

Notes Russian Revolution

1. This issue is treated in my book "*La democracia y el triunfo del Estado. Por una revolución democrática, axiológica y civilizadora*" (Democracy and the Victory of the State. Towards a Democratic, Axiological, Civilizing Revolution). This article deepens its analysis, after new data, and tries to better the creative understanding of the different aspects involved, emphasizing the problem of the to-be-done revolution as cosmovision, project, and task. The work of thinking and the pursuing of knowledge should never stop, and always be under development and improvement.
2. The 'father' of Russian Marxism was Gueorgui Plejanov (1865-1918), forgotten today but most read for decades, previous to 1917. Lenin admired him during some time and opposed him afterwards, in one of those stormy battles so common with the militant doctrinarianism. Plejanov, under the looks of Marxist orthodoxy, reformulated some of the main elements of such a doctrine, while affirming its most negative aspects at the same time. In his essay *The Development of the Monist View of History* he furtively opposes Hegelian dialectics, supposedly cardinal in Marx, then returns to the Aristotelian formal logic, which would appear as rigidity, abstraction, and timelessness, as the inability to comprehend the opponents in their unity and their struggle. And, in fact, Bolshevism was impregnated by a rough and outdated Aristotelian gnosiology. In *The Role of the Individual in History* he reinforces the mechanistic determinism and fatalism of Marxism, and its incomprehension of the incidence of the individual into social change, together with a sophisticated denial of the various manifestations of individual liberty. To understand the Plejanov ideological system, the history and the present of Russia must be resorted to, modeled by the creed of the Orthodox Church, the Byzantium's heritage, and by immutable social structures, authoritarians, where the individual is a nullity, sacrificed to the interests and necessities of the State. It is from this background, much more than from Marx's texts, from where Plejanov draws his ideology, later admitted by Bolshevism. This shows that the cultural legacy and the institutional frame have a colossal influence and a high extent of continuity. In the same way, the Bolsheviks, Russian nationalists, overwhelmed by the supposed economic, technological, and administrative 'backlog' in Russia, not even could understand the praises of the late Marx for the Russian peasantry. In their opinion peasantry was a despised reactionary mass that had to disappear (make them disappear) as soon as possible. It was for that reason that they not even criticized such a formulation: they just ignored it. It is paradoxical that the Russian communists, who view themselves as the forefront of the most breaking modernity, ended up being little more than Orthodox and chauvinist Russians, tinted by atheism, which gave them reason to the dialectical thinking, one of whose axioms is the unity (and the struggle) of the opposites.
3. The real nature, function, and purpose of the extreme state terrorism installed by the Russian Communist Party in power, is not always comprehended by scholars and historians. An example of this is the book by Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. It would be against evidence to assign Stalin all responsibility for this, since not only him but tens of thousands more demanded and applied terror. Those 'condemning' Stalin during the 20th Congress of the party, in 1956, were as involved in the massacres as he was.

For some time the generalized institutional violence was essential for securing the establishing power for the new State and the new bourgeoisie. At some point later, such an extreme and extended violence became counter-effective, since, literally, it was crushing the social body, reducing persons to such a state of nihilism that the minimal functioning of things turned endangered. For that reason, after the second half of the 1950s the violence intensity decreased, and those in charge altered their procedures, still with an always present hostility. The Soviet Union was the 20th century State carrying State terrorism farthest, more than the Nazis and the Francoists, fact that is shown in the available data on: the number of policemen for hundred thousand inhabitants, the percentage of those assassinated and repressed (inside the population), the universal and routinely frequent employment of torture, and so on. In sum, the USSR was the worst and most terroristic fascist (left-fascist) regime of its time.

4. In his book *The Soviet Century: What Really Happened in the Soviet Union?*, Moshe Lewin tries to rescue the recoverable part of the Marxist experiment in Russia, arguing that by carrying the critique too far, it will favor the present capitalism ... He offers his data about repression between 1921 and 1953, concluding that around 800,000 people were sentenced to death, and 2.6 million were sent to concentration camps as political prisoners. Lewin deliberately ignores the always-present torture, a well-documented fact. Therefore, those sentenced to death and executed were only a fraction of those killed by the regime, a fortunate fraction since they were simply shot dead and not after being tortured. It is impossible to estimate their number (they were officially declared dead 'due to natural causes while seized'), but so many concrete cases are known that no doubt there were too many deaths of this type. It is true that to keep presenting the Soviet Union as a 'socialist' republic most favors the capitalism of today, and the same is true when calling 'a revolution' the facts of October 1917. Simon Sebag Montefiore says in his book *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*: "many prisoners were so hardly hit that their eyes were literally gouged. As a general rule they were beaten to death, and such an event registered as a "heart attack". Occasionally the tortures drove the victims crazy. It was also usual to assassinate members of the families of the prisoners, even when they had no political activity whatsoever, generally after infringing cruel atrocities on them. Disappearances were numerous: persons that were captured by the political police, never to be seen again. It can be concluded that Lewin's numbers for the mortal victims of the terror practiced by the Russian communist neo-capitalism result much inferior to the real. It is probable that there were so many extra-judicial executions as those with official sentence. And still the massacres done by the Russian communists in Poland (22,000 Polish persons were killed in Katyn in 1940, as part of a holocaust planned to exterminate the Polish people), in Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and so on, should also be taken into account.
5. A good treatment of this issue can be found in the section: *Frederick W. Taylor y la organización científica del trabajo. Taylorismo y trabajo en la Unión Soviética*; in the book *Homo Faber. Historia intelectual del trabajo, 1675-1945*, by Fernando Díez Rodríguez.
6. This issue is well treated in *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, by Vladislav M. Zubok. The Eastern Europe part of the Soviet

empire, arising from the questionable victory of the USSR in 1945, is analyzed in *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-56*, by Anne Applebaum. The economic deterioration and the political discredit to the Soviet imperialism, occasioned by the oppressive control of those territories materialized in the uprising of German workers against the Red Army in Berlin and other cities in 1953, and especially in the spontaneous insurrection of the Hungarian people in 1956, crushed after causing thousands of victims, not to be forgotten the permanent struggle in Poland, the resistance in Czechoslovakia, and the frequent riots in Rumania, to quote the most important events. It became usual that the working class and the 'worker States' of Eastern Europe fought each other in the streets, sometimes including massive assaults to the headquarters of the communist parties, the burning of red flags and the throwing Lenin busts out the windows. These events made the 'workerist' official rhetoric lose all efficacy, already in the '60s. Also, after the invasion to Czechoslovakia in 1968, the USSR was financially incapable to keep its occupation army, so it had to retreat. Surely the Soviet Union was a failed empire, though ferocious and murderous. Essentially, it was the updated version of the secular Russian empire.

7. The dreadful massacre of La Vendée, perpetrated in the name of the Republican State emerged from the French Revolution, has been negated for decades, but today is recognized as a genocide by everyone, including the French State, since it is impossible to keep hiding it. And there were dozens of similar carnages in other places. The Russian Revolution took the example of La Vendée to perform its own repression of the peasantry during the 'collectivization of the agriculture', advocated by Lenin. For details, see '*La guerre de Vendée*', by Alain Gérard. For an interpretation of the French Revolution as a state anti-revolution against the popular classes of the countryside and the cities, see my book '*La democracia y el triunfo del Estado*'.
8. In '*Investigación sobre la II república española, 1931-1936*', I critically review the 'revolutionary' behavior of the republican faction during the government of the Popular Front in the places where the Francoist upsurge was defeated. The conclusion is that all parties and worker unions in the Left constituted themselves into a new state apparatus and a new bourgeoisie against the working classes, to whom they submitted to exploitation, marginalization from political life, oppression and repression. Francoism did the same in the territories under its domain, and so did the leftist republicans in their own.
9. It is one of the ten original papers included in the book '*Derecho Pirenaico / Zuzenbide Piriniarra*', Nabarralde Fundazioa, Iruñea/Pamplona, 2017.