoston 1986:199). In this framework, state “used regulatory activity more and more openly to rescue capital from the ‘basic contradictions of capitalism.’” (Hoston 1986: 199). It did so in finance, and in the industrial sphere.

Simultaneously, Inomata argued “Japan [had] established itself decisively as an imperialist country ('in the modern sense') via the Sino-Japanese War”[179], and “after the growth of finance capital in World War I, it pursued the "typical policies of imperialism""[180] (Hoston 1986: 201). In this context, Japan, as a modern imperialist power, had to be capitalist, and had to “engage in aggressive policies abroad, possess power to struggle for a monopolist position in the world system, […] require warfare to maintain its expansionist and monopolist

[178] As in Hoston (1986: 198).

[179] As in Hoston (1986: 201).

[180] As Hoston (1986: 201) stresses: “The very notion of imperialism, Inomata argued, "implies mutual competition among advanced capitalist countries, and means the subjugation and exploitation of semi-civilized peoples and uncivilized peoples by such competitive countries."82 Competition such as this could only occur within an international framework. Thus, the world system itself had to be imperialist, as it was by 1894-1895,”.

position […and] "operate its own capital externally, as finance capital," as Japan did when it built the Seoul-Inchon and Seoul-Pusan railways in Korea" (Hoston 1986: 201)[181].

As already mentioned before, Inomata's analysis placed also great importance on China, as Japanese economic activity related to it was of a great scale, in both industrial and financial sectors. As Hoston (1986: 202) puts it,"[t]he nationalist revolution in China threatened the very existence of Japanese capitalism". Japanese bourgeoisie could not afford to lose the benefits of Chinese market, and to risk a slowdown of Japanese economic growth. Therefore, it had to "intervene desperately in China (although it was the military that was in fact the main political force here) and possibly occasion yet another world war, which would abet the decline of the entire world capitalist system" (Hoston 1986: 203).

Inomata thus, argued for the need of a proletariat revolution to fight against an "imperialist bourgeoisie". Japanese proletariat could find allies in the "colonial masses and those of semi-colonial countries,. . . as well as existing proletarian states", who opposed imperialism (Hoston 1986: 203).

Finally, the constant warfare, Inomata noted, "also generated 'rapid growth in armaments, along with militarization and financial difficulties,' which enabled the military to maintain an important role" (Hoston 1986: 191-2) in the state apparatus.

The Question of Manufacture - "Manufacture debate" (1933-4)

The so called "Manufacture debate" (began in 1933-4) concerned the location of Japan's manufacture period [proper] into the nation's historical schema. It took place mainly between Kōza-ha's Hattori Shisō, and Rōnō-ha's Tsuchiya Takao. "The point at issue in dispute was whether the industry of the pre-Meiji era had so far advanced as to the "Manufacture Stage" that precedes the "Modern Factory Stage" set in the theories of Marx and Lenin" (Tonomura 1998). Both scholars therefore (and a few more who got involved in this sub-debate), contested on whether late Edo period could be supported that represented the manufacture period proper, as described by Marx. The discussion involved historical research and theoretical argumentation. The debate was further continued after the War.

Hattori, conducting historical research on the country's economic development and periodization, argued that Japan had already attained this phase during the late *Tokugawa* years. He criticized his previous work, and that of both factions, that posed excessive importance on the role of external pressures for the transformation of the economy and its industrialization, overlooking the internal dynamics of Japanese economy itself.

Hattori had previously argued[182] that after the reopening of Japan to foreign interaction, "[t]he preexisting contradictions in Japan's feudal society were resolved under the new conditions provided by interaction with the West." (Hoston 1986: 102). According to his analysis "Japanese feudalism had been suffering from contradictions inherent in the feudal mode of production even before the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1854; but because of the abrupt end to the shogun's exclusionist policies coerced by the powers, Japanese feudalism

[181] While there were, within the world economy, national differences in the rates of the development of monopoly and finance capital, they could preclude a nation's being categorized as an imperialist power or not (Hoston 1986: 201).

[182] In his "A History of the Meiji Restoration" (1928)

began to decline" (Hoston 1986: 102). The Meiji Restoration therefore, cannot but be an incomplete bourgeois-democratic revolution, as "[b]ecause of the foreign pressures that galvanized it, then, the Meiji Restoration was a revolution from above pioneered not by a rising bourgeoisie, but by a class of warriors drawn from the old feudal structure of Tokugawa Japan. Hence the Restoration could not complete either the economic or political tasks that were accomplished by the "classic" bourgeois-democratic revolutions of Western Europe." (Hoston 1986: 103).

The Land reforms carried out by the Restoration government "did not 'carry out a decisive agrarian revolution'"; rather, […] ''reproduced feudal relations of exploitation between landowner and peasant based on large feudal landownership among new landlords, on the basis of modern landownership and tenant farmers.'" (Hoston 1986: 104). Those "new landlords" emerged from the increasing number of peasants losing their lands and becoming tenants-farmers, as rents grew, due also to the merging of lands, which became now possible.

In his article for the Kōza's Lectures entitled "'Revolution and Counter-revolution in the Meiji Restoration", and his essay "Methodological Problems in the History of the Restoration" (1933), Hattori though, came to the realization that his analysis underestimated Tokugawa's economy internal dynamics for development and change[183]. It can be argued that he had followed exactly the method that is often criticized today in the non-western world, i.e. he analyzed local development through accepting western[184] models and concepts, and using them to explain Japan's current position, and history, without questioning their assumptions. It was not the case that he rejected those as such however, he started to question their western interpretation.

In those texts hence, he argued that late Edo period was a "stage of relatively high-level development of early capitalism" (Hoston 1986: 106), as Japan already was experiencing high industrial development. There was a significant presence of machine industry, owned and managed by the shogun and the *daimyō*, which production was addressed also to the civilians (Hoston 1986). The production of consumer goods (and of the raw materials necessary for their production), Hattori claimed, was the main indicator for the detection of the manufacture area in the economy, as "[t]he production of labor implements, he claimed in opposition to views expressed by Tsuchiya and Hirano Yoshitarō, marked not the formation of the manufacture era, but its conclusion." (Hoston 1986: 113).

In this context, the late Edo period constituted "'the era of manufacture in the strict sense'[185] when 'manufacture was the predominant form taken by capitalist production,' according to Marx" (Hoston 1986: 107). He thus argued that "manufacture in the narrow Marxian sense (i.e., without machines) had already developed well before the Restoration", and that "first capitalist production occurred outside cities in rural areas" in industries such as

[183] "Hattori argued that to date Japanese Marxist economic historians had not considered Lenin's observations with respect to the late Tokugawa era. Even when they recognized in the bakumatsu the existence of domestic industry and the toiya-sei (putting-out system, Verlag system)—phenomena which are correlated with the early stages of capitalist production in Marxian economics—their theoretical significance for the indigenous development of capitalism in Japan was ignored" (Hoston 1986: 108).

[184] The term "western" is used here however, as Hattori refers also to Lenin's work, it should be mentioned that it is highly possible, as Linkhoeva (2020) points out, that for the Japanese of the time, Russia represented neither West nor East.

[185] Which according to Hattori lasted from the Tenpō period (1830-1844) to the second decade of the Meiji era (Hoston 1986).

metal refining, textiles, ceramics, and brewing of spirits (Hoston 1986: 106). This era became therefore the basis for the industrial revolution of the Meiji period (Hoston 1986).

According to Hattori, the late Edo period "saw feudal and capitalist elements in a transitional unity, on the basis of which stood manufacture"[186], and western pressures did not do more than just to accelerate the transformation of the economy and lead to "a spontaneous industrial revolution that Hattori dated in the late 1870s and 1880s." (Hoston 1986). It is interesting to stress here some common points with the latter claim of Hayami's of an "industrious revolution" during the Tokugawa era. While the latter's analysis and result differ substantially from Hattori's, we can see that both attribute a greater role to the Tokugawa economy and its rural areas.

Japan therefore, differed from its neighbors (China for example) in that respect, and that is why it could follow a different path. A path that began by the stage of "primitive accumulation", i.e the era of this industrial revolution. In this of course, the Meiji state took the lead and assumed crucial role.

Hattori also, stressed the importance of the development of the division of labor within Japanese society, which eventually transformed the labor power into a commodity, and which he saw as the "'decisive historical condition' of the manufacture period […] i.e., 'the process of primitive accumulation itself.'" (Hoston 1986: 112). Seen from this perspective, therefore, the result of the interaction with external capitalist nations [and markets], was nothing more than to accelerate a process already underway. Hattori, based on his reading of Capital, argued that "[t]he key prerequisite [for manufacture] was an internal division of labor propelled by commerce, which promoted production for exchange value rather than for use-value.", something that was already happening in late Tokugawa Japan (Hoston 1986: 114). "Thus, it was the development of the internal market that was critical for the manufacture period; the expansion of the world market, which Marx felt was premised on the manufacture period, Hattori claimed, simply 'accelerated greatly the internal division of labor in the society.'" (Hoston 1986: 114).

For arriving at these conclusions, Hatton embarked on "painfully detailed" examinations of manufacture and production processes in late Edo perio Japan, through which he believed that was able to demonstrate "the predominance of manufacture over small commodity production", but which he also saw as a task which he "himself acknowledged, too enormous for one scholar to achieve" (Hoston 1986: 109).

Tsuchiya Takao from his side, did agree with Hattori about the importance of internal dynamics in the process of economic development. He supported that "the prevailing understanding of Japanese-Western relations in terms of the schema "feudal Japan-capitalist Europe and America" was erroneous and should be abandoned" (Hoston 1986: 115). He did not however, agree with him on the designation of late Edo period as the manufacture era of Japan. To support his views he conducted as well historical research concerning production methods in Edo period Japan, while often questioned Hattori's findings.

Tsuchiya argued that before the machine system, there were three common forms of capitalist management: (1) handicraft industry, in which masters use hired laborers instead of or together with apprentices; (2) wholesaler-based cottage industry or capitalist domestic labor; and (3) manufacture. When the third form dominates over the first and second forms, it is the "Proper Manufacturing Era" according to him (Tonomura 1999).

[186] As in Hoston (1986: 109).

And while Tsuchiya acknowledged that the number of manufactures was not necessarily small during the period of Hattori's analysis, as could be seen in many examples, such as silk manufacturing, textile manufacturing, brewing, wax manufacturing, whale processing, money minting, and metal refining, he argued that only a few were of a large scale. In addition, the degree of division of labor in those was low. There were many micro-manufactures, and many of them had not yet subordinated their domestic labor to the external industry. The yarn and textile industry, which was considered to be the most advanced, had also seen considerable development of manufactures, but in general, the main form of industry has been the wholesaler-based cottage industry (Tonomura 1999: 162)

Moreover, while there existed indeed manufacture in some fields, Tsuchiya "raised the question of the true character of these particular enterprises", as for example "were more often private enterprises, but some were han owned and managed" (Hoston 1986: 117).

Hattori responded to Tsuchiya's claims, and among others argued that Tsuchiya "had misstated the forms of capitalist production" , as to separate "capitalist domestic industry from manufacture" was a mistake (ibid). "Citing Lenin, Hattori pointed out that although capitalist domestic industry could coexist alongside machine industry, it was most characteristic of the manufacture era" (ibid: 117).

Concerning now the issue of the "character" of those enterprises, Hattori claimed that what should be examined instead, was the organization of labor ("mode of exploitation") in them. In addition, Hattori extended his research, and among others, he "found evidence of the existence of "a large market, large enterprise, and large capital"—all of which were to be found only after the beginning of the manufacture period" (Hoston 1986: 118).

Tsuchiya as well extended further his research, but again could not agree with Hattori's thesis. Among other, he argued that "Hattori had not adequately examined shops that produced the instruments of labor themselves", that he had "failed to distinguish between the mechanization of production and that certain point to which manufacture developed", while he "emphasized the positive "hothouse" role of han enterprises, while neglecting their negative effects on Japanese development" (Hoston 1986: 118). Moreover, while Marx had indeed claimed that manufacture was initially limited to the domestic market (in England and France), he had not claimed this to be the case during the manufacture period proper (Hoston 1986: 118). Finally, Tsuchiya stressed that according to "The German Ideology" (1932), "the disintegration of feudal retainer groups and the spread of vagabonds in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, providing a large pool of free laborers, were a precondition for the establishment of manufacture" (Hoston 1986: 119).

Other critics of both Hattori's assertions and Tsuchiya'a analysis, came mainly from other Kōza-ha members[187], who directly or not, expressed their disagreement with his assertions. It should be mentioned however, that in doing so they discussed a range of subjects related to Meiji Restoration as well (Hoston 1986). Therefore, their related studies can be included in the wider framework of studies concerned with the character Japanese economy had assumed after the Restoration and its peculiar aspects, especially its particular form in Japan.

[187] "There were, of course, those in the Kōza-ha who looked favorably on Hattori's thesis. Aikawa Haruki and Kobayashi Ryōsei, for example, joined Hattori in countering Tsuchiya's criticisms" (Hoston 1986: 121).

Hoston (1986) stresses the "power" of Hirano Yoshitarō's critique, as it was mainly focused on theoretical issues. Hirano accused Tsuchiya for "crude empiricism", in trying to answer the question of domination or not of manufacture, either by looking at the number or quantity of specific examples (which were either way insignificant) or the "form of cooperation based on a division of labor'" (Hoston 1986: 122). He stressed that indicators of manufacture were "workshops that produced labor implements themselves" (ibid).

However, for Hattori, those would just proved the "transition from manufacture to large industry" (Hoston 1986: 122). Significance for the argument rested on the organization of labor and the development of a commodity economy, he claimed. Hattori saw that many Kōza-ha members could not see beyond the point where Japan's backwardness and difference in the developing progress as to the western world can be found, and hence, they were unable to notice development in other areas (Hoston 1986). "Even the unmistakably modern buds of capital and wage labor they stamp as feudalistic and Asiatic phenomena"[188] he stressed.

Hirano though went a step further, and introduced to the discussion the political aspects of development. He published an article according to which, "the objective character of the civil rights movement and its limitations were attributable to the special character and contradictions of the maturation of industrial development in Japan"[189]. Therefore, the development of Japanese economy should be regarded in relation to the political environment.

He brought up again the issue of the ownership. For him, the way by which the means of production are accumulated in the capitalists' hands was crucial. Crucial for the analysis of "powerful imbalance in changing relations of production— a large peculiarity in this country."[190], and consequently, the analysis of the current characteristics of the classes, i.e. an immature bourgeoisie and a proletariat. Therefore, it was crucial to study the elements that are "obstructing further development"[191] (Hoston 1986).

Hirano "indicated three basic models in the process of the evolution of industrial capital: '(1) from manufacture to factory industry; (2) from putting-out system industry to manufacture; and (3) from putting-out system industry to factory industry (omitting the change from handicrafts).'" (Hoston 1986: 123).

In this framework, Hirano "stressed the need to examine both the linkages among handicrafts, toiya-sei industry, and manufacture ("three basic patterns") and the conflict between the necessity for the three kinds of change indicated above on the one hand and elements impeding those processes on the other." (Hoston 1986: 123).

Conclusions

There is no question that the Debate is of great importance to the development of Japanese economic and social thought. The range of subjects related to Marxism, discussed

[188] As in Hoston (1986: 121).
[189] As in Hoston (1986: 122).
[190] As in Hoston (1986: 123).
[191] Such as the "'Asiatically backward' feudal system exploiting 'petty cultivating peasants,' and 'the domination of commercial capital and usury capital' that lived 'parasitically' off that feudal exploitation', as well as 'Japan's isolation from the world market' which 'denied Japan an important condition for the transformation of commercial to industrial capital'" (Hoston 1986: 123).

during the period of the Debate is extremely wide, and often it prefigured issues that would later become subjects of great debate among western Marxists scholars.

As Hoston (1984b: 45) notes, "Western Marxists have recognized that the work of Takahashi Kohachiro (Kōza-ha) and Uno Kōzo (closely identified with the Rōnō-ha) is more sophisticated than that of Western Marxists on such issues as value theory and patterns of economic development". Scolars like Uchida Yoshihiko (内田義彦, 1913-1989) developed their post-WWII economic thought, while being greatly affected by the contributions to the Debate[192].

One thing thus that the Debate proved, is that Japanese thinkers of the time were not passive receivers of western knowledge. Thinkers from both groups produced economic and historical analyses of high quality, studied Marxism in detail, and advanced their theories, in the context of their time.

Yasuba (1975: 74-5) argues as well, that the Kōza-ha model is quite similar to the Lewis, Fei-Ranis model of dualistic development. "It is interesting that Ranis and Fei claimed that the unlimited supply phase of their model applied to Japan before World War I, exactly the same period as the formative period of "peculiarly Japanese" industrial capitalism according to Yamada".

The Debate became the reason of important historical analysis (and data collection). Thinkers engaging in the Debate put great efforts in conducting historical research about the Japanese economy, polity and society. Their analysis became a great source of historical data. Even if we accept Walker's (2016: 31) claim that "[w]hat is important to understand about the background in historical circumstances to the debate on Japanese capitalism is the crucial point that the facts were not what was fundamentally in question", it cannot be refuted that those scholars contributed significantly to the study of Japan's economic history.

The studies about the location of the Asiatic mode of Production in Japanese history contributed to the discussions concerning the universality of Marxist theory, and offered material for later relevant discussions, as the issue was re-studied during the years after the WWII. In this context as well, having explained the course of development in Japan, Japanese scholars often found themselves very close to doubting the assumption of Marx's unilinear historical route of development.

Hoston (1986) also, finds that the Japanese scholars engaged in this Debate developed the concepts of "Instrumentals" (Rōnō) and "Structuralist" (Kōza) approaches to the state, half a century before their western counterparts. Their analysis on the state structure and role in the economy was a great part of the Debate, as Japanese capitalist development, current stage and Imperialist behavior could only be explained with reference to such analysis.

In the case of the "Manufcture debate", as Hoston (1986: 109-10) notes, "there were the larger but most significant issues that Western scholars approached with respect to Western Europe only much later. How was one to understand realistically the relationship between feudalism and capitalism during the era of the 'transition'? Do not feudalistic and capitalistic forms coexist for some time? And what is the impact of external forces like international trade on the transition to capitalism: are they preconditions or merely features that tend to accompany the indigenous growth of capitalism? How do such factors help to distinguish the Japanese experience from the Western European one—or from the fate of the remainder of a seemingly stagnant, passive Asia?"

[192] See more: Yamada, T. (2022). The Origin and Development of Uchida's Social Science. In: Civil Society and Social Science in Yoshihiko Uchida. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1138-5_2.

The Debate was also linked to broader discussions in Japanese academia, addressing issues related to the Marxist theory and its cohesion, such as the debate on the labor theory of value. It thus contributed to the advancement of economic studies in Japan, in general.

A point worth of mention is as well, that the scholars did not detach themselves, and their analysis from the reality of their times. They used actual examples in their studies, sometimes even including in their argumentation names of important contemporary figures. Walker (2016: 31) furthermore notes, that "[t]he continuity of the debate on Japanese capitalism served as a background against which the postwar themes of historiography in Japan were developed".

Chapter III

Morality in Marxism

While the analyses comprising the Debate can be considered as the highest example of theoretical inquiry by preWWII Japanese Marxists, there were other aspects of Marxism that concerned deeply many Japanese Marxists thinkers. One among those was morality.

Generally regarded, a question arises: do questions of moral context belong to economics? Mainstream economics would obviously answer negatively. Moral issues are irrelevant to the subject of economic science, and any attempt to include moral judgments in an economic analysis represents nothing more than a normative statement which renders the analysis unscientific.

When questions of moral standards of economic agents are posed for example, they are immediately rejected. Take the case of capitalists and the social responsibilities of business. Milton Friedman (1912-2006) -the "free market-champion" as he is sometimes called- is almost always invoked to remind us that the social duty of a capitalist is no other than to seek profits. Capitalists (and potentially any rational individual –homo economicus-, as this title is attainable by anyone in a capitalist world according to the mainstream economist), through competition, seek profits and in the process, the economy develops and everyone end up better as time goes on. Capitalists, greedy individuals as they are assumed by mainstream economics, should not be concerned with moral judgments. Those are the subject of the law makers, who set the rules of how society should function.

The same goes for any rational individual –homo economicus-. The economist James McGill Buchanan (1919-2013) argued in 1975 that "*E*ach person seeks mastery over a world

of slaves,"[193]. The economist Branko Milanovic restricts the rejection of any moral standards to just the sphere of economics[194]:

> "I am thus intellectually sympathetic to the view that personal morality exists only outside economics or capitalism. I might like the guys who are nice and ethical, but when it comes to economics I really do not expect them to be so. I even very much doubt when they claim they are. I tend to see them as hypocritical. This is not in their job description. […] even when I consciously do not play by the rules […] I do not have to feel bad about it. It is the job of the referee to catch me and punish me. In other words, there is no internal ethical mechanism to stop me."

In any case, the answer of mainstream economics is clear. If we have already then an answer, as a discipline, why the morality question keeps arising constantly in economics? Why it is that every time something "unexpected" disrupts our societies (and thus our economies and economic indicators), this question becomes all the more relevant?

"Are there any limits to the Market?" asks for example the political philosopher Michael Sandel through his 2012 book "What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets"[195]. The murder of George Floyd in the US, in May 2020, brought back the issue of racism as a tool for economic development. "Racism is profitable. Could we have another system that generates as much economic activity if we didn't have racism? […] It's an immoral approach, which is why we need to rethink how we define economics in general.", claims the scholar Darrick Hamilton[196]. More general non-incidental issues, keep the discussion alive: the growing inequalities and the concentration of wealth in a small proportion of the population (see for example Thomas Piketty's work[197]), the participation of women in economics and economy, the outbreak of economic crisis, like the 2008 one, caused by an uncontrollable financial system, or the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences for the economy. And issues as such will continue to pose, among other issues the question of morality in economics. Like they did in the past.

In this chapter therefore, a tiny portion of such discussions of the past is presented briefly; how the Japanese Marxist thinkers of the period under study dealt with questions of morality?

The question of the role of morality in economics was already a subject of discussion in 1920s Japan. In an article entitled "Economics and Morality" (1927), the economist Kinji Tajima (欽司 田島, 1867-1934) affirms that the issue of combining economics with morality was relevant in early 20th century Japan. The conclusion, to which he arrives in that respect, is the following:

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[193] In his 1975 book, The Limits of Liberty. See: https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/meet-the-economist-behind-the-one-percents-stealth-takeover-of-america

[194] See: https://evonomics.com/role-of-morality-in-a-capitalist-economy/

[195] Sandel, M., J. (2012) What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

[196] See: https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/how-americas-economy-runs-on-racism

[197] Piketty, T. (2014). Capital in the twenty-first century. Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

> "Hence, I am convinced, the grounds on which man forms a home, or organizes a society or a local community, or even a state, to which authority he willingly submits himself, and the interests of which he strives to support and promote by his steadfast and faithful conduct or by his productive and industrial labour, do not lie in the annihilation of his Self, i.e. in non-egoism, but they are based upon the spontaneity of human nature in his efforts to foster his minor-ego to become a major-ego. To view these facts in the light of morality, it is the expansion of the minor-good to the major-good. To observe them in the light of economics, that is nothing else but the furerance of the minor-interest to the major-interest. Thus the conclusion we arrived at is, Morality and Economics, reciprocally acting or depending upon each other, set our society in motion to its best advantage and are never incompatible with each other" (Kinji 1927: 26)

Kinji begins by asking what makes human the "noblest being in the universe" ("the lord of creation"). He finds the answer in Confucian teachings[198] (through invocation of thinkers like Hsun Zhu): "what makes man lord of creation or the noblest being in the universe lies in the fact that he has a sense of decorum and morality, both of which are outgrowths of one and the same Self" (p. 4). According to him, ethical conduct/morality does not correspond to selflessness i.e. "non-egoism"; "I assert therefore that all our moral actions ought to be engendered out of Egoistic grounds. In other words, they ought invariably to be conformable to the spontaneous desire of our Ego." (Kinji 1927: 6)[199].

Individualism became one of the issues that strongly concerned the intellectual circles during this turbulent period[200]. It "emerged suddenly as a major preoccupation in Japanese discourse late in the Meiji era (1868-1912), and it flourished during the Taishō era (1912-1926);" (Nolte 1984: 667). And while for Kinji, individualism (egoism) was associated with moral action, the reverse was often highlighted by many thinkers of the time, who worried about the social consequences of its propagation and spreading.

Individualism was however, only an aspect of the societal change that Japan undergone at the time. As Harootunian (1996) points out, the "commodity culture" that developed in the urban areas, was accompanied by concerns and doubts[201] about the consequences it had (and would have) on society. He gives an example: "Aono Suekichi, a social critic, reported that salary men in the early 1930s were beginning to show signs of "psychological unhappiness" because they could not satisfy their desire for consumption" (ibid p.83)[202].

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[198] He mentions also, Aristotle's thesis on man being a political animal.

[199] He explains: "From what has been stated, I believe, the reason why the ancient sages and wise men chose righteousness in preference to their lives, or why in their eyes the Law of Humanity carried more weight than worldly fortunes is quite obvious. That is to say, it was only that they acted in compliance with their predilection, or it was simply because they had no hesitation in sacrificing lesser gratifications for greater ones." (Kinji 1927: 7).

[200] As Nolte (1984: 671) stresses, "[b]efore the Meiji Restoration the concept of the individual hardly existed-proper behavior was defined by class status and gender.".

[201] Doubts are often stressed by other scholars as well. See for example Nolte (1984: 667). She discusses the "profound doubt about the meaning of individual experience" that "New experiences and ideas" caused.

[202] The point that Jain (2020:14) makes, in regard to the issue of mass consumption is interesting: "Marx noted that one positive feature of capitalism was that under it there was tremendous increase

Japan was developing in a society of mass consumption, culture and politics, which posed major challenges and uncertainties[203]. Harootunian (1996, p.80;) talks about a "secondary discourse" of "everydayness" that arose in response to such concerns:

> **"**It was precisely this dread of mass culture and consumption (not to mention the spectre of mass politics) and its promise to unhinge older, fixed social relationships and subjectivities that led to the formation of a secondary discourse on the social that aimed at representing the essence of society, by appealing to a timeless culture or figure of community, to perform a virtual poeticizing of everydayness in order to negate the divisions, fragmentation and conflict that had instituted society in Japan. Both the left and the right participated in this secondary discourse on the social: Marxists sought to construct a conception of modernity rooted in an analysis of everyday life that would avoid reducing all historical epochs to capital yet might still be capable of retaining it as a moment in a historical larger process whose outcome was in the future. For conservatives, what Raymond Williams called "modernists against modernity", the task was to locate a space whose discovery would fulfil heroic cultural models outside of history itself. This move entailed finding a refuge from what many perceived as an inauthentic social life of capitalism for a ground of authenticity capable of establishing a dimension of society without history within the heart of historical society, or, as Zizek was to describe it later, "capitalism without capitalism"." […] "Yet with both the left and the right the task was to overcome the division, disunity and fragmentation which contemporary society was experiencing." [Harootunian 1996:]

This "dread of mass culture and consumption" thus, together with signs of corruption in the state and businesses, displacement, impoverishment and unrest in groups of population signaled that something was off in Japanese society. And it was Marxism indeed that provided an explanation to the thinkers of the time of the causes behind those phenomena, as well as a path to follow in order to connect (for some again) with what was humane[204].

Brivio (2009: 71) notices that "it is with the introduction of Marxism that the shift from the historicizing of the mere human existence towards a historicizing of 'society' as a whole took place". Marxist thinkers, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, started

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in human desires for material goods in contrast with pre-capitalist societies in which people felt relatively content if a small number of basic desires were fulfilled. The capitalist system, however, could not satisfy these desires for the greater part of humanity. Socialism is as good as capitalism with respect to its role in increasing desires and better than capitalism with respect to satisfying these desires. Why this hedonistic value underlying the socialist utopia has never been seriously discussed is quite puzzling. The importance of this hedonistic value lies in its contradiction with the environmental values".

[203] Estrangement, loneliness were also plaguing Japanese society. Characteristically, in a series that the famous writer Natsume Sōseki "wrote for a popular Tokyo newspaper during 1912–1913, "Sōseki depicted the plight of the modern individual as one of painful loneliness and helplessness" (Kodera 1987, 6). He saw egoism as the source of the plight, and has Ichirō, the hero of the serially appearing novel Wayfarer, conclude that "there is no bridge leading from one man to another; loneliness, loneliness, thou [are] mine home" (Kodera 1987: 6)" [*Watsuji Tetsurō*. (2019, November 27). The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/watsuji-tetsuro/].

[204] Or even Japanese. See next chapter.

to analyze Japanese society more systematically during those years. Moreover, Brivio (2009: 74) argues that when Fukumoto Kazuo returned from Germany (in 1924), he introduced to Japanese Marxists "Marxist Philosophy", and that through his knowledge of the ideas of thinkers like Georg Lukács (1885-1971), Karl Korsch (1886-1961) and Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) a new "humanistic" trend appeared in Japanese Marxism that strongly appealed to "the sensibility of the young Marxists such as Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun", but also to that of its critics, such as Watsuji Tetsujirō[205].

As has been already pointed out, the notion of economics in Japan entailed often a moral aspect, coming from the country's Confucian tradition. Buddhist teachings also seems to have their role to play. Moreover, the fact that a "sense of the intercourse between literature, philosophy, politics, and economics was typical of the intellectual life of their time, bewildering though it may be to readers in today's age of advanced specialization" (Nolte 1984: 669) is also important in that aspect. It is also interesting to note again that the intellectuals of the time often linked scholarship with political practice. Taking into consideration all that, it is evident that the economic thinkers of the time developed their ideas in a framework which allowed the emergence of different and multifaceted interpretations and proposals.

This chapter starts thus by giving the general framework into which the Japanese Marxist thinkers of the time developed their ideas. A brief presentation of the "moral tradition" in Japan was already given in the introductory chapter, and as such no further mention will be included here. However, it is deemed helpful to illustrate briefly, how morality was part of the economic thought, from the Edo period onwards. In addition, a short overview of the issue of whether Marx's work contains moral argumentation is given.

The question of whether Marx and Engels engage in a moral critique of capitalism is always relevant and simultaneously, impossible to answer. The dead do not speak. However, unanswered questions leave room for speculation, for different approaches and interpretations, which can offer a richer and more diverse thematology for the historian of (economic) thought, to reflect upon, when she/he tries to look at what has been discussed in the past. Benefiting from this fact, this chapter looks at how the Japanese thinkers of the time, interested in Marxism, saw questions related to moral issues, and used moral argumentation.

Finally, a section focusing on Kawakami Hajime, who is the main figure of this chapter, follows together with concluding remarks.

Morality in Japanese economic thought

As has been already briefly discussed (see Appendix I), Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism shaped the way Japanese people perceived reality. Their influence thus, could not but be apparent in the economic thought as well. And while Shinto's role can be characterized as secondary (and mainly through its extension to politics), the roles of Buddhism and Confucianism were clearly much more significant in the expression of economic ideas, even during the modern period.

[205] Watsuji, in the framework discussed here, developed his theory of social interconnectedness.

As mentioned above, while economics is often considered, all the more by mainstream economists, as a value free science, it is true that the degree to which something like that was the case during the past (e.g. a century ago) was considerably much smaller, and especially, when the Japanese economic and intellectual tradition is considered. Here, some examples of economics being interwoven with moral argumentation from the pre- to modern period are briefly presented. This was the "tradition" inherited by the scholars under study, and it is important to be taken into account, as continuity (even if slight) may be noticed.

While discussing some of the economic ideas expressed during the late Edo, Meiji and Taishō periods it is also, deemed important to very briefly present the development of economics as such, at those years, in Japan. I will therefore, mention in each section where economic inquiry stand in Japan during a specific time, and then, introduce briefly the thought of a main figure of that period. I should note that this section is mostly based on secondary bibliography, and not much on personal original work, as it presents the most common examples of economic thinkers who used moral argumentation in their works.

Edo period (1603-1867)

It can be argued that until the Meiji period, economic ideas in Japan were expressed mainly by Confucian scholars, in the context of their recommendation of practices for good governance by the benevolent ruler. During the Edo years, we have scholars like Ogyū Sorai (荻生 徂徠, 1666-1728), Dazai Shundai (太宰春台, 1680-1747) or Arai Hakuseki (新井 白石, 1657-1725), who discussed in their writings and lectures more or less general economic issues, and who however, included such remarks in their greater oeuvre. It should be noted that most of these scholars, did not seek change or progress through their ideas, but a way to bring about or maintain stability and harmony in the society.

On the other side, Edo period scholars, witnessing the development of a commercial and monetary economy, under the general peace of the Tokugawa years, had to incorporate those new trends into their analysis and intellectual outputs, so to keep up with their times, produce useful guides for rulers and society, explain current conditions or even propose solutions to contemporary problems.

In the Confucian tradition, profit-seeking was not a virtue. However, we can find scholars who started to accept it, as long as it was aimed at improving the well-being of the people, and bring harmony to the society. Moreover, as Prof. Nishioka Mikio (2018: 69) notes: "It was during the Tokugawa period when the problem that linked happiness to the economy first appeared in Japan". Those thinkers dealt with issues such as commercialization, poverty, which was considered a factor of social instability, money and so on, and they often had to adapt their views to the conditions prevailing in the real economy.

Among those thinkers, Dazai Shundai (太宰 春台, 1680-1747) can be regarded as one of the most progressive thinkers, when it comes to economic thinking, during the Edo years. Dazai is often regarded as one of the first to use the term "keizai (経済)" for economics. In his Keizai Roku (経済錄, Economic Annals), he explained the term and its meaning.

> "To govern the whole nation under heaven is keizai. It is the virtue of ruling society and relieving the sufferings of the people. Kei is wise

> statesmanship (keirin)…. Kei literally means 'to control a thread'. The warp of a piece of material is called kei and the woof, i. When a weaving woman makes silk cloth, she first prepares the warp…and then she weaves in the woof. Kei is also 'management' [or 'construction'] (keiei)…. When you construct a royal palace, you must first make a plan of the whole, and then you carry out the plan. This is kei.
>
> Sai means the virtue of salvation (saidō). This may also be read wataru, and literally means 'to carry someone across a river to the farther bank'…. It is also the virtue of bringing relief (kyūsai), which may be read sukuu, and means 'to relieve people of their sufferings'. Moreover, it may be interpreted as meaning 'accomplishment' or 'bringing to fruition'. Therefore the term [keizai] has many meanings, but the essential point of those meanings is simply this: in short, to manage affairs and to bring these affairs to a successful conclusion." (Keizai Roku, 1729)[206]

For Dazai, economics was a fundamental element of politics and was aimed at governing-administering the nation and the word, and relieving the people from their sufferings. Their main usage is in the management of affairs and the successful completion of those affairs.

Dazai recognized the unstoppable course of the development of commerce city-centered economy, which contrasted with traditional rural areas, a contradiction which was becoming more and more obvious and problematic. In his Keizai Roku, he saw the rural economy as a key sector of the economy, and stressed the importance of the protection of the samurai class (like many other scholars of his time did), he recognized also however - something that differentiates him from many of his predecessors and contemporaries-, the reality of a monetirized trade-based economy (Morris-Suzuki 1989). For this reason, he proposed the adoption of a system of domain monopolies, where the domain would focus on the sale of specific local products, as an opportunity for local development. It should be noted, that support for trade expansion did not imply support for commercial profit seeking. On the contrary, one of the advantages of such domain monopolies, he argued, would be that they could limit the ability of merchants to make a fortune with the profits of trade (ibid).

Dazai often stressed the importance of morality in economic endeavors. For Dazai, the role of the scholar (when it comes to political economy) was to propose policies according to the "the way of the ancient kings" (Najita 1972). To provide the rulers with political and economic policies, in order to help them in the state management and relief of the people.

The main figure although, when it comes to the combination of economics and ethics, of the late Edo period was Ninomiya Sontoku (二宮尊徳, 1787-1856). Ninomiya, who was almost forgotten after the war, to be reborn in public conscientiousness during the last decades, is a shining example of what is discussed here. He was an agrarian reformer of the Edo period, and in the form (as a statue) of a young boy carrying a bundle of firewood on his back while reading a book, is today one of the well known figures in Japan.

He devoted his life to the restoration of his house and lands, and then, of villages and areas in decline. Although he did not receive formal education during his childhood, he

[206] As in in Morris-Suzuki (1989, 11)

studied the classics on his own, and tried to put what he thought to be the essence of those teachings into practice. His contributions left their mark on both rural areas and rural life, and ultimately on Japanese intellectual and economic thought.

It is often mentioned that his thinking combined aspects of the traditions of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Typically, he used to say that his teaching mixed the three, in a ratio of half, one quarter and one quarter respectively (McKenzie 2003). According to Ninomiya, Shinto was the Way that takes care of the foundations of the country, Confucianism was the Way that takes care of the administration of the country and Buddhism was the Way that takes care of the administration of the mind (ibid). Ninomiya tried to extract the essence of each of those teachings, their importance to humanity.

In this framework, he developed a theory of economic practice based on ethics, which is called "theory of moral reciprocation (報 徳 思想)". He believed that we should be grateful to our parents, spouses and siblings, as well as to nature for the kindness-favor we receive and that we should act in return for them. The benefits of the heavens, the people and the earth must be repaid, he believed, for the country to be peaceful and prosperous. So this could be achieved through the four following principles: honesty/sincerity (至誠), diligence (勤 労), budgeting within one's means (分 度) and making concessions/giving back (推 譲) (Nippon 2019). So if people acted collectively and with gratitude, a "true society" would emerge, he argued, in which kindness would prevail.

What Ninomiya was also trying to convey, was the self-improvement of individuals for the common good. It could be argued that it was as well, the removal from a strong relationship of dependence of the rural population on the authorities, and its empowerment. For this for example, he placed special attention to planning. He encouraged farmers to collect statistics and records of their production and helped them make the necessary calculations (ibid). Thus, he said, they could calculate quite accurately, their average annual income, as well as budget their expenses accordingly. At the same time, in a community which provided for emergencies (through credit unions for example), agricultural activity could take on a more stable, independent and efficient form. And since the well-being of each individual was linked to that of the community, the suffering of some, if not helped in times of distress, would ultimately affect the lives of others and hold back the progress of all. That is why Ninomiya stressed the importance of providing mutual assistance within the community. He promoted voluntary credit unions for just that purpose. It is a fact that most of Ninomiya's ideas are not considered original. Their importance, however, lies in the practical application and the extent to which Ninomiya gave them.

Meiji Period (1868-1912)

After the arrival of the "Black Ships" (1853) and the beginning of the wider opening of the country, the first thinkers were sent to study abroad, in the West and, among other things, come in direct contact with Western economic thought-tradition. Nishi Amane (西 周, 1829-97) and Tsuda Mamichi (津田 真道, 1829-1903) were among the first to experience this, in 1863. They studied at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, under Simon Vissering (1818-88) in subjects such as natural, international and constitutional law, economics and statistics. With their return, they published a significant part of their notes, and (partial)

translations of Western texts. However, it seems that the economic theory course they had attended was not the center of their interest.

The Meiji period of course, was characterized, among others, by the Bunmei Kaika (文明開化, civilization and enlightenment) movement, where figures such as Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤 諭吉, 1835-1901) and Amane played an important role in the thinking of the time. More young (mainly) people were being sent to Europe and America for studies. Economic introductory and general textbooks were introduced, often partially translated, accompanied by commentaries or as chapters in original works[207]. Along with modernizing voices, some more conservative figures can also be found. Sada Kaiseki (佐田 介石, 1818-82) for example, warned that the introduction of products and technologies would lead to poverty those living by traditional means (Steele 2007)[208].

As has been already discussed, from the middle of the period on, the focus was gradually shifted to the study of specific Western economic theories. Towards the end of the century, there was an increased interest among the thinkers of the time who dealt with economics, in the German historical school. Neoclassical economics were of course also introduced, but their influence seems limited. The field of finance and business was also one which we see to be of interest to some of the thinkers of the time. One of the most important figures of the period was Tokuzō Fukuda (福田 徳三 , 1874-1930), who developed his own theory of welfare economics. Moreover, already at the end of the Meiji period we can find interest in the Marxist work, and in anarchism.

In 1902 though, Yetaro Kinosita still noted that Japanese scholars could not overcome their "intellectual tradition" and as such, substantial economic research has not much progressed:

> "During the last few decades, numbers of Japanese students have studied in the universities of Europe and America , but their favored studies have been medicine, jurisprudence , metaphysical philosophy , or branches of the physical sciences . The study of economics has not received the share of their attention which it deserved. The cause of this may be, in part, that the word economy suggests to the Oriental mind only greed and parsimony. Many Japanese students are sensible of this bias. The politico - ethical teachings of Confucius and of Mencius , and the doctrine of Buddhism which has had so vast an influence in shaping the minds of the people of the Orient, do not favor, if they are not actually hostile to, the development of economic science as such. With these prejudices and misconceptions of economic science, the ambitious minds of the young Japanese have tended to seek knowledge in all other branches of western learning, and have overlooked that most important part of political science - economics. […] But economics is the youngest of all the sciences in Japan, and no Japanese economist of note has yet appeared. It can be said that here is no classical work of economic literature in the language of

[207] For more see chaper I.

[208] Another example of opposition to modernization efforts was Taoka Reiun (1870-1912), who through his essays entitled "Hibunmeiron", rejected the 19th century western notion of civilization as progress. For more see: Loftus, R. (1985). The Inversion of Progress. Taoka Reiun's Hibunmeiron. Monumenta Nipponica, 40(2), 191–208. https://doi.org/10.2307/2384719

> Japan, except a few translations from European languages. Japan is virgin soil for the study and development of economic science." (Kinosita 1902: p.7)

In this context, apart from the academic and activist circles, people who engaged, who were active in the "real economy", like the businessman Shibusawa Eiichi (渋沢 栄一 , 1840-1931), developed their own approach to economics and economic practices.

Shibusawa, the "father of Japanese capitalism" as he is often called, with Confucius' "Analects" as his guide, devoted himself to the founding and support of hundreds of businesses and organizations in the country, laying the foundations of Japanese business life. He established and participated in hundreds of joint stock companies in Japan and advocated their establishment in order to serve the public interest. Among others, he organized the establishment and management of the First National Bank (Dai-Ichi Kangyō Bank, now part of Mizuho Bank), he co-founded the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and supported the Tokyo School of Commerce (forerunner of Hitotsubashi University), and the Japan Women's University (as a supporter of women's education). It can be argued hence that he pulled the Japanese business sector by hand, throughout the Meiji period.

Shibusawa had an active role as a mediator and supporter of business activity in Japan, and went to great efforts to promote business mentality throughout the country. He developed a theory of "unity of morality and economics", which sought to combine Confucian thought with capitalist organization (Confucianism with the abacus). His theory of ethical management, his ethical capitalism -the Gapponshugi as it is often called-, was a theory where the interest of society as a whole must take precedence in decision making processes of an entrepreneur (something similar to the corporate social responsibility discussed today):

> "The idea of advancing enterprises by assembling the most appropriate human and capital resources with the purpose and objective of pursuing the public interest" (Kimura 2017, 129–130)[209].

Shibusawa himself, encouraged commercial enterprises to put the public-national interest before their financial returns. He advocated that one should behave ethically, no matter what the consequences in the market, and often referred to the importance of social change, where everyone with practical skills and abilities could rise in the social ladder. He did recognize the role of profits as motivators to economic activity however, he claimed that without a positive impact on the society any efforts would be futile in the long run. Interest in Shibusawa is increasing during the recent years[210].

Taishō (1912-1926) – early Shōwa (1926-1989) periods

As has been already discussed, the Taishō period saw the gradual shift of interest to Marxism, which continued and intensified during the first years of the Shōwa period, when

[209] Quoted in Sagers (2018, 16)

[210] Two recent publications are : Sagers, H., J. (2018) Confucian Capitalism: Shibusawa Eiichi, Business Ethics, and Economic Development in Meiji Japan . Palgrave Studies in Economic History, Palgrave Macmillan. And Shimada, M., & Narum, P. (2017). The entrepreneur who built modern Japan : Shibusawa Eiichi (First edition.). Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture.

the most detailed expression of pre-war Japanese Marxist thought, the "Debate on Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義論争 – *Nihon Shihonshugi Ronsō*)"[211], broke out. By 1935, Marxist thought had been suppressed by the state, which was heading towards authoritarianism and the WWII.

The latest years of the Meiji period (especially after the High Treason Incident of 1910-1), found left-wing circles going through the so-called "winter period", from which they came out however, after the Russian Revolution, which breathed new life into the study of Marxism in the country. Simultaneously, the social unrest that characterized the three pre-WWII decades, led many scholars to seek explanations in the Marxist tradition.

Marxist bibliography expanded significantly[212] in the period 1919-27, and turned to the masses and the popularization of Marxist ideas towards the end of the 1920s, culminating in the publication of the "Collected Works of Marx and Engels (マルクス・エンゲルス全集)" in 1928. In 1922, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was founded[213], and many scholars of Marxism of the time gathered around it.

Under those circumstances, many figures emerged, in fields such as literature, philosophy, politics and economics, who found in Marxist theory a refuge through which they could make sense of the material (and intellectual) conditions around them and simultaneously, be critical of them. Some thinkers tried to reconcile Marxism with long established local traditions of thought. Kawakami Hajime (discussed below) is the most well known example. Seno'o Girō (妹尾義郎, 1889-1961), the Buddhist who tried to combine Buddhist teaching with Marxism is another one[214].

At this point, it is worth of mention that Hein (1998) notice a change in the methodology adopted by the scholars that followed Kawakami's generation. As she (1998: 397-8) notes, thinkers like Ouchi Hyoe or Arisawa Hiromi, Sakisaka Itsurō:

> "were intellectually comfortable with a much smaller role for individual morality in the rules governing social and economic interaction than was Kawakami. […] They saw no morality in refraining from the rough-and-tumble worlds of politics and policymaking, in sharp contrast to the generation before them. They also saw modern social science as a tool for all people, not an alien Western concept. This group of economists also preferred comparative research to moral philosophizing. […] Rather than openly champion morality, these men celebrated method.".

They found it more efficient to argue on the basis of right and suitable policies, through a "technocratic, universalistic, and rationalist" base. Despite this though, "Their scientific commitment to comparative method was still embedded within a moral vision of a

[211] See chapter II.
[212] See Chaper I.
[213] Two years later it was dissolved and reestablished in 1926, without however many important figures.
[214] For more on Seno'o Girō see: Large, S., S. (1987). Buddhism, Socialism, and Protest in Prewar Japan: The Career of Seno'o Girō. Modern Asian Studies, 21, pp 153-171 doi:10.1017/S0026749X00008015 , and Shields, J. (2012) "A Blueprint for Buddhist Revolution: The Radical Buddhism of Seno'o Girō (1889–1961) and the Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism." Japanese Journal of Religious Studies p. 333-351.

good society,[…] their underlying moral vision combined with social science technique provided a platform from which they could critique the West as well as Japan." (ibid: 398).

The left women's movement is also worth mentioning here. Women like Yamakawa Kikue (山川菊栄, 1890-1980), Fukuda Hideko (福田 英子, 1865-1927) and Itō Noe (伊藤 野枝, 1895-1923) participated in the various socialist movements of the time, and wrote in the related press. In 1921, the Sekirankai (赤 瀾 会 - Red Wave Union) was established. It was an organization by women which, condemned capitalism and was concerned with contemporary socioeconomic problems.

In this framework, if we accept that Marxism offers space for a moral critique of capitalism, where injustice persists, in a system based on exploitation of the alienated workers, it is interesting to see what approaches can be found from the Japanese Marxist scholars of the time. Here, Kawakami Hajime is used as the main example, and through the study of some of his views, other figures and their ideas are briefly mentioned as well. But before their examination, it is useful to look briefly at how Marxism can be connected to moral argumentation.

In Marx

Did Marx resort to moral argumentation when attacking capitalism? As the famous anecdote goes, the German philosopher Karl Vorländer (1860-1928) has said that, "[t]he moment anyone started to talk to Marx about morality, he would roar with laughter." (Morgan 2006: 391). It is not the aim of this section to argue on whether Marxism makes use of moral argumentative on not. As said before, this is in the eye of the beholder. Taking that into consideration thus, some opinions on the issue follow.

As Jain (2020: 8) argues:

> "An important implication of historical materialism is that notions of right and wrong, good and evil, depend on the economic structure (substructure) of the society; and these notions change with the changes in the substructure. There are no absolute normative standards[215] applicable across epochs. Historical materialism per se merely propounds the law of progression of history and consequently cannot have any implications regarding the normative character of the progression."

For Marx, "[t]he mode of production of material life […] conditions the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life" (Jain 2020: 7). Moral norms are nothing more than expressions of existing material and production conditions, and in the case of the capitalist society, those are "imposed/sponsored" by the ruling class, i.e. the capitalist/bourgeois one, as definite forms of social consciousness emerge in each stage of development of productive forces and relations of production.

In "Anti-Dühring" Engels states accordingly:

[215] Jain (2020: 11) finds two normative non-relativistic points in Marx, namely "that development of productive forces is good; and elimination of exploitation is good.".

> "We therefore reject every attempt to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and for ever immutable ethical law on the pretext that the moral world, too, has its permanent principles which stand above history and the differences between nations. We maintain on the contrary that all moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time. And as society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms, morality has always been class morality; it has either justified the domination and the interests of the ruling class, or ever since the oppressed class became powerful enough, it has represented its indignation against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed. That in this process there has on the whole been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, no one will doubt. But we have not yet passed beyond class morality. A really human morality which stands above class antagonisms and above any recollection of them becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class antagonisms but has even forgotten them in practical life."[216].

Marx often expressed disdain for the content of notions such as justice and morality. They were like idle, hollow "contemporary" constructions, blurring reality. Marx claimed for example, that he did not assert that his findings about the process of the production of surplus value, in the capitalist mode of production, proved the existence of injustice.

> "At any rate, in my presentation even, "profit on capital" is in actual fact not "a deduction from, or robbery of, the worker". On the contrary, I depict the capitalist as the necessary functionary of capitalist production and demonstrate at great length that he not only "deducts" or "robs" but enforces the production of surplus value, thus first helping to create what is to be deducted; what is more, I demonstrate in detail that even if only equivalents were exchanged in the exchange of commodities, the capitalist—as soon as he pays the worker the real value of his labour-power—would have every right, i.e. such right as corresponds to this mode of production, to surplus-value. But all this does not make "profit on capital" the "constitutive" element of value but only proves that the value not "constituted" by the labour of the capitalist conceals a portion which he can appropriate "legally", i.e. without infringing the law corresponding to the exchange of commodities." [MECW, Vol24, p 535]

The system was a just system, with regard to the corresponding mode of production.

Marx's and Engels' relativization and degradation of the notion of justice to the specific conditions of the existing forces of production –"the capitalist […]earns surplus value with full right, i.e., the right corresponding to this mode of production."- implies hence that what is just and unjust is something of minor importance to the revolutionary movement.

As Jain (2020:14) notes however, "[b]oth historical materialism and the idea of justice as absence of exploitation are central to the Marxist doctrine". While it is true that

[216] N.p.

many scholars believe that Marx's views do "not accord justice any non-relativistic status" (Jain 2020: 8), there are others that see a more central role for justice in them. Cohen (1983)[217] for example, argues that in "the Marxist doctrine justice is a non-relativistic normative criterion", and that 'at least sometimes, Marx mistakenly thought that Marx did not believe that capitalism was unjust, because he was confused about justice.". Moreover, as Fields&Narr (1982: 252) note, "[a]ny theory which touches upon social and/or political practice has a determining ethical or value component even if that component is not made explicit by formulators and refiners of the theory.".

Fields, Narr (1982: 246) also, point out that "Western Marxist theorists[218] have devoted very little attention to the moral or ethical dimension of their vocation. This is attributed to an attempt to keep Marxism 'scientific,' an attempt which is however based upon a false view of science as value free.". It should be added that this is not only a western phenomenon, albeit to a lesser degree. In addition, this is not even a phenomenon restricted to Marxist theorists, as economists in general are often preoccupied with the issue.

The economist Virgil Henry Storr (2018) from his point of view, claims that Marx, except for an economic ("inevitability of crisis") and social ("necessary antagonism between classes", which capitalism simplified) critique of capitalism, offered also a moral one, based on the concepts of exploration and alienation:

> "To understand the basis for Marx's economic and social critiques of capitalism, you also have to understand Marx's moral critique of capitalism. Although he might not have recognized it as a moral critique, his moral attack concerned the inevitability of exploitation and alienation under capitalism." (Storr 2018: n.p.).

Storr identifies "exploitation" and "alienation" as the two central concepts in Marx's works on which he raised his moral condemnation of capitalism.

In addition, Virgil adds, that unlike some of the economic theories of Marx which has been proven to be faulty, "his moral critique has not yet been proven wrong by history or adequately addressed by his critics", while simultaneously, it remains quite popular. And while someone can agree or disagree with Storr's assertions[219], it is true that there is space, in Marx's oeuvre, to base a moral condemnation of the capitalist system.

"Exploitation" and "alienation" are indeed two central problems raised by Marx in his writings. Storr (2018: n.p.) connects exploitation with injustice: "At the center of the capitalist system, Marx believed, was the exploitation of the many by the few. Moreover, capitalism was not only profoundly unjust but was also demeaning and destructive.", he claims (ibid).

As for alienation, Storr (2018) argues:

> "For Marx, the moral invidiousness of the capitalist system was not limited to how the capitalists exploited the workers. Workers in a capitalist system, Marx explained, necessarily become estranged, or alienated, from the

[217] As quoted in Jain (2020: 10)

[218] It is worth giving credits to the authors for making explicit that they talk about "Western Marxists".

[219] The essay is indeed part of a collection of essays, discussing the issue.

product of their labor, the act of labor, their true natures, and their fellow men. This estrangement is both demeaning and dehumanizing. Rather than workers being able to improve their lives through their labor, they are made worse off through their labor." (ibid)

As such, capitalism is portrayed as a system that not only is doomed to collapse, from the point of view of economics, but also is "bad" in moral standards. Finally, Storr (2018: n.p.) -who quotes several passages from Marx- states:

> "Work should be a source of dignity. But in a capitalist system, work is not ennobling. […]To summarize, for Marx individuals in a capitalist system become alienated from their labor product, the production process, their human nature, and one another. Capitalism thus transforms humans into a kind of creature. Recall, that Marx ([1844] 2005, 220) argued that "the division of labor … [transforms] him into a spiritual and physical monster."
>
> If morality is in any way an expression of our humanity, then this spiritual and physical monster does not have the capacity to be a truly moral actor. A man who is estranged from himself and his fellow men cannot possibly be virtuous. The money system, which is responsible in Marx's theory for the worker's alienation, exhibits an "overturning power both against the individual and against the bonds of society, etc., which claim to be essences in themselves. It transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence and intelligence into idiocy" ([1844] 1988, 138). Again, the confusion, the loss of self that Marx describes, is profound, total. Estranged from his true nature, man is bewildered, and "the world," Marx (ibid.) wrote, is "upside down." We should expect workers in a capitalist system to be debased because laboring in a capitalist system debases. We should expect him to be undignified because laboring in a capitalist system robs him of his dignity. We should expect him to be egoistic and asocial because laboring in a capitalist system alienates him from his human nature and his fellow men."

Another aspect of the way Marx can be considered as developing his critique also on moral terms has to do with the language used by Marx, which often invokes the human sentiments. Consider for example the following passage from "Capital" (Vol.I Ch.32)[220]:

> "Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself"

Marx describes quite elaborately a world where misery and exploitation prevail. He often attacks the amoral behaviors in capitalist society. Even hence if it is accepted that Marx's analysis -his scientific socialism- does not actually involve any argumentation based

[220] N.p. Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch32.htm

on moral standards, the language itself that is used surpasses the limits of a representation based on scientific terms. His explicit usage of words which carry a negative connotation, such as oppression, exploitation or alienation have clearly a purpose.

It cannot be also denied that many Marxists found in Marxism a justification for the condemnation of injustices and misdeeds taking place in the world. Marx's work often inspires discussion on a wide range of issues, such as environment or racism. As Solomos and Back (1995) point out:

> "Contemporary debates about race and ethnicity have been influenced in one way or another by Marxist and neo-Marxist scholarship and research. This is clear from both recent theoretical texts on the subject and from empirical and historical studies in a number of societies. Indeed, it can be argued that an engagement with Marxism has been at the heart of many of the most original contributions to recent debates in this field."

It can be also argued that the whole edifice of Marxism is based on a moralistic thesis; the need to get rid of this world of exploitation and inhumanity and strive for a better society. Jain (2020: 13) puts it as follows:

> "With the advent of socialism, the prehistory of humanity comes to a close and the proper history begins. Human beings, by nature, are social beings; and under socialism, this essential feature of humanity is at last realised. Exploitation of human beings by human beings also comes to an end. These two features of the socialist society are emphasised in the Marxist doctrine.[…] it is not only the socialisation of human beings and elimination of exploitation that happen under socialism; it is also the case that there is continual increase in desires and their fulfilmen.".

Kawakami Hajime (河上 肇, 1879-1946)

Kawakami Hajime could not but be the main figure of this chapter. He is perhaps the most famous example of pre-WWII Japanese Marxist thinkers involving morality into their thinking. An "unusual Marxist" as he claimed for himself, he is often regarded as one of the most important, famous or influential Marxist of prewar Japan, with his writings having an extremely large and profound impact on the intellectuals of the time (and future ones). He was certainly someone who as a scholar, but also as a figure, inspired many young people to get an interest in economics, and for some among them, in Marxism, as well as in political and social activism.

Kawakami was born in Yamaguchi prefecture, at a time when the Meiji state was putting its modernization program in action, trying to enhance the nation. He "was raised in what he describes as a completely secular household, one with absolutely no "religious atmosphere" (Jijoden 5, 116)." (Carley 2017:89). Son of a former samurai, he received the appropriate education, based on the Chinese classics, and Confucian teachings. As a result, he later became also a talented and prolific writer, as well as composer of Chinese poetry.

In 1898 he enrolled at Tokyo Imperial University, into the department of Political Science of Law School (he graduated in 1902). At this stage, Kawakami was following the sure path to success, as attending one of the Imperial Universities –what's more the Law School of Tokyo Imperial University- almost implied securing a place in the bureaucratic apparatus of the Meiji government.

Soon, he got deeply concerned with the so called social problems (社会問題) of modern Japan, He got attracted to Christianity and started to familiarize himself with Buddhist scriptures. A famous story of the time wants him, while still a student (in 1901) to be deeply moved by a public speech about the Ashio Copper Mine Poisoning Incident[221], donating on the spot most of the clothes he was wearing.

After graduating, he tried unsuccessfully to secure a bank position. He worked as a journalist and lecturer, and wrote some articles on law and constitution. He also studied economics at a graduate program in the university. He gradually began writing and translating works related to economics and socialism.

In 1905, he came across the preacher Itō Shōshin (伊藤證信, 1876-1963), who advocated the dogma of "Selfless Love (Muga ai -無我愛)". Kawakami resigned from his job and at the end of year, and entered the commune Itō had established under the name "Muga en (無我園, garden of selflessness)". He left however the group after only a few days. While he believed in Itō's teachings and the aim and scope of the movement, he found that the daily lives of the people who actually gathered at Muga en were contrary to his beliefs.

He joined the Yomiuri Shimbun, and later (1908) he secured a professorship at Kyoto Imperial University (1908), but was forced to resign in 1928, due to his connections to leftist groups. Between 1913-5 he travelled to Europe. While at Kyoto, his interest in Marx's work grew bigger. In 1919 he began the serialization of his own journal, Shakai Mondai Kenkyū (Research in social problems). During the 1920s, he got interested more in "Capital". He analyzed the existing translations and often criticized them, pointing out any inconsistencies. He also planned to publish a work on the differences between the various editions of the first chapter of "Capital", but abandoned the task due to practical difficulties (Inoue 2021). He published his own translation of a part of "Capital, Vol. I"[222] in 1931.

In 1929, Kawakami together with Ōyama Ikuo (1880-1955), formed the short-lived New Labor-Farmer Party (*Shin rōnōtō* -新労農党)[223] (Gavin 2011), gave speeches as its member, and even ran (unsuccessfully) for office (Sumiya 2005). In 1932, he joined the then illegal Japanese Communist Party. He was imprisoned for violating the Peace Preservation Law in 1933 (released in 1937). It is worth noting that, unlike many other communists or leftists of the time, he did not committed tenkō. However, he was forced to leave the political movement. He was also forced to part with any books and magazines related to left-wing

[221] At a public speech by Women's Association for Mineral Poisoning Area Relief. "The Ashio copper mine incident is the name given to the environmental disaster that occurred as a result of the Ashio mining operations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was Japan's first major pollution disaster, and has also been credited by historians as leading to the birth of the Japanese environmental movement". Source: *Ashio Copper Mine*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashio_Copper_Mine .

[222] He aspired to publish a complete translation of "Capital" one day.

[223] A "legal left-wing party operating under the wing of the illegal JCP" (Carley 2017).

literature. “He presented 670 books and other publications on Marxism, Das Kapital included, to the Probation Office of the Ministry of Justice in 1941, and he also sold off his other economics documents.” (Inoue 2021: 28).

After his release from prison, he retracted from public life. He spent the remaining years of his life mainly in his home, in economic distress, refusing often to receive support from friends and former students and colleagues. He spent his time writing poetry and his autobiography. He died in 1946, due to pneumonia, weakened from malnutrition, at his home.

He was a prolific writer and throughout his life he produced an important number of literary works on economics, but also of Chinese poetry, translations and commentaries on Marx and Marxist bibliography, many essays and articles (on various subjects) for journals of wider or smaller circulation. As his most famous works on economics can be regarded: his best seller “Tale of Poverty” (1917), “Historical Development of Capitalist Economics (資本主義経済学の史的発展)” (1923), “Outline of Economics (経済学大綱)” (1928), his introduction and commentary to Vol. I of Marx's Capital, his “Introduction to Capital (資本論入門)” (1928-9) and his Autobiography.

On his ideas

Kawakami was from early on interested in the issue of poverty and selfishness, two concepts that inspired his writings. Capitalism was of course associated with individualism, in a society where collective consciousness was central. Kawakami believed in the importance of self-cultivation (practical and moral) to contribute to the society. His thought could be described as insightful but simultaneously, often as naïve one.

> “Kawakami’s lifelong intellectual concerns were prefigured in these initial publications. His effort to retain normative considerations in interpreting the past as well as guiding the future became the basic theme of all his scholarship.” (Bernstein 1990: 40)

Kawakami’s road to Marxism was gradual. It is interesting to note that his first impression of Marx seems to not have been very positive. “In an article on socialism in 1907, he regarded Marx "a man of mean character" that interpreted everything from materialistic motivations” (Yagi 2007: 35). As Iida (1988) notes, Kawakami, while being strongly influenced by socialism, was at the same time strongly influenced by his own original beliefs. Materialism was not something he could accept earlier on, considering his strong ethical sense.

The young Kawakami, showed interest in socialism and the Japanese socialist movement, but at the same time, he maintained a certain distance from them and the Heiminsha (the center of socialist ideas). While he viewed them critically, he sympathized with them, and got even influenced by them in certain ways (ibid). Moreover, he was rather opposed to Marxism, anarchism and other revolutionary socialist movements, such as Christian socialism (ibid).

Younger Kawakami’s respect for the monarchy was strong, and as such he could not accept Heiminsha’s views. To seek the idea of loyalty and patriotism in the Heiminsha was like “seeking fish from a tree”, he claimed (Iida 1988:21). Adding to that, its members overlooked the importance of moral cultivation.

Iida (1988) in his article, examines Kawakami's 1906 essay, "Critique of Socialism (*Shakaishugi hyōron*)", written under a pseudonym[224] (Bernstein 1990) for Yomiuri Shimbun. In his text, Kawakami sharply criticized the government, political figures, socialist activists and Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities' professors. He was concerned about the Freedom of speech, but simultaneously, about the hypocritical speeches and behaviors of socialist leaders and economic professors of the time. The first failed to be true to what they "preached", while the second cared only about their personal advancement, lacking in academic skills.

As for his life situation at the time, Iida (1988) notes that even though he was employed as a part-time lecturer at a number of schools, including a post-graduate school, he was probably in a precarious situation both mentally and materially. Bernstein (1990) also stressed the sense of "crisis" that he felt, even being close to a "mental collapse" at the end of 1905. Bernstein (1990: 43) quotes Kawakami:

> "I came to the realization that the path of economic research which I had chosen in order to raise my status was, in the end, nothing but … the search for my own fame and profit, and the very opposite of absolute unselfishness. Once again doubts considering human life-and the anguish because they were still unsettled- pushed to the foreground of my consciousness. Although I had gone through the trouble of devoting all my energies to economics, … I was seized by doubts as to whether I shouldn't give it all up."

Kawakami found himself questioning his actions and motivations, something that he would do again and again in the future. His desire to stay true to his beliefs and principles conflicted with his efforts to advance professionally and materially.

> "Should I continue to be an instructor in economics or should I, like Toynbee[225], resign my position and engage in the education of the poor? Should I chase after fame or wait upon benevolence? Should I seek profit or obey duty? I had to choose one or the other. A countless number of times I sought to delay the solution of this problem. Yet… this was something demanding resolution and could not be delayed, even for one moment. Nevertheless, leaving one's teaching position is no easy matter, and so I hesitated and vacillated, one way and then the other."[226]

His initial interest was in agricultural economics. In his writings during the first years of the 20th century, Kawakami placed great importance on agriculture which he believed should be regarded as the foundation of national economy, and should be promoted at least as much as industry and commerce (Yagi 2006). That is why, at this early stage, he advocated protectionism, arguing that free trade would affect negatively agriculture and decrease the agricultural population, leading to increased extravagance and loss of patriotism, while at the

[224] Bernstein (1990: 44) mentions that Kawakami "made elaborate efforts to conceal his identity, for fear that the opinions he expressed would not find favor with the government and he would jeopardize his chances of winning a Ministry of Education fellowship".
[225] Arnold Toynbee (1852-83).
[226] As in Bernstein (1990: 43).

same time would lead to a concentration of people in cities, an increase in the number of poor people, and a deterioration of urban sanitation (Makino 2007:2)[227].

During disputes (in 1907-8) between thinkers (including Fukuda Tokuzō) about the abolition of the tax on rice imports, after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) when such a tax was used to finance the war, Kawakami, while in articles of the time did not support either view, advocated at last for the retention of the tax and the protection of independent farmers. He believed in their work ethics and that through it, they could find the most appropriate-effective way to improve their agricultural production, which according to the other side would not develop if the duty was in action (Makino 2007).

In capitalism now, Kawakami saw the commercialization of everything:

> "Long ago we said samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant, and the merchant was the most lowly fellow […] in the present world, however, […] the merchant spirit is in style […] Whenever anyone opens his mouth, the first thing he asks is not whether something is right or wrong, but whether or not it is profitable.*"*[228]

In 1916, after his return from Europe (trip 1913-5), Kawakami published (initially as a series of articles for Osaka Asahi Shimbun, and later -1917- as a book) his famous Bimbō Monogatari (貧乏物語, The Tale of Poverty[229]), a bestseller[230] which marked a turning point in Japanese economic thought (Makino 2007)[231].

Kawakami was deeply concerned about the causes of poverty[232] in advanced economies. "What is surprising in civilized countries today is the poverty of the majority of people" he pointed out in the beginning of his book. He took as example the case of Britain[233], one of the richest countries in the world[234], as he said. There, Kawakami observed, poverty is present. A "desperate poverty (絶望的の貧乏)", as he called it, where no matter how hard

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[227] Makino (2007) identifies Kawakami as a national economist (国民経済学者) at that time.

[228] As in Bernstein (1990: 56). This reminds us also arguments, such as the one by Prof. Michael Sandel who argues that "we have drifted from having a market economy to being a market society". [Keynote lecture, Annual Conference, Institute for New Economic Thinking, Toronto, 2014. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEOQ66oLgGQ]

[229] Hereafter as "Tale".

[230] It was reprinted 30 additional times (Yagi 2007).

[231] Makino (2007:16) notes that there were many people who learned about the problem of poverty through this work, and aspired to solve social problems or to study economics.

[232] Makino (2007) argues that Kawakami's (unexplained) reason for the seeking of a solution to the poverty problem was connected with his views (expressed before the publication of the Tale) regarding national enhancement. According to him, Kawakami's point was that if a large number of people were gradually falling into poverty, it would be impossible to get good soldiers in the future, and promote education and morality. Moreover, for Kawakami at the time, economic development was a prerequisite for the establishment of morality. He also however, notes that Kawakami's interest was gradually changing to one of prioritizing the solution of social problems.

[233] Although the problem is not restricted to Britain he says.

[234] "The reason why Britain, the U.S., Germany, and France are called the richest countries in the world, despite the fact that they have a large number of poor people, is because they have a small number of very rich people who have a surprisingly large amount of wealth, which was rare in the past." (Kawakami 1917).

you work, you cannot escape poverty. “I now believe that this is a major social disease of the 20th century” he declared.

As has been occasionally shown before, the 1910s saw a growing interest in the causes of poverty and dissatisfaction among the Japanese people. Issues such as poverty, standards of living, human desires and suffering, progress and retrogression, western (material and behavioural) modes and their importance were among others widely discussed and debated. The Tale can be therefore approached in that framework.

In his text, Kawakami focused on three questions: “how many people are poor”, “why are so many people poor” and “how poverty can be cured”[235]. In this context, he argued that the cause of the increasing poverty in the country was that goods production was directed towards the production of unnecessary luxury goods, for which demand could be expressed in monetary form. And as such, not enough goods were produced to eradicate poverty.

> “[T]he reason why insufficient necessities of life are produced is that the world’s productive power is squandered on the manufacturing of luxury goods. If the necessities of life were produced in slightly larger quantities than the demand of the impoverished masses could support, the exchange price of these goods would fall and profits would be reduced. Therefore businessmen limit the production of such goods. It seems to me that this is the main structural economic reason why so many people in civilised countries suffer poverty at the present time. (Kawakami 1965:87)”[236] .

In this context, the main solution he proposed was for the affluent strata of society to limit their demand for luxury goods[237].

As Yagi (2007:34) notes, Kawakami’s argumentation was not something exceptional at the time; “both the moralistic choice as well as mentioning the concept of socialization[238] did not violate the cannon of the social policy scholars of that time”. It was not uncommon for thinkers to appeal to morality when developing their arguments and proposals. Through his book, Kawakami actually offered an “understanding [that] was the common base on which the academic discourser of social scientists in pre-war Japan had developed,” (Yagi 2007: 34).

Makino (2007) argues that Kawakami attempted through this work to show the conditions for overcoming the problems of insufficient capital and low productivity of the Japanese economy, which was economically inferior to that of the West. He argues that Kawakami’s thesis can be only understood when being aware of Kawakami's concept of “capital (資本)” at the time, i.e. as “property that has a certain monetary value that is accepted by society in general,” and it includes credit as well as money, and not as specific goods (ibid: 6). In other words, it is the surplus that remains after the deduction of the necessary expenses

[235] An Appendix was included with two essays of Lloyd George, while among the illustrations a portrait of Adam Smith was included in the beginning of the book, as well as a portrait of Karl Marx.
[236] As in Morris-Suzuki (1989, 67).
[237] He offered three measures that could cure poverty: (a) the voluntary restraint of luxury by the rich, (b)the remedial distribution of wealth, and (c) social reorganization that shifts production from the private to the public sector (Yagi 2007: 34). The first choice was however highlighted. Sugihara thought, based on a speech and a speech draft of Kawakami, argues that his original plan was the third suggestion (Yagi 2013).
[238] Yagi refers here to the other measures Kawakami had advocated in the book.

related to survival, i.e. the sum of household savings and corporate investment funds (ibid). Capital thus in that sense is mainly owned by the rich, the capitalists. In this context, what Kawakami proposed is that the money spent by capitalists for the purchase of luxury goods, together with the capital that is used in the production of such goods, once employed for other purposes ("various businesses") would expand production (ibid). That is why capitalists have enormous power and their will great impact on society and economy. Makino (2007: 7) hence concludes that the "abolition of luxury by the rich" was only a means to create capital.

Makino (2007) moreover, emphasizes that Kawakami actually pleaded to the consciousness of rich people, but also for the transformation of the system (economic organization) itself[239]. That is why in 1918, he referred to both John Ruskin[240] and Marx, as the two leading figures of economics of humanitarianism (人道主義の経済学) and socialist economics (に社会主義の経済学) respectively, that were the main fields of interest in his views (ibid: 11).

As now Yoshino (2005) notes, Kawakami, by using in the text the sentence "all social problems are human problems (社会一切の問題は皆人の問題である)" implies that society could be improved first and foremost through the transformation of human consciousness. That is why he believed in the possibility of affluent consumers changing their behavior. In this way, Kawakami believed that it was possible to guide people to goodness by appealing to the morality (ibid).

Kawakimi wrote in "Tale":

> "In short, there is a cause-and-effect relationship between people and their circumstances. In other words, people create their circumstances, and circumstances also create people. However, if we ask which of these is the source, the circumstances are the end and the person is the true source. Therefore, when it comes to solving social problems, I say that the remodeling of economic organizations is, by its very nature, not the most fundamental of fundamental measures.
>
> However, I am not ignoring the influence of social organization on the individual's spiritual thought. In fact, I am one of those who recognize the enormous influence of the economy on the human mind as much as anyone else, and in this respect I owe much to Karl Marx[241], one of the greatest thinkers of the nineteenth century."

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[239] He notes however that Kawakami's "humanitarianism" cannot be regarded as an attempt to create a communist society, but as questioning the will of the people who had the real power (capital) to run the society.

[240] Ruskin's influence on Kawakami has been often noted. For Makino (2007:12) Kawakami seems to have appreciated Ruskin's idea of "using wealth for good", i.e. his argument that the value of the same goods or money depended on how it were used. As Kawakami believed that the use of capital determined whether it was wasted on the consumption of luxury goods by the rich or used to improve the living standards of the poor by increasing the supply of essential goods, such a theory should be convincing. Ikegami (1989) also stresses the importance of Ruskin's ideas for Kawakami during the years of writing the Tale.

[241] At the time however, he noted: "I have no time to give a detailed biography of Marx neither I feel the need to do so".

He then quotes Marx's famous passage from the Preface for the "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (1859)[242] on the forms of social consciousness[243]:

> "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life."

Kawakami notes that is difficult to fully comprehend his opinion from a single reading, but that he do not have time to explain it in detail at this point. He thus proceeds to summarize his views: "To put it simply, the economic organization will change first, and then people's ideology and spirit will change. This is the general idea of Marx's opinion.". He then notes that fortunately, ideas similar to Marx's economic and social views have existed in the East since ancient times. Namely, the view "that morality will not advance unless the economy improves", which as he says, "is one application of the fundamental spirit of the so-called economic view of society".

Deguchi (1962: 47) also, points out Kawakami's lack of "historical conscientiousness" at the time, and his misconception concerning the modern nature of capital:

> "It seems to me that he failed to clearly understand the modern nature of capital, because, when Kawakami used such expressions that "the structure of present society is perfectly convenient for the rich", "but wretched are those who do not have money", he obviously identified wealth as money in general and not as money capital, as a form of modern capital"

The "Tale" received many comments, but also the criticism of other Japanese economists, among whom a few Marxists (like Sakai Toshihiko or Kushida Tokuzō)[244]. In the end, Kawakami withdrew the book from circulation in 1919 (Yagi 2007), "resolving to 'wash my hands of bourgeois economics and prepare to study Marxist economics'" (Bernstein 1990:94).

In any case, the book was widely read among young men, who found through it a purpose worth of mobilization. Sakisaka Itsurō for example, has written that from the "Tale":

> "I learned that 'poverty' was not only my own problem, but the problem of today's society, so I knew that this problem of poverty was

[242] Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm

[243] Later, the same passage will become the subject of an article, written for the Kyoto University Economic Review (see below).

[244] And still does. It continues to be read, and discussed. There is plenty of academic bibliography on the book, Kawakami's intentions, its content, influence and even usefulness for today (see for example Shibata 2013).

something worth devoting one's entire life to, just as many intellectuals and scholars had done. This was great discovery to me."[245]

Ōuchi Hyōe (大内 兵衛, 1888-1980) would later write that his generation was "told of the existence of poverty in Japan and moved by Kawakami's explanation of it" (Bernstein 1990: 93). Nevertheless, Ōuchi also stated that Kawakami had just "shown us a new side of western Europe's bourgeois economics linked to Japan's old morality " (ibid :92) and that Kawakami as the "Malthusian of the East", had believed that moral restraint could solve this great world-historical problem (Shibata 2013). "If we look back at 'The Tale of Poverty' from the peak of 'An Introduction to Capitalism', it is indeed vulgar and sluggish, and a fallacy as a doctrine. (ibid., p. 228)", he added (ibid).

For Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933) the Tale was "seriously contaminated by the unrealistic wishes of a moralist" (Yagi 2007: 35). He as well, "pointed out the theoretical inconsistency of the solution that Kawakami had presented for the poverty problem, i.e .the voluntary renunciation of luxury by the rich", predicted though that "this book will have no effect on the promotion of the elimination of luxury of the rich, but will lead its many readers to the position of social reform." (ibid)[246].

Before proceeding, it should be noted that among the people from whom Kawakami received feedback on his works, his scholarship was influenced to an important degree (like often happens), by three figures of his time: his rival (Yagi 2013) Tokuzō Fukuda (1874-1930)[247], and two of his critics; his student at Kyoto, Kushida Tamizō (櫛田 民蔵, 1885-1934), and Fukumoto Kazuo (福本 和夫, 1894-1983)[248].

Fukuda, in a public speech entitled "From false democracy to genuine democracy (虚偽のデモクラシーより真正のデモクラシーへ)"[249] (1919), commented on the "Tale", stressing the points where he believed Kawakami was mistaken; even in the case where all the labor and capital spent on the production of luxury goods were spent on the production of socially useful goods, production would still be insufficient, he argued, something that should be of concern (the fact that production will still be scarce). He also noted that "even if we tell the rich to stop being extravagant, they will never stop". Moreover, the Tale Fukuda argued, was mainly read by the poor, and not the rich, and as such, Kawakami's efforts to promote its thesis were not successful. And finally, he expressed his disagreement with Kawakami on the role of demand in production. At least in the case of luxury goods, Fukuda claimed, demand does not dictate production[250].

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[245] As in Bernstein (1990: 93).

[246] It should be noted that Sakai later, said that he respected Kawakami, saw him as a comrade and got to gradually better understand his views, despite criticizing him quite harshly during the past (Fukusawa 2019).

[247] Professor at Keio University.

[248] He got of course involved in debates with other thinkers as well (among others Watsuji Tetsurō, Sakai Toshihiko, Ōuchi Hyōe, Sakisaka Itsurō, Abee Iso).

[249] Published in Osaka Mainichi Shimbun.

[250] Fukuda (1919) talked about the two kinds of impulses that drive human beings and make them active in life (in pair with desires): the urge to acquire things (to possess) and the urge to create things. In this context, he argued that modern civilization has made too much progress in one direction (possession) and unfairly oppressed the other, resulting in false democracy gaining excessive power,

Kushida criticized the "Tale" soon after its publication. Kushida was a student of Kawakami in Kyoto, and the two often "exchanged" views on Marxism. Kushida respected Kawakami (Yagi 2007), but was also highly critical of him, while Kawakami listened to his criticism and often strived to deepen his understanding of Marxism, and advance further his knowledge and views[251]. It often seems that it was because of Kushida's criticism that Kawakami continuously struggled with understanding-accepting Marxism and his materialistic view of history.

In the case of the Tale, Kushida "accused Kawakami of being an idealist rather than a materialist," (Morris-Suzuki 1989: 68). Moreover, he pointed out that "the emergence of luxury in society is a product of poverty. Luxury is not the cause of poverty"[252]. He pointed out that exploitation of the workers by the capitalists was the main reason behind poverty, as the "income of the rich is derived from the surplus value that is exploited from the poor (laborers)", and thus Kawakami had given an interpretation which was "a naive intuition of the Marxian idea of exploitation" (Yagi 2007, 36). Finally, he stressed the importance of distribution in that sense (Bernstein 1990).

As Gavin (2011:59) notes however, the "Tale", "[n]ot only did it ensure Kawakami a permanent place in the history of Japanese economic thought, but it also marked a major turning point in his approach to Marxism". Kawakami's interest in Marxism began gradually to increase during the late 1910s. As Morris-Suzuki (1989) notes in her book on the Japanese economic thought, Kawakami and other Japanese economists of the time were attracted by the "moral passion" they encountered in Marx's writings. In that respect, Kawakami was later again, severely criticized by Kushida , for his naive understanding of Marx's work, and Fukumoto who charged him for not understanding dialectical materialism. Kawakami accepted the criticism and studied Marxism more deeply each time. And it was only after "a long struggle to reconcile his personal, moral and religious beliefs with what he perceived to be the scientific truth of Marxism, [that] Kawakami became a prominent spokesman for Marxism in interwar Japan" (Gavin 2011:59). He always however, as a "special Marxist" produced a "special" interpretation of the doctrine. Marxism attracted Kawakami because it represented a scientific doctrine which simultaneously, recognized and condemned the "ills" of modern world.

For Yagi (2013: 4) "Kawakami chose this destination as a result of his ardent desire to solve the fundamental social problems of Japan". Kawakami was a thinker-scholar who continuously strived to re-position, himself in his study of economics. And while his economic views changed considerably from his student to his later years, something seemed to stay constant within him. Kawakami remained concerned about the suffering of the people and the role of personal cultivation as a part of the remedy to it. In 1919, when he began to publish his own journal, Shakai Mondai Kenkyū (Research in social problems), he wrote in the Preface of the first issue: "I examine various social policies under the ultimate criterion of

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delaying the emergence of what he described as genuine democracy. That is why, in order not to worry about poverty, we must work hard and produce, promote the development of creativity and increase our productive power, he claimed.

[251] Ōuchi Hyōe (1888-1980) once said that "the development of Marxian economics in Japan is most easily understood by examining the relationship between Kawakami and Kushida," [Yagi 2007, 36]

[252] As in Yagi (2007:36)

the fundamantal solution of social problems," (Yagi 2007: 34)[253]. As Berstein (1976: 127-8) notes, Kawakami "sought to create a society based on altruistic principles and guided by scientific knowledge".

As for Marxism, Yagi (2007) distinguishes two steps taken by Kawakami towards Marxism. The first one came with rejection of "the distribution policy as the solution to the poverty problem" (p.35). He places that in 1920. The second one was taken with the reconsideration of the "concept of moral revolution", which came to be regarded as a preparatory, mental phase in the process of social revolution, Yagi argues (ibid).

In 1919, Sakai Toshihiko criticized Kawakami, in an article entitled "The Most Fearful Defects of Moral Socialism". He claimed that Kawakami, by his frequent pleads to human's morality, implied the existence of an "unchanging morality", and "typified pronouncements of the power class" (Berstein 1990: 114). Kawakami replied through his text "Changing Morality and Unchanging Morality (可変の道徳と不変の道徳)"[254] (1919):

> "I recognize the evolution of morality. In certain times and, moreover, in certain areas, cannibalism was considered morally permissible. Slavery, too, was considered morally permissible. However, today these things are morally reprehensible. Similarly, today's society considers it morally acceptable to hire human beings as labourers. According to materials recorded in Dr. Shimamura Ikuto's Studies in Relief, thnumber of customers of one prostitute in one month reached ninety-two men … We treat human beings like slaves in this way, and in Taishō Japan, it is even legal … However, I believe that we must inevitably reach a time when this morality and these laws too will change. Just as cannibalism and slave systems today are repudiated, so today's wage system and licensed prostitution, in the future society, will necessarily be rejected. In this sense, I recognize the evolution of morality … At the same time, however, I believe that morality is unchanging…
>
> Mr. Sakai says my understanding of the origins of morality and the evolution of its content is very inadequate … Of course there are contradictions and inconsistencies in my thought. But, if my "sickness" is to believe in an unchanging, eternal, and absolute truth, then I can never part completely from this sickness."[255]

In this exchange of views, can be found as well one of the few instances where Kushida would find traces of truth in Kawakami's insistence on morality. Kushida, intervened in the dispute between the two. "First, he agreed with Sakai's position that denied the existence of eternal morality in the class society. However, thereafter, he rescued Kawakami's unchanging morality by suggesting Marx's ideal of universal human liberation after the socialist revolution. Kushida, thus, guided Kawakami's moralist conviction that had

[253] Yagi (2007: 34-5) mentions that Kawakami stated in his Autobiography that "around that time, I groped for the direction of truth in Marxism and decided to propagate it ,though I did not know it well.". He also however, points out that the researcher Kobayashi Kanji claimed that "Kawakami's actual purpose for launching the journal was his desire to unite the element of moral revolution with the organizational revolution of society" (ibid).

[254] A prophetic text could be argued!

[255] As in Bernstein (1990: 114-5).

originated from traditional Confucian ethics toward the vision of the future human society" (Yagi 2007: 43 -note17). Nevertheless, he later rejected the moral argument in its entirety.

In 1923, Kawakami published the "Historical Development of Capitalist Economics (資本主義経済学の史的発展)". In the book, Kawakami traced the development of western economic thought[256]. He summarized his research on the history of economic thought and characterized "capitalist economics" as an ideology that endorses selfish activities, tracing its origins to Locke and Mandeville, then to Smith, Malthus and Ricardo, culminating in the utilitarianism of Bentham and J. Mill, while on the other side, he placed J. S. Mill, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Marx's rejection of egocentric activities (Mawatari 2000).

Kushida, in his essay "Does Socialism Face towards Darkness or Light? (社会主義は闇に面するか光に面するか)", "after some complaints regarding Kawakami's weak treatment of morality in econornics" (Yagi 2007: 36), charged the work with "bourgeois bias" (Mawatari 2000). Kushida stressed the class character/nature of economics. He claimed that "an economic thought that can transform society emerges as the demand for the representation of a partial class interest and grows in the struggle for it" (Yagi 2007: 36). Kushida thus, positioned Ricardo as speaking for the capitalist class, Malthus for the landlord class, Mill not understanding that the law of distribution depends on the law of production, and Ruskin and Carlyle for being reactionary in their denial of self-interest (Mawatari 2000:2). Moreover, he "voiced his disagreement on the association of Carlyle and Ruskin's aristocratic reactionary thought with the advent of socialism." (Yagi 2007: 36).

Debate with Watsuji

In 1926, Kawakami engaged in a discussion with his fellow professor at Kyoto Imperial University at the time, Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻 哲郎, 1889-1960), later recognized as one of the leading figures of 20th century Japanese philosophy. Watsuji published in 1926, a paper entitled "Some Opinions on the Students Arrest Incident (学生検挙事件所感)", in the University journal. The paper referred to the so called "Kyoto Gakuren Incident (京都学連事件)", where many university students associated with the Marxist-Leninist group Gakuren (学連 - Gakusei Shakai Kagaku Rengokai - Student Social Science Federation) were arrested during the span from the late 1925 to early 1926 (Oakes 2002).

Watsuji began his essay by referring to what he called "riot tactics"[257]. While he did not directly relate the members of the group involved in the incident to those, he used the incident to talk about what became the main focus of his paper, i.e. the revolutionary agenda and propensity of socialists, they obsession with violent activities. "Socialists would carelessly remark, 'just tear it all down, things can only get better"[258], he claimed. For Watsuji

[256] Mawatari (2000) thus, argues that the founder of the history of economics (a Marxian type of history of economic thought) in Japan was probably Kawakami.

[257] "I can't judge for myself whether this recently disclosed incident stems from nothing more than youthful fancy or is the initiation of concrete action. Most likely it's some combination of the two, I would think." (p.91).

[258] All the translations of Watsuji's and Kawakami's texts used in this section are taken from "Watsuji Tetsurō / Kawakami Hajime Exchange (1926)," trans. Christopher W. Oakes, in From Japan's

although, the Russian example offered plenty of data to reflect upon, and finally realize that the Russian Revolution did not succeed in many of its aims.

> "from a humanitarian perspective what evidence is there that Russia today from the time of the revolution onwards is any better off than Russia before the revolution? Were all the enormous sacrifices for the sake of the revolution, all that large-scale human massacre, truly in the end a worthy price to pay for giving birth to the Russia of the present? […] the Russian revolution is instead a massive demonstration of just how prone to error human beings are. Likewise it is nothing else but an illustration of the mutual contradictions contained within destructive means themselves."

A "violent revolution" or usage of "destructive means" is not a solution. "No one doubts the fact that present-day society requires reform" however, law, even if it is considered a bad law, should always be respected. "We empathize from the bottom of our heart with the ideal of defying the rule of law and founding the rule of virtue, but to implement the rule of violence in order to establish this rule of virtue is clearly self-contradictory", Watsuji argued.

He then criticized the scholars of the time engaging in "socialist research". His paper concluded:

> "If one claims to be carrying out 'research' into 'social science' while actually devising strategy for class warfare with religious faith in Leninism, then it is a misuse of the words 'science' and 'research.'" (p.93).

To believe that Marxism or Leninism showed the correct route to follow, while ignoring the facts/data available cannot constitute scientific research, he claimed.

Kawakami, while at the time mourning the loss of his child, saw it as a duty and nevertheless decided to reply –publicly- to Watsuji. "However, as your opinions were published in a university newspaper, I, as one with an outlook opposed to yours and as a member of the same university, felt as if I had a duty to publicly make a statement criticizing your opinions." (p.95). Hence, despite the fact that he "wished in fact to print this, […] in the same university newspaper", he decided to publish his essay on his own journal, as he "wished to use up space at will". Simultaneously, by doing that, he took the "issue out into the arena of public debate", as he believed there were many out there who held the same views to Watsuji.

This is a good example of Kawakami's strong sense of duty[259], but also his passionate engagement in the discussions of his time. He took his role –as scholar, academic and later Marxist- always seriously and with sincerity:

> "From this point onwards I will speak without restraint, and will perhaps dispense with courtesy as a matter of course, but it is my hope that you

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Modernity: A Reader (Chicago: The Center for East Asian Studies, The University of Chicago, 2002): 91–123. No further reference will be given.

[259] "Speaking frankly, upon our scholarship you have showered down your commonsensical, unreflective criticisms. Answering such criticisms as these coming from a philosopher, one who would usually be expected to take the most critically reflective stance, is perforce our scholarly duty.".

will not take me to task for this, but that my readers will see this as a sign of my sincerity.".

Sincerity which, for Kawakami, seemed to be absent from Watsuji's paper. Starting his essay, Kawakami found Watsuji's way of writing the paper quite elaborate. He seems to have paid close attention to the text itself and how it was structured. He attributed a considerable part of the paper's impact to its "prose technique". He charged Watsuji for, indirectly, reducing the recent Incident to riot events or the rumors circulating during the fire following the Great Kanto Earthquake[260]:

> "all of this about Russian riot tactics, the great fires attending the Great Earthquake of Tokyo-for that makes up the content of your piece's introduction-from the very start causes the reader to prejudge the events of the recent student incident as somehow being extremely disorderly, something along the same lines as a riot or a great fire; indeed on this point your writing displays more than enough literary finesse.
>
> However, that you mentioned the above two facts is not due merely to literary technique. […]
>
> The measured wording of this part, made to appear connected and yet disconnected, continuous and yet discontinuous, there with stamping a certain convincing impression on the reader's mind-intentionally or not-seems to me to possess a most unusual subtlety. […]Of course, as I said before, a vague uneasiness remains that to piece together your arguments so snugly somehow forces upon them an unreasonable interpretation;"

Kawakami continued then with the issue of violence. He drew parallels with the advancements of medical science[261]. Medical science progressed as much because simple remedies such as medicines and ointments could often not save the patients. The cruel act (as seen from a common standpoint) of surgery is often the only way to save lives. At this point, Kawakami found a similarity with Socialism, which Watsuji "carelessly" claimed to propose to "just tear it all down, things can only get better".

This was only one of numerous cases where "the true nature of things conceals itself with the opposite phenomenal form". Kawakami continued:

> "For this reason social science, as a true science, must wield a keen scalpel to actual living society, peel off the many layers of the outer skin {phenomenal form} obscuring the true nature of things, and expose the root of the illness concealing itself within society's inner workings. Therein lies the mission of pathology, and based on the fundamental theories of that pathology a certain clinical science is therewith born."(p. 106)

[260] During the chaos caused by the earthquake and the fire following it, rumors spread charging socialists and Koreans with the instigation of these. The rumors were accomplished by violent acts committed by police and radical citizens brigades.

[261] Kawakami often used the examples of medical science of medical practitioners in supporting his arguments.

As for whether human sacrifices of great scale should be made in order to establish a better off society, Kawakami answered: "[T]hat a truly enormous number of human lives must be sacrificed as well in order to maintain the present social structure is a readily apparent fact that even you must acknowledge" (p.105).

WWI, a war whose -as Marxists argue- "fundamental cause [laid] in capitalist social structure", resulted in many more lives being sacrificed than during the Russian Revolution[262]. As many were as well the lives that were lost every day in society due to capitalism's workings:

> "today's society is maintained upon the sacrifice of people's lives, lives that could have been saved by human power[263] -above all else the lives of the massive number of children born into the proletariat class. You may perhaps claim that this is not how society is maintained, but that is one necessary aspect of the monopolization practiced by the bourgeoisie class, and this monopolization first comes to be maintained by the sacrifice of the many. And so we see that under the present day economic structure appearing ever so tranquil (that is its phenomenal form) the countless corpses of infants and children and the ashes of those worn out with labor are in fact piled up higher and higher each and every day (this is the true nature of the situation)." (p. 105).

Kawakami also, brought up again the examples of Meiji Restoration and of the 19th century samurai and scholar Yoshida Shōin (吉田 松陰, 1830-1859)[264], who as he said, was now worshipped. "I find it somewhat odd that you don't seem to mind at all that agitator of the social order is today worshipped as a deity".

Shōin, who opposed the Bakufu government was imprisoned and then beheaded. He became a symbol figure for the samurai of the time, especially those embracing the *Sonnō jōi* (尊王攘夷 -revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians) slogan. At Kawakami's times, where Meiji Restoration was seen as a revolution that gave Japan the possibility to modernize and develop, Shōin was considered a national hero and martyr.

> "I cannot help but feel that all of this is somewhat enigmatic in today's world, where it is taken for granted that agitating the legal order is the greatest crime known to man, but in the end it only goes to show that a revolution in the economic structure is accompanied by a revolution in moral conceptions and that in a time of social transformation value judgments are flipped with the revolution's accomplishment. If they win they're loyal troops, if they lose they're bandit rabble." (p. 107).

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[262] As for that, Kawakami writes: "You point out that many people's lives were sacrificed in the Russian Revolution. I am not convinced that so many were, but let us say for the sake of argument that you are right." (p.105).

[263] "Let us simply take a close look at the ordinary conditions of the society in which we are living. Thereupon we cannot but recognize that each and every day under today's economic structure countless people die without fulfilling their natural span of life because of the restrictions of that structure. However much modern medical science has progressed, the cases in which its blessings reach down to the overwhelming majority of the nation, the proletariat, are extremely few;"

[264] Shōin was a samurai from Chōshū domain (now part of Yamaguchi prefecture) and his influence on young Kawakami is often stressed.

It is interesting to notice at this point that Kawakami here gave a possible explanation as to why Marxism seemed so appealing doctrine to the Japanese of the time. We tend to forget that 1920s Japan was barely more than half a century away from the Tokugawa times and the Shogunate's fall. The existing system could be as well overthrown, just like the previous one.

> "In basing itself upon a class system the present economic structure is the same in essence as feudal society, and so it is by no means unnatural if the thought occurs to one that a new society will someday be born from the womb of this one in much the same manner" (p.107).

Kawakami also took upon the example of Socrates, which Watsuji had used. The latest had brought up Socrates in order to support his view that a "distinction must be drawn between the fact that the present law is flawed, or that the law's enforcement is flawed, and the authority of the law itself.". "We all consider sublime the attitude of Socrates, who calmly accepted an unjust punishment out of respect for the law of the land", Watsuji added.

Watsuji although, had chosen the wrong example, Kawakami claimed. The case of Socrates presented similarities with that of the students in question.

> "Socrates was in his time an agitator of the legal order as well, and for that reason was sentenced to death by the court of law of that time. Therefore I find it inexplicable that it is his attitude of all people's that you" consider sublime." […] If we were to transpose you back thousands of years ago in the past, would you not join with the "ignorant mobs of Athens" and censure Socrates yourself?" (p. 110)[265].

Watsuji replied to Kawakami, with surprise (as he said) about the later's misunderstandings of his writing. He clarified the main points Kawakami has commented upon, and then, proceeded to explain his main theme; i.e. "the opinion that 'acting out of blind idolization of Leninism' should not be called 'research.'" (p.114).

Debate on overpopulation

Closely related to the issues of increasing poverty and unemployment was the so called population problem (jinkō mondai –人口問題), which culminated in a "debate" over population[266] between Kawakami and Takada Yasuma (1883-1972)[267]. The debate belongs to

[265] In his reply to Kawakami, Watsuji supported his choice: "When speaking of Socrates' "respect for the law of the land," at the very least one must have Crito in mind. In that dialogue it is argued by Socrates that even if the actual law is employed as the manifestation of unjust force, one must not on that account refuse to acknowledge the law of the land, that injustice is inflicted by human beings so one must not on that account use violence against the laws themselves.[…] It was truly beyond my wildest expectations that these words would bring on a rebuke that the arrested students were just like Socrates or that Socrates disturbed the legal order of his time."

[266] It can be regarded as part of wider discussions, often called the "Shōwa Population Controversy (昭和人口論争)".

a series of discussions on population, taking place from late 1910s to '30s[268], and was initiated in 1926, when Takada published[269] his essay "Give Birth and Multiply (Umeyo Ueyo - 産めよ殖えよ)". Kawakami followed (1927) with a criticism of Takada and others, and Takada again elaborated more on the issue through an essay, entitled "Population and Poverty (人口と貧乏)" (1927). Other figures took also stance on the issue.

Takada attempted to treat the problem of poverty from a sociological perspective, rather than by confining it to the narrow framework of economic problems (Yoshino 2005). He claimed that large population was "the weapon of the people of color against the white people" and that by losing it, self-destruction awaits (ibid). His thesis was an extension of his power theory, which saw social problems as problems of the desire for some form of power (Sugita 2015). People wanted to excel others, to be superior in some respect, to satisfy their desire for power more than at present (ibid).

In this framework, he spotted the problem to lay in the high standard of living (生活標準) at the time. He denied the objectivity of the overpopulation problem, claiming that the "standard of living" that rose during the economic boom following the WWI could no longer be maintained during the subsequent recession and that this only made people feel as if they were having difficulties in living (Yamada 2017). For Takada concepts such as the "cost of living (生活費)" or "necessary expenses (必要費)" were not constant in their content, but changed from society to society and from era to era (Yoshino 2005). Takada thus argued that the standard of living of the working class should be lowered[270].

> "There are people who say that even today they cannot afford to eat. Those are people who do not know the meaning of the so-called hardships of life. The other day I was strolling in a neighborhood of a town and saw a beggar wandering around. He was eating potato skins, fish heads, etc., which he picked up from a dustbin, and his blood color was extremely good, not comparable to that of city people. His inability to eat is nothing more than his inability to maintain a certain physical appearance. If they lower their standard of living a little, there is a way for them to eat everywhere in the world. (Takada, 1927: 93)"[271]

To support his thesis, he even developed his own population equation: (S*B)＝(d*P), where S represented the standard of living, B the population, P the productive capacity (living materials) and d the distribution coefficient (social organization) (Yamada 2017). His theory

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[267] Sociologist and economic scholar (sometimes called one of the first economic sociologists of Japan). Graduate of Kyoto Imperial University (1910). At the time professor at Kyushū Imperial University.
[268] A national census was conducted in 1920, and a second one in 1925. The two showed a rapid growth of population, and were widely discussed.
[269] Published in Keizai Orai (Economic Outlook, 経済往来).
[270] Similar ideas can be found in 19th century Europe as well. The Polish Frederyk Skarbek (1792-1886) for example, expressed "concerns that the working-class desires for a better life might grow faster than the means assembled to achieve it, and such a situation could threaten the social order. He argued that people should not imitate the upper classes' lives since this breeds envy, which breeds rebellion" (Jedlicki 1999, pp. 158–159). (Julius 2020:27). See: Julius, H. (2020), An Introduction to the History of Economic Thought in Central Europe, Palgrave Macmillan.
[271] Excerpt from Yamada (2017: 64-5).

linked directly population growth with productive capacity. As such, domestic problems were thought to occur when the equilibrium between the various elements of the equation was disrupted. The state-problem of overpopulation was thus defined by a deviation from the equilibrium between population and food (ibid).

Takada's views were in contrast to those expressed by scholars of the time, such as Abe Isoo (安部 磯雄, 1865-1949)[272], who was among the thinkers who during the 1920s recommended a birth control policy[273] in order to address the issues of poverty and overpopulation. As Lee (2017:43) notes, Abe "justified the use of birth control in three main ways. Namely, birth control was a new morality, it provided a key solution to class conflict under capitalism, and it was necessary for the development of peaceful international relations.". Abe's ideas carried a moralist overtone, as he often stressed the need for moral refinement. Gavin (2011:65)[274] claims that "Abe's socialist vision is characterized by his emphasis on moral refinement as a means of solving economic hardship". Humble living and "responsible and artificial" reproduction –what Lee (2017:44) notes to be a call to eugenics[275] and "an attempt to moralize scientific knowledge"- were some among his main recommendations. It is also worth noting that Abe did not advocated at the time, the direct overthrow of capitalism, but increasing intervention on the state level and "self-control" on the individual level, in the framework of a capitalist economy and its dictations (often as described by Marx).

Kawakami was critical of such views and of Takada (among others). In 1927, he published a book[276], entitled "Critique of the Population Problem (人口問題批判)", where he elaborated on the issue[277]. While Kawakami had studied the Malthusian theory, and even had highly evaluated it academically, by the time he published his book, he had rejected its premises, as well as its implications[278]. Kawakami advanced a view taken from a Marxian standpoint, and dismissed the claims that unemployment and poverty were caused by overpopulation. He now accepted the Marxist thesis[279], and argued that what appeared to the

[272] A Christian socialist. Professor at Waseda University. Often called the "Father of Japanese Baseball" and the "Father of Japanese Socialism".

[273] Abe changed stance during the war years, and supported also a view of "give birth and multiply". For more on Abe and his views as opposed to Kawakami's see Gavin (2011).

[274] By quoting Yamaizumi Susumu.

[275] "Birth control and eugenics were incorporated into the realm of moral responsibility as ethical practices shifted away from "natural reproduction" towards the "responsible and artificial" production of desirable descendants." , and "in Abe's schema, scientific reproduction—that is, the use of reproductive technologies like birth control, eugenics, and sexual hygiene— and parental morality worked to mutually reinforce each other" (ibid). For more see Lee (2017).

[276] It was a synthesis of his previous articles (written in 1926-7) on the issue (Sugihara 1982)

[277] Sugihara (1982) claims that this work can be considered to present Kawakami's final views on the issue.

[278] Sugihara (1982: 31) mentions that in the first article (1902) of Kawakami on population, he saw Malthus' theory as "absolute, global, and abstract", but also found it "a painful argument" which sees the increase of population as "something to be worried about and not something to be delighted with".

[279] It is worth noting that Kawakami's affiliation at the time with Kyoto Imperial University placed him in an advantageous position, allowing him to engage more freely in the study of Marxism, when compared to other institutions (Gavin 2011), and simultaneously, providing a wider dissemination and prestige to his views.

common sense, to be a problem of population growth was in fact a consequence of capitalist development, of capitalist accumulation and exploitation.

Kawakami argued that the prevailing view on (over)population, the Malthusian view, which derived the existence of overpopulation from mere figures of population growth and population density, and attributed to it the hardships of life (Sugihara 1982:29) "equates us Japanese with wild silkworms."[280]. Such a view negated the fact that humans are capable of developing their productive capacities under certain historical social forms and placed them in the same loss as wild animals and plants. Kawakami then quoted Marx (ibid) :

> "every particular historical mode of production has its own special laws of population, which are historically valid within that particular sphere. An abstract law of population exists only for plants and animals, and even then only in the absence of any historical intervention by man (Capital Vol.I: n.p.)"

The so called population problem was a manifestation of the existing conditions in capitalist production –increased mechanization-, Kawakami claimed. He thus introduced Marx's theory of relative overpopulation (Sugihara 1982). What appeared as an absolute excess of population was in fact an excess relative to the demand of capital (ibid). "If we do not think for a moment that the earth moves, we will see that the sun revolves around the earth. In the same way, a relative decrease in capital can be seen conversely as an absolute increase in population."[281].

And as almost all "public opinion" was based on the assumption that there was an immense overpopulation –a commonsense fallacy- the measures proposed to control the so-called overpopulation were inadequate (ibid). Theories such as Takada's even tried to deny reality.

As Gavin (2011) mentions, Kawakami (in 1930) talked about "a new phenomenon", namely "permanent unemployment". Kawakami here, commented on the industrial rationalization (*sangyō gōrika*), advanced by the government, which increased the mechanization of production and claimed to improve labour efficiency. He argued that, despite even being endorsed by a few labour unions, it actually caused higher unemployment by discarding workers.

The problem was inherent in the mechanism of capitalism itself. It was "a disease of capitalism in its final stage"[282], and as such the remedy laid at the core of system itself. Kawakami was critical of views which sought to promote reforms, within the capitalist framework. Any remedies that were based on the premise of existing capitalism would cause the people of the country to be "troubled and lost" for a long time (ibid).

"If anyone claims that birth control is the main measure for social improvement, I absolutely reject it"[283] Kawakami also argued. However, as Sugihara (1982) points out, he was not opposed to the use of birth control by workers, as a way to improve their lives. But birth control was not something that could "cure the disease". The existing system was

[280] As in Sugihara (1982: 29).
[281] As in Sugihara (1982: 30).
[282] As in (ibid: 34). Sugihara points out that Kawakami's interpretation of the overpopulation issue as a characteristic of capitalism in a later stage is problematic.
[283] As in Sugihara (1982: 40).

pushing the working class to "hastily continue to endure an unhealthy and short-lived generation" in order to "maintain the working market", as recent demographic statistics indicated an unhealthy state of high fertility and high mortality, Kawakami claimed (ibid). Birth controls could only help to replace the unhealthy and short-lived generation with a healthy and long-lived one.

In response to ideas such as those of Abe now, who called the government to adopt policies that would improve the living conditions of the working class in order to avoid the emergence of "dangerous thoughts" within its circles, Kawakami stressed that it was capitalism that caused their impoverishment and gave fuel to revolutionary ideas (Gavin 2011). Such policies could not change the fate of the working class.

Another point which Kawakami stressed was that such erroneous interpretations of the population issue gave moral courage to the followers of imperialism (Sugihara 1982).

As Sugihara (1982) points out, Kawakami's views can be related to his ideas expressed in his earlier writings, when his arguments carried a nationalistic and humanitarian overtone. In his earlier writings, Kawakami had expressed the idea of growth population as a means to race/national expansion and strengthening of the country. Sugihara (ibid: 36) suggests that Kawakami in 1905 and Kawakami in 1927 were in the same position in opposing birth control on the grounds that it would lead to the decline of the nation (民族) and that Kawakami's argument included the assertion that the population problem could be viewed from the perspective of an ethnic group (民族), which was different from that of class, and that these two perspectives were not incompatible.

Kawakami seems that was also concerned with the mortality rates among the poor (especially children). As Sugihara (1982: 41) again notes, Kawakami had been writing during the 1910s about the fact that the child mortality rate in urban areas was "extremely large" compared to that in the countryside and that the difference between urban and rural areas increased as children grew up. Gradually, his focus turned more towards the situation in the city as such. In an essay for Osaka Asahi Shimbun entitled "On Women's Issues (婦人問題雑話)" (1915) he wrote:

> "The most unfortunate people in the world are the fetuses and infants whose mothers are laborers. The children whose mothers are laborers face hardships even before they are born, and after they are born, they suffer even more severely, and most of them die before they even learn to speak the human language."[284]

Kawakami talked about the "tragedy of civilization (文明の悲劇)", where the production of goods had made great progress, but the majority of the people had not benefited from it. Where mothers had to work and engage in factory labor, in order for their household to survive and hence, abandoned their infant children. "Originally, the original purpose of our family was to complete the protection and nurturing of our offspring, but modern civilization has deprived mothers of their homes and babies of their milk, and is gradually destroying our families"[285]. In the above mentioned exchange with Watsuji, we see as well Kawakami

[284] As in Sugihara (1982: 41).
[285] As in Sugihara (1982: 41-2).

highlighting the issue of lives (especially of children) being sacrificed every day due to the economic social structure.

Sugihara (1982) thus connects Kawakami's thesis on the population problem with those ideas, and sees a continuation of his "humanitarian" views.

On Social consciousness

It seems that Kawakami's greatest difficulty was in accepting a purely materialistic conception of history. In an article published in 1926 at the Kyoto University Economic Review, entitled "Marx's 'Forms of Social Consciousness'", he tried to elaborate on the "forms of social consciousness" as he conceived them, and as he saw them in Marx:

> "My own views are somewhat different from this[286]. In my own opinion, some of the forms of social consciousness (I shaII call "the forms of economic consciousness" for convenience sake) which has an inseparable connection with the "real basis" which constitutes the economic structure of society. These forms of economic consciousness are interwoven in the basis. It is not that the legal and political superstructures are erected on the basis and upon them stand the forms of social consciousness as a second set of superstructures-in the air, as if it were, and considerably away from the basis. (Had this been Marx's idea, his formula would not have a break in. the sentence construction when explaining the nature of the real basis by adding the phrase "on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.") Thus, in my own opinion, a study of the economic structure of society means a study of the dominating forms of social consciousness. A study of the former is a study of the latter. […]
>
> I believe that in a certain sense both "Critique of Political Economy" and "Capital" contain nothing but a study of the forms of social consciousness in the capitalist society." (Kawakami (1926), KUER Vol.1, p.28)

In the article, Kawakami made use of passages from Marx's lectures "Wage Labour and Capital" (first published in 1847)[287] and Capital[288]. Kawakami noted that "capital" can be regarded as a definite historical form of social consciousness (p. 28), "one of the most "social" forms of consciousness which is common to every one living in the capitalist society-common to the rich and poor, to the educated and the illiterate, to the old as well as the young" (p.29). Every person in a capitalist society is conscious of its existence and possession. It becomes "capital" only under "certain circumstances" Kawakami noted, dictated by the capitalist mode of production and "the development of relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of men's material powers of' production."[289].

[286] Kawakami refers here to "Those people [who] naturally identify the forms of social consciousness with 'the legal, religious, aesthetic or philosophic-in short ideological forms'" (1926: 27).
[287] Kawakami had published a translation in 1919 (Fukusawa 2019).
[288] He also scarcity refers to the "Critique of Political Economy".
[289] Marx (1847) as quoted by Kawakami (p. 29).

Simultaneously, “capital” is also “a social (a bourgeois) relation of production”[290]:

> “[W]hen men establish a certain relation of production through a certain thing, that thing becomes capital; and, at the same time, consciousness of capital is produced in men's minds. In consequence, consciousness of capital and the development of the content of that consciousness correspond to the relations of the capitalist production.” (ibid: 29).

The same is evident for other things, such as “commodity, money, exchang-value and price [which] are the manifestations of relations of production in the commodity-producing society, and are, at the same time, the forms of social consciousness” (ibid: 30).

Kawakami argued that “[t]hat a certain form of consciousness always corresponds to a definite relation of production becomes clear as one peruses chapters in "Capital."” (p31). And it was in this context that Marx, through the study of economics, i.e. the study of “how such things as the commodity, money, capital, value, price, profit, etc. correspond to relations of production into which men enter in their social production of life” (p.31), arrived at the conclusion that “’It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciourness.”, which is of course the “spirit of the historical materialism”.

Kawakami charged scholars such as Fukumoto, who argued that Marx’s analysis was restricted to what he called “pure economic processes” and did not discuss the forms of social consciousness[291], for “ignorance of the determining characteristics of Marxian economics”, failure to comprehend Marx’s works[292], and opposition to his “real spirit” (p.33).

> “There are the following two vital points in Marx's economics: first, relations of production between men correspond to a definite stage of development of their material power of production; secondly, forms of social consciousness correspond to definite relations of production. These two essential views differentiate his economics from what he calls tire "bourgeois economics." Thus, he is proving a universal proposition that "it is not the consciouness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness," by elucidating how such forms of social consciousness as the commodity, money, capital, value, price, porfit etc., are corresponding to definite relations of production. Marx devotes his entire volumes of Capital to prove this above·stated point, but some think that " Capital" does not deal with the question of forms of social consciousness,

[290] Again quoted from Marx (1847; :29;)

[291] Kawakami in particular, refers to Fukumoto’s article (for the journal Marxism), “A study of the place of Capital in the critique of economics” [Yagi (2007:38) states the article as “Argument on the Range of The Capital in Marx's Critique of Political Economy (Keizaigaku hihan no uchini okeru Marukusu Shihonron no Hanni o Ronzu)” (1924)]. Fukumoto had “conceived the totality of the modern bourgeois society as an enlarged reproduction process of the following four-layered system: (1) pure economic process, (2) state process (political process), (3) conscious process, and (4) international process” (ibid). Based on this, he “defined "the unified totality of all the processes" as the object of criticism in political economy and identified its final purpose as "clarifying the law of economic motion" of the modern bourgeois society”(ibid).

[292] “*the* fact that Marx points out that these economic categories are historical forms of consciousness which correspond to definite relations of production, cannot be comprehended by them.” (p. 33).

because they regard such things as the commodity, money, capital, value, etc., either as things themselves or their natural qualities." (ibid: 32-3)

As Yagi (2007: 40) has suggested[293], Fukumoto's emphasis on consciousness "might have strongly appealed to Kawakami's idealistic mind". Kawakami was struggling to understand Marx's conception of historical materialism and simultaneously, to not lose completely his belief in the existence of a role for human in the society.

Marx thus, Kawakami argued, devoted his efforts to the study of the forms of social (economic) consciousness. As such, it was a "prerequisite for the thorough understanding of his historical materialism" to understand Marx's economic views, Kawakami claimed. And of course, this could be done by the study of his "greatest work", "Capital":

> "The preface to "Critique of Political Economy" contains Marx's formula, and his main work, "Capital," is the continuation of the former work, as he explicitly tells us in the preface to the first edition of the latter. Thus the formula of historical materialism is at once the preface to and the conclusion of, his greatest work, "Capital." […] Just as it is wrong to separate "the economic structure of society" from "the forms of social consciousness," it is also a grave mistake to separate "the legal and political superstructures" from " the economic structure of society" upon which the former stand." (p.33-4)

Moreover, "Production relations and legal relations, economic actions and legal actions-these do not exist in separation as do water and oil. Some legal relations and relations of production which are expressed by the former are like both sides of the same paper." (p.35).

Kawakami finally, made a distinction between "ideological forms" and "economic forms of social consciousness":

> "I have already pointed out that, of forms of social consciousness, what can be regarded as forms of economic consciousness are such things as the commodity, money, capital, value, price, profit, etc., all of which have on inseparable connection with relations of production and which are not included among ideological conceptions in which men become conscious of the contradictions of material life and fight it out. For this reason Marx excluded economic forms from what he calls ideological forms in the latter part of his formula." (p. 36)

Kawakami replied here to Kushida, who had argued[294] that despite the fact that Marx omitted the economic form in the passage where he talked about the distinction between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production and ideological forms[295], he actually included economic ideas in the forms of social consciousness (Kawakami 1926). Ideological forms ("political conceptions" such as the concepts of socialism or communism),

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[293] By citing Yamanouchi Yasushi.

[294] In "Essay on Socialism," (Kaizo, 1924).

[295] "In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic -- in short, ideological -- forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out." (A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, available at: https://sites.pitt.edu/~syd/marx.html).

"'in which man become conscious of the contradictions of material life and fight it out'", are different from the forms of economic consciousness Kawakami had mentioned above, which "everyone in society have", he argued, despise them being "also determined by the existing relations of production" (p.37). Kawakami did not believe that here Marx implied economic ideas as well:

> "This is my opinion that those things which are bound up with 'the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science' and which are to be distinguished from 'the ideological forms' are meant to be definite economic facts, and not economic ideas themselves. I do not believe that his political ideas include economic ideas; nor does it seem reasonable to suppose that Marx forgot to mention economic forms in his formula."(p.35-6)

Kawakami gave again the example of Meiji Restoration, the "bourgeois revolution in Japan". As he said, the Restoration was carried out in the name of political/religious conceptions (loyalty and anti-foreign sentiment) however, "Marx would contend that the revolution is not to be explained from the standpoint, not of those ideological forms but of the relations of production which existed at the time" (p.36). Consequently, an analysis of "economic facts", which resolves itself into an analysis of forms of economic consciousness, would be necessary. "The transformation of the economic conditions of production inevitably accompanies a similar transformation of the contents of the forms of economic consciousness." (p. 36-7), he explained.

"[Social] Scientific truth" - "Religious truth"

The scholar Sugihara Shiro, in summarizing his lifetime work on the history of economic thought (four volumes[296] in total, the last unpublished) devoted his third volume to Kawakami. He gave it the title "Learning and Humanity: Studies on Kawakami Hajime" (Yagi 2013). The title's choice -"Learning and Humanity"- seems indeed to be a very descriptive one to give to Kawakami's course in the study of economics.

"Other than that of a scholar, Kawakami had various aspects of life such as that of a patriot, a man of letters, and a truth seeker. It is the nature of Kawakami that all these features existed not separately but were combined in one, in Kawakami. Being such a person, Kawakami had to be a man on voyage from the beginning up to the end of his life", Sugihara notes, presenting Kawakami as a "*tabibito*" i.e. a traveler[297] (Yagi 2013: 5).

Sugihara in his book, traced "Kawakami's lifelong inquiry" having as a basis his rereading of Kawakami's Autobiography "whereupon he realized the significance of Kawakami's reflections on the strained relationship between "scientific truth" and "religious truth" during his five years in prison" Yagi (2013: 2). Kawakami's Autobiography (jijōden -

[296] Volume 1. The Essence of Economy and Labor: Studies on Marx, Volume 2. Liberty and Progress: Studies on John Stuart Mill, Volume 3. Learning and Humanity: Studies on Kawakami Hajime, and Volume 4. Intellectual History and Bibliography: Studies on Japan (Yagi 2013).

[297] As Deguchi (1962:46) notes, Kawakami himself often referred to his "scientific career or even general human affairs" as journeys, and compared himself to a traveler ("a wayfarer").

自叙伝) was published posthumously (1947) and has been since then of much interest to scholars wishing to understand Kawakami the person, and his thought. It was there where he claimed that "his position "as a materialist who asserts the existence of religious truth" is what defines his interpretation of Marxism (Jijoden 5, 161)" (Carley 2017: 89).

Like Sugihara, Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, in her book "Pure land, real world: modern Buddhism, Japanese leftists, and the utopian imagination", includes a chapter[298] on Kawakami and his peculiar relationship to religion and religious inquiries, basing much of her analysis on his Autobiography[299]. Curley tries through it to examine Kawakami's concepts of "religious truth" and "scientific truth".

Kawakami continued to study Marx's works, and by the 1930s he had already acquired a good idea of their content, and could dive deeper into their analysis. As should be apparent, Kawakami was well aware that his Marxism often deviated from the "scientific" approach most Marxist wished to follow. That is also why, to the observer, he often looks as struggling. However, it can be argued that after his release from prison, and despite his material deprivation, his curious mind had settled, had calmed down. After years of inquiries and theoretical struggles, he had arrived at a conclusion, a theory, which appears as a continuation of his previous ideas. He himself admits in his Autobiography that he felt relieved and satisfied with his intellectual conclusions.

It is obvious that Kawakami, from early on, saw economics as an empirical science. He often cited data and contemporary academic research to support his views. He also inspected and documented the conditions in various places and industries (Sumiya 2005). As however Deguchi (1962: 50) notes, Kawakami was often unaware of the extent to which he linked his scientific research with social practice[300]. Economics for him had a clear connection to real phenomena and human actions and therefore, scientific knowledge was to be directed to social practice. We can see that in that he, ultimately (and until his imprisonment), chose to abandon formal academic circles, to carry out his own research on Marxism, and to get involved in the social movements of his time. Especially in the case of Marxism, which Kawakami saw as oriented toward the unity of theory and practice, political practice was perceived by him as a duty, a duty which as he later wrote sustained him in his pursuit of scientific truth (Sumiya 2005).

Much more for Kawakami though, the materialist conception of history was compatible with the belief in the existence of something other, something inner and human. In his later years he thus established a distinction between a religious truth (shūkyōteki shinri - 宗教的真理), which deals with the esoteric human realm, and a social scientific truth (shakaikagakuteki shinri -社会科学的真理), which is concerned with the objective knowledge of the external world. Each one of "these two kinds of truth had clearly its own specific domain to govern" (Deguchi 1962: 40-1)[301].

[298] Chapter three : Special Marxist, Special Buddhist.
[299] And his work "Prison Ramblings (Gokuchū zeigo)", published also posthumously (1947).
[300] Deguchi (1962: 50) gives as an example Kawakami's later confession that while in Kyoto, he "*was determined to make propaganda of socialism as much as* possible making the best use of the position of an university professor".
[301] As Deguchi (1962: 41) notes "this conviction of Kawakami constitutes an inherent as well as a fundamental factor that can be traced back to the origin of his thoughts."

In order to explain Kawakami's notion and function of "religious truth", Carley (2017) highlights his relationship with religion[302]. She argues that the fact that Kawakami returned to the study of religion during his years in prison, while surprising and unusual for a Marxist, proved that his "youthful interest" in religion was not only a passing phase. Kawakami himself argued that it was through the religious experiences he had acquired that he became a Marxist for the first time, and that they were exactly those very forces that once drove him to enthusiasm for the religious movements that drove him to further devote himself to the study of Marxism (Sumiya 2005). Religion (maybe not in the form we are used to in the West) played clearly a decisive role throughout Kawakami's life, assuming different forms and nuances. Carley (2017: 94) points out that the "the most interesting feature of Kawakami's treatment of religion, […] is that there is so little about it that is traditional.".

As has been mentioned above, Kawakami was raised by learning the Confucian teachings, far from religious influences. As however, religion often comes to ease people's agonies, so it soon did for the restless young Kawakami. He thus became interested in Christianity as a student, like many of his contemporaries, and soon familiarized himself with Buddhism as well. As quickly he turned to religion though, just as quickly he became disillusioned by it.

His experience with the Muga ai movement can be considered as the most stimulating one, leading to what he described as his "great death".

> "I was able to assign a koan[303] to myself, for myself: "if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you." Should one live one's life according to these words? And if so, how? This was the koan I assigned myself, and happily I was able to examine it thoroughly, giving it my all. At last by means of making a firm decision to neither sleep nor rest, killing the self by its own power, I was able to see [the answer]. By means of plunging deeply into such a course, I believe I ultimately attained the experience of the moment of Great Death, or the extinguishing of the ego (jiga mekkyaku 自我滅却). (Jijoden *5, 145)*"[304]

It was at this moment that Kawakami realized the "religious truth" for the first time. The moment when he realized that he (his body) was but an "instrument under heaven (天下の公器)", which he should nurture with care, and offer for the sake of the public, while striving to suppress his selfishness (Sumiya 2005)[305].

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[302] She as well notes the impact that had on Kawakami his experience in prison.

[303] Koan (公案) refers to a "is a story, dialogue, question, or statement which is used in Zen [Buddhism] practice to provoke the "great doubt" and to practice or test a student's progress in Zen" [Wikipedia].

[304] As in Carley (2017: 91).

[305] Sumiya (2005) describes how Kawakami was struggling at the time, seeing sleeping as a kind of sin. Being desperate to evangelize the dogma of selflessness, he had to reduce his sleep as much as possible, something that if continued would eventually lead him to death.

Religion as such, Kawakami believed, reflecting the interests of a particular social class (ruling one), degenerates and assumes the role/form that Marx had attributed to it, i.e. becomes the "opium of the masses", which "numbs the fighting spirit and sedates the defiant power of the masses" (Carley 2017: 100). Through the invocation of powerful gods and promises of paradise, religions function as a tool in the hands of capitalists, enabling them to discourage courageous resistance and confirm in the minds of the masses their powerlessness, which itself, "as it is experienced in the current moment is a product of capitalism, insofar as it arises on the basis of fear (kyōfu 恐怖) and insecurity (fuan) (117), which themselves arise on the basis of the poverty capitalism engenders"[306] (Catley 2017:100). "Religious truth" however, is distinct from religion.

To begin, it is not a matter of "escaping into a world of mystical clouds and fog" (Carley 2017: 104). "Religious truth" is in fact the one that once grasped, liberates us from religion (ibid). "Kawakami defines religious truth as consciousness of consciousness itself (ishiki sono mono o ishiki -意識そのものを意識) (1947, 78)" (Carley 2017: 95). It is a state where a person is aware of his consciousness. It is an action directed inwards.

"As a Marxist, Kawakami is committed to materialism, so he positions the material at the base of consciousness: the body and its sense organs are the basis upon which consciousness arises (76)." (Carley 2017: 95). In this sense, Kawakami remains a materialist. Religious truth however, "is not arrived at by means of the ordinary operations of consciousness through which we grasp external things as objects. It is arrived at by means of an extraordinary operation of consciousness through which the mind shows itself to itself as an operation or activity." (ibid: 98). It is a different process[307], which only the human mind can carry out.

Such views now, claiming that "religious truth" can only be realized "by directing consciousness inward" can be found in Buddhism or Confucianism for example (ibid: 98). "Religious truth" does exist at the core of the established religions Kawakami believed. Religious practice is seen by him as a "formal method for pursuing and producing consciousness of consciousness" (ibid). However, "religious truth" is being covered over -and even metamorphosed- by various elements originating in class society. As Carley (2017: 99-100) describes it:

> "when religious truth circulates within a class society, it becomes permeated by the features of that class society, "like the pure rain and dew from

[306] An interesting point on the worldviews of Capitalism and Buddhism in regard to suffering, was recently made by Prof. Tim Jackson, for a podcast of the Institute for New Economic Thinking (Available at: https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/videos/life-after-capitalism). Prof. Jackson notes that while both systems accept the inevitability of suffering ("everything is suffering"), they go to completely opposite direction: Capitalism says that because everything is suffering, a struggle of survival, competition between individuals is the only way to survive in the "struggle of existence". Therefore competition becomes its most important principle. Buddhism from its side, says that because everything is suffering and suffering comes from people's cravings, someone has to reduce those and increase his/her concern for others. Capitalism thus proposes to ignore the suffering of others while Buddhism to sympathize and care for them.

[307] "A science like psychology "handles the mind using the same method with which it handles [external] things. But just as the eye reflected in the mirror is not the eye itself, the mind in this case is not the mind itself—lively and wriggling with energy; it is rather a mind that has become objectified, reified, dead" (1947, 90)." [Carley 2017: 97]

> the sky which fall to earth, flow forth, and become the muddy stream of the Yellow River" (89). This has two related effects. First, religious truth becomes obscured by layers of "fantasy, superstition, false views, delusion, deception, lies, and so on" (129), such that it "loses its radiance completely" (130). These layers themselves, produced whenever religious truth is shared or made social, are the substance of the religious organization (kyōdan 教団), which Kawakami understands as synonymous with religion (*shūkyō*) (129). […] religion is always only an accretion of errors laid on top of religious truth, and religious organizations are always already degenerate. Second, because the layers accumulating around religious truth are permeated by class interests, religious organizations inevitably reflect those interests and thus serve the ruling class. This is how religion comes to function as the opium of the masses (130, 142*)*."

"Scientific truth" now, is the one exposed by Marx and his historical materialism. Marx's theory is indispensable in order to understand the present social formation, and engage in social activism. "Scientific truth" functions as a guide, just like any other science. According to Kawakami:

> "However deeply one has studied Zen, it does not mean one understands capital (shihonron 資本論), just as however much one practices the Buddhist law (buppō), without mastering the study of science, one will not understand the theory of electricity; without knowledge of engineering, one will not understand the structure of an airplane; and without knowledge of medicine, one will not understand the structure of the human body. When it comes to the structure of capitalism—its emergence, growth, and extinction—it is the Marxist canon that explains all of this scientifically; there is no method outside of this through which to gain an understanding of it. (159–160*)*"[308]

As Carley (2017: 103) notes, Kawakami claimed that "one's religious understanding, however profound, does not in itself prepare one for effective social engagement". That is to say, "scientific truth" exists independently of "religious truth"[309]. The attainment of one does not mean that of the other. And that is something that is reflected in the methods advanced by Buddhist schools, which often "prefer silence to speech" (Carley 2017).

> "And yet, Kawakami protests, "religious specialists these days often feel free to have a say on social questions" and even to criticize Marxism and communism, when they should be biting their tongues: social problems "can only be solved through the power of science (or social science). Just as curing illness, reforming agriculture, and discovering the Various uses of electricity are not problems to be solved by religious specialists, social problems cannot be solved by religious specialists"" (ibid: 103).

[308] As in Carley (2017:103).

[309] Deguchi (1962) on the other hand, claimed (by examining the Tale) that Kawakami saw religious truth and empiric-scientific truth as directly linked. He attributes the primary cause of that to the fact that in "Oriental thought […] ambiguity remained between the scientific truth and religious truth". He thus concludes that in the "Tale", while "started with the presentation of positive evidence of the existence of poverty ended with an economic ethics inspired by Oriental thought in ancient times" (ibid: 49).

"Religious truth" however, can facilitate the attainment of "scientific truth". As Carley (2017: 104) notes, "the person who has grasped religious truth is a person free to pursue scientific truth using scientific methods. Religious truth does not in itself solve social problems, but it does give rise to the negation of religion that is required in order to solve social problems.". As Kawakami wrote, "every time the masses rise up in order to realize their actual happiness in the world, the gods are abandoned by the masses and die"[310].

Someone therefore, who has attained "religious truth" (like himself[311]), being freed from the illusions and false hopes and fears that religions create –always in the framework of capitalism- will be at a position to address his/her real material conditions. Marx and Engels themselves noted in "The Communist Manifesto"[312]:

> "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.".

This state of "self-consciousness" is not what "religious truth" facilitates to attain? As Carley (2017: 114) concludes:

> "Thus Kawakami arrived at a theory of two truths in which neither one was subordinate to the other but instead each stabilized the other by virtue of their difference. Religious truth supplements Marxist social science with a powerful self that could persist in being a Marxist against all odds."(ibid: 114)

Conclusion

Let us ask the question: why did Kawakami get interested in economics, and eventually in Marxism? Was it not because he found meaningful to do so, in order to stay true to his believes and to himself? Sumiya (2005) mentions an article entitled "Economics and Life (経済学と人生)", published in 1915, in a magazine called "Christian World (キリスト教世界)", where Kawakami tried to answer the question of why he chose to do research in economics. He claimed to have been "very troubled by this question", as he himself had once "abandoned economics as a trivial subject". What eventually led him to economics though, was his interest about how poverty came about and what will happen in the future. As he claimed, as long as there was poverty, selfless love could not be realized[313].

Kawakami believed in economics, and in Marxism. He putted his hopes on them, and devoted much of his life to their study. Moreover, he never committed tenkō (転向), i.e.

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[310] As in Carley (2017: 104)

[311] It is worth mentioning that Sumiya (2005) notes that Kawakami, through his inquiries and conclusions may be even possibly regarded as someone who is narcissist, or too self-absorbed.

[312] Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm

[313] Economics also were attractive he added, and as such he could not stay away from them (ibid).

political-ideological conversion[314]. He did publish a statement when in prison, announcing that he will severe his ties to the movement (legal or illegal), and return to his previous studies. He did not however renounce his views. After his release from prison, he was at ease with himself. He wrote in his Autobiography that he had no regrets (Carley 2017).

He did not renounce his views neither on his basic beliefs. Yagi (2013: 1) notes that "Kawakami's moralist attitude did not change, even though he became a Marxist, and can be seen in his reflections on religious truth and scientific truth during his prison years.". The choice of Kawakami thus, as the main figure of this chapter, allows us to examine the "morality question" from two different perspectives.

Kawakami's economic thought can be said that was based on his (and his time's) moral standards. Economics were not seen just as a science able to explain objectively material conditions and anticipate future outcomes. Economics were a valuable tool to understand and change the course the nation and society were taking. Economics were indeed indispensable to administer the nation and ease the suffering of the people for Kawakami.

Simultaneously, Kawakami's economic thought was formed through a morally oriented approach to economics adopted by him. Kawakami engaged in economic studies and research with a very serious attitude, and sense of duty. He reflected upon the criticism made to him (despite selectively), and struggled to deepen his knowledge and understanding of economic concepts and approaches. As has been explained above, he saw himself as an "instrument" to be used for the public good.

Kawakami's case hence is indicative not only in the aspect of him resorting to morality in the construction of his arguments but also, in that his attitude towards economics and scholarship was based on and often driven by his ethical standards in life. His consistency in studying social problems, his personal struggles concerning his scholarship, his sense of duty, duty to pursue deeper his understanding of Marxism for example or to respond to other scholars when they seemed to advance false views.

But Kawakami's case remains quite relevant as well. The role of moral argumentation in economics has been recently discussed more vividly and widely, and issues discussed a century ago are still posing pressing questions. The mainstream narrative that wants economic agents to act on atomistic basis for example, keeps getting called into question. Furthermore, as Drakopoulos (forthcoming:1) points out, "The idea that social influences and social interactions play a central role on individual economic decisions has had a long presence in the history of economics", despite the fact that it keeps getting rejected by mainstream economics. Today, there are studies[315] showing that human beings were not historically always living as competitive, greedy individuals, seeking their self-interest.

Moreover, the problems that Kawakami endeavored to address a century ago are quite present today, a century later. The issues of poverty, unemployment, inequality are all

[314] A process that is considered to have begun in 1933, when two imprisoned leading figures of the JCP, Sano Manabu (1892-1953) and Nabeyama Sadachika (1901-79), made a public declaration (later referred to by using the older term tenkō), where they renounced Marxism and stated their support for the imperial system. Through governmental pressure many others followed. For more on the history of tenkō see: Sipos, George T. & Hayter, Irena & Williams, Mark. (2021). Tenkō: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar Japan.

[315] See for example: https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/is-the-doom-of-humanity-really-inevitable-maybe-not .

pressing matters, all the more in a post-pandemic world[316], characterized by high inflation and the return of expansionist wars. It is striking how the history repeats itself. Or rather, how history can reveal that progress is a relative term.

Kawakami's ideas and the discussions of his time, a time when Japanese society, after going through tremendous changes, was beginning to question its "achievements" and models, can be connected to all those discussions taking place today, concerning issues such as what our economies should look like or what should we pay attention to (instead for example of just following and looking increases in productivity, output, efficiency etc.). Different paths seem all the more possible nowadays, and people from the past often remind us exactly that. The possibility of the emergence of a post-pandemic economy that emphasizes other issues/values (environment, human beings, inequalities, time-poverty etc.) are much discussed nowadays. The established economic system (in the West) is often accused of issues such as anxiety of capitalism or insistence on materialism. Voices calling for a system that will allow the realization of human potential are also increasing.

To conclude therefore about Kawakami, as Deguchi (1962) notes, in order to understand him and appreciate his thought, someone has to see him both as an economist but also as a social thinker. Only then "the spirit that dwelt in the innermost depths of his personality springs up to forefront clearly revealing itself. We can only then find out how his spiritual self dealt with the realities of life. It must be in such philosophical problem that Kawakami as a so-called "wisdom-seeker" is to be discussed." (ibid: 40). Only then his ideas make sense.

[316] Kawakami experienced the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918.

Chapter IV

The National Question

This chapter focuses on the "national question". Walker (2012: 3/iii) points out that "[t]he "national question" remained the decisive center around which Marxists considered the strategies and tactics of politics, as well as the means and methods of writing history". It was as well decisive for the development of the economic thought of Japanese "Marxists" throughout the period under study.

The term (national question) can be (and has been) used to express various and different issues related to the concept of the nation. Walker (2012: 3) for example refers to the "problem of 'national question'", as "the theories of the distinguishing or specific characteristics of the Japanese situation" through the years, and he uses the framework of the Debate on Japanese Capitalism to examine the issue. As Hobsbawn (1992: 10) notes, "[t]he 'national question', as the old Marxists called it, is situated at the point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation".[317] Concerning this dissertation, the term is seen more broadly and entails all those efforts, by the prewar Japanese Marxists, to address issues related to the national advancement and enhancement, in the global framework of the time.

As has been mentioned in the previous chapters (and briefly described in Appendix I), Japan was among the many countries that saw an increasing turn towards nationalism, militarization and authoritarianism, especially from the second half of the 1930s onwards, when increased military expenditures and activities were accompanied by a public discourse, and a variety of theories justifying nationalism. Moreover, the Peace Preservation Law (1925) and the "Special Higher Police (abbreviated as Tokkō -特高)" targeted anyone/anything attempting to alter the "kokutai (national polity)" or the established political socio-economic system.

As however will be shown below, the "national question" concerned the Japanese thinkers already from the beginning of the century[318]. What is of interest to this particular study is that socialist and Marxist thought was at the center of the discussions around it. Marxism, at the period under study, either was used by the Japanese in order to advance views that justified Japan's efforts to expand and/or dominate neighboring territories, either as the theoretical basis which explained the country's unique situation, and proposed possible future actions.

Already in the previous chapters it became clear that the "national question" was present in the economic and Marxist discussions of the time.

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[317] When looking therefore at the ideas developed as response to the "national question[s]", the framework in which they emerge should as well be taken into consideration.

[318] Even before. As Hobsbawn (1992: 10) notes "nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalism but the other way aroun". However, the analysis of the thought of pre-modern period is out of the scope of this work. You can see for example: Najita, T. (1971). Restorationism in the Political Thought of Yamagata Daini (1725–1767). Journal of Asian Studies, 31(1), 17–30. https://doi.org/10.2307/2053047

In the framework of the Debate on Japanese capitalism discussed in chapter II, we saw for example in the works of the theorists of the Kōza group an insistence on the peculiarities of the Japan's capitalist development and conditions. Walker (2012) in particular, examines the views of Yamada Moritarō in that respect. As has been already discussed, Yamada and his Kōza peers often highlighted Japan's unique path to capitalist development and its peculiar contemporary conditions. Kōza-ha's theses in particular, highlighted the uniqueness of the Japanese case versus the rest of the world. The Japanese scholars, realizing the difficulty to draw parallels of the Japanese case with the "universal" model of development found in the Marxian theory, attempted to provide evidence of Japan's alternative route, and "fit" that in the general Marxian theory.

We saw that even earlier, in Kawakami's case, the "national question" became a motif for his studies on economics. Kawakami's thought can often be seen in retrospect to his concerns about national enhancement (economic and military). Poverty, in that sense, was regarded as an ill, weakening the nation through the weakening of its population[319]. In the case of Kawakami, his concerns for national enhancement were thus as well an example of the many forms the "national question" assumed in the discussions of the time.

The issue of "national question" as examined in this chapter goes beyond the issues the first Marxists discussed, such as Stalin in his 1913 work "Marxism and the National Question". The national challenges Japan was dealing with had not so much to do with the problem of uniting/accommodating different groups of various national identities in a movement. The principle concerns of the Japanese Marxists of the time were related to national enhancement, and the nation's placement among the other developed nations, in the global sphere.

It can thus be argued that the approaches the Japanese Marxists of the time adopted, regarding ideas related to the "national question" and nationalism, can be seen as going into two main directions: the one leading to those thinkers who developed their Marxism as an attempt to contribute to the national efforts for advancement, and the other leading to those who entangled in the official efforts to enhance the national spirit, sought to fit their Marxism (or at least Marxist background) in the greater official narratives. The second group developed more profoundly during the late 1930s and early 40s.

The idea that Japan should assume a leading role in the world was not new. Already in 1902 for example, in his "The Past And Present Of Japanese Commerce" Kinoshita Eitarō (1871-?), noted that Japan:

> "Adopting and adapting western civilization, they are [the Japanese] best fitted to interpret it to the other races of the other races of the Orient. Spurred on by commercial aims and opportunities, the Japanese will mingle largely with the peoples of western civilization and with those of the more ancient and inert civilizations. The Empire of The Rising Sun is sure to be, in a great measure, the workshop and the carrier of the Far East, and in fulfilling this capacity, she will find other opportunities opening before her. The "Federation of the world" is far off - very far; but in moving towards it, whatever may be the part in the drama of human existence which Nippon has to play, she will seek to

[319] Some remarks on his related views follow below.

accredit herself to all the peoples of the earth. For many centuries she has lived apart. Her exclusiveness is put away forever. Japan is now in friendly rivalry with the other nations, and the history of what she has been, is, and hopes to be, has now, we hope, become of general interest.".

The narrative that wanted Japan to be the most fitted in promoting the interest and advancement of the region, became widespread during the next decades. Even figures like Nitobe Inazō (新渡戸 稲造, 1862-1933), former under-secretary general of the League of Nations who was regarded as someone who advocated peace and international cooperation, towards his latest years adopted it (at least officially)[320].

Complementary to this narrative, was the view that Japan was fighting alone, under uneven terms, in a world scene dominated by a powerhouse of western nations (Russia included). As will be shown below, international competition and power dynamics at the global level were of great concern to both Marxists and non-Marxists thinkers throughout the pre-WWII period[321].

In this framework therefore, Marxist thinkers could not avoid related discussions, and most importantly, some of them could not distance themselves from, often popular, nationalistic and radical views. As will be briefly presented below, thinkers used concepts developed by Marxism in order to justify views that supported the country's expansionist and nationalistic tendencies of the time.

As Hoston (1984b: 44) notes, the "dichotomy in the treatment of Marxist and nationalist thinkers in prewar Japan is misleading". The examples of "Marxists" advancing nationalist views (and vice versa) are numerous throughout this period[322]. On the one hand, Marxism offered the theoretical base for anti-capitalism and as such, its diffusion among the disappointed and alarmed from the social problems (see previous chapters) Japanese thinkers of the time was wide. On the other, the global framework into which the Japanese state and economy had to develop, triggered in many their national sentiment, which tried to respond to potential external (often turning internal) threats. The result was a variety of different approaches combining elements of Marxist theory and national sentiment.

Hoston (1983:110) notes that "Marxism ultimately posed a serious threat to Japanese national identity, creating an intellectual and social conflict that all Japanese Marxists were at pains to resolve". The phenomenon of Tenkō (転向) was a reaction to this. Tenkō refers

[320] For more about Nitobe see: Oshiro, G. M. (1985). Internationalist in prewar Japan : Nitobe Inazō, 1862-1933 (T). Retrospective Theses and Dissertations, 1919-2007. University of British Columbia.
[321] Linkhoeva (2020: 17) argues that "Japanese Meiji leadership, […] never felt secure about Japan's standing. Witnessing the "scramble for China," the new modernizing political and intellectual elite saw Western powers, including Russia, as predators ready to take advantage of weakened Japan. Fear of colonization, formal or informal, became a sort of paranoia, permeating the general public, the political elite, and the military."
[322] Linkhoeva (2020: 10): The "conflation of Marxism and nationalism was, of course, a global post–World War I phenomenon, especially in those countries where socialism amalgamated with the goals of national independence and rapid modernization". Sygkelos (2011: 2): "Indeed, it could be argued that many Third-World nationalists turned to Marxism-Leninism, because it helped to explain away the backwardness of their countries and provided national liberation movements with an effective anti-imperialist discourse. This generous contribution of Marxism to its ostensibly rival ideology has been largely ignored."

mainly to the ideological conversion of hundreds of "Marxists", activists and thinkers in Japan, the years before WWII[323]. In 1933, the leading figures of the Japanese Communist Party Sano Manabu (1892-1953) and Nabeyama Sadachika (1901-1979), while imprisoned, declared their convention, initiating what have been called the "mass tenkō" of the 1930s:

> "In a co-authored letter titled 'A Letter to our Fellow Defendants' (Kyōdō hikoku dōshi ni tsuguru sho), Sano and Nabeyama […] announced a 'significant change' (jūyō na henkō) in their political position and urged their comrades to break with the Comintern, to reconnect the revolutionary vanguard to the Japanese masses and to harness the purported nationalist sentiments of the working class in order to carry out a socialist transformation across the Japanese Empire. The authorities released the letter to the press on June 10 and distributed the letter to 600 other incarcerated JCP members throughout the country on June 13.9 In the weeks following the Sano–Nabeyama announcement, Justice Ministry procurators met in Tokyo to take stock of these defections and to consider methods for inspiring other incarcerated communists to defect. Their efforts paid off and by the end of summer 1933, hundreds of incarcerated JCP members renounced the party and the Comintern. In this way, the infamous 'mass tenkō' (tairyō tenkō) of 1933–34 was engineered by the state and, building from this success, the state codified tenkō as a central pillar of its 'thought crime' apparatus in 1936." (Ward 2021: 6)

According to Hoston (1983: 98):

> "By 1940 virtually all JCP members had tenkōed, including many who had once condemned Sano's and Nabeyama's action. Most of the exceptions, like Yamakawa Hitoshi, were associated with the Rōnō-ha faction, which, having left the JCP, was more secure from police pressures until 1936.
>
> Group, or organizational, tenkō reached a peak in 1942, when almost all existing political parties and labor organizations merged to form the Taisei yokusansai (Imperial Rule Assistance Association). The left-wing socialist movement was now but a ghost of its former self. Radical Marxist intellectuals like Hirano Yoshitarō, who had made innovative contributions to Marxist literature concerning Japanese capitalism, began to reflect their tenkō in new writings."[324]

It should be noted that what is examined in this chapter are ideas that arose before the second half of the 1930s, and the country's extreme turn to military authoritarianism. The cases of Marxist thinkers adopting the national line, abandoning their previous views, doing tenkō etc. during the late 1930s onwards represent a different story which should be examined

[323] The phenomenon of Tenkō is more complex, while the term was expanded to cover a wide range of cases. For more see: Hayter I. Sipos G. T. & Williams M. (2021). Tenkō cultures of political conversion in transwar japan. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429280559

[324] It should be noted that Tenkō has sometimes been regarded as a means to deceit the "system". Even at the time, as Ward (2021: 8) mentions, "Conservative politicians were surprised by the wave of 'ideological conversions' that swept through the population of incarcerated communists during the summer of 1933. Many expressed scepticism as to whether these conversions were authentic or merely a ruse for communists to be released from jail and continue their illegal political activities (what came to be labelled gisō-tenkō [fake-conversion]".

on its own. The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a general overview of the way Marxism developed and was used during the first decades of the 20th century, and concerns about the nation -what it is described here as the "national question"- were one of the issues "Marxists" devoted their attention to.

In this context, some remarks concerning the issue and the topics of previous chapters are given next. A brief presentation of the Marxian discussions around the "national question[s]" at the time follows. Finally, two of the most representative examples where "Marxism" was used as a base to advance nationalistic views are briefly discussed.

Marxism and the National Question

The concept of the "nation", and everything deriving from it, can be said to be of central role in the Marxian theory. It is essential for the emergence of capitalism, its development and survival, and it is something that is going to go away once capitalism collapses. It is therefore, a concept that ought to be studied and conceptualized accordingly. The same apply consequently to the "national question[s]" (however defined). However, "[i]n the writings of Marx and Engels, the national question is rather marginal and of peripheral interest" (Sygkelos 2011: 10).

In Marx's theory classes, "and not nations or states, are the basic units in history, and the struggle between classes, instead of interstate conflict, occupies the center of attention", while "[d]omestic politics itself, together with the political forms of the class struggle, and all types of ideological consciousness such as religious beliefs and national identities, belong to the 'superstructure'" (Berki 1971:81). The same applies for international politics and war (Craig 2017).

While Marx and Engels hence did not address directly the "national question[s]" as such, they occasionally in their writings, stumbled upon it, and placed it in the framework deemed most appropriate for the purposes of their analysis each time. They "brought it under what they saw as a more pressing or fundamental political or economic issue (the Irish question to Anglo–Irish landlordism, the Polish to Russian expansionism, and the Indian to British imperialism)" (Sygkelos 2011: 10).

When regarded generally, Marxism's connection to the "national question" can be examined in respect to mainly four aspects: a nation's right to self-determination, a state's role in the economy, international relations, and national sentiment (nationalism). Consequently, a wide range of topics related to those issues can be invoked, and discussed when referring to the "national question". To name a few: war, formation of nations-states, international relations, national identity, nationalism, imperialism, state's economic role, local (national) unique conditions, among others. Many of these issues have been occasionally commented upon by Marx and Engels, but ambiguity concerning their views on them remains vast.

As it can be assumed, all those issues cannot be discussed here. What this section tries to accomplish, is to set the general framework for the section that follows, and the ideas presented in it. As such, some of the most often discussed topics concerning Marxism and the above mentioned issues are briefly presented.

It is difficult to "extract" a theory of state from Marx's writings. Barrow (2000: 87) argues that:

> "Efforts to arbitrate between competing theories of the state by returning to the Marxian classics are futile, first, because the classical texts are 'incomplete' and, second, because they are ambiguous and often self-contradictory. Hence, as long as Marx's writings remain a key referent for the development of state theory, it will be necessary to recognize that a range of positions is defensible from within the intellectual canon and that the canon itself provides no basis for arbitrating among the competing theories."

That is why someone has to go beyond Marx's and Engels' works, he argues. There are however, some parts in their writings that can be of use in the efforts to understand their stance on the state, and other issues related to it.

In their "Communist Manifesto" Marx and Engels state that at the era of capitalism:

> "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."[325]

The modern state, an instrument of the bourgeois class, acts in its favor through coercive policies aiming at subjugating the proletariat class. For Marx contemporary national states were a product of capitalism (a bourgeois creation)[326]. Their existence served specific historical purposes, which would become obsolete once capitalism disappears from the world. Engels wrote in 1884[327]:

> "The state, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which have managed without it, which had no notion of the state or state power. At a definite stage of economic development, which necessarily involved the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity because of this cleavage. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity, but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they once arose. The state inevitably falls with them. The society which organizes production anew on the basis of free and equal association of the producers will put the whole state machinery where it will then belong – into the museum of antiquities, next to the spinning wheel and the bronze ax."

It can be therefore generally accepted that nations, as units, play an important role in Marxist theory, in the sense that they become the vehicle through which the bourgeois class expands, capitalism develops, and the proletariat is formed and emancipated. Furthermore, it

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[325] N.p. Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm

[326] As Berki notes (1971: 82-3), "[n]ations themselves, in Marxian theory, are not absolute, but historical, and hence ephemeral, units.".

[327] Engels, F. (1884) Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch09.htm

can be accepted that in a post-capitalist world, nations (at least as states) cease to be necessary, as their role has been completed, and thus will gradually disappear[328].

In that context, once national states has emerged, and capitalism is well established, a conscious proletariat emerges, and through class struggle, brings the overthrow of the system. In "Communist Manifesto", Marx and Engels however, make clear that:

> "Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."[329]

In that respect, they also state:

> "The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.
>
> The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.
>
> National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.
>
> The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.
>
> In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another will also be put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."[330]

As therefore "the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation", it can be said that national framework is very important in that respect. Marx and Engels expressed for example

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[328] As Berki (1971) however notes, during the post-WWII years, a silent consent of this outcome arriving in the very distant future is noticed. "[U]nity now tends to be presented as a goal only dimly visible in a distant, misty future", he argues (1971: 91). He gives some examples: "A Pravda editorial in 1963, […], refers to Lenin's teaching that "national and state differences among peoples and countries would continue for a very long time even after the establishment of proletarian dictatorship on a world-scale." It reaffirms, further, the curious double commitment to unity and diversity: "We are obligated to inculcate in the people a love not only for their own country but for the other Socialist countries as well, so that each person will feel that he is a patriot both of his own country and of the entire world Socialist commonwealth." Mao Tse-Tung, not surprisingly, says: "Can a Communist, who is an internationalist, be at the same time a patriot ? We hold that he not only can but must also be one. . . ."".

[329] N.p. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm . National self-determination was for Marx and Engels an indispensable "strategic weapon", notes Berki (1971: 87).

[330] N.p. Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm

occasionally, their support for the national struggles of different groups, such as the Polish people, or the Irish.

The same approach applies to the issue of war. As Craig (2017: n.p.) notes, "Marx and Engels agreed that certain kinds of wars, especially those fought for the achievement of bourgeois national independence from premodern imperial rule, were certainly on the right side of history". Engels on his side, believed that a "major war could serve as an agent of progressive change" (Craig 2017: n.p.), a view that many Marxists adopted later as well. A war could trigger a revolutionary spur they believed.

Simultaneously, the scope of the proletariat goes beyond national boundaries in Marx's scheme. As Morgan (2006: 392) notes, capitalism transcends national boundaries:

> "This global capitalism will, he [Marx] predicts, be met by an ever-growing challenge of proletarian internationalism in which workers recognize that their personal and so-called national interests are also transcended and revolutionary solidarity is achieved. Communists, he argues 'point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality' (Marx & Engels, 1967, p. 95). In short, Marx believed that in the class condition of the proletariat he had discovered, as he wrote to his father, 'the Idea in the real world itself'."

Sometimes however, the proletariat loses its vision and way. That is when nationalism comes to the front. Nationalist ideas then misguide the working class, and divert it from the path it is destined to follow. That being the case, nationalism should be something that can easily be dismissed by the Marxist doctrine. As however is well known, and will later be shown, through the Japanese cases discussed below, nationalism came often to be expressed by thinkers affiliated with Marxism and socialism.

According to the Marxist theory, modern nationalism has its beginning in the late 18th century, and bourgeoisie's efforts to get rid of any feudalist remnants in order for capitalism to prevail[331]. Nationalism thus serves specific purposes, and must not misguide the masses, the proletariat and its cause. "Consistent Social-Democrats must work solidly and indefatigably against the fog of nationalism, no matter from what quarter it proceeds", Stalin (1913) stressed.

The task however, is harder than it may first seem. Stalin (1913) stressed in his famous "Marxism and the National Question":

> "We can always cope with open nationalism, for it can easily be discerned. It is much more difficult to combat nationalism when it is masked and unrecognizable beneath its mask. Protected by the armour of socialism, it is less vulnerable and more tenacious. Implanted among the workers, it poisons the atmosphere and spreads harmful ideas of mutual distrust and segregation among the workers of the different nationalities."

[331] Characteristically, Stalin (1913) noted:"The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism". All the quotes concerning Stalin's 1913 work "Marxism and the National Question" are retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03a.htm

A clear cut thesis on nationalism is absent though in Marx's writings[332]. Sygkelos (2011: 9) argues that despite the fact that "a more general convergence between Marxism and nationalism" can be noticed (as in the Bulgarian case he studies): "[t]he grounds of this convergence pertain to some classical Marxist theoretical principles and axioms that prevented subsequent Marxist generations from developing a coherent, uniform theory of nationalism and an effective strategy to confront it.".

Class reductionism and economic determinism were two major theoretical principles that "inclined classical Marxists to keep the dynamics of nationalism out of their theoretical conceptualisation" (Sygkelos 2011: 10). Class reductionism "obscured the significance of nationalism", as in a world where class consciousness would continue to develop, national consciousness would "wither away", while all the classes "were conceived of as supra-national" in the theory.

Economic determinism as such "fostered a set of conceptions that made an autonomous theory of nationalism as a political phenomenon seem unnecessary" (Sygkelos 2011: 10-1). As nationalism was represented as "an epiphenomenon of the capitalist superstructure" it was bound to collapse along with capitalism, and the nation to disappear. Marxist stage theory now, required the formation of "large states" that "it was believed, guaranteed the advance of productive forces, a condition that would hasten the advent of a classless society"[333]. Finally, the Hegelian inheritance of the "the idealist conception of 'historyless' people", saw the emergence and workings of a "healthy bourgeoisie" as a necessity to their national independence, and progress[334].

Sygkelos (2011: 11) adds Marxian instrumentalism as another major factor in this respect. "[T]he instrumentalist approach to the national question deterred Marxists from constructing a theory of nationalism", he argues, as the latter (or any distinct national movement) was often conceived either as beneficial for the advancement of the socialist cause, and thus encouraged (or used accordingly), either as an obstacle, in which case it was opposed. This "tactical approach to the national question" Sygkelos (2011: 12) notes, explains the "contradiction that the national movement of the same people could be both progressive and reactionary", a distinction advanced by some Marxist thinkers.

Robinson (2020: 61) argues that even Marx and Engels themselves were not free of nationalist sentiment, in respect to Germany, their home country:

> "As analysts of nationalism[335], their legacy then was ambiguous. It appears that with respect to the actual nationalist movements of their time, in Germany, Poland, eastern, or southern Europe, neither Marx nor Engels

[332] Munck (2010: 52) argues that despite the fact that there is not a 'Marxist theory of nationalism' as such, Marxism offers a "richness of perspectives from which to understand nationalism". As such, "all Marxists need to be appraised of the rich, if contradictory, debates around nationalism that have taken place within the broad Marxist tradition since its inception.".

[333] "Yet nationalism 'unmade' large European empires", he notes (Sygkelos 2011: 11).

[334] He adds though that "In fact, the late 19th and the 20th century saw the emergence of a number of small states including those of so-called historyless people, such as Bulgaria." (Sygkelos 2011: 11)

[335] Robinson (2020: 60-1) "Though Marx and Engels substantially agreed about the historical elements and characteristics of European nations extant in the mid-nineteenth century, there were some differences between them respecting the nationalism, or what they came to call the national question […] With respect to nationalism, Marx was the more likely to recognize that as an ideology its historical significance was ambiguous at worst, and Engels that such ambiguity constituted an unacceptable threat."

> achieved an extraordinary comprehension or fully escaped the parochialisms of the day. Rather, their historical method provided them with a means of supporting their predispositions on the historical worth of peoples and the varying capacities of the several European national movements. Their own nationalism whether "unconscious or subconscious," as Davis[336] is forced to concede, or otherwise, made them generally unsympathetic to the national liberation movements of peoples (e.g., the Russians and other Slavs) that historically threatened what Marx and Engels believed to be the national interests of the German people."

It is worth at this point as well to note the adoption by many Marxists of the time, and of course by Marx and Engels themselves, of the distinction between "historic" and "historyless", "revolutionary" and "non-revolutionary" peoples/nations. Munck (1985: 85) mentions characteristically, Marx's and Engels' views the period around the revolutions of 1848:

> "The revolutions of 1848 allowed Marx and Engels to become practical revolutionaries. […] Marx and Engels argued that with the overthrow of absolutism the formation of strong national states was necessary: the 'great historic nations' of Germany, Poland, Hungary and Italy fulfilled the criteria for viable national states. These people had gained this right through their previous struggles for unity and independence. Other smaller, less dynamic nationalities were deemed 'nonhistoric' and undeserving of working class support."

It is evident that if a Marxian thesis on all these issues is requested, someone has to look beyond (and after) Marx and Engels themselves. She/he has to examine the rich Marxist bibliography available out there, and try to spot "tendencies" or points of agreement among the Marxists thinkers and their theories, a task quite daunting itself.

Despite the ambiguities concerning the "national question" in Marx's oeuvre, Marxists scholars coping with contemporary issues came gradually to realize, that the "national question[s]" (however defined in each case) was central to the development of societies, but also of the movement (again however defined). They began therefore, from early on, to develop ideas and theories based on Marxism regarding issues related to the nation and the concept of "national". What emerged were theories and political proposals that however, were not unanimous and universally accepted by the whole of Marxists. Ideas developed in a specific framework, often serving specific purposes. Those theories would often be complemented with new ideas, interpreted in different ways, but also be contradictory to each other, despite being included under the Marxist umbrella.

"Marxism and the National Question" was of course the title of Stalin's pamphlet, written in 1913. Stalin tried to answer the question of how to deal with the different ethnic minority groups found in Russia. How to connect and mobilize a proletariat, comprising of different nationalities, to the common struggle. Moreover, he took the opportunity to criticize contemporary attempts to address the issue. Sygkelos (2011: 13) notes that:

[336] Davis, H. (1967) Nationalism and Socialism, Monthly Review Press, New York, pp. 50–51.

> "Stalin wrote his treatise on the national question for polemical purposes against 'cultural national autonomy' and organisational autonomy within the socialist movement as the Bolsheviks were for a centralised and well-disciplined organisation. Significantly, in his treatise, instead of confronting nationalism, Stalin contented himself with defining the nation.".

According to Stalin (1913), "[a] nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."[337]. And as he adds, "[i]t goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.".

Stalin also writes about the "right of nations to self-determination", i.e. the right of a nation to "arrange its life in the way it wishes":

> "The right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right forcibly to interfere in the life of the nation, to destroy its schools and other institutions, to violate its habits and customs, to repress its language, or curtail its rights […] [The nation] has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights."

As he immediately however notes, social-democracy has not the obligation to support and accept every "custom and institution" or every "demand" of a nation:

> "While combating the coercion of any nation, it will uphold only the right of the nation itself to determine its own destiny, at the same time agitating against harmful customs and institutions of that nation in order to enable the toiling strata of the nation to emancipate themselves from them. […] A nation has the right even to return to the old order of things; but this does not mean that Social-Democracy will subscribe to such a decision if taken by some institution of a particular nation. The obligations of Social-Democracy, which defends the interests of the proletariat, and the rights of a nation, which consists of various classes, are two different things."

Apart from Stalin's work, Otto Bauer's (1881-1938) "The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy" (1907)[338] is often regarded as one of the first major Marxist contributions to the issue, the first systematic Marxist theory of nationalism[339]. Bauer's work was developed amid the years of the early 20th century when debates were taking place among Austrian social democrats and when the national question, i.e. the coexistence of different national groups within imperial Austria, was a pressing matter. Bauer developed a theory of

[337] All the excerpts from this work are taken from the digital database/archive "marxists.org", hence pages enumeration does not apply.
[338] Published in German, first in 1907, and again in 1924. First complete English translation published in 2000.
[339] Stalin (1913) criticized Bauer's work.

national-cultural autonomy[340], defining the nation as: "the totality of human beings bound together by a community of fate into a community of character." (Bauer 2000: 117).

Bauer (2000: 213) recognized the importance of the national question, and called his fellow social democrats to pay attention to the subject, while warning about the consequences of overlooking the issue. "A lack of understanding of the national question on the part of socialists would only push workers into the hands of the bourgeois nationalists" (Munck 1985: p93) he argued, and asked: "Can we not wrest from the propertied classes their most important weapon if we decide to participate in the national power struggles?" (Bauer 2000: 449).

Bauer (2000: 213) argued that "[n]ational hatred is transformed class hatred.", and that under socialism national differentiation could flourish:

> "The fact that socialism will make the nation autonomous, will make its destiny a product of the nation's conscious will, will result in an increasing differentiation between the nations of the socialist society, a clearer expression of their specificities, a clearer distinction between their respective characters. This conclusion will perhaps surprise some; it is regarded as a certainty by supporters and opponents of socialism alike that socialism will reduce national diversity, narrowing or even doing away with the differences between nations. […] It is certain that the differences between the material contents of different national cultures will be reduced in socialist society. Modern capitalism has already begun this work. […] There can be no doubt that socialism will increase this cosmopolitan tendency in our culture to an enormous extent, will reduce the differences between the material contents of cultures at an incomparably greater speed, such that the nations will learn still more from one another, each learning from the other that which corresponds to its particular goals. However, it would be precipitate to conclude from this that the reduction of the differences between the material contents of cultures will also lead to nations' becoming completely identical." (Bauer 2000:96)

It can thus be said that the interplay was always among thinkers that accepted nations and nationalistic tendencies (most often under certain conditions), those that rejected any call to nationalist sentiment, and those that advanced the second view, but in fact succumbed to the first.

A well known debate[341] in that respect was that between Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) and Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919). Both can be characterized as modernists and instrumentalists in their views on nationalism (Candeias, Segrillo 2022) however, their

[340] Ephraim Nimmi (Bauer 2000) sees Bauer and Karl Renner (1870 - 1950) as the precursors of multiculturalism. He adds however, that "to attribute to Bauer and Renner the role of precursors of multiculturalism misleads by oversimplification" as "multiculturalism in contemporary liberal democracies is subject to limits, many of which Renner and Bauer would have found unacceptable" (Bauer 2000: xviii). Moreover, "Bauer and Renner's argument is more comprehensive than most contemporary liberal discussions of multiculturalism, as they ventured into areas that remain untouched in the contemporary debate" (Bauer 2000: xix).

[341] It began in 1902-3 with several articles on the national question by Lenin, continued with written "exchanges" between the two during the next years, and ended in 1919, when Luxemburg was assassinated. For a detailed presentation of this debate see Candeias, Segrillo (2022).

approached the "national question" quite differently. It should be noted that the ideas expressed during this debate are representative of the general discussions on the "national question" taking place among Marxist thinkers during the first decades of the 20th century, and as such are briefly presented here.

Lenin, from early on wrote about the "right of nations to self-determination". Luxemburg from her side, was among the critics of that thesis, stressing the misleading role it could have, and the concept's abstract nature:

> "A 'right of nations" which is valid for all countries and all times is nothing more than a metaphysical cliché of the type of "rights of man" and "rights of the citizen." Dialectic materialism, which is the basis of scientific socialism, has broken once and for all with this type of "eternal" formula. For the historical dialectic has shown that there are no "eternal" truths and that there are no "rights." ... In the words of Engels, "What is good in the here and now, is an evil somewhere else, and vice versa" – or, what is right and reasonable under some circumstances becomes nonsense and absurdity under others. Historical materialism has taught us that the real content of these "eternal" truths, rights, and formulae is determined only by the material social conditions of the environment in a given historical epoch.."[342]

Generalizations such as this were of no "practical" use as "guidelines for the day to day politics of the proletariat, nor [they had] any practical solution of nationality problems.". The times required a different approach Luxemburg argued. The world tended to the formation of "great capitalist states", as Marx himself had claimed. Sure, the role of nationalism was important for the development of capitalism during the past. However, this was not the case anymore. "[T]he independent existence of smaller and petty nations, is an illusion" now, she argued[343]. Imperialism aggravated this phenomenon.

There was however, another grave issue with this formulation, i.e. the fact that "it ignores completely the fundamental theory of modern socialists - the theory of social classes":

> "When we speak of the "right of nations to self-determination, " we are using the concept of the "nation" as a homogeneous social and political entity. But actually, such a concept of the "nation" is one of those categories of bourgeois ideology which Marxist theory submitted to a radical re-vision, showing how that misty veil, like the concepts of the "freedom of citizens,"

[342] All quotations concerning Luxemburg's 1908/9 series of articles on The National Question and Autonomy are retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/index.htm

[343] "The return of all, or even the majority of the nations which are today oppressed, to independence would only be possible if the existence of small states in the era of capitalism had any chances or hopes for the future. Besides, the big-power economy and politics – a condition of survival for the capitalist states – turn the politically independent, formally equal, small European states into mutes on the European stage and more often into scapegoats. Can one speak with any seriousness of the "self-determination" of peoples which are formally independent, such as Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Rumanians, the Serbs, the Greeks, and, as far as that goes, even the Swiss, whose very independence is the product of the political struggles and diplomatic game of the "Concert of Europe"? From this point of view, the idea of insuring all "nations" the possibility of self-determination is equivalent to reverting from Great-Capitalist development to the small medieval states, far earlier than the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." (Luxemburg 1909: n.p.).

> "equality before the law," etc., conceals in every case a definite historical content.
>
> In a class society, "the nation" as a homogeneous socio-political entity does not exist. Rather, there exist within each nation, classes with antagonistic interests and "rights." There literally is not one social area, from the coarsest material relationships to the most subtle moral ones, in which the possessing class and the class-conscious proletariat hold the same attitude, and in which they appear as a consolidated "national" entity."

Lenin responded by accusing Luxemburg of methodological errors in her analysis, a series of misconceptions/misunderstandings and vagueness. What the concept of "the right to self-determination" represented was clear he claimed:

> "[If] we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.
>
> […] it would be wrong to interpret the right to self-determination as meaning-anything but the right to existence as a separate state. At present, we must deal with Rosa Luxemburg's efforts to "dismiss" the inescapable conclusion that profound economic factors underlie the urge towards a national state."[344]

One of Luxemburg's greatest mistakes according to Lenin, was that "[f]or the question of the political self-determination of nations and their independence as states in bourgeois society, Rosa Luxemburg has substituted the question of their economic independence.".

And Lenin invoked the example of Asia, and that of Japan to support his thesis:

> "There is no doubt that the greater part of Asia, the most densely populated continent, consists either of colonies of the "Great Powers", or of states that are extremely dependent and oppressed as nations. But does this commonly-known circumstance in any way shake the undoubted fact that in Asia itself the conditions for the most complete development of commodity production and the freest, widest and speediest growth of capitalism have been created only in Japan, i. e., only in an independent national state? The latter is a bourgeois state, and for that reason has itself begun to oppress other nations and to enslave colonies. We cannot say whether Asia will have had time to develop into a system of independent national states, like Europe, before the collapse of capitalism, but it remains an undisputed fact that capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in that continent, too; that the tendency of these movements is towards the creation of national states

[344] The quotations regarding Lenin's series of articles entitled "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914), are retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/

> in Asia; that it is such states that ensure, the best conditions for the development of capitalism. The example of Asia speaks in favour of Kautsky and against Rosa Luxemburg."

Lenin called attention to the "historical periods of development" of each country. There is a difference between the countries "where bourgeois-democratic reforms have long been completed, and those where they have not" he argued. In that respect, "to seek the right to self-determination in the programmes of West-European socialists at this time of day is to betray one's ignorance of the ABC of Marxism". There, the national question "was settled long ago". In Eastern Europe and Asia[345] however, it was another story. A "whole series of bourgeois-democratic national movements which strive to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states" were "awakening". It was important therefore to "have a clause in our programme on the right of nations to self-determination", Lenin claimed.

Lenin thus supported the right of nations for self-determination, as well as their right to secession, always however in regard to the class interest of the proletariat:

> "The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support, At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness;".

As Munck (2010) notes, Lenin's support for nationalist movements was often tactical.

When it came to the issue of war now, and its character, Luxemburg argued[346] that in the era of imperialism national wars were not possible: "[I]t is always the historic milieu of modern imperialism that determines the character of the war in the individual countries, and this milieu makes a war of national self-defence impossible."

Lenin from his side[347] disagreed, claiming that the fact that the current war (i.e. WWI) was imperialist did not mean that national wars were over:

> "It is highly improbable that this imperialist war of 1914–16 will be transformed into a national war, because the class that represents progress is the proletariat, which, objectively, is striving to transform this war into civil war against the bourgeoisie; and also because the strength of both coalitions is almost equally balanced, while international finance capital has everywhere created a reactionary bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that such a transformation is impossible: if the European proletariat were to remain impotent for another twenty years; if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of virile national states; if imperialism outside of Europe (primarily American and Japanese) were to remain in power for another twenty years without a transition

[345] "*our 'Orient'*" as he called it.
[346] In the "Julius Pamplet" (1915). Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/ch07.htm
[347] In his "Julius Pamplet" (1916). Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/jul/junius-pamphlet.htm

to socialism, say, as a result of a Japanese-American war, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. This means that Europe would be thrown back for several decades. This is improbable. But it is not impossible, for to picture world history as advancing smoothly and steadily without sometimes taking gigantic strides backward is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong."

To believe and propagate the "there can be no more national wars" had also harmful consequences, Lenin argued:

"But this fallacy is also very harmful in a practical political sense; it gives rise to the stupid propaganda for "disarmament," as if no other war but reactionary wars are possible; it is the cause of the still more stupid and downright reactionary indifference towards national movements. Such indifference becomes chauvinism when members of "Great" European nations, i.e., nations which oppress a mass of small and colonial peoples, declare with a learned air that "there can be no more national wars!" National wars against the imperialist Powers are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable, they are progressive and revolutionary […]"

Finally, there was also the case of colonies: "national wars waged by colonial, and semi-colonial countries are not only possible but inevitable in the epoch of imperialism.".

As Candeias and Segrillo (2022; 59) note, Lenin rejected the view that "with socialism, the national question will lose its importance":

"Lenin not only thinks that the nationalism of oppressed nations can play a positive role even in the era of imperialism, but also that, even under socialism, the self-determination of nations in a democratic way can help bring nations closer together to a shared socialist destination (by decreasing the potential for tensions between peoples)."

Lenin talked also about the right of oppressed nations to struggle for liberation, against oppressor nations. Something that Luxemburg and the Polish Social Democrats opposed:

"If Belgium, let us say, is annexed by Germany in 1917, and in 1918 revolts to secure her liberation, the Polish comrades will be against her revolt on the grounds that the Belgian bourgeoisie possess "the right to oppress foreign peoples"!

There is nothing Marxist or even revolutionary in this argument. If we do not want to betray socialism we must support every revolt against our chief enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big states, provided it is not the revolt of a reactionary class. By refusing to support the revolt of annexed regions we become, objectively, annexationists. It is precisely in the "era of imperialism", which is the era of nascent social revolution, that the proletariat will today give especially vigorous support to any revolt of the annexed regions so that

tomorrow, or simultaneously, it may attack the bourgeoisie of the "great" power that is weakened by the revolt."[348]

Lenin often stressed the distinction between political and economic aspects of things (oppression, conditions, categories etc.):

> "What has this argument about the economic prerequisites for the abolition of national oppression, which are very well known and undisputed, to do with a discussion of one of the forms of political oppression, namely, the forcible retention of one nation within the state frontiers of another?"[349]

As Sygkelos (2011) notes, what Lenin achieved through the above mentioned realizations was to displace the notion of exploitation from class to nation and to change it into national domination:

> "Indeed, Lenin developed a stratification of nations similar to the social one: the imperialist powers could be seen as the capitalists, nations struggling for national self-determination and semi-colonies as middle classes, and colonies as the proletariat" (Sygkelos 2011: 15)

After the Russian Revolution (1917) Luxemburg (1918)[350] criticized the Bolsheviks' approach on the issue, claiming that it turned against them, and hindered the process of creation of a united front:

> "The hope of transforming these actual class relationships somehow into their opposite and of getting a majority vote for union with the Russian Revolution by depending on the revolutionary masses – if it was seriously meant by Lenin and Trotsky – represented an incomprehensible degree of optimism. And if it was only meant as a tactical flourish in the duel with the German politics of force, then it represented dangerous playing with fire. Even without German military occupation, the famous "popular plebiscite," supposing that it had come to that in the border states, would have yielded a result, in all probability, which would have given the Bolsheviks little cause for rejoicing; for we must take into consideration the psychology of the peasant masses and of great sections of the petty bourgeoisie, and the thousand ways in which the bourgeoisie could have influenced the vote. Indeed, it can be taken as an unbreakable rule in these matters of plebiscites on the national question that the ruling class will either know how to prevent them where it doesn't suit their purpose, or where they somehow occur, will know how to influence their results by all sorts of means, big and little, the same means which make it impossible to introduce socialism by a popular vote.

[348] Lenin, V. (1916) The Discussion On Self-Determination Summed Up. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/jul/x01.htm
[349] As in Candeias and Segrillo (2022: 57-8)
[350] Luxemburg (1918). Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/russian-revolution/ch03.htm

> The mere fact that the question of national aspirations and tendencies towards separation were injected at all into the midst of the revolutionary struggle, and were even pushed into the foreground and made into the shibboleth of socialist and revolutionary policy as a result of the Brest peace, has served to bring the greatest confusion into socialist ranks and has actually destroyed the position of the proletariat in the border countries."

It should be noted that Lenin's overall contributions to the issue were of much importance to Marxists. Stalin's work was after all instructed by him (Sygkelos 2011), and it was through Lenin's writings and theoretical contributions that the "national question" acquired new significance, and opened the way for new approaches. As has been partly shown above, and as Sygkelos (2011:14) argues, "Lenin introduced three theoretical innovations of national significance: the right of nations to self-determination, the anti-imperialist idea, and the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations.". Those were consequently, employed by the Soviet Union in order to secure its interests, and promote its plans, domestically and internationally.

In Soviet Russia, "nationalism was always present", Sygkelos (2011:16) notes[351]:

> "Indeed, […] the intoxicating optimism for world revolution and internationalism of the First Congress gradually gave ground to nationally-oriented discourses and tactics. A spectre was haunting the international communist movement during the Comintern years: the spectre of nationalism." (Sygkelos 2011: 18)

In this context, communists in many countries sought often to compromise their aims, join forces or appeal to nationalistic movements, and find a common cause (China, Germany, Bulgaria).

Lenin's famous work on "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (1916) must be as well briefly presented. Lenin accepts the view that capitalist development goes through stages, and according to him, imperialism represents the "latest stage of capitalist economy":

> "Private property based on the labour of the small proprietor, free competition, democracy, all the catchwords with which the capitalists and their press deceive the workers and the peasants are things of the distant past. Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three powerful world plunderers armed to the teeth (America, Great

[351] Sygkelos (2011) stresses as well Russia's turn towards nationalism during the WWII years, when "the symbiosis of Marxism and nationalism in the Soviet Union was accomplished" (Sygkelos 2011: 17). "Although the significance and dynamics of the national question had been exalted since the 1920s, the Seventh Congress (1935) constituted a landmark in the emergence of Marxist nationalism", he argues (Sygkelos 2011: 19). In that respect, he stressed the importance of the efforts of the communists "to enlighten the working masses about the past of their own people in 'a historically correct fashion', in the 'true spirit of Lenin and Stalin', so as 'to link their present struggle with the revolutionary traditions of the past'".

Britain, Japan), who are drawing the whole world into their war over the division of their booty"[352]

Imperialism now, displays the following basic five features according to Lenin[353]:

"(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed."[354]

Finally, Leon Trotsky's (1879-1940) theory of "Uneven and Combined Development", as presented in his 1930 book "History of the Russian Revolution", should be mentioned. Trotsky argued that:

"Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development – by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms."[355]

For various obvious, according to Trotsky, reasons (related to specific material and historical conditions), countries develop unevenly. However, they interact with each other, and due to the "whip of external necessity[356]", they strive to advance economically (industrially). Simultaneously, they make use of the "privilege of historic backwardness", which "permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages". Backward countries are able to adopt elements from the advanced nations without having to take all the steps the latter followed, and thus develop.

This theory is connected to Trotsky's concept of "permanent revolution". Trotsky believed that national conditions are greatly influenced by world conditions:

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[352] Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref02.htm

[353] Those points are valid for the definition only when "the basic, purely economic concepts" are considered, Lenin notes.

[354] Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch07.htm

[355] Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/hrr/ch01.htm

[356] Economic and militarist reasons are included in the concept.

> "The economic peculiarities of different countries are in no way of a subordinate character. It is enough to compare England and India, the United States and Brazil. But the specific features of national economy, no matter how great, enter as component parts and in increasing measure into the higher reality which is called world economy and on which alone, in the last analysis, the internationalism of the Communist parties rests."[357]

Consequently, a country cannot (and should not[358]) act in isolation from the rest of the world. As he noted:

> "Every backward country integrated with capitalism has passed through various stages of decreasing or increasing dependence upon the other capitalist countries, but in general the tendency of capitalist development is toward a colossal growth of world ties, which is expressed in the growing volume of foreign trade, including, of course, capital export."[359]

Kautsky's work "The Permanent Revolution" (1931), were the idea of "permanent revolution" was better formulated, was primarily concerned with the Russian case, and the route the country should follow. According to Kautsky:

> "The seizure of power by the international proletariat cannot be a single, simultaneous act. The political superstructure – and a revolution is part of the 'superstructure' – has its own dialectic, which intervenes imperiously in the process of world economy, but does not abolish its deep-going laws. The October Revolution is 'legitimate' as the first stage of the world revolution which unavoidably extends over decades. The interval between the first and the second stage has turned out to be considerably longer than we had expected. Nevertheless it remains an interval, and it is by no means converted into a self-sufficient epoch of the building of a national socialist society."[360]

In this context, the "Theory of permanent revolution" advanced three main claims[361]:

- "While the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat led through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a regime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development."

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[357] Introduction to the German Edition of "The Permanent Revolution" (1931). Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/prge.htm

[358] Kautsky reject for example Stalin's "socialism in one country" theory.

[359] Introduction to the German Edition of "The Permanent Revolution" (1931). Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/prge.htm

[360] Introduction to the German Edition of "The Permanent Revolution" (1931). Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/prge.htm

[361] Introduction to the First (Russian) Edition of "The Permanent Revolution" (1931). Retrieved from : https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/prre.htm

- "For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation. Society keeps on changing its skin. Each stage of transformation stems directly from the preceding. This process necessarily retains a political character, that is, it develops through collisions between various groups in the society which is in transformation. Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of 'peaceful' reform. Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and everyday life develop in complex reciprocal action and do not allow society to achieve equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such."
- "The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, flows from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national foundations – but it cannot be completed within these foundations. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-contained whole; it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution constitutes a permanent process, despite temporary declines and ebbs."

To summarize, the "national question" was a part of Marx's and Marxian oeuvre throughout the years, but the approaches to it show great divergence and disagreement among the thinkers involved. Most of the times, the ideas expressed were reactions to contemporary conditions and challenges. Depending on the situation, and the impact on the struggle and power of the working class, issues such as national priorities and national enhancement were often evaluated case by case. Finally, concerning nationalism itself, it is possible to argue that it was often of use to the objectives of many "Marxists".

As Robinson (2020: 60) notes, "the historical figure of the nation, conceived in terms of its historic role in the development of capitalist production, remained an aspect of the acceptance or rejection of nationalist movements by Marx and Engels. Nationalism was acceptable if its success resulted in the construction of a "viable" industrial nation. In the same vein, it was unacceptable ("nonsense," "impracticable," "fanatical") for nationalist movements to threaten what Engels had termed "true [i.e., productive] national boundaries" in Pound Rhein."

Some remarks on Kawakami

Bernstein (1990) entitles the first part ("Part One") of her biographical book on Kawakami "Meiji Nationalist". Other scholars, as have been occasionally mentioned in the

previous chapter, have repeatedly stressed Kawakami's national sentiment and patriotism, especially while young.

Kawakami's stance towards nationalism is a somewhat complex issue though. In 1911, Kawakami wrote an essay entitled "Japan's peculiar nationalism (日本独特の国家主義)". There, he argued that for the Japanese, the state assumed the role of religion:

> "In the eyes, brains, and hearts of Japanese, there is nothing so noble as the state. For this reason, even though Japanese would sacrifice any and everything for the state, they would be unable to agree to sacrifice the state for any and everything. The state is the sole divinity to which they would offer any sacrifice, but they cannot even imagine the existence of other divinities to which they might sacrifice the state."[362]

According to Kawakami, the nationalism of the Japanese people was their greatest characteristic, the essence (精華) of the country (Mita 1998). In Japan, "the state is the end and the individual is the means", while in the West "the individual is the end and the state is the means"[363], Kawakami argued. Japan has succeeded in war, due to its nationalist sentiment witch advanced cooperation, however, that was in contrast to the West, where individualism had allowed the progress of the division of labor, and thus economic development in Japan was not following western pace:

> "If we compare individuals with individuals, we Japanese, in terms of wealth, knowledge, and physical strength, cannot by any means rival the West, but we have combined to form the nation of Japan, and because of this nationalistic spirit, we have succeeded in creating a powerful nation.
>
> Therefore, I am eagerly awaiting the healthy development of this nationalism in the future. However, I am opposed to all theories, movements, policies, and institutions that seek to unnecessarily and harmfully flatter this nationalism, which is a characteristic of the Japanese people."[364]

Kawakami thus believed that nationalism was necessary to compete with the West, but that it was harmful to unnecessarily propagate nationalism (Mita 1998). Kawakami was critical of this phenomenon, as this nationalism rendered individuals weak, freedom of thought limited, and the development of production slow. The Japanese nation was strong, but the Japanese people were certainly weak, Kawakami argued (Makino 2007). To make the economy stronger, individuals should assume a more central role in the system. To that purpose, Kawakami also emphasized the need for freedom of thought[365] in order to develop the economy by making the most of individual creativity (Makino 2007).

The connection of religion and national sentiment, can also be found in Nitobe Inazō's famous book "Bushido: The Soul of Japan" (1899). Nitobe, reveals in the preface of

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[362] As in Takahashi (2007: n.p.)

[363] As in Makino (2007: 4) . "*Kawakami also states that individualism and socialism are of equal spirit and that this is the reason why socialism is excluded in Japan*."(ibid)

[364] As in Mita (1998: 131).

[365] When it comes to freedom of speech, Kawakami argued that it was not easy to say which is freer, Japan or the West (regarding religion). Just as it was forbidden to criticize Christianity in the West, it was forbidden to criticize national supremacy in Japan, he claimed (Mita 1998).

his book that what drove him to write it was the question: how the Japanese knew morality if they did not have a religion?[366] The Japanese had Bushidō, what is known as "the code of the samurai". Bushidō now came to be formed from elements of Buddhism, Shintō and Confucianism. Among those, Shintō[367] became the force that imbued the Japanese with the sense of loyalty and patriotism:

> "What Buddhism failed to give, Shintoism offered in abundance. Such loyalty to the sovereign, such reverence for ancestral memory, and such filial piety as are not taught by any other creed, were inculcated by the Shinto doctrines, imparting passivity to the otherwise arrogant character of the samurai. […] Essentially like the Roman conception of religion, our reflection brought into prominence not so much the moral as the national consciousness of the individual. Its nature-worship endeared the country to our inmost souls, while its ancestor-worship, tracing from lineage to lineage, made the Imperial family the fountain-head of the whole nation. To us the country is more than land and soil from which to mine gold or to reap grain—it is the sacred abode of the gods, the spirits of our forefathers: to us the Emperor is more than the Arch Constable of a Rechtsstaat, or even the Patron of a Culturstaat—he is the bodily representative of Heaven on earth, blending in his person its power and its mercy. If what M. Boutmy says is true of English royalty—that it "is not only the image of authority, but the author and symbol of national unity," as I believe it to be, doubly and trebly may this be affirmed of royalty in Japan.[…] The tenets of Shintoism cover the two predominating features of the emotional life of our race—Patriotism and Loyalty. Arthur May Knapp very truly says: "In Hebrew literature it is often difficult to tell whether the writer is speaking of God or of the Commonwealth; of heaven or of Jerusalem; of the Messiah or of the nation itself." A similar confusion may be noticed in the nomenclature of our national faith. I said confusion, because it will be so deemed by a logical intellect on account of its verbal ambiguity; still, being a framework of national instinct and race feelings, Shintoism never pretends to a systematic philosophy or a rational theology. This religion—or, is it not more correct to say, the race emotions which this religion expressed?—thoroughly imbued Bushido with loyalty to the sovereign and love of country." (Nitobe 2004: n.p.)

[366] "About ten years ago, while spending a few days under the hospitable roof of the distinguished Belgian jurist, the lamented M. de Laveleye, our conversation turned, during one of our rambles, to the subject of religion. "Do you mean to say," asked the venerable professor, "that you have no religious instruction in your schools?" On my replying in the negative he suddenly halted in astonishment, and in a voice which I shall not easily forget, he repeated "No religion! How do you impart moral education?" The question stunned me at the time. I could give no ready answer, for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days, were not given in schools; and not until I began to analyze the different elements that formed my notions of right and wrong, did I find that it was Bushido that breathed them into my nostrils." (Nitobe 2004: preface).

[367] "In Japan, the Meiji government tried to place the emperor cult at the center of a modern state. The modern emperor cult had recourse to ancient myths in the course of its elaboration. Nationalism and Shinto ended up in complete unity. Pre-Meiji Shinto preserved aspects of simple animism, a folk belief that did not presuppose a state. Then, when the Meiji state came into being, this was absorbed into what was called state Shinto and reconstituted so that nothing remained of the earlier form." (Takahashi 2007: n.p.)

Professor Takahashi (2007: n.p.) argues that in Japan, "official ideology used Shinto as a nonreligious religion, a 'supra' religion", which is why "it exerted such power over people's minds". Professor Takahashi (2007: n.p.) hence comments: "If you say that Japanese life is lacking in spirituality, that is so, but in its place, there is the state, or the community, or an awareness of belonging to a community distinctive to 'the Japanese.'".

Tanaka (2020) offers a even different image of Kawakami. According to him, Kawakami was characterized by "muli-facetedness", which began with the "spiritual circumstances of his early life. Then, as he was influenced by Yoshida Shōin (1830–1859), he "cultivated a spirit of passion and nationalism" (Tanaka 2020: 89). Lator on, Kawakami's interest in developing a biological perspective and studying East and West cultural differences, added interesting features to the analysis of his "Tale", Tanaka (2020: 91) argues:

> "From his perspective of East–West culture, this measure for "poor" was different in Europe and Japan. European and American policy was designed to save the lives of individuals. On the other hand, Japan would be required to eliminate the "poor" from the nation so as not to damage healthy people who contribute to the growth of national power. Kawakami believed that healthy and productive people were the foundation of the country. His recognition was a eugenics point of view, and more of a nationalist point of view. The country is the center, and individuals come after that."

Debate On Japanese Capitalism

It is obvious from chapter II that the "national question" was a part of the Debate on Japanese Capitalism. As the basic aspects of the Debate have been already presented, this section limits itself to the brief mention of the points that can be related to the issue at hand.

The two factions of the Debate (Rōnō-ha and Kōza-ha) approached the "national question" in their theses, each dealing with different aspects of it. In that respect, Hoston (1995: 223) notes:

> "With reference to nationalism, national pride and questions concerning the universal and particular, or special, aspects of Japan's development experience were at the heart of the debate from the very outset"

The choice of the Rōnō-ha to distance itself from the Japanese Communist Party, and to charge it with the accusation of following the Comintern theses on Japan, which ignored "Japanese realities", can be considered as Hoston (1995) stresses, an example of "nationalist instincts" from its members[368]. As have been already discussed, the members of Rōnō-ha refused the "27 Thesis" according to which the bourgeois revolution had not been completed. By refusing the external proposals, Rōnō-ha assumed an "independent" stance on the Japanese case. As (Morita 2020) notes, while Rōnō-ha remained generally loyal to the Comintern's general political positions, the group was able to maintain its "intellectual

[368] Hoston (1995: 195) attributes also the enloiment of Rōnō-ha's thinkers from the JCP, such as Yamakawa Hitoshi and Arahata Kanson (荒畑 寒村, 1887- 1981), to their "anarchist and nationalist instincts", that as she writes, reemerged when Comintern "produced analyses of the 'Japan problem'".

independence", as it was relatively independent from the Japanese Communist Party and the Comintern. It was in that respect also, that Rōnō-ha could keep a certain distance from Stalinism as well[369]. While it never took an anti-Stalinist position, it was not infinitely faithful to Stalinism either (Morita 2020).

Another point of Hoston (1984, 1995) is that the engagement with the "national question" became a necessity for the Japanese Marxists of the time, in order to ovoid the possibility of "nationalistic application[s] of Marxism"[370]. Hoston (1984) stresses in particular the case of Takahashi Kamekichi, which is presented below. As we will see, Marxism was used by some thinkers in order to advance nationalistic theses[371]. In that respect, Hoston (1984: 44) claims that a "general historical pattern" can be noticed, "in which Japanese national socialism was consistently formulated from the left rather than from the right, and which endured from mid-Meiji through Taishō to early Shōwa".

Concerning the Debate, issues such as the "Asiatic mode of production", the state's role in the economic development, the state's form, the emperor system (a peculiarity of Japan), and imperialism were some of the issues discussed. Kōza-ha's particular attention to the special conditions of Japan's development can be stressed[372]. Yamada Moritarō's claims about the "military and semi-serfdom" character of Japanese capitalism are indicative of that approach. In his "Analysis of Japanese Capitalism" (1934) he refers to this as a "*purely Japanese archetype*":

> "Japanese capitalism was obliged to construct the gigantic system of militaristic key industries with the government's aid upon the vast base of semi-serf lilliput cultivation. It formed the structure of Japanese capitalism and determined the track of reproduction. In this case, the form of its militaristic and semi-serfdom features constituted the archetype of Japanese capitalism. It formed a typical pattern that added 'civilized fetters of excess labor' to the 'barbarism of serfdom.' This form appears as the purely Japanese archetype, different from the British capitalism that emerged in the home nation of free

[369] Morita (2020) examines the views and attitudes of Rōnō-ha's thinkers towards Trotsky, and finds that Trotsky was highly evaluated as a revolutionary leader by thinkers such as Yamakawa or Arahata, until his fall from the ranks of the Soviets. Afterwards, he was harshily criticized by the majority of the Japanese Marxists, among whom were Rōnō-ha's thinkers that previously had praised him. In some of the latter's approaches however, Morita (2020) sees a more open approach, and not a complete deletion of Trotsky's face and acts.

[370] "Because the controversy occurred in "the era when [Japan] turned from 'the conditions of Taishō democracy' to an age of war and fascism," it is not surprising that the concerns associated with the national question should have figured prominently in the debate on Japanese capitalism." (Hoston 1995: 223).

[371] As Hoston (1995: 223) notes, "Nationalism, then, played a role both as a positive irritant and as a negative factor in precipitating the debate".

[372] Walker (2016: 64) argues: "In fact, the Kōza faction form of historiography and political economy is exactly the mainstream of the global communist movement of the 1920s and 1930s, as we have seen, for example, in the remarkable terminological consistency between Yamada, Kuusinen, Stalin, and others. It is not a logic, therefore, of the "particularity" of "Japan", it is a logic of "particularity" in general. This point is extremely important, because it demonstrates that the Kōza faction's intellectual position cannot be dismissed in an inversion of their own logic: we cannot simply say that they were obsessed with "Japanese-ness". On the contrary, they exemplify a general tendency in Marxist historiography and political economy that locates a global project in a network of "particularities", a project that was developed to an extremely high theoretical level in the Japanese intellectual world, and it is this broad, global logic that is the problem".

> competition, […] This form of double fetters now becomes the constraint against developing productive forces. It is illuminated by the determining factor of the productive forces, i. e., the proletariat."[373]

The thinkers engaged in the Debate undertook a series of historical analysis, in order to analyze Japan's capitalist development and the conditions of the Japanese economy, often of course doing the necessary comparisons to the experiences and conditions of other capitalist nations. The importance they gave to local peculiarities varied though. Sakisaka Itsurō's for example thesis that "[e]xamining particularity is nothing but to find its tendency to dissolve into the general tendency"[374], was shared by many Rōnō-ha's members. Kōza-ha on the other side put considerable importance on such elements.

Another important point in the discussions of the Debate concerned the emperor system. Hoston (1995:225) argues that "[i]n the degree of importance attached to the imperial institution lies the key to the centrality of the national question to the debate on Japanese capitalism". Kōza-ha accepted the need to abolish the emperor system, a remnant of the past, in order to proceed with the democratic-bourgeois revolution. Rōnō-ha however, diminished the importance of the issue, conceiving the emperor system as a "bourgeois monarchy" which will wither away along with the state and capitalism (Hoston 1995: 224-5). Hoston (1995) however asks whether Rōnō-ha's position on the issue has other implications:

> "In short, for the Kōza-ha, the imperial institution, the tenno-sei, as they called it, was at the core of the entire state structure in Japan, the key to identifying its underlying class basis in semi-feudal agriculture; but for the Rōnō-ha, it was but a mere appendage of a state apparatus based on a highly capitalistic industrial sphere and commercialized agriculture. But was the imperial institution truly so insignificant in the Rōnō-ha critique, or did the Rōnō-ha's opposition—along with that of the Kaitō-ha, Takabatake Motoyuki, and tenkosha proponents of a Marxian national socialism—to the Comintern's call to abolish the emperor system signify a deeper subjective attachment to the imperial institution that Russian leaders in the Comintern could not possibly comprehend? Could this attachment explain what appeared to be a marked reluctance to treat the imperial institution in the objective general terms required by Marx's theory of the state and reject it in accordance with the demands of revolutionary theory? […] Marxism required a detached, dispassionate treatment of the imperial institution, affection for the uniqueness of which was deeply inculcated into all Japanese who had come of age in the late Meiji and Taishō." (Hoston 1995: 225)

[373] Nihon Shihonshugi Bunseki – Nihon Shihonshugi ni okeru Saiseisan Katei Haaku (Analysis of Japanese Capitalism: A grasp of the reproduction process in Japanese capitalism). As in Yagi (2023: 155).
[374] As in Yagi (2023: 156).

Takahashi Kamekichi and the "Petty Impeialism" debate (プチ帝国主義論争)

Closely related to the Debate on Japanese Capitalism was a preceding discussion (another sort of debate) that took place during the second half of 1920s, i.e. the so called "Petty Imperialism debate (**プチ帝国主義論争**)" , which revolved around the issue of whether Japan had reached a level of development adequate to render it an imperialist power at the time. The debate was developed mainly between Takahashi Kamekichi (高橋亀吉, 1891-1977) on the one side, and Inomata Tsunao and Noro Eitarō on the other.

Presenting the framework of the debate, Nobuoka (1977) places its beginning (in a broad sense as he writes) in 1926, when Maruoka Shigetaka (丸岡重堯, 1897-1929)[375] published his article "The situation of world and Japanese capitalism, and the social movement in our country (世界及日本資本主義の情勢と我国社会運動)"[376], arguing that Japan did not qualify to be characterized as an imperialist country, when examined in respect to Lenin's theory, as presented in his "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (1916)[377].

The actual however, beginning of this debate (its beginning in a narrow sense, as Nobuoka puts it[378]) was Takahashi Kamekichi's 1927 article "The Imperialist Position of Japanese Capitalism (日本資本主義の帝国主義的地位)"[379]. In that article, Takahashi, following the same method as Maruoka (Nobuoka 1977) and examined the imperialist character of Japanese capitalism, concluding again that the five signs of Lenin's theory of imperialism did not apply to Japan, and claiming hence that Japanese capitalism at that time, could only be characterized as "petty imperialism", if anything. Takahashi's argument however, was more strongly colored by nationalistic overtones, than Maruoka's (Makino 2011: 102). In both cases though, the main argument was that finance capital and monopolies did not prevail in Japan, while the country was not a capital exporter but importer, or in any case, the export of capital was not of great significance.

Both, Maruoka and Takahashi were immediately criticized. Some of the arguments against their views will be briefly mentioned below. Before, Takahashi's main ideas at the time are presented and then, his argumentation on the issue.

Takahashi is one of the most representative examples of a thinker, using some parts of the Marxian theory to arrive at conclusions which can be characterized as nationalistic among the figures appearing in this dissertation. His theory of "petty imperialism (プチ・帝国主義)", deriving from Marxism's theoretical assumptions, gave excuse to Japanese

[375] A reporter for the Toyō Keizai Shinpō at the time.

[376] Published in December 1926, for the 社会思想.

[377] Maruoka's claims came as a response to Fukumoto Kazuo's theory of "rapid downfall of Japanese capitalism (日本資本主義急激没落論)". Maruoka argued that the transition of world capitalism to the imperialist stage did not mean that it was in a state of rapid decline, and that it was wrong to speak of the rapid decline of Japanese capitalism, which has not even become imperialist yet (Nobuoka 1977: 290).

[378] As the term "petty imperialism" was introduced by Takahashi. Nagaoka (1977) notes however, that the term itself had little significance, as was not used much, even by Takahashi himself later on.

[379] Published in "Taiyō", in 1927 (『太陽』第 33 巻第 4 号、1927 年). Some of his ideas on the issue were also expressed in the article "The degeneration of imperialism in the last stage (末期に於ける帝国主義の変質), published (1927) in "Shakai kagaku" (Hoston 1984: 12).

expansionism at the time, while brought to the public discussion a perspective that a large part of the population had, concerning Japan's position at the time.

Takahashi was born in 1891, in Yamaguchi prefecture, as the eldest son of a boatbuilder. He graduated from the department of commerce of Waseda University (1916), and after spending a brief time as a company employee, he worked as a journalist (and from 1924 as editor in chief) for Tōyō Keizai Shimpō (the Oriental Economist -東洋経済新報). From 1926 he was active as an independent economic commentator (経済評論家). In 1919 he traveled to Europe and the U.S. and came into contact with the Japanese socialists in the U.S., such as Katayama Sen (片山 潜, 1859-1933) and Taguchi Unzō (田口運蔵, 1892-1933), something that influenced his following activities as a journalist.

After his return to Japan, Takahashi became acquainted with Yamakawa Hitoshi and other social activists, and became involved in the socialist movement (Makino 2011)[380]. He showed interest in Marxism, and wrote as well, several times, for the legal journal of the Japanese Communist Party (Makino 2011) and for leftist journals, such as "Marxism", and "Taiyō" (Hoston 1984). Takahashi criticized the way capital was "wasted" under capitalism, and saw to find ways -through socialist policies- to improve the lives of the people and strengthen the economic power of Japan (Makino 2011: 95). The latter became a matter of great concern to him, and it was in this framework that his "petty imperialism" theory was born.

Takahashi, as an economic writer, is described as someone who valued primarily empirical studies (Hoston 1984), and whose economics were "practical economics (実践経済学)" (Makino 2011). As Makino (2011: 96) describes, Takahashi asserted that his views on economics came straight from the real economy and dealt with real economic issues. During his early years as a reporter for the Toyō Keizai Shimpō, having no time to study economic literature, he realized that Adam Smith as well, had no books on economics to learn from, but that by using the inductive method and working on real economic phenomena he was able to establish his own economics (Makino 2011: 96). This was the path he decided hence to follow[381].

Takahashi was active throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1923 he participated in the founding of the "Political Research Association (政治研究会)". Soon however, he was driven away (1925) from the group. After leaving the Association, Takahashi became increasingly opposed to the left's "literalist" interpretation of Marxism, and consequently developed his theory of "petty imperialism" (Sakai 1991: 55). In 1928 he ran unsuccessfully for office, with the Japanese farmers' party (日本農民党).

In 1932 Takahashi "formed his own economics institute[382] and subsequently acted as consultant to the Japanese colonial administrations in Manchuguo and Taiwan and as advisor to the Japanese government in a variety of posts, most notably serving in the cabinet's War Planning Office" (Hoston 1984: 8). Takahashi was well informed about both domestic and international economic and political developments. He thus was not just an economic commentator, but was active as a member of various government committees, and was involved in various debates of pre-WWII Japan (Makino 2011). Finally he was active in the

[380] He even founded (1923) a socialist organization (防援会) (Makino 2011).
[381] Of course, Makino (2011: 96) adds that "it is natural to assume that Takahashi himself was influenced by various ideas and events of his time, whether he was aware of it or not".
[382] The "Takahashi Economic Research Institute (高橋経済研究所)".

Shōwa Research Association (昭和研究会), through which he advocated his views about the so called "New Order in East Asia (東亜新秩序)" that the first Konoe Cabinet advanced in 1938 (the Konoe Statement).

In this context, Hoston (1984: 10) notes:

> "Takahashi's background and activities, then, made him a very unusual Marxist in prewar Japan. Although he enjoyed a strong reputation in government and business circles, his education at a private university rather than at the prestigious Tokyo Imperial University, which produced most leading Marxist scholars, gained him less esteem among fellow Marxists**.** Nevertheless, by 1927, he was very highly regarded by Marxist and non-Marxist scholars of economic development because of his pioneering work in Japanese political economy. His Nihon shihon-shugi keizai no kenkyū (Studies on the Japanese capitalist economy, 1924), which presented his thesis of the deadlock of the Japanese economy (yukizumari-ron), became widely influential in the proletarian movement. His was the most provocative and innovative work that emerged in the 1920s combining Marxian analysis with the study of Japanese political and economic development."

His most known pre-WWII contribution to the economic discussions of the time however, which allowed him to establish himself as an economic expert, was probably his participation in the so called "debate on gold ban (金解禁論争)". Takahashi, together with figures such as Ishibashi Tanzan (石橋 湛山, 1884-1973), supported the lifting of the gold ban during the early years of Shōwa period, at a new parity, a thesis that proved to be more appropriate than the chosen one.

Concerning his ideas, Makino (2011) argues that Takahashi's economic thought reflected specific concepts and ideas, which remained unchanged throughout his life[383]. The first was his criticism of luxury, of extravagant use of capital. In his writings during the 1920s, he complained about how the social role of capitalists, to accumulate wealth through savings for the sake of society had given way in the modern era, to the actions of a group that had become an entity that adversely affected wealth accumulation through extravagance (Makino 2011: 97). In this framework, Takahashi believed, the government should assume a leading role (through taxation and business activity). "Just as the military class was eradicated by the Meiji Restoration Revolution, a policy to eradicate today's idle and extravagant class should be adopted"[384], he wrote in 1925[385].

In this respect, according to Makino (2011), Takahashi's ideas during this period can be said that were quite influenced by the works of the journalist and author Hartley Withers (1867-1950) on the one side[386] -his "Poverty and Waste" (1914)-, and by Bukharin –his

[383] Sakai (1991) as well finds a continuity in his pre-WWII thought.
[384] As in Makino (2011: 98).
[385] "The Japanese capitalist economy of the late period and its transformation (末期の日本資本主義経済と其の転換)", 白揚社, 1925 (Makino 2011).
[386] Probably by Kawakami's "Tale" as well.

"Economic Theory of Transition" (1922)[387]- on the other. More specifically, Withers' views on the misuse of money and capital in England, increasing poverty and halting production, and Bukharin's point that the economy would fall into negative reproduction through the unproductive use of productive forces**.**

A second issue underlying Takahashi's ideas can be assumed to be his attention to production, which was especially apparent in his earlier writings[388]. His concerns about the unproductive use of capital, and excessive capital consumption, which Takashi at the time equated with "extravagance" (Makino 2011), drove him to call for attention to the increase of production:

> "The way to turn around our economic crisis is to find a way to effectively use the nation's wealth and labor for the future increase in production. To do so, it is first necessary to curtail today's wasteful and extravagant consumption of wealth and labor, and to generate a significant amount of wealth and labor that can be used to increase production in the future."[389]

Here, the idea of "yukizumari (行詰り)" i.e. deadlock/impasse of Japanese capitalism should be introduced. From the late Taishō to the early Shōwa period, Takahashi consistently argued that the Japanese economy was coming to a standstill, due to in particular the extravagance of the "propertied class (有産階級)", threatening hence the livelihood of farmers and workers **(**Makino 2011). As has been discussed previously, Taishō Japan saw the emergence of numerous challenges and social unrest, which intensified during the early Shōwa years. Japanese economy suffered from the aftermath of WWI, while still being vulnerable and underdeveloped in capitalist standards.

Takahashi supported his thesis, by arguing that what had been achieved throughout the Meiji years, had reached its limit. As Hoston (1984: 17) notes, the factors that gave Japan the chance to develop at a high pace during the Meiji period (1868-1912) were:

> " (1) the growth of productive forces achieved through copying, adaptation, and refinement of "modern science and technology" from Europe and the United States; (2) the effect of the first factor to render the rich natural resources that had lain undisturbed under feudalism useful resources; and (3) a rich supply of cheap labor beneficial for competition with foreign industries."

Now however, Japanese economy found itself at a point where further development, based on such factors was no more possible:

> "The soil which has nurtured the development of our capitalism from its infancy to maturity has . . . become exhausted of its main nutritive elements; ... many contradictions inherent in the development of capitalism

[387] Bucharin, N. I. (1922) Oekonomik der Transformationsperiode, Hamburg: Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale. According to Makino (2011), a Japanese translation was published in 1922.

[388] Apart from Takashi, many thinkers at the time were concerned with the issue of promoting ways to increase production. Kawakami as well, as was shown, was interested in the issue.

[389] As in Makino (2011: 98).

> have intensified, and thus it has become impossible for our economy to continue the capitalistic development such as [it has sustained] up to now."[390]

And while "[t]he […] conditions that had fostered Japanese economic development during the Meiji period had disappeared", "new domestic and international conditions created further impediments to the development of Japanese capitalism."[391], Takahashi argued. Unionism leading to higher wages, competition from backward economies such as China, setbacks from the country's imperialist policies (e.g. higher taxes or rise of nationalistic revolutionary movements in other countries such as China) were some of the reasons why development was halted (Hoston 1984).

Capitalism in Japan had entered a phase of development that was oriented toward overseas development. Having already reached the saturation point of industries for the domestic market, its future development depended on the possibility of expansion in foreign markets. But the possibilities were extremely limited. Low wages, which used to be Japan's only weapon in international competition, could not be used anymore. Simultaneously, the scarcity of raw material resources made it impossible for Japan to advance its heavy industries, and its main industry, the textile industry, could not compete with China and India. Adding to that, Western countries monopolized raw materials, and sales channels, while following protectionist policies (Sakai 1991).

Action hence had to be taken in order to exit this situation, Takahashi believed. The state's role was crucial in that respect. He argued that "in order to fundamentally prevent unemployment, today's capitalist economic system itself must be fundamentally reformed"[392]. In this context, he proposed the adoption of "fundamental measures" in order to implement "socialist economic principles 'to the extent deemed feasible in today's capitalist society'" (Makino 2011: 101).

Takahashi advanced the idea of a "state capitalism (国家資本主義)", that protected the capitalist class and simultaneously, was of benefit to the proletarian class:

> "The characteristic of state capitalism is to use planned and organized production methods characteristic of a socialist economy instead of the anarchic production methods of individual capitalism, which is rife with abuses."[393]

Such a system would be able to deal with the problem of capital wasting and extravagant consumption that were of primary concern to Takahashi. Makino (2011) thus notes that Takahashi's "socialism" was quite different from what other socialists of the time had in mind. Moreover, as Sakai (1991: 94) notes, Takahashi's "socialist theory (社会主義論)" was framed by his thoroughly production-oriented way of thinking. Even in the case of the proletarian movement, his focus was mainly on improving the efficiency of the labor force, rather than on the issue of class conflict within capitalist society. Besides, Takahashi was already, by the end of the 1920s, distancing himself from the left movement. The "petty imperialism" debate became his criticism of the latter.

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[390] As in Hoston (1984: 17).
[391] As in Hoston (1984:17).
[392] As in Makino (2011: 101).
[393] As in Makino (2011: 101-2).

The debate

In 1927, Takahashi thus advanced the same argument as Maruoka to base his theory of "petty imperialism", supporting it however with more statistical data and discussing it in greater detail than him (Nobuoka 1977). In his article "The imperialistic Position of Japanese capitalism" for "Taiyō (太陽)"[394], he noted:

> "If you look at Japanese capitalism internationally, it may indeed be imperialistic. However, at the most, it is an imperialistic country as the petit bourgeois is to the grand bourgeois. If we take the term petit bourgeois and establish the category of petty imperialism, Japan is but a petty imperialist country. Thus, just as the interests of the petty bourgeoisie coincide with those of the proletariat and are not one with the interests of the grande bourgeoisie, the interests of petty imperialist countries coincide more with those of countries subject to imperialism than with those of large imperialist countries."[395]

Japan hence, according to Takahashi, was a petty imperialist country at best, and should not be regarded as an imperialist power at the time. On the contrary, it was possible to even assume that Japan itself was a victim of imperialism[396]: "Consequently, [Japan's] international class role, rather than coinciding with that of imperialist countries like Britain and the United States, coincides far more with that of China, India, and other countries subject to imperialism"[397] he claimed.

Japan's actions hence, when it came to militarization and armed conflicts/wars at the time (and in the close future), should be taken as efforts to survive in an environment arranged by the imperialist powers of the time. If Japan was "militaristic", it was not for imperialistic purposes, but its militarism had the character of a "national movement (国民運動的)", he argued. The wars Japan was undertaking should be seen as national wars, against the oppression of the "white people (白人)" (Makino 2011):

> "Japan's wars with Russia and China and its annexation of Korea were merely "nationalistic wars" waged in order to establish Japan as an independent state. Its proletarian revolutionary movement, therefore, should not despise nationalism, as the Comintern's program urged the JCP to do. Rather it must incorporate nationalistic elements into its movement in the manner prescribed by Lenin for the colonial areas, and, from its relatively advantaged position vis-a-vis China and India, take the lead in liberating the oppressed peoples of Asia. If the left failed to appreciate this objective need for nationalism in its revolutionary program, Takahashi warned, the Japanese masses would soon turn to the right, and the left itself would be to blame for the rise of fascism in Japan." (Hoston 1984: 14)

[394] As well in his 1927 "The theoretical collapse of the left movement: The theoretical basis for the right movement (左翼運動の理論的崩壊―右翼運動の理論的根拠)" for "Hakuyosha (白揚社)".
[395] As in Hoston (1984: 14)
[396] To support his thesis, Takahashi argued for example that a great part of the country's exports (more than 50%) were non-industrial products (Makino 2011: 103).
[397] As in Hoston (1984: 14).

Makino (2011: 103) notes that Takahashi's racialist or Asianist thinking, in which he contrasted "white people" with the Japanese and advocated a confrontation with the West along with China and other oppressed peoples, had been around way before his "petty imperialism" thesis. Already in 1921, Takahashi, trying to answer the question of why was the country poor, while having escaped enslavement by the "white peoples", argued that the "white people" had established their monopoly positions (monopolizing resourceful land) since ancient times, and as such the only way to advance was to stand against them together with other "people of color (有色人種)":

> "First of all, we must cooperate with China and raise China, which is now treated as an inferior country, at least to the level of Japan by Japanese hands. We must then proudly cry out for the emancipation of the oppressed people of color of the world and provide them with equal opportunities. Only in such a battlefield can Japan emerge from its present stalemate and begin to make progress toward a bright future. Only by taking all people of color as brothers and family members will Japan's destiny open up to them."[398]

In this framework, it was impossible for Japan, as a late developed country, to catch up to the most developed countries at the time, Takahashi argued. The main reasons were two: "Japan's lack of raw materials, and the previous partition of the world by the more advanced capitalist states that deprived Japan of access to essential raw materials and markets abroad."[399] (Hoston 1984: 18). It is worth noting that the most blame was put by Takahashi on those "advanced countries" that had managed to establish themselves in the world scene, and did everything in their power to keep their advantageous positions:

> "[N]o matter how much their economic power declines, and how they may fall into indolence, the now advanced countries of Europe and America will remain perpetually in a superior position and [their peoples] can continue to enjoy a high living standard[400] unsuited to their [true] power"[401]

Described liked that, it appeared clearly as an unjust situation for Japan. As Hoston (1984: 19) puts it:

> "Even as Japan approached the height of its capitalistic development, the advanced economies of Western Europe and America abruptly changed the "rules of the game.-" Now, as "status quo powers" seeking to protect the colonial and semi-colonial spheres of influence that they had acquired through international violence, after World War I, the advanced capitalist countries were suddenly taking up the cry for' peace, working through the League of Nations and arms-reduction talks. These maneuvers were purposeful efforts to protect their territories from rising LDCs; their effect was to place additional obstacles in the path of Japan's development."

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[398] As in Makino (2011: 103-4).

[399] This was an argument advanced by Nitobe Inazō as well, during his 193[] tour in the U.S.. It is interesting to note that he traveled on the same ship with Takahashi (Oshiro 1985).

[400] Makino (2011: 95) notes that Takahashi repeatedly criticized capitalist extravagance during his early writings.

[401] As in Hoston (1984: 19).

The main refutation of Takahashi's claims came from Inomata Tsunao and Noro Eitarō, who countered his arguments. It should be mentioned though that Asano Akira (浅野晃, 1901-1990) was the first to engage in a debate with Maruoka, starting with his article entitled "Imperialism of a right sleepwalker: Refutation of the popular argument of Maruoka Shigetaka (右横夢遊病者の帝国主義—丸岡重堯氏の俗論を駁す—)"[402]. Suzuki Mosaburō (鈴木茂三郎, 1893-1970**)** and Ōmori Yoshitarō followed, criticizing Maruoka's and Takahashi's argumentation.

Suzuki using statistical data, argued that Maruoka's characterisation of Japan as a country that imported capital was a false assertion (Nobuoka 1977). He referred also to the loans to China and emphasized that capital exports should not be interpreted solely from an economic perspective, but that attention should also be paid to the political function of these exports (Nobuoka 1977). Ōmori pointed out the methodological flaws shared by Maruoka and Takahashi, and criticized them for their lack of recognition of imperialism as a concept related to the "world economy (世界経済)" (Nobuoka 1977).

Going a step further than Ōmori, Inomata's and Noro's main argument was again that Lenin's theory could not be applied to a single country. Lenin's theory referred to the "world system" they argued (Makino 2011). His assumption about imperialism representing the highest stage of capitalism was related to "capitalism as a world system" according to Inomata, a "world category (一つの世界的範疇)" according to Noro (Nobuoka 1977: 297-8). It was thus a methodological error to examine a country's imperialism based on Lenin's theory. Inomata argued thus that Lenin's theory concerning a supra-national phenomenon, could not be used in analyzing individual states (Hoston 1984). Noro from his side argued that all but the last feature were evident in Japan, applying Lenin's criteria in the same manner as Takahashi had (Hoston 1984).

Moreover, imperialism was a concept that included a political aspect as well, something that should not be disregarded, Inomata and Noro stressed. Imperialism was a "political-economic process in its totality" and a "political-economic category" Inomata argued, and therefore, it was a mistake to try to examine imperialism in respect only to its economic characteristics, as Takahashi did (Nobuoka 1977: 298**)**. Noro argued that imperialism was a "world category and an international political process", and that therefore, "the analysis and investigation of whether Japanese capitalism had matured to the stage of imperialist development should always be considered only in relation to the internal linkage with the actual movement of world capitalism" (Nobuoka 1977: 298).

Finally, the important role of "monopolistic state capital (独占的国家資本)" was overlooked by Takahashi, when discussing the role of monopolies in Japan, they noted (Nobuoka 1977: 298). However, it was impossible to assess the extent of production and capital accumulation in the country without examining state capital, which itself was already a monopoly, Inomata argued (Nobuoka 1977). The financial oligarchy (zaibatsu) Inomata noted, functioned only in relation to this state capital, while finance capital was in the process of rapid development and the mechanism of the state capitalist trust (国家資本主義トラスト) was being formed (Nobuoka 1977: 298).

Takahashi from his side, asked on which basis then should be examined whether Japan was imperialist or not, if Lenin's five basic signs referred to imperialism as a "world category" and thus could not be applied in Japan's case? Let alone, when his critics

[402] (Marxism, No. 33, January 1927)

themselves (especially Noro), tried to advance their views on issues such as the existence of accumulation of production, monopolies, finance capital, capital exports, etc., using in the end Lenin's theory as a basis (Nobuoka 1977). Takahashi argued also that Inomata's logic, concerning his views on imperialism as a "political-economic concept" and the significance of imperialist policies, was victim of the so called "converse error". Finally, he claimed that "government monopoly (政府の独占)" was distinct from any of the four forms of monopoly described by Lenin as characteristic of the imperialist era, and thus the category had little meaning as the "economic backbone" of imperialism (Nobuoka 1977: 299).

Nobuoka (1977: 299-300) notes that the essence of the debate had not to do with the right interpretation of Lenin's theory[403], but with Takahashi's point about the economic immaturity of Japanese capitalism. Takahashi cited statistical data, and developed his arguments about the lack of a basis, of actual signs (policy alone could not be a sign he argued), in the views that Japan was imperialist at the time. This debate brought out the methodological difficulties existing in the analysis of Japanese imperialism (Nobuoka 1977). The discussions that comprised it became the incentive for a series of discussions which eventually led to the Debate on Japanese Capitalism[404].

Hoston (1984: 11) positions Takahashi's thesis in the framework of Japanese Marxists' efforts at the time, to fit the Japanese situation/example into the model provided by Marx and Lenin, to make sure that "[w]hatever the peculiarities of Japanese development," the Japanese case made sense "in terms of the path of Western Europe". This was necessary she argues, in order to justify the historical necessity for the revolution that they were advocating, and in order to avoid the danger of stumbling upon cases where "even a leftist,[…] could easily manipulate the Marxian framework to legitimate an ultra-rightist policy of military expansionism", and more importantly, do it with an argument "logically compelling" (Hoston 1984:12-3).

Ironically therefore, Takahashi advanced a "logically compelling"[405] argument that exactly did "legitimate an ultra-rightist policy of military expansionism", based on a distorted "Marxian framework", while warning about the danger of fascism's rising in the country (Hoston 1984). Takahashi believed that due to Japan's position as a "petty imperialist" country, its proletarian movement (like China's), could not escape the character of a national movement (Makino 2011: 104):

> "If we are not prepared now [to turn the proletarian class into an anti-imperialist movement] and if we do not take such precautions, in the unlikely event that the order of our society is disrupted, the masses will not move in the direction of the leftist theory, but will instead be assisted by the opposite. Indeed, in such a case, the liberation of the masses will depend less on recovering the exploitation of the masses by their own capitalists and more on recovering the exploitation of the masses by foreign countries, at least to a greater extent than before"[406]

[403] As he says, Takahashi's understanding of Lenin's "Theory of Imperialism" as revealed through this debate, was far inferior to that of Inomata (and probably of Noro).
[404] Inomata and Noro gradually developed different views on the issue, as was shown in Chapter II.
[405] According to Hoston (1984: 12).
[406] As in Makino (2011: 104).

Noro replied to Takahashi's claims, saying that there won't be the masses that will turn to fascism in case "the social order is disrupted", but only patriotic xenophobes and others opportunists (Makino 211: 105)[407].

Takahashi was one of the most productive economists of the 1920s-30s (Sakai 1991), and his views had noticeable impact on the discussions (and policies) of the time. Takahashi was critical of capitalists (if left free to act), of political corruption, and of foreign capitalist states. As Makino (2011) notes though, Takahashi's theory of "petty imperialism" may had some validity in showing the position of the Japanese economy at that time, at least as perceived by the majority of the Japanese people. As (Nobuoka 1977) note, Takahashi's views were not detached from the general public sentiment.

His theory of "petty imperialism" was a challenge to the left thinkers of the time (Sakai 1991). The "petty imperialism" debate is considered to initiating the Debate on Japanese Capitalism. Takahashi's thesis generated a discussion which gradually brought to the surface many issues regarding the development and current state of Japanese capitalism. Noro's and Inomata's divergent views also became apparent as the discussion proceeded. Hoston (1984: 16) concludes that Takahashi's theory:

> "was a remarkable application of Marxian analysis to Japanese economic development to draw, by Marxist-Leninist standards, counter-intuitive conclusions, given the phenomenon of Japanese expansionism and Lenin's theory of imperialism. At the same time, Takahashi's views man-aged to incorporate what would be the Rōnō-ha's emphasis on Japan's rapid industrial development with the future Kōza-ha's stress on Japan's underdevelopment relative to other industrialized countries. Finally, while it referred specifically to Japanese conditions, the argument is suggestive of patterns of development in other "backward" countries."

Takabatake Motoyuki and State Socialism

The conceptualization of national/state socialism, during the years before the suppression of left circles is most notably associated with the work of Takabatake Motoyuki (高畠 素之, 1886-1928), whose main views on the issue are introduced in this section. Before however proceeding, it is worth quoting Hoston (1984b: 46):

> "Marxist theories of nationalistic socialism were among the most original products of Japanese Marxism to emerge in this period. They included Takabatake's Marxian national socialism; Sano Manabu's post-tenkō socialism-in-one-country; the socialism centered on the Imperial Household of the kaitō-ha (dissolutionist faction), led by Asano Akira, Mizuno Shigeo, and others (Hoston 1981); Akamatsu Katsumaro's advocacy of "scientific Japanism" and then national socialism (Wagner 1978); and Takahashi Kamekichi's program for a Marxian version of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Hoston 1984). The combination of Marxism and nationalism in this pattern not only exposes

[407] As Makino (2011: 105) notes, Takahashi was more accurate than Noro in recognizing the importance of nationalism for the social movement, as 1930s saw the labor movement to shift to the right. The proletarian class, in the midst of its difficulties, sought a solution by venturing into foreign countries, rather than through class struggle.

> the fragility of the myth of Taishō democracy; it also illuminates the significance of international factors in creating a sense of crisis that was shared by intellectuals from the Left to the Right and, eventually, provoked an official effort to resolve it by going to war. Ultimately, in the face of international military conflict, Left and Right converged in support of Japan's expansion into Asia."

Takabatake Motoyuki (高畠 素之, 1886-1928) was (as has been mentioned in Chapter I), the one who offered the first complete translation of Capital (1919, completed in 1924). Often mentioned as the founder of "State Socialism (国家社会主義)" in Japan, Takabatake developed his theory of state socialism beginning in 1919[408]. For Takabatake, national/state socialism (國家社會主義)[409] was the only form of socialist thought that envisaged the completion of the state/nation through the abolition of labor exploitation. The state therefore, assumed its ideal form and best served its purpose under state socialism.

As Hoston (1984b: 44) notes, "Takabatake combined Marxism and a state-centric nationalism as complementary, rather than conflicting". His theory drew much from the "kokutai (national polity)", which was developed and promoted throughout the prewar years: "Takabatake's resolution of the national question enabled him to advocate values traditionally identified with the Japanese kokutai- harmony between ruler and ruled, collectivism, and ethnic unity personified in the emperor-at the same time that he pursued progress along the Western path, through capitalism toward socialism as described by Marx and Engels." (Hoston 1984b: 46).

Takabatake was born in 1886, in Gunma prefecture. Despite being a promising student, his education options were limited due to the poor financial situation of his family, but also his connection to Christianism[410], he enrolled at the theology department of Doshisha University. His studies were cut short, as he dropped out of the university and began his more active engagement with the socialist trends of the time.

He became engaged with the anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui, and joined his "anarcho-syndicalist group in Tokyo in early 1907, attracted by its militancy and direct-action tactic" (Linkhoeva 2020: 188). He was arrested in 1908 due to an article he had written about the "Red Flag Incident (1908)"[411]. After his release, he became interested in Marxism, and began studying (by himself) German. He was struggling financially until 1911, when he started working with Sakai Toshihiko, in his publishing house "Baibun-sha (売文社)". There he became associated with figures such as Yamakawa Hitoshi, Arahata Kanson, Ōsugi Sakae and Wada Kyutarō (和田 久太郎, 1893-1928). Thereafter, his fluency in German, his translations [e.g. Kautsky's "Karl Marx' ökonomische Lehren (The Economic Doctrines of

[408] Hoston (1995:221) argues that Takabatake's "national/state socialism" was, together with Yamakawaism and Fukumotoism, the only "Marxist theoretical work that could merit the label 'original'" at the time.

[409] Kokka Shakai-shugi: the word "kokka" can be translated both as "state" and "nation", with their meaning to be interchangeable in Takabatake's writings. Regarding this double meaning, Linkhoeva (2020: 191) notes that it "served Takabatake's purposes, for it enabled him to imply that (a) the ethnically homogenous Japanese masses (kokumin) constitute the nation; (b) the Japanese nation is coterminous with the state; and (c) socialism provides economic equality for all members of the nation-state, thus ensuring its unity and stability."

[410] He became a Christian when young but later on he abandoned Christianity.

[411] See Appendix I, II.

Karl Marx -1887)"[412]] and writings (in the organ of the Baibun-sha, Shinshakai -新社会) on Marxism established him as an "expert" on Marxist research. In this framework, Takabatake was among the thinkers that introduced the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) to the Japanese audience. Gradually, disagreements among the members of Baibun-sha[413] led to its dissolution.

Takabatake, together with a small group of young "followers", created a group for the promotion of National socialism, which published a journal, under the title "Kokka Shakaishugi (National socialism -国家社会主義)"[414]. In 1920, Takabatake, with Ōsugi, Yamakawa, Sakai, and others organized the shortlived "Shakaishugi Dōmei (Socialist League)", which membership had grown from 1,033 to 6,000-7,000 members, among whom Koreans and Chinese (Linkhoeva 2020: 136)[415]. In 1923, together with Uesugi Shinkichi (上杉慎吉, 1878-1929)[416], Takabatake created the "Keirin gakumei (Statecraft Study Association -経綸学盟)" (Linkhoeva n.d.: 2)[417]. Takabatake continued his writing activities until his death (due to illness), a significant part of which discussed Marxism. His deep knowledge of Marxist bibliography, and western thought in general was noteworthy[418]. He became as well, associated with many nationalist (even radical) and socialist groups throughout his lifetime. It should be noted though that his views were attacked by both left and right circles. It seems that he rejected the accusations of both sides[419]. He wrote for example in 1927, that his theory of National Socialism had him labeled, from early on, as fascist. But at that time (1927), even thinkers like Takahashi or Yamakawa were being called like that, making him feel better.

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[412] Under the title "An explanation of Capital (資本論解説)".

[413] Among them were Takabatake's different from the other members' views on the state.

[414] It ceased publication after five issues (some were banned), while the group could not continue its activities due mainly to financial issues.

[415] A "diversity that reflected the internationalist mood of the time" Linkhoeva (2020) notes.

[416] Professor at the Faculty of Law at Tokyo Imperial University at the time.

[417] The group is often considered as the first example of a fascist group in Japan. "The group's main tenets were total ethnic mobilization and militarization, struggle against capitalism and the contemporary political system, and opposition to communism and the Soviet Union in particular." (Linkhoeva n.d.: 2). Takabatake's motif in collaborating with Uesugi seems that was the hope of gaining financial support for the establishment of a political party (Tanaka 1970). Linkhoeva (2020: 202) mentions that the immediate incentive for the establishment of the association was the victory of the Italian Fascist Party in October 1922, and that "according to a bizarre anecdote, when Takabatake heard of Mussolini's victory, he became very upset at his own failures and, in a fit of rage, repeatedly punched a wall with his fist until it started bleeding, after which he was unable to hold a pen for a month".

[418] Hoston (1984b: 53-4) characteristically notes: "The combination of Takabatake's German-language ability and his broad background in Western European socialist and nonsocialistthought equipped him to understand Marx's conception of the state, complete with its Hegelian roots. Takabatake's writings cited not only the most widely disseminated classics, Capital and the Communist Manifesto, but they also drew on less readily available works, including "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy,' "The Poverty of Philosophy,"Anti-Diihring, and Origin of the Family, P rivate Property, and the State (Takabatake 1928b:85-98). He also drew on events and philosophical trends in the European socialist movement, noting anarchist and statist elements in the ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Lenin, and Eduard Bernstein. His study of the concep-tions of the state found in the work of Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and G. W E Hegel enabled Takabatake to appreciate the contributions of his predecessors in state socialism, such as Ferdinand Lassalle, without blindly imitating them."

[419] As he claimed: "There is a tendency among the right-wing groups to act as tools of bureaucracy and parties, while the left, including social democrats, act as tools of foreign (Russian) powers. Neither the right nor the left are patriots. But we are, because there is no power or authority behind our back. We are independent spirits" (As in: Linkhoeva2020: 206).

During his last year, he had managed to gain the support of influential figures for the establishment of a political party, to promote his "radical patriotism". His political career ended however before it could begin.

Takabatake developed his thought (and his theory of National Socialism) in the same general framework as Takahashi. Japanese economy was slugging, while social unrest was rising due to the economic distress of the postWWI years. International conditions were not favorable for the country, while foreign powers were seen by thinkers like Takabatake as a potential threat, trying to intervene in the internal matters of the country, or even questioning its independent existence.

In that respect, Linkhoeva (n.d.: 5) notes that Takabatake took action[420] due to his concern about the Soviet Union's rising influence in the region: "Anti-communism or, more precisely, anti-Soviet Union sentiment, was an element brought to the radical Right by people like Takabatake with a socialist background who were alert to the problems of the working class and the immense appeal communism might have for Japanese workers, minorities, and immigrants"[421]. Takabatake, Linkhoeva (n.d.: 4) notes, was "greatly alarmed" by the foundation of the Japanese Communist Party (1922) with the support of the Comintern, as he perceived it as a "Comintern agent aiming to turn Japan into nothing less than a Soviet colony".

The bourgeois state of the time, always serving the interests of the capitalists, was seen as unqualified to confront the situation. It was in this context that Takabatake's theory of National Socialism was thus developed. What was needed was not the abolition of the state as such, but of the bourgeois state. Capitalism used the state's power for its advantage that however, did not mean that the state should cease to exist. In that respect, Takabatake (1926)[422] argued:

> "We do not believe that the essence of a nation lies in the development of freedom, but rather in the restriction or restraint of freedom. This point is shared by both anarchism and Marxism. However, while anarchism and Marxism teach that the nation should be abolished because of this, we believe that the existence of the nation is inevitable because of this, and we seek to establish socialism on the basis of this actual necessity."

Takabatake offered a detailed introduction and analysis of the Russian Revolution, in his writings in Shinshakai[423]. His understanding of the issue is highly evaluated, and his analyses are often considered more profound than those of his peers. His own understanding however, was a turning point in his endeavors, and in his relationship with other Marxists. The Bolshevik Revolution was perceived by Takabatake as a clear example of the necessity of the state in a post-capitalist economy. Bolshevism[424] was a political (政治的) movement (aiming at seizing power) according to Takabatake (Tanaka 1970), and it was antidemocratic

[420] She refers in particular to his activities in the "Keirin gakumei".
[421] He was "impatient to start a mass movement in the manner of the Bolsheviks and, later, Mussolini's Fascist Party", and that is why he broke off with the socialist group by 1923 (not for ideological reasons), Linkhoeva (n.d.) argues.
[422] 高畠素之 (1926) カール・マルクスの國家理論 (Karl Marx's Theory of the Nation), Retrieved from: http://awatasan.web.fc2.com/kansoku/kyuuban/002_kaihou/marx_kokka.html
[423] Sakai, Yamakawa and others offered articles on the issue as well.
[424] Linkhoeva (2020: 133) notes that initially, "the Japanese leftists did not differentiate between Bolsheviks and the soviets".

and anti-Western (Linkhoeva 2020: 190). The Russian Revolution as such, was a "national, statist, and anticapitalist revolution", and it "was none other than the first of the national socialist revolutions to come in the world" he claimed (Linkhoeva 2020: 185-6)[425].

According to Takabatake, the state can and should continue to exist and execute its role even when socialism replaces capitalism. Marx and Engels developed their theory of scientific socialism, and for that they will remain in history. Their historical analysis of capitalist development was of great importance. Nevertheless, Takabatake claimed that as a Marxist, he was keen as well to stress their errors:

> "Marx's socialism was scientific, based on a careful analysis of the dynamics of capitalism, but there was also a utopian and emotional Marx whose internationalism and anarchism permeated the Communist Manifesto and "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific." Marx's notion that the state would wither away after a socialist revolution was unscientific, for it ignored the fact that human nature, as Hobbes had suggested, was fundamentally evil. Men were egotistical and needed to be dominated or ruled, even in a socialist society, Takabatake argued, for human nature would not change despite the most radical transformation in the relations of production." (Hoston 1984b: 54)

"*Marxism was essentially statist*"[426], Takabatake believed, and national socialism was a logical development of Marxism (Tanaka 1970). Moreover, humans have to be controlled by an authority, otherwise they could not coexist in decent way due to their egoistic and evil nature. For Takabatake, domination precedes exploitation (Tanaka 1970). And while exploitation occurs during the process of state formation, as the ruling class often comes to become the exploitative class, a state can function without exploitation. National Socialism aimed therefore at this[427].

Socialism as such, was considered the ideal type of national organization. Socialism was originally the most scientific method of seeking human freedom and equality for Takabatake (Tanaka 1970), hence it was a prerequisite for the well-being of the nation-state (Linkhoeva 2020:192). Concerning democracy, Takabatake wrote:

> "If you consider democracy carefully, it essentially means that the minority exercises domination (shihai), claiming to [do so] in the name of the people. Where do democracy and dictatorial aristocracy differ? We think that they are ultimately the same." Democrats simply argued that "deceit and usurpation were better than {outright} thievery."[428]

In that sense, Takabatake claimed that his national socialism (*Kokka Shakaishugi*) was different from western state socialism:

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[425] It is worth noting that "Takabatake argued that the reality of the Soviet state, and especially its dictatorial character, revealed that Lenin did not follow or support Marx's state theory" (Linkhoeva 2020: 190).

[426] As in Hoston (1984b: 56).

[427] Takabatake distinguishes his own "functional national socialism (機能的国家社会主義)" from Lassalle's, which he names "ethical national socialism (倫理的国家社会主義)" (Tanaka 1970). For him, all other socialist ideas were characterized by fantasies and ideality due to the fact that they did not recognize human egoism (Tanaka 1970).

[428] As in Hoston (1984b: 52).

> "Strictly speaking, kokka shakaishugi must be translated as state socialism, because national socialism is translated as kokuminteki shakaishugi. However, we translate into English our theory of kokka shakaishugi as National Socialism [sic]. In the West, state socialism denotes social reformism, and thus although it has "socialism" in its name, in fact, in its essence social reformism is against socialism. National Socialism is almost not used, except by the famous English social democrat [Henry Mayers] Hyndman, who named his party the National Socialist Party. There are also few socialist parties in the world that use "national" in their name. But if you think about it, the majority of socialist parties in the world are national socialist. Those who laugh at our theory of national socialism, claiming that nationalism [kokkashugi] and socialism [shakaishugi] are like water and oil, are in fact ignorant of the global trend of socialism."[429]

That trend was to blend together nationalism, statism, socialism, and anticapitalism, just as the Bolsheviks had done (Linkhoeva 2020). Socialism could advance the interests of the whole Japanese nation (minzoku), whose members already shared a common national feeling. Capitalism on the other hand, "established the malicious exploitation of one class over another instead of the "pure domination" of the neutral state and confused people into thinking that the state itself was an "evil" institution" (Linkhoeva 2020: 195).

Takabatake argued that "our position is to apply Marxism to the economy and the spirit of social reformism to politics"[430]. Socialism should be used for the sake of the state-nation, and not vice versa (Tanaka 1970: 51). As for the way national socialism should be organized, the establishment of a "patriotic economic organization (愛国的経済組織)" would render the conflict between capital and labor unnecessary, production would be centralized, and eventually, the state would "be managed by its best minds, which would constitute a new ruling elite" (Linkhoeva 2020: 196).

"Internationally, it would seek cooperation with other "colored peoples" to end "the present oppression and exploitation of the colored peoples by white peoples" (Hoston 1984b: 55). The state would have to be wary of external threats as they would continue to exist, even by socialist countries. As Hoston (1984b: 57) notes, according to Takabatake's view "Japan must guard against "workers' imperialism" on the part of the Soviets[431], for any state, whether capitalist or proletarian socialist, had a natural propensity to expand."[432].

That being the case, Takabatake initially did not support Japanese expansion in China, and stressed the need to support China in her efforts to build an independent national state

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[429] As in Linkhoeva (2020: 192).

[430] As in Tanaka (1970: 50).

[431] Linkhoeva (2020: 200) quotes Takabatake (1925): "Communism is imperialism that uses socialism as its weapon. It is easier to fight a military threat, but here they target the social system. To fight it, we need to carry out a fundamental reconstruction of our social system. Proletarian imperialism is more dangerous than tsarist imperialism. Japan must watch out for Russia.". Again in 1927, Takabatake wrote about the expansion of the Soviet Russia to the Far East, and "warned that the danger of Soviet internationalism lay in its special ability to capture the hearts of colonial people with socialist and anti-imperialist rhetoric." (Linkhoeva 2020: 200).

[432] Hoston (1984b: 57) notices as well that "Takabatake shared with Takahashi a growing sense that the capitalist powers were preventing Japan from pursuing the same foreign-policy course that the powers themselves had used to increase their prestige", and that there operated a "powerful racial element [as] the great powers claimed to want peace not out of a sincere desire for peace, but to force Japan back into its former enslaved position with other Asian peoples".

(Linkhoeva 2020). "Independent nation states working in mutual respect—that was his vision of the international order" Linkhoeva (2020: 201) notes[433]. As she adds however, after the Soviet advancement in Mongolia, he feared further Soviet expansion and ultimately, saw Japanese empire as "the only force capable of stopping the Bolshevik advance in East Asia and liberating Asia from Soviet imperialism" (Linkhoeva 2020: 202)[434].

Takabatake's approach to the national question can be characterized as functional. His "support of the imperial system and his "respect for kokutai" were quite different from the thinking of the conservative Right" for example (Linkhoeva 2020: 194). Takabatake recognized the importance of the emperor, as due to the ubroken imperial line, and the emperor's dominant position for thousands of years, the people felt a kind of mystified reverence and respect towards him. Consequently, the emperor was crucial for the unity of the nation, and as "the Japanese state originated with the founding of the imperial house […] [it] therefore would continue to exist only as a monarchy" (Linkhoeva 2020: 194)[435].

He was a practical theorist, and in order to promote and gain support for his views he became associated with various groups, of different profiles[436]. He tried to avoid illegal means as much as possible. Even though unsuccessfully, he strived for a mass movement[437]. And the masses were driven by specific forces, he believed:

> "that the basic feature of mass mentality was its irrational "instinct" (honnō), with its two coexisting elements—patriotism (aikokushugi), which manifests itself at times of national distress, and victim mentality (higaisha tarubeki shinri), which refers to the people's self-perception as victims of unjust economic and social circumstances. For Takabatake, this mob patriotism should be vindicated, cherished, and indulged[438]. He welcomed the outburst of "patriotic" spirit among the masses and derided Japanese communists for their naïve belief in the "internationalist" spirit of the workers." (Linkhoeva 2020: 198)

As Tanaka (1970) notes Takabatake, which during his later years, referred sometimes to his own position as "radical patriotism", was at the nexus of the beginning of the history of both the communist and nationalist movements of the Shōwa period. After Takabatake's death his national socialism movement was continued by his disciples Tsukui Tatsuo (津久井龍雄, 1901-1989), Ishikawa Junjūrō (石川 準十郎, 1899-1980), and others (Fuke 2019). While Takabatake's ideas were transmitted and often "edited" and "enriched" by them,

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[433] "Takabatake concluded that if China did not succeed in producing its own Lenin, Mussolini, or Kemal Atatürk, even though it might free itself from the bonds of imperialist powers, its destiny was to become 'food for proletarian imperialism.'" (Linkhoeva 2020: 201).

[434] "and therefore the Chinese government would have to acknowledge Japan's supreme role on the continent and yield to its dominance" (Linkhoeva 2020: 202).

[435] Those views were expressed by Takabatake to "rebuke his rightist critics" (Linkhoeva 2020: 194).

[436] Even "terrorist" ones (Linkhoeva 2020).

[437] Linkhoeva (2020: 197) argues that "In his feverish attempts to gain the support of the Japanese public, as well as leftists, by appealing to nationalism, Takabatake used all the rhetorical techniques at his disposal".

[438] Linkhoeva (2020: 197-8) refers here to Takabatake's reaction to the massacres that followed the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923). Takabatake believed that the "the murderous behavior of the Japanese working-class mob was normal" at the time.

“Takabatake’s ideas found great resonance among those at the top of the political world in the post-Depression period of the 1930s” Lonkhoeva (2020: 207) notes.

Conclusion

Marxism as a general theory of development, as was shown, proved useful in the context of the “national question” as well. It provided the basis for arguments such as the “petty imperialism” theory of Takahashi, or the national socialism movement initiated by Takabatake. Of course this was not only true in the Japanese case. As Linkhoeva (2020 :187) however notes, “Taishō national socialism differed from its counterparts in Germany and Italy in one major way: it arose in the context of the growing Japanese Empire, which had to compete intensely not only with the European powers and the United States but also with another emerging superpower in East Asia, the Soviet Union”.

The theories that emerged throughout those years should therefore, be examined in the framework of the time. As may be clear to the reader, a simple categorization of thinkers between right or left is almost impossible in the case of Japanese preWWII socialist thinkers. What is important though is that a categorization which may seem obvious in the western theoretical context was not a “limit” to the Japanese thinkers of the time.

Linkhoeva (2020: 185-6) notes:

> “In their pursuit of a social revolution and revision of Marxism, the interwar generation of socialists in Europe and Japan abandoned the idea of the working class as the prime revolutionary force and instead replaced it with the nation as a whole. This gave birth to a new concept of the state, which was to organize, direct, and defend the national community, as well as reflect the wishes and aspirations of the newly “awakened” masses rather than those of the old political and economic elites. This desire to go beyond Marxism and find in the nation and the state the true revolutionary force was, as Sternhell argued, ‘one of the main routes for going from left to right and from the extreme left to the extreme right.’”

Finally, a crucial point Hoston (1984b: 46) makes, concerning the rejection by many Japanese Marxists of the international scope of Marxism, is the following:

> “How was one to dispose of the national state, the value of which had become fully appreciated only recently in Japan, while pursuing the goal of stateless international socialism? Marx's internationalist resolution of this problem was inappropriate to Japan's needs inasmuch as conditions that had shaped the capitalist industrialization of England and France no longer existed. New and different domestic pressures and international forces operated during the Taisho and Showa years, tensions that would allow Japan to continue its upward curve of development and to maintain public peace only by preserving a powerful national state.”

Chapter V

Comparative Study: Japan and Poland

The last part of this dissertation concerns a comparative study of the economic thought, of Japan and Poland, during the early 20th century, and under the influence of Marxism. This dissertation has as main subject the Japanese economic thought of the early 20th century, and the influence of Marxism on it however, this last chapter tries to examine the possibility of a comparative analysis of the economic thought of Japan and Poland, during those years. Below, the idea behind this comparative study is presented, and how it is believed that it will allow us to draw useful conclusions about the history of economic thought of those regions, but in general as well.

Despite that at a first glance, this may seem as a strange choice of countries to study together, it is interesting to notice that those two cases seem to present some common characteristics that allow space for such a study. It is important to note that this study does not claim that Poland is the most (or the only) suitable example to study together with Japan. It merely attempts to show that such a study is possible and of interest for the study of the history of global economic thought. In addition, it should be noted that the current study is but a brief overview of the issue. As such, it should not be assumed that it exhausts the possibility of further related analysis.

Some basic information for each country follow, when looking at their respective history. Although those are well and widely known, a brief reference to them is necessary to showcase the seeming "distance" (geographical, political etc.) between the two cases.

Poland, is located at the center-eastern part of Europe. It has its history filled with invasions, divisions, loss of independence. Its intellectual history has been shaped on the basis of Western intellectual tradition, philosophy and sciences. Christianity played and still plays a central role in the lives of Polish people and society, for hundreds of years. Finally, for a great part of the 20th century, Poland was under communist regime and only during the recent decades it shows high economic development under capitalism.

Japan from its side, located at the far eastern edge of Asia, comprised of islands has almost never come into direct danger of losing its territory (with the exception of the Mongol attempts in the 13th century). Its intellectual history and thought is the result of blending local elements with Chinese and Korean knowledge and traditions, having been introduced, assimilated and often transformed throughout the years, while religion's existence and role being supplementary. During the 20th century, its rapid industrialization and development placed it as one of the world's biggest economy.

The early 20th century however, found the two countries facing a great deal of challenges, often similar in nature.

Poland regained its independence in 1918[439], although still engaged in armed conflicts to secure its borders (e.g. the Polish–Soviet War 1919-1921)[440]. In 1922, when they were

[439] The so called "Partitions of Poland" (1772-95), by Austria, Prussia and Russia, had divided the country in "three parts".

settled, Poland was the 3rd biggest (in terms of territory) country of Europe. Its population rose to 34 million inhabitants during the interwar years, and was composed largely of minorities groups (Ukrainians, Jews, Belarusians etc.). Organizing the state, the economy to finance its undertakings and institutions, many of which were to be established for the first time, developing the country's infrastructure, which had received much damage from the previous wars, were all pressing matters. Poland, on its independence, was mainly a backward agrarian economy, therefore, the new governments were in charge to promote industrialization and agricultural reforms. In Poland state involvement in the economy was high. Adoption of a constitution (1921), elections – under universal suffrage – creation of political organs-parties and educational reforms, which gave rise to literacy among the people, all took place during those years.

Japan from its side, after the Meiji Restoration of course, initiated a series of reforms (economic, political, social) and focused on its rapid industrialization, as its main economic sector then was as well, agriculture. All these also, were ways of keeping its independence from the imperialist powers of the time. The slogan "Fukoku kyōhei" (富国強兵, "Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Army"), became widespread during the Meiji period. Soon the country had to secure its aspirations in the west (China, Korea, Russia – respective wars). In Japan's case also, educational reforms, creation of political parties, elections (even though with smaller electorate) took place. Finally, uniting the people was important, as was dealing with minorities (such as Chinese and Korean workers).

During the mid-thirties both countries started moving towards authoritarianism. In Poland, this process started with Marshall Józef Piłsudski's (1867-1935) coup of May 1926 and the formation of the Sanation government (1926–1939), which aimed at restoring "moral health" to public life. Japan of course as well, gradually took the road to militarism and authoritarianism.

Having said all that, it is interesting to notice that during this period, it is possible to argue that the two countries found themselves often with quite similar issues to deal with, despite the differences in magnitude, scope etc. Thus, a comparative study can be possible and of great interest here. What they had to deal with then?

First of all, they had to organize their states and their institutions. They had then to secure and advance their geopolitical thesis. Poland, after its independence, secured its position (territory) through some battles however, there were expressed aspirations for expansion, while simultaneously, it was constantly under a condition of uncertainty. Germany and Russia were never satisfied with its independence. Japan in the latter years of the Meiji period was in a better position than some decades before, but still was struggling to enjoy a treatment on equal basis within the rest of the world's powers, and simultaneously, to secure its expansionist efforts to the west (Korea, China etc). Moreover, as has been discussed in the previous chapters, a feeling of uncertainty and threat from foreign powers (such as Russia) was present throughout the preWWII years. It is worth of note that the two countries shared as well what can be called a "common threat", namely Russia. This fact, as will be shown below, often "connected" the two during the preWWII years.

[440] Or even advancing aspirations for a colonial policy. See for example: Puchalski, P. (2017). The Polish mission to Liberia, 1934–1938: Constructing Poland's colonial identity. The Historical Journal, 60(4), 1071-1096. doi:10.1017/S0018246X16000534

In this framework, it was important for both countries to exert effective "control" over the people. Things like strong national identity (something that in the first place allowed Poland to be able to assert its independence, after so many years), consensus for the international policies, willingness to contribute to the battles (metaphorically as well) were all important matters in both cases. For issues such as national unification, the "implantation" of the idea of a nation in people's mind was an urgent issue for the authorities. Simultaneously, to cope with people's dissatisfaction, which often led to riots (e.g. rice riots in Japan in 1918), strikes and protests was also an important challenge. In both countries there are examples of groups reacting, either for reasons related to working conditions, either for political reasons either for others, with many times those efforts ending in violent suppressions by the authorities. Therefore, to promote a local mentality to the masses, was important. Economic and military enhancement was thus deemed to be necessary. Poverty and social problems were a common concern for both, especially throughout the 1920s.

Under those circumstances, it is only natural that great efforts were directed to the study of economy and economics. A strong economy was necessary for achieving the previously mentioned goals (e.g. finance the policies, satisfy the people, raise the living standards). Many universities emerged and together with the existing ones, developed faculties of economics or included economic lectures in their curriculum (initially included in the Law Departments). Bodies of research[441] were created as well; in those, studies and conferences were taking place and their role was often advisory to the state. Their contribution to economic inquiries and studies is very important. Many prominent economic thinkers conducted their researches in such bodies.

Publishing industry also expanded greatly. As the literacy ratio was rising in both countries, after reforms in education had been introduced (compulsory), we can see an increase in the number of publications and press; journals, magazines and newspapers, like Ekonomista in Poland[442] or Kokumin Keizai Zasshi in Japan, specializing in economics, business or finance emerged. Many thinkers, like Kawakami Hajime in Japan, published their own journals. They would mention sometimes the intention or hope to create a Japanese or Polish economic school in the style of German or Austrian for example. It is also, worth of mention that many prominent economists of the 20th century, from Poland and Japan, began their careers during those turbulent years (e.g. Kalecki, Lange, Luxemburg, Morishima, Uno, Tsuru to name a few).

Consequently, it is possible to find many thinkers trying to understand contemporary developments and answer questions related to the issues mentioned before, using the knowledge and tools of the time. They also showed a particular interest in Marxian thought, as in both countries Marxist work was greatly studied and debated. In this context, Marxism had an important place in the economic thinking during those years. It is characteristic that many prominent economists of the 20th century, that came from the two countries, were interested in Marxist thought, during the beginning of their careers. Some of course were

[441] Two of the most important in Poland were the "Institute of Business Cycle and Price Research (Instytut Badania Koniunktur i Cen)" established in 1928, under the supervision of Edward Lipiński (1888-1986), and the "Institute of Social Economy (Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego)", founded in 1920, under the supervision of Ludwik Krzywicki (1859-1941).

[442] In the way of the English language Japanese journal "Kyoto University Economic Review", "*an English-language journal was established in order to make the findings of Polish economists accessible to international scholars*" (Witczak Haugstad 2008: 23).

later characterized as clearly Marxists. It is possible therefore, to take Maxism as a common basis for the scholars of the time, to deploy their theories and ideas.

Capitalism seemed the cause of imperialistic activity of the western powers, and the conviction that it should be abolished and replaced was widely expressed in both countries[443]. Capitalists were accused of manipulating the government, something that was often the cause of protests and complaints. We had the examples of the conglomerates –zaibatsu- in Japan, often accused of favorable treatment by the officials or disturbing the proper functioning of the market. In Poland, Oskar Lange (1904-1965) and Marek Breit (1907-1942), argued (Breit, Lange 2003: 52) that monopoly capitalism created economic chaos, which manifested itself in the increasing intensity and length of crises. The problem of serving the capitalists and not the people, of corruption among government officials, of antagonisms in society (e.g. between capitalist and workers), capitalist accumulation and its limits, imperialism, were all issues of great debate.

Taking all that into consideration, there are three different levels of analysis this study tries to elaborate on.

The first one, focuses on exchange of ideas between Japanese and Polish thinkers of the time. On a second level, how the ideas expressed by thinkers of both countries dealt with similar issues, and produced similar (or different) approaches – responses to those, is examined. Finally, through such a study, we can also pay attention to what is the influence factors such as local history, geographic thesis, religions, traditions etc. exert on the development of economic thought. Here we have two quite distant in that respect, examples.

Before however, these three categories are further discussed, it is deemed useful to give a brief overview of the development of economic and Marxist thought in Poland. The reader should be quite familiar with the Japanese case by now, thus only the Polish case remains to be introduced so that the comparative analysis could be carried on.

Economic thought and Marxism in "Poland" – brief overview

Polish economic thinkers were greatly influenced first by mercantilist and then by physiocratic ideas[444], way until the 19th century, when Adam Smith's writings gained in popularity (Konczacki 1994: 169). Socialist ideas were first importantly influenced by utopian socialism, had religious and mystical overtones, and developed mainly outside of Polish territories and around the agrarian problems and the issue of nation's independence[445].

Economic thought in partitioned Poland was, as expected, developed without consistency, encompassing a variety of different views and interpretations. The most important contributions to economics by Polish scholars could be found in the academic centers of Krakow (Jagiellonian University) and Lviv (Jan Kazimierz University), where the

[443] We do not talk specifically about communism here, but of new alternatives which would deal with the problems of capitalism.

[444] "[I]n the opinion of Edward Lipinski, a leading Polish historian of economic ideas, nowhere in Europe, apart from France, had Physiocratic theory found equal intellectual appeal and enjoyed equal popularity as it did in Poland" (Konczacki 1994: 170).

[445] For a more detailed analysis of the beginnings of Socialism in Poland see Dziewanowski (1951).

favorable conditions under the Austrian rule, allowed a relative cultural freedom (Klimiuk 2019). Polish economic thought was characterized by a historical direction, as the influence of the German historical school was important during the early 20th century, while after the country's independence[446] and the establishment of many centers of economic studies and discussions, liberalism and neoclassical economics gained attention. Supporters of interventionism were also present[447]. Commenting on the preWWII Polish economic thought, in a 1951 speech, the famous Polish economist Oskar Lange (1904-1965) stated:

> "[P]re-war economic science in Poland was overwhelmingly a bourgeois science. This was due to the capitalist economic base of the time and the capitalist nature of the state at the time and the universities and educational institutions operating within it. But it must be said that even as a bourgeois science, pre-war Polish economics was generally backward, for it did not reach its own original scientific thought, but repeated and chewed up foreign theories that were fashionable at the time. This reflected the backward state of our national economy and our socio-economic life."[448] (as in Klimiuk 2019: 44)

Dziewanowski (1951) notes that "scientific" socialism in Poland was advanced firstly in Russian Poland ("the largest part of the national territory"[449]), where the growth of large-scale industry was rising on a faster pace than in other parts of the "country", while the conditions of the emerging working population were not favorable: "the Socialists of the Russian-controlled part of the country, and especially Warsaw, took the lead from the very beginning and retained it, almost without interruption" Dziewanowski (1951: 514) stresses[450].

Dziewanowski (1951: 514-6) also, stresses the importance of the political, economic and intellectual consequences the defeat of the so called "January Uprising" (1863-1864) had on the subsequent development of Polish socialist thought and activities. A new middle class, together with a rising Jewish intelligentsia, and "fallen" members of the former nobility which "brought with them certain features, such as strong patriotic and revolutionary

[446] Wiles (1957: 190) "Pre-war Polish economics was a backward province of continental classical economics. Work tended to be derivative from foreign models; there was nothing self-generating and original like Polish logic. Marx was of course as well known as in any neighbouring country, and a few economists had a tincture of right-wing Marxism like the 'economism' of the Russian Tugan-Baranowsky. So there was some non-Communist intel- lectual Marxism-that phenomenon that Britons find so difficult to understand, and too readily confuse with simple dishonesty. Communism itself was also small. The marginal analysis was not much known, the Keynesian scarcely at all."

[447] Concerning the profile of economic professionals of the interwar years, Haugstad (2008: 27-8) states:

"What we can assert is that the economists of the interwar years were overwhelmingly male and principally gentile.Their family backgrounds were in business, the landowning gentry and the intelligentsia, although the last group was not necessarily wealthy. Because their careers developed at the intersection between academic institutions, the world of business and the realm of banking and state agencies, it is clear that prominent representatives of the discipline were members of Polish high society."

[448] As in Klimiuk (2019: 44).

[449] Dziewanowski (1951: 513).

[450] "[A]t the end of the 19th century, Poland, especially Russian Poland, was becoming a rapidly industrialising peasant country" Dziewanowski (1951: 520).

traditions, a higher level of education and a longing to regain the lost standard of living" became the leading forces of the movement[451]:

> "Such a group, led by a mobile and determined intellectual elite, gave to the Socialism of Russian Poland a great deal of dynamic force as well as certain other initial advantages over the movement in other parts of the country. Neither the better educated Galicia nor the economically more highly developed Western Poland could upset that initial superiority, and both had to accept the leadership of Warsaw." (Dziewanowski 1951: 517)

Socialist ideas during the interwar years, developed mainly outside of academia. As Haugstad (2008: 24) notes:

> "Socialist economists found it difficult to penetrate academic strongholds […] Economists with leftist sympathies and active socialist politicians had a much more prominent place in scholarly and political debates, although the number of academic positions they held was very limited[452]. The Free University in Warsaw was alone among academic institutions in employing scholars who openly acknowledged their leftist views. Communist economic thinkers were active in Polish lands before 1918, but the Polish authorities had banned the Communist Party because of its refusal to support the cause of Polish independence. Communist Party members' overt tenure of academic positions was in these conditions impossible."

The socialists of the time, preoccupied with their political role and activities, focused most of their attention on practical issues at hand. The Polish Socialist Party (PPS) for example, for a long time did not have a separate theoretical body, which was an exception compared to other socialist and communist parties in Europe (Piskała 2012). The politician Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (1893-1940) commented on the problem of the low interest in theoretical issues within the Party (PPS) as follows:

> "The world has undergone enormous transformations. The old formulas, the old habits of thought have in many cases lost their previous meaning, have become dead. In order for the movement to cope with difficulties of colossal proportions, socialist thought must work with double energy [...]. But this work is accomplished almost exclusively in the West. Polish socialism, constantly in the throes of social struggles and state-building, has gained experience rather empirically only, has outlined the direction of its policy in concrete efforts only, and so far has not attempted to capture either the experience of the past or the

[451] "*Such a group, led by a mobile and determined intellectual élite, gave to the Socialism of Russian Poland a great deal of dynamic force as well as certain other initial advantages over the movement in other parts of the country. Neither the better educated Galicia nor the economically more highly developed Western Poland could upset that initial superiority, and both had to accept the leadership of Warsaw*." (Dziewanowski (1951: 517).

[452] A good example is Oskar Lange. Due to his views, he could not continue his scientific work at the Jagiellonian University, and practically he was forced to emigrate.

daily moves in forms of theoretical generalizations produced by the critical Marxian method."[453]

Socialists and Marxist economic thinkers of the time were mainly active in the framework of political parties, and some, in that of research groups or bodies. Piskała (2012) notes that Marx was a central-symbolical figure for the Polish interwar socialist movement, which subsequently could be considered as a mass social movement, consisting, apart from the PPS at its core, from a large number of trade unions, youth organizations, self-education organizations and others[454]. Piskała (2012: 38) discerns two "images" of Marx widely used: him as a friend of Polish people[455], and him as a thinker.

Marx of course was considered the founder of scientific socialism and the modern workers' movement (Piskała 2012)[456], while as has been mentioned in the previous chapters, there are instances where he and Engels expressed their support for Poland's emancipation and independence. Polish people they argued, were a great part of revolutionary activities in Europe and America[457], and it was in the interest of the worker-classes in Europe to recognize this[458]:

"And so, the Poles played outside the boundaries of their own country a great role in the struggle for proletarian emancipation; they were in the full sense of the word its international champions. Let that struggle extend itself today within the Polish nation itself, let her be upheld by the emigrant press and

[453] As in Piskała (2012: 37-8).

[454] This was manifested in the simplest way by hanging his portraits, organizing ceremonial events and lectures on the anniversaries of his birth and death, and presenting his figure in numerous prints and periodicals (Piskała 2012).

[455] An image widely used in socialist propaganda, especially before 1918 (Piskała 2012).

[456] Piskała (2012: 38) notes that the attitude towards Marx never acquired the characteristics of a cult, polemics with his texts were allowed, and he was far from being considered an infallible "prophet" of socialism.

[457] "Poland is not only the only Slav race which has fought and is fighting as a cosmopolitan soldier of the revolution. Poland spilt its blood in the American War of Independence; its legions fought under the banner of the first French republic; with its revolution of 1830 it prevented the invasion of France, which had been decided upon by the partitioners of Poland; in 1846 in Cracow it was the first to plant the banner of revolution in Europe, in 1848 it had a glorious share in the revolutionary struggles in Hungary, Germany and Italy; finally, in 1871 it provided the Paris Commune with the best generals and the most heroic soldiers." [Marx, K., Engels, F. (1875) On Poland . Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/03/24.htm]

[458] Moreover, he added: "'The workers' party of Europe takes the most decisive interest in the emancipation of Poland and the original programme of the International Working Men's Association expresses the reunification of Poland as a working-class political aim. What are the reasons for this special interest of the workers' party in the fate of Poland?
'First of all, of course, sympathy for a subjugated people which, with its incessant and heroic struggle against its oppressors, has proven its historic right to national autonomy and self-determination. It is not in the least a contradiction that the international workers' party strives for the creation of the Polish nation. On the contrary; only after Poland has won its independence again, only after it is able to govern itself again as a free people, only then can its inner development begin again and can it cooperate as an independent force in the social transformation of Europe. […]
'Another reason for the sympathy felt by the workers' party for the Polish uprising is its particular geographic, military and historical position. The partition of Poland is the cement which holds together the three great military despots: Russia, Prussia and Austria. Only the rebirth of Poland can tear these bonds apart and thereby remove the greatest obstacle in the way to the social emancipation of the European peoples." [ibid]

> propaganda, let her go arm in arm with her Russian brethren with their unequalled efforts, and then will be found one more reason for the repetition of the old cry: 'Long live Poland. '"[459].

The above mentioned Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* -PPS)[460] now can be considered the most important field for the emergence and dissemination of socialist - Marxist thought. It defined itself as a Marxist party, and it was one of the most important political forces of the Second Polish Republic (*II Rzeczpospolita*, 1918-1945), and an integral part of the state's political system, playing an important role in the life of the nation and the working class. Piskala (2012: 39) notes that during the interwar period the party was characterized by great ideological openness, significant internal pluralism and easy absorption of new inspirations coming from very different sources[461].

The Communist Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski* -KPP, 1918-1938)[462] was as well active, although its political impact was less significant, while it was highly connected with the Comintern. It was founded in 1918, by the merger of the "PPS-Left (PPS-*Lewica*)" and the "Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (*Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy* -SDKPiL)[463]". Due mainly to its stance during the Polish-Soviet War (1919-21)[464], the party was ruled illegal, while later on, its support for the 1926 coup d'état of General Piłsudski (what came to be called the "May error -*błąd majowy*") put the party at disadvantage in the Comintern. The party was dissolved by the Comintern in 1938.

Finally, another group that manifested its views during the interwar years was the "catholic 'solidarist' economists", who were "firmly anchored both in Lwów […] and in the Catholic University in Lublin" (Haugstad 2008: 23-4)..

When examining more specifically the development of Marxism and socialism in general, during the late 19th and early 20th century Poland, one cannot proceed without reference to the national issue, the "Polish question" i.e. the efforts for the independence of

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[459] Marx, K., Engels, F., Lafargue, P., Lessner, F. (1880) A Letter to the Polish Socialists. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/11/27.htm

[460] Founded as the "Overseas Union of Polish Socialists (*Związek Zagraniczny Socjalistów Polskich*)" in 1892, Paris.

[461] Moreover he notes, the fact that PPS can be considered as a Marxist party concerns the theses contained in the party's official declarations and speeches of its leaders, and the issue of implementing the Marxist program in current political activity was a completely story. The party included not only orthodox Marxists, as given the ideological pluralism typical of this party, this was not possible.

[462] The period 1918-1925 as Workers' Communist Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polsk*i). For practical reasons, referred below as KPP.

[463] Founded in 1893, based on an internationalist Marxist program. It was created mainly by members of the "Union of Polish Workers (*Związek Robotników Polskich -ZRP*)", who refused to support the national demands contained in the PPS program, and thus left the PPS to form it. One of its most renown members was Rosa Luxemburg, who engaged in 1896 in a conflict with Józef Piłsudski (from the PPS) regarding the question of Poland's independence.

464 It opposed the war and sided with the Red Army. That general stance the KPP had during the first years of independent Poland is often referred to as the "error of Luxembourgism (*błąd Luksemburgizmu*)".

Poland (and later its maintenance). Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935)[465], leading member of the PPS and the man that became the most important figure in Polish politics during the next decades, wrote characteristically in a 1903 article, entitled "How did I become a socialist?":

> "I called myself a socialist in 1884. I say - called - because this did not mean that I acquired an unbreakable and fixed conviction that the socialist idea was right [...]. I openly confess that it was a fashion, because it is difficult for me to call otherwise the socialist epidemic of the time that gripped the minds of young people of revolutionary or merely oppositional disposition. It spread to such an extent, that none of my more intelligent and energetic colleagues avoided going through the socialist stage in their development. Some became socialists, others moved to other camps, others renounced all social aspirations, but each of them was a socialist for a longer or shorter time [...] A socialist in Poland must strive for the independence of the country, and independence is a significant condition for the victory of socialism in Poland."[466]

Scientific socialism as formulated by Marx, was the basis for the theoretical works of many Polish Marxists thinkers, who saw in it (as their Japanese counterparts) a scientific explanation of economic development, while historical materialism was considered to be at its core. Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (1893-1940)[467], wrote:

> "Historical materialism is a method of studying the history and the present of societies, it is a scheme, a tool with the help of which we find causal relationships in the chaos of past events and can with a certain, greater or lesser in various cases degree of probability predict the further development of social relations"[468]

However, as Piskała (2012) stresses, the fact that many thinkers saw historical materialism as "a method" to analyze phenomena, led them often to reject Marxism's deterministic views. Hence the eventual collapse of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society was not always seen as necessary or inevitable. According again to Niedziałkowski , "Socialism, as the sum of certain social ideals, belongs to the category of historical possibilities"[469]. Moreover, the view that Marx's views were limited to his epoch, and as such could not anticipate future conditions and advancements was widespread in

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[465] An interesting fact, in the wider context of the present dissertation, is that his brother, Bronisław Piłsudski (1866-1918), became an ethnographer after his imprisonment in Sakhalin for his participation in the preparation of the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander III. He traveled to Japan (1905-6), studied the Ainu culture (even married an Ainu women), and founded (together with the writer Futabatei Shimei -二葉亭 四迷, 1864-1909) the Japanese-Polish Society. He developed connections with a wide range of Japanese and Chinese figures of the time. For more see: https://ank.gov.pl/en/wystawy/japanese-trails-of-bronislaw-pilsudski/ and Pałasz-Rutkowska, E. (2013).

[466] As in: Wojtaszak, A. (2015) Stanowisko Józefa Piłsudskiego wobec marksizmu w korespondencji oraz Pismach zbiorowych , Uniwersytet Szczeciński : NOWA KRYTYKA 34, p. 104-4. DOI: 10.18276/nk.2015.34-06

[467] Member of the PPS.

[468] As in Piskała (2012: 40).

[469] As in Piskała (2012: 40-1).

socialist circles such as the PPS[470]. The socialist thinker Feliks Perl (1871-1927) commented characteristically: "No Marxist - except probably intellectual idiots - will claim that Marx said everything and that everything he said is sacred. Marx's works are not the Koran"[471]. Marxism therefore, should be treated in a dynamic way, making it open to reinterpretations and the search for new solutions to contemporary phenomena, and not seen as a static theory, many thinkers believed (Piskała 2012). It should be of course noted that there were (groups of) thinkers that devoted more attention and effort to stay "true" to Marx's views, often criticized such approaches, and stressed the importance of overthrowing the current socio-political system, through a proletarian revolution.

Contacts

"Contact" between Japan and Poland can be traced back to the 16th century. From the side of Poland, Polish people probably first heard of Japan through a 15th century translation of Marco Polo's "Il milione (Book of the Marvels of the World)" (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). Then references to the work of European missionaries in Japan followed[472]. During the 17th-19th centuries, some travelogues and references to the country appeared. By the late 19th century, the general Polish public had become more aware of Japan, and works by scholars of different interests (many reaching Japan through Siberia, a place of exile) were published (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). The end of the 19th century saw the appearance of the first serious translations of Japanese literature, and increased interest in the Japanese art (in line with the trend of Japonisme in Europe) (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013).

From the side of Japan, the Japanese probably first heard of Poland during the so-called Christian "Tenshō embassy (天正の使節, 1582-1590)", to Europe (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). Throughout the Edō period, geography books from Nagasaki seems that were the sole reference to the country, while in the 18th century, a book about Europe by the Confucian scholar Arai Hakuseki (新井 白石, 1657-1725), mentioned Poland based on information obtained from an imprisoned Italian missionary (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). After the opening of the country during the Meiji period, information about Poland became more accessible, and knowledge about the country was slowly increasing, in the context of increased interest about the West and western cultes and tradition. It was probably through Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Things western (西洋事情, 1866)" that the general Japanese public first came into contact with the name Poland (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013: 2).

At this point, it is interesting to see a view of Poland, that was presented to the Japanese during the early Meiji years. In 1873, in a memorial, the statesman Kido Takayoshi (1833-1977) described his passage through Poland. An extract follows:

[470] That, Piskała (2012: 41) notes, gave them the possibility to conveniently and easily explain the 'apparent' inconsistency of their views with that of Marx's writings.
[471] As in Piskała (2012: 41). Or Niedziałkowski stated: "We are not a sect, whose creator predicted everything once and for all, solved all problems and for belief presented supposedly the dogmas of the church" (ibid).
[472] Wojciech Męciński (1598-1643) is considered the first Polish Jesuit to go to Japan. He was captured and killed by the Japanese, in the framework of the prohibition of Christianity by the Tokugawa Shogunate.

> "When I was traveling in a railway carriage from Prussia to Russia, one morning at dawn my dreams were suddenly broken by the melancholy notes of a flute. I got up and opened the window. I was in Poland, the flute player was a poor native who was begging copper coins from the passengers. This incident carried my mind back to the days of Poland's greatness, and it was long before I was able to restrain my tears. Alas! What country can escape the same fate if it does not maintain its constitution and preserve the integrity of its laws. As the turning point between prosperity and decay, between safety and destruction, is so crucial, I felt compelled to note down this example so as to submit it for the opinion of my enlightened readers."[473]

Poland here, was used as an example to avoid, as an example of a miserable country that had fallen victim of internal disorder, a disorder that has caused its partition by its neighboring states, which, as Kido writes, "could no longer stand by unconcerned". Poland thus represented an example to avoid as a nation, a warning to the Japanese of the dangers the new "open" era brought along. Other written works of the late 19th century referred to the tragedies of the Polish people, namely the partition of their country and their independence movement (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013).

The closest point of interest to both countries from the late 19th century until WWII, the issue that became the most often cause for the two countries' contacts, seems that was Russia. Russia represented a major threat to both nations, and became often the reason political and military figures of the two countries sought to reach to each other. Major Fukushima Yasumasa (福島 安正, 1852-1919) for example, during his stay in Germany (1887-1892), visited partitioned Poland several times, and seems to had made contact with a number of Polish people. He believed that only the so-called Polish patriots, the fervent anti-Russians who wanted Poland's independence through armed struggle, could bring him the most important information about Russia, information that he used later on, when traveling (1892-) across Siberia, from Berlin to Vladivostok via Poland (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). He also, it seems met with Polish independence activists and Siberian exiles in the course of his trip.

The turning point however, for the mutual interests of the two countries, was the occasion of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). Initially, the news of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War was at first received with skepticism in Poland however, the course of the war soon changed their attitude, and they became more supportive of Japan, developing a deep sense of kinship with it, accompanied by a surge in Polish literature about Japan, translations of Japanese literature, and other publications on Japanese themes (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). Japan's victory now against Russia had important political consequences for Poland.

Many saw Russia's defeat as an indication of its weakening, something that could be of great advantage to Poland, they believed. In their efforts to advance Polish independence, the leaders of the PPS (Piłsudski), and the National League (Liga Narodowa, Dmowski[474]) in particular, tried promptly to seek cooperation with the Japanese. However, the two parties had very different positions, and their contacts and negotiations with the Japanese were conducted

[473] Kido Takayoshi, Japan Weekly Mail 1873 (pp.776-798) – as in Bereday, G. (1974). A JAPANESE VIEW ON THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND. The Polish Review, 19(2), 89-91. Retrieved August 26, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25777204

[474] Roman Dmowski (1864-1939).

in secret and separately (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013: 4). Piłsudski and Dmowski both traveled (separately) to Tokyo, and met with Japanese government and military officials.

Piłsudski believed that the War should be used to restore Polish national independence, something that could be assisted with Japanese financial aid, which would facilitate the organization of an armed uprising against Russia within the Kingdom of Poland (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013). The uprising would force the Russian military to increase its strength in Europe, consequently weakening its strength in the Far East. He as well claimed that the many Polish working in the Trans-Siberian Railway, which provided transportation for Russian soldiers, could sabotage it, as well as cause damage to facilities on the front lines in the Manchurian region (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013).

Dmowski from his side, argued that an uprising within the Kingdom of Poland would once again bring tragedy to the Polish people and no benefit to Japan. The Russian authorities, he claimed, would quickly suppress the Polish uprising and would then build up their forces in the Far East even more than before (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013: 4-5).

In the end, Piłsudski's efforts were not successful. An agreement with Poland, would have offered to Japan important information from Polish intelligence on the Russian army, and a possible armed uprising and disruption of the trans-Siberian railroad network, something that would be of great advantage. However, the Japanese were not interested in the political situation of Poland. Having only just entered the world political and diplomatic arena, Japan did not want to get involved in European affairs, and was reluctant to interfere in foreign affairs (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2013: 4-5). Pałasz-Rutkowska (2013: 5) notes that although the joint Polish-Japanese operations during the Russo-Japanese War were not as successful as initially expected, it was at this time that a deep affinity for the Japanese was born among the Polish people.

Independent Poland began gradually to establish diplomatic relations with many countries, among which Japan. The Japanese government recognized Poland's independence in 1919, and gradually the two established formal relations. As Pałasz-Rutkowska (2013: 6) notes, in Japan, the military authorities were more interested in Poland than were the civilian ones, while the Polish side was much more eager to conclude diplomatic relations quickly and to send official diplomatic missions to Japan, a rising power of the time[475]. Further on, it can be argued that the two countries developed a generally friendly relationship the next years.

Finally, it is worth noting that their relationship continued in good terms, well through the next decades:

> "Japan's official policy toward Poland changed only in the second half of 1941 after Germany launched its invasion of the USSR and in connection with worsening Japanese-American relations. Japan, which sought to create the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, had to support German policy in Europe. On October 4, 1941, our embassies were officially closed, and on December 11, after Poland – an ally of Great Britain – declared war on Japan, our two countries found themselves in opposing camps. However, despite severed diplomatic ties, unofficial military cooperation between Poland and Japan continued throughout the war." (Pałasz-Rutkowska 2011: 33)

[475] For Poland, maintaining friendly relations with Japan struck the right balance in its difficult relationship with its eastern neighbors, Pałasz-Rutkowska (2013: 6) notes.

Concerning economic thought, direct "contact" between thinkers, what is taken as the first level of approach in this dissertation, is a daunting task to spot. As mentioned in the introduction, the most well known example, and the first the author was able to spot, was the case of the Polish economist Oskar Lange praising in his 1934 article[476] Shibata Kei's 1933 article[477], entitled "Marx's analysis of capitalism and the general equilibrium theory of the Lausanne School", as a the first attempt to bridge the gap between Marxian economics and the general equilibrium theory:

> "Professor Shibata thinks that the sterility of the theory of general economic equilibrium is due to its complexity and the high degree of abstraction which make its application to actual problems impossible. Marxian economics instead, being concerned rather with aggregates and averages than with the mental structure of the individuals taking part in the organisation of capitalist production, is more amenable to direct practical application. Professor Shibata tries, therefore, to restate and simplify the Lausanne system of equations so as to make it possible to apply them practically. In this Professor Shibata has performed an exceedingly fine piece of analysis for which any serious economist should be grateful. It seems to me, however, that Professor Shibata has not touched the very essential point which accounts for the (real or alleged) superiority of Marxian over 'bourgeois' economics." (Lange 1935: 194)

Lange goes on then to compare the two "schools" (Marxian and "bourgeois") of economics and to presents their respective merits and demerits. He concludes that the "superiority of Marxian economics in analysing Capitalism is not due to the economic concepts used by Marx (the labour theory of value), but to the exact specification of the institutional datum distinguishing Capitalism from the concept of an exchange economy in general." (Lange 1935: 201).

Concerning Lange and Shibata, Yagi (2023) mentions that Lange had mistook Shibata for a socialist:

> "At the time of the outbreak of the war in China, Shibata found himself on tour as one of the last researchers abroad that Japan's Ministry of Education sent to Europe and the United States before World War II. Lange mistakenly took Shibata for a socialist and invited him to join the 'university of refugees.' Which was to be established in New York. Shibata, who was a patriot, did not take this proposal seriously. However, on his way back to Japan to remain a loyal citizen of a nation that became criticized as the 'aggressor' by most Western nations, Shibata had to ponder the cause of the war and the policy to save his nation." (Yagi 2023: 170-1)

It is important to note that this was a period when Japanese economists were beginning to establish themselves in the field of economics. Other similar "exchanges" could have taken place however, more research on the issue is needed.

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[476] Lange, O. (1934) Marxian Economics and Modern Economic Theory, The Review of Economic Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3. (Jun., 1935), pp. 189-201

[477] Shibata, K. (1933) Marx's analysis of capitalism and the general equilibrium theory of the Lausanne School, Kyoto University Economic Review, 8 (1): 107-136

It can be accepted that "Polish" economic thought had reached Japan as well, at least through the works of Rosa Luxemburg, as Luxemburg's ideas were discussed among Japanese Marxists.

Kuruma Samezō (久留間 鮫造, 1893-1982), while in Ōhara Institute for Social Research, studied among others Luxemburg (in the context of his analyses of the theory of crisis). Kuruma worked for the Institute, when he was sent, with Kushida Tamizō, to Europe for research purposes (to collect materials and books for the Institute), in 1920-2, while from 1923, he was professor on the history of economics at Doshisha University.

In his "An Introduction to the Study of Crisis" (1929)[478] Kuruma, among others, examined Luxemburg's "Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to an Explanation of Imperialism" (1913). As he noted, Lenin and Luxemburg "carried out the most innovative work for developing a scientific analysis of imperialism". While Luxemburg's book validity on the issue of rightly "grasping the problem and the process of inference she employed" can be questioned, no one could "ignore the historical significance of Part One of The Accumulation of Capital" he noted:

> "With an increasingly keen awareness of the approaching crisis of world war, which accompanied the gradual unfolding of the contradictions particular to the imperialist stage of capitalism, the decision by the Social-Democratic Party regarding the policy to adopt toward war became increasingly crucial. Luxemburg made the first theoretical achievement intended to sweep aside the petty-bourgeois attitude of the "central faction" of the party and put in place a truly proletarian stance as its foundation. The historical significance of The Accumulation of Capital is demonstrated by the incredibly controversy it generated within the Social-Democratic Party"[479]

Luxemburg's through her book, expressed "a clear truth that was confirmed in the actual stance toward imperialism of those (in the Marxist "central" faction) who attacked The Accumulation of Capital", Kuruma noted. According to Kuruma, the people Luxemburg criticized, while claiming to be "expert Marxists", repeated the mistake Sismondi had made a century before regarding "the contradictions of capitalism in the form of 'universal competition'", but in "their attitude toward the contradictions of capitalism in the form of imperialism". However, Kuruma notes, "This can certainly not be considered a well-intentioned, naive error [as in Sismondi's case]. Rather, this must signify a conscious turning away from Marxism, a conscious betrayal of the class interests of the proletariat.".

Kuruma, while praising aspects of Luxemburg's work, finds defects in her analysis, which he contrasts with Lenin's "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism". He argues hence that despite that each "book has particular historical significance in terms of adopting a truly proletarian stance toward this new situation", "Lenin's Imperialism represents a step forward compared to Luxemburg's work". Luxemburg he claims, did not seem to had "an adequate awareness of her corresponding historical mission":

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[478] An Introduction to the Study of Crisis (Kyōkō kenkū joron). Journal of the Ohara Institute for Social Research, 6(1). Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/kuruma/crisis-intro.htm

[479] N.p. This one and others quotations of this particular work of Kuruma are retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/kuruma/crisis-intro.htm

> "If we look at the structure of her book, as already noted, its fundamental part is composed of a general analysis of the reproduction process of social capital. She concludes that expanded reproduction (capital accumulation) is absolutely impossible in a purely capitalist society. From this impossibility, she demonstrates that non-capitalist environments are indispensable to capital accumulation in general. And it is here that she seeks to locate the economic basis of imperialism. It may be possible, through such a general basis – as the general characteristic of capitalism – to explain imperialism, but this will be quite unable to explain the imperialism that characterizes capitalism's modern stage – or the particular modern aspect of imperialism. What actually motivated Luxemburg, spurring her to write The Accumulation of Capital in 1913 on the eve of a world war, clearly must have been the latter, yet what she explained was the former. Herein lies a defect in her work. And it is the existence of this defect that highlights the ground-breaking significance of Imperialism."

Lenin on the other side, Kuruma notes, defined his object of study "from the outset in terms of 'imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism.' From this, he is clearly aware that unless 'the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism' is studied, 'it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics.'". Luxemburg analysis was not to the point, resorting to analysis of general categories and phenomena:

> "Lenin, thus, does not pose the question in terms of the general process of capital accumulation, but instead considers the "concentration of production and monopolies," "banks and their new role," and "finance capital and the financial oligarchy," which were ground-breaking developments at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Unlike Rosa Luxemburg, he does not raise the problem of the general relation between capitalist societies and non-capitalist societies. Instead, he considers the "export of capital," "division of the world among capitalist associations," and the "division of the world among the great powers," which characterize the modern stage of this relation. The consideration of these problems by Lenin provides an essential grasp of imperialist war in its most modern form – i.e. not war in general or a general view of capitalist aggression, as explained by Luxemburg, but rather as a world war among great powers to divide up the world, which is the explosion that occurred in 1914 and will continue to occur as long as capitalism still exists – and he also reveals the basis of the tendency of "social patriotism" that appeared along with the necessity of war. Moreover, unlike Luxemburg, from the outset Lenin considers where the most dangerous enemies are, pointing out that "special attention has been devoted in this pamphlet to a criticism of Kautskyism, the international ideological trend represented in all countries of the world by the most 'prominent theoreticians,' the leaders of the Second International cand a multitude of socialists, reformists, pacifists, bourgeois democrats and parsons." Finally, unlike Luxemburg, who abstractly speaks of the general self-contradictions of capitalism, and explains the ultimate deadlock of capitalism from these self-contradictions, Lenin locates within imperialism, as the modern form of capitalism, a clear sign of the decline of capitalism and a clear transitional aspect leading toward socialism."

Miscellaneous "contacts" between Marxists from the two countries can as well be mentioned in the analysis. Apparently, while in the United States[480], Inomata Tsunao met a Polish Jewish emigrant, Bertha Gehr, who later married. It seems that their relationship was quite eventful, while they marriage did not last long. She was a communist, and she even worked for a time with Katayama Sen[481]. While it is sometimes mentioned that it was through Bertha that Inomata acquired a bigger interest in communist ideas, it is unlikely that he had, at the time, any contact with the ideas of Polish thinkers.

Concluding, the question remains: are there any other such examples? How easy it was to have happen such exchanges? etc. Those are all questions to be further studied.

Comparison of subjects – responses

The second level of this analysis is the examination of the subjects that the two countries' Marxists studied and expressed their views on, the questions concerning them, and the responses they produced in order to deal with contemporary to them issues. For practical reasons, the analysis will focus mainly on the subjects already discussed in the previous chapters. This however, does not mean that the interests of the thinkers at the time were limited to those.

The start will be with the examination of some of the issues discussed by the Japanese Marxist scholars involved in the Debate on Japanese Capitalism (see chapter II), during the late 1920s-30s. Such issues, among others, were the development of the agrarian sector, the feudal remnants in rural areas, or even the issue of imperialism. It is interesting to notice that Polish Marxists, especially those involved with the Polish Communist Party, like Franciszek Fiedler (1880-1956) and Maria Koszutska (1876-1939) discussed similar issues as well.

The agrarian problem in the Japanese case can be described as the problem of the existence of feudal remnants (such as extra-economic coercion, high ground rents often payable in kind etc.) in the agrarian sector, and their role for the socialist revolution that was to come. Why the agrarian sector was left behind, and should it undergone a process of bourgeoisification before a socialist revolution can occur? Such were the questions raised by some of the participants in the Debate. In that framework, the Kōza faction advocated a two stage revolution, while the Rōnō-ha dismissed the issue as a matter of time.

In the Polish case now, the agrarian problem can be described (especially when regarded from the perspective of the KPP) as the need to engage the large agrarian population in the proletarian struggle, and the problem of "managing" it accordingly for and in the communist society. Therefore, what was advanced was not a two stage revolution for the backwardness found as well in a part of Polish peasantry, but what was often called agrarian revolution (rewolucja agrarna). Characteristically, Maria Koszutska claimed:

[480] Inomata studied in the United States during the period 1915-1921, economics and philosophy at the University of Wisconsin and other institutions.
[481] Information on Bertha Gehr is scarce.

> "In a country with such a relatively weak working population as in Poland, there can be no revolution without an agrarian revolution. And what is an agrarian revolution? Let's say it clearly, let's call things by their name: the agrarian revolution is the seizure of land by peasants."[482]

The issue however, of land ownership by peasants was greatly debated among the KPP members. In the KPP case, what was of importance was the way agrarian population could be "used" for the upcoming proletarian revolution.

The great disparity in the development and size of agrarian lands were of course discussed however, in the context of how they should be managed effectively and in favor of the aims of the revolutionary movement. In this framework, KPP published his "Agrarian Theses (*Tezy Rolne*)" in 1922, under the redaction of Fiedler, Koszutska and Adolf Warski (1868-1937) (Słabek 1961).

The Theses replaced the previously dominating slogan of socializing farms (folwarks) with the new "land for peasants", advancing the view that private ownership of land by peasant was to be preserved in the future. The next years a "debate" among the members of the KPP on the agrarian issue took place. The main concern of many thinkers was how to gain the support of the large agrarian population for the proletarian revolution that was to come. Many feared that for the Polish peasants private ownership of land was of great importance, and that the peasants would not accept the slogan of nationalization of land under communism. That could even have the danger of causing the siding of the peasants with the bourgeois parties, which could advance the view of private ownership of land. Therefore, it was important they argued, to not to put forward nationalization of land as a slogan in the party's program. Moreover, a possible uprising of the agrarian population could pose problems for the supply of provisions for the cities. On the other side, some thinkers expressed concerns about the post-revolution attitude of peasants that were granted the right to own private land. Consequently, many Polish communists viewed the neutralization of middle size peasants as the most probable option to take, while for the issue of the backward ones, they often argued for a period where private ownership could first be left to advance the production.

Imperialism was another issue discussed by both sides. In both countries' thought, imperialism, was seen as being "imposed" by the great powers, although for different reasons in each case. For Poland, it was to stop Russia. Polish imperialism hence could only be a byproduct of the imperialism of the strong western powers and the aspirations of the Polish bourgeoisie and old nobility, while its target could be the large territories of Ukraine or Belarus [an important figure here was Jerzy Ryng (1886-1937)]. As for Japan, it was "imposed" in the sense that it was necessary in a hostile –politically and economically- world. In each case though, imperialism intensified contradictions and class struggle.

It is important to note that in the case of Poland the analysis conducted had not to the same extent academic character, when compared to the scholars of the Debate and their high level of theoretical work. In Poland, such discussions were mostly part of the Communist's Party efforts to advance and base its case and views.

When trying now to find parallels with the chapter on morality, the first Polish figure to consider is Ludwik Krzywicki (1859-1941). Krzywicki, one of the most renowned Polish

[482] As in Holzer (1962: 706).

thinkers of the late 19th early 20th century, can be described as sociologist, economist, educator, social activist. He was a Marxist thinker, who played an important role in the dissemination of Marxism in Polish circles, who however, was later accused of being "*a* reformist and an 'incomplete' Marxist" (Olszewski 2006: 364)[483].

As Olszewski (2006: 364) notes, "[a]lthough a prominent expert on and proclaimer of Marx's works, Krzywicki never considered the German philosopher's ideas as the ultimate authority, or as containing the only correct or even clear proscription for social activism". According to Krzywicki:

> "The author of Capital,' . . . having eliminated certain factors, demonstrates tendencies of a capitalist order. These tendencies may become reality, only if no other factors exist except the forces indicated by the author of Capital. However, there are other multiple forces which modify the tendencies of the 'sophisticated' capitalist order. One need only point to the state and the resistance of the proletariat; it is due to them that the development of the capitalist world is not necessarily as the author of Capital implies in his work."[484]

Krzywicki was opposed to all forms of determinism (Olszewski 2006). For Krzywicki of great importance were "the specific socio-cultural and economic characteristics of each society" (Olszewski 2006). Historical materialism was an important method for historical and social research, he believed. In that respect Jordan (1963) notes:

> "According to Krzywicki, historical materialism explains the origin and the appearance of social and political ideas in a society at a given stage of its development and does not deny that once formulated these ideas exercise a powerful influence upon the productive forces and relations of production which brought them into being. Being functionally a secondary and dependent phenomenon, the ideas may become later a factor of primary importance. Without them there would be no social development. They only make possible the purposeful activity of great masses of people and talented individuals. Since the ideas can enter into various combinations in the human mind they are thus also conditioned by the mind. The power of the mind is, however, limited in so far as only such ideas assert themselves which somehow correspond to the material conditions. The latter limit the range of socially effective ideas, make the selection between what is utopian and non-utopian, between what can and what cannot modify the social and economic base."[485]

Krzywickiwas also concerned with the issue of poverty and of the living conditions of the working class. In 1933, he edited the publication of a collection of stories titled the "Memoirs of the Unemployed (Pamiętniki Bezrobotnych)", which became a bestseller in Poland (Lebow 2012). "Krzywicki, argued that the memoirs were, above all, a demand to right the wrong of unemployment: 'I don't want assistance or support' was, according to

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[483] Olszewski (2006: 369) argues that "*if Krzywicki had survived World War II, he would have never have been declared a Marxist*".
[484] As in Olszewski (2006: 365).
[485] Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/jordan/ideology/ch04.htm .

Krzywicki, their refrain—'give me work!'(Lebow 2012: 297). Furthermore, the Memoirs would have the role of transmitting the hardships of the unemployed to the wider strata of the population[486]:

> *"*even if they have to make such a heavy impression, let them arouse people's consciences! Let the sounds of misery spread into the world, which at the moment is spreading so defiantly not only in our country, but also elsewhere - these sounds of difficult experiences, and above all of hunger and disease, these unspeakable torments of moral suffering that are so abundant in today's situation. The number of people calling for help runs into tens and hundreds of thousands! And this is not a closed matter only within the present moment. It is about our future, about the generation that has not yet grown from the earth, on whose shoulders the fate of the country will one day rest, and which today is not eating enough, is in poor health, is stunting and degenerating. For, despite poverty, children are born in abundance. They are born and they die!" (Krzywicki 1933: 5-6)

The Memoirs therefore, had to "arouse people's consciences" about this tragic situation. A situation which was the result of human consciousness:

> "The core of the diarists is made up of ordinary mortals, who may have some vivid sympathies for the slogans of this or that party, but who do not follow any party order, and therefore have their own ways of thinking, their own views and even their own remedies for taming the crisis - naive, sometimes very naive, but, we repeat again, their own without any party stamp. […] The crisis is a kind of hurricane of social nature, which puts multitudes of hired men and women of physical and mental labor at the mercy of misery, and brings industrialists to ruin. It is a calamity in the midst of an excess of products and because of such excess. […] A disaster of an elemental nature that has sprung up as a natural and necessary link in today's unplanned and private production system, and in which no one was personally at fault, although everyone "somehow" put their hand to it. […] But yet the understanding of the essence of the crisis and its sources is rare even among the more educated among the intelligentsia! It is also rare among our diarists. After all, the crisis is ultimately the work of human hands in the dark tangling and moving amidst planless anarchy in the sphere of production. But its unloading and its course are constantly influenced by the conscious activity of people. It is these people who are usually pilloried as perpetrators and culprits. The elemental, blind powers of economic anarchy dissolve into people, are translated into acts of human will, into the effects of their consciousness." (Krzywicki 1933: 7-8)

[486] "That is why Memoirs of the Unemployed is not only a story intended to awaken people's consciences, but also a book for people who care about the future, for politicians, for statesmen, so that they know what is growing deep inside human souls. Sometimes the expressions of this growth are very naive, almost childish, sometimes they even seem like unrelated gibberish, an emotional reflex contained in one exclamation point, but by the way, they are expressions of something that, although not always absurd, becomes the confession of thousands." (Krzywicki 1933: 6-7).

Another important point about Krzywicki is his stance to the "national question". Olszewski (2006: 366) notes that "[i]rrespective of his leftist socialist beliefs, and their shifting and ultimately decreasing radicalism, one discovers a romantic Polish patriot and a great positivist.". Krzywicki was a supporter of Poland's independence, while he devoted great attention to the advancement of national education and culture:

> "Krzywicki's educational literature contributed not only to a patriotic popularizing of academic knowledge and socialist thought, but also to encouraging a specific patriotism itself. His articles in the Russian and Polish press helped towards the 'de-russification' of Polish youth in the eastern borderland regions and in their reacquisition of the Polish language." (Olszewski 2006: 367)

Other thinkers, saw to use concepts such as religion to promote socialist ideas. One example can be Feliks Perl (1871-1927), who was a member of KPP. Perl "treated religion with great respect", and while "he was a materialist and an atheist, he wrote: "Every sincere belief that concerns the inner life of an individual [...], conscience and soul must not be violated." (Kolbuszewska, Sikorska-Kowalska 2015: 21).

Simultaneously however, he realized the power Christianity exerted on the Polish masses. He published an essay "Socialism a child of Christianity (Socjalizm dzieckiem chrześcijaństwa)" (1906), where he tried to argue that socialism-communism was not in opposition to Christian teachings. "Christ not only lived like a communist, but also recommended communism to everyone as a necessary condition for obtaining the 'Kingdom of God'"[487] he claimed. The "strong in this world", wanting to not lose their position, defended "their conquest by all means", even through the exploitation of religion for their own purposes.

Examining finally the "national question", it can be argued that it was of a clearly distinct substance in the related approaches of the two countries. While in both it was (in one way or another) ultimately related to national independence, the issues of concern were clearly different in the two countries.

The previous chapter presented some of the issues discussed by the Japanese thinkers of the time, and how Marxism became the theoretical base for the advancement of nationalistic ideas. How Japanese imperialism was seen as a crucial element for national enhancement and resistance to the western (and of course Russian) threats.

In the Polish case, as mentioned above, the "national question" was often synonym to the "Polish question". Before WWI, national independence was of utmost importance to a great number of Polish "Marxists". After the regaining of independence, it became, as in the Japanese case, a matter of enhancement and survival in a hostile world, but also in Poland's case, a matter of accompanying a population characterized by great ethnical diversity.

Walicki (1983: 565) refers to the following "historical paradox" in the case of Polish thinkers:

> "[T]he Poles who joined the First International and ardently supported its Marxist wing were not Marxists, while those who first espoused Marxism cut themselves off from Marx's and Engels' view on the 'Polish question'."

[487] As in Kolbuszewska, Sikorska-Kowalska (2015: 131).

He discusses in particular the views of Rosa Luxemburg and Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872-1905) on the issue of Poland's independence during the pre-WWI years. As it is well known, Luxemburg was opposed to the efforts of Polish activists for an Independent Poland, as she argued that this was of no benefit to the Polish proletariat, and of no historical relevance. "National separatism, she thought, could be justified only in the pre-capitalist stage of development" Walicki (1983: 570)[488]. A wiser tactic to follow was to turn to Russia. Polish economy was already in the process of industrialization, and the Polish economy was greatly integrated with that of Russia, Luxemburg believed.

Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, leading Marxist theorist of the PPS, argued from his side that national independence was indispensable for the proletarian class, and that only in a national framework could the class struggle take shape. For Kelles-Krauz, "an independent national state is necessary both for the bourgeoisie and for the working class", as political democracy "-a necessary condition for modern, civilized forms of class struggle - can take deep root only in a state whose citizens are not committed to national irredentism or to the oppression of national minorities." (Walicki 1983: 580). Contrary to Luxemburg, Kelles-Krauz argued that "Polish workers had become a 'national class'" (Walicki 1983: 580):

> "It was absurd, he [Kelles-Krauz] maintained, to put class interests above national interests because the viewpoint of each class and, especially, the proletarian viewpoint was merely a certain interpretation of the interests of a given nation as a whole. In contradistinction to castes and estates, modern classes are not separate from each other and alien to each other; they oppose each other within a certain common denominator, within a certain national unity" (Walicki 1983: 580)

Feliks Perl is another thinker that can be mentioned here. Member of the PPS, he combined Marxism-socialism with a strong sense of patriotism. Perl opposed any attempt to dismiss the "Polish question". In 1892, at the congress in Paris, during which the Polish Socialist Party was established and its program was presented, he stated:

> "And socialists would be enemies of such patriotism, would they be enemies of their nation?! What a stupid thought and what a slander! Socialists who work with such dedication in their country for their people, who strive to spread education as widely as possible, so that there are no disadvantaged, hungry and ignorant people in the nation, so that the whole country becomes a common workshop for all, and a common source of prosperity for all – the socialists would be enemies of the nation! NO!"[489]

The "national question" concerned Polish Marxists even after the reclamation of independence, and thinkers of the KPP, in the process of their activities soon realized the importance of the issue for the Polish masses. In that framework, Koszutska stressed:

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[488] Walicki (1983: 572) notes that "Rosa Luxemburg combined an adamant rejection of political nationalism with emphatic support for the aims of cultural nationalism". She also, seeing from her stance to the Ukrainians for example "she remained influenced by Marx's and Engels' distinction between 'historical nations' and 'history-less peoples'." Walicki (1983: 574) adds.

[489] As in Kolbuszewska, J., Sikorska-Kowalska, M. (2015: 123).

> "The alliance with the peasantry, support for the revolutionary movements of the oppressed nationalities, the united front, the use of the concept of 'interests of the nation', the very heresies, heresies that formed the basis of the entire Bolshevik tactics. But without these heresies, the proletariat cannot become hegemonic over other classes."[490]

In order to engage the broad social masses with the revolutionary movement, it was important to take into account their interests, i.e. the interests that united the nation (Hozler 1962). These national interests, concerning various social groups, should be dealt in close connection with the respective class interests. In this context, the leaders of the KPP aimed to demonstrate that the propertied classes were doomed due an internal contradiction of interests (Hozler 1962).

It is also worth noting that for the "Marxist" supporters of Poland's national independence[491] such as Kelles-Krauz, often stressed the "Asiatic" character of Russia, which was often seen as a sign of the country's backward and despotic (even for some barbaric) character.

Another example at this level of analysis, could be the possibility of studying together thinkers from both countries, on specific topics. Can we examine together for example, Yamakawa Hitoshi's 1922 call for "Back to the Masses!"[492] together with Rosa Luxembourg's insistence on the importance of masses for the socialist movement? Professor Ota Yoshiki[493] for example, does something similar to that. Prof. Ota studies together Luxemburg and Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923) and their respective views on the "Bolshevik Revolution".

Having examined the above approaches to the issues discussed in the framework of this dissertation, one can see that there are many sides to a defined problem. Which of those, and how each, will be addressed can vary between different social, economic, political, geographical conditions. What however can be as well seen is that there are issues which each society tries to address. By studying now such cases, in the specific context of Marxism, it is possible to better understand questions like: which aspects of Marxism seemed appealing to those thinkers? why? were they the same for both? etc.

Particularity vs universality

The third level of analysis as presented in this dissertation concerns the possibility of examining the influence of various "non-economic" factors on the development of the respective economic thought of the two countries.

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[490] As in Holzer (1962: 706).

[491] As well for the national democrats, such as Stanisław Grabski (1871-1949). For more see: Bojko (2018) .

[492] Yamakawa, H. (1922). A change of course for the proletarian movement (H. Baldvinsson, Trans.). https://www.marxists.org/subject/japan/yamakawa/change.htm

[493] Ota, Y. (1999) Rosa Luxemburg and Sakae Osugi -Two Attitudes towards "Bolshevik Revolution" , The Economic Association of Okayama University , Issue 1, Vol.31

Religion for example, can be of interest here. Except for the important difference in nature and role of religion as such, in each country, its role in the dissemination of Marxism can be examined. We see for example (at a first general glance, as things of course were more complicated) that its role is quite different in the two countries.

In Poland, the church saw Marxism as one of the threats that had a negative impact on the country and its citizens, destroying its moral and social foundations. Figures related to the catholic church -like the cardinal August Hlond (1881-1948)- attacked fiercely Marxism, and saw it as a threat to Christian teachings, Polish family, and social life. Marxism was an anti-religious doctrine, while at the same time, it promoted the image of a man free from traditional morality. It was a doctrine that brought division instead of unity, and poverty instead of prosperity (Sierzchuła 2018).

In Japan though, it was often Christian circles that promoted socialist and even Marxist ideas. As a Kublin (1951: 264) has written, "Christian socialists in Japan were probably socialists because they were Christians and not Christians because they were socialists. "[494]. Through associations such as the Shakai-shugi Kenkyū-kai (Association for the Study of Socialism) thinkers in Japan discussed issues related to socialism and Marxism. And despite that those socialists often, at this phase, either rejected Marx's ideas, or did not have deep familiarity with them, many later, during the Taishō and Shōwa years, became prominent Marxists. Subsequently, some among those Marxists turned of course against Christianity and religion in general. The "Japan Anti-religion Alliance (Nihon Hanshukyo Domei)" and "Japan Anti-religion Alliance (Nihon Hanshukyo Domei)" were created by socialist thinkers during the 1930s.

Conclusion

The aim of this section was to show that a comparative study of the development of economic thought in seemingly non-related frameworks, can offer insights on the –direct or indirect- interactions in the field of the history of economic thought, and history of intellect in general, in space and time. It is a study that has still a long way to go. This dissertation touches only slightly on the subject. It tries to spot points of "contact" between the two countries and reflect on the way economic ideas are generated in different contexts.

What can be derived from it, is that there was an urge in many Japanese thinkers to remain true to Marx and his theory (see for example Kawakami). Even when advancing views rejected by other Japanese Marxists, they often strived to defend their views in the Marxian context. Polish Marxists however, often seem to lack such a need. As has been briefly presented, they recognized Marx's contributions, and used his argumentation however, they advanced their (often related to politics) views and defended them, accepting their distance from Marx's ideas.

This can be related to the way Marxism was introduced in the two cases. Polish thinkers familiarized themselves with Marxism in the era of the Polish national struggle, and in the context of European Marxian trends. The Japanese, saw in Marxism a scientific theory that could explain the social problems of their time, amid rapid socio-economic changes under capitalism. In addition to that, Japanese Marxism had a deep theoretical base, and their analysis was developed as a form of social inquiry. Many Japanese Marxists were involved in

[494] Kublin, H. (1951). The Origins of Japanese Socialist Tradition. The Journal of Politics. https://doi.org/10.2307/2126522

academic research. On the other side in Poland, representative Marxists were mainly political figures, and developed their views in accordance with current to them political conditions and aims.

Another point to make is that the two countries saw Russia as a major threat. Marxism itself was often associated with Russia and the approaches of thinkers from both sides were greatly influenced by this fact. If a Marxist theory painted favorable Russia, or could allow a possible advantage to it, it was often rejected by many Marxists. This had an effect on the theories developed, especially those that combined Marxist ideas with patriotism.

Concluding, this study could be titled "Creolizing Marx, through the ideas of Japanese and Polish "Marxist" thinkers of the early 20th century". Cornell & Gordon 2021 (p1-2) describes the concept of Creolization as follows:

> "Creolizing as an approach to political theory draws insight and orientation from creolizing processes in and beyond the Caribbean. In creolized elements of life—whether speech or food, reasoning or music—forms of activity tied to groups of people who were supposed to be radically unequal and separated through Manichean social orderings in fact combined in ways that were unpredictable and surprising, yet recognizable. Used as an approach to ideas, creolizing takes two primary forms. The first is historical and reconstructive, aiming to identify relations of influence and indebtedness that have been hidden or obscured. In its constructive mode, creolizing stages conversations that could not have taken place historically but that would have been and still remain generative. The creolizing endeavor is not undertaken randomly. The aim is to put different, previously sequestered sides of a shared political situation together to explore the results."

This section, aiming at "connecting" trends of thought and ideas developed in different but simultaneously similar conditions, finds thus methodological base in the Creolizing approach.

Epilogue

The question of whether there is a distinct "Japanese Marxism" can now be answered: there is a distinct "Japanese Marxism", as there is a "Polish Marxism", and any other "Marxism" developed in a defined historical and cultural framework. Economic thought cannot be separated from the general historical, cultural, social and economic framework it is generated in, as as a product of human intellect, it reflects the conditions under which this intellect develops.

The question that is more challenging is whether, where and why a "Marxism" of any nationality differs from that of another. In this dissertation thus, this question in partly addressed, although more analysis is needed. "Japanese Marxism" is of course, due to the reasons mentioned above, distinct from the "Polish" one, as it reflects different general conditions. However, the points where Marxist theory as such is transformed into a genuine local theory are of importance to this analysis.

Marxism in Japan was accepted by a significant portion of active thinkers and scholars, during the preWWII years, as the core of scientific socialism. It was regarded as a theory that could explain current economic conditions, and offer useful insights about what needed to be done. As such, Marxist ideas were extensively studied, analyzed and even sometimes "enriched". The Debate on Japanese Capitalism generated a large amount of analyses and theories regarding a wide range of topics. Marxism was also used for the development of the "national question", with theories such as Takabatake's finding in it justifications for nationalistic views. Kawakami's "special Marxist" perspective was also a noteworthy example of how "Japanese Marxism" developed.

Similar analysis can be done for the respective "Polish Marxism" however, theoretical analysis in the Polish case was clearly limited. With the examples of Luxemburg, Kelles-Krauz and some other thinkers, Marxism was mainly a base theory for political and social activity.

One aspect that this study did not manage to present is the importance of the Marxist theory for the development of the ideas of non-Marxists thinkers, to whom Marxism as a theory, but also as an intellectual trend of large diffusion in Japan (and Poland), became a source of inspiration. Thinkers like Fukuda Tokuzō, while critical of Marxism as such, used concepts of the theory to develop their own ideas.

Fukuda, who in "the early stage of the introduction of Marx in Japan, […] was indeed counted as an authority both in the knowledge of Marxian economics and its criticism […] refuted both the necessity of the collapse of capitalism and the coming of a classless society under socialism" (Yagi 2023:76). He developed his theory of welfare economics, which was based on his idea of the "right to live", and which acknowledged "the essence of the labor movement as a welfare movement and that of labor dispute as a welfare struggle"[495].

Another important side of the development of socialist and Marxist ideas that was not examined in this dissertation, but which is worth of study, is the development of economic thought by women thinkers throughout the period under study. Women were active in both countries, and while the activity of Polish thinkers such as Luxemburg, Koszutska or Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska (1860-1934) has been often studied, that of Japanese has not[496]. As such more research on the issue is needed.

[495] As in Yagi (2023:78).

[496] See Yoon (2014). Available at: https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article3455

In addition, the reader is advised to seek visual materials related to the content of this dissertation, as it is believed that they contribute to the deeper understanding of the research's essence. Visualization is a great method of sharing thoughts and ideas, and during the ages, visual materials were used to pass a great amount of information and messages. Despite thus being a great source of information for the researcher, they are also a great source for the readers to familiarize themselves with the subject, and to "get a glimpse" of the way the people in question "saw" historical facts, and were informed about them.

In Japan in particular, the introduction of the printing technology from China, and later from Korea, played a crucial role in the popularization of printing. Books, woodblock prints and posters were highly circulated. Woodblock-print broadsheets (the so called "*kawaraban*", and later during the Meiji period taking the form of "*nishiki-e*"), printed in large quantities, where images were arranged with text, were circulating already since the Edo period (in spite of prohibitions issued by the authorities), depicting and spreading newsworthy incidents and news.

Moreover, the use of photography became popular in the publication of magazines and journals, where the graphic genre was most notable for its numerous illustrations. A good example is in the case of the Hibiya Riot (mentioned before) and "The Tokyo Riot Graphic", a special issue of an illustrated magazine that was published at the time, with the title "Recent Events Graphic (*Kinji Gahō*)", and which included materials from this spontaneous anti-government demonstration. The editors even added, beyond the English title on the cover, English captions to the illustrations (showing a trend to turn towards an international audience, but competition as well). The "turbulent" times and the high rate of literacy the Japanese society was characterized by, gave the reasons for the flourishing of such means of communication.

To conclude, it is remarkable how Marxist theory became the basis for so many greatly diverse theories and proposals. Its ability to act as a stepping stone for the advancement of theses, calling for independence, nationalism, socialism, war, peace etc. can be said that is its main strength, allowing it to still survive and even thrive among different groups of thinkers and scholars. Marxist is always relevant, for different reasons.

We tend to examine "distant" economic thought in relation to our established history and theories – ideas. This is after all what was done in this dissertation as well. However, what comes from the imported ideas (Marxist in our case), and where the "universal ideas" enter or stop? It does not really matter, and is impossible to tell apart novel ideas and influenced ones. Is there a "Japanese Marxism"? There is as there are many others. More probably there is no "universal Marxism", or universal economic theories.

The present study thus cannot but be fruitful. As has been already mentioned, it is imperative that we familiarize ourselves with the struggles of the past. We tend to forget from where economic problems arise and for what economic science is all about. Economic structures are manmade and as that they have to be realized. They exist to work for the societies and not vice versa. By getting to know how the past generations dealt with economic problems and phenomena, and what has already been told, we can interpret the world around us in a more effective and realistic way.

Appendix I

An Introduction to Japanese History

This essay undertake the task of introducing the reader to the historical framework of the early 20th century Japan.

A brief narration of the way to the Edo period (i.e. the early modern period of Japan's history) is given, and then, the most important aspects and notions of Edo period's (1603-1867) socio-economic formations are presented. Edo period is regarded as a reference period, as it was during it that political and economic integration became more systematic. The processes by some introduced as "Japan's Industrious Revolution" and development of an economic society (Hayami 2015), by others as proto-industrialization (Gordon 2003), along with the political turmoil of the later Tokugawa years (i.e. the Bakumatsu period), brings us to the second section of this essay, the years after the Meiji Restoration, where modern Japanese history begins.

After discussing the establishment of the new political situation and the Meiji Constitution, the social, political and economic conditions of the period under study (going further to the Taishō and early Shōwa periods) are analyzed, so that the reader can place the ideas discussed in this dissertation in their context. The latter however, has to keep in mind that what follows is just a "quick tour" along the Japanese history, and that many topics mentioned here are the subject a wider and diverse sum of studies and debates.

It should be noted that (as already mentioned in the Introduction) Japanese history is usually divided into time periods (see Table 1), based often on where the center of power (political or military) is concentrated[497]. While this division can be quite arbitrary in practical matters, it is useful for historical orientation purposes. Therefore, as long as periodization is concerned, those conventional Japanese political-historical divisions are used here.

Table 1 : Main Japanese Era Names

Period Name	Chronology
Paleolithic (旧石器時代)	before 14.000 BCE
Jōmon (縄文時代)	14.000 BCE – 300 BCE
Yayoi (弥生時代)	300 BCE – 250 CE
Kofun (古墳時代)	250 – 538
Asuka (飛鳥時代)[498]	593 - 710
Nara (奈良時代)	710 - 794
Heian (平安時代)	794 - 1185
Kamakura (鎌倉時代)[499]	1185 - 1333

[497] After the Meiji Restoration (1868), era names are connected to the rule of emperors. For more on the periodizationn of Japanese history see Saaler & Szpilman (2018: xx - xxi).

[498] Kofun and Asuka periods are sometimes referred as Yamato period (大和時代). The years when one period begins and the other starts are not clearly defined.

[499] The years 1333-1336 marked the so called Kemmu Restoration (**建武の新政**), under the rule of emperor Go-Daigo (後醍醐天皇, 1288-1339).

Muromachi (室町時代)[500]	1336 - 1573
Azuchi – Momoyama (安土桃山時代)	1573 - 1603
Edo (江戸時代)[501]	1603 - 1868
Meiji (明治時代)	1868 - 1912
Taishō (大正時代)	1912 - 1926
Shōwa (昭和時代)	1926 -1989
Heisei (平成時代)	1989 - 2019
Reiwa (令和時代)	2019 - present

Before the Edo Period

Until the late 7th century, what came to be known as Japan emerged, through the domination of the Yamato clan, whose rulers enacted the imperial dynasty (the Imperial House of Japan) which continues to the present, making it the oldest continuing hereditary monarchical house in the world.

> By the early 700s, this Yamato clan had achieved unchallenged political as well as sacred authority. It built a capital city and commissioned the writing of historical chronicles that invented a mythic genealogical line extending back from the sixth century C.E. through twenty-eight legendary rulers to 660 B.C.E. This ancient mythology was revived in the late nineteenth century as the orthodox "modern" view of imperial history. (Gordon 2003: 2).

Interactions and contact with China and Korea contributed to the introduction of a wide range of cultural, political and social factors and norms. Those included administrative reorganizations and reforms (which resulted in changes such as the Taika reforms[502] and the ritsuryō[503] system of government), the introduction of a writing system (based on kanji), Buddhism and Confucianism, bureaucratic organization and legal theories.

Passing then through the periods of Nara (710–794), Heian (794-1185) and Kamakura (1185-1333), Japan remained quite uninterrupted by external threats (except from the two unsuccessful Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281).

Political changes concerned mainly exchanges of power, between the Imperial house and the Shogunal (military) centers, as "since the creation of the Kamakura Shogunate, warrior authority became a new force", while "a class of wealthy provincial landowners appeared" (Hayami 2015: 23). The cultural elements brought by the Chinese (and Korean) influence were further incorporated, developed and often integrated into Japanese culture. The

[500] Often referred also as Ashikaga period (足利時代), due to the rule of Ashikaga Shogunate (1338–1573). These years are often also divided into the Nanbokuchō period (南北朝時代, 1337- 1392) and the Sengoku period (warring states period -戦国時代, 1467-1590).

[501] Often referred to as Tokugawa period (徳川時代) as well.

[502] They established the rule of the Emperor, while included reforms on land and governance.

[503] A central governmental structure based on the Chinese Sui and Tang systems. It firstly "operated on the premise of state ownership" where "all of the land in the realm belonged to the sovereign," and taxes were collected from leasehold farmers in accordance with this rationale." (Hayami 2015: 17). "However, […] this method could not be seen as uniformly implemented throughout Japan" (ibid).

hiragana and katana syllabical alphabets were created and spread, while literature expanded[504]. The economy remained mainly agricultural, based on a combination of the ritsuryō and shōen[505] systems (ibid).

As the Muromachi Period (1336-1573) went on, the daimyō (feudal lords)[506] of different regions rose in power, developing their own military forces around their bases, in what came to be called castle towns. As Hayami (2015: 32) notes however, "Muromachi shogunate was unable to effectively grasp the transition to an agricultural village society and economic society". Undermining thus Shogun's rule, various daimyō engaged in the *Ōnin* War (1467–77) enacting the *Sengoku Jidai* (Warring States period), when Japan broke into many warring parts. During those times, arts[507] and traditions continued to develop, together with a samurai[508] and court society, each representing its own sub-culture, ethics and norms. It was also during this period that European envoys (mainly Portuguese, Spanish) started to make active their presence bringing with them, among others, Christianity[509] and muskets. Their role however was "an important but relatively minor […] for a century before the modern era" (Gordon 2003: 18).

It should be noted that wide disparities were characteristic during those years. The differences between various domains were wide and it cannot in any way be claimed that Japan was a homogenous entity. "The extent to which the masses of common people shared an identity as possessors of a common Japanese culture was quite limited. In many ways, the idea that Japan is a unified place whose people comprise a coherent nation is a creation of modern times" (Gordon 2003: 6).

It was also common, for people to suffer many hardships, such as famines, natural disasters or conflicts. It should be also noted, that Japan would not yet include the Ezo region (northern part of Honshū and present's day Hokkaido), as well as the Ryūkyū Islands (islands that stretch southwest from Kyūshū to Taiwan, today's Okinawa prefecture).

Under those circumstances the so called "three great unifiers of Japan" - Oda Nobunaga (織田 信長, 1534-1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣 秀吉, 1537-1598), Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川 家康, 1543-1616) - emerged, giving an end to the chaos and uncertainty of the Sengoku era and inaugurating a period of more than two centuries of phenomenal peace. Tokugawa Ieyasu would claim the title of Shogun (military ruler), and transfer the capital from Kyoto to Edo (modern day Tokyo), enacting the so called Edo period, and the beginning of what many researchers call the early modern period of Japanese history (see Wigen 2000).

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[504] The "Tale of *Genji* (**源氏物語**, *Genji Monogatari*)" for example, a classic of Japanese literature, sometimes referred as the first novel ever written, was written during the Heian period.

[505] A system under which some private ownership of land was allowed. "However, […] with the exception of the early self-reclaimed shōen, the proprietor's rights consisted of the right to acquire a fixed percentage of the nengu (rice tax) generated by the land, something that can hardly be called land control." (Hayami 2015: 19).

[506] They were from the ranks of provincial (military) governors, local samurai, nobles or rarely, from a lower status. They came to gain control over a territory and develop a relationship lord-vessel with the samurai class.

[507] Tea ceremony, flower arrangement (*Ikebana*), *Nō* drama, to mention some.

[508] Even though samurai's history can be traced back to the 10th century, and many warrior rulers emerged from this group (like the first shoguns drawing their legitimacy by claiming the title of shogun from the imperial court). They were a hereditary warrior class, which followed a strict behavioral code (*bushidō* - way of the warrior), while maintaining a close contact with education and arts.

[509] Which was soon banned.

Edo Period (1603-1868)

Edo became the base of the Shogunate (the military state), and Japan's new capital city. The Tokugawa regime applied a series of administrative changes. They included the relocation of territories (*han*) and rank (measured in *koku*[510] of rice)[511] assigned to each *daimyō*[512] with the establishment of the *Bakuhan* system, their obligation to subordination to the Shogun, an inward external policy, faced towards a partial isolation from the "external world", the disarmament of the peasantry and the separation of the roles between samurai and cultivator.

The "seclusion (鎖国, *sakoku*)" policy is widely mentioned in discussions about the Edo period. It is however accepted that Japan was not entirely isolated, as it may first seem. It maintained an indirect contact with the rest of the world, through what has been called "four portals (四つの口, *yottsu no kuchi*)"[513]: the city of Nagasaki, where a Dutch base was allowed to operate[514] on the artificial island Dejima, the Tsushima island where the trade with Korea was undertaken, the Ryūkyū islands (for the Chinese goods), as well as the Ezo (for the trade with the Ainu).

Even though, those activities allowed only a limited amount of influences and interactions between "interior" and "exterior", they were important to the country's later development. "The Japanese were not actually seeking policy reasons to reduce the volume of trade at that time" (Cullen 2017: 70), and "it was imports and not exports that provided the drive for promoting trade" (ibid). Emphasis was given though to the control of trade. "The control of the trade lay firmly in the hands of shogunal officials, aided by a new breed of interpreters employed directly by them, and not as in the past by the foreign traders" (ibid). Moreover, Japanese were prohibited from going abroad, and of possessing ships (red seal ships preserved "trading passes"[515]) with a capacity exceeding 500 *koku*.

The political structure which was established (the *Bakuhan* system) was "the result of the final maturation of the institutions of shogunal rules at the national level and of the *daimyō* rule at the local level" (Hall 1991: 128). Japan's territory was divided into *han* (domains) which were assigned to *daimyō*. "Three-quarters of Japan was under the control of daimyo […] The number of domains, and of daimyo, changed throughout the period as a result of rewards and penalties; over 500 existed at least briefly, and at any point there were slightly more than 250." (Jansen 2000: 49). They varied in size and importance, as well as "in their social structure, depending on the proportion of their population that was samurai" (ibid: 50).

Edo society was made up of four main classes: warrior, farmer, artisan, and merchant, "arranged in a hierarchy of moral virtue as well as secular authority" (Gordon 2003: 16). However, a portion of population did not belong to one of those, being either "people of

[510] A Japanese unit of volume. 1 koku is equivalent to 10 to (斗) or approximately 180 liters or about 150 kilograms.
[511] "At first glance this may seem a backward step away from monetization, but in actuality it represented a much more ambitious effort to quantify total production;" (Jansen 2000:23).
[512] Tokugawa Ieyasu "was able to arrogate to himself a monopoly of daimyō proprietary rights;" (ibid: 21).
[513] See: Arano (2013).
[514] As well as an English one, if it had not been withdrawn later.
[515] "shogunate issued "vermillion seal licenses" to authorize trade in an attempt to regulate it and use it as source of revenue" (Hayami 2015: 63).

respect or celebrity: Buddhist priests, actors, and artists", either "subject to society's scorn, including prostitutes and various groups of outcastes" (ibid).

Urbanization was rapid. Edo's population "is said to have reached one million people during the mid-Edo Period. Conceivably, Edo may have been the world's most populated city at that time" (Hayami 2015: 63). Its population rose rapidly due also the adoption of the alternate attendance system (*sankin kōtai*)[516], according to which the *daimyō* from all over the country, as well as their families and retainers had to maintain residence in Edo and dwell alternate years between their domain and the capital. A great number of samurai concentrated in the largest castle towns, leading to the development of a large service class of townsmen (*chōnin*). Apart from officials, bannermen etc., commoners, craftsmen, artisans, peddlers, and merchants filled the towns.

The total population of Japan in general rose significantly (while not steadily) during the Tokugawa years[517]. As Gordon (2003: 23) notes, "by 1700 about 10 percent of the people of Japan, or about three million people, lived in towns or cities of over 10,000 inhabitants. Edo, with its million souls, was the largest city in the world. Kyoto and Osaka, each with about 350,000 residents, were comparable to London or Paris. By any measure, Japan was one of the most urban societies in the world in 1700.".

And while Edo was a castle town, Kyoto and Osaka[518] were radically different (Jansen 2000: 166) and aside from a small number of samurai stationed there by the *bakufu*[519] or domains, other groups came first (ibid). Kyoto was the ancient capital, the home of the imperial court and the old aristocracy, while Osaka "became a national economic hub" (Hayami 2015: 65), as a port city and intermediate of river routes for commerce.

Moreover, the process of urbanization required a development of markets and goods for covering the needs of the growing urban population, but also of routes and transportation facilities. Checkpoints, highways and stations for the travels were established, and permissions issues for the commoners to travel[520]. A whole range of officials and personnel were required. As a result, "Japan had developed a communication system that knitted the country together to a surprising extent." (Jansen 2000: 134).

The amount of cultivated land and its yields increased as well, and as farmers improved their practices, "agricultural production and output grew substantially in the Edo era. Reliable general data do not exist, but production records that survive for individual fields show that output in the 1700s and early 1800s sometimes doubled over a fifty-year span" (Gordon 2003 :26). Hayami indeed, finds the seeds of what he calls an "industrious revolution" on this intensification of agriculture, through mainly the increase in input of manual labour (Saito 2010).

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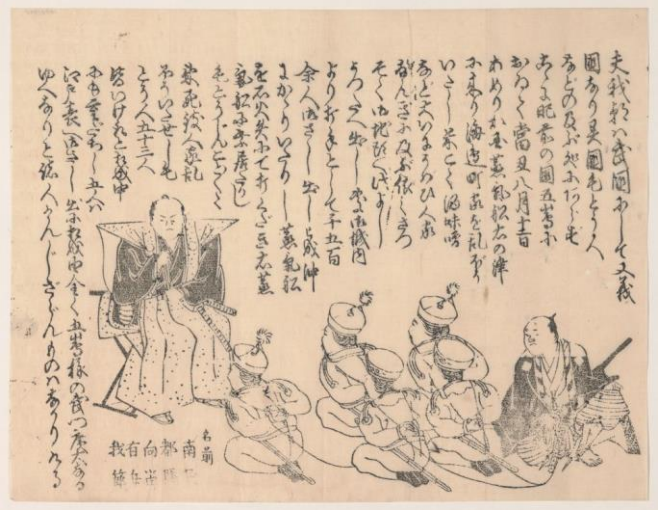
[516] Which aspired to keep the *daimyō* under control, and prohibit them from rising in power. It is characteristic that those travels between Edo and domains, as well as the maintenance of a residence in Edo cost a great amount of their (to a great extend "fixed") income. The exact requirements though, changed over time.

[517] "Inhabitants numbered around five million in the early centuries of settled agriculture in the first millennium c.e." and "the population grew to about thirty million by the early 1800s." (Gordon 2003: 2).

[518] The so called "*santo* (three cities)".

[519] The government.

[520] "Travel became so common by the late eighteenth century that a lively publishing industry developed to produce maps, travel diaries, and the Tokugawa equivalent of the modern travel guidebook." (Gordon 2003: 25).



Εικόνα 1 The print is about the fictional incident, in which five American sailors were captured after attacking Gojima, Hizen no Kuni, on August 12, 1853. Source: Early Modern News Sheets: Japan https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/vh650bb3062

Economic changes thus in Edo period, as Hayami (2015) argues, were important (also as a major premise toward industrialization), especially the fact that "an economic sphere covering the entire nation formed atop the economic spheres covering regions (or domains)" (ibid: 62). In urban areas, "with the exception of rice, all daily essentials were obtained via markets" (ibid: 63). Osaka's merchants undertook the task of converting the *nengu* (land tax) rice to currency, while products from all over the country were assembled there. To this end, moneychangers established branch offices in different regions, allowing money payments to be carried out in distance. A *daimyō* or a merchant could deposit money or submit payments in one region (for example Osaka where many daimyō kept warehouses for stocking their *nengu* rice) and receive it in another (e.g. Edo). Apart from the classes of *daimyō* and merchants, during the Edo period, "the ordinary people learned of currency for the first time, and they were greatly affected by incorporating it into their lives." (ibid: 65).

"Economic activity was opened to masses, and with this as foundation, popular culture (in particular, townsman *–chōnin-* culture) flourished during this era" (ibid :60). Combined with a high literacy ratio[521], the spread of cultural activities was significant. *Bunraku*, *Kabuki*, *Rakugo*[522] became popular, as well as the *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints[523]. Woodblock-print broadsheets, combining text and images (called kawaraban), and yomiuri (selling by reading), which "was the practice of news vendors […] who hawked newssheets, printed from hand-graven blocks before the advent of movable type, by reading them aloud"[524] represented the press of the time. The circulation of books, which brought by the Dutch gave a boost to the study of western sciences (among others geography, astronomy, western medicine), was also widespread.

Intellectual framework

As has been already mentioned, Japan has based many of its cultural constructions on concepts and norms brought (and incorporated) form China and Korea. That is also why China was conceived often as a model to tend towards, or (especially later) as a model which time has come to now surpass. Therefore, when studying the Japanese thought someone shall take into account that influence and its main points in use by the scholars of the time. Simultaneously though, Japan developed its proper ways and norms by integrating those elements with its own traditions. Characteristically, Gordon (2003: 1) notes that, "the

[521] "He [R. P. Dore] estimates that by the end of the Tokugawa period some 40 percent of boys and 10 percent of girls were receiving some sort of education outside the home. On that basis, it is probable that Japan was behind only two or three Western countries, and well ahead of all other countries, in the percentage of its people with access to education and literacy."(Jansen 2000: 190).

[522] Performing arts.

[523] Which inspired among others, the French trend of "Japonisme".

[524] See: *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yomiuri-shimbun

Japanese people have been alternatively proud of their Chinese inheritance and defiantly assertive of an independent identity".

Confucianism and Buddhism (as well as Daoism to some extent) can be argued that were the two most influential systems of thought and conduct, introduced to Japan through its interactions with Korea and China. Those traditions, taking a shape befitting Japanese conditions, together with Shintoism, offered, throughout the centuries, the intellectual foundations on which the political and societal actions were based.

Confucianism, often described as a humanistic doctrine, stressed the importance of ethical conduct, by rulers, officials and commoners by adhering to virtues such as righteousness, benevolence (often rendered also as goodness or humaneness -仁), propriety, filial piety, loyalty, rituals etc. According to the philosophy, through the establishment of higher-lower relationships (father-son, older brother-younger brother, husband-wife, ruler-subject) into the social structure, and the adherence to rituals long ago established, morality and social harmony could prevail. Self cultivation was a key feature of the theory. Action or rule by virtue (as a model) was seen as the most effective. During the Edo period Neo-Confucianism emerged as the main "strain" of the doctrine. The "school" introduced metaphysics to the Confucian philosophy, and allowed a more progressive (even scientific in some cases) approach to reality.

It is interesting to mention here what the famous economist Morishima Michio (森嶋通夫, 1923-2004) has noted, concerning the different approach to the doctrine adopted by the Japanese. While it is generally accepted that in the *Analects*[525] a central role is attributed to benevolence, in the Japanese case it is possible to notice a shift from the primary focus on benevolence to that of loyalty and thus obeisance. As such:

> "Throughout Japanese history up to the present individualism has never prospered, and, as a result, a strong, serious advocacy of liberalism has been virtually non-existed. The Japanese have been required to obey their rulers, to serve their parents, to honour their elders and to act in accordance with the majority factions in society. There has been little margin left over to grapple with problems of conscience. […] While Chinese Confucianism is one in which benevolence is of central importance, Japanese Confucianism is loyalty-centred Confucianism." (Morishima 2001: 10-1).

Buddhism was the other main concept introduced to Japan during the 6th century, and came to play, along with the native "religion" Shintō, a major role in shaping the Japanese internal thought and culture[526]. Buddhism assumed different forms in Japan, which were reflected on the various schools (sects) of Buddhism that emerged throughout the country.

Its teachings about the overcome of suffering, attainment of enlightenment and even rebirth in the Pure Land (paradise) guided people's lives throughout the centuries (although to different degrees by period). Japan developed (as in many other cases) its own versions of Buddhist thought (Zen Buddhism, along with many other sects as Nichiren or Pure Land ones), which became a guide for many court aristocrats, scholars, samurais, intellectuals and artists. Selflessness which was also in accord with Confucian teachings became as well a way

[525] The written records of Confucius's main ideas.

[526] It is worth mentioning that among others, Buddhist temples were also often required to keep records on population, having an administrative role as well.

of life for many thinkers to pursue, and many were willing to offer their efforts for the sake of the nation or the people.

Those traditions of thought (Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintō and to some extent Daoism) coexisted often in harmony, especially during premodern times. Under those, private and public spheres were often strictly separated. Collectivism, aiming at social harmony, the fulfillment of one's duties to the nation were later recognized by intellectuals as the "Japanese way" of conduct, assuming even nationalistic overtones.

Finally, it should also be noted that religions were (and still are) often mingled together in Japanese society.

After the Edo Period

2018 marked the 150th anniversary from the Meiji Restoration. Conferences and events took place all over the world, as that year marked also the 160th anniversary from the signing of many treaties between Japan and countries like France or the USA. For the contemporary scholar Meiji period can now be regarded as an inescapable route to be taken by the Tokugawa Japan, as the latter's "capacity" to deal with contemporary to it challenges had already met its limits by 1850s. However, that was not the case for the people of the time, who got entangled in a race for change and survival.

The 19th century brought increasing external pressures for the "opening" of the country and the conclusion of commercial-political treaties. When US Commodore Mathew C. Perry (1794-1858) firstly arrived in Japan, in 1853, the famous "Black Ships (黒船 - *kurobune*)[527]", the steamships which accompanied him, made a great impression on the Japanese. Soon Japan had to accept Perry's demands, as well as those of other western powers, who demanded to be equally treated. Colonialism had appeared in East Asia and the Japanese would rather do their best to avoid becoming a colony of the west. The Opium War (1839-42) between China and Great Britain was a good example of where a confrontation could lead to. Moreover, the Japanese government soon realized its lack in armed power. With an inactive (for decades) warrior class, and outdated weaponry, it could not in any way survive an armed conflict against a western power, let alone more western powers.

The inability of a central authority to respond clearly to the threat, but also to deal systematically with similar issues (emerging with greater frequency during the last years of Tokugawa rule) became all the more clear. The years that followed were characterized by internal disagreements, disputes and confusion as to which course the country should follow. It was a time when distrust and anxiety at home were intense and political life was in turmoil. It was against this background that the demand for the expulsion of foreigners in the name of the emperor arose among a wide spectrum of the Japanese population. The best-known form of this idea was expressed in the *Son'no Jōi* ("Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians") slogan-movement (尊王攘夷)[528]. Discomfort among some *daimyō* was also apparent, as it was among many groups of the population.

Adding to that, famines and economic distress were frequent phenomena during the later decades of the Edo period as well:

[527] Four warships, including two steamers in 1853, nine ships in 1854 (the three steamers).
[528] Advocates of such ideas were also often called *Shishi* (志士, men of purpose).

> "Several devastating famines killed thousands in the late 1700s. In the Tenmei famine of 1786, the worst weather in decades led to crop failures, starvation, and deserted villages. Reports reached the cities of unburied corpses piling up, and even of cannibalism. Again, in the 1830s, widespread famines were chronicled, which generated death tolls from hunger and related disease in the tens or even hundreds of thousands in some prefectures." (Gordon 2003: 27-28).

The government from its side, in an attempt to correct some of these issues had introduced in 1842-3 a series of reforms (*Tenpō* Reforms).

In 1866, the influential domains of Chōshū and Satsuma, which had gained in influence and/or power, agreed to follow a common course, and turn against the shogunal government, in a move of great importance for the country's future. The Shogunate soon collapsed, and the Meiji Restoration, where power was returned to the hands of the emperor - or rather to the hands of powerful men from domains such as Satsuma and Chōshū - was now a fact.

The new Meiji era (1868-1912) brought with it rapid changes, but also challenges. The new government implemented a series of reforms to modernize the country, industrialize it and make it militarily stronger against the danger of foreigners (for many though still barbarians). The latter imposed on the country a series of what was characterized as unequal treaties which later on became a burden to dispose of[529].

The Meiji Constitution was proclaimed in 1889, and administrative, military and education reforms were enacted. In the years that followed the Restoration there was a great interest in the West and what it had to offer, both practically and intellectually. Internationalization "in the sense of learning from the West was of the utmost importance to the Meiji government." (Nakamura 2005: 18). Experts from the West were employed, and many students were sent to study abroad, in order to gain knowledge about it and contribute to the modernization efforts.

The *Bunmei Kaika* (Civilization and Enlightenment) movement which emerged, with figures such as the well-known intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢 諭吉, 1835-1901) and Nishi Amane (西 周, 1829-1897), played an important role in the thinking and the "Westernalization" efforts of the time. Voices, such as that of Fukuzawa, were widely heard and disseminated. Fukuzawa wrote, among others, the essay "*Datsu A ron* (On Leaving Asia 脱亜論)" (1885), in which he proposed that the country should join the Western bloc and leave behind Asia, as for him Asia was synonymous with concepts such as decadence and backwardness. Along with modernizing voices however, some more conservative ones could also be found.

Under such circumstances, the country experienced significant and rapid development which, however, at the beginning of the new century (the 20th century), began to cause concerns. Japan did emerge as a "new considerable" power on the global stage, with its victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5)[530]. After its victory, the Imperial Japanese Navy "rose to fifth place among the world's largest naval forces"[531] (Kowner 2022: n.p.).

[529] They were in action until 1910s.
[530] Later, the country would try "to revive the memory of the Russo–Japanese War as a tool for enhancing patriotism and militarism" (Kowner 2022: n.p.).
[531] A "position it had held between 1901 and 1903" (Kowner 2022: n.p.).

Nevertheless, it was still not treated on an equal basis by the Western powers. This was something that brought disappointment to a part of the population[532].

Gordon (1992: 1) describes the situation Japanese society was in, during the first two decades of the new century, as follows:

> "In the first two decades of the twentieth century, crowds of city-dwellers took to the streets of Tokyo and launched the most vigorous urban protests yet seen in Japan. At least nine times from the Hibiya riot of 1905 to the rice riots of 1918, angry Tokyoites attacked policemen, police stations, and national government offices, smashed streetcar windows and beat the drivers, marched on the Diet, and stormed the offices of major newspapers. They destroyed public and private property, launching both symbolic and substantive attacks on the institutions of the established order of imperial Japan.
>
> In the same years, wage laborers mounted new forms of protest in the workplace. In the handful of major factories, shipyards, and arsenals that made up the heavy industrial sector of the economy, a tradition of protest evolved before the advent of unions. Over 100 labor disputes took place in the heavy and textile industries during these years, with 49 of them concentrated at just nine major public and private enterprises between 1902 and 1917. Although unions led none of these disputes, a union movement did emerge in these same years; workers in Tokyo in 1912 created the major union federation of the imperial era, initially named the Yūaikai (Friendly Society). By 1916 they had built a solid foundation of about 20,000 members in the Tokyo and Osaka areas."

The rural areas did not follow the urban, in terms of development. There was dissatisfaction among a significant part of the population, while protests and rural uprisings were on the rise. The so-called "social problems (社会問題)" became the subject of discussions in the press and intellectual circles during the 1910s-20s. Poverty, the standards of living, social unrest, population growth, individualism, corruption were all issues widely discussed and debated.

In this framework, socialism and anarchism attracted a noticeable number of followers, who could not "adapt" to the new conditions. The government from its side, began to gradually suppress such groups. A series of incidents involving leftist groups and individuals associated with socialist activities took place. Such were the "Red Flag Incident (赤旗 事件)" (1908) and the "High Treason Incident (幸徳事件)" (1911)[533]. In both, many activists and anarchists were arrested, and some even executed. Among them was the well-known anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui (幸徳 秋水, 1871-1911). The so called "Winter period" (1911-17) for socialism in Japan followed however, the Russian Revolution (1917) gave "new air" to the country's left movements.

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[532] Another reason of disappointment for the people were the terms of the peace treaty that came out of the war. The so called "Hibiya Riot", that followed the war, consisted of a large number of people who protested, with injuries and property damages occurring. The riot lasted for three days, and is often considered as the "first major social protest" in the modern history of Japan.

[533] Later incidents include the "Toranomon Incident (虎ノ門事件)" (1923), the "Bokuretsu Incident" (1925), the "March 15 incident (三・一五事件)" (1928), the "Sakuradamon Incident (桜田門事件)" (1932). Finally, under the increasing pressure of militarism, the "Popular Front Incident" (1936), and the arrests of many professors of Tokyo Imperial University, during the "Professor Group Incident (教授グループ事件)" in 1938, "concluded" the sequence of such incidents.

The short Taishō period (1912-26), often coined with the term "Taishō Democracy", saw an increase in the plurality of voices and political representation. New parties were formed, and under the universal suffrage (General Election Law, 1925) the electorate extended to all male citizens of age 25 and higher. Simultaneously however, government repression grew steadily throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The so called "Peace Preservation Law" was enacted in 1925, and was revised in 1928. The Law "criminalized anyone convicted of following Bolshevik ideology", and later it went as far as to impose "the death penalty on those who intended to alter the national polity (kokutai, but gave only two years' imprisonment to those who wished to alter the capitalist system of private property)" (Linkhoeva 2020: 101).

Taishō period was characterized though, by the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake (関東大震災):

> "[O]n September 1, 1923, the Great Kantō Earthquake struck Tokyo and its environs with horrifying effects. The shocks came just at noontime. Lunch fires were burning in thousands of charcoal and gas stoves around the city. As wooden buildings collapsed and hibachi stoves tumbled over in neighborhoods crowded with rowhomes and narrow alleys, fire broke out all over the city. Particularly huge whirlwinds of fire swept through the eastern wards over the following two days. The city's distinctive mix of residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods was devastated. Estimates of the dead and missing ranged from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand. Tremors or fire destroyed 570,000 dwellings, roughly three-fourths of all those in the city. For a time, economic activity in Japan's largest city came to a virtual standstill." (Gordon 2003: 140).

This disaster was also connected to the assassination of many Koreans and socialists. Rumors about Koreans starting the fires that followed the earthquake, or poisoning the wells quickly spread, and police together with civilian brigades attacked them. Together, they targeted anarchists and socialists, who were accused of planning treason. Among those killed were the anarchists Ōsugi Sakae (大杉 栄, 1885-1923) and Itō Noe (伊藤 野枝, 1895-1923)[534] .

It was clear to anyone at the time that the so called "Taishō Democracy", was far from tolerant of any attempt-action that could not "fit" into the national narrative, and that this situation would continue (if not get stricter) during the Shōwa years.

Economy

Shizume (2012: 211-2) in his analysis of the interwar Japanese economy divides the period into five phases: the "World War I Boom" (1914-9) with "high rates of growth and inflation", the "Chronic Recession" (1920-9), which saw a "lacklustre, with low economic growth, mild deflation and an unsettled financial system", the Shōwa Depression (1930-1), "a two year bout of severe deflation and economic decline", the "Takahashi economic policy" i.e. the years characterized by "high growth and modest inflation", where the results of finance minister's Takahashi Korekiyo (高橋 是清, 1854-1936) economic policy took effect, and

[534] With them, Ōsugi's six years old nephew was also killed.

finally, the period from 1937, the "Wartime command economy", when "Japan entered the era of the command economy of the AsiaPacific War[535], embarking on several years of high growth and rampant inflation." (Shizume 2012: 211).

Shōwa Period (1926-1989) began with the so called Shōwa Financial Crisis of 1927, which was followed by the Shōwa Depression of 1930-1. The 1920s saw increasing concerns in the financial sector, with many banks and companies often suspending operations or even going bankrupt. Bank runs were not rare (though often local), as were Bank of Japan's and governmental interventions, in order to minimize the damages of such phenomena. In addition, bad debt had become a widespread problem.

Japan has accumulated a large number of smaller banks, the so-called "kikan ginko"[536], which were established and managed by individual firms or industries. Those banks operating without any monitoring, risk management and information disclosure regulations, supported the "mother" firms while acquiring bad loans.

During the 1923 earthquakes, Bank of Japan (BOJ) issued the so-called "earthquake bills", providing liquidity to the economy through such banks. However, the extent to which such policies were carried out was excessive, and the bad debt problem became even more intense, culminating in the 1927 Crisis. When in 1927, in an attempt to pass legislation to address the issue and under political pressure, the finance minister Kataoka Naoharu (片岡 直温, 1859-1934) declared that the Tokyo Watanabe Bank was going bankrupt (it was not yet though), panic and bank run prevailed. Soon, when it became known that the Bank of Taiwan[537] had also a considerable amount of bad debt acquired (especially with the Japanese trading company Suzuki Shoten), and BOJ refused to come to its rescue, the situation became even more unsolvable. The banks were forced to close for some days, and economic activity came to a temporary standstill. As a consequence of the crisis, financial concentration followed: "The number of commercial banks fell from more than 2,000 in 1919 to 625 in 1932. Deposits were increasingly concentrated in the "Big Five" banks: Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Yasuda and Daiichi." (Ohno 2018: 101).

In 1930, after years of debates, Japan decided to return to the gold standard. The timing however, was unfortunate, and soon a gold embargo was issued.

The 2nd Sino-Japanese War took place in 1931, and gradually Japanese economy headed towards World War II, and to a form of wartime command economy.

Geography

Japan is located over the so called "Ring of Fire"[538], a fact which has strongly affected the lives of its people. Natural disasters are something that systematically occurs in their territories. It is characteristic that 20 per cent of the major (of magnitude 6 or greater on the Richter scale) global earthquakes happen there, while today it accommodates on its

[535] WWII.

[536] "literally translates as "institution banks" but really means banks subordinated to and financing only a very small number of businesses" (Ohno 2018: 77). Their number reached to over 2000 in early 20th century.

[537] The central bank in annexed to Japan Taiwan, which however, operated as a commercial bank as well.

[538] See: *Ring of Fire*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_of_Fire

grounds 111 active volcanoes. While combined with climatological phenomena (typhoons, etc.) it is clear that during its history Japan had (and still does so, as only in 2018 25 typhoons had already crossed its territories) to cope with many unexpected situations resulting from those, like famines or massive disasters. Moreover, in the past wooden constructions were widely in use, and fires were a frequent occurrence in villages and towns, with the Meireki era fire (1657) being one of the greatest. Jansen (2000: 151) refers to the below description by James McClain:

> "The first fire began early on the eighteenth afternoon of the new year of Meireki 3, 1657, at Honmyōji, a small, inconsequential temple located in Hongō, on the northern rim of the city. By late afternoon flames had burned through Hongō, charred Yushima. Carried by flying sparks, the blaze jumped across moats and canals, wiped out dozens of daimyo estates clustered to the north of the castle, made short work of hundreds of bannerman compounds, scorched merchant housing in the thickly settled districts that lined the Kanda River. In the early evening the treacherous winds shifted and hurried the flames into the merchant quarters along the banks of the Sumida River . . . Several hours later a carelessly tended cooking fire in a samurai residence in Koishikawa ignited a second day of terror. The wind, still fierce, quickly fanned the flames into another major conflagration. First lost were several large daimyo estates, and then the blaze leaped into Edo Castle, consuming large portions of the central residential keep and swallowing up the great donjon, towering symbol of the shogun's wealth and power."

Another example is of course the above mentioned 1923 Great Kanto earthquake, which was followed by a major fire, destroying a great part of Tokyo, and leading to death thousands of people.

Appendix II

Participants in the Debate on Japanese Capitalism

It is of interest to look at the profiles of the thinkers involved in the Debate. Most of them were scholars and researchers, some maintaining, at the time of the Debate (or at some point), a professorial position at a (Imperial) University, or being employed by some kind of research institution, like the Ōhara Institute for Social Research for example. Many held editorial positions in journals. They were often highly educated men (supported often by active women that also left their imprint on the socialist movement of the time), of middle class status. Finally, most of them lost their position or were imprisoned towards the end of the 1930s, as government oppression increased.

Very brief biographical notes of some of the main figures of the Debate are hence provided below, with the purpose of letting the reader to familiarize himself/herself with the people whose intellectual struggles are presented in this dissertation. Not only this will help him/her to get to know better the thinkers whose theories are discussed in Chapter II, but it

will also show that those theorists, often of academic background, could easily turn to activism and action.

Here, only the pre-WWII activities of the figures discussed will be presented. Most of the thinkers who did not lose their lives earlier, returned to their academic activities after WWII, while many continued also to be involved with the left movement, parties and associations. The reader will probably notice that more Kōza-ha representatives had a clearly academic background than Rōnō-ha's. Both factions, however, were represented (at least until repression shyrocked) in academia, and conducted research of analogous quality.

For the Rōnō-ha

Yamakawa Hitoshi (山川 均, 1880-1958)

Yamakawa Hitoshi, was born in Okayama prefecture. He dropped out from Doshisha high school (1897), and moved to Tokyo. In 1900 he was arrested for disrespect, due to an article he had written. He joined the Japan Socialist Party (日本社会党) in 1906, and worked also for the "*Heimin Shinbun* (平民新聞)", with many important figures of the time. In 1908, he was imprisoned during the so called "Red Flag Incident (赤旗事件)[539]". After his release from prison, he returned briefly to his hometown, where he stayed during the next few years, remaining inactive during the so called "winter period". He returned to Tokyo, and joined the *Baibun-sha* (売文社), the publishing house Sakai Toshihiko had founded some years before. The same year, he married Yamakawa Kikue (山川 菊栄, 1890-1980), a leading figure of the women's socialist movement. During the next years, Yamakawa was quite active. Among other activities, in 1922, he participated in the founding of the Japanese Communist Party, and in the summer of the same year he published his "A change of course for the proletarian movement"[540], which became the basis for the so-called "Yamakawaism". He did not join the reconstituted JCP, and in 1927, Yamakawa and others published the first issue of "Rōnō", becoming the intellectual leader of Rōnō-ha. In 1937, he was imprisoned during the "People's Front Incident (人民戦線事件)"[541].

Inomata Tsunao (猪俣 津南雄, 1889-1942)

Inomata Tsunao was born in Niigata Prefecture. When he graduated from high school (at the top of his class), his family's business went bankrupt, so he struggled to continue his studies. He graduated (1913) from the Department of Political Science and Economics of Waseda University, while in parallel, he attended the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages. With the help of a philanthropist from his hometown, he moved to the United States in 1915 and studied agriculture, economics, and philosophy at the University of Wisconsin and other institutions. Upon his return to Japan in 1921, he became a lecturer at Waseda University, where he taught the history of economics and agricultural policy. He joined the Japanese Communist Party, but was later arrested. He thus resigned from Waseda University. He did not join the reconstructed communist party. He joined the Rōnō group, but later distanced himself from it. He later joined the Japanese Populist Party (日本大衆党), but was expelled

[539] See: *Red Flag Incident* . Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Flag_Incident .
[540] Available at: https://www.marxists.org/subject/japan/yamakawa/change.htm .
[541] See: *Popular Front Incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_Front_Incident

from the party after a conflict with Yamakawa Hitoshi and others. He continued his studies in the field, and published various papers, mainly on agricultural issues. In 1937, he was arrested for the "People's Front Incident". After his release from prison in 1939, he was hospitalized and died in 1942.

Arahata Kanson (荒畑 寒村, 1887-1981)

Arahata Kanson was born in Yokohama. After graduating from school, he worked at a foreign trading house and converted to Christianity. He worked at the Yokosuka Naval Arsenal, but later resigned, and joined the socialist movement. With Sakai Toshihiko's help he worked as a reporter for a newspaper in Wakayama, and soon he joined the *Heimin-sha* (平民社). He met there the social and women's rights activist, Kannō Suga (管野 スガ, 1881-1911), whom he soon married[542]. He was arrested during the "Red Flag Incident (赤旗事件)" (1908). After his release from prison, he joined Sakai's publishing company and worked with figures such as Yamakawa and Takabatake Motoyuki. He worked on magazine publications, for a short period, with Ōsugi Sakae (大杉 栄, 1885-1923). However, the two disagreed on theoretical issues related to socialism, and parted ways. Arahata continued his labor union activities in the Kansai region, while he participated in the founding of the Japan Socialist League (日本社会主義同盟) in 1920 and the Japanese Communist Party in 1922. He was arrested along with Sakai in 1923. He opposed Fukumotoism, and did not participate in the reconstruction of the JCP. In 1927, he was one of the founders of the journal Rōnō, and became a core member of the faction. At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, he joined the anti-fascist movement and the Japanese Proletariat Party. In 1937, he was arrested along with Yamakawa and others in the "People's Front Incident", and was imprisoned until the end of the war.

Tsuchiya Takao (土屋 喬雄, 1896-1988)

Tsuchiya Takao, was born in Sendai. He graduated from the Second High School in 1918. In 1921 he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, and became assistant professor in the Department of Economics there. He got involved with the Rōnō-ha, and conducted research in the framework of the Debate. In 1938 he was expelled from the university during the "Popular Front Incident".

Sakai Toshihiko (堺 利彦, 1871-1933)

Sakai Toshihiko was born (3rd son) in an impoverished samurai family in today's Fukuoka prefecture. He graduated at the top of his class in middle and high school. He then studied English, and entered the First Higher School (Tokyo), which was a preparatory school for Imperial University. He was later expelled for failing to pay his tuition fees though. He then began writing novels, and working as a newspaper reporter, and as a teacher in Osaka and Fukuoka. Later, he started working as an editor in Tokyo, where he developed his interest in socialism and pacifism. There, he became acquainted with figures such as the anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui (幸徳 秋水, 1871-1911) and the Christian thinker Uchimura Kanzō (内村 鑑三, 1861-1930), with whom he worked at the "*Heimin Shinbun*", where the first translation of the Communist Manifesto appeared. He also wrote articles on Esperanto, and he became a councilor of the Esperanto Society of Japan, which was founded in 1906. He was, like

[542] She was later involved in an affair with Kōtoku, and thus they divorced. It is said that infuriated Arahata, when released from prison, obtained a pistol and attempted to shoot Suga, but failed to do so.

Yamakawa, imprisoned during the "Red Flag Incident" (1908). During the "winter period", he made his living by setting up a publishing company (the *Baibun-sha* -売文社), and conducting editorial work for magazines, while maintaining contact with socialists throughout Japan. He was involved in the establishment of the *Reimeikai*[543] in 1918, and was a member of the *Reimeikai*'s rival *Rousoukai*[544], along with figures like Takabatake Motoyuki, with whom he was close. He participated in the formation of the Japanese Communist Party (1922), with Yamakawa and Arabata, but later, he left the Party and joined the Rōnō group. He then continued his political activities, and was elected to the Tokyo city council in 1929. He continued to write and translate many texts on western socialist thought, on the Russian revolution, but also Western literature, including utopian literature. In 1931, he collapsed from a cerebral hemorrhage and thereafter spent the rest of his life recuperating. The following year, his condition worsened. so he was briefly admitted to Aoyama Mental Hospital. In 1933, his condition worsened further, and he died in Tokyo.

Sakisaka Itsurō (向坂 逸郎, 1897-1985)

Sakisaka Itsurō was born in Fukuoka. He graduated from the Imperial University of Tokyo, in 1921. When he was a university student, he read Marx's writings as a way to study German, and became a Marxist. Sakisaka studied in Germany from 1922 to 1925. During the hyperinflation in Germany after World War I, he was able to purchase numerous editions of Marx's writings at low prices. After he returned to Japan, he married, and became assistant professor at Kyūshū University, and later (1926), a full professor. The next year he was active in the publication of "Rōnō". In 1928 he was forced to resign from his university post, along with other professors, due to the increasing oppression by the authorities. He moved to Tokyo, where he became involved in the compilation and translation of the "Collected Works of Marx and Engels". He was arrested and imprisoned in 1937, in connection with the "Popular Front Incident". After his release, he was banned from publishing or speaking in public. Confined to house arrest, he translated German books anonymously, and lived self-sufficiently by operating a home farm.

Kushida Tamizō (櫛田 民蔵, 1885-1934)

Kushida Tamizō was born in a farming family in Fukushima prefecture. He graduated from Tokyo Foreign Language School in 1908 and Kyoto Imperial University in 1912 (he studied under Kawakami). After graduating, Kushida got associated with Takano Iwasaburo (高野岩三郎, 1871-1949), who was at the Imperial University of Tokyo at the time. Kawakami had provided him with a letter of recommendation, and he was given a post as an assistant in the Department of Economics. He was a member of the editorial board of the Osaka Asahi Shimbun (1917, soon he resigned), a professor at Doshisha University, and the Faculty of Law at Tokyo Imperial University. He left Tokyo University, in 1920, after the

[543] Reimeikai (黎明会, Dawn Society) was a Japanese "educational society" formed in 1918, by scholars like Yoshino Sakuzō and Fukuda Tokuzō. The members declared themselves committed "to strive for the stabilization and enrichment of the life of the Japanese people in conformity with the new trends of the postwar world.". The group was formed in order to sponsor public lectures, supported universal suffrage and freedom of assembly, andvadvocated less restrictions on the right to strike. The group came together "to propagate ideas of democracy among the people.", and was dissolved in 1920. Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reimeikai

[544] Rousoukai (老壮会, The Society for Old Combatants) was a Japanese think tank which attracted participants from both the left-wing and right-wing of Japanese politics. It was founded in 1918 and continued until 1921. Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rousoukai

"Moritō Incident (森戸事件)[545]", he engaged in research for the Ōhara Institute for Social Research (大原社会問題研究所), and was sent to Europe, together with Kuruma Samezō (久留間 鮫造, 1893-1982), to collect books for the Institute. He stayed mainly in Germany. He studied the works of Marx, and became one of the leading figures of the Rōnō-ha. He is also known for his criticism of Kawakami Hajime's interpretation of Marx. His wife was Kushida Fuki (櫛田 ふき, 1899-2001), who was an activist of the women's movement.

For the Kōza-ha

Noro Eitarō (野呂 榮太郎, 1900-1934)

Noro Eitarō was born in Hokkaido. He played baseball as a boy, but in the second grade of elementary school, he had one of his legs amputated. He was an excellent student, and later entered Keio University[546]. There, he studied under Koizumi Shinzō (who later would criticize Marx's Value Theory), and (later Rōnō-ha's "member") Inomata Tsunao. He also assisted Nōsaka Sanzō (野坂 参三, 1892-1993)[547] at the Industrial and Labor Research Institute (産業労働調査所). He graduated in 1926. After his graduation, he was sentenced to ten months in prison, during the so-called "Gakuren Incident (学連事件)"[548]. He was released on bail, for medical treatment. He then worked again at the Industrial and Labor Research Institute, and conducted research on Japanese capitalism. He was again briefly detained, in 1929, during the "April 16th Incident (四・一六事件)"[549]. He continued to be active, contributing largely to the work of Kōza-ha. He died in prison in 1934.

Yamada Moritarō (山田 盛太郎, 1897-1980)

Yamada Moritarō was born in Aichi prefecture, in 1897. He was the eldest son of a local landlord (Walker 2016). After graduating from the Tokyo Imperial University's Faculty of Economics in 1923, he worked as a research assistant in the same department and became an assistant professor in 1925. He became interested in Marxism. In 1930, he was arrested for his sympathetic attitude towards the (illegal) JCP. He left then his university position. He was again arrested and imprisoned for the "Com Academy Incident (コム・アカデミー事件)[550]"

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[545] An incident that involved assistant professor at Tokyo Imperial University, Morito Tatsuo (森戸 辰男, 1888-1984), who had published an article on Kropotkin. Together with Morita, Ōuchi Hyōe (大内 兵衛, 1888-1980) was as well involved.

[546] Due to his disability, he was not allowed to enter public institutions.

[547] Nōsaka was a prominent member of the socialist-communist movement in Japan. One of the founders of Japanese Communist Party, who worked for the Comintern and was active in Britain, United States, China. After the WWII he leaded the Japanese Communist Party, and was named Honorary Chairman after his retirement. While widely respected in left circles, in his final years, he was expelled from the Japanese Communist Party when the releasment of prewar Soviet confidential documents revealed his actions against fellow Japanese activists during the Great Purge, and he was harshly criticized.

[548] An incident in which Marxist research circles, at various universities, were suppressed and scholars arrested.

[549] See: *April 16th Incident*. Wikipedia . https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_16th_incident .

[550] The Incident refers to the arrest of a group of Kōza-ha's scholars, for being an organization similar to the Comintern's "Коммунизма-Академия". Source (In Japanese): *コム・アカデミー事件*. Wkipedia. https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%82%B3%E3%83%A0%E3%83%BB%E3%82%A2%E3%82%AB%E3%83%87%E3%83%9F%E3%83%BC%E4%BA%8B%E4%BB%B6 .

in 1936, but escaped prosecution. In 1939, he was appointed as an economic researcher for the East Asia Research Institute (東亜研究所), and the next year, he went to China (Walker 2016).

Hattori Shisō (服部 之総, 1901-1956)

Hattori Shisō was born in Shimane. He attended the Third High School, and in 1925, graduated from the Tokyo Imperial University. He became a member of the Research Institute of Industry and Labor (産業労働調査所) under Nōsaka Sanzō, in 1927, and a member of the secretariat of the Labor and Peasant Party (労働農民党) the following year. He then participated in the founding of the Materialist Research Society (唯物論研究会) in 1933, and started conducting research as a Marxist historian. He stopped working on the history of the Meiji Restoration when he was arrested in 1938.

Hirano Yoshitarō (平野 義太郎, 1897-1980)

Hirano Yoshitarō was born in Tokyo. He graduated from the First Higher School, and in 1921, from the Faculty of Law of Tokyo Imperial University. Soon (1923), he became an assistant professor. In the same year, he married the daughter of businessman. In 1924, he joined the Research Institute of Industry and Labor and became involved in the practical socialist movement. The years 1927-1930, he studied in Germany. There, he came into contact with Comintern activists such as Katayama Sen. After returning to Japan, he continued his research activities. In 1936, he was arrested during "Com Academy Incident", but was acquitted.

Hani Gorō (羽仁 五郎, 1901-1983)

Hani Gorō was born in Gunma prefecture. In 1913, after completing his elementary education, he moved to Tokyo. In 1921, he entered the Law department of Tokyo Imperial University. He took a leave of absence, after a few months, and left Japan in the same year to study philosophy at Heidelberg University in Germany. During that time, he began to study historical materialism. In 1924, he returned to Japan and entered the History Department of the Faculty of Letters at Tokyo Imperial University. In 1926, he married the education commentor and socialist, Hani Setsuko (羽仁説子, 1903-1987). In 1927, he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University. He worked at the Historiographical Institute of Tokyo Imperial University, as a temporary employee however, in February 1928, he resigned due to a controversy over a speech he gave in support of Japan's first universal suffrage election. In 1929, he participated in the founding of the "Proletarian Science Institute (プロレタリア科学研究所)". In 1933, he was arrested on suspicion of violating the Peace Preservation Law. He was later released. After that, he won the sympathy of many intellectuals for his resistance to militarism through his writings. He was arrested again in Beijing (1945), and was detained in Tokyo.

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