

relatively few but often rather large industrial enterprises its class militancy is growing swiftly. Its political consciousness and organisational forms are developing. The working class has built its own trade unions and in some countries its own Party. It is essential that the political role of these Parties should be developed and strengthened.

The working class is objectively becoming more and more the defender of the interests of all the working people. From the economic struggle for their own rights and interests many contingents of the proletariat are going over to political actions against neocolonialism, local reactionaries and international imperialism. At the present stage of the national democratic revolution even though the proletariat has certain objective and subjective weaknesses it remains the most consistent revolutionary force in the struggle for national and social liberation, national economic development, industrialisation, the promotion of cooperative forms of the economy, the surmounting of tribalism — that blight of the African peoples — and for universal cultural rejuvenation.

In this struggle the peasantry, which in African countries comprises the majority of the population, is the natural and numerically strongest ally of the working class. It is impossible to ensure real social progress for a long period without taking into account the very serious problems of the peasantry, without responding to the aspirations of the peasant masses for socio-economic progress, without active support of the peasantry.

Profound changes are taking place in the agrarian structures of Tropical Africa. These changes are directly linked to the rapid extension of commodity-production in the village. The penetration of foreign capital and capitalist forms of production (setting of prices, loans and credit), leads to the destruction of the simple forms of productive forces and growing erosion of the pre-capitalist patriarchal and feudal structures, resulting in the take-over of communal land for the purpose of capitalist exploitation by traditional landowners or by the leading segment of bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the emergence of rural bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie alongside with the large masses of landless and impoverished peasants and agricultural workers. This process leads

to the pauperisation of the rural masses; this is the social picture of rural areas in Tropical Africa.

Class Struggle

The rapidity and the depth of these structural agrarian changes differ from one country to another. The growing heterogeneity of the peasantry inevitably means that opposed social and political interests shall emerge and lead to an intensification of the class struggle. Experience shows that the policies of "modernisation" of the rural area, including the cooperative policies, if not accompanied by popular participation, are in favour of rich rural strata and they necessarily entail the pauperisation of the broad peasant masses.

This is why it is so important for progressive forces to ensure the widest democratic participation of the peasant masses in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle in the countryside and in the struggle for genuine agrarian reform.

The progressive forces share the demands and aspirations of the working and poor peasantry and try to heighten their social and political consciousness. Naturally therefore the working class and other progressive forces encounter not only the active resistance of the local rich and exploiting classes but also that of imperialism and its instrument the multi-national corporations.

As a result of the migration of rural population to the cities a rapid process of urbanisation has taken place. This rapid growth has created tremendous socio-political problems primarily that of spawning large economically unstable and declassed elements.

The process of urbanisation has also led to the marked numerical growth of the middle and some transitional strata which includes elements dislocated from the rural areas, small traders, artisans, office workers and intellectuals. These strata also take part with varying degrees of intensity in the struggle for democracy and national and social progress. It is from these strata that such an influential force as revolutionary democrats more or less clearly shaped is emerging, and which in the socialist oriented countries controls state power.

The intellectuals constitute an active political stratum in African society. They play an important role in African political life,