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Great revolutions make history. Conservative resistance and counter-revolutions only delay their progress. The French revolution invented modern politics and democracy, the Russian revolution paved the way for the socialist transition, while the Chinese revolution connected the emancipation of those peoples oppressed by imperialism with the path to socialism. These revolutions are great precisely because they are bearers of undertakings that are far ahead of the immediate demands of their time. And that is why there are clashes with the resistance of the present, at the origin of setbacks, "thermidors" and restorations. But they remain the beacons that illuminate the still unfinished struggles of the peoples for the realization of these goals. It is therefore impossible to understand the contemporary world by ignoring these great revolutions.

I define the late Soviet system by some basic characteristics: autocratic power, social stabilisation, economic delinking from the global capitalist system and its integration into this system as a superpower. Have fifteen years of "reforms" culminated in the setting up in Russia of a capitalist system capable of "stabilising" and thereafter of putting the country effectively on the path of liberalist promises? Reality obliges us to answer no. So, in fact, these new forms of capitalism in Russia have increased rather than reduced the characteristics of a Soviet system that has reached an extreme stage of decline. New Russia is only a minor periphery of the contemporary imperialist capitalist system. The capitalist forms of the new Russia exclude all democratic progress. Autocracy is no longer a "vestige of the past" here but a necessary form of existence of the comprador oligarchy's power.

Since then Russia has held a minor position in G7, now G8 (G71/2). Yet for all that it is not an active player in the functioning of global balance. To all appearances, it preserves considerable military power, second in the world in terms of its nuclear equipment and ballistic missiles although the deterioration of its military organisation gives reason to fear that it may be incapable of using this arsenal effectively, in the event it were necessary, which is to say in the event of United States aggression.

The basic principles on which the alternative to the current system in place in the world should be established are simple, clear and in fact largely understood. On internal ("national") plans: (i) a "mixed economy" that on the one hand gives the state the means to orient overall development and on the other offers private property and the market a sufficient profit margin to make the promotion of initiatives possible; (ii) the institutionalisation of worker/enterprise/state collective bargaining; (iii) the development of representative democracy through the promotion of participative democracy initiatives. On a global scale: (i) the organisation of the negotiation of forms of economic management (trade, capital flows, technological transfers, monetary management) based on the acknowledgement of the diversity of interests and the inequality of the partners; (ii) acknowledgement of the principle of the sovereignty of the people reinforced by support for the progress of democratisation, the foundations of a multi-polar political world. The implementation of all of these principles would make it possible to begin an initial stage on the road to the "long transition to world socialism". Of course, these very general principles which are valid for all only come into their own when put into practice in a way that respects the diversity of objective situations.

For Russia this means: (i) the re-nationalisation of large enterprises, particularly in oil and energy (therefore expropriation of the oligarchy); (ii) the invention of new forms of joint management (workers and leaders) of the industrial and commercial enterprises, whether these should be formally public (state, communities, workers collectives) or private; (iii) the reestablishment and reinforcement of public social services, education (which was of a high standard in the USSR) and scientific and technological research; (iv) the abolition of the constitution of 1993 and the elaboration of an authentically democratic constitution by a large elected convention; (v) support for forms of popular intervention of participative democracy; (vi) the initiation of extensive negotiation between the republics of the former USSR to enable the construction of an economic and political regional space that respects the autonomy of the partners and is capable of establishing interdependence to the benefit of all; (vii) the re-establishment of Russian military power (until there is a general disarmament when the United States are prepared to submit to one); (viii) the development of negotiated commercial, technological and financial arrangements initiating the construction of a "great Europe" from the Atlantic to the Pacific; (ix) the development of a foreign policy that is active and independent (of United States policy in particular) designed to strengthen the institutions responsible for the construction of a multi-polar world.

From the perspective of the alternative globalisation envisaged here, the place and the roles fulfilled by the national partners shall by force of circumstance remain specific and different from one another. Russia shall occupy the place of both a major producer/exporter of raw materials (oil and mineral products) and renewed industrial power (without being necessarily subject to the hazards that the search for "competitiveness" on a so-called open world market implies). China's place, by comparison, is that of a new industrial power whose production would be commanded principally by the enlargement of its internal market and only accessorially by its exports (the opposite of the principle that the WTO is determined to impose).

The leaders of Russia today have perhaps understood that the objective of the United States and its subordinate European allies is to destroy Russia and not to help it renewing itself. To do that Russian government has to give up its support for the oligarchies that still run the economy of the country. Assuming that Europe pursues its Atlanticist orientation Russia has only one other card to play. A coming together of the large Eurasian powers – Russia and China in particular – would put an end to Washington project to dominate the World and open the road to a renewed pattern of pluricentric organisation of the world..