

THE FALSE “NATURALITY” OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTIONISM

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**“La falsa ‘naturalità’
dell’evoluzionismo socialdemocratico”**

One of the essential traits of the developed deformation of Marxism, experimented in that great laboratory of opportunism that the II International and the German Social Democracy have represented, concentrates on the relationship among capitalistic development, capitalistic society evolution and fight for socialism. From our point of view, more than one Bernstein’s open and declared revisionism, the deformation in an “orthodox” key executed by figures like Kautsky holds a particular interest. The first one declaredly cancels the revolutionary perspective in the light of the capitalism developments. The second one is the historical interpreter of an even more insidious deformation. The core of revolution is not explicitly refused as an already surpassed passage or an exhausted perspective, on the contrary. The point is in the relationship between the historical developments of the capitalistic society and the actual political valence of the revolutionary perspective. The asserted assumption of revolution in a comprehensive scientific vision of social transformations becomes the key to deprive of meaning the recall to the revolutionary passage without having to formally repudiate it. Marxism scientificity is reduced to a positivistic, theologic conception, actually not dialectic. The changes and the social processes that develop within the logics and the capitalism working mechanisms, that don’t put under discussion in a revolutionary sense the dominating class political power, that don’t involve the role cause and the tasks of a political force that would set upon theoretical scientific basis the revolutionary struggle, assume an absolute centrality into the passage to the socialist society. At first sight there is a consistency with the Marxist setting out that indicates in the capitalistic developments themselves, in the ripening of their contradictions the objective presuppositions for the passage to the superior form of social organization. Apparently there are all of the “ingredients” of the Marxist “recipe” : socialism not as a parturition of utopian projectualities but as a phase that finds its own existence conditions in the developments of capitalism itself; class struggle and the proletarian party leading role to collocate within this historical dialectics. Marxism, though, is not a “recipe” and to sum its “ingredients” is not enough. The synthesis that is made of the elements that only for expository convenience can be considered in a distinct way is essential. Therefore there is not a “materialism”, made up of economical productive developments, of social dynamics generated spontaneously and inevitably by the class relationships, that comes first and to which afterwards the class struggle element is added together with the proletarian political intervention, in such a way as the alleged scientific socialism escapes to the roughly mechanicistic simplifications and a niche would still be reserved to the role of conscience in the political struggle and to the political struggle itself, however without denying its totally secondary role. If we go beyond the explicative schematizations, there is not the materialistic “core” of the economical fact, of the social “objectivity” to which then superimpose, like a redundancy, the “subjective” element of the class struggle specific evolution, of the political conscience in it, of the party. Obviously not in the sense that ideologies, sociological representations, juridical elaborations, national

traditions, religious conceptions, political volitions could abstract themselves as meaningful historical forces from the determination of the manner of production and of the class relationship linked to it. In the sense that to conceive the level of the understanding of the reality within a party, the cohesion and combativeness degree of a class organisation as elements after all determined by the historical condition of the production relationships and by the correspondent class order doesn't mean to downgrade these elements to secondary effects, nullify their function and relevance in the course of the social transformation.

In the Kautsky's setting out, the passage to socialism is a natural process that inescapably acts in force of the capitalism functioning itself. Social-Democracy is an expression of the Marxist science since it is aware of this process and tunes up its own action according to it. All considered, to the proletariat party, to the party that should represent the action of class inspired to the Marxist science, pertains the task to "organize" these tendencies that spontaneously flow into socialism, favouring and accelerating its course. The role of the proletariat conscious component is to politically go along with the growing strength of its own class, give completeness within the sphere of the Nation, of the political and social relationships, of the socialism tendencies that are already prevailing and cannot but affirm themselves. Social-Democratic policy actually superimposes, adds itself to an social-economical process that marches fully by itself towards socialism. One more time it seems confirmed at first sight the coherence with the Marxist school and its more elevated experiences. It was Marx to conceive the historical becoming of the economical formation of society as a process of natural history (*Naturgesetz* – law of nature), a concept then vigorously restarted by Lenin in "*What are the friends of the people*". But this conception doesn't entail the reduction of the history of society to a socioeconomic gear that keeps on working without caring of the struggle among classes, parties and of their level of conscience of the historical process. Class struggle, with its outcomes, with its own influences on the same class relationships upon which it develops, it is not the sanction, the pure and simple reflex of the action of an inescapable, rationalistic historical tendency to the overcoming of a social level for the attainment of the superior one. Class struggle, with its forms of conscience, its parties, it is not the secretion of the historical action of the succession laws of the manners of production, just like, for the materialistic bourgeois, brain secreted thought.

In the grand, deep dialectic Marxist conception of the history of society as natural history, human action organized in classes and in parties is an integrated part of the "naturalness" of the historical course and can deploy a determining action in it. This doesn't apply only to the proletarian class struggle or to proletarian revolution. Analyzing American Civil War, Marx considers the economic tendencies that, if allowed to act, would have, gradually, pacifically, led to the extinction of slavery in the South of the United States. But slaver States had a political weight, could react to this tendency and even graze victory, could fight in such a way as not to be able to historically exclude that North America capitalism could have entered other paths and come to know other results. Economical laws that tended to resize slavery are not "materialism", with the slaver States political and military capability to react, reciting the role of a marginal addition, vain expression of an not material human acting. They all re enter in the process of history determined by material production, that

encompasses both the railways and the northern factories, and the economically backward Southern society political and military dimension, as well as John Brown's inexhaustible leap and inflexible puritan rigour and Robert Lee's humanist culture and military virtues, both the rapacious voracity of the industrial bourgeoisie and the reactionary project of the planters' class, as well as the occurred victory of the North and the possibility of the victory of the South. All inscribed within the world market, the financial and commercial routes with England and the European powers, in the epoch frame of the capitalistic production mode of affirmation .

In the 1932 preface to its *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotskij delivers us a splendid definition of the Marxist materialism, "*materialism doesn't ignore the man that feels, thinks and acts, but it does explains him.*" This ability to explain men and their action becomes in its turn an acting force in the history of men. The attainment of this force is not the natural, spontaneous, granted result of the social-economical course, of the objective laws of a mode of production. Only in the context of extreme abstraction, at the distance of a very far-reaching historical reflexion, we can conclude that every articulation, every passage of the class struggle and of the formation course of a class conscience in the struggle, had some profound and necessary reasons in the economical-social organization, in its phases and transformations. To conclude that class struggle in a specific phase couldn't have but the outcome that historically it has had, that the level of revolutionary organization and of the conscience of the exploited classes couldn't but be, for objective reasons and in virtue of precise economical and social reasons, at the level in which it presented itself or attest itself upon a comfortable and actually useless ritual banality, it went that way because it had to go like that, or to elaborate a pondered political judgement, most of the times is possible only when the struggle cycle is exhausted, the combat powder has deposited, the data and knowledge elements collection and re elaboration of a social and political reality have become operations pursuable with a sufficient completeness and precision level,

The leninist synthesis, drawn by Kautsky himself, of the political conscience brought to the proletariat from the external of their own exclusive class experience, is profoundly consistent with the marxist materialism. Conscience in fact doesn't derive from the empyrean of eternal and metaphysic ideas, but from the historical dialectics of experience and theory, from the history of the capitalistic social organization and of the class struggle in it. The party that represents this conscience, that is this conscience, is not an idea, is an historical force, with its formation course determined by the conditions and the acting of the social components. The meeting between conscience and class, between party and class, is not the encounter between idea and matter. They are products, elements of the historical matter, of the process of the natural history of society. They are determined, but not in the sense that they eventually will meet because of the intrinsic laws of capitalism and they will inevitably originate, under the force of things, the passage to communism. They are determined because neither the class, with its composition, its organizations. its tradition, its attitude, nor the party, the conscience, with its level of development, of incidence can escape the social history that made its existence possible. This history, that embraces in a dialectical continuity, made up of ruptures, jolts, regressions, confirmations in negation, the specific genesis of a mode of production and its existing condition, with the present condition of the connected political and social ordinations, poses some limits, a sort of oscillating band for the action of men, of the parties, of the

class organisms. To establish with a valid approximation the width of this band is, in different terms and with different possibilities, a challenge as well as for the political reflexion applied to history as for the leadership of the political struggle. But that doesn't mean that it is possible to cancel the necessity of the action, of the organization of the revolutionary action, of the work to reach and entrench in the class the highest possible level of conscience. This effort has some historically objective limits, linked to the condition of the social formation, of the historical embankments that, above all when analysing the past, as a rule they will be able to be individualized. An example of great value is offered to us by Engel's reflexion on Thomas Münzer and on the peasants' war in Germany. But this doesn't exclude that in some moments, in the phases in which important factors do converge to make possible some advanced revolutionary outcomes, from the specific action, from the particular way of moving and of collocating within this oscillating margin some determining results do depend.

In one of his main works, "Road to power" in 1909, Kautsky clarifies and puts in writing his setting out: the real political action, the actual terms and criteria upon which to arrange the political existence of the social democracy are those that can be found in the combination between the proletariat class growing force and the social democratic action aimed at representing, increasing it in its turn, this objective force in the institutions and in the capitalistic society. Revolution, the perspective of the revolutionary clash among classes and of the role in it of the revolutionary class party are confined on a distant horizon, actually they are expelled as authentic questions and real problems of the social democratic action. All of this is possible because in Kautsky the conception of socialism as a natural and unavoidable product of the development itself of the capitalism is strong and rooted, as a result of the historical acting that marches on positivistic tracks that don't know forces capable to arrest, deviate or even less break them or impose them a trajectory different and opposite to that of the progress towards the new social stadium. It is right the conception of socialism as a natural childbirth and at the end of the day not revolutionary of capitalism to pose the conditions for the refusal and the debasement of the problem of the party and of its preparation with revolution in sight. Class struggle itself becomes a secondary effect of the action of the powerful forces of the unavoidable historical developments that go towards socialism. Capitalism "fades" into socialism, thanks also to the political presence of the social democracy that understands this process and tunes up to it.