



Born — December 9, 1879 Died — March 5, 1953

... I think, comrades, that self-criticism is as necessary to us as air or water. I think that without it, without self-criticism, our Party could not make any headway, could not disclose our ulcers, could not eliminate our shortcomings. And shortcomings we have in plenty. That must be admitted frankly and honestly. ...It would be strange to fear that our enemies, our internal and external enemies, might exploit the criticism of our shortcomings and raise the shout: Oho! All is not well with those Bolsheviki! It would be strange if we Bolsheviki were to fear that. The strength of Bolshevism lies precisely in the fact that it is not afraid to admit its mistakes.

Stalin on Proletarian Party Organisation Criticism-Self-criticism and Fight Against Bureaucracy

The 41st death anniversary of Comrade J.V. Stalin, the giant communist leader, the most worthy follower of Lenin's behest, the architect of the socialist transformation and socialist construction of the first socialist state of the world, and the great saviour of mankind and civilization against the most savage Hitlerite fascist menace, will be observed on March 5, 1994. We feel that in the background of the present serious set-back in the international communist movement, it will be befitting to recall on this occasion some of his invaluable teachings which, if correctly grasped, will provide clearcut guidance in our fight against revisionism.

We, therefore, give below some excerpts from his invaluable teachings — Editor, *Proletarian Era*.

...We have mentioned all this in order to compare the proletarian party with the proletarian class and thus briefly to bring out the general features of the Party.

The foregoing makes it sufficiently clear that the proletarian party, being a fighting group of leaders, must, firstly, be considerably smaller than the proletarian class with respect to membership; secondly, it must be superior to the proletarian class with respect to its understanding and its experience; and, thirdly, it must be a compact organisation.

In our opinion, what has been said needs no proof, for it is self-evident that, so long as the capitalist system exists, with its inevitably attendant poverty and backwardness of the masses, the proletariat as a whole cannot rise to the desired level of class consciousness, and,

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Railway & General Budget totally anti-people: SUCI

Condemning the out and out anti-people General Budget Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, has issued the following statement to the Press on 28.2.94:

"The unprecedented fiscal deficit of Rs. 54,915 crores in the Central Budget, 1994-95, will further push up the price and inflationary spiral. As a consequence, common men will gain nothing by the income-tax exemption limit of Rs. 50,000.

"The Central Government, which on the plea of financial crisis increased the prices of rice, wheat, sugar, petrol, diesel, coal, LPG, etc., before the Budget Session, again has exposed its own class character by allotting a staggering Rs. 23,000 crores for military budget.

"On the scores of custom, excise and corporate tax Rs. 4081 crores has been exempted besides the lowering on Bank credit by 1%, only for the entry of foreign capital as also to facilitate the inflow of foreign loans in the interest of the Indian monopolists.

"We call upon the toiling people to build up movements against this anti-people Budget placed solely in the interest of the foreign multinationals and Indian monopolists."

Strongly condemning the anti-people Railway Budget, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI has issued the following statement to the Press on 24th February, 1994:

"In presenting the Railway Budget of 1994-1995 on 24th February, 1994 the Railway Minister has shown a deficit to the tune of Rs. 997 crores. This amount will be met up by increasing the freight charges on various items causing a further price hike in essential commodities and also by increasing the fare of monthly tickets, (by Rs. 9.00 upto 90km and Rs. 11.00 to Rs. 40.00 for a distance over 100 km), sleeper charges and reservation charges.

This hike in railway fare and freight will seriously tell upon the common people who are already hard pressed by the burden of price rise and mounting taxes.

We call upon the Left and democratic parties for a united mass movement against this anti-people Railway Budget."

Stalin on Problems of Party Organisation

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consequently, there must be a group of class-conscious leaders to enlighten the proletarian army in the spirit of socialism, to unite and lead it in its struggle. It is also clear that a party which has set out to lead the *fighting* proletariat must not be a chance conglomeration of individuals, but a compact, centralized *organisation*, so that its activities can be directed according to a single plan.

Such, in brief, are the general features of our Party.

Bearing all this in mind, let us pass to the main question: Whom can we call a Party member? Paragraph One of the Party Rules, which is the subject of the present article, deals with precisely this question.

And so, let us examine this question.

Whom, then, can we call a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party — i.e., what are the duties of a Party member?

Our Party is a Social-Democratic Party.* This means that it has its own programme (the immediate and the ultimate aims of the movement), its own tactics (methods of struggle), and its own organisational principle (form of association). *Unity* of programme, tactical and organisational views is the basis on which our Party is built. Only the *unity* of these views can unite the Party members in *one* centralised party. If unity of views collapses, the Party collapses. Consequently, only one who fully accepts the Party's programme, tactics and organisational principle can be called a Party member. Only one who has adequately studied and has fully accepted our Party's programme, tactical and organisational views can be in the ranks of our Party and, thereby, in the ranks of the leaders of the proletarian army.

But is it enough for a Party member merely to *accept* the Party's programme, tactics and organisational views? Can a person like that be regarded as a true leader of the proletarian army? Of course not! In the first place, everybody knows that there are plenty of windbags in the world who would readily "accept" the Party's programme, tactics and organisational views, but who are incapable of being anything else than windbags. It would be a desecration of the Party's Holy of Holies to call a windbag like that a Party member (i.e., a leader of the proletarian army)! Moreover, our Party is not a school of philosophy or a religious sect. Is not our Party a *fighting* party? Since it is, is it not self-evident that our Party will not be satisfied with a platonic *acceptance* of its programme, tactics and organisational views, that it will undoubtedly demand that its members should *apply* the views they have accepted? Hence, whoever wants to be a member of our Party cannot rest content with merely accepting our Party's programme, tactical and organisational views, but must set about applying these views, putting them into effect.

* In those periods communists were known as social-democrats and communist parties the social democratic labour parties. But later on the term 'social-democracy' became synonymous with class collaborationism and betrayal to the working class. Since then communists do not take the name social democrats.

But what does applying the Party's views mean for a Party member? When can he apply these views? Only when he is fighting, when he is marching with the whole Party at the head of the proletarian army. Can the struggle be waged by solitary, scattered individuals? Certainly not! On the contrary, people first unite, first they organise, and only then do they go into battle. If that is not done, all struggle is fruitless. Clearly, then, the Party members too will be able to fight and, consequently, apply the Party's views, only if they unite in a compact *organisation*. It is also clear that the more compact the organisation in which the Party members unite, the better will they be able to fight, and, consequently, the more fully will they apply the Party's programme, tactics and organisational views. It is not for nothing that our Party is called an *organisation* of leaders and not a conglomeration of individuals. And, since the Party is an *organisation* of leaders, it is obvious that only those can be regarded as members of this Party, of this organisation, who work in this organisation and, therefore, **deem it their duty to merge their wishes with the wishes of the Party and to act in unison with the Party.** (emphasis ours)

Hence, to be a Party member one must apply the Party's programme, tactics and organisational views; to apply the Party's views one must fight for them; and to fight for these views one must work in a Party organisation, work in unison with the Party. Clearly, to be a Party member one must belong to one of the Party organisations.** Only when we join one of the Party organisations and **thus merge our personal interests with the Party's interests can we become Party members,** (emphasis ours) and, consequently, real leaders of the proletarian army.

If our Party is not a conglomeration of individual windbags, but an *organisation* of leaders which, through its Central Committee, is worthily leading the proletarian army forward, then all that has been said above is self-evident.

The following must also be noted.

Up till now our Party has resembled a hospitable patriarchal family, ready to take in all who sympathise. But now that our Party has become a centralised *organisation*, it has thrown off its patriarchal aspect and has become in all respects like a *fortress*, the gates of which are opened only to those who are worthy. And that is of great importance to us. At a time when the autocracy is trying to corrupt the class consciousness of the proletariat with "trade unionism", nationalism, clericalism and the like, and when, on the other hand, the liberal intelligentsia is persistently striving to kill the political independence of the proletariat and to impose its tutelage upon it — at such a time we

** Just as every complex organism is made up of an incalculable number of the simplest organisms, so our Party, being a complex and general organisation, is made up of numerous district and local bodies called Party organisations, provided they have been endorsed by the Party Congress or the Central Committee. As you see, not only Committees are called Party organisations. To direct the activities of these organisations according to a single plan there is a Central Committee, through which these local Party organisations constitute one, large, centralized organisation.

must be extremely vigilant and never forget that our Party is a *fortress*, the gates of which are opened only to those who have been tested.

We have ascertained two essential conditions of Party membership (acceptance of the programme and work in a Party organisation). If to these we add a third condition, namely, that a Party member must render the Party financial support, then we shall have all the conditions that give one right to the title of Party member.

Hence, a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts the programme of this Party, renders the Party financial support, and *works in one of the Party organisations.*

That is how Paragraph One of the Party Rules, drafted by Comrade Lenin, was formulated. ... (*J. Stalin Works*, Vol.-1, Moscow 1952, pp 64-69)

* * *

...There can be no doubt that ridding the Party of useless guests and concentrating functions in the hands of the workers themselves would contribute a great deal to the renovation of the Party. But it is no less clear that the mere "transfer of functions" under the old system of organisation, with the old methods of Party work, and with "leadership" from abroad, cannot link the Party up with the masses and weld it into a single whole.

Obviously, half-measures cannot achieve much — we must seek radical means for a radical cure of the ailing Party.

The Party is suffering primarily from its isolation from the masses; it must be linked up with the masses at all costs. But this can be done under our present conditions primarily and mainly on the basis of those questions which are particularly exciting the broad masses. Take, for example, the impoverishment of the masses and the offensive launched by capital. Huge lockouts swept over the workers like a hurricane, and the cutting down of production, arbitrary dismissals, reduction of wages, lengthening of the working day and the capitalist offensive in general are continuing to this day. It can hardly be realised what suffering all this is causing among the workers, how intently it is making them think, what a host of "misunderstandings" and conflicts arise between the workers and the employers, what a mass of interesting questions are arising in the minds of the workers on this basis. Let our organisations, in addition to conducting general political work, constantly intervene in all these minor conflicts, let them link these up with the great class struggle and, backing the masses in their daily protests and demands, demonstrate the great principles of our Party by means of living facts. It should be clear to everybody that only in this way will it be possible to stir the masses who have been "forced to the wall," only in this way will it be possible to "shift" them past the accursed dead point. And "shifting" them past this dead point means precisely — rallying them around our organisations.

The Party committees in the factories and works are the Party organs which could most successfully develop such activities among the masses. The advanced workers in the factory and works committees are the living people who

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Excerpts from Comrade Stalin

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could rally to the Party the masses who are around them. All that is needed is that the factory and works committees should constantly intervene in all the affairs of the workers' struggle, champion their daily interests and link up the latter with the fundamental interests of the proletarian class. To make the factory and works committees the principal bastions of the Party — such is the task.

Further, in pursuit of the same object of drawing closer to the masses, the structure of the other, higher, Party organisations must be adapted to the task of defending not only the political but also the economic interests of the masses. Not a single branch of industry of any importance must escape the attention of the organisation. To achieve this, in building up the organisation the territorial principle must be supplemented by the industrial principle, i.e., the factory and works committees in the various branches of industry must be grouped in sub-districts according to industry, and these sub-districts must be linked up territorially in districts, etc. It will not matter if this increases the number of sub-districts — the organisation will gain a firmer and more stable foundation, and it will become more closely linked with the masses.

Of still greater importance for overcoming the crisis is the composition of the Party organisations. The most experienced and influential of the advanced workers must find a place in all the local organisations, the affairs of the organisations must be concentrated in their strong hands, and it is they who must occupy the most important posts in the organisations, from practical and organisational posts to literary posts. It will not matter if the workers who occupy important posts are found to lack sufficient experience and training and even stumble at first — practice and the advice of more experienced comrades will widen their outlook and in the end train them to become real writers and leaders of the movement. It must not be forgotten that Bebels do not drop from the skies, they are trained only in the course of work, by practice, and our movement now needs Russian Bebels, experienced and mature leaders from the ranks of the workers, more than ever before.

That is why our organisational slogan must be: "Widen the road for the advanced workers in all spheres of Party activity", "give them more scope!"

It goes without saying that in addition to the will to lead and initiative in leadership, the advanced workers must possess considerable knowledge. We have few workers who possess knowledge. But it is just here that the assistance of experienced and active intellectuals will be of use. Arrangements must be made for higher circles, "discussion groups" for advanced workers, at least one in every district, at which they will systematically "go through" the theory and practice of Marxism. All this would to a very large extent fill the gaps in the knowledge of the advanced workers and help them to become lecturers and ideological leaders in the future. At the same time, the advanced workers must more often deliver lectures at their works and factories to "get the utmost practice," even

at the risk of "making a mess of it" in the opinion of their audience. They must once and for all cast aside excessive modesty and stage fright, and arm themselves with audacity, confidence in their own strength. It will not matter if they make mistakes at first; they will stumble once or twice, and then learn to walk independently....

In short, 1) intensified agitation around daily needs linked with the general class needs of the proletariat, 2) organisation and consolidation of the committees in the factories and works as the Party's most important district centres, 3) the "transfer" of the most important Party functions to the advanced workers and 4) the organisation of "discussion groups" for the advanced workers — such are the means by which our organisations will be able to rally the broad masses around themselves....

... Let us pass to this last question.

And so, how can the isolated local organisations be linked up with one another, how can they be linked up in a single well-knit Party, living a common life?

One might think that the general Party conferences that are sometimes arranged would solve the problem, would unite the organisations; or that *Proletary*, *Golos* and *Sotsial-Demokrat*, which are published abroad, would, in the long run, rally and unite the Party. There can be no doubt that both the first and the second are of no little importance in linking up the organisations. At any rate, the conferences and the organs that are published abroad have been until now the only means of linking up the isolated organisations. But in the first place, conferences, arranged very rarely at that, can link up the organisations only for a time and, therefore, not as durably as is required in general: in the intervals between conferences the connections are broken and the old amateurish methods continue as before. Secondly, as regards the organs that are published abroad, apart from the fact that they reach Russia in extremely limited quantities, they naturally lag behind the course of Party life in Russia, are unable to note in time and comment on the questions that excite the workers and, therefore cannot link our local organisations together to permanent ties. The facts show that since the London Congress, the Party has succeeded in organising two conferences and in printing scores of issues of the organs published abroad; and yet the work of uniting our organisations in a genuine Party, the work of overcoming the crisis, has made scarcely any headway.

Hence, conferences and organs published abroad, while extremely important for uniting the Party are, nevertheless, inadequate for overcoming the crisis, for permanently uniting the local organisations.

Evidently, a radical measure is needed.

The only radical measure can be the publication of an all-Russian newspaper, a newspaper that will serve as the centre of Party activity and be published in Russia.

It will be possible to unite the organisations scattered over Russia only on the basis of common Party activity. But common Party activity will be impossible unless the experience

of the local organisations is collected at a common centre from which the generalised Party experience can later be distributed to all the local organisations. An all-Russian newspaper could serve as this centre, a centre that would guide, co-ordinate and direct Party activity. But in order that it might really guide the Party's activity it must receive from the localities a constant stream of inquiries, statements, letters, information, complaints, protests, plans of work, questions which excite the masses, etc.; the closest and most durable ties must link the newspaper with the localities; acquiring in this way adequate material, the newspaper must note in time, comment on and elucidate the necessary questions, distil from this material the necessary directions and slogans and bring them to the knowledge of the entire Party, of all its organisations....

If these conditions do not exist there can be no leadership in Party work, and if there is no leadership in Party work the organisations cannot be permanently linked up in a single whole!

That is why we emphasise the necessity of precisely an all-Russian newspaper (and not one published abroad), and precisely a leading newspaper (and not simply a popular one).

Needless to say, the only institution that can undertake to launch and run such a newspaper is the Central Committee of the Party. Even apart from this it is the duty of the Central Committee to guide Party work; but at the present time it is performing this duty unsatisfactorily and, as a result, the local organisations are almost completely divorced from one another. And yet, a well-run all-Russian newspaper could serve as a most effective instrument in the hands of the Central Committee for effectively uniting the Party and guiding Party activity. More than that, we assert that only in this way can the Central Committee be transformed from a fictitious centre into a real, all-Party centre, which will really link up the Party, and really set the tone of its activity. In view of this, the organisation and running of an all-Russian newspaper is the direct task of the Central Committee.

Thus, an all-Russian newspaper as an organ that will unite and rally the Party around the Central Committee — such is the task, such is the way of overcoming the crisis through which the Party is passing....(*Works, Vol. 2, Moscow 1953 pp 154-161*)

* * *

... I think that the chief defect in our internal Party life is that, although the Party's line, as expressed in the decisions of our congresses, is correct, in the localities (not everywhere, of course, but in certain districts) it was put into practice in an incorrect way. While the proletarian-democratic line of our Party was correct, the way it was put into practice in the localities resulted in cases of bureaucratic distortion of this line.

That is the chief defect. The existence of contradictions between the basic Party line as laid down by the Congresses (Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth), and the way our organisations put this line into practice in the localities — that is the foundation of all the defects in internal Party life.

The Party line says that the major questions of our Party activities, except, of course, those

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that brook no delay, or those that are military or diplomatic secrets, must without fail be discussed at Party meetings. That is what the Party line says. But in Party practice in the localities, not everywhere, of course, it was considered that there is really no great need for a number of questions concerning internal Party practice to be discussed at Party meetings since the Central Committee and the other leading organisations will decide these questions....

... The Party line says that the Party membership must be kept informed about the work of the economic organisations, the factories and trusts, for, naturally, our Party units are morally responsible to the non-Party masses for the defects in the factories. Nevertheless, in Party practice it was considered that since there is a Central Committee which issues directives to the economic organisations, and since these economic organisations are bound by those directives, the latter will be carried out without control from below by the mass of the Party membership.

The Party line says that responsible workers in different branches of work, whether Party, economic, trade union, or military workers, notwithstanding their specialisation in their own particular work, are interconnected, constitute inseparable parts of one whole, for they are all working in the common cause of the proletariat, which cannot be torn into parts. In Party practice, however, it was considered that since there is specialisation, division of labour according to properly Party activity and economic, military, etc., activity, the Party officials are not responsible for those working in the economic sphere, the latter are not responsible for the Party officials, and, in general, that the weakening and even loss of connection between them are inevitable.

Such, comrades, are, in general, the contradictions between the Party line, as registered in a number of decisions of our Congresses, from the Tenth to the Twelfth, and Party practice.

I am far from blaming the local organisations for this distortion of the Party line, for, when you come to examine it, this is not so much the fault as the misfortune of our local organisations. The nature of this misfortune, and how things could have taken this turn, I shall tell you later on, but I wanted to register this fact in order to reveal this contradiction to you and then try to propose measures for improvement.

I am also far from considering our Central Committee to be blameless. It, too, has sinned, as has every institution and organisation; it, too, shares part of the blame and part of the misfortune: blame, at least, for not, whatever the reason, exposing these defects in time, and for not taking measures to eliminate them. (emphasis ours)

But that is not the point now. The point now is to ascertain the causes of the defects I have just spoken about. Indeed, how did these defects arise, and how can they be removed?

The Causes of the Defects

The first cause is that our Party organisations have not yet rid themselves, or

have still not altogether rid themselves, of certain survivals of the war period, a period that has passed, but has left in the minds of our responsible workers vestiges of the military regime in the Party. I think that these survivals find expression in the view that our Party is not an independently acting organism, not an independently acting, militant organisation of the proletariat, but something in the nature of a system of institutions, something in the nature of a complex of institutions in which there are officials of lower rank and officials of higher rank. That, comrades, is a profoundly mistaken view that has nothing in common with Marxism; that view is a survival that we have inherited from the war period, when we militarised the Party, when the question of the independent activity of the mass of the Party membership had necessarily to be shifted into the background and military orders were of decisive importance. I do not remember that this view was ever definitely expressed; nevertheless, it, or elements of it, still influences our work. Comrades, we must combat such views with all our might, for they are a very real danger and create favourable conditions for the distortion in practice of the essentially correct line of our Party.

The second cause is that our state apparatus, which is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, exerts a certain amount of pressure on the Party and the Party workers. In 1917, when we were forging ahead, towards October, we imagined that we would have a Commune, a free association of working people, that we would put an end to bureaucracy in government institutions, and that it would be possible, if not in the immediate period, then within two or three short periods, to transform the state into a free association of working people. Practice has shown, however, that this is still an ideal which is a long way off, that to rid the state of the elements of bureaucracy, to transform Soviet society into a free association of working people, the people must have a high level of culture, peace conditions must be fully guaranteed all around us so as to remove the necessity of maintaining a large standing army, which entails heavy expenditure and cumbersome administrative departments, the very existence of which leaves its impress upon all the other state institutions. Our state apparatus is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, and it will remain so for a long time to come. Our Party comrades work in this apparatus, and the situation — I might say the atmosphere — in this bureaucratic apparatus is such that it helps to bureaucratise our Party workers and our Party organisations.

The third cause of the defects, comrades, is that some of our units are not sufficiently active, they are backward, and in some cases, particularly in the border regions, they are even wholly illiterate. In these districts, the units display little activity and are politically and culturally backward. That circumstance, too, undoubtedly creates a favourable soil for the distortion of the Party line....

The fourth cause is the absence of a sufficient number of trained Party comrades in the localities.

... Lastly, the fifth cause — insufficient information. We send out too little information, and this applies primarily to the Central Committee, possibly because it is overburdened with work. We receive too little information from the localities. This must cease. This is also a serious cause of the defects that have accumulated within the Party....(Works, Vol. 5 Moscow, 1953 pp. 365-370).

* * *

... I am emphatically opposed to the policy of kicking out all dissenting comrades. I am opposed to such a policy not because I am sorry for the dissenters, but because such a policy gives rise in the Party to a regime of intimidation, a regime of bullying, which kills the spirit of self-criticism and initiative. It is not good when leaders of the Party are feared but not respected.(Emphasis ours) Party leaders can be real leaders only if they are not merely feared but respected in the Party, when their authority is recognised. It is difficult to produce such leaders, it is a long and arduous process, but it is absolutely essential, otherwise the Party cannot be called a real Bolshevik Party, and the discipline of the Party cannot be conscious discipline. ... (Works, Vol. 7 Moscow, 1954 pp 45-46).

* * *

... Naturally, with every turn in the development of the class struggle, with every sharpening of the struggle and intensification of difficulties, the differences in the views, customs and sentiments of the various strata of the proletariat must inevitably make themselves felt in the shape of definite disagreements within the party, and the pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology must inevitably accentuate these disagreements by providing them with an outlet in the form of a struggle within the proletarian party.

Such are the source of inner-Party contradictions and disagreements.

Can these contradictions and disagreements be avoided? No, they cannot. To think that these contradictions can be avoided is self-deception. Engels was right when he said that in the long run it is impossible to slur over contradictions within the party, that they must be fought out.

This does not mean that the party must be turned into a debating society. On the contrary, the proletarian party is, and must remain, a militant organisation of the proletariat. All I want to say is that one cannot brush aside and shut one's eyes to disagreements within the party **if they are disagreements over matters of principle.** (emphasis ours) All I want to say is that only by fighting for the Marxist line based on principle can a proletarian party be protected from the pressure and influence of the bourgeoisie. All I want to say is that only by overcoming inner-Party contradictions can we succeed in making the Party sound and strong.

Specific Features of the Opposition in the CPSU(B)

Permit me now to pass from the preliminary remarks to the question of the opposition in the CPSU(B).

First of all, I should like to mention certain specific features of our inner-Party opposition. I am referring to its external features, those which

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Successful Haryana Peasants' Conference

Rohtak: The fourth Haryana State Conference of All India Krishak and Khet Mazdoor Sangathan was held here on 14, 15 and 16 February. The open session was held in HUDA Complex Maidan on 14 February after a colourful procession of thousands of peasants and agricultural labourers marched through the main thoroughfares of the city. A large number of women agricultural labourers also participated in the rally.

Comrade Balwant Singh presided over the open session. Comrade Shankar Singh, President, All India Committee of AIKKMS and member of the Central Committee, SUCI, who addressed the meeting as the main speaker, analysed the present political and economic

workers and improvement in the irrigation system of the state; deciding to gherao the Parliament to force the central government to reject the GATT, and demanding an immediate institution of a judicial inquiry and to punish the guilty in the rape and murder case of a young girl of Kurukshetra District.

The two-day delegate session was held at District Patwar Bhavan. The session was inaugurated by Com. Girijeshwar Singh, member All India Committee of AIKKMS who urged the delegates to strengthen the organisation. Comrade Shankar Singh in his concluding speech deliberated on the prevailing international situation and the tasks ahead of the revolutionaries. Comrade Singh exhorted the peasants and workers to fulfil their historic task

by building up powerful movements from the grassroots level on the basis of correct political

TN demonstration against price-hike

Madras: Protesting against the decision of the Central Government to increase the issue prices of wheat, rice and sugar, and the prices of petrol and diesel close on the heels of the hike in LPG prices, and demanding their withdrawal, the Madras-Chinglepet District Committee of the SUCI organised a demonstration opposite the Kuralagam Complex in Parrys on Feb 11, 1994 in the evening.

Comrade S. Narayanasamy, member of the Tamilnadu State Secretariat, SUCI, and Secretary, Madras-Chinglepet District Committee, in his address to the large crowd that had gathered in the course of the demonstration, said that the very anti-people core of "Manmohanomics" was revealed in the way the government did not hesitate to snatch even the cheapest variety of rice from the poor by putting it beyond their reach.

He explained how further hardships could be expected by the people, already reeling under continued attacks of heavy taxes and price-rises, when transport fares and freight charges would go up because of the hikes in fuel prices, and these in turn would have a cascading effect on the prices of essential commodities. He also showed how the hiking of prices through the practice of administrative fiat was becoming a regular pre-budget feature, with more hardships following in the Railway and General Budgets.

He also severely condemned the state government for increasing the prices of rice and kerosene, saying that it was trying to maintain a pro-people posture by attempting to blame the Centre and could not be believed, as it had hardly resisted the price increase by the Centre when compared to the battles it was conducting against the Congress-I government at the Centre on issues which to the common man, facing severe crisis in his life, could only be termed as petty politics.



Dais of the Open Session of AIKKMS, Haryana on 14th February at HUDA Complex Maidan, Rohtak. Seated from left are: Comrades Anoop Singh, Babu Ram, Rup Chand, Shankar Singh, the main speaker, Sansar Chander and Balwant Singh.

situation of the country and castigated the government for accepting the Dunkel proposals on GATT in the interest of the monopoly capitalists of the country, thereby shifting the burden of the crisis of capitalism on to the common people. Comrade Singh exhorted the peasants to carry the people's struggle to its logical culmination lest it fell in the trap of narrow parliamentary politics and showed how AIKKMS was fighting the GATT agreement on principle and not for any electoral gains.

The open session unanimously adopted three resolutions, deploring the hike in the prices of essential commodities and electricity tariff; demanding work round the year for rural

line to achieve their ultimate goal. The messages of Com. Protiva Mukherjee, Vice-President, All India Committee and Sri P. S. Yadav, Scientist, were read out in the delegate session.

A powerful 11-member State Committee and 13-member State Council of the AIKKMS were unanimously elected to build up the movements. The following comrades were elected: Com. Balwant Singh President, Com. Babu Ram and Com. Roop Chand, Vice-presidents, Com. Satyawan Secretary, Com. Anoop Singh and Com. Zile Singh Assistant Secretaries and Com. Vijai Kumar Treasurer



Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper PROLETARIAN ERA to be published in the first issue after last day of February.

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Demanding reintroduction of English and pass-fail system in the primary level of education, students of primary schools too, took to the streets. Seen in the picture is the part of the 50 thousand strong massive sit-in-demonstration by the children who gathered and demonstrated braving scorching sun at Esplanade East, Calcutta, on 21st February, the martyrs' day of the historic language movement in erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. It was a part of the education movement, the people of West Bengal have been waging for more than a decade to protest against the anti-people language and education policy of the 'Left-front' government headed by the CPI(M) in West Bengal.

Excerpts From Comrade Stalin

(Contd. from page 4)

strike the eye, and shall leave aside for the present the substance of the disagreements. I think these specific features may be reduced to three principal ones. There is, firstly, the fact that the opposition in the CPSU(B) is a *combined* opposition and not "simply" some kind of opposition. There is, secondly, the fact that the opposition tries to camouflage its opportunism with "Left" phrases, making a parade of "revolutionary" slogans. There is, thirdly, the fact that the opposition, because of its amorphousness as regards principles, every now and again complains that it has been misunderstood — that in point of fact the opposition leaders constitute a faction of "the misunderstood." (Laughter)

Let us begin with the first specific feature. How are we to explain the fact that our opposition comes forward as a *combined* opposition, as a bloc of all the various trends previously condemned by the Party, and, moreover, that it comes forward not "simply," but with Trotskyism at its head?

It is to be explained by the following circumstances.

Firstly, by the fact that all the trends united in the bloc — the Trotskyites, the "New Opposition," the remnants of "Democratic Centralism," the remnants of the "Workers' Opposition" — are all more or less opportunist trends, which have either been fighting Leninism since their inception or have begun to fight it latterly. It stands to reason that this *common* feature could not but facilitate their uniting into a bloc for the purpose of fighting the Party.

Secondly, by the fact that the present period is a crucial one, and that this crucial period has again faced us point-blank with the basic questions of our revolution; and since all these trends differed, and continue to differ, with our Party over various questions of the revolution, it is natural that the character of the present period, which sums up and strikes the balance of all our disagreements, should impel all these trends into one bloc, a bloc opposed to the basic line of our Party. It stands to reason that this circumstance could not but facilitate the uniting of the diverse opposition trends into one common camp.

Thirdly, by the fact that the mighty strength and solidarity of our Party, on the one hand, and the weakness of all the opposition trends without exception and their divorce from the masses, on the other hand, could not but render the disunited struggle of these trends against the Party manifestly hopeless, in view of which the opposition trends inevitably had to take the course of *uniting* their forces, so as to compensate for the weakness of the individual groups by combining them, and thus increase the opposition's chances, if only in appearance... (Works, Vol. 9, Moscow 1954, pp. 12-14).

* * *

Self-Criticism

A characteristic feature of the work of this plenum, of its debates and its resolutions, is that from beginning to end, its key-note was the

sternest self-criticism. More, there was not a single question, not a single speech, at the plenum which was not accompanied by criticism of shortcomings in our work, by self-criticism of our organisations. Criticism of our shortcomings, honest and Bolshevik self-criticism of Party, Soviet and economic organisations — that was the general tone of the plenum.

I know that there are people in the ranks of the Party who have no fondness for criticism in general, and for self-criticism in particular. Those people, whom I might call "skin-deep" Communists (laughter), every now and then grumble and shrug their shoulders at self-criticism, as much as to say: Again this accused self-criticism, again this raking out of our shortcomings — can't we be allowed to live in peace? Obviously, those "skin-deep" Communists are complete strangers to the spirit of our Party, to the spirit of Bolshevism. Well, in view of the existence of such sentiments among those people who greet self-criticism with anything but enthusiasm, it is permissible to ask: Do we need self-criticism; where does it derive from, and what is its value?

I think, comrades, that **self-criticism is as necessary to us as air or water. I think that without it, without self-criticism, our Party could not make any headway, could not disclose our ulcers, could not eliminate our shortcomings.** (emphasis ours) And shortcomings we have in plenty. That must be admitted frankly and honestly.

The slogan of self-criticism cannot be regarded as a new one. It lies at the very foundation of the Bolshevik Party. It lies at the foundation of the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Since our country is a country with a dictatorship of the proletariat, and since the dictatorship is directed by one party, the Communist Party, which does not, and cannot, share power with other parties, is it not clear that, if we want to make headway, we ourselves must disclose and correct our errors — is it not clear that there is no one else to disclose and correct them for us? Is it not clear, comrades, that self-criticism must be one of the most important motive forces of our development?

The slogan of self-criticism has developed especially powerfully since the Fifteenth Congress of our Party. Why? Because after the Fifteenth Congress, which put an end to the opposition, a new situation arose in the Party, one that we have to reckon with.

In what does the novelty of this situation consist? In the fact that now we have no opposition, or next to none; in the fact that, because of the easy victory over the opposition — a victory which in itself is a most important gain for the Party — there may be a danger of the Party resting on its laurels, beginning to take things easy and closing its eyes to the shortcomings in our work.

The easy victory over the opposition is a most important gain for our Party. But concealed within it is a certain drawback, which is that the Party may be a prey to self-satisfaction, to self-admiration, and begin to rest on its laurels. And what does resting on our laurels mean? It means putting an end to our

forward movement. And in order that this may not occur, we need self-criticism — not that malevolent and actually counter-revolutionary criticism which the opposition indulged in — but honest, frank, Bolshevik self-criticism.

The Fifteenth Congress of our Party was alive to this, and it issued the slogan of self-criticism. Since then the tide of self-criticism has been mounting, and it laid its imprint also on the work of the April plenum of the C.C and C.C.C.

It would be strange to fear that our enemies, our internal and external enemies, might exploit the criticism of our shortcomings and raise the shout: Oho! All is not well with those Bolsheviks! It would be strange if we Bolsheviks were to fear that. The strength of Bolshevism lies precisely in the fact that it is not afraid to admit its mistakes. Let the Party, let the Bolsheviks, let all the upright workers and labouring elements in our country bring to light the shortcomings in our work, the shortcomings in our constructive effort, and let them indicate ways of eliminating our shortcomings, so that there may be no stagnation, vegetation, decay in our work and our construction, so that all our work and all our constructive measures may improve from day to day and go from success to success. That is the chief thing just now. As for our enemies, let them rant about our shortcomings — such trifles cannot and should not disconcert Bolsheviks.

Lastly, there is yet another circumstance that impels us to self-criticism. I am referring to the question of the masses and the leaders. A peculiar sort of relation has lately begun to arise between the leaders and the masses. On the one hand there was formed, there came into being historically, a group of leaders among us whose prestige is rising and rising, and who are becoming almost unapproachable for the masses. On the other hand the working-class masses in the first place, and the mass of the working people in general are rising extremely slowly, are beginning to look up at the leaders from below with blinking eyes, and not infrequently are afraid to criticise them.

Of course, the fact that we have a group of leaders who have risen excessively high and enjoy great prestige is in itself a great achievement for our Party. Obviously, the direction of a big country would be unthinkable without such an authoritative group of leaders. **But the fact that as these leaders rise they get further away from the masses, and the masses begin to look up at them from below and do not venture to criticise them, cannot but give rise to a certain danger of the leaders losing contact with the masses and the masses getting out of touch with the leaders.**

This danger may result in the leaders becoming conceited and regarding themselves as infallible. (emphasis ours) And what good can be expected when the top leaders become self-conceited and begin to look down on the masses? Clearly, nothing can come of this but the ruin of the Party. But what we want is not to ruin the Party, but to move forward and improve our work. **And precisely in order that we may move forward and improve the relations between the masses and the leaders, we must keep the valve of self-criticism open**

(Contd. on page 7)

Stalin, a giant communist leader

— Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

Who can deny that just as Lenin in his struggle against the revisionists and the centrists safeguarded the Marxist theory of State and the dictatorship of the proletariat from distortion and effacement and by generalising upon the historical experience of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, made brilliant contribution to Marxism, so also Stalin in his struggle against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites safeguarded Marxism-Leninism from distortion and effacement and by generalising upon the historical experience of the period of general crisis of capitalism and further disintegration of world capitalist market, enriched Marxism-Leninism. Stalin's works on problems of Leninism, his contributions to national question, to the question of linguistics, to the problems of socialism in the USSR and to revolutionary military science, in particular, are treasures of revolutionary science. To minimise the leading role of Stalin as a great communist leader which the present leaders of CPSU are objectively doing by their refusal to publish his works, is to withhold due appreciation of his values. *In fact, the present understanding of Leninism, as distinct from Social-Democracy and Trotskyism, is due to Stalin.* Trotsky claimed to be a Leninist, though he had fundamental differences with Stalin in the understanding of Leninism. The followers of Trotsky call themselves Leninists. They accept Lenin as an authority; what they differ with is Stalin's interpretation of Leninism. The social-democrats and the Trotskyites are not considered as

communists because of their non-acceptance of the understanding of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by Stalin. *Stalin's understanding of Leninism is the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism. This understanding has brought the communist movement to its present stature.* It will, of course, be further enriched in the light of experience of newer problems and developments; but nevertheless, the basic understanding of Marxism-Leninism as established by Stalin will remain and guide the communists in the course of its further development and progress. Indeed, like his precursors Marx, Engels and Lenin, Stalin also is an authority on Marxism-Leninism. To black out Stalin would have the inevitable result of disowning his authority and consequently of rejecting his interpretation of Leninism, which is the present-day understanding of Marxism-Leninism. To the future generations, the chapter of relentless struggle waged by Stalin against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites to safeguard the revolutionary spirit of Marxism-Leninism would remain dark and black and they would be deprived of the opportunity of being ideologically steeled. It would mean invitation to all sorts of counter-revolutionary ideas to pass off as Marxism-Leninism and the ideological foundation of the communist movement would suffer a setback. *In short, it would objectively uncrown Lenin himself.*

(Excerpts from his *Selected Works*, Calcutta, 1988, Vol. 1, pp. 84-86)

Stalin on Party Organisation

(Contd. from page 6)

all the time, we must make it possible for Soviet people to "go for" their leaders, to criticise their mistakes, so that the leaders may not grow conceited, and the masses may not get out of touch with the leaders. (emphasis ours)

The question of the masses and the leaders is sometimes identified with the question of promotion. That is wrong, comrades. It is not a question of bringing new leaders to the fore, although this deserves the Party's most serious attention. It is a question of preserving the leaders who have already come to the fore and possess the greatest prestige by organising permanent and indissoluble contact between them and the masses. It is a question of organising, along the lines of self-criticism and criticism of our shortcomings, the broad public opinion of the Party, the broad public opinion of the working class as an instrument of keen and vigilant moral control, to which the most authoritative leaders must lend an attentive ear if they want to retain the confidence of the Party and the confidence of the working class... (Works, Vol. 11, Moscow 1954, pp. 31-35).

Against vulgarising the slogan of self-criticism

The slogan of self-criticism must not be regarded as something temporary and transient. Self-criticism is a specific method, a Bolshevik method, of training the forces of the Party and of the working class generally in the spirit of revolutionary development. Marx himself spoke of self-criticism as a method of strengthening the proletarian revolution. As to self-criticism in our Party, its beginnings date back to the first appearance of Bolshevism in our country, to its very inception as a specific revolutionary trend in the working-class movement.

We know that as early as the spring of 1904, when Bolshevism was not yet an independent political party but worked together with the **Mensheviks within a single Social-Democratic party** - we know that Lenin was already calling upon the Party to undertake "self-criticism and ruthless exposure of its own shortcomings." Here is what Lenin wrote in his pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*:

"They (i.e., the opponents of the Marxists - J.St.) gloat and grimace over our controversies; and, of course, they will try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and

shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle not to be perturbed by these pin-pricks and to continue, in spite of them, their work of *self-criticism and ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings*, which will unquestionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-class movement grows. As for those gentlemen, our opponents, let them try to give us a picture of the *true* state of affairs in their own 'parties' even remotely approximating that given by the minutes of our Second Congress!" (*Lenin Works* Vol. VII, p. 190)

Therefore, those comrades are absolutely wrong who think that self-criticism is a passing phenomenon, a fashion which is bound speedily to go out of existence as every fashion usually does. Actually, self-criticism is an indispensable and permanent weapon in the arsenal of Bolshevism, one that is intimately linked with the very nature of Bolshevism, with its revolutionary spirit.

It is sometimes said that self-criticism is something that is good for a party which has not yet come to power and has "nothing to lose," but that it is dangerous and harmful to a party which has already come to power, which is surrounded by hostile forces, and against which an exposure of its weaknesses may be exploited by its enemies.

That is not true. It is quite untrue! On the contrary, just because Bolshevism has come to power, just because Bolsheviks may become conceited owing to the successes of our work of construction, just because Bolsheviks may fail to observe their weaknesses and thus make things easier for their enemies -- for these very reasons self-criticism is particularly needed now, after the assumption of power.

The purpose of self-criticism being to disclose and eliminate our errors and weaknesses, is it not clear that in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat it can only facilitate Bolshevism's fight against the enemies of the working class? Lenin took into account these specific features of the situation which had arisen after the Bolsheviks had seized power when, in April-May 1920, he wrote in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*:

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how serious the party is and how it *in practice* fulfils its obligations towards its *class* and the *toiling masses*. *Frankly admitting a mistake*, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the circumstances which gave rise to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it - that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class*, and then the *masses*". (Vol. XXV, p. 200)

Lenin was a thousand times right when he said at the Eleventh Party Congress in March 1922:

"The proletariat is not afraid to admit that this or that thing has succeeded splendidly in its revolution, and this or that has not succeeded. All revolutionary parties which have hitherto perished, did so because they *grew conceited*, failed to see where their strength lay, and *feared to speak of their weaknesses*. But we shall not perish, for we do not fear to speak of our weakness and shall learn to overcome them". (Lenin works, Vol. XXVII, pp. 260-61).

There is only one conclusion: that without self-criticism there can be no proper education (Contd. on page 8)

Stalin on Party Organisation

(Contd. from page 7)

of the Party, the class, and the masses; and that without proper education of the Party, the class, and the masses, there can be no Bolshevism.

Why has the slogan of self-criticism acquired special importance just now, at this particular moment of history, in 1928?

Because the growing acuteness of class relations, both in the internal and external spheres, is more glaringly evident now than it was a year or two ago.

Because the subversive activities of the class enemies of the Soviet Government, who are utilising our weaknesses, our errors, against the working class of our country, are more glaringly evident now than they were a year or two ago.

Because we cannot and must not allow the lessons of the Shakhty affair and the "procurement manoeuvres" of the capitalist elements in the countryside, coupled with our mistakes in planning, to go unheeded.

If we want to strengthen the revolution and meet our enemies fully prepared, we must rid ourselves as quickly as possible of our errors and weaknesses, as disclosed by the Shakhty affair and the grain procurement difficulties.

If we do not want to be caught unawares by all sorts of "surprises" and "accidents," to the joy of the enemies of the working class, we must disclose as quickly as possible those weaknesses and errors of ours which have not yet been disclosed, but which undoubtedly exist.

This refers to the sabotage activities of a counter-revolutionary organisation of bourgeois experts, in Shakhty in the Donbas region of the USSR, who carried on their work for 5 years as per instruction from the anti-Soviet organisations of international capital. It was discovered in early part of 1928. (Note from *Stalin Works* Vol 11)

If we are tardy in this, we shall be facilitating the work of our enemies and aggravating our weaknesses and errors. But all this will be impossible if self-criticism is not developed and stimulated, if the vast masses of the working class and peasantry are not drawn into the work of bringing to light and eliminating our weaknesses and errors.

The April plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. was therefore quite right when it said in its resolution on the Shakhty affair:

"The chief condition for the successful accomplishment of all the indicated measures is the effective implementation of the slogan of self-criticism issued by the Fifteenth Congress."

But in order to develop self-criticism, we must first overcome a number of obstacles standing in the way of the Party. These include the cultural backwardness of the masses, the inadequate cultural forces of the proletarian vanguard, our conservatism, our "communist vainglory," and so on. But one of the most serious obstacles, if not the most serious of all, is the *bureaucracy* of our apparatus. I am referring to the bureaucratic elements to be found in our Party, government, trade-union, co-operative and all other organisations. I am referring to the bureaucratic elements who batten on our weaknesses and errors, who fear like the plague all criticism by the masses, all control by the masses, and who hinder us in developing self-criticism and ridding ourselves of our weaknesses and errors.

Bureaucracy in our organisations must not be regarded merely as routine and red-tape. Bureaucracy is a manifestation of bourgeois influence on our organisations. Lenin was right when he said:

"...We must realise that the fight against bureaucracy is an *absolutely essential* one, and

that it is just as complicated as the fight against the petty-bourgeois elemental forces. Bureaucracy in our state system has become a malady of such gravity that it is spoken of in our Party programme, and that is because it is connected with these petty-bourgeois elemental forces and their wide dispersion" (*Lenin Works*, Vol. XXVI, p.220).

With all the more persistence, therefore, must the struggle against bureaucracy in our organisations be waged, if we really want to develop self-criticism and rid ourselves of the maladies in our constructive work.

With all the more persistence must we rouse the vast masses of the workers and peasants to the task of criticism *from below*, of control *from below*, as the principal antidote to bureaucracy. Lenin was right when he said:

"If we want to combat bureaucracy, we must enlist the co-operation of the rank and file"... for "*what other way is there of putting an end to bureaucracy than by enlisting the co-operation of the workers and peasants?*" (*My italics - J.St.*) (*Lenin Works*, Vol. XXV, pp.496 and 495).

But in order to "enlist the co-operation" of the vast masses, we must develop proletarian democracy in all the mass organisations of the working class, and primarily within the Party itself. Failing this, self-criticism will be nothing, an empty thing, a mere word.

It is not just *any kind* of self-criticism that we need. We need such self-criticism as will raise the cultural level of the working class, enhance its fighting spirit, fortify its faith in victory, augment its strength and help it to become the real master of the country...(*Stalin Works*, Vol. 11, *Moscow 1954*, pp. 133-138)



Massive stir in Bangalore against outrage on girl student

Bangalore : In Bangalore city a massive protest meeting was jointly organised by AIMSS, AIDYO and AIDSO, in protest against the recent molestation attempt on a sixteen-year old student of Maharani Science College of the city by some criminals.

Eminent personalities of the State, Prof. A.N. Murthy Rao, Sri B.R.G.K. Achar, Sri Aniruddha Desai, Smt. Hemalatha Mahishi, Dr. Vedavathy, Prof. G.S. Shivarudrappa, Dr. K.M. Srinivasa Gowda, Sri Doddarange Gowda, Dr. B.C. Ramachandra Sharma, Prof. Basheer Hussain, Prof. Hasan Mansoor, Sri M.P. Prakash, Sri Sudra Srinivas and principals of various colleges came forward.

In the huge protest meeting on 11th February, at Mythic Society students from various colleges participated. Prof. G.K. Govinda Rao, leader, teachers' movement, Prof. Sethu Rao, President, Karnataka State Vijnana Parishat, Sri Aniruddha Desai IAS, Smt. S.K. Poornima Devi, leader of teachers' movement, Com. B.R. Manjunath, President, State AIDSO, Com. Uma, State Convenor, AIDYO spoke on the occasion. Com. H.G. Jayalakshmi, State Secretary, AIMSS, presided over the meeting. Dr. Sudha Kamath, State President AIMSS, placed the resolution.

Later a delegation met the Chief Minister,

Sri Veerappa Moily and submitted the resolution.

Two days later the Chief Minister, accompanied by Education Minister, Police Commissioner, Directorate of Collegiate Education and leaders of AIDSO, AIMSS, AIDYO visited the college, personally met the students, examined the security in the hostel and on the spot instructed the officials to take immediate measures.

The movement inspired the students and strengthened their confidence in the struggle. The students have now resolved to form "Students' Vigilance Committees" and fight every such attack on girl students.

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