

Self-criticism of the Communist Camp

Written when Marshal Tito, the leader of the Communist League of Yugoslavia, was expelled from the Cominform, the article drew attention to the mechanical process of thinking and organization prevalent in the international communist movement.

If this problem of non-Marxist mechanical outlook was not resolved in time, Comrade Ghosh warned far back in 1948, the world people might witness a new phenomenon of socialist countries engaging in open confrontation or warfare among themselves — an observation proving to be prophetically true in the succeeding years.

The release of unprecedented mass struggles and progressive democratic movements throughout the world for lasting peace, democracy and socialism under the leadership of the USSR and the People's Democratic countries of Europe against world imperialism and all sorts of reaction in each and every country, has no doubt struck terror in the capitalist-imperialist camp in the post-War period. But paradoxically enough, there is still lack of firm solidarity on the basis of ideology and uniformity of thinking in the united revolutionary front of the people fighting for the above objective. The danger inherent in this cannot be averted by ignoring and glossing over it or by remaining blind to it. Though all the communists accept this tautologically, yet in practice the attitude towards different fraternal socialist countries, as recently displayed by the leadership of the world communist camp, has reflected bossism and, in some cases, has become meaninglessly harsh on the plea of enforcing iron discipline. From all this it appears that instead of overcoming the present crisis of the world communist camp, the approach and attitude of the present leadership would presumably push the present situation to a far deeper crisis in the near future.

While acknowledging with just pride and deference the very many achievements and successes and glorious sacrifices of the world communist movement, we have not failed, even for a moment, to point out the serious shortcomings in it. All the genuine communists who do not want to be swayed by self-deception in the name of self-criticism and want to adopt a revolutionary programme of action to get rid of the crisis with the help of scientific process of analysis instead of being influenced by any sort of blind emotion or bias, cannot gloss over these serious shortcomings and will have to scientifically probe deep into it.

These serious shortcomings and defects are largely due to the fact that the present leadership of the world communist camp is, to a very large extent, influenced by mechanical process of thinking. We have been noticing this for a long time with much agony and anxiety. In our opinion, it is precisely because of this that there has been continuous violation of the Marxist dialectical principle of mutually dependent and beneficial relationship, based on equality and mutual respect, between the fraternal communist parties of different countries that has virtually led to the negation of the Marxian science, accepted through test of the historical experiences regarding the dialectical process of emergence and formation of the revolutionary communist leadership through interaction of ideas.

Whereas it is an accepted Leninist principle that the general international line of revolution should evolve through interaction of ideas between the communist parties of different countries, developed on the basis of concrete social, political and economic conditions of different countries in the perspective of the prevailing international political situation, we, on the contrary, have been noticing for a long time that instead of following this dialectical process for evolving the general international line of revolution, a practice and convention of accepting without critical examination the analysis of the international situation by just one or two leading communist parties as the general international line of revolution have developed.

This has virtually led to the negation of conflict of ideas in the matter of developing the concept of 'international leadership'. The result was obviously disastrous for the communist parties of different countries. That is to say, *whereas the leadership of the communist parties should have been developed through struggle and interaction of ideas between all members of the party, between the leaders and the rank and file and through deriving knowledge from different kinds of experience of the world communist movement, most of the parties have chosen the easy way of mechanical centralization which has led to the formation of bureaucratic leadership at the top.*

This phenomenon clearly indicates the serious shortcomings in the ideological and political fields of activities in the world communist movement. The proof of it can be found from the very admission by different communist parties (reference may be made to the communist parties of France, Italy, India, etc., in a meeting of the Cominform in the matter of applying the well-known 'People's War Theory' in concrete political situations obtaining in those countries) that in conducting day-to-day struggles they have been guided by a wrong approach and a non-proletarian class outlook, in spite of making big strides in the trade union movements in the post-World War period.

It is for this very setback in the ideological sphere of activities that even after arriving at a crucial and important stage of revolutionary struggle, the parties which are to prepare themselves for a fight to finish, have to adopt afresh a programme to start inner-party ideological struggle even at this decisive hour.

The question naturally arises : what is this struggle for, and against whom inside the party is this struggle directed ? Does the decision to launch the struggle indicate in any way the recognition of the necessity of and correct understanding about developing dialectical process of thinking within the party ? In our view, herein lies the crux of the question of the present-day ideological struggle. So far, the communists of different countries mostly stressed one-sided routine work of organization without showing any regard to co-ordinating it with questions of ideology. On the other hand, these leaders have only exhorted the party workers about their duty to the party, the discipline (which is nothing but mechanical) and the need to expand anyhow the party organization.

But the day of reckoning has now come. Now it is being felt more and more that without screening and purges in the parties it would be impossible for them to provide proper leadership to conduct movements in future. For, the present leadership of the communist movement has at long last come to realize that the vast organizations that have grown through limitless sufferings and sacrifices made by the workers, more or less blindly without a clear understanding of the objective, are, to a large extent, devoid of any real foundation as a result of which opponent forces (liberal democrats and social democrats who were partners in Democratic Front) are finding it possible to usurp the entire fruit of their labour. This explains why attempts are being made

afresh to undertake ideological struggles in order to translate the knowledge of science of Marxism into collective knowledge of the parties. But, here too, the manner in which criticism and self-criticism are being conducted, the way in which a policy of sheer one-sided analysis and mechanical approach to problems is being followed, denying any opportunity to the teachings, past as well as present, of the communist movement to come into conflict and contradiction with opposing ideas and viewpoints or even deliberately glossing over it altogether, and the unquestioning blind acceptance of the same that is being lauded as the sign of sense of discipline and dynamic mind, make us apprehensive as to whether it will ultimately be possible for the present Cominform leadership to come out of this impasse.

It must be made clear in this connection that while we have no difference whatsoever regarding fundamental objective and present political programme of the international communist movement, we are of the firm opinion that the attitude that the leaders can commit no mistake in conducting ideological struggle and handling organizational matters, or that in case they commit mistakes any attempt to point these out in the spirit of self-criticism tends to weaken the communist movement as such, is sheer blindness and influenced by bourgeois escapism which is alien to Marxism.

It has been proved that despite its long association with the communist camp and carrying on with the tradition of many historic revolutionary battles to its credit, the Communist League of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Marshal Tito has failed to grasp properly the fundamental tenets of Marxism. So, the record of sufferings and sacrifices in the past alone is no guarantee of correctness in conducting communist movements at present; the approach, the standpoint and the programme have got to be judged on the anvil of experimented truth and fundamental teachings of Marxism constantly, and as far as possible, on every practical issue. This point has found clear expression in the following words of Comrade Stalin : '*Without practice, theory is sterile and without theory, practice is blind*'. Although the call of the present Cominform leadership to consolidate organizational solidarity has evoked quite a wide response within the parties on the one hand, side by side, signs of newer cracks and rifts in the firm solidarity forged through many heroic struggles are coming to light.

Mention may be made in this connection of the differences between Togliatti and the Leftwing communist workers inside the Communist Party of Italy, the removal of Gomulka from the post of Secretary of the Polish Workers' Party because of his identity of viewpoint with Tito and the charge of the Communist Party of Macedonia against Bulgaria that the latter is not following the teachings of Lenin and Stalin in the matter of the right of nations to self-determination. Besides, it cannot be denied that serious questions have already cropped up as to the political behaviour of those parties in India known as communists who, at least, verbally, admit their allegiance to the international communist leadership.

Over and above the causes just mentioned that are at the root of the serious confusion prevailing in the international communist movement today, it is necessary to take note of another aspect. That is, what should be the relation between the Soviet foreign policy directed from the state level and the task of the CPSU to accelerate the international proletarian revolution ? Are they mutually conducive or is one divorced from the other ?

On this question there exists a good deal of confusion amongst the communists. Some hold that the Soviet foreign policy directed from the state level and the Soviet policy of accelerating the international revolutionary proletarian movement are

distinctly separate having no relation between the two, while there are others who hold that the two are not only not separate but are one and the same.

The first is influenced by Trotskyism and the second is a well-known theory in the communist circle. But in fact, as the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the task of the CPSU to accelerate the international proletarian revolution are not divorced from each other, so also it will be equally wrong to conceive these two as one and the same because that will create a serious hurdle for having a correct appraisal of the revolutionary significance of the role and policy adopted by the Soviet Union. They are mutually conducive and are interdependent — one influencing the other. In formulating and applying the Soviet foreign policy, the leaders of the CPSU are to keep an eye mainly on two points. First, they are to examine and explore the possibility as to how the international proletarian revolutionary movement can be further helped and strengthened everywhere, whether indirectly and, if possible, in some cases, directly. Second, to protect the Soviet socialist state from the intrigues, interference and onslaughts by the world imperialism-capitalism, the forces of international reaction, and keep uninterrupted the march of socialism. These are the two pillars on which the Soviet foreign policy rests. Hence, it would be dangerous to conclude that any political or diplomatic move at state level, from time to time, prompted by the necessity of the Soviet foreign policy is the policy of the international proletarian revolution. But this type of misconceptions and mistaken views are creating newer and newer confusions in the communist camp today.

We would like to stress once again that it is not possible to correctly understand the real implication of the international revolutionary policy of the Soviet Union by a commonplace explanation of its foreign policy, judging it simply at its face value. Without a proper realization of the tactical approach of the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, derived through concrete experiences of struggles and embodied in the lessons of the October Revolution, it is impossible to grasp it correctly in the present-day complex political situation.

As the Trotskyites have distorted the implication of the Soviet foreign policy and the important role of the Soviet Union in accelerating the international proletarian revolutionary movement, so also the different communist parties affiliated to the Third International of the past and the Cominform at present, have committed grave errors by taking a commonplace and simplified view of the Soviet foreign policy which is basically consistent with Leninism. And because of this, they have failed to comprehend the objective contradiction that exists between the Soviet foreign policy and the task of revolution in different countries. These parties are confusing the question of Soviet foreign policy with the question of revolution in different countries and, as a result, in the face of newer and newer complexities and problems, they are continually committing one mistake after another.

We would appeal to all communists, of the world, especially to those in India who are known as communists, to take this criticism of ours as a piece of self-criticism and not as a criticism by opponents. What we are trying to particularly pinpoint before the communists is that *sheer blind faith in the Soviet or Cominform leadership will only weaken it. We have at our disposal the store-house of the experiences of the world proletarian revolutionary movement, we possess the Marxian science of dialectics — these provide us with the means by which we must test the leadership — be it the Soviet or the Cominform.* It must not be forgotten for a moment that the individual initiatives of each and every communist party form the rock-bottom foundation of dynamism and effectiveness of international communist organizations. The practice of lending continuous blind support to the leadership, with eyes shut, makes it

impossible to have an objective appraisal of the world situation and adopt a correct programme. The history of the disrupters like Tito and others proves to the hilt our analysis that the process of thinking and the process of movement in the international communist movement have not been free from error. Any attempt to cover up this truth is nothing short of self-deception and the movement must have to bear largely the responsibility for the present confusion and crisis. *So, it is incumbent on every communist worker to judge dispassionately and to be conscious of the past history, present trend and tendencies and future course of communist movement. Disruption in the communist movement has not died out with the burial of Trotskyism ; if sufficient vigil is not constantly exercised, newer rifts in the communist camp cannot, in the context of the present extremely complex political situation, be ruled out.*

Not only this ; if this problem of non-Marxist mechanical outlook prevailing at present in the matter of ideological questions is not rightly resolved in time, it may, no wonder, in the long run bring about a new phenomenon in the world history when people would witness that even after the establishment of socialist system in different countries, the communists, instead of further cementing the unity between them and making rapid strides towards the establishment of world communist society, are engaged in open confrontation or even war.

We, as Marxists, should always keep this point uppermost in our mind that we should not indulge in anything that might in any way injure the interest of the world socialist camp under the leadership of the Soviet Union, in our zeal to strengthen it.

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