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Trotsky's Law of Uneven and Combined Development in Marini's *Dialectics of Dependency*

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Abstract

We noticed along Ruy Mauro Marini's text *Dialectics of Dependency* many formulations of a theoretical concept called Law of Unequal and Combined Development. This conception was explicitly formulated, on the basis of Lenin's and Marx's first analysis of the international revolutionary process, by Leon Trotsky, who played a major role in the 1917 Russian Revolution. By showing specific passages of Marini's *Dialectics of Dependency* and Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, we defend that the concept of the Law of Uneven and Combined Development is present in Marini's thought. Also, the paper raises the thesis that Trotsky's Law is rediscovered by various Latin American left thinkers since the 1960s because it is an objective truth. This explains partially why many authors in the tradition of the Marxist Dependency Theory in Latin America do not refer to Trotsky despite using one of his main theoretical contributions.

Key-words: Marini, Trotsky, unequal and combined development, dependent economy, socialist revolution

'The proletariat of an economically backward country can come to power before the proletariat of an advanced country from the capitalist point of view'

Leon Trotsky

'The consequence of dependency can not be, therefore, nothing else than more dependency, and its overcoming necessarily supposes the suppression of the relations of production involved with it'

'(...) the generalization of the Latin American revolution tends to destroy the main support brackets of imperialism, and its victory will represent a death blow to it. This is the historical responsibility of the Latin American people and faced with it, there can be no other possible attitude than the revolutionary praxis'

Ruy Mauro Marini

1 Introduction

The text *Dialectics of Dependency* (Dialética da Dependência), written in 1973 by the Brazilian organic intellectual Ruy Mauro Marini is a strong contribution to the development of Marxist thought in Latin America. It began to reassess the political strategy of supporting the bourgeoisie at a time when the Latin American left was shaken by the developments that culminated in a series of Military Strikes linked to capitalist imperialism. From the 1960s on, new methodological ways to think and change historical, political and economic reality in the continent started being debated. Ruy Mauro Marini demonstrates in this and other texts a unique and experimental perspective of value theory in conjunction with the settled political tactics of the revolutionary thought of Karl Marx. He combined his academic career and his theoretical reflections in order to transform the situation of extreme social and economic inequality that characterized (and still characterizes) the reality of Latin America.

We believe that the theoretical creations of Marini are an important tool to understand the complex reality of the Latin American countries. Also, they help us to think possible ways and strategies to build a society with a anti-capitalist logic in the continent. Moreover, the attitude of political engagement adopted by Marini, who always connected theoretical study and research with revolutionary action, is also present today as an example with regard to intellectual performance. These elements explain the recent recovery of Marini's thought, especially in Brazil, where his work began to be truly widespread only in the end of the 2000s. One of these aspects of recovery refers to the elucidation of Marini's theoretical, philosophical and political influences.

The study of the revolutionary process showed us that there are clear links between the general position of Marini and the prospect of centrality of the periphery in the World Revolution. Along the reading of *Dialectics of Dependency*, we noticed in many passages the presence of a relevant theoretical conception, called Law of Unequal and Combined Development. This conception was explicitly enunciated by Leon Trotsky, who played an important role in the process of socialist revolution in Russia in 1917.¹

Because of its originality in comparison to the general outline of the process described by Marx during the formation of European capitalism, this theoretical formulation represents a significant improvement in the development of Marxist thought on historical evolution. As Trotsky sought to turn the revolutionary theory of Marx with the concrete facts generated by the Russian Revolution, he eventually developed an overview of the mechanism of capital functioning which explained how it was possible to start the construction of socialism outside Western Europe. This construct is, therefore, a very suitable tool for studying the revolutionary process in the so called "underdeveloped" countries or, better yet, in countries with capitalist dependent economies.

¹ As Demier (2005) warned, Lenin used the "Law of Uneven Development" to reflect on the uneven rhythms of capitalist development. However, Trotsky added to this the concept of "Combined Development", exposing the dialectical relationship between capitalists core and periphery. Trotsky's formulation appears mainly in "História da Revolução Russa" (1 ed.. São Paulo: Editora Instituto José Luís e Rosa Sundermann, 2007, Tomo I), "Balanços e Perspectivas" e a "Revolução Permanente", ambos contidos na coletânea intitulada "A Teoria da Revolução Permanente. São Paulo: Editora Instituto José Luís e Rosa Sundermann, 2010.

This focus on the periphery departing from the logic of global capital is what allows Marini to be put closer to Trotsky. This paper argues and illustrates that many elements in the Dialectics of Dependency are expressions of what Trotsky called the Law of Uneven and Combined Development. Therefore, the thesis is that the abstract core of Marini's interpretation of the development of Latin America is a theoretical synthesis elaborated by Trotsky which emerged from his study of the Russian Revolution.²

2 The Law of Uneven and Combined Development

The study by Trotsky ([1930] 2007) on the Russian Revolution allowed some interesting conclusions for the international revolutionary movement. One of them is the so called Law of Uneven and Combined Development. What is it? The whole issue of understanding the October Revolution in Russia revolved around the possibilities of socialism in advanced industrial economies in that period, such as Germany, the United States and England. The moments preceding the First World War drew the attention of the Communists to these countries. However, the German social democracy did not prevent the war and reformism became the guide of the German Social Democratic Party. The conditions for the realization of the socialist revolution there wilted. On the other side, they were maturing and transforming things in Russia, a development which led to the socialist victory in Russia in October 1917.

How was that possible? Marx's analysis did not indicate that the advanced capitalist economies are those that are more able to transit into socialism? Why did not the Russian economy follow a process similar to the bourgeois revolutions in Europe, with a progressive destruction of feudalism and the formation of market social relations? Did Russia directly jump from a feudal structure over capitalism into the socialist society?

All these questions confounded analysts seeking to understand the specific situation of the rise of the Soviet Union. On one hand, the initial analysis did not have a methodology minimally close to historical materialism (and, therefore, were only journalistic accounts of events). On the other, the instrumental Marxist study of history was handled with too rushed mediations, which resulted in an apparent contradiction between the supposed prediction of Marx on the World Socialist Revolution and the reality of revolution not in an advanced capitalist economy.

To resolve this impasse, Trotsky began to organize the studies of the revolutionary process until that moment. He wrote the book *History of the Russian Revolution* using the method of Marx to study concrete historical processes, trying to identify all active social forces linking the experience of the Paris Commune, the episodes of 1905, February 1917 and finally, October 1917.

The first discovery, in general lines, is exposed in chapter 1 of *History of the Russian Revolution*. Trotsky's central thesis is that the Socialist Revolution occurred in

² One caveat here seems to be important. The notion that the peripheral economies can start the revolutionary process before Western Europe is widespread and should not just go back to Trotsky. Our intention is to point out that the lessons learned from the study of the Russian Revolution by Leon Trotsky coincide with the findings of Marini on the world revolutionary process, taken from the observation of Latin American reality. The question of whether or not Marini was Trotskyist also misses the point of this work. For an autobiography with political and intellectual trajectory of Ruy Mauro Marini, see http://www.marini-escritos.unam.mx/002_memoria_es.htm.

Russian due to its specific economic and social characteristics. These particular conditions opened up the possibility for the events which culminated in the conquer of power by the Bolsheviks.

According to Trotsky ([1930] 2007), due to the high degree of capitalist development in Western Europe, Russian tsarism progressively fell into deep social contradictions. In his study of the decline of the Russian monarchy, Trotsky never fails to consider local events in connection with world events, in particular, with the political and economic movements of the most advanced capitalist regions. Thus, as capitalist structures consolidate, tsarism still existing in the twentieth century began to bump into increasingly narrow limits. Capitalism was developing in Russia, but punctually and with great intention. It was taking advantage of the enormous progress already achieved by the transformations in Western Europe, such as the development of machinery, which was then being used directly in the Russian economy. This combination in Russia, the coexistence of archaic production methods, appropriate to the social relations of production of feudalism, with the productive structure of capitalist industry already formed and thus directly transported from the centers there, caused a situation that could be called 'temporal approximation of the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution'.

Quite briefly, the idea can be summarized as follows: once bourgeois revolutions are consolidated in Europe, capitalism moves to other regions still operating on feudal foundations. The natural process would then be the occurrence of a bourgeois revolution, which rearranges the social relations of production according to the logic of capital. However, due to the fact that industrial structures already form large armies of workers in major urban centers of "backward nations" (as was the case in Petrograd in relation to the vastness of the Russian countryside), and because the communist ideology is already developed in Europe and can be quickly transmitted by means of communication to any corner, the social claims of the bourgeoisie supported by workers (such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression, etc ...) are rapidly converted into exclusive social demands for employees. What is to be a bourgeois revolution is in danger to turn into a socialist revolution.

According to Trotsky, this historical gap can be used consciously to trigger the fall of the old regime in a process that results in an immediate socialist revolution. In his assessment, Lenin knew how to use this window when he helped to, via organization of the Bolshevik party, connect the riots of 1905 to the movements that established and liquidated the Provisional Government headed by Kerensky between February and October of 1917.

On the surface, it seems that there was a leap of steps. But what actually happens is that the permanence of the bourgeois regime is so ephemeral that its historical location becomes extremely compressed. By presenting the concept of "dual power", the moment in which there is coexistence of the Provisional Government and the Soviet, Trotsky ([1930] 2007) points out that all variants of political organization of the state had been tried and discarded as worthless. This means that the forms of the bourgeois state born and die very quickly precisely due to the position of "weak link" played by the region in the overall process of transition from capitalism to socialism. This seems to be a point to be emphasized, since many oppose the notion of revolution of Trotsky because the idea resembles to the possibility of skipping the stage of capitalist development.

Indeed, the original debate in Russia was exactly this. In the nineteenth century, the Russians were trying to understand the characteristics of the capitalist development

in their country. At first, the Narodniks dominated the discussion.³ For them, Russia could avoid the evils of capitalism, going directly to a certain agrarian socialism, taking a parallel path, a deviation from the form of capitalist social organization. In their view, Russian society would have the option to immediately create a utopian society which was supposedly being formed in the minds of the workers. But the publication and dissemination of Marxist thought in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Russia was like a bomb over the Narodniks.

One of the diffusers of scientific socialism for analyzing the Russian reality was Mikhail Pokrovsky. Along with other thinkers who then began to form the first Russian Marxists, he argued that there was no possibility of bypassing the capitalist stage for the construction of socialism. Following Marx, they noted that the conscious socialist society must come about from the advances unconsciously produced by capitalism. Thus, Russia could not but develop capitalistically, in order to later be able to erect the non-primitive communist mode of production. And this is where Trotsky ([1930] 2007) enters in a polemic with the first diffusers of Marxism in the country.

In the appendix to chapter 1 of *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky addresses Pokrovsky and ends up working out the best summarized exposure the Law of Uneven and Combined Development associated with the reality of the Russian Revolution. The problem according to Trotsky is that the reasoning of the Marxists against the Narodniks is mechanical.

In other words, they are absorbing the writings of Marx without adaptation to the actual conditions of Russian history. The general outline of Marx does not apply to specific situations without adequate mediations. The linearity Pokrovsky and other Marxists describe is creating a too abstract model of the development of civilization, where unidirectional passage of pre-capitalist forms for capitalism to socialism must be the same for all regions of the globe. This is not what happens in reality. Empirical observation indicates that some regions develop social forms of capitalist production and at the same time rely on regions where the contradictions between social relations and market traditional social relationships deepen. In this heterogeneous process of development of the productive forces and social relations of production, it is not possible to conceive each national economy or country doing the same schematic trajectory. The linear exposition of transformation is just an example for Marx to consider the whole of global society, but not for specific parts of the entire History. Following the perspective of linearity culminates, for example, in a shameful Eurocentrism which is then unjustified inserted into Marxism (see on this Saludjian et al. (2013). Marx's theory of history and the question of colonies and non-capitalist world. Paper presented at the IIPPE 2013 Conference).

The problem (making an analogy with the evaluation of Rosa Luxemburg ([1912] 1985) on Russian studies about the schemes of reproduction and capitalist crisis) is that the Marxists, in their eagerness to dismount the utopian socialism of the Populists, ended up falling into a dogmatic mechanization.⁴ That is, they started

³ Conhecidos também como populistas russos, os Narodniks são intelectuais russos de classe média que criticavam o desenvolvimento capitalista na Rússia via socialismo utópico. Exaltavam a superioridade do antigo regime em comparação com a formação do trabalho assalariado e se portavam nostalgicamente em relação ao passado agrário.

⁴ Luxemburg ([1912] 1985) faces an intricate theoretical problem: the reproduction of capital over time. The Russian legal Marxists, developing schematic diagrams with the help of mathematics, wanted to show to the populists that capitalism is theoretically feasible. This would be important to defend that Russia can not deviate from the capitalist mode of production. But Rosa Luxemburg argues that the Marxists won the controversy with the populists by excess: in an effort to eliminate the populist proposal,

spreading the idea that every economy must follow a straight trajectory shaped by Western Europe during the formation of its capitalism and its first socialist movements. It seems that this way of presenting the development of the revolution as a linear process is at the heart of the economic construction, mechanical and objectivist Marxism which will be publicized by the USSR State.

It is very important to keep in mind that Trotsky's position is not that of the Narodniks: the Marxists are correct to liquidate the populists because these do not work with the method of Marx, and they have distinct class interests in comparison to the proletariat. It happens that the linearity in Marx is relative: according to Trotsky, it is not necessary to develop of the productive forces in the place (nation) of the Revolution, as it already occurs in some other part of the world. Interconnecting the market makes the effect of the productive forces, so to speak, global. In this sense, the possibilities of production shall be taken at the international level, even if the political structures of the state organization are still framed by national borders

Inequality in combination of different economies creates certain regions where the contradictions between the old and the new system are so great that the two revolutions (the one which eliminates the old regime and the one which paves the way for the socialist regime) are very close in time. In total, the abstract scheme of Marx is logical (humanity will not reach socialism without passing through capitalism), but for specific groups, what counts is that at some point there has been already some capitalist development of the productive forces, which becomes increasingly global. The Socialist Revolution does not presuppose the existence of capitalism *in every corner of the globe*.

In the case of Russia, when the end of feudalism is delineated, the revolution has a strong potential to advance beyond the Bourgeois Revolution. The February Revolution could not be stopped and 'descended the hill' into the October Revolution together with the conscious actions of the Party organization by Lenin (Trotsky ([1930] 2007)). Following the global and internationalist perspective of Marx, Trotsky emphasizes all the time that if the rest of the world does not follow the socialist world revolution which has just begun in Russia, there will be no success. Hence the emphasis on internationalism and binding constant revolutionary links at different locations over time. It is from this point that we can move on to a deepening of the concept of Permanent Revolution.

The important thing to bear in mind here is that the theory formulated by Trotsky represents an alternative path to the one proposed by much of the Left during the twentieth century. The Communist officialdom advocated a strategy of advancing by stages in the development process of the socialist revolution in countries with dependent economy. The orientation of the Third International (after Lenin) to communist parties in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century was to make alliances with sectors of the national bourgeoisie in order to capitalistically develop the local forces of production. Only after this step could they think on how to organize workers for the seizure of political and economic power.

The strategy guided by the Law of Uneven Development and Combined placed in the center of the action the possibility of workers of those peripheral countries to start the process of rupture with capitalism. The problem of weak means of production and underdeveloped productive forces would be solved by relying *on the advances already achieved by the capitalist developed centers*.⁵

they eventually showed the theoretical eternity of the capitalist mode of production with the abstract schemes of reproduction.

⁵ The key is to achieve a combination of inequalities of global capitalism that produces those conditions that occurred, for example, in the Russian Revolution. This is not a recovery of the populist tradition, as it

In the words of Florestan Fernandes (1995), Trotsky, using the theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, developed the concept of Permanent Revolution in a practical and theoretical perspective, 'going to the bottom of the collective dynamics of the dispossessed classes in the impulsion and fusion of dialectics reform and social revolution'. In a different formulation of the uneven and combined development, Florestan Fernandes points out that for Trotsky:

(...) in backward societies, the working and poor classes could accelerate the historical process, performing tasks which are neglected repelled by the propertied classes. As a result, it was up to them to unearth latent historical processes of the existing order, to give them greater speed and to initiate the creation of a new society. (Fernandes (1995) pp. 119-120, A. T.)⁶

And this theoretical formulation of Trotsky, the Law of Uneven and Combined Development, according to this study, is present as a background in the reflections made by Ruy Mauro Marini in his text *Dialectics of Dependency*, which is currently contributing for updating revolutionary Marxism since the 1970s in Brazil and Latin America.

3 The Dialectics of Dependency as expression of the Law in Latin America

It is curious to notice that Ruy Mauro Marini⁷ in his text *Dialectics of Dependency*, in a fair and necessary way, makes references to Karl Marx, Nelson Werneck Sodré, Andre Gunder Frank⁸, Georges Canguilhem, Celso Furtado, Paul Bairoch, Tulio Halperin Donghi, Friedrich Engels, Paul R. Olson, C. Addison Hickman, Maximilien Rubel, Roberto Cortés Conde, Don L. Huddle, Boris Fausto and Ernest Mandel. But at no time does he properly refer to Leon Trotsky.

In his analysis of the Political Economy Thought in Brazil, Mantega (1985) pointed out some relations between the theories developed by Leon Trotsky, Ruy Mauro Marini and Andre Gunder Frank. Several other authors also indicated similarities between Marini and Trotsky, but always from the perspective of strategic revolutionary action.⁹ What we argue is that, a careful comparative reading of *History of the Russian Revolution* and *Dialectics of Dependency* shows that the theoretical analysis of worldwide capitalist development is the same for Marini and Trotsky.

seems to be the case, for example, of some peasant struggles for land. The alternative to capitalism must be born out of capitalism itself. Trotsky does not return to the Narodnyks (or to utopian socialism).

⁶ Quotations translated by the authors are marked with A.T. (authors translation).

⁷ This practice is not unique to Ruy Mauro Marini. Several other authors during the twentieth century and early twenty-first century, used (and use) assumptions and concepts elaborated by Leon Trotsky without due reference. It is possible that this absence of reference is on the one hand, a political problem rather than lack of scientific criteria. Moreover, it is quite likely that many leftist authors did not have contact with the thought of Trotsky at all. Chapter 2 of Camarinha Lopes (2011) is in fact a rediscovery of what had already been laid by the Law of Uneven and Combined Development. It is needed to give proper credit, at least to Trotsky and Lenin, but no guidance was given with respect this because the author did not have contact with the writings of Trotsky at that time. This note serves as an indication why this gap and need to update that chapter.

⁸ Andre Gunder Frank also does not make proper reference to Leon Trotsky. On the influence of Trotsky on Frank, see Mantega (1984).

⁹ Essa proposição teórica apresentada por Leon Trotsky está presente em seu texto elaborada para a IV Internacional, "Programa de Transição – A Agonia Mortal do Capitalismo e as Tarefas da IV Internacional".

Some specific parts of text *Dialectics of Dependency* express clearly the presence of the capitalist mode of production overall motion creating differentiated spaces (or inequalities) between regions which open unique possibilities for starting the next mode of production in localities generally despised by many Marxists and militants trapped in the notion of linearity stageist change. For example, right at the beginning of the introduction to *Dialectics of Dependency*, Marini points out the difference between the developmental trajectory of dependent economies and that of advanced capitalism:

What should be said is that, even in the case of insufficient development of capitalist relations, this notion refers to aspects of a reality that, by its overall structure and operation, may never develop in the same way as the so called economies of advanced capitalists did. (Trotsky ([1930] 2007), p. 138. A. T.)

We believe that the idea presented by Marini upon the inability of economies that have peculiarities (like shortcomings and deformations) to develop in the same way as the advanced capitalist economies did is similar to what the Law and Uneven and Combined Development says. The following excerpt from *History of the Russian Revolution* illustrates how the two concepts (Marini's *Dialectics of Dependency* and Trotsky's Law) are close:

A backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries. But this does not mean that it follows them slavishly, reproduces all the stages of their past. The theory of the repetition of historic cycles – Vico and his more recent followers – rests upon an observation of the orbits of old pre-capitalist cultures, and in part upon the first experiments of capitalist development. A certain repetition of cultural stages in ever new settlements was in fact bound up with the provincial and episodic character of that whole process. Capitalism means, however, an overcoming of those conditions. It prepares and in a certain sense realises the universality and permanence of man's development. By this a repetition of the forms of development by different nations is ruled out. Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. The privilege of historic backwardness – and such a privilege exists – permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages. (...) The development of historically backward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of different stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a planless, complex, combined character. (Trotsky ([1930] 1932), chapter 1 [online source does not show pages]. [Brazilian edition: Trotsky ([1930] 2007), p. 20 e 21])

It is evident that both share the understanding that societies not belonging to the core of the advanced capitalist system will not accomplish the same path already done by the core countries. This is, however, only one aspect connecting a large number of authors concerned with the construction of socialism at a global level.

Regarding the case of the Latin American continent in the first session of the text *Dialectics of Dependency*, Marini presents a historical perspective of economic development, pointing out the historical trajectory that conditioned these economies as dependent. Accordingly, Marini says:

Forged in the heat of commercial expansion in the 16th century promoted the nascent capitalism, Latin America developed in close harmony with the dynamics of international capitalism. As a colony producer of precious metals and exotic goods, Latin America contributed at first to increase the flow of goods and to the expansion of the money supply, which, while allowing the

development of commercial and banking capital in Europe, sustained the European manufacturing system and led the way for the creation of large industry. (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 140. A. T.)

And further he states that:

The creation of modern industry would be greatly hindered if it did not have counted with the dependent countries, and if it were to be held on a strictly national basis. (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 142. A. T.)

This conception of the historical process expressed in the passages cited above has the same structure as in the Law of Uneven and Combined Development. The creation of the capitalist mode of production in the world is an uneven process (increase of the level of the productive forces in very concentrated geographically, for example), but it is also a combined process (economic relations between land and city, or between economies with specific international functions form a system of different parts in combination, making the system as a whole). According to Marini, the dynamics of underdevelopment and economic dependence of many countries is essential to the economic development of other countries. In other words, the trajectory of the capitalist center could not have been made if structures that characterize dependent peripheral economies were not created.

The path of capitalist development in advanced nations is the counterpart of the path of economic development from what was once called the 3rd world. They are not separate stories, but complementary spheres mutually determining each other. This reasoning undercuts the possibility of dependent economies repeating the course of development of the capitalist center. There is no way to follow a succession of the same stage of development covered by them *unless there is scope for creating new peripheries in the still remaining borders of the system*. This seems to be the case with the Brazilian sub-imperialism for example. But towards which area will capitalism advance when united workers of the world organize the use of the technical advancement created by capitalism?

When exposing the historical process of the periphery, Trotsky affirms that:

The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course by no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country. The backward nation, moreover, not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture. In this the very process of assimilation acquires a self-contradictory character. Thus the introduction of certain elements of Western technique and training, above all military and industrial, under Peter I, led to a strengthening of serfdom as the fundamental form of labour organisation. European armament and European loans – both indubitable products of a higher culture – led to a strengthening of tzarism, which delayed in its turn the development of the country. (Trotsky ([1930] 1932), chapter 1 [online source does not show pages]. [Brazilian edition: Trotsky ([1930] 2007), p. 21])

This resembles to the idea that the destiny of the backward countries is subjected to the needs of developed countries. In a certain way (which is very evident in the cultural aspect) the center spreads to the rest of the system the idea that everyone must tread the path already traveled by them, as if the world should copy and try to get closer to perfection attained by the Western Civilization. Amin ([1988] 2009) works this

Eurocentrism thought, dialoguing extensively with the interpretation of combined and uneven development, but without making any reference to the studies of Trotsky.

However, given the objective impossibility of advancing through the same stages as the capitalist core did, the dependent economies must, so to speak, make ‘big jumps’ to modify their social and economic structure. Trotsky captures this idea by stating that:

The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development* – by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course, in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class. (Trotsky ([1930] 1932), chapter 1 [online source does not show pages]. [Brazilian edition: Trotsky ([1930] 2007), p. 21.]

Another influence of the Law of Uneven and Combined Development in Marini’s theory lies in how the functional structure of the capitalist system serves to think the position and function of the Latin American economy in the course of the entire political, economic and historical process. Marini states that:

The strong increase of the industrial working class and, in general, the urban population employed in industry and services, which occurs in industrial countries in the last century, could not have happened if they did not count on the livelihoods of agricultural origin, provided considerably by Latin American countries. This was what allowed further division of labor and specialization of industrial countries as producers of manufactures. But the function fulfilled by Latin America in the development of capitalism was not reduced to this: its ability to create world food supply, which appears as a necessary condition for their integration into the capitalist world economy, will readily contribute to the formation of a market for industrial raw materials, whose importance grows with the same industrial development. (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 143. A. T.)

In the second session of the text, entitled ‘The Secret of unequal exchange’, Marini ([1973] 2005), outlining the vision of the structure of uneven operation of the capitalist system, reflects on the role of Latin America in the global market. He demonstrates the importance of the Latin American economies had in maintaining the condition of development of the capitalist powers. Accordingly, Marini says:

In other words, by incorporating in the global market the wage-goods, Latin America plays a significant role in the increase of relative surplus value in industrial countries. Before considering the other side of the coin, that is, the internal conditions of production that enable Latin America to fulfill this function, we have to indicate that it is not only at the level of their own economy that dependence of Latin America reveals itself as being contradictory: Latin America’s participation in the progress of the capitalist mode of production in industrial countries will also be contradictory. (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 147. A. T.)

The connection between center and periphery fulfilling their roles and mutually reinforcing each other is easily deduced from the writings of Marini. For him, it seems clear that the possibility of economic development of some countries were only possible because of the role that dependent economies in Latin America and other continents met in the system as a whole, because:

(...) [it] is by increasing the mass of increasingly cheaper products in the international market that Latin America not only feeds the quantitative expansion of capitalist production in industrial countries, but also helps to overcome the obstacles created by the contradictory character of accumulation of capital (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 148. A. T.)

For Trotsky, a system with these characteristics is irregular, complex and combined. This perspective is clearly present in Marini's thought when he writes that:

Once converted into a capital-producing center, Latin America must create its own mode of circulation, which can not be the same as that engendered by industrial capitalism and which gave rise to dependence. In order to constitute a complex whole, we need to use concepts of simple elements that are combinable with each other, but that are not equal. To understanding the specificity of capital in the dependent Latin American economy means, therefore, to illuminate the very foundation of their dependence in relation to the world capitalist economy. (Marini ([1973] 2005), p. 161. A. T.)

It is clear therefore that the theory developed throughout the text *Dialectics of Dependency*, even not having the proper reference, has a clear relationship with the conceptions and assumptions present in the Law of Uneven and Combined Development elaborated by Leon Trotsky during the first decades of the twentieth century. Even if Marini used other words to expose the idea that the logic of the structure and functioning of the capitalist system is uneven and combined, we emphasize that the similarity and approach between him and Trotsky is feasible and supported by the parallel between reading of *Dialectics of Dependency* and *History of the Russian Revolution*.

Other passages of text *Dialectics of Dependence* further reinforce the relationship between the theory developed by Marini with the premises of the Law of Uneven and Combined Development. We believe, however, that the quotation above reaches the initial goal of this work because it epitomizes the idea that Marini, in formulating his theory, approaches the central axis of Trotsky in order to explain the capitalist system as a total mechanism composed of heterogeneous parts.

4 Marini: rediscovering the Law or Trotsky's influence?

It is worth mentioning here that other studies had already noticed this similarity between these authors. For example, Mantega (1985) states that there is a 'substantial similarity' between the core of the 'Capitalist Model of Underdevelopment' developed by Ruy Mauro Marini and also by Andre Gunder Frank and the Theory of Permanent Revolution and the arguments put forward in the Fourth International by Leon Trotsky.

Chilcote (1974) retrieves and presents to the readers of the English language the literature on capitalist dependency that was formed in Latin America since the 1960s, making it clear that the topic encompasses several positions that often come into conflict. According to his review of the literature at the time, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in a text written in 1973 for the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento), had indicated the influence of Lenin and

Trotsky in the concept of dependence developed by Latin Americans (Chilcote (1974), p. 7). This indication of the influence of Trotsky over the 'dependentistas' is not further studied in this review of the literature.

Decades later, Chilcote develops with greater attention the power of Trotskyist thought over the theoretical development in Latin America. Chilcote (2009)¹⁰ argues that a reassessment of the left on the strategies emanating from the Soviet Union was certainly encouraged by the rise of the revolutionary movement in Cuba in 1950. It allowed new organizations and ideas. Attention was given to Havana instead of keeping the eyes fixed on Moscow, which opened the horizons of those who saw no alternative to the more traditional recipes that came from the original revolutionary center in 1917. Chilcote (2009) reports that many Latin American thinkers were influenced by Trotsky, and that it is possible to connect the issue of dependence and underdevelopment with four concepts of Trotsky's thought of (backwardness, uneven and combined development, permanent revolution and socialist revolution and transition).

On Marini, specifically, Chilcote (2009), p. 727, highlights the suggestion of similarity already highlighted by Mantega (1984) and argues that Marini, both in *Dialectics of Dependency* and in the text *World Capitalist Accumulation and Sub-Imperialism* of 1978 offered a variant of combined and uneven development through the argument of superexploitation of workers in the periphery and the formation of sub-imperialism. According to Chilcote, 'these ideas were similar to conceptions of Leon Trotsky played in the theses of the Fourth International' (Chilcote (2009a), p. 82). Other Latin American scholars are cited by Chilcote (2009) (Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Pablo González Casanova) to illustrate that even without mentioning Marx, Lenin or Trotsky, they end up arriving at the same elementary categories which form, in a way, the theoretical basis of Trotskyism. This relates to the thesis of this article in the following terms:

The recovery of Trotsky's thought is inescapable in the process of verification and study of the revolutionary process in the twentieth century. This happens because, to put it very clearly, generalizations and orders produced by the Soviet Union directed to the international communist movement were not entirely appropriate for the process of socialist construction in the world. In other words: the official guide of the Soviet state, which crystallized in the theory of socialism in one country, failed. Trotsky, by opposing of this type of model, will be taken up by all those who think the social reality of periphery and its construction of the future society. Even thinkers who are relatively distant to Marxist are compelled to fall into Trotsky, because they analyze reality objectively from the demands of the proletariat (which assumes varied ideological forms according to circumstances and regions). The uneven and combined development is an objective truth that appears in all serious study of the capitalist movement of the world.¹¹ The rediscovery, in fact, is not of the Trotskyist thought, but of the dialectical method itself applied to the study and transformation of society in the last century. It's a recovery of the essentials of the philosophy of praxis of Marx in order to adjust the contemporary actions towards the goal of the Communists.

¹⁰ A translation to Portuguese was made by Clarice Silvestre Domingos. See Chilcote (2009a).

¹¹ Trotsky (1939) summarizes Marx's method of study of history with the example of the Russian Revolution. This small text condenses a long series of knowledge which may encourage the deepening of philosophical questions resolved by the development of scientific socialism. It contains: Marx's effect over philosophy, Trotsky's position on the nature of the Soviet Union and a critique of the concept of non-dialectical theory of evolution. It may be an interesting starting point for overcoming the stageist vision that dominated (and still dominates) various streams of intellectual and political left.

In the case under analysis, that of Marini, what we emphasize is that he arrives at the formulations of Trotsky in his own way. For this reason, he does not use the terminology developed in *History of the Russian Revolution*, giving the impression that his theoretical background is distinct. According to Chilcote (2009a), p. 89, Marini held during the time of POLOP (Organização Revolucionária Marxista Política Operária – Marxist Revolutionary Organization Worker’s Politics) that the main influence over the group was Lenin. The presence of Trotskyism was evident in the various groups of intellectuals and activists, although the direct references to the Law of Uneven and Combined Development is scarce in the work of the theorists of dependency. Chilcote (2009a), p. 89, affirms that Marini translated texts of Trotsky and Lenin on imperialism, indicating that he had direct contact with the written material of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. But his emphasis is to highlight that there was a general influence of Trotsky on dependency theory, especially on the formulations of André Gunder Frank and Ruy Mauro Marini.

Michael Löwy, in his presentation of the theory of uneven and combined development, argues that this is an important contribution of Trotsky because it ‘breaks with evolutionism, the ideology of linear progress and euro-centrism’ (Löwy ([1995] 1998), p. 73). But when he points out that Frank Marini retake the question of revolution in Latin America (is it anti-feudal or anti-capitalist?), Löwy puts Trotsky away from the theorists of dependency, as they affirm the exclusively character of capitalism in the region since the time of colonization (Löwy ([1995] 1998), p. 80, note 19). In view of the supporters of Trotsky’s theory, there would be an ‘amalgam’ between unequal relations of production, which would then be dominated by capital. The presence of traditional relationships, pre-capitalism forms of production, is not denied in this current.

In a certain way, it can be said that the nuclear problem (must the revolution in Latin America: (i) destroy the pre-capitalist social ties, (ii) build and consolidate the bourgeois society or (iii) open the way for a socialist society?) is theoretically solved by the Law of Uneven and Combined Development. It is a question here of political practice on how to temporally align all these three stages of the revolutionary process to finish the Old Colonial System and to trigger the process that starts the Socialist Revolution. The doctrine of permanent revolution teaches that every revolution is a link in the total process of building non-primitive communism. Therefore, it is possible to act at every step with a view to the next in an uninterrupted line of transformations that bind back all changes of social changes toward the social goal of workers.

According to Castelo and Prado (2012), this Marxist line actually dates back to what they call a ‘heterodox tradition of Marxism’ (that of Trotsky, Lenin, Gramsci and Mariátegui) that stood in opposition to the evolutionary and mechanistic view that dominated the official organizations of the labor movement worldwide. They argue that, much later, this Marxist current would be reused by various thinkers of Latin American to rethink the continent in the global development process, since what was implemented between 1930 and 1960 did not solve the main problems of Latin America. But why is this heterodox Marxist position necessarily recovered?

Without explicitly formulating this question, Castelo and Prado (2012) point to the need to avoid supporting developmentalism (renamed as new developmentalism) as something which already failed the test of history. In sequence, they recount the history of the Brazilian social thought to fulminate their argument in a solid critique of the developmental ideology as a safe route for the salvation of the country. They present the main ideas for economic and social development of ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), of ISEB (Instituto Superior de Estudos

Brasileiros) and of the PCB (Brazilian Communist Party). Along this intellectual reconstruction of the Brazilian left, Castelo e Prado (2012) demonstrate comprehensively how Brazilians recover Trotsky. And then they make reference to Felipe Demier, who has raised more precisely how Trotsky is being rediscovered by academia in Brazil.

Firmly situated in the field of Marxism, Demier (2005, 2007, 2008) presents an important contribution to the debate about the possible influences of Trotsky's theory over Brazilian intellectuals throughout the twentieth century. He contextualizes the historical process and demonstrates the relationships involving the Law of Uneven and Combined Development and theoretical formulations policies and strategies elaborated by several intellectuals and political organizations in Brazil. Another concern of Demier refers to his questioning about the silencing practiced in universities against Leon Trotsky. Demier argues that the political trajectory and life of the Russian revolutionary hinders a 'domestication' of his theory, making it harder for being fully accepted in the academic world.

Without further discussion about this issue, we present an interpretation consistent with the scientific method for explaining why Trotsky is necessarily recovered by those who seek to understand the reality of the capitalist periphery in the process of the world socialist revolution. Regardless of the fact that Marini and others have been under the influence of Trotsky, we understand that the theory of Uneven and Combined Development formulated in other words by several other authors demonstrates that reality is objective and that the discovery of Trotsky is true. In a word: the Law of Uneven and Combined Development is an objective fact that can be described in different ways. From the standpoint of science, for purposes of organization the intellectual material produced over time and without disparaging the progress and findings of other authors, it is obligatory to point out that the phenomenon originally described by Leon Trotsky in order to significantly facilitate all process of rediscovery and reconstruction of the internationalist revolutionary perspective.

5 Absence and presence of Trotsky: some considerations

We share, along with the authors mentioned, the vision that it is at least curious to check that Marini makes no reference to Trotsky in *Dialectics of Dependency*, since there is a direct relationship between this book and *History of the Russian Revolution* regarding the general vision about capitalist development worldwide. It becomes even more intriguing when we remember that Marini had access to the work of Ernest Mandel, a leading Marxist economist who publicly expressed Trotsky's influence over his theoretical formulations.

But history has demonstrated the important political battle developed by Trotsky against the bureaucratic politics and counter revolutionary developed under Josep Stalin and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Also, his struggles extended to other countries of the world that relied on the activities of communist parties that were under the auspices of the Third International (After Lenin). During this tough battle, before culminating in his death in Mexico in 1940, Trotsky lived a long process of exile in some countries and his political action was hampered. His theoretical perspective also encountered serious difficulties to spread.¹²

¹² For a more accurate debate on the political and theoretical struggles of Trotsky, see: Bensaid (2008), Bianchi (2005), Coggiola (1990), Coggiola (1999), Coggiola (2008), Deutscher ([1954] 1984), Deutscher ([1959] 1984), Deutscher ([1963] 1984), Mandel (1995), Trotsky ([1930] 1978) and Trotsky ([1936] 2005).

What we realized is that the influence of Stalinist policy and practice in the minds of the working class was pretty deep. In this sense it is possible to assess that, in his battle against Stalinism, Leon Trotsky and his revolutionary theory and practice were marginalized and banished from the academic world, both in the East and the West. As Demier (2005) well remembered:

We do not know the reasons why the name of Trotsky was relegated to a shadow zone. Possibly, the long-time Stalinist hegemony in leftist academia may have contributed to that. Even after the overcoming of the *stageist-dualistic schematism*, a mere allusion to Soviet dissident still continue to be seen as a heretical attitude. (Demier (2005), p., A. T.)¹³

Anyway, we conclude that the theoretical contribution of Leon Trotsky has, if not a central influence in the formulations presented by the Marxist Theory of Dependence as a whole, at least one proven similarity with Marini's view based on the comparison between *Dialectics of Dependency* and *History of the Russian Revolution*.

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¹³ Demier (2012), in his doctorate thesis, continued his research on the hidden connections between Trotsky and the intellectual left in Latin America. He pursued a research project not accomplished by Ruy Mauro Marini which aimed at understanding the bonapartists forms assumed by the Brazilian bourgeoisie. Consultation to this work is necessary in order to further discuss the influence of Trotskyism in Brazil.

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