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DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

by Guillermo Costello and Carolina Vidal

Among the currents that vindicate themselves Trotskyites the debate around the relation between democratic and socialist revolution has given innumerable theories and, therefore, various strategies. Morenism, for instance, has been considered bearer of a stageist theory because of the significance it awards to the democratic revolution in the political regime, to the point of considering that there is a “new subject” that arose in the postwar, the petty bourgeoisie, to whom that type of revolution would correspond. Others, like Mandelism, have posed the need to develop a “socialist democracy”, that would be the expression of the unity between democratic and socialist revolution. For those who vindicate Lambertism, the combination of stages of the revolution would be given in the conformation of an institutional architecture in the new State.

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And we could name other trends that follow this course, although they are all undoubtedly united by an inconsistency of the concept of proletarian dictatorship in its comprehension and extension. Such inconsistency led them to definitions of democracy in the sociological field and to the impotence when characterizing the situation of the proletariat in the post war period, which they intended to explain from the aspect of “consciousness” – that is to say, they abandoned the Marxist method of analyzing these categories from the point of view of production.

Trotsky, in theses 8 of the Permanent Revolution said: *“The dictatorship of the proletariat, that rises to power as the leader of the democratic revolution, finds itself inevitably and suddenly, with the triumph, in face of objectives related to profound transformations of the bourgeois right of property. The democratic revolution becomes directly in socialist, turning thus into permanent”.*

Here, he shows how the politics of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most concentrated of all the conceivable politics.

That is why the transformation of the democratic revolution into directly socialist is a revolution in the property right and it must have an expression in the political superstructure, that is the dynamics. He also demonstrates this in the analysis of when the dictatorship of the proletariat was imposed in the USSR: *“Not only till the peace of Brest Litovsk, but until the fall of 1918, the social content of the revolution was limited to a petty-bourgeois agrarian change and to the workers’ control of production. This means that in the practice the revolution had not surpassed the borders of the bourgeois society. During this same stage the Soviets of soldiers ruled shoulder to shoulder with the Soviets of workers and,*

often then set them aside. Only in the fall of 1918 did the elemental tide of soldiers and peasants back down a little to its natural limits and the workers took the lead with the nationalization of the means of productions”. (The class nature of the Soviet State. 1933.)

And this theoretical step forward allows Trotsky to analyze the transition of the revolutionary process in the USSR and the relationship of the revolution with the class sectors involved, in this case the peasantry and the proletariat and their relation with production. This is very important because the different centrist trends of the postwar period tried to give the petty bourgeoisie a direct relationship with production, which it does not have and will never have. Revolutionary Marxism understands an upend to the property right when referring to “democratic”, that means to democratize production and not the idea of democratic civil rights.

That is why, when analyzing the transition, Trotsky posed: “In other words, the peasant draws the balance sheet of the October revolution through combining its two fundamental stages: the agrarian-democratic (“Bolshevik”) and the industrial-socialist (“Communist”). According to the first, a distinct and incontestable plus; according to the second, so far still a distinct minus, and to date a minus considerably greater than the plus. The passive balance of the October revolution, which is the basis of all the misunderstanding between the peasant and the Soviet power, is in turn most intimately bound up with the isolated position of the Soviet Union in world economy.” (Stalin as a theoretician.)•