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TO MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a counter political resolution received by the YSA national office. Carol M. and Dick M. from Boston are party members who were members of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. The other four are non-party youth members.

Comradely,


Jack Barnes

TOWARD A MASS WORKING CLASS YOUTH MOVEMENT:

A RESOLUTION ON PERSPECTIVES

SUBMITTED BY:

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I. THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE TASKS CONFRONTING
OUR CONVENTION

Beginning with August 15 a new situation has opened up. On this date President Nixon fired the first shot in this new period of class war. This new stage in the international class struggle is characterized by the surfacing of all the contradictions of the capitalist system which were built up underneath the "stability" of the boom period. What has surfaced now is the intense world financial crisis, raging out of control and capable of precipitating a collapse even more disastrous than the fall of 1929.

In order to survive, the bourgeoisie must now drive back the working class and destroy the gains which it made during the long and hard years of struggle. What is posed now before the working class is the choice between fascism or socialism.

This crisis deepens as well the crisis of Stalinism and all those bureaucratic agents of capital that fed off the boom period. This crisis brings to the surface and exposes the fraudulent theories which have been based upon the belief in the permanency of the boom.

The prediction made by Trotsky before his assassination at the hands of Stalin's agent has been completely verified: The second imperialist war opened the flood-gates of an unparalleled revolutionary crisis; a crisis which still continues unabated and indeed has intensified in this period, despite the ebb and flow of the international class struggle.

Only the absence of revolutionary leadership has permitted capitalism to survive - with the full collaboration of Stalinism and reformism. However, imperialism has not been able to inflict an historic defeat on the world working class.

The crisis of imperialism has intensified and deepened; the equilibrium between the classes upon which the Soviet bureaucracy rests has been destroyed. The revolutionary movements of the 1950's and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 expressed in terms of the proletarian revolution the dual crisis of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy.

At the Bretton Woods Conference, the bourgeoisie embarked upon a deliberately inflationary ~~inflationary~~ course which they hoped would bring stability and contain the militancy of the working class. These agreements did not reflect a position of strength, but of weakness.

With the sharp crisis of capitalism, these very agreements which served to prevent trade war have now been thrown out the window by Nixon. The de-facto devaluation of the dollar and the 10% tax on imports has opened the stage for trade war, bringing with it the opening of a new period in the international class struggle.

The major factors constituting and explaining the relative strength and duration of the capitalist boom period were the technical changes in important sectors of industry, the expenditure of billions of dollars in armaments, and of course the export of American capital. But all of these factors taken together do not constitute a base, or prepare a base, for a new stage of capitalist development which could have overcome the basic contradictions in capitalism discovered by Marx, and analyzed in their further development by Lenin. However, this conception is very evident in the new "theory" of Mandel and others. These so-called "Marxists" proceed from the abandonment of the historical role of the working class and base their analysis and theories upon the surface stability of capitalism during the boom period. Thus they reject Lenin's basic conception - that of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. A stage which is dominated by wars and revolutions.

According to Mandel and Co., the technical changes which have taken place since WW II laid the basis for a "Third Industrial Revolution." This new industrial revolution is the source of a new stage of capitalism, specifically "neo-capitalism," which would be more capable of utilizing the powers of the state (e.g. control of the economy through legislation, etc.) and, eventually, through a series of "structural reforms," take this process into socialism.

While it is true that these technical changes have set the basis for the development of productive forces on an unprecedented scale, in the period of imperialist decline, these changes increasingly threaten the destruction of these same productive forces. Capitalism can only develop under the signs of parasitism, destruction and barbarism. These and other changes in production methods cannot be contained within the framework of national and private property relations. The development of the means of production on the one side, and the private ownership of those means of production and national frontiers on the other, provide the contradiction which is at the base of the class struggle. The two world wars were nothing but the revolt of productive forces confined by national frontiers.

To further point out the absurdity of these revisionist theories we may examine the "theory" of the "permanent arms economy." This theory maintains that capitalism can stabilize itself by increasing outlays on military preparation. It is true that this factor, arms spending, contributed to the post-war boom. However, these expenditures have also brought their own series of contradictions which have assumed vast proportions in recent years. In conjunction with the sharpening struggle of the working class they have tended to force wages up, thus acting as a contributory factor to the inflationary pressures afflicting all the capitalist countries. These pressures have been bound up with the maturing crisis in the monetary system of the world. This

crisis was further aggravated by the war in Indochina. A war which was largely financed by printed currency. This deepened the already chronic problems of inflation and undermined the stability of the dollar. This mishap was not the result of an oversight of the capitalists and their government, but a recognition of the strength of the working class and their unwillingness to finance the war.

What the revisionists have labelled "stabilizing factors" were, in reality, adjustments of the economic mechanism to the strength of the working class.

The ability of the government to intervene in the economy has been seen by revisionists and reformists as providing a way out, that is, to overcome the contradictions of the capitalist system. This provided directly the opposite. Temporarily securing full employment and relatively high wages (despite rising prices) the adoption of Keynesian economic techniques has inadvertently built up the fighting spirit of the working class. It is this spirit and the strength of the working class which, despite the reformist and Stalinist leaders, is now decisive in pushing the crisis of the economy to its conclusion which in turn finds its direct reflection in the crisis confronting the labor movement and the bureaucracy.

Not one of the so-called "stabilizing factors" to which the revisionists and reformists have attached themselves can in any way overcome the contradictions of capitalism. On the contrary, these contradictions have been sharpened over the years and will have to resolve themselves in the coming period.

From now onward imperialism can only maintain itself by destroying all the conquests of the working class in the advanced, colonial, and semi-colonial countries. Every day hundreds of workers and peasants are murdered in Indochina by American imperialism and were murdered in Indonesia. We are witnessing

the same today in the Sudan. In Africa and Latin America, bloody repression by the civilian and military regimes in the service of imperialism spreads. We have the example of Bolivia where the fascists have been successful in disbanding the Popular Assembly and initiating a reign of terror against all working class tendencies.

After the collapse of its plans for the stabilization of the national bourgeoisie, this is the final solution employed by American imperialism to halt the disintegration of the economy and society in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and dam up the revolutionary current within these countries.

In the advanced capitalist countries the working class is no less threatened. The attempt of the imperialist governments to bring the labor movement under its direct control by incorporating the trade unions, directly or indirectly, into the state, grows out of the necessity for the bourgeoisie to destroy all independent organizations of the working class. The Industrial Relations Act in Britain and the wage freeze and Pay Board in the U.S. are part of this process. For imperialism to survive it must now move against its own working classes.

The working class is not going to allow itself to be stripped of its hard-won gains. Imperialism ^{is} fighting for its life against a working class which has not known defeat for a whole generation. Class struggles on an international scale are inevitable. On the agenda is social revolution in the capitalist countries and political revolution against the bureaucracies in the workers' states. The final outcome of this struggle will depend on the absence or presence of disciplined, revolutionary leadership, of Trotskyist leadership on a national, and, above all, international scale.

Stalinism is the principle counter-revolutionary force within the workers' movement. This period requires a sharp and bitter

struggle against Stalinism and what it poses for the working class-- defeat and subordination to capitalism through reformism. This must be fought against on every front; through this process a Labor Party must be constructed, one that is independent of both Stalinism and petty-bourgeois politics.

The heart of this fight will be in the trade unions. Now Nixon must seek to break the unions. This is why the fight for the labor party and for general strike action against Nixon is so vital. The role of the YSA must be to fight for such a perspective among youth--student and working class--and to aid in bringing this program to the trade union movement.

II. THE THEORY OF NEW RADICALIZATION

The theory of the new radicalization flows directly from Mandel's theory of neo-capitalism, and more specifically from his theory of a new working class. The new working class is composed of students, technicians, etc., in other words it is composed of the petty-bourgeoisie.

The central contradiction in society is no longer irreconcilable struggle of class against class, but rather, a psychological struggle around questions of alienation. It sees the alienation of the petty-bourgeoisie as the motive force of the radicalization of the working class.

The theory of the new radicalization states that as the radicalization continues it would draw the working class and its social weight and force behind it. This subordination of the working class to the struggles of the petty-bourgeoisie is a dangerous trend that must be confronted and defeated by ~~the~~^{DVF} movement. The petty-bourgeoisie is thrown into a crisis as the irreconcilable contradictions between capital and labor burst through to the surface.

In this period the petty-bourgeoisie must follow the leadership of the working class or fight the working class,

by going over into the camp of the bourgeoisie. Before August 15th, the theory of the new radicalization was incorrect, but now this theory is not only incorrect but is suicidal for both the YSA and the working class. In this period of imminent class struggle this theory is totally reactionary.

III. TOWARDS THE WORKING CLASS YOUTH

In order to construct a revolutionary youth movement, we must turn away from the "new radicalization." We cannot mobilize youth to overthrow capitalism on the basis of surface reflections of the class struggle and subordinate the working class to middle class movements. We must turn to the working class and to its most dynamic section, the youth.

Central to this must be a turn to Black and minority youth in particular. The racism perpetrated by the bourgeoisie is a devisive ^{tool} ~~hook~~, and makes the Black minority youth bear all the worst of capitalist oppression in its most concentrated form. Unemployment, inferior education and living conditions find their most oppressive expression among minority youth. Because of this, these youth become the strata that can give the sharpest lead to the class as a whole. This means that the fight to bring a revolutionary Marxist program to these Black and minority youth is crucial to the development of a working class youth movement. This means a fight against the existing consciousness of the youth, for an understanding of dialectics. Only by combatting the reactionary ideology of nationalism, can this be accomplished. Nationalism delivers these youth into the hands of the bourgeoisie by attempting to isolate their struggle from that of the working class as a whole. Racism is a form of class oppression used by the bourgeoisie to divide the working class and disarm it. The way to combat racism is to bring the youth into the struggle to lead the class to power.

Precisely because the YSA has supported Black and other forms of nationalism, it is today the most white of all organizations on the left. The only road to bringing a large section

of minority youth into the YSA is through an uncompromising struggle against nationalism for a working class perspective.

We cannot build the YSA on any other basis. Students can play an important part in this process, but not by reinforcing middle class illusions. Only by subordinating themselves to the struggle to bring Marxism to students against Stalinism and reformism and to go beyond the campuses to the working class youth can middle class youth break themselves from their class roots and play a role in building a working class youth movement.

This means taking the fight for a Marxist program into the working class neighborhoods, housing projects and schools. In this period, with the working class moving forward sharply against the new stage of attacks begun August 15, this fight, and only this fight, will be able to mobilize thousands and thousands of working class youth to give leadership, along with the revolutionary party, to the revolutionary struggle of the working class as a whole.