The necessity of a youth international: Road to revolution

by Max Macht, June 2025 – 7 minutes reading time

In general

Retrenchment policy, forced migration, war and climate change are merely symptoms of capitalism which the global youth gets to experience. These crises don't exist as isolated phenomena. They are all the expression of the increasing capitalist crisis. This is happening internationally: young people are being used as fuel at the front in context of the Ukraine war or the civil wars in Sudan and Congo, they are met with waves of retrenchment policy in dilapidated schools and are fleeing from war and climate catastrophes worldwide. The crisis is not a recent development but has its roots in the financial crisis of 2008, which lead to mass dismissals as well as social cuts in an attempt to unload the crisis onto the working class. As a reaction there have been mass protests and fights against these attacks such as Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain, which remained unsuccessful and resulted in the defeat of the entire working class. The Covid pandemic has led yet to another facet of the crisis through the interruption of the production process as well as the temporary disruption of production chains, which triggered a worldwide recession and taking on debt to get through it. In the end, this simply posed a delay of the crisis thus giving more time to shift the consequences onto the working class, as we can see now and back in 2008.

The youth is even more affected

Young people are especially affected by these crises. We´re not only experiencing the immediate results of economic instability but also the additional oppression of youth causing unemployment and precarious (working) circumstances. The youth is socially oppressed because they are in a stage between childhood and fully entering the labor market. This stage is designated by reproduction, meaning that its primary function is to secure

the continuation of production process which is characterized by preparing us for the labor market and acquiring basic and specific skills on that ground. The process is often not profitable because young people are still in a stage of becoming a beneficial workforce instead of pressing out surplus value. Furthermore, young people face even more exploitation because their work is declared as simply “gathering experience”, making it less worthy. Beyond that, the youth rarely gets to make decisions over their own life and are strongly dependent on the bourgeois nuclear family.

Despite the oppression, its often young people standing in the front row on the streets, in protests and social movements. They are more prone to understanding the contradictions of capitalism because they are still in the process of being brought up by bourgeois ideology and are less demoralized compared to older workers generations, which have long fought in movements without long term success. Young people often have less to lose and are ready to sacrifice more. This actuality highlights the necessity for a revolutionary youth international in order to address young people and to introduce them to a revolutionary program.

Internationalism as the basis for revolution

Capitalism is in its highest stage, imperialism. In this phase, production and capital are concentrated in a few monopolies and there is a fusion of banking and industrial capital. There has also been an increase in the importance of the export of means of production, i.e., capital over goods. This has led to the formation of internationally operating monopolistic capital associations that have divided the entire world among themselves. Capitalism is therefore a global system, and the class enemy is organized internationally.

Since capitalism functions as a global system, the revolution must also be international. An isolated revolution that only wants to bake its own bread is doomed to failure, as the Stalinist degenerate workers‘ states such as the USSR and the GDR have shown. The struggle against capitalism can only be successful if it is organized internationally; the planning, implementation, and analysis of national and local work must be based on the international situation. In order to overthrow capitalism and achieve a socialist society, a

revolutionary international with a clear program that makes this its task is needed.

Youth international as a communist fighting organization

The basis of an international youth organization must be a revolutionary program. This program includes analyses and resulting demands that are formulated on the basis of a transitional program, i.e., demands that build a bridge between struggles for concrete reforms and the revolutionary transition to socialism, with the aim of raising the consciousness of the struggling workers and youth within these struggles and winning them for a revolutionary program. This stands in clear contrast to the Stalinist and social democratic “mini-maxi” programs, which contain and separate reform demands on the one hand and maximum demands that are only possible under socialism or communism on the other. Due to the lack of a bridge to socialism and revolution, the maximum demands degenerate into mere toothless Sunday speeches, while reformist demands are worked through in day-to-day politics.

The program is the calling card of every organization. It shows what it fights for and how it intends to wage these struggles. The program of a youth international must contain clearly defined demands and analyses for the struggle against capitalism and for a socialist future. It must reflect the experiences of the organization and the historical experiences of the workers‘ movement and be at the highest level of Marxist research. At the same time, it is also an important tool for members to support their own activity and to educate themselves. The program can also be used as a measurable element to check the accuracy of past analyses and demands and to adjust them if necessary. This also means that, for us, a program should not be set in stone, but must be continually adapted and updated to current developments.

Bringing consciousness to the class

Revolutionary consciousness does not develop through purely economic,

operational, or day-to-day political struggles. In order to fight for a revolution, workers must be convinced that overcoming capitalism is necessary and possible. This revolutionary consciousness requires knowledge of Marxism and cannot develop spontaneously through class struggles, as these remain at the level of reform and the goals can be achieved within capitalism without directly contradicting it. Therefore, the main task of revolutionaries is to intensify existing struggles and bring the youth and the working class into contradiction with the system. Bringing revolutionary consciousness into the class by winning workers to a revolutionary program—this is a task that requires a communist organization. For the Youth International, this means bringing class consciousness to the proletarian youth, especially to its leading sections.

Relationship to the revolutionary party

In general, the youth alone cannot overthrow capitalism. This task falls to the proletariat. That is why it is essential for the Youth International to work closely with the revolutionary party and the revolutionary international, to engage in programmatic discussions, and to maintain formal relations. The concrete relationship to the party, whether the youth is part of the party or an organization that is organizationally, programmatically, and financially independent, cannot be generalized. This relationship must be determined depending on the severity of the class struggle, repression, etc. However, it is important that the youth are given the space to make their own mistakes and learn from them in order to train revolutionary cadres capable of fighting. But the Youth International also has the task of correcting political mistakes made by the party and leading the struggle for revolutionary politics, should this be necessary. The betrayal of social democracy during and before the First World War illustrates where the Youth International, unlike the Second International, had a clear anti-militarist understanding.

For the building of a revolutionary Youth International!

The building of a Youth International cannot happen in a linear fashion. In

order to build an effective international youth organization, we must discuss our program and theirs with other youth organizations. This task is all the more urgent in a period of intensified class struggle, a global shift to the right, and a general crisis of leadership among the proletariat and youth. These discussions and the development of a common practice can lead to a merger of organizations on the basis of a clear common program and a revolutionary strategy.