



EMANCIPATORY MANIFESTO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



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The purpose of this text is to explain the meaning the youth has for the established order as a group of people widely perceived though not much cared, considered as mere interns or points of interest, planned to be made religious or hateful persons. In this text we tried to elaborate on firstly the position of young people in the historical developments the society experienced and secondly its meaning in our present-day

society. Given transformations and shifting in social life today, it focuses on the status of the youth, the impact of this status on themselves and individual as well as social problems that these impacts create for them. To sum up, the struggle for overcoming these problems brings light to the interpretation of our society, of ourselves and our emancipation from this established order.

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A huge but hidden wave is approaching. The wave belonging to young people who struggle for their survival despite to pressures of corrupted powers, capitalists and degenerate governments, whose labor is concealed from eyes, whose voice is stolen, who are considered as surplus population, who deal with unemployment, feel insecure, who could not dare to do something lest they make mistakes, who are despised when they try to do something new. The wave symbolizing their will to take strings in their own hands and recreate their lives.

The established order pretends to teach young people, the most dynamic segment of social struggles; thereby wastes their time by creating a false assumption that they could get a “better life” and humiliate them by making them obliged to work for low wages even if they make them think to find jobs thanks to their university degrees. Yet its graveyard is being dug by people who struggle in Brazilian coffee farms, Zonguldak mines, Wall Street, Chinese facilities, cafeterias in Istanbul, oil refineries of Iraq, university campuses of Chile.

This appeal is called for the organization of young people seen as “amateur people” by capitalism to become a force that could take its own initiative and do not lend its future to others.

EVER RENEWED FORM OF SOCIETY AND EXISTENCE: YOUTH

Adolescence is the beginning to transform from being child to an adult for not just humans but for all living beings. Thereby, they take the first step to a long period of physical productivity and they mostly reach their most productive period in their adolescence. No doubt this period ends at age of 30 or so for human biology. Yet what concerns us is not the intrinsic value of adolescence, but its social value.

The essential meaning of adolescence for society is the fact that those people are not seen as adults yet. When and how they become adult depend on social and historical circumstances. So their biological common ground which they gained due to their age gains a social quality. In primitive-communal society, the society itself decided who are adults or not. Until then all individuals used to live under the shared responsibility of the society. In the mode of life based on agriculture that necessitated vast amount of human labor, adolescence was a short period. People were forced to work as soon as possible. The same rule applied to the early phase of capitalism.

In Western Europe in which capitalism emerged, life expectancy was not around 80 like it is now; rather it was lower than 40. Obviously, the factor lowering this average was harsh conditions of poor workers. Also at that time, biological maturation did not go hand in

hand with social maturation. Children as members of poor families had to help their parents or were forced to work. Before they could get 20, they were expected to get married and have lots of children. In that period, young population was a productive force for bourgeoisie. In a stereotyped fashion, "youth equaled to the future." This attitude repeated itself for all latecomer capitalist countries like Turkey.

1960's are years when people started to see the first symptoms for the end of welfare regime as a global form of capitalism after the Second Imperialist War. 1970's were years of crises for capitalism and 1980's opened the era of neoliberalism. In periods of capitalist fluctuations when level of welfare rises, no wonder that there is no observable attempt to rebel. Similarly, there is no rebellious acts in periods when the whole society stroke the bottom. In other words, poverty and revolutionary acts do not go hand in hand. The



chance for waves of rebellion raises when moments of crises increase the amount of historical possibilities and when people fear to lose things they own. That is, when the period of welfare gives way to the downfall, laborers, petty producers, students and all other social segments start to object this situation. Because they could predict that they would lose their gains and if they do not prevent that there might be lots of social problems. If this wave of rebellion is stubbornly kept alive until the total breakdown of the social order, people might create a revolutionary situation.

Within this framework, young people were seen as the future of society in 1960's and 70's and they were labeled as the "trustees of the republic." Then the left envisioned the future of society in a developmentalist framework and thought young people as the most dynamic element of this project.



THE YOUTH TODAY: REAL, DESTRUCTIVE AND CREATIVE

It would be correct to take the youth into consideration with its connection to capitalism rather than its biological features for its emancipation.

8 Today the youth is one of the social segments that the periodic/structural aspects of capitalism determine. At this point, the decisive feature of capitalist infrastructure operates well within the dynamic of crisis. As well known, the underlying reason behind its structural crisis is the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. This prompts bourgeoisie to maximize its profit while lowering its costs as much as possible.

The impact of neoliberalism, as felt in Turkey in 90s, accelerated the urban migration by destroying rural life as a result of privatizations and liberalizations. It made millions of people gathered in metropolises. Those masses became workers. Due to technological advancements as well as the increase in labor productivity and the reduction in investments as a result of economic crises, capitalist order increasingly became free from workers. Therefore, it caused to increase in unemployment among young people and created a surplus population.

With the intensity of crisis, the youth is now

surplus population. In order to absorb and qualify this surplus, thereby to increase the competition in labor market, young people are put into empty schools, private teaching institutions and examinations.

Although educated youth participate in labor market to great extent, they are constantly under the risk of unemployment. The inequality between the increase in workers “with university degrees” and the increase in employment, university education increasingly becomes worthless. That forces young people to continue their education and get better or higher titles. On the other hand, it causes widespread disappointment since they could not get jobs or status which the system promised them. This disappointment makes them to postpone the decision for getting a permanent, stable job, creating their own family by marriage and moving from their parents’ home. Avoiding all kinds of commitments, maintaining the chance of choice, rejecting responsibilities are some decisive aspects for current youth. Yet the delay of the transformation from adolescence to adulthood enables young people to criticize and evaluate adults’ values. Because of this fact, the youth cannot be contained with high school and university students. Now it includes much bigger segments of the society as **extended adolescence.**

Young people are forced to work for their board in order to compete in a social order whose rules are put by adults. Yet they are obliged to be more obedient, educated and productive than previous worker generations. It is possible to list social problems that these conditions brought to us:

- Throughout the world, unemployment rate of young people is higher than unemployment in other age groups.
- The risk of unemployment makes young people accept the pressure of higher education voluntarily. Such as private courses, examinations, more majors, certificates, permanent studentship...
- Endless attempts to find jobs and earn money consume savings of families since it increases the cost of compulsory educational expenses.
- On the contrary, the quality of education decreases. While a small majority has access to quality education, the majority is subjected to a kind of education devoid of scientific, philosophical or historical grounds. In order to be graduated from a good school, much more money and time is necessary unlike the past.
- Educational facilities have become places in which unemployed youth wastes its time free from pressures of society and families.
- As those conditions prevents them to get productive, the age when they become adult increases. Today the age of adolescence continues until 30s. For religion, in schools, farms, workplaces, streets, family life, politics, in brief everywhere those young people are considered as "amateur people." In connection with this, psychological problems, increase

in the consumption of antidepressants and clinical patients are widely observed phenomena. And the youth is bound to live in isolation and devastation. It creates a new generation whose members are powerless, suffering from the lack of confidence and meaning.

- Now drugs, alcohol and wandering become a kind of life-style rather than activities “to fill free time.”
- Young people could only articulate their demands through traditional ideologies since they do not have any common grounds that they channel their desire for struggle into. Even for the simplest struggle, they need to gather together and act as agents. The occurrence of this gathering by means of ethnic, religious and regional ideas refers to the lack of an emancipatory, revolutionary social relation. Therefore, it is necessary to see struggles based on religion/ethnicity not as “the obstacles against this unity.” Though, it is important to note their limitations.
- In imperialist era, universities have been increasingly losing their qualities as scientific places. In countries like ours, universities are mere mediators between scientific knowledge obtained in imperialist countries and its translation to technology in exploited ones. Hence, higher education becomes just another step of primary education. Academic structure obtains the characteristic peculiar to relations between masters and apprentices. Being a student now is similar to computer formatting. Today scientific knowledge is produced in two places: In Research

ch and Development departments of corporations and among people independently think and study.

- Young people constitute the social segment that was sacrificed in great amounts in all wars. Because they are practical agents of all warfare. Wars are irreplaceable aspect of capitalism by which it attempts to solve its intrinsic problems. It serves both to the creation of profit-making opportunities and to the annihilation of surplus population. Just as war-torn cities open a lot of profit-making opportunities, the annihilation of some young people while making others guardians of the order creates new possibilities for capitalism.

REVOLUTION IS THE YOUTHFULNESS OF EARTH



Young unemployment emerged as a result of structural crises of capitalism and its role as surplus population gave young people more weight in labor market. It also increases the pressure over employed people and creates a segment of people who has nothing to lose. Free time as a result of unemployment enables young people to compare themselves with other social segments and consciously understand the situation they found themselves in. These two factors bring potential threats for established order.

All political measures are taken to suppress these risks. Schools turn into prisons, families become money sources and university degree got meaningless as young unemployed keep snowballing. The youth is disregarded, isolated and diverted by nihilistic thoughts and short-lived pleasures.

Throughout history, people create values according to their own modes of operation and these values shape their lives. These values change forms in various ways. The established order cleans out the meaning from values created by social struggles (like solidarity, freedom, equality, independence) and replace them with individualistic values aimed to defend exploitative relations (like competition, careerism). On the one hand it eliminates traditional values of society and on the other, it replaces them with short-lived, tradable, individual pleasures. So that dissolves all values and meanings among youth. For instance a young worker living in a metropolis who work for a minimum wage feels obliged to buy the latest product of a fa-

mous cell-phone brand with installments. In order to give him/herself a social identity he/she needs to do that. So the youth must either adapt themselves to this order and be others' "youth" or choose not to be the part of this society and suffer from isolation, psychological problems and commit suicide.

Life is not a multiple choice exam and those options cannot be seen as rights and freedoms. Those who are confined with these two options have only one exit: to pave their own ways. Intellectual conversations in cafes, idling around on streets and studying in libraries till morning do not emancipate us. This blockade forcing us to stay in "inhuman" conditions could only be lifted by united and rebellious force of young people. This struggle could become concrete only if it defends the interest of downtrodden and exploited. The emancipation of young people is possible only when they become a self-organized, disciplined, well-informed force that rejects an inferior position before adults and decides its own future.

The aim of the struggle is not just about giving a name to a group of people gathered around certain ideas, thoughts, hopes and concerns. The struggle against this order is possible only when its forces claim to create a free and equal world. It requires young people to produce their own answers and social values against bourgeoisie, its ideology, alienation and isolation. A political center that would unite all of us despite differences in identity and make them an anti-establishment force is the real emancipatory way for youth.

Corruption spreads all social institutions as well as politics. Today politics brings lots of negative things to minds such as frauds, trickeries, rent-seeking activities, bribery, etc. But should this corruption, degeneration in political sphere prevent young people from participating in political activities? Instead it is the result of their avoidance. In current mainstream political organizations, young people are seen as simple workers who need to fulfill daily/practical tasks of their organizations. They are mere extensions of them, not significant elements in decision-making process. One underlying reason is a kind of pathologic thought that tired and unsuccessful leaders could not confess themselves: No other will could handle these jobs except them. On the other hand, followership and artificialness enforced in the name of traditionalism are significant obstacles before the revolutionary will of youth. Most certainly, youth must be open to learn and benefit from historical experiences. Yet it could develop a critical and constitutive historical consciousness only if it does that in a global way. The critical thought, constitutive idea, revolutionary voice, discourse and action of present could be developed by only youth. Therefore, one of its significant task is to struggle against any kind of bureaucratic, traditionalist structure preventing their revolutionary will. It requires the empowerment of grassroots organizations against bureaucratic hierarchy, full initiative and control under young people, efficient ideological tools for struggle.

In the event that current organizational tools are corrupted or got inefficient, it is necessary to deve-

lop the capacity to overcome this corruption and fulfill the objective requirements of the struggle. To further this struggle, youth should develop experiences that would improve this capacity.

For its emancipation, tasks and responsibilities are as follows:

- 1)** We must explore the ways to overcome this exploitative order putting us into “subhuman” status and read, experience a lot in order to understand its true nature.
- 2)** In order to obtain scientific/philosophical/theoretical knowledge (without rejecting those options offered by this order) we must develop means to improve ourselves.
- 3)** We must put up an organized fight against capitalism, imperialism, dominant classes and their representatives; we must organize this fight in all corners of the country and establish local committees in every village, neighborhood and city.
- 4)** We must establish links of communication with other young people with similar problems throughout the world and organize a trans-nationalist frontline.
- 5)** We must develop alternative ways of struggle on behalf of suppressed and young people by decommodifying science, art and technology.

6) We must create the network of solidarity instead of egoism and competition.

7) We must reestablish social values that was cleared out by market forces and replaced with daily pleasures in the process of struggle.

8) We must build grassroots organizations in all public institutions or support progressive and revolutionary elements in current institutions.

This Manifestation for Young People's Emancipation does not offer a theoretical explanation to problems that youth experiences. Rather, it is a rebellion against the isolation, humiliation and condemnation of young people. **Youth Committees** are first step youth would take to be free. It highlights both their rebellious spirit and their "young" hopes since they still believe that their struggle is alive and contemporary. And yet it would grow with ideas and experiences as more young people join the ranks. It is a revolutionary call for its most beautiful children and struggle for freedom. We know that the most valuable thing in this world is the unity of people struggling for emancipation. The most significant source to enhance this struggle, revolutionary power of creative, critical thinking young people opened to the new.

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