



THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND MODERN THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The article considers the main theoretical concepts of the Russian historical science used to study the Russian Revolution of 1917. **Methods:** They are selected from monographs, articles and chronicles, and form a special source of information. **Results:** A historiographic review demonstrates that these concepts (party, Marxist, systemic, structural, behavioral, neo-constitutional approaches, optimistic and pessimistic practices, conspiracy theory) reflect the ideology and subject of research rather than offer scientific tools. There is an opinion that the historiographical and source base for studying the Russian Revolution of 1917 formed the positivist practice of collecting facts and documents. Marxism-Leninism influenced the study of specific topics and certain names. Starting with the first (lifetime) edition of the works of V.I. Lenin, the principle of historicism provided a large number of terms, events and biographical information, which established an extensive historical context and cause-and-effect relationships. Marxism is important for studying the revolution as a variant of historical materialism and is crucial for understanding the ideological heritage of the revolution and the motivation of its leaders. According to some scholars, Marxism also justified the struggle for power in 1917. At the same time, Marxism cannot explain the subsequent events since a radically complex mass society cannot be described by classical theories, old terms and methods. Marxism is applicable to describe the ideological context of 1917 but fails to analyze contemporary events. **Conclusion:** Thus, the authors of the article propose a thesis about the chronological correspondence of the chosen methods to the events under study. Modern methodological approaches provide different theoretical knowledge about the Russian Revolution of 1917 suitable for new generations but lose the historical context understandable to the previous generation. New approaches (structuralism, deconstructivism, discourse analysis and global history) aim at describing rather than explaining revolutionary events.

Keywords: The Russian Revolution of 1917; Marxism; Positivism; The principle of historicism; Structuralism; Deconstructivism; Classes and masses; Information society.



A REVOLUÇÃO RUSSA DE 1917: ABORDAGENS METODOLÓGICAS E TEORIAS MODERNAS

RESUMO

Objetivo: O artigo considera os principais conceitos teóricos da ciência histórica russa utilizados para estudar a Revolução Russa de 1917. **Métodos:** São selecionados a partir de monografias, artigos e crônicas, e constituem uma fonte especial de informação. **Resultados:** Uma revisão historiográfica demonstra que esses conceitos (partidários, marxistas, sistêmicos, estruturais, comportamentais, neoconstitucionais, práticas otimistas e pessimistas, teoria da conspiração) refletem a ideologia e o objeto de pesquisa mais do que oferecem ferramentas científicas. Há uma opinião de que a base historiográfica e fonte para estudar a Revolução Russa de 1917 formou a prática positivista de coletar fatos e documentos. O marxismo-leninismo influenciou o estudo de tópicos específicos e certos nomes. Começando com a primeira edição (vitalícia) das obras de V.I. Lenin, o princípio do historicismo forneceu um grande número de termos, eventos e informações biográficas, que estabeleceram um extenso contexto histórico e relações de causa e efeito. O marxismo é importante para estudar a revolução como uma variante do materialismo histórico e é crucial para entender a herança ideológica da revolução e a motivação de seus líderes. Segundo alguns estudiosos, o marxismo também justificou a luta pelo poder em 1917. Ao mesmo tempo, o marxismo não pode explicar os eventos subsequentes, pois uma sociedade de massa radicalmente complexa não pode ser descrita por teorias clássicas, termos e métodos antigos. O marxismo é aplicável para descrever o contexto ideológico de 1917, mas falha em analisar os eventos contemporâneos. **Conclusão:** Assim, os autores do artigo propõem uma tese sobre a correspondência cronológica dos métodos escolhidos aos eventos em estudo. As abordagens metodológicas modernas fornecem diferentes conhecimentos teóricos sobre a Revolução Russa de 1917 adequados para as novas gerações, mas perdem o contexto histórico compreensível para a geração anterior. Novas abordagens (estruturalismo, desconstrutivismo, análise do discurso e história global) visam descrever em vez de explicar eventos revolucionários.

Palavras-chave: A Revolução Russa de 1917; Marxismo; Positivismo; O princípio do historicismo; Estruturalismo; Desconstrutivismo; Classes e massas; Sociedade da informação.

1 INTRODUCTION

The 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917 marked an important milestone in historical research. There are many disputes about its causes, driving forces, chronological framework and the number of revolutions in principle but one of the most important and decisive issues is missing – the dispute about the methodology for studying revolutionary events. While reviewing the existing works, all scholars hardly touch on such a fundamental issue as the theoretical and methodological substantiation of historical research on the history of the Russian Revolution (Petrov, 2017).

G. Gerasimenko highlighted the party-based approach that influenced the content



of both Soviet and émigré works. Party affiliation (Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) provided emotional bias and ideological sketchiness of research (Gerasimenko, 1995, pp. 4-5). One of the main historians of the Russian Revolution, V. Buldakov distinguished between the Menshevik concept of the revolution as an illegal coup and the official Soviet historiography divided into "declarative revolutionism and latent statehood", which had the greatest impact on its study. He believed that the Soviet power in the past and present day had decisive ideological and political influence on conceptual approaches (Buldakov, 2009, pp. 115-117).

V. Nikonov provided a similar classification of approaches. The scholar divided research practices in relation to the Russian Revolution of 1917 into pessimistic (Marxism-Leninism, the objective approach of liberals and emigrants) and optimistic (theories about the high level of development of Russia before the revolution and the accidental revolutionary explosion due to war consequences and various conspiracies) (Nikonov, 2011, pp. 14-15). The Western methodological and theoretical approaches cited by the author do not provide a universal key to understanding the Russian Revolution since they do not consider the role of individuals and elites in the development of events. V. Nikonov supported the elite conspiracy theory, proved the sufficient development of the country in 1917 and the fatal role of the Russian intelligentsia in destroying the state. It is obvious that V. Nikonov wrote a large number of scientific and propaganda works, voiced the position of the Russian government (which did not expect any revolutions), revealed the dependence of historiography on the government indicated by Buldakov and once again revived the conspiracy theory.

In a political collection on the "revolution" concept, the British political scientist J. Dan published an article on the methodology of studying the Russian Revolution of 1917. In his opinion, the Marxist approach had "the dignity of universalism", explained the causes of the Russian Revolution but "was absolutely unsuitable for explaining the purposeful, strategic and extremely concerted political actions of armed political parties" (Dan, 2008, p. 127). This universal collection does not have a separate article on the Russian Revolution of 1917 but considers a wide range of revolutions from the French Revolution to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

The Russian scholar A. Medushevskii (2007, pp. 4-5) highlighted three established approaches: systemic, structural (class) and behavioral. While noting their contribution to the development of science, he wrote about their abstractness, linearity and lack of variability in explaining the transition from one stage of social development to another.

A. Medushevskii proposed to apply a neo-institutional approach to the history of the Russian Revolution in order to analyze legal acts, institutions, processes and technologies. Then it is possible to "reconsider the succession of power during and after the Bolshevik Revolution and determine the correlation between constitutive and constitutional aspects at the transitional period" (Medushevskii, 2007, p. 6).

Another scientific collection embraces works on different causes of the Russian Revolution, where the main dispute is the application of statistical and mathematical methods. The difference in approaches consisted in the source of scientific methods and the reliability of statistical information. In addition to Marxism, scholars used the Malthusian approach to assess the demographic situation in Russia on the eve of the revolution and the structural-dynamic theory of civilization development. L. Grinin (2010) even introduced a new term – the Malthusian-Marxian trap. It means overpopulation in industrial society, which requires significant transformations in the political system.

The philosopher and historian I. Pantin mentioned an active-practical attitude to history: the Russian Revolution is still present in the modern context and included in modern social relations. The scholar considered the revolution as a complex phenomenon and long-term process, referring to the Marxist, liberal and conservative theories. Marxism is outdated (unlike the facts collected by the Soviet historical science), while the liberal theory (including the conspiracy theory) aims at praising pre-revolutionary Russia and analyzing the actions of individuals and groups. An integrated approach takes into account the entire historical context, the specific development of the Russian society and global processes that have influenced the country (Pantin, 2015, pp. 10-15).

A review of methodological concepts has demonstrated that they are few in number. The study of the Russian Revolution of 1917 often depends on the political views of a particular researcher. The existing concepts identify the research subject of study rather than offer general scientific methods.

The novelty of the article lies in the fact that it reviews the methodology of revolutions and promotes the integrated approach.

This article aims at searching for new conceptual possibilities in the theoretical study of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

It will be implemented through the comparison of various theoretical and methodological approaches; the analysis of their main provisions; the study of historical literature (monographs, articles, chronicles) (Chubaryan, 2014, p. 203).



The following hypothesis is put forward: without knowledge and study of Marxism, it is impossible to understand the history of the Russian Revolution. However, this is usually a simplified description. The full-fledged understanding of complex revolutionary processes is provided by modern concepts comprising different approaches.

2 METHODS

The article is prepared within the framework of intellectual history. The basis is laid by the comparative analysis of theoretical concepts, including such general scientific methods as analysis, synthesis, generalization and abstraction (Chubaryan, 2014, p. 203).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Positivism and Marxism

When preparing a scientific publication, any historian usually goes through the stages of reading the relevant literature, studying reliable sources and compiling a new text. The accumulated facts, events, names, documents and memories are the result of a positivist approach. All chronicles summarizing the history of Russia and its regions, numerous clarifying and refuting articles bear the primacy of the fact confirmed by a source and provided with a footnote. Cleansing the Soviet scientific and popular-science literature of ideological and propaganda clichés, one can still see lists of sources and references, the chronological principle of constructing texts and quotations from documents. This creates a tradition of scientific text, which can be unconditionally trusted and whose data can be verified. Consequently, all descriptive books and articles about the revolution are based on positivism. Marxism-Leninism influenced the choice of topics and research objects but not scientific approaches.

A striking example of the positivist approach is the six-volume chronicle of revolutionary events published between 1923 and 1930. Describing the Russian Revolution of 1917 by day, the authors used not only official documents (transcripts, reports, orders, decisions of the Russian Provisional Government, decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, decisions of the Petrograd Soviet, minutes of meetings of various public organizations) or newspapers issued by different parties but also the memoirs of the Bolshevik opponents: P. Milyukov, A. Denikin, A. Kerensky



and other eyewitnesses of the revolution taken from the emigrant "Archive of the Russian Revolution" published in Berlin (Arkhirv Russkoi revolyutsii, 1921). The compiler of an introduction to Volume 3 (June-July 1917) V. Vladimirova claimed that there were few materials on the history of workers', soldiers' and peasants' mass movement, the Communist Party and the Kronstadt Soviet Republic. However, she paid much attention to "the accuracy of dates (days) and actual presentation" (Avdeev, 1923, p. 3). Most of the chronicle describes the activities of the Bolsheviks and the social groups that supported them. In the 1920s, this selection of topics was called the Marxist approach. In fact, the emphasis on studying a socio-economic situation, various forms of class struggle and the activities of one party is not a special Marxist approach but the mere analysis of certain topics.

In the USSR, many historical, theoretical and philosophical works constantly referred to K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, J. Stalin and all the subsequent leaders of the state. They revolved around a selected number of quotations and did not go beyond them. The reader could pick up the collected works, check the correctness of quoted extracts and see the influence of the classics on the study of specific topics. Marx wrote about the German foreign policy or the history of Russia, Engels debated about the origin of man or materialistic philosophy, Lenin discussed the Russian Revolution of 1917, attitudes towards war, art, the development of military affairs and international relations, i.e. everything that they mentioned briefly or dwelled on in detail. At the same time, the scientific basis of research was still positivism.

Some historical works about the revolution differed from theoretical discussions by applying the principle of historicism, which revealed cause-and-effect relationships and the context of that time. All the historical works realizing this principle followed this chronological line: from the birth of social democratic doctrines in Russia to the victory of the Bolshevik Party; from the description and analysis of the causes of the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the victory of the Bolshevik Party; from the study of international relations in the early 20th century to the victory of the Bolshevik Party and new principles of foreign policy (Piontkovskii, 1923). The abstracts to collected works provided excellent historical context, clarifying terms and events, and contained short biographies. The first collection of Lenin's works (lifetime edition) was supplemented with many comments explaining the terms, historical events and names mentioned in the text. In the 1930s, a unified concept of the history of the revolution was established, which had been hindering the party and the state to apply the principle of historicism for three decades. The 4th edition of V. Lenin's collected works was censored: some



sentences and paragraphs were deleted, and the notes were ideologically adjusted to comply with the Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and cut down (Mosolov, 2010, pp. 425-430).

If positivism and historicism, being universal scientific means, can be used in any historical research, the application of Marxism is more complicated. K. Marx formed his own vision of history and the role of revolutions in the preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy". According to the well-known formula about the relationship between social existence and social consciousness, at a certain moment, productive relations begin to slow down the development of society.

Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic – in short, ideological – forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. (Marx & Engels, 1959, p. 7).

K. Kautsky emphasized an important feature of Marx's materialism or determinism, namely the decisive and consistent impact of the material sphere on the development of humankind. Moreover, everyone who denies the scientific nature of the materialistic understanding of history is not a historian (Kautsky, 2003). One remark by K. Kautsky (2003) is also important for understanding rigid schemes of Marxism-Leninism: "As for me, a fanatical and Orthodox Marxist who is reproached for worshiping authorities, I think quite differently; and I never claimed that this or that thought was true only because it was expressed by Marx or Engels" (p. 9). Such an attitude towards classic citations was impossible in the Soviet times.

According to G. Plekhanov, Marxism provides a universal key to the materialist understanding of the world and its history. It is worth mentioning that Marxism allows to comprehend the cause-and-effect relationships of all phenomena based on the main thesis: existence determines consciousness (Plekhanov, 1925, pp. 35, 46). However, the main thing is

the interaction between productive forces and social economy. Since a superstructure of social relations, feelings and concepts grows on the economic basis (firstly promotes and then hinders economic development), it also interacts with basis, which adjusts all those phenomena that seem to contradict the main provision of historical materialism. (Plekhanov 1925, pp. 66-67).



While analyzing the causes of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Yu. Martov also mentioned the interaction of these two spheres. The scholar found changes in the life of the proletariat after 1914 but failed to pinpoint any changes in the collective consciousness. "For the first time in the movement of the proletariat, a theory representing this class as a link in historical development [...] tried to guide the movement. However, the elements of historical development turned out to be stronger than theory" (Martov, 1923, p. 19). Apparently, both Plekhanov and Martov tried to reveal the interaction of existence and consciousness, further developing K. Marx's thesis.

The impact of matter on the thinking and life of a person as a whole is the main methodological toolkit created by Marx and Engels on the basis of all philosophical materialistic teachings. According to L. Althusser (1971), K. Marx's historical materialism is "an unprecedented revolution in the history of human knowledge" (pp. 15-16). He compared K. Marx's historical approach with a new scientific "continent" (after the "continents of Mathematics and Physics"), the continent of History, which led to revolutionary changes in philosophy and conditioned the further triumph of materialism (Althusser, 1971, pp. 15, 19).

The principle of historicism is the application of materialistic tools in historical research. This is a particular case of the general materialistic understanding of world existence, not only Marxism. Consequently, one can always use basic scientific tools from classical Marxism to comprehend the past and the present.

It turns out that positivism provided a factual framework, a chronological structure and Marxism with variations. An ideological content, a roadmap, a terminological apparatus and the principle of historicism were connected through cause-and-effect relationships and created a single intellectual space based on the Russian Revolution of 1917. In other words, positivism is the general philosophical foundation; Marxism-Leninism is the ideological basis; the principle of historicism is a tool for many studies of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

3.2 Marxism and modern times

World War I and the Russian Revolution seriously influenced the worldview of the masses. Many scientists recorded these drastic changes in a way of life and the inability of scientific methods to assess it. In 1920, the renowned Russian historian R. Vipper (1921) said that



until recently, we had been asked about the life of masses, its conditions and their interests. Now we want to learn about various events, the role of certain people and the connection of ideas. When a philosopher defines this change of views and interests, it is usually said that public opinion has moved from materialism to idealism. (p. 13).

The scholar substantiated his opinion by describing the revolutionary events:

a small group seized an extremely large state, headed a huge mass of people and restructured the entire cultural and social life from top to bottom. What guided them? An ideological system, abstraction or utopia of an earthly paradise, which until then had been living only in the minds of a few exalted novelists. [...] This conditions a major turn in our historical reasoning. We need to pay attention to the enormous influence of ideas, the creative and destructive role of theories for humankind. (Vipper, 1921, pp. 11-12).

Obviously, Vipper and Martov came to almost identical conclusions.

The Soviet scientists drew the opposite conclusions and highlighted different types of materialism as the main philosophical foundations of science. Debating over the interaction of being and consciousness, Orthodox Marxists forgot about an inverse relationship. Distinguishing between "existence" and "consciousness", and analyzing them as independent phenomena, they placed the main emphasis on the study of the former concept. It is independent of consciousness, primary in relation to it, and creates the conditions for its development (Fomina, 1960, pp. 11-12; Kelle & Kovalzon, 1969, p. 47; Rutkevich & Loifman, 1994, pp. 247-248; Zhuravlev, 1961, pp. 14-17). Only a few philosophers recognized the interaction and mutual influence of these spheres, when consciousness can influence existence at certain moments (Tugarinov, 1958, pp. 9, 17). Currently, the influence of social consciousness on social existence is not questioned in their dialectical unity. Both phenomena can alternately take the leading roles and influence each other. The range of factors influencing the development of public consciousness has been expanded: political struggle and its results are of great importance (Oizerman, 2001, pp. 16-23).

Indeed, Marxism in the Soviet historical science pursued not only ideological but also political purposes. Being a tool of cognition, Marxism-Leninism, also became the mechanism of power. The class struggle in Russia ended in 1917 with the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. the main formula of the Soviet state throughout its existence. It does not matter what the true essence of the state structure was, Marxism-Leninism provided a strict and clear terminological apparatus, theoretical laws, theses, ideologems and slogans. The German historian A. Klæhr (2010) evaluated the role of Marxism in the GDR in the same way: "Marxism-Leninism was the ideological and pseudo-scientific tool by which the state system and the totalitarian domination of the

Socialist Unity Party of Germany were legitimized. Historical science played a special role since society received its legitimation only from history".

However, there is a significant difference in applying Marxism to the study of history. Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin had been creating and promoting their ideas from the middle of the 19th century. The early 20th century formed a new reality: there is mass society and new sciences to comprehend it. In this regard, the "mass" term has completely different meanings. Within the framework of Marxism, the popular masses are predominantly an oppressed population that need to free itself from oppression and build a new society. The latter should be divided into classes not according to the goals of existence but according to the available means of production. The life span of classes is often measured in centuries.

In psychology or sociology of the early 20th century, the mass is a new structure, often momentary, unstable, having destructive power and gathering to solve a specific problem. Upon reaching the goal set, masses disintegrate. A classic example is the Russian Army during World War I. The temporary connection of people had drastic consequences for the country, in particular the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The mass society turned into the information society, where the channels and speed of information dissemination play a crucial role in people's lives. The news about the abdication of Nicholas II spread throughout the vast country in one or two days. In such a society, the news that affects the feelings and emotions of the masses gains much importance. However, Marx neglected the role of emotions and feelings, regarded them as secondary and considered their significance only in exceptional moments.

According to Medushevskii (2007, pp. 19-20), traditional political theories became ineffective in the new conditions of the mass society, which made the Bolsheviks develop a new technology of coups: the mass mobilization of non-parliamentary forces, the seizure of communications and the creation of new ideas about the organized nature of the revolution.

A new type of society (information-mass) could not be described by the old Marxist terms and approaches. An objective scientific basis is always relevant: data collection, the identification of cause-and-effect relationships, the description of the sequence of events and conclusions. They are tools that divide science, art, religion and other branches of human life. Even now postgraduate students who prepare their theses are engaged in a materialistic understanding of history. Marxism as the content of certain ideas had been relevant from the middle of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. However, they cannot describe modern life since the number of factors that



the founders of this doctrine did not take into account has increased over the past years (Shubin, 2009, p. 130).

A reasonable question arises about the time synchronization of the theory and the reality under study. What theory will give an adequate answer to the questions posed by scientists? What methods should be used to analyze the Russian Revolution of 1917 if Marxism is discredited by its Orthodox application? Will the latest theories provide a better understanding of the whole complex of revolutionary events?

To understand the events of a particular period, the latter should be comprehended by those theories that were created back then or a little earlier, but were relevant in the period under study. In this case, it is easier to interpret the thread of thoughts of those people, their values and preferences. Theories that are more recent might explain historical events in a formal and logical way but they do not consider the historical context. Being formally correct, this explanation will be improper since "new" theories arose from "new" scholars with opposite values, different worldviews and more facts.

Why might post-structuralism, gender history, discourse analysis, content analysis, total history and other methodological approaches be inappropriate (Feldman, 2015)? They emerged or received scientific distribution after the Russian Revolution of 1917. They utilize new scientific achievements that were unknown at that time. These concepts are based on other values. When M. Bloch, J. Le Goff, M. Braudel and M. Foucault created their works, there were already people with different ideas and changed worldviews.

World War I and the Russian Revolution of 1917 marked an ideological turn in both global and Russian science. Technological breakthroughs, natural science achievements and weapons of mass destruction raised the authority of individuals (scientists and politicians) and reduced the value of human life. The idea of a revolution or rebellion against the old regime was popular not only in Russia. The collapse of empires gave rise to new peoples and social groups. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire radically changed the essence of Turkey (Kireev, 2007, p. 159). The similarity of these two revolutions consists in their secular nature, orientation towards scientific and technological progress (Bakhrevskii & Svistunova, 2019, pp. 123-128).

If we consider the Russian Revolution of 1917 from the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism, we can better understand the motives of the people of that time and all the actors of those events. Thus, V. Lenin convinced his supporters of the correctness of his views. Together with the Bolsheviks, he promoted his ideas, gave speeches and published his works to engage more people. It was a gradual rather than a rapid



process. It is not about the possible "power" techniques of persuasion, in which the Bolsheviks were accused by their ideological opponents. The fact is that the Bolsheviks were understood by those who listened to them, saw them and read them. They discussed the bourgeoisie, the class struggle and the special role of the proletariat; the revolution, the redistribution of land, workers' control and the Soviet power; equal rights, the elimination of private property and the inevitable world without annexations and indemnities. People of different education levels, who read poorly or could not read at all, correlated these unfamiliar terms with their lives and perceived Marxism through their own, often very difficult and hopeless life (GASK, 1920). Simple Bolshevik slogans often addressed the life foundations of common people and made them realize the necessary changes. In 1917, the social demand for a revolution was formed not by the Bolsheviks but by the unsuccessful actions of public authorities and established stereotypes. Representatives of all political parties implemented not only their requests for change but also caught the deep impulse of the people. It is impossible to arrange a revolution in a country without any prerequisites for changes.

In the 1920s, the victorious Bolsheviks began to form their ideology through education on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. Those who came to learn to read and write (students of any age) did not question the knowledge gained and the authority of their new "teachers". As a result, illiteracy was eliminated through the theory and history of revolution. For example, the letter "B" stands for "bourgeoisie", "L" means "Lenin", "I" suggests "intervention", etc. (GASK, 1920). Thus, a consistent picture of the revolution is formed through an unquestioned ideology. The impossibility of critical analysis creates an "ideal" revolution with its romantic heroes, i.e. a new world. The last stage was especially active in the 1930s, when a new image of the revolution was created that was beneficial to J. Stalin.

Let us get back to people. Based on K. Marx's terms and theses, V. Lenin and his comrades built their speeches and actions to ensure the understanding of the broad masses. Even their opponents noticed this approach and accused the Bolsheviks of demagoguery and pandering to the crowd. This means that a future historian who is several decades away from this event might not fully understand the motives of actions, ideas and public consciousness of that generation under the conditions of methodological pluralism if they do not know the essence of Marxism and its varieties.

3.3 Structural Marxism

One more challenge is structural Marxism. In the 1960s-1970s, European scholars



rethought K. Marx's ideas, which created a new methodological toolkit for comprehending reality. L. Althusser, whose scientific works are still relevant (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2008, pp. 39-41), suggested reading Marx's texts in a different way. Applying Z. Freud's concept about hidden meanings in text, the scholar tried to reveal the "unconscious" in Marx's works and identify his methodological techniques. He supported the thesis about the indisputable influence of any ideology on writers. With the help of structural analysis, it is possible to determine the influence of the main ideology or its subtypes. The analysis of ideology became one of the methods L. Althusser preferred most. The subject to perceive an ideology is formed through "conversion". Before indoctrination, a person is simply an individual who then becomes subject to an ideological impact (Althusser, 1971, pp. 173-174). An ideology does not exist without its addressee. Accordingly, ideology and practice are interrelated and inseparable from each other. Furthermore, practice is one of the forms of ideology (Althusser, 1971, pp. 170-171).

As a consistent Leninist, L. Althusser could not neglect the Russian Revolution of 1917. Following Lenin's theory of the "weakest link", he considered the conditions under which the revolution in Russia was a success (the only country in the world) (Althusser, 1962). The scholar emphasized the following circumstances: the emergence of an objectively revolutionary situation during World War I; the influence of financial-industrial monopolies; the increased exploitation of workers; the growing role of masses. All the possible contradictions aggravated in Russia as the weakest capitalist country: feudal exploitation, absolute monarchy and church influence, a mass of ignorant peasants, a gap between advanced industries and agriculture, the class struggle, revolutionary sentiments in the ruling elite not so long ago the past revolution of 1905-1907, support for the overthrow of the monarchy by the British and French businesses. According to Althusser (1962), Russia was both an advanced and a lagging world power.

Philosophizing about phenomena, unity, levels, instances and constitutions for a long time, the scholar defined the dominant of his theory: the overdetermination of contradictions between productive forces and production relations of all other essential processes that led to the revolution. If we discard all his philosophical reasoning, the historical material cited by him is a transcription of Lenin's thoughts about the causes of the Russian Revolution. Despite many methodological tools and theoretical explanations offered by L. Althusser, he did not provide new knowledge about the Russian Revolution of 1917.



Several questions arise: why did L. Althusser write about the revolution in this way? Would K. Marx himself understand what was written several decades later about his ideas? Would he recognize Althusser's conclusions as "his" thoughts?

L. Althusser's text about the revolution is filled with historical material and philosophical reflection. It is based on a materialistic understanding of history, the ideas of Marxism and the principle of historicism. However, the adherence to Marxism does not allow Althusser to see the whole picture of conditions that led to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Being a loyal Leninist-Stalinist, he recognized V. Lenin as an authoritative philosopher and successor of K. Marx, as well as used Stalin's precise quotes. Perceiving Lenin's statements without criticism, L. Althusser wrote a Western version of Soviet surveys of V. Lenin, avoiding numerous citations and obsequious attitudes. In other words, the philosopher could not write it any other way. He lacked both historical sources and the desire to prepare a decent historical study.

A more complicated issue is Marx's possible understanding of all the subsequent interpretations of his texts. Contemporary Marxist critics, whom he read and answered to, lived with him in the same time period, and had the same context, ideology, values and terms. In the 1920s, Soviet and Western scholars found themselves in a completely different situation. They were pressed not only by World War I and the Russian Revolution but also by the realization that Marx's ideas could be actually implemented. The primacy of socialist and revolutionary ideas over monarchical and capitalist existence, which Vipper and Martov mentioned, came into conflict with the materialist postulates of Marxism about the basis and superstructure. The contradiction was obvious, therefore it was circumvented by multiple verbal constructions and a firm belief that Marx and Lenin could not be mistaken. This internal logical contradiction cannot be seen on the pages of Soviet historical and philosophical literature.

According to Freud's interpretation, it was the first Soviet historical and philosophical neurosis that created a logical trap for all future scientists.

If we apply the method of deconstruction, the indicated contradiction is absence, elision, spacing, ambiguity and refraction at the same time. Authors did not write about this fact but it does not mean that it did not happen.

If we follow the principles of Althusser and try to see the impact of ideology, then it becomes obvious that this ideology is Orthodox Marxism.

It is obvious that K. Marx, despite his remarkable intellect, would find it extremely hard to understand all this intellectual sophistication. After all, they are based on Marx's ideas but transferred to the next level of theorizing. In fact, the latest methods and the



results obtained by them go further than K. Marx did. All conclusions are determined by the historical context, which Marx himself did not know and did not experience. It seems that he would not have accepted the Orthodox attitude towards his ideas and texts, which was typical of all socialist and communist scholars.

To try to comprehend the essence of the Russian Revolution of 1917, one should definitely know Marxism. Even the basic knowledge will help understand the slogans of active revolutionaries and their motives. The comprehension of revolutionary texts, speeches and memoirs outside of Marxism-Leninism will not allow hearing those people and feel their time. The unorthodox approach to Marxism provides an important tool for understanding the ideological content of the revolution. If a modern scientist writes a historical work on some circumstances of the revolution clearly and consistently following the Marxist methodology, it is unlikely that contemporaries will understand such a text. Of course, it will be understandable but it will not be widely accepted and will not gain scientific importance. While reading this text, the youth will not grasp the meaning of rhetorical twists and terms, as well as logical chains and methodological aspects.

Historical and dialectical materialism, the principle of historicism as part of these approaches, the methods and practices of positivism allow developing various revolutionary plots and will serve as a general scientific foundation for a long time to come. In this regard, data verification, work with different historical sources and the scrupulous analysis of written texts are positivist-materialistic methods of research. The knowledge that emerged in the course of such a research comes from a source rather than theoretical and ideological constructions. The general principle of materialism (existence determines consciousness) is transformed into a formula: "firstly, the source; then new data".

This approach plays a different role in the 21st century as a large amount of information has already been accumulated using this method. Thousands of scientific and popular science works little by little create a chaotic and fragmented image of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Many gaps have already been eliminated but enough documents remain in archives waiting to be examined with the help of positivist-materialist methods.

The new methodological approaches that have been forming in the intellectual space since the middle of the 20th century pursue different goals: not to describe the past but to understand it. Comprehending the currently available facts of the past, eyewitness testimonies and authentic sources, a new picture of the revolution is being



created. Considering revolutionary ideas in the context of Marxism, positivism and new methodological approaches, we have obtained a completely new result. However, it does not always reflect reality. Each generation is much closer to and better understands the methodology that emerged in their time. The use of postmodernism, various types of structuralism, deconstructivism, discourse analysis, global history, new local history, the frontier and other methods accumulates new theoretical knowledge. With the help of these methods, it is impossible to obtain a simple description or presentation of the past as they aim at understanding and comprehending history by new generations.

For example, the theory of deconstruction aims at revealing hidden gaps and elusive meanings. All the results of applying deconstruction techniques are contemplative. They are based on the gaps identified by modern authors and existing in their timeline regardless of the historical context of a particular source. Trying to unveil the hidden historical knowledge, scholars do not create anything new but assume like L. Althusser. Before mentioning the causes of the Russian Revolution of 1917, he wrote, "I would like to reflect on the Marxist concept of contradiction as exemplified by the concept of "the weakest link" in Leninism (Althusser, 1962). Then he retold Lenin's viewpoint and determined the main trigger of the revolution in a complex philosophical text. He comprehended, theorized, substantiated and created new philosophical and linguistic constructs but did not provide any new material for historical science.

4 CONCLUSION

To ensure a scientific approach to studying the events of the past in general and the Russian Revolution of 1917 in particular, K. Marx's scheme is actually applicable but in the historical and methodological context: positivism and materialism at the base (foundation), the latest methods above it (superstructure). Marxism and its interpretations (terminologically and abstractly present in both parts) are crucial for understanding the ideological content of the Russian Revolution. A new theory, logically consistent and ideologically detached from modern times, will provide new theoretical knowledge for new generations of people who learn about the past. The main task is to keep all these parts of scientific research away from political and propaganda influence.

Thus, the current research of the Russian Revolution of 1917 is based on the following scheme: positivism and materialism provide a simple basis (facts, events and



names). Dialectics and the principle of historicism demonstrate various patterns of the historical process. Marxism allows to understand the ideas, terms and arguments of the main revolutionaries. New methodological approaches will help to better understand the complex revolutionary process.

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