

# A Note on Iosif G. Abramson

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Iosif Grigorievitch (or Yerzhevitch) Abramson is, with no exaggeration, a legendary figure, a personality highly respected in the Left and among scientific circles in Russia and internationally. A distinguished scientist in nuclear physics and chemistry, with a vast culture in music, poetry, and literature, he stood from his youth throughout his long life a militant communist, an exemplary fighter for universal human emancipation, world Socialism.

He wrote by his life a chapter of living history, which is impossible to summarize in a short introductory note. We could say that he embodies all the tumultuous history itself of the Soviet Land of October, its epic tragedy and the struggle for a catharsis of this tragedy by a renewal of the international struggle for Socialism.

Here a brief sketch of his long journey from the most dramatic moments of a long century. It is based on notes taken from Comrade Abramson's presentations in the international meetings and Marxist Summer Camps organized by the EEK in Greece and by the DIP in Turkey.

Iosif G. Abramson was born in Leningrad, in the Soviet Union, in 1927. It was the year that the struggle between the Left Opposition in the Bolshevik Party and the rising Stalinist bureaucracy had led to the expulsion and repression of the Opposition and of its leader Leon Trotsky. As a young boy Iosif had the chance to see Kirov, the Party leader in Leningrad, before his assassination in 1934- a crime, which became the pretext and starting point of mass repressions and purges by Stalinism in the 1930s. The old Bolshevik guard that led the revolution was in the first rank of the innocent victims.

He was born in a Soviet Jewish family of medical doctors, genuine supporters of the Land of the October Revolution.

His uncle, Iosif Eliashberg, the brother of his mother, member of the West Siberian section of the VKB(b)- the Communist Party- was executed in 1937, during the Great Terror of *Yezhovtchina*, together with Robert Eikhe, the first secretary of the Regional Committee of West Siberia of the VKP(b).

Later, by chance, Iosif Abramson discovered that even his patronym fell victim to bureaucratic anti-Semitism: the name of his father, initially Yerzhyi, was considered “too Jewish” and it was arbitrarily changed into the most Russian sounding “Gregori”...

Nevertheless, Iosif Yerzhevitch or Grigorievitch became from his youth a communist fully dedicated to the cause of Socialism. He participated as an adolescent fighter in the heroic protracted defense of Leningrad under siege against the Nazi troops of invasion. Following the antifascist Victory, he became a member of the Communist Party, dedicated in the rebuilding of the heroic city and Soviet fatherland. He completed his scientific studies in the most advanced fields of physics and chemistry, becoming quite early known among scientists and intellectuals.

In the period 1951-55 Abramson was in Vorkuta, at the Arctic Circle, working as a teacher in a Miners' College. Later, he worked at the Vorkuta filial of All Union Coal Research Institute.

In Vorkuta, he was married, in 1953, with Sonya Galperina, the daughter of Piotr Galperin, the great, non-conventional, well known Soviet psychologist and professor in the Moscow State “Lomonosov” University. Iosif and Sonya lived together for 59 and half years, until her death.

Iosif G. Abramson remained a militant communist, both during the Soviet era and after the inglorious demise of the Soviet Union.

Even now, in an advanced age, he is very active as a member of the Executive Committee of the Russian Party of Communists -*RPK*, as the chief editor of its official organ. the newspaper *Kommunist Leningrada* (The Communist of Leningrad), as a member of the Association of Marxist Social Scientists- *AMSS*, and as a member of the *Levyi Front* (Left Front).

I.G. Abramson is well known for his efforts to overcome the sectarian divisions among communists both in Russia and internationally. As a genuine internationalist, participating often in many political events of the international Left, traveling from Turkey and Greece to Nepal and Argentina, he supports the necessity of the struggle for a new revolutionary International. In this spirit, Comrade Iosif Grigorievitch Abramson was from its beginnings and continues to be a leading member of the International (previously Balkan) Socialist Center “Christian Rakovsky”.

# **Marx's forecast has come true, science *has become* the leading productive force: the global revolutionary leap becomes the categorical imperative of time**

*Iosif G. Abramson*

## **Abstract**

The forecast of Marx that in time science will become an immediate productive force has come to pass. Literally, “from the wheel”, the results of scientific research become technological solutions, and the mass of wage workers are released from production. They are replaced by robots and automated systems of newer and newer generations. And together with this, the main contradiction of capitalism is aggravated. It would seem that it is possible to open new production facilities, new medical and educational centers. This is what modern material production requires (we will specify: materially-virtual). Having become an immediate productive force, science demanded changes in the nature of labor and in the carrier of labor. This is no longer a hired worker, creating a monotonous product by routine

technology. It should be a worker-creator, creating new, increasingly perfect and nature-friendly technologies, a worker - homo creator. Mandatory working hours should be reduced in favor of free time for creative work. And this requires the removal of the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private way of appropriating the results of labor. The socialization of production becomes a categorical imperative.

In the preparatory manuscripts for Capital there is the following paragraph:

Nature does not build machines, locomotives, nor railways, nor electric telegraph ... etc. All these are products of human labor, natural material transformed into organs of human will, dominating nature, or human activity in nature. All these are *organs of the human brain created by the human hand*, the materialized power of knowledge. The development of fixed capital is an indicator of the extent to which *universal public knowledge* [Wissen] has become a *direct productive force*, and hence is an indicator of the extent to which the conditions of the social life process itself are subject to the control of universal intelligence and are transformed in accordance with it; to what extent social productive forces are created not only in the form of knowledge, but also as direct organs of social practice, of the real life process.<sup>1</sup>

Before Marx's prediction came true, in the first quarter of the twentieth century there were two grand physical revolutions (not only the great Russian social one), relativistic and quantum-mechanical. In the middle of the century, fundamental biology discovered a gene that carries inherited traits. In those years, at the turn of the 1940s and 50s, cybernetics was formed, the science of the general laws governing the processes of control and transmission of information in machines, living organisms and society. And from that time, having absorbed the grandiose results of the mentioned revolutionary upheavals in the knowledge of nature, high science began to form a close alliance with technologies, having launched a scientific and technical revolution from the first decades of the second half of the 20th century. The world sees with what speed and with what increasing acceleration, especially since the beginning of the zero years of this century, the technologies of the achievements of the natural sciences are invading, first of all, in the field of information theory. Literally "off the wheels", the results of research and development are becoming technological solutions, and the mass of hired workers are released from production. They are replaced by robots and automated systems of newer and newer generations.

And at the same time the main contradiction of capitalism becomes sharper. Technologies based on the latest scientific discoveries and inventions accompanying them harshly increase labor productivity. The level of production of material goods is relatively quickly becoming adequate to the volume of material needs of employees and the entire population. But the things are becoming more difficult to sell. In addition, their production every year requires a smaller number of people.

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<sup>1</sup> Marx K. & Engels F. Collected Works, v.46. p.2, page 215

And the problem of making a profit becomes more and more difficult for capitalists to solve. This is on the one hand.

On the other hand, the proletariat, especially of the scientific and technological sphere, in the unity and at the same time in the struggle with capital, is opposing the need for creative work, the need for obtaining new knowledge. It takes time free from routine work. There is a new level of aggravation of the contradiction between the social nature of labor and the private-proprietary nature of the appropriation of its results. It is becoming increasingly difficult for capital to keep the exploited majority in a state of consumer society. It is being torn to replace by the society of creators. The human being of routine labor is replaced by the creative human of labor — the creator-worker who creates new, increasingly perfected and environment-friendly technologies, homo creator, as for the first time Alexander Buzgalin in his famous brochure of 1996 (!) “The Future of Communism”<sup>2</sup> perfectly proved.

In September 1917, Lenin concluded: “state-monopoly capitalism is the most complete *material* preparation of socialism, there is a *threshold* of it, there is that step of the historical staircase between which (step) and the step called socialism, there are *no intermediate* steps.”<sup>3</sup> After 100 years, world capitalism is faced with a completely unusual situation for the self-preservation in power. Productive forces require widely educated creators. And they need free time for creativity. Creative work, free time becomes the main need. And how to sell free time? This is not a simulacrum, not a new gadget, not new, super-expensive sneakers, and not a new super-expensive car-crossover. The step about which Lenin wrote is becoming more narrow. But to overcome it an awareness of the categorical need to overcome it must be required. Despite the crises, the waves of which hit the world economy with increasing frequency, global capitalism itself will not leave the historical path. As Vladimir Mayakovsky superbly cried: “Not to overtake it, not to get around, only blow it up is for us the way out!”

And just as the industrial proletariat was, as the most advanced layer of the proletariat, the support of the Bolsheviks in the Great Workers and Peasants Revolution of 1917, so organized, employed in high-tech sectors of the economy, the proletariat of modernity will be the vanguard of the coming revolution, designed to remove the alienation of man from the results of his labor. But in order to become such a vanguard, even this highly educated stratum of the modern proletariat must be imbued with the awareness of the need for liberation from the domination of capital. And the first steps towards this are the wide and convincing propaganda of this truth. The specificity of Russia requires in this connection the liberation from the established Bonapartist regime and the real provision the freedom of speech on state radio and TV channels.

Sometimes people ask: what contradictions will become the sources of the development of a classless society? There will be many, non-antagonistic contradictions. The main of them will be between new technologies, quickly

2 Бузгалин А.В. Будущее коммунизма. М., 1996, 112 с., ISBN 5-87322-368-0

3 Ленин В.И. ПСС, т 34, с.193

replaced by each other, and the requirements for the preservation and improvement of the human environment and the earth's flora and fauna. But there will be many other contradictions. For example: between the threats of planetary elements, disasters and the possibilities of preventing them and minimizing the harm they cause, between the level of knowledge achieved and the unknown phenomena and regularities that need to be revealed, between the creative tasks that people set themselves, and the limited human life, between family and social bringing children up, between different trends in literature and art and so on.