

## THE HISTORICAL «INVARIANCE» OF MARXISM

*First part of the Meeting of Milan, September the 7<sup>th</sup> 1952  
Published in "Sul Filo del Tempo", May 1953*

Translated by ICP – "The Internationalist Proletarian"  
[www.pcielcomunista.org](http://www.pcielcomunista.org)

1.– The term «Marxism» is used not in the sense of a doctrine discovered and introduced by the individual Karl Marx, but to refer to a doctrine that arises with modern industrial proletariat and that «accompanies» it in the whole course of a social revolution; and we conserve the term «Marxism» in spite of the vast speculation field and of the exploitation of it by a whole series of antirevolutionary movements.

2.– Marxism, in its only valid meaning, counts today three main groups of adversaries. First group: bourgeoisies that sustain as definitive the capitalist mercantile type of economy and as illusory its historical overcoming with the socialist production mode, and that coherently integrally refuse the doctrine of economical determinism and class struggle. Second group: the so-called Stalinist communists, who declare accepting the Marxist historical and economical doctrine, but which propose and defend, even in the developed capitalist countries, non-revolutionary claims, identical, or even worse, to the political ones (democracy) and economical (popular progressivism) of traditional reformists. Third group: the declared supporters of the revolutionary doctrine and method who, however, attribute its current abandonment by most of the proletariat to initial defects and gaps in the theory, which, consequently, should be rectified and updated.

Deniers–fakers–updaters. We fight all three and consider that today the last ones are the worst ones.

3.– The history of the Marxist left, of radical Marxism, more specifically, that *of Marxism*, consists in the successive resistances to all the revisionism «waves» that attacked different points of the doctrine and the method, ever since its organic and monolithic formation that can be placed with the *Manifesto* of 1848. In other texts we have reminded the history of these fights in the three historical Internationals against utopists, labourists, libertarians, reformist and gradualist social-democrats, left-wing and right-wing unionists, social-patriots, and today national-communists and or popular communists. This struggle has covered the field of four generations and in its different phases, it does not belong to a series of names, but to a well-defined and compact *school*, and, in the historical sense, to a well-defined *party*.

4.— This difficult and long fight would lose its link with the future resumption of the revolution if, instead of drawing from it the lesson of the «invariance», the banal idea that states that Marxism is a theory in «continuous historical development» that can be modified in the course and the teachings of the events were accepted.

This is, invariably, the justification of all the treasons whose experiences have been accumulated, as well as all the revolutionary defeats.

5.— The materialist denial that a theoretical «system» emerged in a given moment (or even worse, emerged in the mind and ordered in the work of a specific man, thinker or historical leader, or both things at the same time) could contain irrevocably all the course of the historical future, its rules and principles, must not be understood in the sense that there do not exist systems of stable principles for a very long historical course. On the contrary, its stability and resistance to be damaged, or even «improved», is a main element of force of the «social class» to whom they belong and whose historical task and interests they reflect. The succession of such systems and doctrine and praxis assembles is not linked to men that mark the periods, but to the succession of the «production modes», that is, of the types of material organization of life of human communities.

6.— In spite of having acknowledged openly as wrong the formal content of the doctrine assembles of all big historical courses, dialectic materialism does not deny with it that they had been necessary in their epoch, and it imagines even less that the error could have been avoided with better thoughts of wise men or law makers, and that they could have *noticed* before their errors and perform their rectifications. Every system contains its own explanation and its own existing reason in its cycle, and the most meaningful of them are those with best organicity that have been able to keep unaltered in the course of large struggles.

7.— According to Marxism, no continuous and gradual process in history exists in what has to do (first of all) with the organization of the productive resources, but a whole series of distinct and successive jumps forward that deeply and from the roots revolutionize the whole economic and social apparatus. They are real cataclysms, disasters, quick crises in which everything changes in a brief period of time, while it stayed unchanged during a very long period; they are crises like the ones of the physical world, of the stars of the cosmos, of geology and the phylogenesis of living organisms itself.

8.— Being class ideology a superstructure of the modes of production, it is also not formed by the regular gathering of knowledge grains; it appears in the tearing of a violent clash and it guides the class that it represents, in a substantially monolithic and stable way, for a long series of struggles and attempts, until the next critical phase, until the next historical revolution.

9.— The doctrines of capitalism, precisely, when justifying the social revolutions of the past until the bourgeois revolution, affirmed that, from then on, history would progress in a gradual elevation way with no more social catastrophes, since ideological systems, gradually evolving, would absorb the flux of new conquests of pure and applied wisdom. Marxism demonstrated the fallacy of such a vision of the future.

10.— Marxism itself cannot be a doctrine that is being depicted every day with new inputs and with the substitution of chunks (better said, of mends and patches!), since it still is, in spite of being the last one, one of the doctrines that are a weapon of a dominated and exploited class which must revolutionize social relations, and that, by doing so, is in a thousand ways the object of the conservative influences of the forms and traditional ideologies belonging to the enemy classes.

11.— Even being able already today —or, even, ever since the proletariat appeared in the big historical scene— to glimpse the history of the already classless future society and, therefore, already with no revolutions, it must be affirmed that, during the very long period that will lead to it, the revolutionary class will be able to fulfill its task only if it acts in the whole course of the tremendous fight using a doctrine and a method which stay stable and stabilized in a monolithic program, no matter how many supporters there are and what the result of the phases and the social clashes are.

12.— Consequently, even though the ideological endowment of the revolutionary working class is no more revelation, myth or idealism as it is for the precedent classes, but positive «science», it has the need, however, of a stable formulation of its principles, and even of its action rules, which fulfills the role and has the decisive efficiency that dogmas, catechisms, tables, constitutions and guide-books such as the Vedas, the Talmud, the Bible, the Koran or the Declarations of Rights have had in the past. The deep substantial and formal errors that those compilations contain have not removed from them their great organizational and social force (revolutionary first, after counterrevolutionary, in dialectical succession); moreover, in many cases, those «misdirections» have precisely contributed to conform this force.

13.— Precisely, since Marxism denies any sense to the search of «absolute truth» and does not see in the doctrine a fact of the eternal spirit or the abstract reason, but a working «instrument» and a fighting «weapon», it requires that in the peak of the effort and in the height of the battle neither the instrument nor the weapon are to be abandoned, in order to be «repaired», but that they will only win in times of peace and times of war brandishing from the beginning good tools and weapons.

14.— A new doctrine cannot appear in any historical moment, but there are specific epochs in history, very peculiar —and even very rare—, in which they can appear as a blinding light beam; if the crucial moment has not been recognized and the sight has not been stared at the terrible light it is vain to resort to candle ends with which the pedant academician or the faithless fighter open their way.

15.— For the modern working class which was formed in the first countries of big capitalist industrial development, the shadows were torn slightly before the middle of the past century. The integral doctrine in which we believe, in which we must and want to believe, had then all the data to be formed and describe a course of centuries (which will be verified and clinched after huge fights). Or this position will be valid or the doctrine will be convicted of falseness, but then the declaration of the appearance of a new class with an own character, program and revolutionary function in history will have been an empty assertion. Consequently, whoever starts to substitute essential parts, theses or articles of the Marxist «corpus» which we possess from almost a century ago destroys its might in a worse way than that who completely renegades and proclaims its abortion.

16.— The «explosive» period, in which the novelty of the new claim itself turns it clear and provides sharp limits to it, is followed by a period whose particularity can be and is of such stability due to the chronic character acquired by the situations, that no improvement or enforcement of the so-called class «conscience» is obtained, but an involution and a degeneration of it. The whole history of Marxism proves that the moments in which class struggle intensifies are those in which theory returned with memorable assertions to its origins and to its integral expression: it is enough to remind the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik revolution and the first post-world war in the West.

17.— The principle of the historical invariance of the doctrines which reflect the task of the protagonist classes, and even that of the powerful returns to the original tables, is applied to all the great historical courses. Such principle is opposed to the chatty supposition that every generation and every station of the intellectual fashion is more powerful than the previous one, to the dumb cliché of the continuous and incessant advance of the civil progress, and to other similar bourgeois prejudices which very few of those who call themselves Marxists truly lack.

18.— All the myths express this, and mainly the myths of the half gods-half men, or the wise men that had an interview with the Supreme Being. It is nonsense to mock such representations, only Marxism has allowed finding their real and material infrastructures. Rama, Moses, Christ, Mohammad, all those prophets and heroes who open centuries of history of the various peoples, are different expressions of this real fact which corresponds to an enormous jump in the «production mode». In the pagan myth, wisdom, that is, Minerva, does not come out of Jupiter brains due

to the dictates of entire volumes to unstable scribes, but thanks to the hammer blow of the worker god Vulcan, who was called in order to relieve an irrepressible headache. At the other side of history, and in front of the enlightened doctrine of the new Goddess Reason, Gracchus Babeuf will rise as a giant, rough in its theoretical presentation, to say that the material physical force enables more advance than the reason and the knowledge.

19.— Examples of restorers against revisionist degenerations also do not lack, such as Francis of Assisi in relation to Christ when the Christianity born for the social redemption of the humble settles in the courts of the medieval lords; such as the Gracchi in relation to Brutus; and such as so many times had to be the precursors of a class to come in regards to the revolutionaries which reneged of the heroic phase of the preceding struggles: struggles in France in 1831, 1848, 1849 and other countless phases in all Europe.

20.— We sustain that all great recent events are more categorical and integral confirmations of the Marxist theory and forecast. We are referring mainly to the points that provoked, once again, the great desertions of the class field and that have confused even those who judge the Stalinist positions as completely opportunist.

Those points are the appearance of centralized and totalitarian capitalist forms (both in the economical and the political field), led economy, State capitalism, open bourgeois dictatorships; and, on the other side, the Russian and Asian development process from the social and political point of view. We see, then, the confirmation of our doctrine as well as its birth in a monolithic form in a crucial period.

21.— Whoever succeeded opposing Marxist theory to the historical events of this volcanic period would prove that it is completely wrong, that it has completely failed, and, with it, any attempt to deduce from the economic relations the main lines of the historical course. At the same time, it would succeed in proving that, in any phase, events constrain to establish new deductions, explanations and theories, and to accept, consequently, the possibility to propose new and different means of action.

22.— An illusory way out for the difficulties of the moment would be admitting that the basis theory should remain changeable and that precisely today would be the moment to launch new chapters of it, so that, as a result of such act of thought, the unfavorable situation would revert.

Additionally, it is an aberration that this task is assumed by little groups with derisory forces and, even worse, solved through a free discussion that parodies in a

Lilliputian scale bourgeois parliamentarism and the famous clash of individual opinions, which is not a fresh new resort but an old nonsense.

23.— This is a moment of maximum depression of the curve of revolutionary potential; therefore, it is entire decades far from the moments fit to give birth to original historical theories. At this moment, which lacks any close perspectives of a great social shock, it is not even a logical fact of the situation of political disintegration of the world proletarian class, but it is logical that only small groups are able to maintain the historical leading string of the great revolutionary course, extended as an arch between two social revolutions, given that such groups demonstrate that they do not wish to spread anything original and stick to the traditional formulations of Marxism.

24.— Criticism, doubt and judgment of all the old well consolidated conceptions were vigorous elements of the great modern bourgeois revolution that charged with gigantic waves against natural sciences, social order and political and military powers, to advance afterwards and lean out with much lower iconoclastic impulse against the sciences of human society and the historical course. Precisely, this was the result of a period of deep shock which had a foot in the feudal and agrarian middle ages and another in the modern industrial and capitalist society. Criticism was the effect and not the cause of the huge and complex fight.

25.— Doubt and control of individual conscience are an expression of the bourgeois reform against the compact tradition and authority of the Christian Church, and they were translated in the most hypocritical puritanism which, with the banner of the bourgeois conformity to religious morality or individual right, promoted and protected the new class dominance and the new form of subjection of the masses.

The way of the proletarian revolution is opposed, in which individual conscience is nothing and unitary direction of collective action is everything.

26.— When Marx stated in the famous theses on Feuerbach that philosophers had sufficiently interpreted the world and that the point now was to change it, he did not mean that the will of transforming determines the fact of the transformation, but that first came the transformation determined by the clash of the collective forces, and only after the critical conscience of it in the individuals. These do not act due to a decision matured by each one of them, but due to the influences that precede science and conscience.

The pass from the weapon of the critics to the critics of the weapons precisely displaces everything from the thinking subject to the militant mass, so that not only

rifles and canyons, but also that real instrument which is the common doctrine of the party, uniform, monolithic and constant, to which we are all submitted and linked, becomes a weapon, finishing with the chatty and know-it-all arguing.