

DRAFT REB THESIS ON

PERSPECTIVES

THE TOTALITY OF THE CRISIS: NIXON'S WARS AT HOME
AND ABROAD, RAMPANT RACISM, AND RECESSION

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I. Crisis and State-Capitalism

The fact that something as world-shaking as Nixon's wars at home and abroad could be triggered off not alone by his stealthily-ordered invasion of Cambodia on April 30th, but by an "off the cuff" reference to anti-war students as "bums", bears stark witness to the insoluble contradictions tearing at the vitals of American capitalism. Neither his seeming retreat from that telling comment, nor even his pullout of American troops from Cambodia on the June 30th date set, succeeded either in closing the credibility gap, or influencing the Senate to defeat the Cooper-Church amendment to stay his hand from further misadventures in Southeast Asia. At home his "Southern Strategy" may not have won him Wallace, but has taken from under the presidency any ground on which to stand among blacks.

The sickness of this senile land is without parallel. Even so moderate an organization as the NAACP, presently (July 3) meeting in Cincinnati, has described Nixon as "anti-Negro."* Whether one looks at the Mississippi State (storm) troopers' dastardly shooting up of a black college woman's dormitory, or at the massacre of white students at Kent, Ohio, or at the stock market spiralling downward, the unbridgeable chasms between races, between generations, between classes, (not to mention the disorientation within the capitalist class) -- all bespeak disjuncture. It is as if that lord of plagues Agnew had succeeded in dismembering the whole nation. The outpouring of 150,000 opponents to the invasion of Cambodia is but prelude to the struggles ahead. So serious is the recession that is enveloping the country that labor too -- judging by the wildcats of the postal workers, teamsters, and women office workers as well as the welfare workers -- is girding itself for battles that will not limit themselves to the bargaining table.

April 30, 1970 will no doubt go down in history as the day of imperialist idiocy. Marxist-Humanists aren't concerned with Nixon's idiocy, i.e. the ignominy of the super U.S. imperialist tiger being discovered tail-ending such little mice as Thieu-Ky-Nol. What is of importance is the one thing none of the rulers, big and little, planned or anticipated. This, just this, produced the wars at home -- Kent, Ohio, Augusta, Georgia, Jackson, Mississippi. Because such developments can transform Nixon's attempts at a preventive civil war into a social revolution, we need to spend a great deal of time on the subjective as well as the objective aspects of the world situation.

* Bishop Stephen G. Spottswood compared the Nixon Administration to the one that ruled at the end of World War I, when the worst Ku Klux Klan-organized riots covered the land. "This is the first time since 1920 that the National Administration has made it a matter of calculated policy to work against the needs and aspirations of the largest minority of its citizens. . . ." New York Times, July 5, 1970.

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It is necessary to probe, why it is that, despite the birth of a mass anti-war movement, the Old Left remains almost as isolated as before 1965 when the new generation of revolutionaries was born in opposition to Johnson's bombing of North Vietnam. It is necessary to see how pragmatism has kept the New Left so unclad ideologically that it is easy for the old ideologues to strip it totally bare of all sense of direction. The New Left remains suspended over the abyss, the theoretic void, without any awareness, either of what Marx called "the spontaneous self-organization of the proletariat", or of the philosophy of the self-determination, not only of nations but of ideas. The result is that the youth become prey to opposing "vanguards". Pivotal as this is, it is necessary first, however, to face the recession for the objective situation remains the foundation of the subjective. Whether we're considering recession or the invasion of Cambodia; whether the question is the Middle East or the Sino-Soviet conflict, the global crises underlie the internal conflicts, be these the black revolution, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the youth and the women's liberation.

Thus, simultaneously with the new "Vietnams", one can chalk up many "historic firsts" in the newly aggravated recession. Of all the post-war recessions, this is the first that is occurring while a war is in progress. It is the first time that even the arms industry has been unable to stop the fall in the rate of profit. Indeed, by now many capitalists claim they are experiencing fall not only in the rate, but in the mass, of profits. In any case, it is the first time when the country is experiencing, at one and the same time, planned unemployment and unplanned galloping inflation.

At the same time, and despite government insomination of artificial profits into the armaments industry, there is a steep drop in business investments with Big Business calling this "the tailend of the postwar boom in capital spending." Obviously, the government spending nearly 30 billion dollars a year on the Vietnam war, alone, is considered postwar (sic) "capital spending."

To be precise, the annual rate of accumulation in 3rd quarter of 1969, which was \$10 billion, is now down to practically zero growth. Not even the Administration spokesmen are talking of an upturn in the second quarter of 1970. Indeed, Walter W. Heller, ex-Chairman for Council of Economic Advisors under President Kennedy, sees no serious upturn for third quarter. The Brookings Institute thinks unemployment will, by mid-1971, rise above the present 5%. All this, moreover, is a question of talking in "average" nationally. In Seattle, this 5% "average" becomes 8.1%. As for the inner-city, in any big city -- unemployment among blacks in the ghetto is as high as 20%.

What is amazing in the development of postwar capitalism is that despite all the "lessons" from its war experiences as well as from full state capitalism of the Russian variety, which is presently also experiencing a crisis; despite the "wisdom" of planning and deficit financing; despite bloated armaments production, not to mention "controlled" cyclical crises, nothing, absolutely nothing, stops recessions from occurring and recurring -- and heading toward yet another war. In a nuclear age there are H-bombs enough to kill each other 100 times over!

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In a word, all of these "firsts" add up, not to something unique, but to the most characteristic textbook, that is if it is Marx's textbook analysis of crises resulting from the mainspring of capitalism -- paying the worker at value -- the minimum it takes to produce and reproduce his kind -- extracting from him the maximum of unpaid hours of labor (surplus value), the greater part of which keeps getting invested in machinery, and the lesser in living labor. This mainspring of capitalism, i.e. motive of capitalist production, is at odds with the method of automated production which needs ever fewer living laborers to operate. Nothing, including total statification of production, can resolve this overpowering contradiction, except the abolition of value and surplus value production.

If this factor of state intervention in the economy appeared only as a war phenomenon during World War I., the world Depression should have made us realize that we had moved to a new stage of world economy: state capitalism. In any case, lush as the mass of profits still seem to be under "private enterprise", and heavily as the extraction of unpaid hours of labor weigh on workers' backs, the truth is that there isn't enough capital produced to keep this crazy capitalistic system going with the self-same profit motive on an ever-expanded scale of production. The proof at the moment is seen from the fact that neither Plans (and state intervention in the economy is state planning) nor Armaments; neither "liquidity" nor planned unemployment while controlling the cyclical crises from becoming full-scale Depression; neither neo-colonialism, nor even "industrial holocaust" of US also over its West European allies in technologically advanced lands indeed, and not even an ongoing war, can stop the decline in the rate of profit, the totality of the crisis.

The irony of our age of absolutes is that just when some self-styled Marxists were ready to stress that the decline in the rate of profits is "only" a tendency which is softened by many counter-tendencies, (and that includes that of state capitalism calling itself Communism) the most overpowering factor of the decline in the rate of profit is recognized by the capitalists themselves. For the truth is: this is an age when even from a "purely economic" point of view, Marx's forecast of capitalist collapse has moved from theory to life. All the more important is it to look at the totality of the crisis as it appears politically in the disorientation among the super-powers vying for world mastery.

II. Cambodia and the Middle East, or the US, Russia and China

Who would have thought that Nixon would carry out the acts that Che Guevara couldn't get revolutionaries to do -- create 2 or 3 Vietnams?

And succeed where Mao had not succeeded -- convince North Vietnam to prefer a protracted war to "peace negotiations" and thereby follow Giap's guerrilla philosophy that extension of fields of battle is the best way to down a foreign enemy? Yet Nixon has made all this come to pass. By ordering the invasion of Cambodia on April 30, 1970, Nixon has, with a single stroke, not only extended the battlefields, protracted the war, but, after all, created a single, unified Indo-Chinese people to fight US imperialism. Not even Ho Chi Minh, who had tried for 2 decades, was that successful in creating

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a single revolutionary front throughout the entire peninsula.

Sihanouk, who tried so hard to keep Cambodia neutral that he even launched an attack against the Khmer Rouge just a few months before he himself was overthrown was forced into a united front, not only with the Khmer Rouge, but also with North Vietnam, the Vietcong, the Pathet Lao, not to mention Mao's China as the headquarters of his Government in exile. As against Nixon's ignorance, however, Chou-En-lai knew how to keep to the sidelines of this United Front formation created at Kampuchea. In a word, far from signifying an end to the Vietnam war, the pullout of American ground troops on June 30th from Cambodia, even as the invasion of April 30th, has laid bare just what Nixon means by "Vietnamization". Under the delusion that he can have Asians fight US wars if only he arms them, pays them handsomely -- and devastates their country, Nixon has launched the second Indo-China War. Nixon knows as well as any body that 1970 is not 1954; that "Vietnamization" as a Korea type of "ending of the war" cannot be. But now that the Middle East is likewise expanding from an Arab-Israeli confrontation into a Russia-USA glaring at each other, he hoped that he could sell the idea of a successful Vietnamization to his alleged "silent majority."

Thus, at the San Clemente White House, what had been planned and touted as a glorification of "victory" (Nixon's designation of the Cambodia misadventure) with the representatives of the three major TV networks turned, seemingly suddenly, into a warning to Russia about the "terrible" danger in the Middle East. Thoroughly flustered, Nixon made parallels to the missile crisis in Cuba. While no such parallel exists, Russia's strategic placement of SAM 2's and 3's in Egypt, American imperialism's delayed reaction to Russia's acting in Egypt exactly as US imperialism acted in Vietnam, sending in "advisers" on the way to their possible becoming participants must be closely examined in a global, and not just an Arab-Israeli confrontation, context.

The Arab-Israeli confrontations have been continuous ever since the outright Six Day War in 1967 had stopped, but no peace resulted. The fact that Nixon, when he first won the elections, thought he could re-establish American oil interests in Arab lands merely by announcing a new "even handed" policy, is proof enough of how far Nixon was from comprehension of reality. Russia wasn't playing that game anymore. Not since 1969, when it held its confrontation with China at the Ussuri!

The American "experts" on the Middle East had long noted that reopening the Suez Canal shortens the route both between the Baltic and Black Sea ports and to the East -- to India and North Vietnam, not to mention the access it allows the considerable Russian fleet bound for the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. They further told Nixon (as if he didn't know US imperialism's global interests) that the whole discussion of whether to sell or not to sell jets to Israel was no longer the real problem. Russia's goal by now is, as a British expert put it, "freedom of transit thru the Dardanelles, the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal -- even at the price of supporting the Arab states in the extinction of Israel." The latter counts for little to Russia, not because she cares for the Arab States but because she wants the Suez Canal reopened for her own imperialist and strategic interests, including the Sino Soviet conflict.

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Nixon's "sudden" interest in the Middle East as the crossroads of the world where a change in the balance of the super powers could set off World War III has, however, nothing to do with the Sino-Soviet conflict, though it was Nixon's imperialist invasion of Cambodia that created the opportunity for Mao to regain everything, or nearly everything, he had lost when he refused a United Front with Russia to help Vietnam as US rained its bombs on it. This time, as against Russia's wavering over Prince Sihanouk's ouster, China not only became the headquarters for the Cambodian Government in Exile, Mao also convinced the Communists in Cambodia (whom Sihanouk had battled before he himself was overthrown) to accept him, both as Leader for Cambodia, and the Chairman of the newly-created United Front of the Indo-Chinese people. Russia was excluded from this meeting at Kampuchea, but this did not appear as a refusal to unite with all anti-US forces. Rather, it was a way to unite the Indo-Chinese people directly involved in the struggle against US imperialism. Formally Mao's China was not part of the conference. With his May 20th call for "world revolution", Mao could even lay claim to being a Marxist.

Outside of the exploitative relations in China itself, the one thing, however, that belied Mao's pose as a "world revolutionary" and exposed his likeness to Russia, as to the other super-power aiming for world mastery USA, was his attitude to the Middle East. Just as he had crowned Prince Sihanouk as a revolutionary, so had he crowned, not only Arafat but also that fascist, Shukairy, and that as far back as the eve of the 1967 war. He now proceeded to prove the totality of his approval of the "Arab Revolution" by stressing that he had never recognized Israel.* Neither the fact that Mao had not yet conquered power when Israel was born, nor their glorification

* To try to divert from the concrete reality of how Israel was born and the class struggle in each country with some general theory of a "two camp" world as if only the Jewish masses need to overthrow their ruling classes, but the Arab masses are with their exploitative rulers because they represent "the progressive forces" is criminal. To the extent that Israel is now an occupying force, resistance against it will, and is, emerging. It is this, and not commandos from without that serve as a beacon also for the Jews who are opposing Zionism. It was the threat of genocide that unified the nation. Commandos from without, led by exhorters of the "annihilation of Israel" cannot, however, be appointed as a "revolutionary force," not even when Mao adds his blessings to those of the fascist Shukairy.

of Stalin who had been the first to recognize Israel because, at the time, the whole of the Middle East, except for Israel, was in Western imperialist hands, stopped their present rewriting of the history of Israel as the "creation of Western imperialism."

" Socialist" rhetoric, notwithstanding, Arafat has, in one respect, sunk one step lower than Shukairy. As against the latter who claimed he would recognize Jews as Palestinians if they had come to the country before 1947, Arafat, in July, 1968, authored the 14th Palestine Council Covenant which "recognized" as Palestinians only those Jews who had lived in Palestine before 1917. That this meant dooming most of the 2 1/2 million Jews in Israel (and, precisely, it should be added, those who were not Zionists, who came not "to colonize" but to attempt establishing "multinational socialist republic") seemed of little concern to Mao who had the Sino-Soviet conflict on his mind.

N either Mao-Arafat or Brezhnev-Nasser were worried over the fact that, as against the planned genocide of the Jews, Nixon's "peace plans" might appear as the more "progressive" since all were sure that the "Left" knew not how to distinguish their opposition to US imperialism from that of Russia-China and the "Arab revolutionists" even when these include actual slave masters as those in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, much less the new "revolutionaries", such as Arabs fighting their black countrymen who hunger for self-determination. Therein, therein precisely, lies the tragedy of the American Left. This manifests itself not only on the question of the Middle East, but of the black revolution. This they are all supposed to be for, and yet their association is not with the masses, but strictly with those self-styled vanguard leaders, as if they, not the black masses, are the true vanguard of the American revolution.

Marxist-humanists are concerned with class struggle and national liberation struggles, not with struggles between state powers, be they nuclearly-armed or only nuclearly ambitious. For the revolutionary movement, the danger lies, not merely in state powers, military might, exploitative relations -- that enemy they know. The danger lies in the fact that the "Left", Old and "New", which do distinguish themselves from US imperialism, yet hardly bother to do so from the Russian or Arab positions, much less the Chinese as if Marxism didn't signify, first and foremost, and above all, from all existing exploitative state powers. The pragmatism that pervades the New Left like the Stalinism that pervaded and pervades the Old Left, equally lay bare the theoretic void opened up in the Marxist movement since Lenin's death. Leon Trotsky did fight Stalinism and did, with the rise of fascism, attempt to reassess also "the Jewish question". It is true that, to the extent that Trotsky refused to face the reality of the class nature of Stalin's Russia or the new stage of world economy as being state capitalist, he left his "heirs" a dual heritage of world revolution, on the one hand, and Russia as a "workers' state", on the other hand, but he is, in no sense, responsible for the Trotskyist epigoni tail-ending of Marxism, much less whitewashing the Arab States as if being anti-Israel ** makes one "pro-Arab

revolution" and one needs but to enunciate "Arab revolution" to have feudal states become "progressive ones". It is not by turning to Al Arafat, however, that we will find a way to uproot American capitalism. Let us, instead, turn to the black revolution.

III. The Black Revolution and the Impasse in the New Left

From three very different blacks — an auto worker, a GI, a college student — on three totally different topics — the recession, Vietnam, Nixon's "Southern Strategy" from three separated places — Detroit, Vietnam, Virginia — came comments so alike as if spoken by one person on a single topic. The worker said: "Racism is the issue. There is no middle road any more. The days we accepted what Reuther used to say — 'We have to take the lesser of two evils.' — are gone. You have to go to the extreme now. In that the Black Panthers are right. We need a revolution."

The GI who is at this very moment still fighting in Vietnam and experiences just as much discrimination as in the South — the 2 year survey of black GIs by a black reporter and published in New York Times should be studied by all — said "The Black Panthers is what we need as an equalizer. The beast (the white man) got his Ku Klux Klan. The Black Panthers give the beast something to fear, like we feared the KKK all of our lives." The overwhelming majority of the GIs felt racism was the real issue, and they should all be home fighting it, even if it means participating in riots or whatever it takes.

The college student said: "Racism is the issue." But she — and the others who spoke — accepted neither the white liberal nor the white radical nor the Black Panthers: "Racism is the issue. Nixon's Southern strategy is not what the white liberals say it is, not caring about blacks

** In contrast to the vulgarities of the Trotskyist epigoni, here are excerpts from Trotsky's writings in 1937 and 1940, published in the Workers International News, June-July 1946:

"During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. The historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-semitism."

"You ask me if the Jewish question still exists in the USSR. Yes, it exists, just as the Ukrainian, the Georgian, even the Russian questions exist there. The omnipotent bureaucracy stifles the development of national culture just as it does the whole of culture The latest Moscow trial, for example, was staged with the hardly concealed design of presenting internationalists as faithless and lawless Jews who are capable of selling themselves to the German Gestapo."

"On the other hand, the Jews in different countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come."

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because of the wide-spread yearning for law and order. Everything Nixon does says: I don't need you. Blacks are dispensable." To her, it seemed that the white radical did not understand the race issue, subordinated it to the anti-war movement, and hardly questioned why the massacre at Kent brought out 150,000 protestors whereas only a few came out at Augusta, Georgia or Jackson, State, though the killings there came as a result of sympathy for the students killed at Kent, Ohio. A nother student interrupted: "We just don't understand all the perversions they (the white students) glorify -- the romance of poverty, buying \$8 Village blue jeans and pouring bleach all over them and the whole flirtation with filth. People don't live like pigs because they enjoy it. They live that way because they have nothing else." As for the Black Panthers, the black student continued, they also give no total answer. "They have lost effectiveness by being recognized. /"as the leaders"/ They have become legitimate. They are just another group raising hell. After a point, people don't see them as threatening any more."

The main disagreement of the black worker with the statements of the black students was directly related to production. He said: "I do not doubt that Nixon thinks blacks "dispensable", but we, in production, know that, without us, there is no production. The real point is to unite worker power with youth idealism and energy. But for that, the youth, especially its leaders, must begin listening to us, stop looking down at us as 'backward'. Then, and only then, can there be a successful revolution."

Instead of the usual historic method of thesis-writing, we chose this way of presenting the analysis of the black revolution in order to show that almost any random conversation by any group of blacks would reveal both the continuity of the ever-present black revolution, and the maturity of the age as well as the separation of themselves from the "established" leaders and the underlying philosophies.

There is no doubt that ever since the anti-Vietnam war movement in 1965 meant the return of the white students from ghettoizing in the South to their college habitat, that the blacks felt that even those whites who considered themselves revolutionaries did not really understand that racism was the issue; that the American revolution would emerge not abroad under some other flag, but right here, and on this question which the whites seem to take or leave, depending on other interests. At the same time, none of the black leaders --even Reverend King, who did have a mass base -- could "make it" in the Northern ghettos. As for the Carmichaels, their words were revolution, but they weren't even here when the ghetto uprisings erupted in 1967. Ever since then, no black organization gained an active mass adherence.

Because, however, both objectively, presently and historically, the black masses have been in continuous, ceaseless revolt against this racist and class society, and because they have not stopped their search for a total philosophy, they are not at the impasse that the left, eaten up with passion to lead, is at.

The impasse among the New Left paradoxically, and not so paradoxically, has come at the very moment when the anti-war movement is at its height, has gained many new forces with the massacre at Kent and in Augusta, Georgia and Jackson, Mississippi; when the bourgeoisie itself is so divided

that both in and out of Congress, in and out of the stock market, and in and out of the military even, there is no such thing as a united command. The theoretic void has made it nearly impossible to give actions a direction. Pragmatism and isolation from the proletariat, not to mention disdain for it, has led both to cultural nihilism and intellectual arrogance that rivals the vanguardists "party to lead" variety. The "individualization", presentation of media type personalities, is hardly an improvement on "vanguard party", any more than Haight-Asbury is on "party headquarter". Both share the common illusion that via superstructure, via "cultural revolution", "communes" outside the mainstream where the masses live and labor and struggle, the system itself can be uprooted. In a word, whether it is a Mao or Fidel or the individualist petty bourgeois intellectuals, all delude themselves that there is a substitute for a mass social revolution.

Because neither super-structure nor under-structure -- be they "communes" built on "biological solidarity" and other "life styles", can substitute for class solidarity and struggles, race self-determination and struggle, there is the danger that the fine idealism of the youth, new independent movements like Womens Liberation and even black liberation would fall into the trap, especially what appears "new" among the old Left: Maoism. The old Left's "superiority" lies not only in the fact that they understand the value of collective action and act themselves in an organized manner, but that though bereft of a total philosophy, they do understand the need for theory as against those who think it can all be picked up "enroute". The mass yearning for a total philosophy is one thing Mao understands fully --and perverts totally. Not since the Analects of Confucius has any attempt been made to have so totalitarian a hold on the whole of China as the quotations in "the little red book."

But this is not why it has become a pole of attraction for the American New Left, or the French, or the African. Rather it is the elitist concept in "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung" that exercises a pull on the administrative mentality so characteristic of our state-capitalist age not only among rulers, but also among intellectuals who oppose the system, are ready to die fighting it --but nevertheless are eaten up by a passion to lead because they have not an ounce of confidence in the proletariat whom they consider "backward", in the black masses whom they consider too preoccupied with race to be as totally in the anti-war movement as they are. And, though opposed to the "vanguard Party", think nothing of considering the convolutions of their minds as the truly "new", and free both from the old Left and "romanticism about the proletariat's role". Instead of questioning why they are so enamored with Mao's "cultural revolution" that they never once listen to the genuine revolutionary opposition to Mao within China,*** they question the opposition within China and in the United States that turn their backs on intellectuals and The Leaders who keep inventing substitutes for the forces of revolution--any and all substitutes, so long as it is not labor, not independent mass movement, and not the labor of working out a new relationship of theory to practice, that begins with the movement from practice.

***The retrogressionism that passes for revolution is seen weakly in the Peking Review's attack on the ultra-left, but nowhere more glaringly contradictory than in the issue of January 30, 1970, where the main article is entitled "Conscientiously Study Chairman Mao's Theory of Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", and the central point of this permanent revolution is promise the masses nothing for "one to several centuries"! Or, to quote Mao himself: "In the realm of politics and ideology a very long period of time is needed to decide who will win in the struggle between Socialism and Capitalism. Several decades won't do it. Success requires from one to several centuries."

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