

The Walter Markov Prize: A Look Back at 30 Years of Global History

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ABSTRACTS

The essay looks back at the development of the *European Network in Universal and Global History* since 1991, determines the place of the Walter Markov Prize in this development, and explains important intellectual stages in the scholarly work of the Leipzig historian after whom the prize is named. His focus on the history of revolution, colonialism, and decolonization forms a grid in which many of the works with which young scholars apply for the prize are situated. The 15 prize winners since the first award of the prize in 1994 are then presented with their work and thus the background is drawn, against which the studies of the prize winners of the year 2021 collected in this thematic issue are to be classified.

Der Aufsatz schaut auf die Entwicklung des *European Network in Universal and Global History* seit 1991 zurück, bestimmt den Platz des Walter-Markov-Preises in dieser Entwicklung und erläutert wichtige intellektuelle Stationen im wissenschaftlichen Werk des Leipziger Historikers, nach dem der Preis benannt ist. Seine Schwerpunkte im Bereich der Revolutions-, Kolonial- und Dekolonisierungsgeschichte bilden ein Raster, in dem sich viele Arbeiten bewegen, mit denen sich junge Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen um den Preis bewerben. Die insgesamt 15 Preisträger und Preisträgerinnen seit der ersten Vergabe des Preises 1994 werden anschließend mit ihren Arbeiten vorgestellt und damit der Hintergrund gezeichnet, vor dem die in diesem Themenheft versammelten Studien der Ausgezeichneten des Jahres 2021 einzuordnen sind.

1. Origins

The founding of the journal *Comparativ* took place in turbulent times. In 1989, the revolution had not only paralyzed the political and economic system of East Germany, but also posed a massive challenge to the universities. With the relatively rapid shift from the demand for more freedom of movement, for more democracy, and for more attention to the ecological dimension of society's future, to the realization of German unification in as short a time-frame as possible, the framework parameters were set. With the elections of 18 March 1990, at the latest, the national question initially took precedence over all other dimensions of the transformation that was just taking off.

Under these conditions, historical research and teaching were not out of the game but had to substantially reorient as well. The variant of Marxism-Leninism that had also prevailed in Leipzig, which had moved far away from any orientation toward the emancipation of the marginalized, lost little appeal that had remained almost overnight. It offered neither an approach to explaining the present nor did it promise any continued career opportunities in the future. People who were fanatic representatives of such a world-view stopped believing in its credibility. However, in its narrowing of political history and its fixation on the national question, this almost sterile Marxism-Leninism proved to be compatible with approaches that were now gaining prominence, resulting in sometimes bizarre coalitions.

Among the traditions that remained alive at Leipzig University was also an interest in world history. For a long time, the university even lived with the anomaly of two competing historical institutes. This situation stemmed from the historian Karl Lamprecht (1856–1915), who had initially been appointed to Leipzig in 1891 to give impetus to the fledgling Historical Institute, founded only a dozen years earlier.¹ But after becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the conservative understanding of his colleagues, who saw historical science as primarily concerned with political processes and the emergence of the German nation, from 1905 on he pursued the separation of a competing Institute for Cultural and Universal History, which was finally founded in 1909 and whose subject matter he wanted to see defined in the broadest possible geographical areas to be covered and with a comprehensively formulated understanding of culture.² While the reaction of German historians to this attempt to think along economic, cultural, and social developments and to compare them across the boundaries of countries and civilizations was, with few exceptions, negative, the Leipzig adventure certainly resonated abroad and inspired similar efforts from China to North America, from France to Norway.³ The First World War and Lamprecht's death in 1915 put an abrupt end to this international popularity, but in no way led to the abolition of dualism in local historiography. This was fol-

1 On the biography of Lamprecht see R. Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht. A German Academic Life (1856–1915)*, New Jersey 1993.

2 M. Middell, *Weltgeschichtsschreibung im Zeitalter der Verfachlichung und Professionalisierung. Das Leipziger Institut für Kultur- und Universalgeschichte 1890–1990*, Leipzig 2005.

3 G. Diesener, *Karl Lamprecht weiterdenken. Universal- und Kulturgeschichte heute*, Leipzig 1993.

lowed by Walter Goetz (1867–1958), a historian of culture, Hans Freyer (1887–1969), a sociologist working in history, and Walter Markov (1909–1993), a historian of political emancipation movements, all of whom continued Lamprecht's claim to teach and write world history under the most diverse political conditions from the Weimar Republic to the GDR: Goetz with a ten volumes thick *World History* published with the Berlin-based Propyläen publishers,⁴ Freyer with a *World History of Europe* that was massively influenced by his experience of the Second World War,⁵ and Markov with the opening of his "World History in the Revolution Square"⁶ to the liberation movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is almost as if the rooms Lamprecht had in use – which, incidentally, fell victim to a bombing raid during the Second World War – and his furniture, which could no longer be used when the university was rebuilt in 1967–1973 because of the now lower room heights, virtually force the successors to constantly reassure themselves of the old programme to write world as cultural history.

It was not completely plucked out of thin air to stick to this tradition in 1990 as well. Who would doubt that 1989 was far more than a national moment, that the parallelism of events from China to South Africa, from Chile to the Baltic States, from Bulgaria to East Germany formed a truly global moment. For its explanation, the then popular thesis, inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein,⁷ that crises tended to become visible at the margins of the world system and could lead to emancipation struggles of the marginalized, could certainly be used.⁸ An institute that was home to expertise on African and Asian history as well as the history of the Americas and much of Europe seemed the most plausible response to these observations and interpretations.⁹ Some of it was available, and the dynamics of the situation suggested the illusion that what was lacking could be accumulated in the course of the pending restructuring. The fact that nothing comparable existed in West Germany and that interest in world history had not received much attention there since Ernst Schulin's relevant volume of 1974¹⁰ did not seem to us, in youthful exuberance, to be a particularly weighty objection, but rather one more reason to stick to the proposal, the plausibility of which no one in the small group of participants seriously doubted. The founding of an academic journal was thus more of a harbinger than a goal

4 W. Goetz (ed.), *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte. Der Werdegang der Menschheit in Gesellschaft und Staat, Wirtschaft und Geistesleben*, Berlin 1929–1933.

5 H. Freyer, *Weltgeschichte Europas*, 2 vols, Wiesbaden 1948, 2nd edn Stuttgart 1954.

6 W. Markov, *Weltgeschichte im Revolutionsquadrat*, Berlin 1979.

7 At that particular moment, Wallerstein had just published the third part of his history of a capitalist world-system: I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System III. The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730–1840s*, San Diego 1989.

8 M. Kossok, *Das 20. Jahrhundert – eine Epoche der peripheren Revolution?*, in: M. Kossok, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 3: *Zwischen Reform und Revolution. Übergänge von der Universal- zur Globalgeschichte*, Leipzig 2000, pp. 289–296 (first published in 1991 and substantially enlarged in 1993 and 1994 respectively).

9 A detailed outline of the institute's research agenda remained manuscript and disappeared unanswered in the files of the vice-rector's office.

10 E. Schulin (ed.), *Universalgeschichte*, Köln 1974; on the German situation with regard to world history writing and research, see J. Osterhammel, *Global History in a National Context. The Case of Germany*, in: P. Vries (ed.), *Global History*, Innsbruck 2009, pp. 40–58.

in itself. The address file of a series of booklets disseminating lectures from the Leipzig Colloquium on Revolutionary History served as seed money. More important financially were the 3,000 French francs contributed by the legendary secretary of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, Clemens Heller (1917–2002), which at least covered half of the printing costs for the first volume and overcame the lean period until the first subscription payments arrived.

Probably we had too much to do with the question of texts, the organization of conferences and the canvassing of readers to even notice how the wind was shifting and the weather for world history in Leipzig was getting worse for some time. On the other hand, we interpreted the publication of the proceedings of a conference in Bellagio, Italy, under the new title “Global History”¹¹ and the quickly arranged exchange with the “Journal of World History”, which had been established in parallel with *Comparativ*, as a tailwind and, after only two volumes, set sail once again more boldly by expanding the journal from four to six thematic issues per year starting in 1994.

The institutional changes, however, ran in the opposite direction: the plan for a new Institute for Cultural and Universal History disappeared into the archives of the vice-rector in charge, while the remaining Historical Seminar (necessarily, as one must admit in retrospect) focused on those historical epochs and territories that corresponded to the curriculum for schools. For the main task remained the training of future history teachers at secondary schools, and their curriculum had little to do with world history. For a moment, the Lamprecht tradition was pushed out of the university; it survived as a private association and lived on members' contributions and interest in the journal. The title of a conference that had formed a kind of prelude in 1991, namely “Karl Lamprecht weiterdenken”, seemed to have lost its optimistic ring. The adherence to the journal and the association almost seemed like a defiant reaction of the undiscerning and unteachable. This obtuseness was, however, reinforced by the international reactions, for at the same time as renationalization, interest in European history (inspired not least by the “discovery” of the European East in the historiographies of Western Europe¹² and especially in global history grew. This led only a few years later, in 2002, to the transformation of the Karl Lamprecht Society, initially strongly anchored in the Leipzig region and Central Europe, into a European Network of Universal and Global History (ENIUGH), which has held major European congresses every three years since 2005, attendance at which attests to the growing appeal of global history as a whole in Europe and far beyond.¹³

Incidentally, the peculiar bifurcation between local and international reaction to the effort for new global-historical perspectives did not last long. Soon, in 2004, another, now

11 R. Buultjens/B. Mazlish (eds.), *Conceptualizing Global History*, Boulder 1993.

12 „Das östliche Mitteleuropa als Herausforderung für eine vergleichende Geschichte Europas“ was the title of a keynote given by Jürgen Kocka at the 50th anniversary of the Herder Institute in April 2000. The Marburg Institute was a pillar of West German research on Eastern Europe, which was now obviously becoming more and more central to the interpretation of European history and challenging a comparison that always had its starting point in the West.

13 M. Middell (ed.), *The Practice of Global History. European Perspectives*, London 2019.

interdisciplinary, master's programme in Global Studies was established at Leipzig University in association with partners in eleven different countries around the world. In the last 18 years, this programme has produced more than 700 graduates, who, according to their geographical origin, come from more than 50 countries. Also at the beginning of the 2000s, a cooperation of area studies specialists with cultural and social scientists in the field of doctoral training developed from tender beginnings into an international doctoral programme and later into a graduate school – in the meantime grown to the quite considerable size of 138 doctoral students and more than 50 supervisors. The little ice age seems to be overcome.

The Walter Markov Prize is in a way a mirror of this development, as are the until now exactly 200 thematic issues of *Comparativ*. Every two years, usually between 25 and 40 dissertations were submitted to the association and its review committee – at first primarily from Germany, later with a much broader distribution throughout Europe, which undoubtedly has to do with the growing awareness of ENIUGH, especially through the regular congresses. In the letters of motivation, the applicants refer to focal points in Walter Markov's work, and the reviewers are equally attentive to these references, without tending toward hagiographic pandering. Before turning to the laureates, let us first ask who that man was, who was born in Graz in 1909, served as a professor from 1949 to 1974 in Leipzig and died near Berlin in 1994.¹⁴

2. Walter Markov – A Historian in the Change of Epochs

Who counts among his socialization events World War I, got around as a student in the Weimar Republic, was caught resisting the Nazis and imprisoned for ten years, sought orientation and a challenging academic task in postwar Germany, took the Marxist side and then was organizationally expelled by the Communists, was the first German professor to teach in sub-Saharan Africa after decolonization; he joined the best in the field of French revolutionary history and emerged as a respected authority on dialogue across Cold War borders, and can rightly be called both a product and an actor in what Eric Hobsbawm called the short twentieth century.¹⁵

In many respects, Walter Markov eludes the clichés used to describe historians who worked in the GDR. Born on 5 October 1909 in Graz into a middle-class family, he underwent an education whose interculturalism probably far exceeded even the standards of the Habsburg multiethnic state and shaped a polyglot cosmopolite: After attending a private German school in his birthplace, he went to elementary school in Ljubljana, Slovenia, then to a humanistic high school, sometimes with Serbo-Croatian and French (in Belgrade) and sometimes with Italian (in Sušak, today's Rijeka) as the language of

14 For further details, see his autobiographical interview with Thomas Grimm: W. Markov, *Zwiesprache mit dem Jahrhundert*, Berlin/Weimar 1989.

15 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, London/New York 1994.

instruction. The work-study student, who combined an ambition to study, political interest and the experience of a scarce standard of living, then embarked on the customary academic itinerancy through the universities of Leipzig, Cologne, Berlin, Hamburg, and Bonn, where Markov completed his doctorate under Fritz Kern (1884–1950) in 1934 before joining the Communist Resistance¹⁶ and being sentenced by the “People’s Court” to twelve years’ imprisonment for setting up a resistance group at Bonn University; he spent this time in Siegburg, in full view of the approaching American troops, until the moment of self-liberation.

This was followed by an attempt to regain a foothold at Bonn University in parallel with the establishment of youth work by the Communist Party; this failed due to the continuum of the conservative milieu, so Markov looked around for further career opportunities in the Soviet occupation zone. The first two years after the war saw him at various venues of the reconstruction of scholarly and political communication that was still underway across the German occupation zones, from an East Berlin Historians’ Conference in 1946 via a meeting of the “Imshausen Society” that worked in the tradition of the broad coalition that had led to the attentat of 20 July 1944 to the first German Historians’ Conference after 1945 in Munich. The lack of scholars and Marxist-trained university teachers, especially in the Soviet occupation zone, promised rapid advancement – the choice of university for this was almost up to him when rectors from Greifswald and Leipzig approached him in search of useful personnel. Markov preferred to fulfil the “classical” requirements for the professorship via the German habilitation instead of relying solely on the political conjuncture, and therefore oriented himself to Leipzig, where Hans Freyer, an expert on the Balkans, was available who, as author of the “Revolution from the Right”, was probably in a completely different camp politically than Markov, but because of his scientific reputation (and the line of tradition to Karl Lamprecht) was considered as one of the few reviewers for the self-confident candidate. To the widow of the Leipzig internist Morawitz, with whom he lived as a subtenant, the newcomer, in all his ambivalence of political left-wing orientation and bourgeois habitus, appeared as a “ghost rider” in the segregation processes of the postwar era: “Someone who voluntarily moved to the East Zone and in doing so appeared like a ‘real’ academic; who, despite his puny external appearance, betrayed certain unmistakable signs of filial piety.” The contradictions with which not only the bourgeois milieu on the Pleiße had to struggle were soon to cause problems for the East German communists (SED) as well.

After Freyer’s escape to Münster in West Germany in 1948 and many skirmishes with other candidates, Markov was given the chair and the directorship of the Institute for Cultural and Universal History at Leipzig University. A focus on European and especially Eastern European history seemed preordained.

16 On the original political approach of this local resistance group, see W. Bramke, Walter Markov und der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus, in: M. Middell (ed.), *Lust am Krimi. Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung Walter Markovs*, Leipzig 2011, pp. 33–48.

However, this option remained open only for a few years; the Leipzig full professor fell victim to the party review of 1950. He was expelled from the SED on charges of “titoist” views, rich contacts with “West German reactionaries” and a lack of openness to a radicalizing “class struggle” and now found himself in a more than precarious situation. Could the position of the avowed Marxist and faculty member, who now tended toward double isolation, be sustained in the long run? Into which field of content could he escape, after statements about the Yugoslavian partisan republic or recent Russian-Soviet history had to lead directly to the continuation of suspicion by rigid dogmatists? Against the background of biographical experiences in the Rhineland, however, it was not Markov’s business to take up the hare’s paw either.

In the sharp conflicts of the 1950s, in which the SED leadership under Walter Ulbricht had trouble keeping its head above water in the changing waves of Stalinism and attempted de-Stalinization, the self-declared “communist without a party card” succeeded in expanding his sphere of action again bit by bit through scientific authority. The institute, rich in tradition, came under the sway of the Second University Reform of 1951, when the universities were given a uniform nomenclature of chairs and institutes in the field of history, thus formally ending the dual existence of the Institute of History and the Institute of Cultural History. There are, however, some echoes of the tension, which went back further, between the Institute for the History of the German People (under Ernst Engelberg’s direction) and the Institute for General History, in which Walter Markov established a fruitful collaboration with the medievalist and Pirenne admirer Heinrich Sproemberg (1889–1966). Sproemberg’s research on the Hanseatic League provided the opportunity for contacts with colleagues in Belgium and France, as well as with those from East Central Europe, while Markov and his student Manfred Kossok (1930–1993), who specialized in Latin America, added to early modern trade history a then rather unusual perspective on transatlantic relations in the direction of South America.

Still prompted by the soon to be centralized Saxon university administration in Berlin in 1952, Markov had been looking for a new thematic framework for his institute. It dawned on him that the movement against colonialism, which was underway but in many cases still far from the success of independence, would pose a considerable challenge for the social sciences: What was emerging in the Global South did not fit into any of the prefabricated templates, whether they were cut against the background of a colonial “civilizing mission” or in contrast to the mature “proletarian revolution”. Quite apart from the fact that the anti-colonial uprising and the subsequent formation of a state of its own had to assure itself of sui generis historical baggage – dependency structures of long duration and the difficulties of ethno-cultural inhomogeneity worked into the equation from which the chances of success were to be calculated. The programme of a comparative colonial history¹⁷ that Markov briefly sketched out in the early 1950s

17 W. Markov, *Bemerkungen zur geschichtlichen Stellung der Siedlungskolonie*, in: *Vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit. Zum 65. Geburtstag von Heinrich Sproemberg*, Berlin 1956, pp. 312–349; W. Markov, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kolonialismus und zur nationalen Befreiungsbewegung der kolonial unterdrückten Völker* in: *Zeitschrift für*

and then sought to implement piece by piece with a colourful group of students, thus had three dimensions.

On the one hand, the history of “extra-Europe” had to be discovered, because this history was now virulent. Undeniably, the European colonial powers played an important role in this history, but the decisive twist that Markov tried to give to the matter was precisely the emphasis on African, Asian, and South American intervention in this history; only much later was the praise of agency to become naturalized for it. This did not yet necessarily mean reconstructing the history of ordinary people, but often the pioneering studies now begun were primarily concerned with the behaviour of indigenous elites; the breakthrough was to take seriously those to be located globally “below.” The Markovian interest in “history from below”¹⁸ found its reflection here in a way appropriate to the area studies of the time.

A second question related to the historical analogies that were to be mobilized for theory building. Was a breakthrough to socialist social relations really on the agenda, if necessary in the absence of a sufficiently “mature” working class, whose role was to be simulated by rebellious non-commissioned officers, young intellectuals or aspiring representatives of the economic middle class on the ground? So, would the standard of comparison have to be sought in the Russian October Revolution and the regime change in Eastern Europe after 1945? Or would it be more worthwhile to look at the parallelograms of forces in the revolutions of the pre-industrial eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?

Third, and finally, would not the concept of a history from below also be appropriate for these European revolutions? Markov devoted much of his academic life to the examination of this question and gave an answer in his biography, growing to four volumes, of the red priest Jacques Roux, who was among the radicals during the French Revolution and on whom Markov explored how far the revolution could be driven to the left and where the tragic moment of the unrealizable dreams of an entirely different society began.

Markov’s interest in the French Revolution undoubtedly goes back further than the 1950s. From early childhood, Napoleon whom he would later devote a biographical sketch and an opulent cultural history¹⁹ haunted his imagination in a heroic role. The encounter with the historian of French and Spanish literature and long-time Leipzig colleague Werner Krauss (1900–1976) in Marburg in 1947 sharpened his attention to “Quatre-vingt-neuf [...] as a culmination of the Enlightenment”. Thus, not coincidentally, Markov’s first statement on his interpretation of the revolution appeared under the title “Grenzen des Jakobinerstaates” (Limits of the Jacobin State) in a collective work

Geschichtswissenschaft 8 (1960), special issue at the occasion of the XIth International Congress of Historians held in Stockholm, August 1960, pp. 544–562.

18 As a later reference to this approach, see his contribution „Curés patriotes“ and Sans-Culottes in the Year II, in: History from Below. Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé, ed. by F. Krantz, Quebec 1985, pp. 209–220.

19 W. Markov, Napoleone (= I Protagonisti della Storia Universale, Nr. 21) Roma/Milano 1967; W. Markov, Grand Empire. Sitten und Unsitten der Napoleonzeit, Leipzig 1984.

on “Grundpositionen der französischen Aufklärung” (Basic Positions of the French Enlightenment) edited by Krauss and his Germanist colleague Hans Mayer (1907–2001).²⁰ Among the intellectual stimuli on site was also the philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885–1977), whose engagement with utopian thought, however, probably inspired Markov more to historical grounding than to direct imitation of the equally speculative and normative approach. A miscellany on the “Utopia of the Citoyen” in 1955 presented the approach that Markov was to follow for the next couple of years and for which he sought the appropriate object of research.²¹ The activities in the second half of the 1950s, from the participation in the International Congress of Historians in Rome – with contacts to the newcomers Ernesto Ragioneri (1926–1975), George Rudé (1910–1993), Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012), Christopher Hill (1912–2003) as well as to the already well established Ernest Labrousse (1895–1988) – to the anthology with the title “Jacobins and Popular Movement 1793/94” to the most comprehensive publication for Robespierre’s 200th birthday (which later differed from the Soviet revolutionary research) brought Markov and his Leipzig Institute into an emerging international network, which was to experience its official birth as the “Commission for the Study of the French Revolution” at the next CISH congress in Stockholm in 1960.²²

Systematic interpretation and transnational networking were the first steps, but Markov had more in mind than meta-theoretical commentary on the research progress being noted elsewhere. His ambition was a book that would secure him a prominent place in the global research community: extensively source-supported, in the force field of an explosive debate, and original in form and content. Fifteen years of a researcher’s life, delayed by the years of imprisonment, were invested accordingly in the project, and the conditions of production were not free of exciting anecdotes.

The meeting with Albert Soboul (1914–1982), the rising star of French revolutionary research, who gave a first guest role in Leipzig at Christmas 1954, brought about the permanent connection with the relevant institute at the Sorbonne and with the Société des Études Robespierriistes. The establishment of contacts to Western Europe benefited from the (albeit changeable) thaw also in scientific policy between the XX and XXII Party Congresses of the Soviet Communist Party. Nevertheless, dogmatists had plenty to complain about: insufficient ideological care in the selection of contributors to those anthologies that brought the fresh air of international discussion into East German revolutionary research; the lack of a link to national history, which was so central after all, even though little could be said against the fundamental rank of 1789, even from the most hardened Marxist-Leninist point of view. The ups and downs in the evaluation at home did not affect the revolutionary historian, who was quickly recognized abroad – more important was the reliable contact with the luminaries of the field such as Georges

20 W. Markov, Grenzen des Jakobinerstaates, in: Grundpositionen der französischen Aufklärung. Neue Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft, ed. by W. Krauss and H. Mayer, Berlin 1955, pp. 209–242.

21 W. Markov, Die Utopia des Citoyen, in: Festschrift. Ernst Bloch zum 70. Geburtstag, Berlin 1955, pp. 229–240.

22 See also the contribution by Katja Castryck-Naumann in this issue.

Lefebvre (1874–1959), who followed his own studies on the peasantry in his famous book on “La Grande Peur” of 1789 as well as later uprisings with the stimulation of a whole cohort of younger scholars, who turned to the people’s movement in its many ramifications and thus gave the rising social history its own note. With Lefebvre’s student Soboul, who prepared his voluminous thesis on the Parisian Sansculottes in the Year II of the Republic (which Markov later made available to the German public in a translated version together with jointly published documents), he soon became close friends, and from there a network of numerous helpers in Paris and the French provinces was established, without which the “Jacques Roux” would never have gained its final form.

Markov failed several times with his request to enter France – he himself suspected an unfavourable dossier in the Ministry of the Interior, which lost its effect only in 1966, when Gaullist interest in a new Ostpolitik put water on the mills of scientific initiatives, which (from Strasbourg) spawned a European association of historians. In 1957, on the other hand, it took illegality-tested partisan tricks to reach the Seine: When Markov arrived with only a borrowed passport from a friend in Fulda, Soboul and Lefebvre first fell from the clouds and then used their authority to achieve the much-needed access to files in the Archives Nationales. The return crossing of the blocked border took place just as unlawfully, hidden in the car of Heinz Kierzek, the owner of the Fulda publishing house, whose friendship Markov owed to their shared prison experience in Siegburg.

As adventurous as the trip itself may seem, it laid the foundation for an impressive work. In no time at all, the future author sifted through his sources and selected what would be needed in the future: “I worked like a wild man every day until closing time at the archive and sketched everything I wanted to take with me immediately. Once I had the references and numbers, the rest was just a technical matter. A reliable secretary of Soboul copied – for years – what was necessary.” The financing also supported Kierzek. While the view of the vita of the revolutionary priest Roux was mastered qua files, his biographer groped in the dark in the investigation of the southwest French home province. This shortcoming was remedied by Georges Castellan (1920–2014) from Poitiers, who had a committed student from Angoulême search for texts and pictures on Leipzig’s instructions.

Doubts about the viability of the topic were not completely erased:

Every attempt to approach Jacques Roux in a velvety way had to start from the dilemma: Does the narrow source base support an entire book on arguably the most conspicuous of the far leftists of the revolutionary period before Babeuf? The book he deserved and yet no one wrote? George Lefebvre, in conversation in 1957, skeptically left open the feasibility: ‘Il faudrait trouver le point de départ’.²³

The described dilemma was not only one of the sparse testimonies of a spectacular life, but touched the core of a research programme, which a new generation of historians ad-

vocated on a broad international front and was eyed suspiciously from the conservative camp. A more detailed social-historical investigation was to clarify who had actually carried the revolution. What qualified the conflicts between 1789 and 1794/99 as a bourgeois revolution? Was the struggle between the estates a decisive battle against feudalism and for a modern capitalist order, and how was the intervention of the common people against usury and price gouging, against the concentration of landed property, to be assessed under these circumstances? How did the radicalism of the Jacobin mountain party fit in with joyless profiteering and that *jeunesse dorée* which only really came into its own under the Directory? Soboul's grandiose analysis of the mass sources for the activists of the *sansculottes* in Paris brought to light its petty-bourgeois structure; the Norwegian Kare Tønnesson (1926–2019) continued the investigation for the period after the defeat of the popular movement in Thermidor. Richard Cobb (1917–1996) from Aberystwyth in West Wales contributed a detailed study of the revolutionary army as an instrument of *terreur*. Piece by piece, a convincing jigsaw puzzle was filled in, which removed the ground from ahistorical interpretations of the 'without-pants' as propertyless proletarians with socialization intentions, as well as from their defamation as an obstacle to any capitalist differentiation. Only slowly did the debate free itself from the stereotype of the one (English) way to capitalism solely through land and wealth concentration and discover the range of transformation variants. The studies of the 1950s placed the debate about social situations and the interests that could be derived from them on a largely new basis. But did this already explain the political course of the revolution? Had the argument that whoever wanted capitalism should have stopped the revolution in 1791 and not derailed it already been convincingly countered?

Sure, Markov was cut off from the years of archival research necessary to write a comparable collective study of a selected social formation. But the biographical approach, which focused on the priest Roux with his commitment to the underprivileged up to the resistance against the great Robespierre, had other, weightier reasons than the lack of opportunity for alternative approaches.

In the first part of his tetralogy, the historiographical-historical overview "Jacques Roux oder Vom Elend der Biographie" (Berlin 1966), Markov develops a thesis that is as surprising as it is insightful: The red priest from the Graviilliers section was an exemplary case in point. His treatment in historiography offers a reliable benchmark for a walk through one and a half centuries of historians' efforts. What comes across in classical academic qualification works as a tedious battle of footnotes under the keyword "state of research", Markov develops into a genre *sui generis* – a history of politics and ideas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the burning glass of Jacques Roux readings. One might dismiss such a focus as an obsessive search by a historian for mentions of his hero, but the "Misery of Biography" can still hold its own among the knowledgeable introductions to the historiographical history of the Revolution in general: it shines through polyglot completeness, through sovereign linking of presentation and judgment, and finally it offers a history of historiography that explains its development from

the context of the time – no historian without reference to the ideologemes of his epoch and caught in the respectively thinkable and sayable.

An important by-catch of fishing with the fine-meshed bibliographic net is Marx's mention of Jacques Roux in the *Holy Family* as part of a revolutionary tradition that began in the Cercle social of 1789 and reached to Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals in 1796, continuing in the nineteenth century with Buonarroti: "This idea, consistently elaborated, is the idea of the new state of the world."²⁴

Here Markov finds the starting point advised by Lefebvre: revolutions require a considerable surplus of imagination as to what all is possible once the old power relations are made to dance. This imagination does not remain entrusted to paper, but makes itself felt in concrete actions. The broad coalition that sweeps away the bastions of the old is based on the "heroic illusion" that much of the desired change is really redeemable. From this follows the far above-average mobilization of energy and creativity that characterizes a revolution.

But it is also part of the heroic illusion that it is more convincing in the honey-moon of the revolution than in the further course – disappointment and frustration are necessarily inscribed in it, when the daily decisions prove the difference of interests. One is the rapid compromise of the new elites washed up to the top with those old rulers who prove to be flexible. The quest for rapid containment of the overflowing imagination and mobilization directs the way to such an agreement. The history of the French Revolution is full of such attempts, only they all failed in the first five years because of the intransigence of the counter-revolution and because of the further pushing of a popular movement in the countryside, in the suburbs and in the colonies, which could not be easily calmed down. The flight of Louis XVI to Varennes indicated that the king was by no means willing to play the role of monarch committed to the constitution conscientiously and without guile. The *Jacqueries* in the great cereal regions of the north and the Paris basin kept the land question open until not only the feudal rights encumbering the person were abolished and the national estates distributed from church property and emigrant hands, but also all levies and front charges lying on the land, which were not to be accepted as capitalist rents, were definitely abolished. The commitment of the *Sansculottes* was not only aimed at the elimination of the guild barriers, but also at a reasonable balance between income from commercial activities and food prices, which were precariously dependent on supplies from an agriculture that was subject to unpredictable caprices due to weather inclemencies, the effects of war and speculative hoarding of the harvest. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the slaves on the plantations in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean were not at all satisfied with the attempt of the plantation oligarchy to detach themselves from the validity of the declaration of human and civil rights in the metropolis and decided to revolt, which could only end with the legal equality of all people on the islands or the return to the status quo ante.

24 K. Marx/F. Engels, *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten*, in: Marx/Engels, *Werke*, vol. 2, Berlin 1962, p. 126.

If, however, the early retreat into compromise failed, then it required a renewal of the “heroic illusion” at an advanced level of radicalism and under new leadership in each case. It was one of the advances of revolutionary historiography in the 1950s (not forgetting the preliminary work of a Jean Jaurès [1859–1914] and an Albert Mathiez [1874–1932] from before and after the First World War I) that the Jacobins were not only considered as a political grouping, but that their anchoring in a Montagnard bourgeoisie came into consciousness. This group of the bourgeois camp had fewer difficulties with a propelled defeudalization than those who saw themselves represented by the Feuillants of the first revolutionary period, because they did not have shares in landed estates and they profited to a lesser extent from royal trade privileges or supplies to the court and nobility. The ownership structures in the colonies were remote from it. In its social structure, mentality and the orientation of its economic activities, the Montagnard bourgeoisie was closer to the profile of the Sansculottes than to the upper levels of a bourgeoisie that already owed its rise to enormous fortunes and political influence (for example, through the purchase of offices, which the crown could not abolish again in view of chronically thin coffers) to the Ancien Régime. This bourgeoisie, voting with the Montagnards, was the decisive bearer of that caesura consciousness that consistently distinguished between the old society and the new revolutionary order. The radicality of their willingness to root out the old resulted from the certain feeling that there was more to gain than to lose, but it also had a cultural component, namely the deep conviction that this new society was a more just one and could eliminate dissatisfaction with the old one. The Montagnard bourgeoisie was ready to spell out the declaration of human and civil rights to a certain extent: Overcoming all forms of class conceit and distribution of prestige according to commitment to the common good; opportunities for participation for all who were willing to defend the new property order; duty to defend the revolution results against attempts to roll them back and cement the break with the Ancien Régime.

Robespierre’s Mountain Party seized power in the Convention from the momentum of the political disputes. But it could do so only because it was supported by the Montagnard bourgeoisie. The establishment of the Republic, with which the Girondists and Jacobins had established the principle of popular sovereignty without restrictions in 1792, was now followed in 1793/94 by the drafting of a series of decrees to eliminate the remaining feudal burdens, to abolish slavery, to introduce economic regulations to ensure subsistence, and to mobilize all the country’s energies against the counter-revolution threatening from outside in alliance with a European coalition. It should be noted that the Mountain Party did not so much grant the fulfilment of the demands of the peasant movement, the urban popular societies and the army of Toussaint L’Ouverture on Saint Domingue from above, but it had the courage to recognize and establish what had long been fought for on the ground and could only have been turned back by the collapse of the mass base of the revolution.

What Robespierre’s team pushed through in the Convention remained tied to the situation, which was shaped first and foremost by the fatal war situation. Anyone who had relied solely on the classical military would have been quickly confronted with the col-

lapse on all fronts. Only the mobilization of a genuine people's army could save the parallelogram of forces. To do so, it was necessary to test the demands of the popular swing masses. Consequently, the revolutionary government decreed the result of the breakthroughs of its democratic base rather than systematically executing its own programme. When it attempted to translate what it had achieved (with the Constitution of the Year II) into a valid order, it had to realize that it was entangled in contradictions: broad grassroots democratic rights of participation or the right to work and to live in dignity even for needy citizens clashed with the absolute right of every citizen "to enjoy and dispose of his property and income, the fruits of his labour and activity, at will" and the general economic freedom in the physiocratic tradition.

The overwhelming success of the constitution in the July 1793 vote (1.8 million votes in favour and 12,000 against, with a 30 percent turnout under conditions of war and civil strife) indicates that the Jacobins had nevertheless succeeded in presenting an acceptable compromise (and, above all, one that many saw as without alternative). The "Feast of Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic" on 10 August symbolically sealed the consensus; from then on, objections were suspected of betraying the "fatherland in danger".

It was here that Markov's hero, Jacques Roux, experienced his finest hour, entering the annals as a spoiler with the "Manifesto of the Enragés". He and like-minded people, including since May the "Society of Revolutionary Republican Women" around Pauline Léon and Claire Lacombe, went against the grain both that the beautiful declarations could by no means stop the skyrocketing of food prices and that the Mountain Party was obviously trying to counteract a further radicalization of the revolution and to discipline the people that were still urgently needed. Jacques Roux gave voice to this widespread unease and attempted an organizational summary. To him, the interests of the "mediocre workers and the class that has always been oppressed by feudal yoke" seemed very insufficiently taken into account, which is why he intended to address the Convention with a collective address. This denunciation of the renewed "heroic illusion", according to which the Robespierrists now represented the common good, exceeded the level of various individual expressions of the same thrust, for the red vicar formed a committee of twelve for the final editing, to which Markov pays special respect as a first step towards the formation of an independent, radical people's party.

The address, only later called the "Manifesto of the Enragés", asked – as a contribution to the constitutional debate – whether speculation had been outlawed, the racketeers threatened with the death penalty, and denied the very claim to administer the welfare of all that the constitution claimed to raise:

Very well – we declare to you that you have not done everything for the happiness of the people. Freedom is nothing but an empty delusion when one class of people can starve another with impunity. Equality is nothing but an empty delusion when the rich man, with the help of monopoly, exercises the right over the life and death of his fellow man. The Republic is nothing but an empty delusion when counterrevolution is carried out

*day after day by the price of food, which three-fourths of the citizens cannot pay without shedding tears.*²⁵

The speech at the Convention suffered from bad timing; announced on 23 June as a contribution to the still-open constitutional debate, Jacques Roux was not given the floor; on the 25th, his text appeared as an open mutiny against the version adopted the day before. The rebuff was accordingly brutal, but this did not diminish the support in his own section, which immediately decided to print the address. The attention that the event attracted had to do, on the one hand, with the feeling among the plebeian strata that Roux was voicing the right thing, but on the other hand, with the hope of the right that the objection from the far left might weaken the mountain party and discredit its draft. The importance Markov gives to the manifesto now lies in the fact that here the revolution reaches its limit. Jacques Roux demanded the reconstruction of the heroic illusion on an even broader line: he wanted to urge the Convention to make the reality of life of the poorer the starting point of its social policy. He warned that otherwise the Revolution would soon lose its most important support. He reminded that the speculative capitalism of the wholesalers had its roots in the economy of the ancien régime, and he accurately pointed out the contradictions of their programme to the Robespierrists. His ideal was not just any socialization, but an egalitarian conception of capitalism that focused first on the happiness of all rather than the property rights of a few. The vast majority of the French had an interest in property; many peasants had just received their portion of redistributed church land; many artisans were owners of their workshop and laborers at the same time. Their idea of a just society did not see itself in contradiction with the guarantee of property, but this property should be distributed in such a way that long-standing inequalities did not become the basis for its abuse in favour of some and to the detriment of many.

It was also true that the much-needed mobilization of the people for the revolution could only be had if their idea of a just society was served.

The explosive power of the Manifesto by no means escaped the Jacobins, for it was not the utterance of an isolated literary far left, but recognizably firmly rooted in important Parisian sections. In July, a partially renewed Welfare Committee met and formed a kind of revolutionary government that, in addition to taking decisive measures for the military defense of the Republic, addressed the problem of commodity hoarding and stock market speculation. The decree of 26 July took up the demand for the death penalty for speculation on the basic needs of urban masses.

The period between July and September 1793 can be seen as a hinge period: On the one hand, there is a difficult social and political negotiation of the relationship between the Sansculottes and the Montagnard bourgeoisie. Jacques Roux's manifesto represents yet another shift of coordinates in the direction of a radical egalitarianism that does not shy

25 My translation from the version published by W. Markov in his *Revolution im Zeugenstand. Frankreich 1789–1799*, Leipzig 1982, vol. 2, p. 450.

away from restricting property rights in favour of a kind of basic security. On the other hand, the security of the Republic pushed to the fore: Girondist revolt, Vendée insurrection and struggle against a broad coalition of European powers threatened to converge. The Jacobins succeeded in containing the first dimension by referring to the second. This was not the hour of further popular uprisings, but of resolute defense of revolution and republic in general. Robespierre and his followers mastered the uprisings in early September from the Paris sections through flexible reaction and the integration of some leftists into the Great Welfare Committee, henceforth untroubled by demands for new elections. The satisfaction of the desire for decisive action from above and the priority given to security found expression in the Suspects Law and the General Maximum Law, the latter being interpreted precisely not as a fundamental solution to the problem of basic security but as an exceptional state of a centralized war economy.

The revolutionary government successfully presented itself as a guarantee of the fulfilment of social demands and victory over the enemies of the Republic, demanding silence from the political representatives of a popular movement whose insistence was denigrated as unpatriotic. Jacques Roux was one of the first victims, his arrest on 5 September was followed by five months of imprisonment before he chose suicide in Bicêtre.

The story of Jacques Roux allows Markov to draw a whole panorama of the Revolution with the intention of giving special justice to two groups.

There is no doubt that the Jacobins had not wrongly painted on the wall the dangers that threatened their revolution, already close to the historical optimum, if it were taken further to the left. They had succeeded in doing what many other revolutionaries had failed to do: to renew that common commitment to broader goals and considerable sacrifices between the bearers and the hegemon of a revolution, when it became clear that only consistency could prevent a relapse behind the starting point. It was not until the Jacobin-controlled Convention, in the early summer of 1793, that the decrees were passed that determined the outcome of the revolution in such a way that all subsequent compromises and even the return of the Bourbons in 1815 did nothing to change the elimination of feudal relations and the establishment of a specific French capitalism rooted in the petty-bourgeois milieu as well as in the remaining dynasties of wholesalers and early industrialists. They were also prepared to use violence to achieve this result. Markov saw the *terreur* (with Marx) as an expression of an ability to deal with the enemies of the (bourgeois) revolution in a plebeian way. But he equally saw it as a fatal form of immobilization of revolutionary dynamics from below by the cold, judicially executed violence from above. Here the contemporary witness of the Stalinist trials in the 1930s and 1950s distinguishes himself from all too unabashed enthusiasm for any form of revolutionary violence.

If the praise of the Jacobins follows rational insight into their ability to drive the revolution beyond the point of no return, the sympathy for the Jacquesrouxins (including its feminist component) is a deeper one. It reflects an interest in the origins of an “idea of the new state of the world”, whose origins in plebeian-peasant egalitarianism indicate a much broader catchment area than a derivation solely from communist fantasies of socialization would allow. But it also allows us to see – if we compare the biography of

Jacques Roux with Markov's autobiographical texts – an identification with the “hot-spurs” whose lasting merit was “to have been the first to recognize the class limitations even of Montagnard democracy and to have gone on the front against the erection of a bourgeois oppressor state in place of the feudal one on behalf of the masses exploited in it”.²⁶ Their tragedy would be precisely that they saw through the Jacobin illusion earlier than others, but did not sufficiently reflect on the illusory nature of their own programme, which was oriented towards principles of humanity.

What one can recognize here is the desire of the intellectual to see through the mechanisms of a more than complex and dynamic situation – and as such the revolution is painted in its ramifications in great detail – and at the same time the desire of those who are themselves committed to emancipatory causes to gain clarity about what is historically achievable in each case.

In that regard the standoff between Jacobins and Jacquesrouxins is particularly interesting. Markov appreciated them both and was not prepared to base his image of the revolution solely on either side in the dispute: In social terms, he considered it imperative to work for the poorest and to guarantee to all the rights to political participation, work, and education. But the victory of the revolution also required assertiveness, a dash of ruthlessness, and the right techniques of rule (up to and including booting out competitors for power whose social programme promised more). Here one reads (not only between the lines) a dilemma that has cast a shadow of tragedy over so many revolutions, and which the historian of revolutions, whom his own life experience had repeatedly placed in such dilemmas, could not escape.

3. Three Decades of the Walter Markov Prize

Finally, let's take a look at those who were honoured with the Walter Markov Prize between 1994 and 2022. The reviewers were not able to make a clear decision in every year and sometimes awarded two prizes. Between 2003 and 2009, a gap opens up that can be explained by the lack of resources for prize money. The Markov Prize is no exception when it comes to the uneven gender balance; it was not until 2003 that the first female laureate appears on the list, and overall only four of the 15 laureates are female. Nevertheless, a balanced ratio can be observed for the class of 2021, and among the excellent works that received an honorary mention, the majority were written by women.

Two focal points stand out in terms of content: historiographical reflection and the growing interest in so-called non-European history (including imperialism). One can also see in this list how global history has developed in the direction of transnational topics, namely those of international organizations, transnational forms of socialization, and cultural spaces of circulation.

In particular, the contributions of recent years are characterized by a growing clear coherence. They show the different directions in which the interest of a new generation of global historians is currently running. The focus is on social as well as cultural history; circulations of knowledge and people are examined, but also their obstacles and the current impossibility of enforcing cosmopolitan homogenization of the world. The narratives of centrism, from whatever center it may emanate, are critically considered, but at the same time it is clear that the actors to whom global historical studies turn are precisely carriers of these discourses: Globalization is not so much a structural context as an activity that focuses on a particular section of the world and is meant to globalize this “world” according to the worldview that these actors consider relevant.

List of Laureates 1994–2021

Norbert Kersken (1994): *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der Nationen. Nationalgeschichtliche Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter*

Thomas Erdmann Fischer (1997): *Geschichte der Geschichtskultur. Über den öffentlichen Gebrauch der Vergangenheit von den antiken Kulturen bis zur Gegenwart*

Christian Koller (1999): *Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt. Die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik 1914–1930*

Knuth Matthias Dethlefsen (1999): *British Presence and Rule in China between 1919–1937*

Ludger Wimmelbücker (2001): *The Kilimanjaro Region. Production and Living Conditions, c. 1800–1920*

Oliver B. Hemmerle (2001): *‘Der arme Teufel’ – Eine transatlantische Zeitschrift zwischen Arbeiterbewegung und bildungsbürgerlichem Kulturtransfer um 1900*

Astrid Windus (2003): *Afroargentiner und Nation. Konstruktionsweisen afroargentinischer Identität im Buenos Aires des 19. Jahrhunderts*

Friedemann Pestel (2009): *Weimar als Exil. Erfahrungsräume französischer Revolutions-
emigranten 1792–1803*

Christoph Kalter (2011): *Die Entdeckung der Dritten Welt und die neue radikale Linke in Frankreich*

Katja Naumann (2013): *Laboratorien der Weltgeschichtsschreibung. Lehre und Forschung an den Universitäten Chicago, Columbia und Harvard 1918 bis 1968*

Lukas Schemper (2017): *Humanity Unprepared: International Organization and the Management of Natural Disaster (1921–1991)*

Johanna Wolf (2017): “Assurances of Friendship”. Metallgewerkschafter während der Globalisierungsprozesse der langen 1970er Jahre am Beispiel der Schiffbauindustrie

Eric Burton (2019): Tansanias “Afrikanischer Sozialismus” und die Entwicklungspolitik der beiden deutschen Staaten: Akteure, Beziehungen und Handlungsspielräume, 1961–1990

Andreas Greiner (2021): Tensions of transport: Human portorage and state formation in colonial East Africa, c. 1890–1914

Siga Maguiraga (2021): Les étudiants maliens en Turquie de 2006 à nos jours: Mobilité et trajectoires socio-éducatives des jeunes ouest-africains

In this issue, we not only present important ideas of the two 2021 laureates (though by no means the full richness of their dissertations, which are worth reading in their entirety and which the Walter Markov Prize is intended to help get into print). Rather, we have also asked the applicants who have received honorary mention by the reviewers to present their studies. In this way, we would like to offer a glimpse into the workshop of the new global history, which is being pursued by a generation that no longer received its education at the margins of a historical science that is strongly fixated on the national, but has grown up already with a great appreciation for global historical themes and approaches. Whether this has necessarily made things easier, on the one hand, can only be judged in retrospect with the necessary temporal distance from the historiography of the early 2020s. For there is no doubt that the pressure has become greater when it comes to still contributing something profitable to a conjuncture that is already in full swing than when one can invoke an outsider position from which intellectual provocation may be easier. On the other hand, a more self-critical trait has already entered global history in recent years.²⁷ The ideological exaltation of globalization in the 1990s has always been broken by historical comparison, but many global historians of the first hour have nevertheless embarked on a euphoric voyage of discovery toward ever more interconnectedness and ever more connections. This joy of discovery has now given way to a more skeptical (or shall we say more realistic) assessment. Interconnections can also be dissolved again (and some speak even of peak globalization), and the crossing of boundaries is necessarily accompanied by the drawing of new boundaries. This attention to the dialectic of de- and reterritorialization is by no means a completely surprising theoretical turn (as we also noted in this journal already in 2005²⁸) and certainly not a completely new discovery, but it clearly gains weight as a point of orientation after the experiences of pandemic and war since 2020.

27 An iconic text in this regard: J. Adelman, Is global history still possible, or has it had its moment? (2017), <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment> (accessed 3 October 2022).

28 U. Engel/M. Middell, Bruchzonen der Globalisierung, globale Krisen und Territorialitätsregimes – Kategorien einer Globalgeschichtsschreibung, in: *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 15 (2005) 5/6, pp. 5–38.