One of the most characteristic features of the present time of the capitalist countries is the sharpening of class contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the increase and intensification of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and of the broad labouring masses against capitalist oppression and exploitation, against the antipopular and aggressive policy of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Characterizing this situation comrade Enver Hoxha, in his report to the 6th Congress of the PLA, pointed out: «We are today witnesses to the great class clashes between the working people and capital and its power. The class struggle of the proletariat and of the other exploited social strata has assumed such proportions, both as regards the number of participants and its sharpness, that the present-day period can be compared with the most critical periods through which the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries has passed.»

THERE ARE NO ZONES OF «CLASS PEACE», BUT ZONES OF THE AGRAVATION OF CLASS STRUGGLE

In these recent years the market of the developed capitalist countries has been filled with numerous publications devoted to the «theoretical» problems of the classes and of the class struggle. By tens are now counted the «schools» of the bourgeois and reformist sociology which are engaged in these problems. This intensive anti-communist activity in the imperialist countries has at its disposal all the organs of the press and propaganda, special institutions and various means: press, radio, television, film, school, church — in a word, the whole big industry of the imperialist propaganda.

Underlying this industry are the efforts of the imperialist bourgeoisie to discredit, weaken or limit as much as possible the extension of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism to the broad labouring masses, to convince them that the capitalist system, under the present-day conditions, is «suitable» to everybody, as well to the capitalists as also to the working people, so as to distract them from the class and revolutionary struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation. To realize these aims, parallel with revolutionary violence, the imperialist bourgeoisie broadly resorts also to the method of distorting the present-day capitalist reality. The falsification of reality is the distinctive feature of the bourgeois propaganda. The bourgeoisie and reformist sociologists have specialized in and claim so much distinction to demagogy in distorting the present-day capitalist reality that by their writings and «theories» frequently arouse doubts also in their own partisans who view a little more realistically the present-day situation of the capitalist system which, in Lenin’s words, «has become the most reactionary obstacle in the social development».

One of the most favourite variants of the bourgeois and reformist propaganda is the assertion that in the developed capitalist countries the present-day capitalist society is being «deproletarianized», that «classes have disappeared» or «are disappearing» and that along with this there has «disappeared and is being disappeared also the class struggle» between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that the zones of «class peace» are extending. As we see, the bourgeois and reformist ideologists are seeking to present their wishful thinking as reality. Facts are obdurate and if we refer to them we clearly see the falseness and demagogy of the bourgeois and reformist propaganda. These facts show that the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is expanding, it is becoming fiercer and more complicated, that there are no zones of «class peace» but zones of the sharpening of the class struggle.

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An important indicator of the sharpening of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the capitalist countries is the extension and strengthening of the strike movement of the working class and of the other laboring masses. The general upsurge of this movement today is greater than in the previous stages of the development of the labour movement. Thus, while during the 20-year long period (1919-1939) the strike movement included 74 million working people, in the 1945-1960 period the figure reached 150 million persons, whereas during the 1960-1970 decade 360 million working people took part in the strike movement. The number of workers participating in strikes grows from year to year. For example, while during the year 1970 the number of workers participating in strikes stood at 64 million persons, in the year 1971 the figure rose to about 70 million.

It follows from the analyses that the major part of the strikes have taken place in countries with a more developed capitalist economy as in the United States of America, Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, etc. Thus, in France in the year 1968 there took place the strike of 10 million working people. A similar strike, in which part was taken by nearly 10 million persons, took place in Japan in the spring of 1969. In April last year a general strike took place in Italy with the participation of about 11 million working people. In Britain, during the first two months of the current year 300,000 miners went on strike. This strike gravely shook the country's economic and political life, so that the British bourgeoisie was compelled to proclaim the state of emergency in the country. Also in the United States of America which is presented by the apologists of imperialism as a society of «social peace» and as «classless and without class struggle», the class conflicts, antagonism between labour and capital, between the proletariat and the imperialist bourgeoisie, are growing and sharpening. According to official statistics, which in fact are minimized, during the first 7 months alone of the past year there were held in the United States 4,580 strikes in which part was taken by 3 million workers, whereas during the first three months of the current year there took place 1,100 strikes with the participation of 400,000 workers. The class struggle is expanding and intensifying also in other developed capitalist countries as in Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, etc., which are presented by the bourgeois and reformist propaganda as zones of «class peace». All these facts best of all testify to the correctness of the conclusion reached by the 6th Congress of the PSL that «Also in those countries which were presented by the bourgeois propaganda as zones of everlasting «class peace» fierce battles are taking place between labour and capital. Here, too, the myth of social-democratic prattles about «social evolution» for the creation of general well-being under the capitalist system has been smashed to smithereens.»

The development of the working class strike movement, as one of the forms of its class struggle against the capitalist rule and exploitation is of great importance for the education of the working class with the feeling of solidarity of its ranks and of hatred against the capitalist order. The strikes teach the workers how to think of the working class struggle against the capitalist oppressive and exploiting order. They are a «school of struggle», in which the workers learn how to fight against their enemies for the liberation of the entire people and of all the working men and women from the yoke of capital. But conceiving the strike struggle only from this aspect is one side of the problem. The other inseparable side of this problem is, as Lenin stressed, that «we must say that strikes are, as said above, a «school of struggle» and not the struggle itself; strikes are only a means of struggle, only a form of the labour movement. The workers can and must pass over, in all the countries, from separate strikes to the struggle of the whole working class for the liberation of all the working people-

But although the main tendency is the extension, deepening and sharpening of the class contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the working class struggle does not develop, and cannot develop, everywhere and always in upsurge, only in rise, but it blazes the trail of history with zigzags, with ups and downs, with offensives and temporary withdrawals. This is an objective law of the development of social revolution which stems from the fact that revolution comes across various obstacles and difficulties raised to it by the imperialist bourgeoisie, the modern revisionists and various opportunists. V. I. Lenin has said that «He that «accepts» the revolution of the proletariat only on condition that it develops easily and without obstacles, that a common action of the proletarians of various countries be reached at once, that guarantees be previously given that there will be no defeats, that the road of the revolution be broad, free and straight, that there should be no need from time to time, while marching towards victory, to sustain heavy sacrifices, to remain in the surrounded fortress or pass through the narrowest, insurmountable, winding and dangerous pathways, is not a revolutionary, he has not emancipated himself from the pedantism of the bourgeois intelligentsia, in reality he will get ever deeper into the camp of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie» (V. I. Lenin, Works, Albanian edition, vol. 28, p. 60).

THE RISE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM COMES FROM VARIOUS FACTORS

The bourgeois and reformist ideologists advocate that today the working class struggle is being encouraged by the communists, that allegedly in the present-day conditions the economic interests of the working class and the other working people in the industrial capitalist countries have been fulfilled and therefore there «have disappeared also the objective conditions» of the class struggle. Speculating on the new phenomena of present-day capitalism, especially on the consequences of the development of the state-monopoly capitalism and of the technico-scientific revolution, they extensively preach among other things the theory of «people's capitalism», of the «society of mass consumption and of general well-being», of the «integration of the working class in capitalism», etc. By means of these theories the bourgeoisie and reformist ideologists are seeking to present the changes in the technology of capitalist production, which come about from the development of the technico-scientific revolution, as changes of the character of the capitalist relations of production, as changes of the class nature of the present-day bourgeois society; they seek to conceal the class and reactionary character of the present-day capitalist state, as a dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie that oppresses and exploits the working class and the other labouring masses.

But how does the truth stand? The facts about the extension and deepening of the strike class struggle we mentioned above show that in the developed capitalist countries, too, the struggle of the working class cannot die out and disappear because it is not dependent either on the propaganda or on the will of the imperialist bourgeoisie, of the reformists and revisionists. This struggle is caused by the objective conditions of oppression and exploitation which inherent in the capitalist system itself, it is caused by various economic, social and political factors.

It is true that the present-day proletariat in the developed capitalist countries is not the one of the 19th century and of the beginning of the 20th century. The technico-scientific revolution, through the development of the productive forces and the growth of the total national production, has given to the bourgeoisie a broader field of manoeuvring in the direction of the fulfillment of some economic demands of the working people. In the consumption by the working people in the developed capitalist countries we notice today, for example, an increase of the expenditures for the purchase of goods of a long-range use, such as radios, TV sets, refrigerators, washing machines, pieces of furniture, individual transport means. There has been extended also the assortment of traditional foodstuffs and clothing. These phenomena are explained by the development of the productive forces, the increase of production which leads also to the increase of demands. On the other side, and this is the most important thing, the gains of the workers, fulfilling some economic and social needs, have come about, above all, as a result of the class struggle of the proletariat and not as an expression of the philanthropic feelings of the bourgeoisie to share the blessings of the economic development with the proletariat.

The monopoly bourgeoisie, which possesses all the means of production, has consumption, too, in its hands. It manipulates it to its liking and never proceeds from the aim of fulfilling all the demands and needs of the labouring masses, but from the interest of drawing as large profits as possible. And however much this production may grow, it does not lead to a «general well-being». The working class, comrades Enver Hoxha said at the 6th Congress of the Party, in spite of the changes the present-day capitalist world has undergone is deprived of any kind of ownership over the means of production, of its management, organisation and aim. The so-called «consumer society» has not been created to fulfill the needs of the working people, but to intensify their exploitation and to increase the profits of the capitalists.

Today, in spite of the development of the technico-scientific revolution and the increase of production, the old wounds of the capitalist system such as poverty, misery, inflation, the rise of prices, the extension of the gap between the great intensification of work, the disappearance of many traditional professions, the economic crises and the deepening of the polarization of the capitalist society have further aggravated. It is precisely these wounds of the capitalist system which give a new impulse to the intensification of the class struggle in every developed capitalist country. Particularly great proportions have assumed such permanent wounds of the capitalist system such as unemployment and the increase of the living cost. It follows from the statistics that in a series of capitalist countries unemployment has assumed so chronic and mass character that even the bourgeois economists cannot consider it as a cyclic phenomenon of a temporary character. In Britain there are 1.250.000 unemployed, in Canada more than 600.000. Italy counts at present 1.300.000 officially registered
unemployed. Whereas in Sweden, although the Swedish official organs intentionally minimize the figure, there are about 400,000 unemployed.

In the main country of the capitalist world, the United States of America, the number of unemployed reaches today the colossal figure of 5,500,000 persons. This figure represents 6.2 per cent of the active population. The U.S. bourgeoisie press itself is compelled to admit the mass character of unemployment in the USA. Thus, the bourgeois revue «Newsweek» admitted a few weeks ago that now unemployment in the USA among men was 4.4 per cent, among women 5.8 per cent, among black people 10 per cent, while among youth up to the age of 20 years it was 17.5 per cent, whereas 800,000 persons were jobless because there profession was no more needed. On the other side, the U.S. press ever more frequently stresses pessimism in connection with the healing of this grave wound of the American society. The review «Newsweek» wrote that «...unemployment is the most important economic problem with which the United States of America will be faced during this year of presidential elections», that «...the microbe of unemployment is stable and the disease caused by it has affected the entire country like a grave epidemics of flu». To the difficulties of unemployment is added also the uninterrupted increase of the living cost. In Britain, for example, from September 1970 to September 1971 the living cost grew by 10.1 per cent, in Holland 7.6 per cent, Japan 7 per cent, the Federal Republic of Germany 5.4 per cent, France from May last year up till may this year the living cost grew 8.1 per cent, whereas the Italian press points out that during the last two years alone the living cost grew by 10 per cent.

Likewise, it must be pointed out that in every developed capitalist country one notices the process of intensification of the exploitation of the working people through the maximum increase of labour productivity. As a result of this policy broad masses of industrial proletariat, in comparison with the quantity of the material values which they were producing formerly, receive today less than several years ago. Thus, in the year 1965 the labour productivity of a worker in Italy grew by 13 per cent while his real wage increased only by 2 per cent. From the year 1963 till the year 1966 the Italian working people, through their class struggle, could achieve a wage increase by 8.2 per cent at a time when their labour productivity grew by 21 per cent. Still greater is the difference between labour productivity and wages in other developed capitalist countries.

Another means of intensification of the oppression and exploitation of the working people is that of consolidating the anti-worker laws, of the efforts to freeze the wages of the factory and office workers, to guarantee to the monopolies unlimited rights to secure maximum profits. Thus, in the United States of America, by the emergency measures and the so-called «new economic policy», the Nixon Administration froze the wages of the workers for 90 days. This mass offensive on the American working class inflicted on the working people a loss of 500,000,000 dollars, while the profits of the 537 largest corporations of the country, in the third quarter alone of the year 1971 grew by 11.6 per cent more than during the corresponding period of the previous year. These processes assumed last year a mass character and a new development also due to the fact that the capitalist world was gripped by a grave monetary crisis. And the monopoly bourgeoisie on the verge of crises or gripped by them is seeking to shift their burden on the shoulders of the broad working masses.

Finally, today even very much developed capitalist countries, the United States of America included, are not in position to cope with the urgent and great problems of poverty, lodging, medical service, etc., which are quite grave problems for the working people and seriously worry the labouring masses. The U.S. government itself has admitted that some 50 million Americans are poor. Out of them, 30 million persons «have been infected by terrible poverty». Here it is not a question only of black people and other coloured working people. Out of these 30 million the two-thirds are white. About 8 million men, women and children are so poor that they are compelled to live on the slamm aims of the so-called «charity funds» or «aid programme».

These facts best ofall testify to what comrade Enver Hoxha said at the 6th Congress of the Party, that «The workers of France, Italy, Britain and America have gone on strike, they have come out in the streets and occupy factories not because they take pleasure in that, but because their living is grave, because the capitalist machine suppresses them, turns them into sheer instruments, it dulls them».

The rise of the working class and the other labouring masses in the struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation comes also from political and social factors, from the antipopular and aggressive policy of the bourgeois ruling circles, from the increase of the fascist danger, from the elimination or limitation of national sovereignty and independence, from the loss or threats against democratic freedoms and rights, etc. Precisely for these reasons the struggle of the working class in the developed capitalist countries is deepening its character with every passing year. The very capitalist system as a whole is becoming the target of this struggle.

SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE PRESENT-DAY STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS

The analysis of the struggle of the working class in the developed capitalist countries, especially beginning from the year 1967, shows a series of distinctive features of this struggle, of which the most principal ones are the following:

First, it is becoming more massive because the number of the workers taking part in it is growing from year to year. And this shows that in the developed capitalist countries there is an increased hatred, a truly revolutionary hatred against the bourgeois system. The extension and deepening of this struggle cannot fail to lead also to the creation of such a shaking situation for the bourgeoisie as it occurred for example in France in the year 1968 when the general strike of 10 million working people, was proclaimed. This strike gravely shook the whole economic and political life of the country.

Second, another distinctive feature of the present-day struggle of the working class is the extension of its social makeup. Parallel with the bulk of the workers, an active part is being taken in this struggle by various sections of the bourgeois society, such as employees, students, teachers, small producers, merchants and...
craftsmen. These middle strata are ever more mobilizing themselves in the struggle against exploitation, plundering and violence on the part of the monopoly bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

Third, the main distinctive feature of the present-day class struggle of the proletariat is its coming out of the framework of the purely economic demands, for a wage increase, for better living conditions, and the increase of the specific weight of the struggle of a political character. This finds its expression also in the fact that in this struggle demands of social-political character are coming to the forefront. Thus, for instance, there is an ever greater increase in the demands of the working class and of the labouring masses in general for real equality, for respect for human dignity, against racial discrimination, for the guarantee and extension of the democratic freedoms and rights, for the education and development of the children of working people, against the decadent system of the bourgeois school, etc. At the same time the workers of the developed capitalist countries, in one form or another, have arisen against the aggressive policy of the governments of these countries, against the anti-labour laws and the fascists methods of violence. Thus, in the United States of America, Britain, France, etc., a broad development has been assumed by the struggle of the working people against the aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism in Indochina under the slogan «U.S. imperialist aggressors, get away from Indochina». In Italy broad proportions has assumed the struggle of the working people against the revival of fascism. In Britain the workers have arisen against the «Law on Industrial relations» which is aimed at juridically curbing and paralysing the struggle of the workers for their rights. In some other countries, as for instance in France, in these recent years there was extended the struggle for the occupation of the factories and big capitalist enterprises.

Fourth, likewise another important feature of the present-day class struggle is the growth of the revolutionary consciousness of the working people who participate in this struggle, their gradual and ever greater detachment not only from the influence of the continuous and all-out pressure of the bourgeois ideology, but also from the influence of the social-democratic and revisionist influence. And this shows the ever better understanding on the part of the working people of that great truth of Marxism-Leninism that the road towards the liquidation of the capitalist oppression and exploitation passes only through the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, through the overthrow of the latter by means of the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The upsurge of the present-day strike struggle of the working class and of the other labouring masses in the capitalist countries, the transition from strikes of economic character to those of political character as well as the increase of the specific weight of the latter, testify to the correctness and actuality of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the class and the class struggle in the present-day bourgeois society; they testify to the uselessness, falsity and fraud of the propaganda of the imperialist, reformist and revisionist bourgeoisie.

Finally, the growth and intensification of the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the developed capitalist countries, especially in the present-day conditions of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, has greatly extended also the possibilities for the establishment of a stable alliance between the working class and peasantry, which is the main social force capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The modern revisionists are seeking to negate the great importance of the alliance of the working class and peasantry, under the pretext that peasantry does not play any special role, especially in the developed capitalist countries, that allegedly the revolutionary possibilities and energies of the peasantry of these countries have greatly diminished or have been exhausted and, consequently, it is not necessary to work and fight for the establishment and the consolidation of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and instead of it they bring to the forefront the alliance of the working class and the intelligentsia. In reality, by these «theories» and practices they aim at detaching from the working class its closest and most determined ally in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist society. The most convincing argument to refute the «theories» of the revisionists is life itself, the development of the struggle of the broad labouring masses of the peasantry and of the agricultural proletariat in the developed capitalist countries themselves. Active actions in defence of their economic, social and political rights, against the reaction and arbitrariness of the governments, against the occupation of the lands of the peasants for military bases, against the policy of aggression — these are some of the main directions of the struggle of the peasantry in the developed capitalist countries. A distinctive feature of this struggle is the ever greater interlacing of the struggle of the peasantry against the feudal left-overs and the semi-feudal exploitation with the anti-monopoly struggle.

Peasantry, however, is not the sole ally of the proletariat in the latter’s class struggle. Under the present-day conditions, too, possible allies of the proletariat in the class struggle are also the middle strata, the bourgeoisie of the city, which are oppressed, exploited and plundered by monopoly capitalism. Such are the craftsmen, little merchants, the majority of employees, and the intelligentsia, the students. «The petty-bourgeois, — Karl Marx has said, — will become a component part of all the coming social revolutions». The historic experience, accumulated by the revolutionary movement of the past, has confirmed also today the correctness of this appraisal of the middle strata in the class struggle. In this struggle the masses of the student youth and various strata of the intelligentsia have claimed distinction in these recent years. But as well the labouring peasantry as also the middle strata of the city can cast aside the oppression by the monopoly capital and achieve their social emancipation only in alliance with the working class ad under its leadership. This stems from the fact that the working class is the only class which has nothing to lose from the revolutionary class struggle for the transformation of the oppressive and exploiting capitalist order; consequently, it is more interested than any other class or social stratum in overthrowing the old exploiting relations of production, in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and social emancipation of the working people.