

Who will lead the struggle for Socialism?

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Introduction

The question as to who will lead the struggle for socialism is, in reality, the question as to which *class* will lead, and the question of organisations related to classes. This is fundamental for those who want to understand Marxism and use a scientific approach to the problem of how to change society—and this, after all, is the essential aim of all genuine revolutionaries.

Marxists are the last people to desire to cling to past formulations or past concepts if life itself shows them to be no longer valid. Marxism is a developing science. It must take account of new phenomena in society, try to appraise them, see what is new, and to what extent accepted concepts are still valid.

At the same time, it must examine new theories and concepts. The extent of their newness is not the decisive thing. We need to distinguish between genuine contributions to the science of revolution and, on the other hand, ideas—often put forward by sincere people ready to sacrifice for the revolution—which life itself, the hard test of practice, disproves.

This is not an academic question. The fate of a country's advance and its possibility of making fundamental change depends on the people and its leadership following a correct path. Otherwise one can have a situation such as in Indonesia, when mistakes of the Communist Party and its leadership led to a massacre of at least half a million people, the overthrow of the former anti-imperialist government, and the throwing back of the whole movement for probably at least a decade.

Essence of Socialist Revolution

A revolution is a fundamental change in the whole basis and structure of society.

As Lenin said: "The transfer of state power from one class to another *class* is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of the term." (Lenin, *Letters on Tactics*, April 1917.)

For a socialist revolution this means the transfer of state power from the hands of the capitalist class into the hands of the working class and its allies.

State power involves the army, the police force, security organs, government departments and the judiciary which, together with the mass media are all, under the capitalist system, controlled by representatives of the capitalist class. The aim of a socialist revolution is to take over these organs of power and place them in the hands of the working class and its allies, so that they can take possession of the economy of the country and so have the possibility of building a new socialist society.

Such an historic change requires the movement of millions of people. That is why Lenin insists that a revolution is the transfer of political power from *one class* to another, that is to say it is not a conspiracy or a coup by a small group, nor a single, dramatic violent act but a whole stage of struggles, of different forms both peaceful and violent, of propaganda, education, organisation, and a variety of forms of mass involvement. The essence of this whole process is the use of what Marx termed the "collective power" of the masses, that is the execution of the will of the working people, the establishment of their ability to compel by force if necessary. This requires the alliance of the working class with all other sections of the people who are exploited by monopoly capitalism.

The Role of Classes in the Revolution

In his article *The Historical Destiny of the Teaching of Karl Marx* written in 1913, Lenin wrote:

"The *main* thing in the teaching of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society".

Marx made it clear that the historic role of the working class does not arise from some special quality or ability. Nor does its decisive role mean that at all times it consciously and fully fulfills this role. What Marx was concerned with was the actual objective status of the working class in capitalist society, a status which would compel it to take actions it may not have hitherto contemplated.

As he pointed out in the *Holy Family* (1844):

"The question is not what this or that proletariat or even the whole proletariat at the moment *considers*

as its aim. The question is what the proletariat is, and what, consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do."

In other words, if some Tory-voting workers have their horizons limited by the ownership of a house and a car, or some backward sections are taken in by Powellism, this does not invalidate Marx's conception of the historic role of the working class, which is not dependent on its actual class consciousness or activity at any given state but on its special status in society.

Why is this? Capitalist society is based on the private ownership of the means of production. It is based on private profit. The source of profit is the surplus value created by the worker. All struggles for wages, hours, piece rates, productivity benefits, trade union rights and so forth are basically struggles over the question of the division of the surplus value created by the worker through his production. All these struggles are a reflection of the class struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist class.

As capitalism develops, the class struggle extends in scope. Giant monopolies are established and mergers take place. Increasingly the State assists these monopolies to strengthen their economic power.

At the same time the working class grows numerically, and, as technological and scientific changes take place, there is a modification in the composition of the working class. Some idea of the growth of the working class is shown by the increase in trade union membership over the past 50 to 60 years:

T.U. membership in the world —	9 million in 1910
	50 .. 1920
	64 .. 1945
	200 .. 1967

All daily struggles by the workers for their immediate demands, whatever may be the limited horizon of those participating in the struggles, objectively are part of the struggle against capitalist exploitation. The only way in which the working class can end this exploitation is by taking over the means of production. This means that it is in the basic interest of the working class as a *class* to establish a form of ownership corresponding to social production.

The worker is connected with the most advanced form of production, factory production. He works collectively with others and combines with them in defence of his interests. He acquires a sense of belonging to a class with common interests. Left by itself this remains limited to a trade union consciousness. The worker does not spontaneously acquire socialist understanding or an awareness of the historic mission of the working class to overthrow capitalism. He is subjected all the time to capitalist propaganda, especially these days in view of the

immense power of TV and the daily press. Moreover, an upper crust of the working class is periodically bought over by capitalism and follows opportunist policies.

A socialist understanding, a fundamental comprehension of what is wrong with society and how to change it, has to be injected into the economic struggles of the workers by the conscious effort of those who understand Marxism, and are organised for this task. In this work students can make an important contribution.

The Role of the Peasantry and the Working Class in the Third World

Before dealing with the role of students and workers in the western world it is necessary to say a few words about the peasantry, the working class and the ideas of Fanon and Debray.

In the third world of Africa, Asia and Latin America the majority of people live on the land. No revolution can succeed without their assistance. The peoples in these regions face historically in this epoch two revolutions—one for independence and the second for socialism. These two revolutionary processes are not unconnected, but a different role is played by each class at every stage.

In most of Africa and Asia, although the workers and peasants in varying degrees in each country made the major effort and carried out most of the activity, it was usually the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who *led* the mass national parties and assumed office after independence.

In some cases, such as Malaya in the period 1941-45, the working class led the national liberation struggle but was subsequently forced to retreat, and independence was established under semi-feudal and bourgeois leadership. In those countries where the working class was able to retain its leading position after independence had been won, for example in China, Vietnam and Korea, the transition to socialism took place as part of the whole liberation struggle. Elsewhere, in those countries of the third world where the workers were not in the leadership, the prospects of advancing from independence to socialism have been put off. The working class was able to lead only in those countries where a Marxist organisation existed and was sufficiently strong to have the allegiance of the majority of the working class, to win the peasantry, and to follow a correct policy.

What does Fanon say about Africa? Briefly, in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, dealing with Africa, he argues that "the peasants alone are revolutionary". He describes the African working class as that section of the colonised population which is "the most pampered by the colonial regime", and as "the most comfortably-off section of the people" and

therefore incapable of playing any significant role in the revolution. In the urban areas Fanon looks not to the working class but to the "core of the lumpen-proletariat" in which he expects that "the rebellion will find its urban spearhead".

Fanon undoubtedly held these views sincerely. But a serious study of the actual facts of the situation and of the course of the African revolution does not bear him out. Of course, it is perfectly true that one cannot underestimate the role of the peasantry. As Engels pointed out in his work on the *Peasant War in Germany* dealing with the struggle of the peasants in the 17th century against feudalism, the peasantry is an immense force. At the same time Engels stressed that to achieve a revolutionary change the peasantry needs a class ally. This has certainly been proved so in history. While the peasantry has been a major force in struggles against feudalism and imperialism and even against capitalism, it has never achieved anything on its own but has always made its gains in a struggle led either by the capitalists, as in France in 1789, or by the working class, as in Russia in 1917, and later in Vietnam, Korea etc.

The peasantry is based on the petty ownership of the means of production, yet it cannot be considered as one homogenous class. In the conditions of the third world it is rather like a tube of tooth paste, opened at both ends and being squeezed in the middle. A small section comes out of the top owning more land and employing wage labour; while a large section is squeezed out at the bottom, becoming poor peasants generally without land, and usually compelled to take up wage labour on a seasonal basis, often for the rich peasants themselves. Thus the peasantry is a stratum of society which is in a stage of break-up between rich peasants (bourgeois), middle peasants and poor peasants (semi-proletarian). At the same time, with the development of industry and urbanisation, more and more peasants leave the land and enter wage-labour in mines, on plantations and in the towns, or go to join the vast number of unemployed, landless people, whose presence in the big towns is such a common feature of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The peasantry are illiterate, ignorant, a prey to religious domination and superstitions, and dominated mentally as well as physically by the chiefs or feudal landlords.

It is no accident that British imperialism, as the military expert, William Gutteridge, recently pointed out in a talk on the Third programme, always chose the peasants for the colonial armies rather than the urban dwellers. The reason was that the peasants were found to be more docile, "loyal" and "reliable".

All this does not mean that the peasantry, especially the poor, landless, agricultural proletariat cannot and does not often play a major role in the struggle

for independence and against feudalism, as was seen in the armed struggle in China, in the present war in Vietnam, in the role played by the peasants and sugar workers in the Cuban revolution, in the role of the plantation workers in the armed struggle in Guatemala, and the armed struggle of the peasants led by the Communists in Colombia.

Fanon and Africa

In Africa, about which Franz Fanon develops his theories, the peasants played a very active role in the countries in which armed struggle took place, such as Kenya, Algeria, Camerouns, and at present in "Portuguese" Guinea, Nambia (South West Africa), Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Angola and Mozambique. But even in these cases the peasant participants have acted under the leadership of organisations which have been influenced to a considerable degree by Marxist ideas and have been led by workers and other urban dwellers. For example, in "Portuguese" Guinea, Amilcar Cabral, the leader of the PGAIC, has explained how he first built his organisation among the dock workers. A recent TV film of the guerrilla struggle in this territory showed that a number of unit leaders of the armed forces were urbanised workers. Similarly in the joint ZAPU-ANC struggle now taking place in Rhodesia, working class leaders from these two territories are playing a key role.

All the available facts show that in the majority of African countries the working class acted as political pacemakers in the struggle for independence and contributed personnel and strength to the whole national movement.

For forty years, in scores of strikes and demonstrations, literally hundreds of workers were killed, and thousands jailed and wounded. This was so, for example, with the Kenya General Strikes of 1921 and 1922, the Uganda strike wave of 1945, the Rand Miners' strike in South Africa in 1946, the General Strike in Nigeria in 1945, the Enugu Miners' strike in Nigeria in 1949 followed by a general strike, the Jos Tin Miners' strike of 1956 (when hundreds of miners marched for miles across the plateau to enter the town of Jos to the acclamation of the whole population), the General Strike in Nairobi in Kenya in 1950 two years before the declaration of the emergency, the General Strike in Ghana in 1950, (which Nkrumah regarded as a key contribution to the winning of internal self-government in 1951), the sixty-six day strike in Guinea in 1953 (which laid the firm basis for the Democratic Party of Guinea), and many others.

All objective studies of these events confirm that they played a major part in exposing colonialism, awakening the people as a whole and stirring their national consciousness.

As for the lumpenproletariat on which Fanon sets so much store as far as the towns are concerned, he even looks to "the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and the petty criminals" (his words) to throw themselves "into the struggle for liberation like stout working men".

It is, of course, true that in Africa there is the special phenomenon of large numbers of young men, teenagers, who have left school but have been unable to obtain employment and who, therefore, become a discontented section of the town population. Many of these youngsters have never experienced wage labour and therefore cannot be classified as workers, but neither are they peasants or representatives of the petty-bourgeoisie. Amilcar Cabral has noted that this is a special problem and that very often sections of these young people play a militant part in the national struggle. In fact, it can be said that the youth wings of the national parties as they existed in the early post-independence days of Kenya or Uganda, and in some other countries, were often largely composed of such young unemployed people. Certainly, one should not ignore the positive role they can play, but it would be unwise to exaggerate their participation and certainly incorrect to regard the lumpenproletariat as a whole as a consistent revolutionary force.

In fact, Fanon is forced to contradict his own theory on this question, and admit elsewhere that it is the imperialists, not the revolutionaries, who have been able to make the most frequent use of the lumpenproletariat against the national liberation struggle—and he cites the very relevant examples of Algeria, Angola and Congo (Kinshasa).

Fanon's attempted "theory" in other words, does not stand the test of an objective examination, and is not in harmony with the actual course of the African revolution.

Debray and Latin America

In his writings on Latin America, Régis Debray, like Fanon, deals with the question of the role of classes in the revolution. In the course of this, he discusses forms of organisation and struggle.

As regards the role of different classes in the revolution, he writes in his book *Revolution in the Revolution*:

"The irony of history has willed . . . the assignment of precisely this vanguard role to students and revolutionary intellectuals, who have had to unleash, or rather, initiate the highest forms of class struggle."

The "illiterate peasants" (he writes in "Latin America—the Long March", *New Left Review* No. 33) have been "suffocated by centuries of 'social peace' under a feudal regime". They will, he says, become "followers of 'propaganda by facts' ". It will

be noted that he refers to them as followers, not as leaders.

Debray's approach is based on the concept that determined action by a group of militants can itself produce a revolutionary situation, and that students and intellectuals will provide the initial leadership for this. Secondly, he argues that the action required is armed action by a small group of heroes who create what is termed a *foco* which spreads eventually among the peasant masses, from them to the small towns and finally to the capital. This small unit, the *foco*, which he states is only applicable to the countries of Latin America, must start on its own, deliberately isolated from the peasants, who, according to Debray, will tend to betray it.

What of the political leadership required for this struggle? Here Debray flies in the face of all past experience, most vividly confirmed in our present time by the struggle of the Vietnamese people. In Debray's scheme of things, the military takes priority over the political leadership. It is, in his view, the military leadership that will give rise to the political vanguard and not vice versa. In place of a political vanguard leading all the different forms of struggle including armed struggle, Debray shows scant regard for such things as industrial actions, student activity, and peasant protest movements.

Neither does he accept the Marxist concept that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". For this reason he embraces spontaneity, the idea that people spontaneously become revolutionaries and acquire revolutionary theory and understanding from practice alone, practice which in his view must be military practice.

These ideas which play down the role of political and ideological leadership, and which include the concept that the military *foco* will give rise to the political vanguard, and not the political vanguard which will create the people's armed forces, arise from his idea that the passive mass will come alive only when the few active heroes show the way by their own armed actions.

Lenin repeatedly warned that a neglect of Marxist theory, the failure to bring this theory to the working class, and a worship of spontaneity, would leave the masses at the mercy of capitalist ideas. The Marxist movement has always had to fight, too, against the idea of the active heroic group replacing the mass movement. Thus, Marx fought against Blanquist and later, anarchist conceptions in the 19th century; similarly Lenin fought later to overcome the dangers arising from the Narodniks who also believed that a few active heroes could stimulate the peasantry, and when they failed in this turned to individual assassination.

Debray's *foco* theory is not even a correct analysis of the Cuban revolution on which he claims to base

his ideas. Certainly this revolution had many new and specific features; but many of these arose out of the special circumstances in Cuba at that time, and in what was then US policy and practice. The latter has now changed. Moreover, a number of specific Cuban features are not present in other Latin American countries. In any case, the armed struggle which began in the hills in Cuba in 1958, was prefaced by years of bitter struggle involving workers, peasants and students, a struggle which was conducted both in the towns and in the countryside, and which was led for most of the previous three decades by the Popular Socialist Party (the name of Cuba's Communist Party at that time) and later also by other organisations. It is those years of dedicated struggle which helped to create the mass conditions for victory and thus facilitated the task of Fidel Castro and his courageous colleagues.

Attempts to apply Debray's *foco* theory in Peru and Bolivia have met with serious setbacks. This, in itself, does not disprove the theory of Debray; but it certainly does not give it validity. It is not without significance that, in contrast with the setbacks in Peru and Bolivia, armed struggle has been maintained for several years where the revolutionary armed units are led by the Communist Party.

All revolutionary organisations in Latin America accept the view that as far as their continent is concerned "armed struggle is the rule, and the peaceful way the exception". This is not a simple question, and certainly one cannot draw easy parallels with Asia or Africa. Latin America, for example, is by no means as backward as most of Africa from the standpoint of economic development. In Africa, less than 10 per cent of the people are urbanised. In Venezuela there is 75 per cent urbanisation and in Argentina 70 per cent—in both cases a figure higher than that for France. Brazil has two cities of over five million people, and three of over one million. In 1968 there were many major mass actions in the cities, especially in Mexico on the eve of the Olympic Games, and for several months in Uruguay. In both cases, workers and students combined in mass demonstrations, strikes, and other activities in the major towns.

In most of Latin America, revolutionary organisations regard armed struggle as inevitable. This is not the question which is in dispute with Debray. What is in dispute is the form, the method, the conditions of struggle; the relationship of the armed struggle to politics, to political parties, to mass action, to the class struggle, to other forms of activity, and the question of leadership. Debray's conceptions on these questions are not only at variance with accepted Marxist views, but they have resulted in practice in serious setbacks and defeats. This in itself is not decisive, but it should certainly give one cause for serious reflection.

Students and Workers in Western Europe

Recently, President Johnson (*The Times* 5.12.68.) appealed for an end to "violence causing chaos in universities around the world." Stating that he had received a report that universities in 25 leading countries had been taken over by dissident students, he lamented the dangers from forces "at work to break-up the democratic societies which so many have laboured so long to build and perfect."

There is no doubt that the students' movement or revolt is one of the major factors of our time and we certainly need to discuss its significance.

Some theoreticians have presented the students (and intellectuals generally) as the force in the West which will lead the struggle for socialist change, displacing the workers in that role. Herbert Marcuse, for example, in his April 1966 paper called *The Obsolescence of Marx* writes:

"In the advanced industrial countries where the transition to socialism was to take place, and precisely in those countries, the labouring classes are in no sense a revolutionary potential."

It will be noted that he does not limit himself to belittling the activity of the working class at present—and when one looks at the United States where Herbert Marcuse works one can certainly regret that the level of working class activity of a politically conscious character is not as high as one would like or the situation requires—but Marcuse even goes so far as to belittle the "potential" role of the working class.

To whom then does he turn? He is not always consistent. In his book *One-Dimensional Man*, he stresses "The outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable" who stand outside the traditional forms of struggle.

In an article in the *New Left Review* (Sept./Oct. 1967) while he draws attention to the need for the "political revitalisation of the working class movement on an international scale" he places his main emphasis on youth whom he finds "free from ideology or permeated with a deep distrust of all ideology (including socialist ideology); it is sexual, moral, intellectual and political rebellion all in one. In this sense it is total, directed against the system as a whole."

At other times he has specifically placed his bets on one section of the youth, namely the students—though even here he appears to have recently modified his views, seeing them as a catalyst rather than as the revolutionary leadership.

Why is there this revolt of the young people? It should be appreciated that this is not something entirely new. Young people have always taken part in rebellion and revolution. It was true in Russia in

1917, in Spain 1936-39, in the resistance movements of Europe and Asia in the second world war, in the struggle in China, in the Cuban revolution as well as in Vietnam today.

What is happening in Western Europe today, however, is not just a continuation of the traditional participation of young people in revolutionary movements. There is something significantly new. For the younger generation in the West, the material changes of the past 30 years do not have the same significance as they do for their parents who remember periods of general unemployment and poverty. Most younger people in the West, now live under different conditions, and far from making a contrast between the material life of today and yesterday, are eager to press forward and win still more. Furthermore, they see a small rich class at the top of the pyramid, a class which constantly grows more powerful through the mergers of giant monopolies which take place week after week.

Young people today awaken earlier, are more mature, better educated and have access to far more information than their parents generally did. They live in a society which needs better educated people in order to function. They are growing up in a world which is in transition from capitalism to socialism. They live in an age of scientific and technological revolution. There is an immense spirit of change, both physical and political. Everything seems to go faster these days and ideas of slow or even static conservatism are disappearing. In addition the ideas of socialism and Marxism are gaining influence on a wide scale.

Position of Students Today

Within this general movement the position of students is very important. The technological revolution is modifying social structures in the Western countries and changing the status of different strata in society. Science is becoming more a direct productive force, and the bulk of students are increasingly being involved in modern production, either directly or via the different services such as market research, public relations, and personnel management, and through the application of sociology, industrial psychology, and so on. The universities themselves are being increasingly geared to this process to which the big monopolies pay close attention.

Formerly students were generally trained for the arts, for the state, or as administrators in different fields—and most of them were sons of the bourgeoisie. Now more of them come from the working class, though for many countries the number is still small. In France, for example, only 10 per cent of students are working class and in Britain 26 per cent, although the latter figure has stood still for the past 20 years. Most students in the Western world come from the

small and middle bourgeoisie. Many students have no secure future and are not certain about employment after finishing studies. They have to make their own way in the world without rich parents. They feel they are being trained to do the jobs as wheels in the capitalist machine.

These changes have to be seen along with the numerical growth of the students. In the United States, the number of students has jumped from 2 million to 7 million in 10 years. Over the same period in West Germany they have risen from 110,000 to 500,000, in France from 200,000 to 680,000 and in Britain, which had 70,000 before the war, the figures have risen in the last decade from 216,000 to 418,000. It has been estimated that today there are 3 million students in Western Europe and 1 million in Japan.

Nor can one ignore the mass character of the new universities which in some ways are more like intellectual factories than places of study. In these new large-scale universities there is a sense of cohesion, it is easy to carry out propaganda, organisation and mass action, and there are facilities for quicker mobilisation. Students also live a more mobile life than the average worker and very quickly contact one another up and down the country and even on an international level.

Formerly it was only a handful of students and intellectuals—one cannot help thinking here of Marx, Engels and Lenin—who broke away from their normal conditions of life and joined the revolution. At times in the past there were occasions when the movement among the students passed beyond the confines of a limited handful of individuals. Today however, whole sections are cutting away in a more permanent fashion. The fact that students are turning to revolutionary movements not individually but as part of a mass movement is a great victory for the revolution and can only be welcomed by all Marxists.

Students and Revolution

It is natural, however, that in this process the students bring with them a variety of ideas which are often not fully thought out, and that sometimes they take contradictory positions and tend to support various concepts connected with anarchism. The working class movement itself suffered from such problems in its early stages and is still not entirely immune from them in some countries. These are problems of growth which patience, principled discussion and experience itself should help to overcome.

No-one should minimise the importance of the student revolt of our time. This is without doubt one of the most significant political developments of the late 1960's. Those who remember the role played by some students in Britain, who acted as strike breakers during the 1926 General Strike, will rejoice to see the great change which has come about.

Nevertheless, despite the great role which students are playing and the support they bring to the general struggle for democracy, peace and socialism, they are unable to fulfil the role as the leading class in the revolutionary struggle. There is, of course, no such thing as a student *class* from the standpoint of scientific socialism.

Students are of mixed class origin, and, as we have seen, only a minority are from working class families. A student, who enjoys this particular status only for a short transitional phase of his life, is not yet a direct victim of exploitation in production and most students probably will never have that experience. Students are not so dispersed throughout the general population and towns as the working class nor, from the point of view of the economy, are they in the same strategic position as the workers. They are not in the factories which are the point of production and exploitation. Students generally lack working-class consciousness, have a somewhat limited experience of struggle and of mass organisations although they learn very quickly and bring many new positive features, especially as regards forms of activity and methods of quick mobilisation.

Lenin stressed that:

“only a certain class, namely the workers of the cities and the factory, industrial workers in general, is capable of leading the entire mass of working and exploited people in the struggle to overthrow the yoke of capital, in the course of the revolution itself, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the entire struggle for the abolition of all classes.”

Are students able to act as catalysts, to stir up workers by their own militant example? They certainly can assist in this way if other conditions are present, although often the process works the other way round.

One has only to think back beyond the last two years and to survey the whole movement in the 20th century to appreciate correctly the role of student participation in mass movements. Sometimes, as in China in the 1919 May 4th Movement, mass action was first taken by students and was then taken up by the workers with general strikes spreading from Shanghai to other centres. Often the students' actions are predated by and later accompanied by workers' mass actions. Even the events in France in May and June 1968, often wrongly regarded as having spontaneously begun because of student action, were in no sense a bolt out of the blue but followed ten years of consistent struggle against de Gaulle, a struggle conducted mainly by the working class and led by the Communist Party.

Marcuse presents an idea—one which is often unthinkingly repeated by other people—that the European working class is corrupt, has become effete and no longer has a revolutionary potential.

Workers in Struggle

We should remember that certain people like to flatter students and deliberately distort and exaggerate reality. Students' actions are often front page news. In contrast, the actions of workers spreading over many years are often ignored by the mass media of the press, radio and television. For example, at the end of October 1968 a few thousand students in Japan (in opposition to the overwhelming majority of students) invaded Parliament and the Central Railway Station in Tokyo. This became headline news in a number of papers. On the same day 700,000 workers demonstrated in Japan and another three million held one-hour strikes and factory meetings against the Vietnam war. In this case there were no headlines. Again, on September 19th, 1968, there was a mass strike of Indian Government employees. Over four thousand were arrested and ten killed—but again there were no headlines.

It is the same in Europe. Far from being quiet, the past few decades show the opposite, in fact a mounting wave of struggles in different forms. It is not sufficient to compare the students in 1968 with workers in 1968, but to see the whole trend—and the fact is that from the 1905 Revolution in Russia, the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916, through 1917 and the post-October Revolution upheavals in Europe, the German Revolution of 1918, the Hungarian Soviets, the Bulgarian uprising of 1923, the fight against fascism, the 1934 armed struggle in Austria, the Spanish War of 1936-9, the anti-Hitler resistance and partisan warfare throughout Europe during the second world war, and the changes in East Europe in 1945-48, it was overwhelmingly the working class led by their Communist Parties which conducted these struggles.

Working Class and Students in Alliance

In the past 20 years, since the end of the war, there have been huge mass movements, strikes and demonstrations by the workers.

Strike battles are an important index of the growth of the movement. From 1919 to 1939, 74 million workers participated in strikes in the industrially advanced capitalist countries. From 1946 to 1966 nearly 260 million participated, that is a more than threefold increase. In 1965 alone, there were 20 million strikers in Western industrial countries and in 1966 there were 28 million. Many of these strikes were general strikes and often for political demands. From 1960 to 1965 there were more than 160 general strikes in the world. Let no-one therefore assert that the workers have become passive and are no longer prepared to struggle.

Students and intellectuals, individually and collectively, have an exceedingly important role to play, especially when they are allied with the working

class movement. One has only to think of the recent developments in 1968 in Italy, France, Spain, Mexico, Uruguay and some other countries, to see the potential power of this new alliance of the working class and the students. The students can play their role not as a superior elite but as part of an alliance. Outstanding individuals, as one can see from experience, can sometimes become part of the vanguard or leadership. If students place their talents, enthusiasm, and knowledge, at the disposal of the revolutionary movement, they can make a valuable contribution to the whole revolution. In turn, they will gain in experience of struggle, of organisation and in their knowledge of the movement and in their understanding of scientific socialism.

If people are against capitalism and want change, this is an essential starting point, this is the common ground on which an alliance of forces can be built. Together we can learn in unity to strike the most effective blows against the class enemy, to advance to power, and to build socialism.

In the new version of the Communist Party programme *The British Road to Socialism*, such a path is outlined for the British people, based on an alliance of the overwhelming majority of the people against the monopolies, an alliance led by the working class, which will assert its democratic strength in order to overcome the capitalist class, assume power and proceed to the building of socialism.