

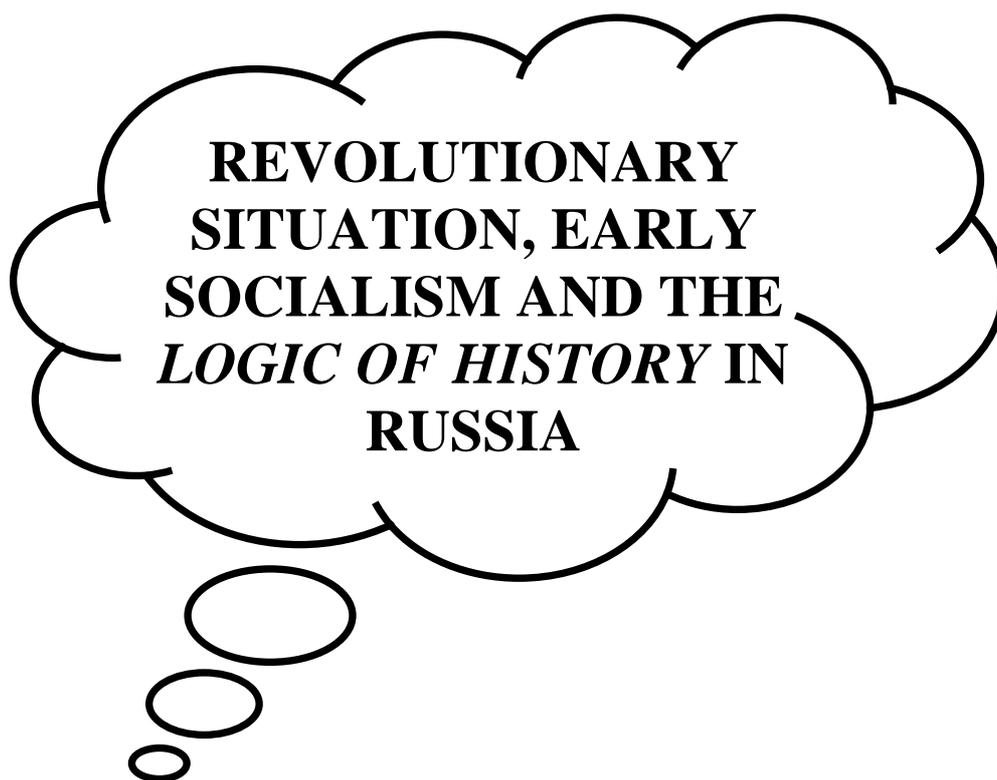
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**REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION, EARLY
SOCIALISM AND THE
LOGIC OF HISTORY IN
RUSSIA**

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Abstract –The social character of people’s attitude to each other is developing regarding the conditions, the process, and the result of labour attitude towards nature, regarding the mode of production. The movement for socialism, the revolutionary process, emerges as a necessity based on the contradictoriness development of the social character of labour. Early Socialism emerges and develops on a material and technical base, which by no means corresponds to socialism, under the conditions of the insufficiently socialised character of labour, while the capitalistic world has the supremacy in the correlation of forces. The basic contradiction of early socialism is the contradiction between the relations of production and productive forces, between social property of the means of production (formal socialization, nationalization) and insufficient growth, “immaturity” of social character of production, or, in other words, *the contradiction between formal and real socialization*. The theoretical and methodological approach of “*The Logic of History*” to the fundamental problems of social development provides a key to the comprehension of an objective reason for a number of social phenomena, thus opening a whole spectrum of research approaches.

REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION, EARLY SOCIALISM AND THE *LOGIC OF HISTORY* IN RUSSIA

Dimitrios S. PATELIS¹

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1. THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The important historical anniversaries are good reasons for consciously reconsidering history and learning lessons from historical experience in order to use them. Is it possible? There may be some truth in G. Hegel's aphorism: "what experience and history teach is this, – that peoples and governments never have learned anything from history or acted on principles deduced from it". Perhaps George Bernard Shaw was right when he claimed that: "Hegel was right when he said that we learn from history that man can never learn anything from history"...

The 7th November 2007 was the 90th anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. The public interest in the revolution has been on the increase, as evidenced by the numerous events and relevant texts published. Why is that so? The Great October Socialist Revolution is undeniably the most significant event of the 20th century. It is a landmark in the history of humankind. It was the first time the oppressed were victoriously "storming heaven", *the first early victorious socialist revolution*, a revolution of epochal importance, which introduces the real (in contrast with the imaginary-utopian, or the purely theoretical) historical process of the attempt towards the practical transformation of society to communism. A revolution with triumphal conquests and dramatic conflicts, which did not manage to resolve its law-governed contradictions, thus finally leading to counter-revolution and capitalist restoration.

This revolution, along with other early socialist revolutions of the 20th century, was a historical breakthrough that *inaugurated for humankind the era of transition to a society without exploitation and oppression*. It is understood that such historical events are not considered "politically correct" when it comes to the "new order" and, therefore, according to the victors of the cold war and the masterminds who shape public opinion, they should at least be irreparably flawed and be associated (at the level of conditioned reflexes) with hideous and ghastly perceptions so that they can be definitely driven to the Unconscious, if not be completely deleted from historical memory. In this way, the sirens of reaction that talk on behalf of a postmodern imperialist globalisation, the "pluralist voices" of all kinds and ideologies shouting the "end of history" due to capitalist barbarism as well as each and every prophet of the market, prompt us to forsake the October Revolution and every prospect for a revolutionary transformation of society.

When Marx explored the capitalist socioeconomic formation and history in general, he did not come up with any metaphysical perception of communism, as the perfect and completed situation: "Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence" (Marx, Engels, *The German Ideology*). On the contrary, communism rises as the socialised humankind, the real human history described by a different type of social development. The perception that regards socialism and communism as an absolutely perfect and paradisiacal situation, described by the complete absence of contradictions, and therefore by the complete absence of movement, is utterly utopian and idealistic, indicating a petty bourgeois attitude. This perception, whether realised by its supporters or not, is actually based on raising the attitude of the petty bourgeois intellectual to a methodological principle.

How does a radically disposed petty bourgeois perceive the radical change of society, namely socialism-communism? Exactly as his wavering attitude, his vacillations between the two

main pivots of capitalist society, capital and labour, dictate to him. The petty bourgeois believes that things in capitalism have a “good”, a “positive”, and a “bad”, a “negative” side. “The problem to be solved: to keep the good side, while eliminating the bad” (Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*... The Method). His overall perception of socialism (which, as a matter of fact, he is completely unable to distinguish from communism) consists in the delusion about the allegedly attainable preservation of the “good” side of capitalism (wealth) and the abolition (in words, of course) of the “bad” (misery), in line with the principle of equality introduced by the “social genius” (according to Proudhon). This “methodology” was theoretically demolished by Marx when he revealed its deadlock through his 1847 work “The Poverty of Philosophy. Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon”. However, this “methodology” survived for an admirably long period in the left intelligentsia, particularly after the defeat of early 20th century socialism. Engels described the path to the emergence of classical Marxism as the conversion of socialism from a utopia to a science. In a reverse path, today there is a regression from scientific theory to utopian versions of consolation again.

Revolutionary undertakings contribute both with their victories and their defeats, as long as the latter become the object of reconsideration, held in trust for the future, only in case this is understood by people who do not content themselves with their physical existence as passive objects-instruments, but learn lessons from the systematic theoretical research of historical experience so that they can become conscious subjects and co-authors of the prospects of history. The man who is not carried away by the circumstances and is not other-determined, either positively or negatively, but is self-determined, thus providing his aims, activity, relations and communication with social content is a conscious subject, a personality. It is the duty of the people who do not consider capitalist barbarism the climax of civilisation to critically and revolutionarily reconsider the conquests and contradictions of the October Revolution from the angle of the international revolutionary process and the prospect for the forthcoming victorious revolutions aiming at the emancipation of humankind. The question is whether there is any response to this duty.

If we put aside the overtly reactive ideas of negating any revolutionary undertaking towards labour emancipation as evil by definition, there are two main “well-intended” ways to deal with the historical experience of revolutions and social transformations, which resulted from the October Revolution in the 20th century: 1) the nostalgia for early socialism, with respect to its “positive” gains, as if a tested model ready to use, given that “it was just unfortunate” due to external reasons that finally have to do with subjective weaknesses and inadequacies (conspiracies, violation of democratic principles, low alert of the responsible authorities, etc.) and 2) the total repudiation of early really existing socialism and the Soviet reality as “inexistent”, impious and sordid, emphasising on its “negative” aspects, its non-conformity with the “clear, pure and uninfected” vision. The “clear” socialist ideal as a “vision” is compared with its “distorted”, “wrong”, “disfigured”, etc., implementation, the idea is matched against socio-historical practice. “Left anticommunism” is not a fortuitous symptom (see Parenti’s analysis, chap.3). It is implicit that both the above versions cannot and do not want to realise the law-governed contradictions in the movement of early socialism. They both express the existential impasse of a defeated left-wing lacking theory, strategy and prospects.

Both versions of dealing with early socialism refer to blind attitudes of involvement in a past which is impossible to pay off, involved in two types of commemorating the dead: the sanctification of the deceased and the curse on their memory. Neither the devotional sanctification (with the respective memorial services) nor the demonological rejection and

depreciation of both the October Revolution and the rest of the early defeated revolutions is a contribution in the direction of overcoming the existential crisis of the left intelligentsia. The particular interest lies in the viewpoint, the angle of vision and the attitude towards life under which the evaluation and critical reconsideration of the October Revolution is attempted, given that during the evaluation of momentous events of this scale and depth any claim for being neutral and impartial (from the point of view of ideology, values, politics, social position, etc.) reveals either ignorance or deceit. The great revolutionary turns in history polarise society and prompt the people to enlist according to choices described by exclusive disjunction. The October Revolution, as the first and greatest of all early socialist revolutions, has and will de facto have a long polarising effect: it invites us to take sides either with revolution, labour, the oppressed and any progress (closely intertwined with the communist prospects) or with counter-revolution, capital, the oppressors, conservatism, reaction, regression and destruction of humankind. But a simple declaration of sympathy as a romantic recollection of a former glorious revolutionary past that has been irrevocably lost is not enough. This critical evaluation is necessary with respect to the preparation of the revolutionary movement that will lead to the victorious (possibly early, but mainly late) future revolutions.

Revolutions, in contrast to the advertised historiographic ideologems of the new order of capitalist globalisation, are neither “unfortunate events” nor “violent exaltations of hesitant masses” resulting from an inefficient “crisis management” on the side of the ruling class, which may lead to uncontrolled and “politically incorrect” attitudes, which are supposed to have permanently disappeared in the “modern republics” of the 21st century. The polarising effect of the revolution does not lean upon subjective and psychological charges, but results from its objective and law-governed role in history: from the role of the polariser and accelerator of history, with the complete condensation, rise and realisation, on full scale, of the contradictions of the social making, aiming at their resolution. Social revolutions are not “coups d’Etat” launched and instigated by the impulsive spontaneous actions of some guileful or enlightened minority at some accidental space and time. Revolutions are the law-governed cracks in the continuity of historical space-time, in which the acceleration in the flow of history is achieved as a leap-like transition from the old to a new quality, with the active enrolment of millions of people to the solution of vital problems resulting from the main and consequential contradictions of the prevailing formation, whose radical overthrow and negation-dialectical sublation is a daily matter of life and death for the majority. According to Marx, they are the locomotives of history and the feast of the oppressed.

2. THE LOGIC BEHIND THE MATURATION OF THE CONDITIONS OF REVOLUTION IN HISTORY

The scientific diagnosis of the international revolutionary process, of the position and the role of each specific historical contribution to this process, is possible only in the context of the theoretical and methodological investigation of the causalities, the logic of the history of humankind as a whole (see Vazioulin, 2004). From this point of view the socialist revolution emerges as the necessary form of the law-governed social transition to the actually socialised humankind, to communism. The Romantic terms used –socialism, communism– refer to the very prospect of the “authentic human” society. Human sociality, in connection with the logic of history, should not be taken for granted once and for all. There are some prerequisites in nature (environment, upright position, walking on two legs and gregarious way of living), while it sometimes primarily emerges as a primitive community (under transformation or as a

transformed drove) in nature's bowels (crowning the evolution of the kinds and demarcating the impasse of this evolution). In addition, a radically different (as compared to the rest of the living creatures) survival strategy is under way, in which survival is not secured by adapting the living creature to environmental changes, but, by contrast, by adapting environment to human needs. The effect of the technological and social interventions on the nature does not transform only the outer nature, but also helps the human nature to start socialising and become a nature intervened by both culture and society. Through labour people start to socially metabolise (not directly as individuals or as droves, but through the collective labour effect, due to technological interventions, on the nature), while the vehicle of both memorisation and the transgenerational transfer of the means and the ways of the determinant strategy on survival of the species par excellence extends beyond the biological memory of the genome, spreading over all the material and intellectual products of civilisation. The human nature does not remain unchanged, but is socially transformed according to the above changes, while the animal psychics gradually become human conscience (with respective changes in its material substratum: appearance of the second signal system and the cerebral cortex).

During the formation of society the escalation of the each time prevalent modes of production-developmental stages of the relations of private property (in slavery, feudalism and capitalism) also means an escalation in the transformation of the endowments of the natural and communal element, caused by the making of the social factor. *Private property* itself, whose climax is the capitalist private property, *is nothing but the first negation of the nature and the community*, a fact also signalled by the competitive element of the exploitation and oppression of class societies, as an expression of the animal struggle for survival, incompletely transformed by the social making. In this contradictory course the very social character of labour, of production, namely the foundation of human socialisation and society, is born, is formed and matures. Private property, in the contradictory course of its appearance, formation and development (climaxing at capitalism), promotes the social character of labour, while at the same time it puts various barriers to its further development. Now there is *a need for revolutionary transformation of society to the second negation, the negation of the negation*, aiming at dialectically sublating capitalism and all the pre-capitalist (animal, communal, divisive, competitive, etc.) endowments of history (at the same time maintaining all the cultural conquests of vital importance in a transformed form) as well as at *the transition to the unified humankind* (in harmony with the nature), no longer in the form of small individual communities in separate apartments (just like in pre-class primitive communities), but in the first place on a global scale.

In capitalism the socialisation of labour and society is promoted in a highly contradictory way. As already explained (Вазюлин, 2005; Patelis, 2005), *the external limit of the extensive development* of capitalism is the formation of the *international capitalist system* (whose limits are shrunk due to the formation of the international socialist system). On the other hand, *the internal limit of its extensive development* is the limit of extension (through concentration – centralisation) of capitalist property as an economic pattern, namely *monopoly* (see also Ленин, pp.403, 428). *Its intensive development dominates only at the stage of imperialism*. The non-conformity between productive forces and relations of production becomes stricter, although it cannot be complete, because complete non-conformity presupposes the complete displacement of living labour from production, the complete automatisisation of overall production (the maximisation of constant capital and the reduction of variable capital to zero). However, this is an *ultimate limit* (of the intensive development of capitalism), whose attainment is absolutely impossible because of the fundamental law of this system. The

attainment of this limit would also mean overcoming the measure of existence of capitalism as quality and essence, as this is dictated by the inner core of the capitalistic relations of production, by the position of living labour in the productive interaction between society and nature. From this point of view, *the automatic collapse of capitalism is impossible and unachievable*. But the immanent contradiction of capitalism begets the real historical limit of the intensive development of capitalism: *socialist revolution*, which in its essence focuses on eliminating the domination of private property in means of production.

The contradictions of capitalism and the conditions for staging the socialist revolution (as a negation of capitalism in the first place) become mature as soon as the social character of production becomes a technical necessity, through the transition to mechanised production (through the transition from the formal to the real subordination of labour to capital). But from the beginning of the transition to mechanised production the social, or to be more precise, the very social character of production barely appears. The social character of production reaches the stage of its maturity, through the transition to automated production, to an integrated automated complex (automated not only as regards the chains of continuous, sequential production, branches of factories, etc., but also as regards entire sectors as well as all the sectors, the entire network of production in society).

3. THE ROLE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

It is impossible to reduce the objective conditions defining the possibility and the necessity for the revolution only to economy and technology, to the existence of a specific level of development of the productive forces and the relations of production, etc. A precondition necessary for the outbreak of the socialist revolution is *the revolutionary situation*, which is the sum total of objective conditions expressive of an economic and political crisis in a given social system and determining the possibilities for social revolution. According to Lenin, its main characteristics are: 1) impossibility for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any changes. For a revolution to break out it is usually not enough that the “lower classes do not want” to live in the old way; another condition is that the “upper classes” cannot live in the old way. In other words, revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters); 2) the want and misery of the oppressed classes must be more than usually oppressive; 3) there must be a considerable rise in the activity of the masses, who allow themselves to be robbed quietly in “peace time”, but in stormy times are drawn to independent historical action both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the “upper classes” themselves (Ленин, v.31, p.85).

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will of groups and parties as well as of entire classes, the outbreak of a revolution is impossible. The gradual escalation of the revolutionary situation, as the result of correlation of forces) at both national and international level, does not instantly lead to the victory of a social revolution as long as it is not accompanied by appropriate subjective conditions (theoretical grounding of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary subject, militant organisation of its revolutionary struggle at all levels, etc.). The revolutionary situation is the objective occurrence with the most powerful expression of the necessity for the collective constitution and intervention *of the subject of the revolution*, whose character is primarily determined by the each time specific character of the statistically prevailing labour, but is also greatly dependent on its overall preparation, education, political background, organisation and militant activity.

The centre of the international revolutionary situation, due to the immanent imbalance in development in capitalism (nowadays on the increase), is defined in space and time by interweaving interests, the aggravation and interlacing of internal and external contradictions, the historical endowments etc., of the international capitalist system in various countries, groups of countries and regions. The international capitalist “organic system” (István Mészáros) neither extends nor is equally established all over the planet. It brings humankind into an international lattice, into a network–main frame (a “chain”, according to Lenin) of relations (production, interdependencies, domination, etc), whose endurance in the various parts of the planet fluctuates according to the historical situation, with respect to the level of the imbalanced development of production and society as a whole. The contradictoriness of the system, its critical phenomena and the revolutionary situations, as objective conditions of the socialist social (not just political) revolution, are expressed with increased intensity and frequency in the each time “weak links” of this main frame.

This phenomenon is not an outdated ideologem but a basic characteristic of the law-governed international revolutionary process (with increasing effects today due to increased imbalance of development), although in case it is not diagnosed, dangerous delusions may be spread, which create disappointment, frustration and retirement of the masses. As Marx had already realised in 1850, “Violent outbreaks naturally erupt sooner at the extremities of the bourgeois body than in its heart, because in the latter the possibilities of accommodation are greater than in the former” (*The Class Struggles...* Part IV). Despite opposite views, the victorious socialist transformations cannot start directly in the heart of capitalism. The spot they are going to start again from is not a matter of taste or subjective choice, but is defined by the law-governed determination of the each time centre (centres) of the international revolutionary process.

4. THE NECESSITY FOR DISTINGUISHING EARLY FROM LATE SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS

Any transition from an obsolete to a new progressive social system (formation) is described by successive victories and defeats until the final predominance of the most progressive one (Vazioulin, 1990, 1992). For example, through the predominance of slavery and the emergence of the contradictions of slave-owning system, the slave-owning states were consecutively swept by the raids of more cohesive “barbarian” communities. However, there is the question of whether *bourgeois revolutions* prevailed once and for all during the transition from feudalism to capitalism. On the contrary: they suffered repeated defeats, while several counter-revolutions and restorations of versions of the feudal relations and absolute monarchy occurred until capitalism was finally established. In this process there are two distinct periods: the period of the early and the period of the late bourgeois revolutions.

V. A. Vazioulin introduced the concept (historical category) of “early socialism” in the late 1980s-early 1990s, in order to develop the theory of “the Logic of History” concretising the dialectics of the contradictory route to communism, in contrast to the prevalent linear views of history (see Вазюлин, 2005, pp. 345-418). The depreciation of the momentous significance of early socialist revolutions may be overcome by exalting the position and the role they play within the dynamic of the changing structure of the transitional era that produces them, in the movement of this structure from phase to phase, within the dialectics of the international, regional and local element during the transition of humankind to communism, through the revelation, on this basis, of the dialectical relation between universal-general, special-

particular and individual in their law-governed emergence, escalation and de-escalation, in the conflict between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies. Consequently, it is necessary to distinguish two stages in the revolutionary process and in the building of socialism on international scale in order to refound the theoretical communist perspective.

This concept is not yet another new-fangled idea promoted against several varieties of dogmatic ideologems of the left-wing in order to claim a “living space”, in terms of commercial petty-political controversies. As a form of reflection and generalisation of the real historical process, according to its essential attributes, it aims to show, through theory and methodology, the ways and the means for positive resolution – at first in the field of revolutionary theory – of a complex of problems that acts as the philosopher’s stone of an existential importance for the approaches and doctrines of the left. The adoption of this theoretical and methodological approach on the side of an increasing number of thinkers (mainly young) coming from various countries, traditions and components of the left-wing is a fact. Nevertheless, there is difficulty in the perception and acknowledgement of these concepts, which is not due only to the apperceptions of those who (on hearing the term) recollect associations of thoughts related to early garden produce..., but also to the stereotypical entrenchment of pseudo-interpretative schematic views.

For the historically and dialectically educated mind it is clear that any complex historical process needs to go through early-fragile versions and phases until it is established and matures to its late forms. The international revolutionary process and the socialist building are not historical exceptions to this dialectical rule. The first stage of this process consists of waves of the “*early socialist revolutions*” in countries described by an inadequately socialised level of production development. Early socialist revolutions result as a causality anywhere their objective conditions, among which is the revolutionary situation, appear.

5. THE SUBJECT OF EARLY REVOLUTIONS

The above processes are neither “processes without a subject” (according to Louis Althusser) nor above politics. Considering a generally undifferentiated view on the working class (apart from the concrete historical forms of labour), versions of which (from economism to metaphysics-messianism) are prevalent among the leftists, there should be an epigrammatic reference to the character of the subject of the early and late socialist revolutions. The subject of early socialist revolutions is the traditional proletariat, the industrial working class, which is involved mainly in repeated, manual, executive, laborious, one-dimensional and often unhealthy labour processes, which emerge as a means for the (chiefly quantitative) satisfaction of constant requirements. Man’s activity becomes a derivative of the prevailing technical and social conditions, is squeezed into them and is reduced to non-creative functions. The character of the labour of this type of working class is related to the *transition from the formal to the real subordination of labour to the capital*, which results from mechanised production. As a result of the latter the division of labour turns into a technical necessity dictated by the real conditions of production. The historical necessity for turning this traditional working class from a class “in itself”, that is, an economically defined category with no self-awareness, to a class “for itself”, made up of workers with a class-conscious view of the world and ready to pursue class conflict against capitalism, is generally connected with the development of the theoretical conquest of classical Marxism, the ideological appreciation and use of this conquest as well as the respective political-organisational patterns (i.e. the “new type” of Leninist party in the early 20th c.).

As a result of the action of this subject and its allies, the early victorious socialist revolutions appear and “early socialism” emerges, whose main characteristics and causalities were mainly revealed by the historical experience of the USSR. There are two basic characteristics of the *early socialism* that results from the victorious early socialist revolutions: a) it surfaces and develops on a (bequeathed from the version of capitalism it overthrows) material, technical and cultural basis, which is not completely commensurate to socialism (not to mention the instant prospects for transition to communism), under the conditions of an inadequately socialised character of labour and b) it emerges in a framework in which the forces of the capitalist world have the supremacy.

6. THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE, POSITION AND ROLE OF RUSSIA ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

In the 1890s capitalism in Russia enters its monopolistic stage, imperialism. The basic particularity of imperialism in Russia lies in the fact that it is entwined by a “dense net of pre-capitalist relations” (Ленин, в.27, р.378). However, industrial development was extremely rapid. Towards the late 19th century the railway network of Russia held the second position in the world (following the USA), while the country had already surpassed France in the production of steel and cast iron, thus holding the 4th position worldwide. The tightness of internal market, due to feudal remains, urged the Russian capital to conquer foreign markets. However, considering its techno-economic weakness, which did not allow the conquest of markets by exporting goods and capital, Russian imperialism was also based on the military potency of czarism, which was used as the complement or substitute of the monopolistic power (Ленин, в. 30, р. 174). Moreover, that specific monopolistic capital was dependent. Direct foreign investments in Russia exceeded the direct investments of the Russian capital abroad (mainly in China, Manchuria, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Turkey and the Balkans). Vast amounts were deducted from state resources in order to pay off the foreign loans of the czarist government. In 1900 foreign investments amounted to 45% of the state share capital, thus securing control over the main sectors of heavy industry and natural resources of the country. In 1917 54% of foreign investments, which amounted to 2.2 million rubles, concerned mining and metallurgy (Чунтулов, pp.110-111).

Remarkable industrialisation took place from the faint 1861 reform (concerning the abrogation of the law of serfdom) until 1913. Industrial production increased by 12.5 times, as compared to 7 in Germany and 3 in France, while the working class quadrupled. There was rapid development in 1909-1914, when Russia “in some way was unexpectedly transformed from a patriarchal to a modern capitalist country” (Ленин, в. 25, р. 33). Direct foreign investments amounted to 55% of overall investments, while 40% of the total industrial production came from heavy industry (see Донгаров, pp.30-31). The rate of development in 1913 (at the peak of pre-war development) amounted to 13%. (Олегина, р. 81). However, industry followed after more developed countries. In 1913 Russia held the 5th position in overall industrial production and steel industry, the 6th position in coal mining, the 8th position in the production of electricity. The industrial production of the country equalled to 12.5% of the industrial production of the USA, while it fell substantially short of the respective figures of Germany, England and France (Чунтулов, pp. 116-117).

The feudalistic remains include the vast latifundia of landholders, the retarded semi-feudal forms of relations and the large-scale use of obligatory work of peasants. The political level

was dominated by the authoritarian czarist regime, the hierarchical system of the established classes with the privileges of the noble as well as the absence of equality of rights. In the early 20th century 62% of all private land belonged to noble landholders (Орлов). Cheap wages in combination with feudal remains contributed to the development and reproduction of labour-intensive production processes as well as to the delay in introducing the conquests of the truly pioneering scientific and technological thought of the Russian intellect of the time with a view to creating a capital-intensive production.

On the eve of World War I the concentration of production was very high. In a total population of 169.4 million people, the overall number of employed workers exceeded 15 million, among whom there were about 3.5 million industrial workers and trainmen. A percentage of 56.6% of the overall number of workers were employed in big industries including more than 500 employees (the corresponding percentage in the USA was just 33%), while 35% worked in industrial enterprises including more than 1000 employees (33% in the USA). With respect to the rate in which production (and, consequently, the working class) was concentrated, Russia presented higher figures than several of the developed countries of the time (Орлов). Nevertheless, despite spectacular progress, the Russian Empire (czarist Russia with its colonies), particularly after the outbreak of World War I, was the country (more specifically: the group of countries) of sharp contrasts; it was a hub of both internal and international contradictions. Along with big industry developed in certain pockets, there was large-scale small industry and handicraft. The elements of monopolistic capitalism and some clearly present feudal remains, even some clan system elements, were inextricable. The development of industry, science and art in the above pockets coexisted with misery, illiteracy and the general economic, technological and cultural delay of the masses of rural regions, particularly in colonies and semi-colonies. According to the British historian of science S. Lilley, the Soviet industry in 1917, with respect to the mean developmental level of technological means, was comparable with the respective Indian level. The coexistence and the combinative use of several forms of exploitation and oppression (feudal, capitalist, national) as part of the authoritarian czarist regime made things unbearable for workers, driving them to revolutionary activities.

In Russia the contradictions of imperialism were being assimilated and becoming more serious due to czarist oppression, the pre-capitalist remains, thus creating an explosive mixture. Russia, as the nodal point of both internal and international contradictions, became the weak link of the international capitalist system, where the centre of the international revolutionary movement was transferred. Those contradictions are fully revealed, as a generalised crisis of the system, by the imperialistic World War I, which finally led to the revolutionary situation and the first early victorious socialist revolution.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION FOR HIGHLIGHTING THE BASIC CONTRADICTION OF SOCIALISM

Some consider the character of the October Revolution in the way the Mensheviks and the Second International did, that is, as early –with the present meaning: as something emerging early, before its time, which allegedly occurred out of place and time, as if Lenin and the Bolsheviks had staged a coup d' état. However, early socialist revolutions are neither ordered nor encouraged by any kind of deontology. They result as causality wherever their objective conditions, and mainly the revolutionary situation, appear. As revolutionaries the Bolsheviks had no other choice since the revolutionary situation had already broken out.

However, the endowments of the low developmental level of productive forces (with strong presence of the pre-capitalist manual-executive labour) de facto attach to the imposed by the socialist revolution relations of production the character of formal socialisation. Due to the fact that the victorious early socialist revolutions at first break out in one and later in more countries, they are under capitalist encirclement, while surrounded by stronger enemies and suffering foreign invasions and wars – World War II, Cold War and numerous local hot military conflicts –, which they face through the hasty building of socialism (i.e. industrialisation and collectivisation in the USSR), “militarisation” of society, geopolitical tactics for precipitate avulsion and protection of the maximum “living space” for socialism, etc. The imbalanced development of productive forces also leads to a low level of integration among the countries of early socialism, tension with geopolitical elements of the past, sometimes even to military conflicts between them (i.e. Yugoslavia-USSR, China-USSR, China-Vietnam, etc.).

The systematic investigation of the development of the relation between the productive forces and the relations of production of early socialism in the USSR should be considered separately. Despite the low level of departure of productive forces, socialist industrialisation in the USSR achieved a spectacular development of productive forces. The changes affecting the bulk of production per capita in the USSR within 15 years (1957-1972) needed 80 years of development in the USA, 35 in Germany, 50 in France and 65 in England (Чехословацкая Академия наук, p. 123).

The achievements of Soviet science towards the late 1950s, after the spectacular exit of the Soviets to space, made the USA reconsider their attitude towards science so that investments in science could increase regardless of the immediately expected profit (Scientific Progress, p. 225). However, to the extent the social character of production has not been fully developed yet, has not matured, there is a non-conformity with social ownership and, as a result (to the extent this non-conformity allows), *social property is still formal* (legal, state, etc.). The transition from the formal to the actual-real socialisation is a process that (despite opposite widespread views) does not result from “democratic”, “participative”, etc., processes of the superstructure (despite the enormous and relatively self-contained importance of the latter). It is a matter mainly of productive-labour processes and of the attributes of their subject (attributes related also to politics-conscience). It is understood that the degree to which the social character of production matures, which is necessary and enough for rupturing the weak link, for overthrowing, for negating capitalism, is not enough for the positive building, for the formation and development of communism. In the second case the criteria for evaluating the degree to which the social character of production (as well as the rest of social aspects) matures are no longer the criteria of capitalism, but the criteria of communism as a process. Therefore, there is a developing process of conformity – non-conformity of the social character of production with socialist relations of production.

Consequently, *the basic contradiction of early socialism* (and the general socialistic building) is the contradiction between the social ownership (formal socialisation in the beginning, nationalisation) of the production means and poor development, “immaturity” of the social character of production or, in other words, the contradiction between formal and real socialisation¹. Thanks to the experience of the USSR and the People’s Republic of China as

¹ In the first place this contradiction may be perceived in proportion to a historical contradiction in the development of capitalism. In the early phases of capitalism (until pre-industrial handicraft, “manufacture”) *the labour of a craftsman worker* (working with manually-operated tools) *was formally subordinated to the capital*

well as of the rest of the countries that resulted from the early socialist revolutions of the 20th century, we can conclude that this contradiction, in connection with which all the rest of socialist contradictions (physical and mental labour, executive and administrative labour, country and town, equality of nations, etc.) move is historically necessary and law-governed. Historical experience has revealed that early socialism (and any socialism) will either resolve, promote this basic contradiction, while moving to communism, or will regress during its resolution, will move backwards, which will result in subverting the conquests of the revolution and gradually enforcing tendencies towards counter-revolution and restoration before the final predominance of these tendencies. *At the stage of immaturity, of the process of forming and maturing the social character of production, both socialist and capitalist relations of production may exist.* This stage is the material and technical basis of the necessity for early socialist revolutions, the coexistence of two social systems, as well as the counter-revolutionary attempts towards restoration, which accompany early socialist revolutions as a causality.

8. LATE SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS AND THEIR SUBJECT

The completion of the first stage leads to the *transition to the era of the “late socialist revolutions”*, which will lead to the permanent and irrevocable elimination of capitalism. Only when the international revolutionary movement and socialism develop on such a scale that the possibilities for the parasitism of the developed capitalist countries will disappear (as well as the opportunities for buying off-manipulating all the components of their working class, both traditional and new) will lead to the revolutionary transformation of the subject of late socialist revolutions and to the outbreak of socialist revolutions in developed capitalist countries focusing the struggle on the heart of capitalism. Likewise, there are two basic characteristics signalling the onset of the era of late socialism: a) socialism starts to develop on a material, technical and cultural basis, which is completely commensurate to socialism (moving in the direction of communism) under the conditions of an adequately socialised character of labour and b) the development of socialism takes place within a framework in which the forces of the socialist world start to have the supremacy against the forces of the capitalist world.

The subject of the forthcoming late socialist revolutions is a different type of worker, who is formed and develops in labour processes described by renewal, development, creativity, development of creative abilities, global-universal orientation and the need for labour (not labour as a means and product for intimidation via starvation or repression). It is the subject of the activities connected with automatisisation, which stop being considered as labour in the traditional meaning of the term, while a pre-representation of the developed form of those activities is provided by the most creative moments of scientific and artistic research activity, what Marx used to call “universal labour”. This subject is today produced and reproduced by the international capitalist system in an imbalanced way as class “in itself”, under objective conditions that reproduce the phenomena connected with attitudes of “labour aristocracy”. The subject of this labour is not directly subordinated to the rigidity of imposed and established material and technical terms. It handles and creates full-range developmental and developing materials and ideal means and modes of the influence of man on his environment, which are at the same time both means and modes of correlation, interaction and

through the supervisory, organisational, administrative, etc. operation of the capitalist. Only when production is mechanised and the division of labour becomes a technical necessity dictated by the real conditions of production *is labour really subordinated to the capital.*

communication among the people. It is exactly these characteristics that may distinguish the subject that, when transformed into a class “for itself”, will consciously carry out the basic contradiction of socialism, which will at the same time annul the contrariety between productive forces and relations of production (when productive forces will be transformed into relations of production and vice versa). People are unable to control the objective conditions of their existence without being able to create and change them on purpose. This is the basic aspect of the start of the predominance of living against dead labour.

A law-governed and prerequisite condition of the course of humankind to communism is the conscious involvement of the subject in the promotion of revolutionary transformations to a degree directly proportional to the breadth and the depth of these transformations. Hence the vital importance of the fundamental development of the revolutionary theory and methodology through the dialectical sublation of the conquest of classical Marxism (see Вазюлин, 2005) in order for this subject to constitute a “class for itself”. However, in the first place this subject should exist as the agent of the respective properties related to cognition and conscience, which are not due to the inspiration from a holy or devilish spirit, but chiefly to the character of its working activity and its relevant broader cultural education. When the USSR faced the need for transition from the extensive to the intensive type of development (late 1950s, early 1960s), the new subject that could promote this transition by elevating the basic contradiction of socialism to a higher level was statistically, socially and politically insignificant (some of its elements appeared in certain sectors of science, aerospace and military industry).

9. THE INTERMEDIATE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTS

If we try to understand the present situation with respect to the international revolutionary process, we will realise that it is a period in which the round of the early socialist revolutions is being completed, a period preparing for late socialist revolutions. A strategic issue of our time is the theoretical preparation for the new stage of the historical development of society, for late revolutions, late socialism. The revolutionary movement has to address –with respect but without dogmatism– and critically-revolutionarily evaluate the highly valuable experience of all the components of the defeated movement and particularly the experience connected with the early socialist revolutions of the 20th century, without being trapped in sanctifications, memorial services, resurrections and scornful-nihilistic renouncement.

In Marx’s time England was particularly important for the investigation of capitalism. In our time the USSR has and will have a similar importance for the investigation of early socialism (and, generally, for positively highlighting the causalities of socialism) until new large-scale historical patterns of socialist building appear. Early socialism provides the opportunity for deeper and more realistic examination of future processes. The investigation of the course of early socialism in countries where it prevailed with its own means (and particularly in the USSR) is important not only for the development of the theory of early socialist revolutions, of early socialism, but also for the development of socialism in general as a process for the transition to communism. It is exactly in the deeper and most durable version of early socialism, in the USSR, where the contradictions and causalities of early socialism, and generally of any socialism, were expressed in the most vivid way. Thus, the new revolutionary theory, the Logic of History, as the starting point of the dialectical sublation of classical historical Marxism, appeared in this country, when the contradictions of early

socialism became visible and started the “self-criticism” of that society. Classical Marxism proved its power through the victories of the early socialist revolutions of the 20th century and the progress of early socialism. The weaknesses and inadequacies of classical Marxism started to appear when early socialism was unable to resolve its contradictions and the bourgeois counter-revolution prevailed in most of the countries of early socialism.

The defeat of one or some of the early socialist revolutions by no means proves that socialism, as a law-governed stage of the development of humankind, was completely and permanently defeated and communism is a utopia for fantasists. The defeat of the early socialist revolutions and the death of early socialism in some countries, or even in all early socialist countries, is not a warrant for historical pessimism, for resignation from the communist prospect. Revolters should be taught by their defeats and have more concrete targets after them, by renewing and redeploying their forces. The transition of humankind to communism is not linear, like an automatic process on the day after the first successful revolution. As regards scale and its importance, it can only be compared with the transition from primitive community to class societies. The period needed for the transition of humankind to communism is going to last more than a hundred years. We are living in an intermediate period, when early socialist revolutions are coming to an end, although late socialist revolutions have not started yet. On the one hand, the intermediate character of this period creates a feeling of immobility, of absence of prospect, while on the other hand it provides the opportunity for developing theory. The latter will require long and systematic collective studies, given that the number and perplexity of the processes under investigation cannot be compared with what classical Marxism comprised.

The international capitalist system that today dominates, despite its contradictions or, more specifically, via its contradictions managed to promote labour socialisation to a higher level before finally defeating the early socialist system almost completely. Counter-revolution and capitalist restoration are a necessary and law-governed (but not unavoidable) moment of this stage. The death of early socialism, the defeat –in the final analysis– of most of the early socialist revolutions is a very possible outcome of this historical period (although not an absolute necessity). The emancipation of humankind, the elimination of alienation, presupposes a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development. Moreover, “this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their world-historical, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it want is merely made general, and with destitution the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a universal intercourse between men established, which produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the ‘propertyless’ mass (universal competition), makes each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others, and finally has put world-historical, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones” (Marx/Engels, *The German...*). The inability in moving from the extensive to the intensive development of production, on a large-scale, as well as the geographical restriction of the attempts in countries with middle and low developmental level of productive forces finally led to the already known outcome.

To put it mildly, it is naïve to attribute the reasons for the defeat of early socialist revolutions and the restoration of capitalism mainly to subjective administration (Stalin, Khrushchev, bureaucracy, degeneration of the democracy of the soviets, treachery and errors of Perestroika leaders, etc). The objective contradictions of early socialism (connected with its basic contradiction) broke out intensely. An essential term for the survival of early socialism via the

practical resolution of these contradictions (by promoting the transformations towards communism) was also the foundation of a course based on serious and systematic research. That was the difficult way. But the easiest way was followed: these contradictions were not researched and the “adopted” solutions accelerated the final predominance of counter-revolution and the restoration of capitalism. The administration was not able to produce such theoretical research or even to understand its necessity. But the defeat came mainly due to the fact that in the critical turning-point of history of early socialism there was neither an objective nor subjective possibilities to resolve these contradictions. The possibilities for restoring the historically antiquated regime are reversely proportionate to the breadth and depth of changes the revolution has brought about. But no counter-revolution can eliminate the revolutionary conquests it battles.

The lessons humankind can draw from the experience of early socialist revolutions are invaluable. The only thing it has to do is realise the possibility and necessity for reconsidering history from the angle of revolutionary theory and methodology. These lessons mean mainly getting beyond simplifying patterns, doctrines and delusions by dialectically developing-sublating classical Marxism itself (see *The Logic of History*), by making the contradictoriness of the historical revolutionary process more concrete, as well as by making the law-governed prospects for a socialised humankind more concrete, not as a mere negation of capitalism, but as a different type of culture, of civilization, within which the overall historical making of humankind is dialectically sublating.

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