

On Organisation



Stalin

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

On Organisation

JOSEPH STALIN

NEW HORIZONS
PUBLICATION

On Organisation
by **JOSEPH STALIN**

NEW HORIZONS PUBLICATION

LIG-570, near Ayyappa Mandir, Phase 1, Urban Estate,
Jamalpur Colony, Ludhiana, Punjab, India - 141010

Email: janchetnapb@gmail.com

Contact : 98155-87807

Present Edition: January, 2022

Cover Design & Typesetting: Tajinder and Vimala

Printed by: Appu Art Press, Jalandhar

Price: 35/-



CONTENTS

On Problems of Organisational Leadership	9
Cadres Decide Everything	15
Selection, Promotion and Allocation of Cadres	17
On Practical Work	19
Appendix One	
L. M. Kaganovitch on the Party Training and Inner Party Democracy	26
Appendix Two	
G. Dimitrov on Cadres	29

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The extracts in the present volume are taken from the following sources: "Problems of Organisational Leadership," from Stalin's Report to the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1934; "Cadres Decide Everything," from his Address to Graduates from Red Army Academies, 1935; "Selection, Promotion and Allocation of Cadres," from his Report to the 18th Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), 1939. The section entitled "On Practical Work" contains extracts from "Seven Questions Answered," Stalin's concluding words at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.), March 1937.

Two Appendices have been added. The first contains extracts from L. M. Kaganovitch's Report on Organisational Problems, which followed and supplemented that of Stalin at the 17th Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.). The second is from G. Dimitrov's Speech in Reply to Discussion at the 7th World Congress of the Communist International, 1935.

ON PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it from the housetops, state it in the form of general theses and resolutions, and take a vote and carry unanimously for victory to come of itself, spontaneously, as it were. This, of course, is wrong. It is a gross delusion. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists can think so. As a matter of fact, these successes and victories did not come spontaneously, but as the result of a fierce struggle for the application of the Party line. Victory never comes by itself—it usually has to be attained. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line of the Party are only a beginning; they merely express the desire for victory, but not the victory itself. After the correct line has been laid down, after a correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on how the work is organised; on the organisation of the struggle for the application of the Party line; on the proper selection of personnel; on the way a check is kept on the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading bodies. Otherwise the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being seriously prejudiced.

Furthermore, after the correct political line has been laid down, organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure.

As a matter of fact, victory was achieved and won by a stern and systematic struggle against all sorts of difficulties that stood in the way of carrying out the Party line; by overcoming the difficulties; by mobilising the Party and the working-class for the purpose of overcoming the difficulties; by organising the struggle to overcome the difficulties; by removing inefficient executives and choosing better ones, capable of waging the struggle against difficulties.

What are these difficulties; and wherein are they lodged?

They are difficulties attending our organisational work, difficulties attending our organisational leadership. They are lodged in ourselves, in our leading people, in our organisations, in the apparatus of our Party, state, economic, trade union, Young Communist League, and all other organisations....

Bureaucracy and red tape in the administrative apparatus; idle chatter about “leadership in general” instead of real and concrete leadership; the functional structure of our organisations and lack of individual responsibility; lack of personal responsibility in work, and wage equalisation; the absence of a systematic check upon the fulfilment of decisions; fear of self-criticism—these are the sources of our difficulties; this is where our difficulties are now lodged.

It would be naive to think that these difficulties can be overcome by means of resolutions and decisions. The bureaucrats have long become past masters in the art of demonstrating their loyalty to Party and government decisions in words, and pigeonholing them in deed. In order to overcome these difficulties it was necessary to put an end to the disparity between our organisational work and the requirements of the political line of the Party; it was necessary to raise the level of organisational leadership in all spheres of the national economy to the level of political leadership; it was necessary to see to it that our organisational work guarantees the practical realisation of the political slogans and decisions of the Party.

In order to overcome these difficulties and achieve success it was necessary to *organise* the struggle to eliminate these difficulties; it was necessary to draw the masses of the workers and peasants into this struggle; it was necessary to mobilise the Party itself; it was necessary to purge the Party and the economic organisations of unreliable, unstable and demoralised elements.

What was needed for this?

We had to organise:

1. Extensive self-criticism and exposure of the defects in our work;
2. The mobilisation of the Party, state, economic, trade union, and Young Communist League organisations for the struggle against difficulties;
3. The mobilisation of the masses of the workers and peasants to fight for the application of the slogans and decisions of the Party and of the Government;

4. The extension of emulation and shock work among the working people;
5. A wide network of Political Departments of machine and tractor stations and state farms and the bringing of the Party and Soviet leadership closer to the villages;
6. The division of the People's Commissariats, head offices, and trusts, and the establishment of closer contact between the business leadership and the enterprises;
7. The elimination of lack of personal responsibility in work and the elimination of wage equalisation;
8. The abolition of the "functional" system; the extension of individual responsibility, and a policy directed towards doing away with collegium management;
9. The exercise of greater control over the fulfilment of decisions, while taking the line towards reorganising the Central Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection with a view to the further enhancement of the work of checking up on the fulfilment of decisions;
10. The transfer of qualified workers from offices to posts that will bring them into closer contact with production;
11. The exposure and expulsion from the administrative apparatus of incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists;
12. The removal from their posts of people who violate the decisions of the Party and the Government, of "window-dressers" and windbags, and promotion to their place of new people—business-like people, capable of concretely directing the work entrusted to them and of tightening Party and state discipline;
13. The purging of state and economic organisations and the reduction of their staffs;
14. Lastly, the purging of the Party of unreliable and demoralised persons.

These, in the main, are the measures which the Party has had to adopt in order to overcome difficulties, to raise our organisational work to the level of political leadership, and in this way to ensure the application of the Party line.

You know that this is exactly how the Central Committee of the Party carried on its organisational work during the period under review.

In this, the Central Committee was guided by the brilliant thought uttered by Lenin to the effect that the main thing in organisational work is—*choosing the right people and keeping a check on the fulfilment of decisions.*

In regard to choosing the right people and dismissing those who fail to justify the confidence placed in them, I would like to say a few words.

Apart from the incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists, as to whose removal there are no differences of opinion among us, there are two other types of executives who retard our work, hinder our work, and hold up our advance.

One of these types of executives is represented by people who rendered certain services in the past, people who have become aristocrats, who consider that Party decisions and the laws issued by the Soviet Government are not written for them, but for fools. These are the people who do not consider it their duty to fulfil the decisions of the Party and of the Government, and who thus destroy the foundations of Party and state discipline. What do they count upon when they violate Party and Soviet laws? They presume that the Soviet Government will not have the courage to touch them, because of their past services. These over-conceited aristocrats think that they are irreplaceable, and that they can violate the decisions of the leading bodies with impunity. What is to be done with executives of this kind? They must unhesitatingly, be removed from their leading posts, irrespective of past services. (*Voices: "Hear, hear!"*) They must be demoted to lower positions, and this must be announced in the Press. (*Voices: "Hear, hear!"*) This must be done in order to knock the pride out of these over-conceited aristocrat-bureaucrats and to put them in their proper place. This must be done in order to tighten up Party and Soviet discipline in the whole of our work. (*Voices: "Hear, hear!" Applause.*)

And now about the second type of executives. I have in mind the windbags. I would say, honest windbags (*laughter*), people who are honest and loyal to the Soviet Government, but who are incompetent as executives, incapable of organising anything. Last year I had a conversation with one such comrade, a very respected comrade, but an incorrigible windbag capable of drowning any living cause in a flood of talk. Here is the conversation.

- I : How are you getting on with the sowing?
He : With the sowing, Comrade Stalin? We have mobilised ourselves. (*Laughter.*)
I : Well, and what then?
He : We have put the question squarely. (*Laughter.*)
I : And what next?
He : There is a turn, Comrade Stalin; soon there will be a turn. (*Laughter.*)
I : But still?
He : We can say that there is an indication of some progress. (*Laughter.*)
I : But for all that, how are you getting on with the sowing?
He : So far, Comrade Stalin, we have not made any headway with the sowing. (*General laughter.*)

Here you have the physiognomy of the windbag. They have mobilised themselves, they have put the question squarely, they have made a turn and some progress, but things remain as they were.

This is exactly how a Ukrainian worker recently described the state of a certain organisation when he was asked whether that organisation had any definite line: “Well,” he said, “they have a line all right, but they don’t seem to be doing any work.” (*General laughter.*) Evidently that organisation also has its quota of honest windbags.

And when such windbags are dismissed from their posts and are given jobs far removed from operative work, they shrug their shoulders in perplexity and ask: “Why have we been dismissed? Did we not do all that was necessary to get the work done? Did we not organise a rally of shock workers? Did we not proclaim the slogans of the Party and of the government at the conference of shock workers? Did we not elect the whole of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to the Honorary Presidium? (*General laughter.*) Did we not send greetings to Comrade Stalin—what more do they want of us? (*Loud laughter.*)

What is to be done with these incorrigible windbags? Why, if they were allowed to remain on operative work they would drown every living cause in a flood of watery and endless speeches. Obviously, they must be removed from leading posts and given work other than operative work. There is no place for windbags on

operative work. (*Voices: "Hear, hear!" Applause.*)

I have already briefly reported on how the Central Committee handled the selection of personnel for the Soviet and economic organisations, and how it pursued the work of keeping a closer check on the fulfilment of decisions. Comrade Kaganovitch will deal with this in greater detail in his report on the third item of the agenda of the Congress.

I would like to say a few words, however, about future work in connection with the task of keeping a closer check on the fulfilment of decisions.

The proper organisation of the work of checking up on the fulfilment of decisions is of decisive importance in the fight against bureaucracy and office routine. Are the decisions of the leading bodies carried out, or are they pigeonholed by bureaucrats and red-tapists? Are they carried out properly, or are they distorted? Is the apparatus working conscientiously and in a Bolshevik manner, or is it running with the clutch out? These things can be promptly found out only if a proper check is kept on the fulfilment of decisions. A proper check on the fulfilment of decisions is a searchlight which helps to reveal how the apparatus is functioning at any moment, exposing bureaucrats and red-tapists to full view. We can say with certainty that nine-tenths of our defects and failures are due to the lack of a properly organised system of check-up on the fulfilment of decisions. There can be no doubt that had there been such a system of check-up on fulfilment defects and failures would certainly have been averted.

"But for the work of checking up on fulfilment to achieve its purpose, two conditions at least are required: first, that fulfilment be checked up systematically and not spasmodically; second, that the work of checking up on fulfilment in all the links of the Party, state, and economic organisations be entrusted not to second-rate people, but to people with sufficient authority, the leaders of the organisations concerned....

Our tasks in the sphere of organisational work are:

1. To continue to adapt our organisational work to the requirements of the political line of the Party;
2. To raise organisational leadership to that level of political leadership;

3. To see to it that organisational leadership is fully equal to the task of ensuring the realisation of the political slogans and decisions of the Party.

(From 'Report to the 17th Congress of the CPSU (B)', 1934)

CADRES DECIDE EVERYTHING

...The old slogan, "Technique decides everything," which is a reflection of a period already passed, a period in which we suffered from a dearth in technique, must now be replaced by a new slogan, the slogan "Cadres decide everything." That is the main thing now.

Can it be said that our people have fully grasped and realised the great significance of this new slogan? I would not say that. Otherwise, there would not have been the outrageous attitude towards people, towards cadres, towards workers, which we not infrequently observe in practice. The slogan "Cadres decide everything" demands that our leaders should display the most solicitous attitude towards our workers, "little" and "big," no matter in what sphere they are engaged, cultivating them assiduously, assisting them when they need support, encouraging them when they show their first successes, promoting them, and so forth. Yet in practice we meet in a number of cases with a soulless, bureaucratic, and positively outrageous attitude towards workers. This, indeed, explains why instead of being studied, and placed at their posts only after being studied, people are frequently flung about like pawns. People have learned to value machinery and to make reports on how many machines we have in our mills and factories. But I do not know of a single instance when a report was made with equal zest on the number of people we have trained in a given period, on how we have assisted people to grow and become tempered in their work, How is this to be explained? It is to be explained by the fact that we have not yet learned to value workers, to value cadres.

I recall an incident in Siberia, where I lived at one time in exile. It was in the spring, at the time of spring floods. About thirty men went to the river to pull out timber which had been carried away by the vast, swollen river. Towards evening they returned to the village, but with one comrade missing. When asked where the thirtieth man

was, they replied indifferently that the thirtieth man had “remained there.” To my question, “How do you mean, remained there?” they replied with the same indifference, “Why ask—drowned, of course.” And thereupon one of them began to hurry away, saying: “I’ve got to go and water the mare.” When I reproached them with having more concern for animals than for men, one of them said, amid the general approval of the rest: “Why should we be concerned about men? We can always make men. But a mare...just try and make a mare.”

Here you have a case, not very significant perhaps, but very characteristic. It seems to me that indifference of certain of our leaders to people, to cadres, their inability to value people, is a survival of that strange attitude of man to man displayed in the episode in far-off Siberia that I have just related.

And so, comrades, if we want successfully to get over the dearth in people and to provide our country with sufficient cadres capable of advancing technique and setting it going, we must first of all learn to value people, to value cadres, to value every worker capable of benefiting our common cause.

It is time to realise that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and most decisive is people, cadres. It must be realised that, under our present conditions, “Cadres decide everything.” If you have good and numerous cadres in industry, agriculture, transport and the army, our country will be invincible. If we do not have such cadres, we shall be lame in both legs.

In concluding my speech, permit me to offer a toast to the health and success of our graduates from the Red Army Academies. I wish them success in the work organising and directing the defence of our country.

Comrades, you have graduated from institutions of higher learning, in which you received your first tempering. But school is only a preparatory stage. Cadres receive their real tempering in practical work, outside school, in fighting difficulties, in overcoming difficulties. Remember, comrades, that only those cadres are any good who do not fear difficulties, who do not hide from difficulties, but who, on the contrary, go out to meet difficulties, in order to overcome them and eliminate them. It is only in the fight against difficulties that real cadres are forged. And if our army possesses

genuinely steeled cadres in sufficient numbers, it will be invincible.

Your health, Comrades!

(From 'Address to Graduates from Red Army Academies', 1935)

SELECTION, PROMOTION AND ALLOCATION OF CADRES

A correct political line is not needed as a declaration, but as something to be carried into effect.

But in order to carry a correct political line into effect, we must have cadres, people who understand the political line of the Party, who accept it as their own line, who are prepared to carry it into effect, who are able to put it into practice and are capable of answering for it, defending it and fighting for it. Failing this, a correct political line runs the risk of being purely nominal.

And here arises the question of the correct selection of cadres, the training of cadres, the promotion of new people, the correct allocation of cadres, and the testing of cadres by work accomplished.

What is meant by the correct selection of cadres? The correct selection of cadres does not mean just gathering around one a lot of assistants and subs, setting up an office and issuing order after order. (*Laughter.*) Nor does it mean abusing one's powers, switching scores and hundreds of people back and forth from one job to another without rhyme or reason and conducting endless "reorganisation." (*Laughter.*)

The proper selection of cadres means:

Firstly, valuing cadres as the gold reserve of the Party and the State, treasuring them, respecting them.

Secondly, knowing cadres, carefully studying their individual merits and shortcomings, knowing in what post the capacities of a given worker are most likely to develop.

Thirdly, carefully fostering cadres, helping every promising worker to advance, not grudging time on patiently "bothering" with such workers and accelerating their development.

Fourthly, boldly promoting new and young cadres in time, so as not to allow them to stagnate in their old posts and grow stale.

Fifthly, allocating workers to posts in such a way that each feels he is in the right place, that each may contribute to our common cause the maximum his personal capacities enable him to contribute, and that the general trend of the work of allocating cadres may fully answer to the demands of the political line for the carrying out of which this allocation of cadres is designed.

Particularly important in this respect is the bold and timely promotion of new and young cadres. It seems to me that our people are not quite clear on this point yet. Some think that in selecting people we must chiefly rely on the old cadres. Others, on the contrary, think that we must chiefly rely on young cadres. It seems to me that both are mistaken.

The old cadres, of course, represent a valuable asset to the Party and the State. They possess what the young cadres lack, namely tremendous experience in leadership, a schooling in Marxist-Leninist principles, knowledge of affairs, and a capacity for orientation. But firstly, there are never enough old cadres, there are far less than required, and they are already partly going out of commission owing to the operation of the laws of nature. Secondly, part of the old cadres are sometimes inclined to keep a too persistent eye on the past, to cling to the past, to stay in the old rut and fail to observe the new in life. This is called losing the sense of the new. It is a very serious and dangerous shortcoming.

As to the young cadres, they, of course, have not the experience, the schooling, the knowledge of affairs and the capacity of orientation of the old cadres. But, firstly, the young cadres constitute the vast majority; secondly, they are young, and as yet are not subject to the danger of going out of commission; thirdly, they possess in abundance the sense of the new, which is a valuable quality in every Bolshevik worker; and fourthly, they develop and acquire knowledge so rapidly, they press upward so eagerly, that the time is not far-off when they will overtake the old fellows, take their stand side by side with them, and become worthy of replacing them. Consequently, the thing is not whether to rely on the old cadres or on the new cadres, but to steer for a combination, a union of the old and the young cadres in one common symphony of leadership of the Party and the State. (*Prolonged applause.*)

That is why we must boldly and in good time promote young

cadres to leading posts.

One of the important achievements of the Party during the period under review, in the matter of strengthening the Party leadership is that when selecting cadres, it has successfully pursued from top to bottom, just this course of combining old and young workers.

Data in the possession of the Central Committee of the Party show that during the period under review the Party succeeded in promoting to leading State and Party posts over five hundred thousand young Bolsheviks, members of the Party and people standing close to the Party, over twenty per cent of whom were women.

What is our task now? Our task now is to concentrate the work of selecting cadres, from top to bottom, in the hands of one body and to raise it to a proper, scientific, Bolshevik level.

(From 'Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU (B)', 1939)

ON PRACTICAL WORK

How the Party's political work is to be strengthened

It is to be supposed that all have now understood, have realised, that to become excessively engrossed in economic campaigns and economic successes while underestimating and forgetting Party-political questions leads up a blind alley. Consequently, it is necessary to turn the attention of our workers towards Party-political questions, so that economic success will be combined with and accompany successes in Party-political work.

How in practice is the task of strengthening Party-political work, the task of freeing Party organisations from economic details, to be carried out? As can be seen from the discussion, some comrades are prone to draw from this the incorrect conclusion that we should now get away altogether from economic work. At any rate, there were voices sounding the note: Well, now, thank God, we shall be rid of economic matters; now we can busy ourselves with Party-political work. Is this conclusion correct? No, it is not. When our Party comrades, carried away with economic successes, moved away from politics, this was an extreme which cost us big sacrifices.

If some of our comrades, taking up the task of strengthening Party-political work, now think of moving away from economy, this will be the other extreme, which will cost us no less sacrifices. You must not jump from one extreme to another. You must not separate politics from economics. We cannot move away from economy, just as we cannot move away from politics. For the convenience of study, people usually separate the methodological questions of economics from the questions of politics. But this is done merely from the standpoint of method, artificially, only for the convenience of study. But in life, on the contrary, politics and economics are in practice inseparable. They exist together and act together. And he who thinks to separate in our practical policy economy from politics, to strengthen economic work at the cost of belittling political work, or contrarywise, to strengthen political work at the cost of belittling economic work, will find himself in a blind alley....

How workers should be selected

What does it mean—to select workers correctly and correctly to distribute them to work?

This means to select workers, in the first place according to a political criterion, *i.e.*, are they worthy of political trusts, and in the second place according to a practical criterion, *i.e.*, are they suitable for such-and-such concrete work.

This means not to convert a business-like approach into a “businessman’s” approach, when people are interested in the practical qualities of workers, but are not interested in their political physiognomy.

This means not to convert a political approach into the single and all-embracing approach, when people become interested in the political physiognomy of workers, but are not interested in their practical qualities.

Can it be said that this Bolshevik rule is carried out by our Party comrades? Unfortunately, this cannot be said. It has already been spoken of here at the Plenum. But not everything was said. The fact is that this well-tried rule is violated right and left in our practice, and moreover in the grossest way. Most frequently, workers are selected not according to objective criteria, but according to fortuitous, subjective, narrow and parochial criteria. Most frequently, so-called acquaintances are chosen, personal friends, fellow-

townsmen, people who have shown personal devotion, masters of eulogy to their patrons, irrespective of whether they are suitable from a political and a business-like standpoint.

Naturally, instead of a leading group of responsible workers, a family group, a company, is formed, the members of which try to live peacefully, not to offend each other, not to wash their dirty linen in public, to eulogise each other, and from time to time to send inane and nauseating reports to the center about successes.

It is not difficult to understand that in such conditions of kinship there can be no place either for criticism of the shortcomings of the work or for self-criticism by the leaders of the work....

How the work of comrades is checked

What does it mean—to check up on workers, to check up on the fulfilment of tasks?

To check up on workers means to, test them, not on their promises and declarations but on the results of their work.

To test the fulfilment of tasks means to test them not only in the office and not only according to formal reports, but first and foremost at the place of work according to the actual results of fulfilment.

Do we need such a check-up in general? Undoubtedly we do. We need it in the first place, because only such a check-up will make it possible to know a worker, to determine his real qualities. We need it, in the second place, because only such a check-up will make it possible to determine the good qualities and shortcomings of the executive apparatus. We need it, in the third place, because only such a check-up will make it possible to determine the good qualities and shortcomings of the tasks themselves.

Some comrades think that people can only be tested from above, when the leaders examine subordinates on the results of their work. This is not true. Verifying from above is necessary, of course, as one of the effective measures for testing people and the fulfilment of tasks.

But testing from above far from exhausts the whole business of checking-up. There is still another kind of check-up, the check-up from below, where the masses, the subordinates, examine the leaders, point out their mistakes, and show them ways of correcting them. This kind of verification is one of the most effective methods of

testing people.

The rank-and-file Party members verify their leaders at meetings of active Party workers, and conferences and congresses, by listening to their reports, by criticising their defects, and finally by electing or not electing some or other leading comrades to the leading Party organs. Precise operation of democratic centralism in the Party as demanded in our Party statutes, unconditional submission of Party organs to election, the right of putting forward and withdrawing candidates, secret ballot, freedom of criticism and self-criticism, all these and similar measures must be carried into life, in order incidentally to facilitate the check-up and control over the leaders of the Party by the rank-and-file Party members.

The non-Party masses verify their economic, trade union and other leaders at meetings of non-Party active workers, at all kinds of mass conferences, where they hear reports of their leaders, criticise defects, and indicate ways of correcting them....

Training cadres on the basis of their own mistakes

What does it mean—to train cadres on the basis of their own mistakes? Lenin taught that one of the surest means of correctly training and educating Party cadres, of correctly training and educating the working-class and the masses of the working people, is conscientiously to disclose the mistakes of the Party, to study the causes that have given rise to these mistakes, and to indicate the paths necessary for overcoming these mistakes. Lenin said:

“The attitude of a political party to its mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the Party and of its fulfilment in practice of its obligations to its class and the masses of working people. Openly to admit error, to reveal its causes, to analyse the situation that gave rise to it, attentively to discuss the means of correcting the error—this is the sign of a serious Party this is the fulfilment by it of its obligations, this is training and educating the class, and then the masses.”

This means that the Bolsheviks are duty bound not to gloss over their mistakes, not to dodge the question of their mistakes, as often happens with us, but honestly and openly to admit their mistakes, honestly and openly to indicate the way of correcting these mistakes, honestly and openly to correct their mistakes.

I would not say that many of our comrades undertake this

business with satisfaction. But if the Bolsheviks really wish to be Bolsheviks, they must find sufficient manfulness in themselves openly to admit their mistakes, to reveal their causes, to indicate the ways of correcting them and thereby to give the party cadres correct training and correct political education. For it is only on this path, only in circumstances of open and honest self-criticism that Bolshevik cadres can really be educated, that real Bolshevik leaders can be educated....

Some comrades say that it is not advisable to speak openly of one's mistakes since the open admission of one's mistakes may be construed by our enemies as our weakness and may be utilised by them.

This is rubbish, comrades. Downright rubbish. The open recognition of our mistakes and their honest rectification can on the contrary only strengthen our Party, raise its authority in the eyes of the workers, peasants and working intellectuals, and increase the strength and power of our State. And this is the main thing. As long as we have the workers, peasants and working intellectuals with us, all the rest will settle itself.

Other comrades say that open admission of our mistakes can lead not to training and consolidating our cadres, but to weakening and disconcerting them, that we must spare and take care of our cadres, that we must spare their self-esteem and tranquility. To this end they propose to slur over the mistakes of our comrades, to weaken the vigour of the criticism, and still better to disregard these mistakes. Such a line is not only fundamentally incorrect but also dangerous in the highest degree, dangerous first and foremost for the cadres whom they want to "spare" and "take care of." To spare and preserve cadres by slurring over their mistakes means of a certainty to ruin these very cadres.

Teaching the masses and learning from them

Lenin taught us not only to teach the masses, but also to learn from them.

What does this mean?

It means, firstly, that we leaders must not become conceited, and we must understand that if we are members of the Central Committee or are People's Commissars this does not mean that we possess all the knowledge necessary for giving correct leadership. An official

position by itself does not provide knowledge and experience.

This means, secondly, that our experience alone, the experience of leaders, is insufficient to give correct leadership, that consequently it is necessary that one's experience, the experience of leaders be supplemented by the experience of the masses, by the experience of the rank-and-file Party members, by the experience of the working-class, by the experience of the people.

This means, thirdly, that we must not for one moment weaken, still less break our connections, with the masses. This means, fourthly, that we must pay careful attention to the voice of the masses, to the voice of the rank-and-file members of the Party, to the voice of the so-called "small men," to the voice of the people.

What does it mean—to lead correctly?

This does not at all mean sitting in one's office and compiling instructions.

Correctly to lead means: Firstly, to find a correct solution of the question. But a correct solution cannot be found unless account is taken of the experience of the masses who test the results of our leadership on their own backs.

Secondly, to organise the operation of the correct solution, which, however, cannot be done without direct aid from the masses.

Thirdly, to organise a check on the fulfilment of this decision which again cannot be done without the direct aid of the masses.

We leaders see things, events and people from only one side, I would say from above; our field of vision consequently is more or less limited. The masses, on the contrary, see things, events and people from another side, I would say from below; their field of vision consequently is also in a certain degree limited. To receive a correct solution to the question, these two experiences must be united. Only in such a case will the leadership be correct.

This is what it means—not only to teach the masses, but also to learn from them....

Thus it transpires that our experience alone, the experience of the leaders, is still far from adequate for the guidance of our affairs. In order to guide correctly, the experience of the leaders must be supplemented by the experience of the Party masses, by the experience of the working-class, by the experience of the toilers, by the experience of the so-called "small people."

And when is this possible?

It is possible only if the leaders are closely connected with the masses, if they are bound up with the Party masses, with the working-class, with the peasantry, with the working intellectuals.

Contacts with the masses, the strengthening of these contacts, readiness to listen to the voice of the masses. In this lies the strength and impregnability of Bolshevik leadership. It may be taken, as a rule, that so long as Bolsheviks keep contact with the broad masses of the people, they will be invincible. And contrarywise, it is sufficient for Bolsheviks to break away from the masses, and lose contact with them, it is sufficient for them to become covered with bureaucratic rust, for them to lose all their strength and to be converted into nothingness.

In the system of mythology of the ancient Greeks, there was one famous hero, Antaeus, who, as mythology declares, was the son of Poseidon, the god of the sea, and Gaea, the goddess of the earth. He was particularly attached to his mother, who had borne, fed and brought him up. There was no hero whom this Antaeus did not vanquish. He was considered to be an invincible hero. Wherein lay his strength? It lay in the fact that every time he was hard pushed in a struggle with an opponent, he touched the earth, his mother, who had borne him and fed him, and obtained new strength. But, nevertheless, he had a weak spot—the danger of being separated in some way from the earth. His enemies took account of this weakness of his and lay in wait for him. And an enemy was found who took advantage of this weakness and vanquished him. This was Hercules. But how did Hercules defeat him? He tore him from the earth raised him into the air, deprived him of the possibility of touching the earth, and throttled him.

I think that Bolsheviks remind us of Antaeus, the hero of Greek mythology. Like Antaeus, they are strong in keeping contact with their mother, with the masses, who bore them, fed them and educated them. And as long as they keep contact with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible.

This is the key to the invincibility of Bolshevik leadership.

(From Stalin's concluding speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU (B), 1937)

APPENDIX ONE

L. M. KAGANOVITCH ON PARTY TRAINING AND INNER PARTY DEMOCRACY

When people are overburdened with office work and the writing of general resolutions, they overlook “trifles,” they overlook human beings. They fail to see a new foreman, a new engineer, a new technician, they fail to see new heroes of labour, they fail to see the Young Communists, who are growing up, who could be promoted to new work.

People say that we are short of men, but this is not true. We have the men, able men, but we must be able to promote them, to put them into their proper place. We must be able to lead them properly. The man who is put into a job must be trained, must be raised in the process of his work; care must be taken that he does not become emasculated and dusty. From time to time we must take a rag and wipe away the dust that has accumulated on him....

The organisation of the proper acceptance of members in the Party is only half the business. We must see to it that the newly adopted Party member, when he is already in our ranks, properly equips himself ideologically, that he grows, that he should feel everyday guidance in his activity, that he be actively drawn into the work of the Party, and that he becomes politically hardened. When we speak of Marxist-Leninist training, we not only mean class-room training, we mean the ideological equipment of the Bolshevik. The Party member must be trained in the Party school, but principally he must be trained in practical political work. That means that we must raise the Marxist-Leninist training of the Party members to a high level and improve the work of our Party organisation....

Lenin always linked up theoretical problems with everyday practice. Stalin gives us examples of how to combine the most complicated theoretical problems with the everyday struggle. And yet many of our Red professors put theory into one compartment

and practice into another, and are quite unable to combine these two compartments. Unfortunately instead of combining theory with practice they, like the philosopher in the fable, write very profound treaties upon "The Nature of a Rope," and as Marx and Engels have not said anything on this subject, they think they are making a wonderful contribution to the treasury of Marxism.

A number of our Soviet Party schools suffer mainly from the fact that the education is organised precisely on school lines. A Bolshevik is not a school-boy, he is being trained politically and his schooling should be combined with the everyday political and practical struggle. He must be ideologically equipped both at school and at Party meetings. Hence, as you have no doubt observed, the new draft of the rules does not simply speak about training, but about ideologically equipping the Communist. Every Party member must be equipped with the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

If we put these demands to every Party member, how much more must we put them to the Party leaders? There must not be any sharp division between expert propagandists and expert organisers. Specialisation is a very good thing, we are in favour of it, but we must not carry it to extremes. And excessive specialisation is particularly unsuitable in Party work. Very often an organiser fails to carry on propaganda and agitation not only because he has not the time for it, but let us speak frankly, also because he is unable to. We saw that a director of a factory must master knowledge. All the more reason therefore why we should demand of every Party Committee secretary, of every district committee secretary and of every Party organiser that they acquire the ability to use the compass of Marxism-Leninism. A Party leader must not only be an organiser and administrator in the best sense of the term, but he must also be a propagandist and an educator of the Party members.

We know that the level of our Party meetings has risen. Party members learn and should learn Bolshevism as much, if not more at Party meetings, as in the Party school. Everyone understands that.

Internal Party democracy and self-criticism have been and are the most important pivot of our whole Party work and education of the Party members. Internal Party democracy has risen to a new stage. Internal Party democracy is now understood in a new way. When you attend meetings of Communists now, you realise that they cannot

be compared with what the position was a couple of years ago....

We cannot deny, however, that we could have done much more had we succeeded in combining the work of the organisers and the propagandists. This would have raised the Marxist-Leninist ideological equipment of the Communists to a new stage. Cases occur when Party meetings are carried on in a stereotyped manner without serious preparation. People are called together and they are told: Comrades, we have tasks, we must fulfil so-and-so. Or they discuss some campaign or anniversary. In such cases, of course, all you get is mere tub thumping or else mere "business," and naturally, such meetings do not help to educate the Party members. And yet, every Party meeting should help to raise the ideological level of the Communists. The discussion of internal Party questions, of questions concerning the politics and practice of building up socialism, raises the intelligence of the Party members to the level of understanding the vanguard role of the Bolsheviks, as the organisers of the masses.

The Party member grows, becomes educated and hardened in the conditions of internal Party democracy, amidst the free and business-like discussion of all the questions of Party policy. At the same time he becomes hardened and educated in the struggle against all those who depart from the fundamental problems of Party policy, who want to take advantage of the discussion of these problems in order to sabotage this policy, in order to undermine the Party leadership and in order to shake its iron ranks. The experience of our internal Party life shows that our Party ranks have grown up, have become strong and hardened in the struggle against all those who depart from the policy of the Party, from Leninism, in the struggle for the compactness and unity of our Party ranks.

That is why we must continue to raise and harden these Party members in the struggle against the slightest manifestation of opportunism in our ranks.

The growth of the Party member depends upon the way internal Party work is organised, it depends upon the amount of attention that is paid to the Party member, and on the way he is led....

(From 'Report on Organisational Problems, 17th Congress of the CPSU (B), 1934)

APPENDIX TWO

G. DIMITROV ON CADRES

Comrades, our best resolutions will remain scraps of paper if we lack the people who can put them into effect. Unfortunately, however, I must state that the problem of *cadres*, one of the most important questions facing us, received almost no attention at this Congress. The report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was discussed for seven days, there were many speakers from various countries, but only a few, and they only in passing, discussed this question, so extremely vital for the Communist Parties and the labour movement. In their practical work our Parties are still far from realising that *people, cadres, decide everything*. They are unable to do what Comrade Stalin is teaching us to do, namely, to cultivate cadres “as a gardener cultivates his favourite fruit tree,” “to appreciate people, to appreciate cadres, to appreciate every worker who can be of use to our common cause.”

A negligent attitude to the problem of cadres is all the more impermissible for the reason that we are constantly losing some of the most valuable of our cadres in the struggle. For we are not a learned society but a militant movement which is constantly in the firing line. Our most energetic, most courageous and most class-conscious elements are in the front ranks. It is precisely these front-line men that the enemy hunts down, murders, throws into jail, puts in the concentration camps, and subjects to excruciating torture, particularly in fascist countries. This gives rise to the urgent necessity of constantly replenishing the ranks, cultivating and training new cadres as well as carefully preserving the existing cadres.

The problem of cadres is of particular urgency for the additional reason that under our influence the mass united front movement is gaining momentum and bringing forward many thousands of new working class militants. Moreover, it is not only young revolutionary elements, not only workers just becoming revolutionary, who have

never before participated in a political movement, that stream into our ranks. Very often former members and militants of the Social-Democratic Parties also join us. These new cadres require special attention, particularly in the illegal Communist Parties, the more so because in their practical work these cadres with their poor theoretical training frequently come up against very serious political problems which they have to solve for themselves.

The problem of what shall be the *correct policy with regard to cadres* is a very serious one for our Parties, as well as for the Young Communist Leagues and for all other mass organisations—for the entire revolutionary labour movement.

What does a correct policy with regard to cadres imply?

First, *knowing one's people*. As a rule, there is no systematic study of cadres in our Parties. Only recently have the Communist Parties of France and Poland and, in the East, the Communist party of China, achieved certain successes in this direction. The Communist Party of Germany, before its underground period, had also undertaken a study of its cadres. The experience of these Parties has shown that as soon as they began to study their people, Party workers were discovered who had remained unnoticed before. On the other hand, the Parties began to be purged of alien elements who were ideologically and politically harmful. It is sufficient to point to the example of Célor and Barbé in France who, when put under the Bolshevik microscope, turned out to be agents of the class enemy and were thrown out of the Party. In Poland and in Hungary the checking up of cadres made it easier to discover nests of provocateurs, agents of the enemy who had sedulously concealed their identity.

Second, *proper promotion of cadres*. Promotion should not be something casual but one of the normal functions of the Party. It is bad when promotion is made exclusively upon the basis of narrow Party considerations, without regard to whether the Communist promoted has contact with the masses or not; promotion should take place upon the basis of the ability of various Party workers to discharge particular functions, and of their popularity among the masses. We have examples in our Parties of promotions which have produced excellent results. For instance, we have a Spanish woman Communist, sitting in the Presidium of this Congress, Comrade

Dolores. Two years ago she was still a rank-and-file Party worker. But in the very first clashes with the class enemy she proved to be an excellent agitator and fighter. Subsequently promoted to the leading body of the Party she has proved herself a most worthy member of that body.

I could point to a number of similar cases in several other countries, but in the majority of cases promotions are made in an unorganised and haphazard manner, and therefore are not always fortunate. Sometimes moralisers, phrasemongers and chatterboxes who actually harm the cause are promoted to leading positions.

Third, *the ability to use people to the best advantage*. We must be able to ascertain and utilise the valuable qualities of every single active member. There are no ideal people; we must take them as they are and correct their weaknesses and shortcomings. We know of glaring examples in our Parties of the wrong utilisation of good, honest Communists who might have been very useful had they been given work that they were better fit to do.

Fourth, *proper distribution of cadres*. First of all, we must see to it that the main links of the movement are in the charge of strong people who have contacts with the masses, have sprung from the very depths of the masses, who have initiative and are staunch. The more important districts should have an appropriate number of such militants. In capitalist countries it is not an easy matter to transfer cadres from one place to another. Such a task encounters a number of obstacles and difficulties, including lack of funds, family considerations, etc., difficulties which must be taken into account and properly overcome. But usually we neglect to do this altogether.

Fifth, *systematic assistance to cadres*. This assistance should take the form of careful instructions, comradely control, rectification of shortcomings and mistakes, and concrete, everyday guidance.

Sixth, *proper care for the preservation of cadres*. We must learn promptly to withdraw Party workers to the rear whenever circumstances so require, and replace them by others. We must demand that the Party leadership, particularly in countries where the Parties are illegal, assume paramount responsibility for the preservation of cadres.... Remember the severe losses the Communist Party of Germany suffered during its transition to underground conditions!...

Only a correct policy in regard to cadres will enable our Parties to develop and utilise all available forces to the utmost, and obtain from the enormous reservoir of the mass movement ever fresh reinforcements of new and better active workers.

What should be our *main criteria* in selecting cadres?

First, *absolute devotion* to the cause of the working class, *loyalty to the Party*, tested in face of the enemy—in battle, in prison, in court.

Second, the closest possible *contact with the masses*. The comrades concerned must be wholly absorbed in the interests of the masses, feel the life pulse of the masses, know their sentiments and requirements. The prestige of the leaders of our Party organisation should be based, first of all, on the fact that the masses regard them as their leaders, and are convinced through their own experience of their ability as leaders, and of their determination and self-sacrifice in struggle.

Third, *ability independently to find one's bearings* and not to be afraid of *assuring responsibility in making decisions*. He who fears to take responsibility is not a leader. He who is unable to display initiative, who says: "I will do only what I am told," is not a Bolshevik. Only he is a real Bolshevik leader who does not lose his head at moments of defeat, who does not get a swelled head at moments of success, who displays indomitable firmness in carrying out decisions. Cadres develop and grow best when they are placed in the position of having to solve concrete problems of the struggle independently, and are aware that they are fully responsible for their decisions.

Fourth, *discipline* and *Bolshevik hardening* in the struggle against the class enemy as well as in their irreconcilable opposition to all deviations from the Bolshevik line.

We must place all the more emphasis on these conditions which determine the correct selection of cadres, because in practice preference is very often given to a comrade who, for example, is able to write well and is a good speaker but is not a man or woman of action, and is not as suited for the struggle as some other comrade who perhaps may not be able to write or speak so well, but is a staunch comrade, possessing initiative and contacts with the masses, and is capable of going into battle and leading others into battle. Have there not been many cases of sectarians, doctrinaires or moralisers

crowding out loyal mass workers, genuine working class leaders?

Our leading cadres should combine the knowledge of *what* they must do—with *Bolshevik stamina, revolutionary strength of character and the will power to carry it through...*

Comrades, as you know, cadres receive their best training *in the process of struggle*, in surmounting difficulties and withstanding tests, and also from *favourable and unfavourable* examples of conduct. We have hundreds of examples of splendid conduct in times of strikes, during demonstrations, in jail, in court. We have thousands of instances of heroism, but unfortunately also not a few cases of pigeon-heartedness, lack of firmness and even desertion. We often forget these examples, both good and bad. We do not teach people to benefit by these examples. We do not show them *what* should be emulated and *what* rejected. We must study the conduct of our comrades and militant workers during class conflicts, under police interrogation, in the jails and concentration camps, in court, etc. The good examples should be brought to light and held up as models to be followed, and all that is rotten, non-Bolshevik and philistine should be cast aside.

Since the Leipzig trial we have had quite a number of our comrades whose statements before bourgeois and fascist courts have shown that numerous cadres are growing up with an excellent understanding of what really constitutes Bolshevik conduct in court.

But how many even of you delegates to the Congress know the details of the trial of the railwaymen in Rumania, know about the trial of Fiete Schulz who was subsequently beheaded by the fascists in Germany, the trial of our valiant Japanese Comrade Ichikawa, the trial of the Bulgarian revolutionary soldiers, and many other trials at which admirable examples of proletarian heroism were displayed?

Such worthy examples of proletarian heroism must be popularised, must be contrasted with the manifestations of faint-heartedness, philistinism, and every kind of rottenness and frailty in our ranks and the ranks of the working class. These examples must be used most extensively in educating the cadres of the labour movement.

Comrades, our Party leaders often complain that *there are no people*; that they are short of people for agitational and propaganda work, for the newspapers, the trade unions, for work among the

youth, among women. Not enough, not enough—that is the cry. We simply haven't got the people. To this we could reply in the old yet eternally new words of Lenin:

“There are no people—yet there are enormous numbers of people. There are enormous numbers of people, because the working class and the most diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognised by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, we have no talented organisers capable of organising extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all forces, even the most inconsiderable.”

These words of Lenin must be thoroughly grasped by our Parties and applied by them as a guide in their everyday work. There are plenty of people. They need only be discovered in our own organisations, during strikes and demonstrations, in various mass organisations of the workers, in united front bodies. They must be helped to grow in the course of their work and struggle; they must be put in a situation where they can really be useful to the workers' cause.

Comrades, we Communists are people of action. Ours is the problem of practical struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the threat of imperialist war, the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. It is precisely this *practical task* that obliges Communist cadres to equip themselves *with revolutionary theory*. For, as Stalin, that greatest master of revolutionary action, has taught us, theory gives those engaged in practical work the power of orientation, clarity of vision, assurance in work, belief on the triumph of our cause.

But real revolutionary theory is irreconcilably hostile to all emasculated theorising, all barren play with abstract definitions. *Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action*, Lenin used to say. It is *such* a theory that our cadres need, and they need it as badly as they need their daily bread, as they need air or water.

Whoever really wishes to rid our work of deadening, cut-and-

dried schemes, of pernicious scholasticism, must burn them out with a red-hot iron, both by *practical*, active struggle waged together with and at the head of the masses, and by *untiring effort* to master the mighty, fertile, all-powerful teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

In this connection I consider it particularly necessary to draw your attention to the work of our *Party schools*. It is not pedants, moralisers or adepts at quoting that our schools must train. No! It is practical front-rank fighters in the cause of the working class that must leave their walls—people who are front-rank fighters not only because of their boldness and readiness for self-sacrifice, but also because they see further than rank-and-file workers and know better than they the path that leads to the emancipation of the toilers. All sections of the Communist International must without any dilly-dallying seriously take up the question of the proper organisation of Party schools, in order to turn them into *smithies* where these fighting cadres are forged.

The principal task of our Party schools, it seems to me, is to teach the Party and Young Communist League members there how to apply the Marxist-Leninist method to the concrete situation in particular countries, to definite conditions, not to the struggle against an enemy “in general” but against a particular, definite enemy. This makes necessary a study not merely of the letter of Leninism, but its living, revolutionary spirit.

First method: teaching people abstract theory, trying to give them the greatest possible dose of dry learning, coaching them how to write theses and resolutions in literary style, and only incidentally touching upon the problems of the particular country, of the particular labour movement, its history and traditions, and the experience of the Communist Party in question. Only incidentally!

Second method: theoretical training in which mastering the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism is based on a practical study by the student of the key problems of the struggle of the proletariat in his own country. On returning to his practical work, the student will then be able to find his bearings independently, and *become an independent practical organiser and leader capable of leading the masses in battle against the class enemy.*

Not all graduates of our Party schools prove to be suitable.

There is a great deal of phrases, abstractions, book knowledge and show of learning. But we need real, truly Bolshevnik organisers and leaders of the masses. And we need them badly this very day. It does not matter if such students cannot write good theses (though we need that very much too), but they must know how to organise and lead, undaunted by difficulties, capable of surmounting them.

Revolutionary theory is the generalised, *summarised experience* of the revolutionary movement. Communists must carefully utilise in their countries not only the experience of the past but also the experience of the present struggle of other detachments of the international labour movement. However, correct utilisation of experience does not by any means denote *mechanical transposition* of ready made forms and methods of struggle from one set of conditions to another, from one country to another, as so often happens in our Parties.

Bare imitation, simple copying of methods and forms of work even of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in countries where capitalism is still supreme, may with the best of intentions result in harm rather than good, as has so often actually been the case. It is precisely from the experience of the Russian Bolshevniks that we must learn to apply effectually, to the specific conditions of life in each country, the *single international line*; in the struggle against capitalism we must learn pitilessly to cast aside, pillory and hold up to general ridicule all phrasemongering, use of *hackneyed formulas, pedantry and doctrinarianism*.

It is necessary to learn, comrades, to learn always, at every step, in the course of the struggle, at liberty and in jail. To learn and to fight, to fight and to learn. We must be able to combine the great teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin *with Stalinist firmness* at work and in struggle, with *Stalinist irreconcilability on matters of principle* towards the class enemy and deviators from the Bolshevnik line, with *Stalinist fearlessness in face of difficulties*, with *Stalinist revolutionary realism*.

(From 'Speech at the 7th World Congress of the
Communist International, 1935)

•••

A correct political line is not needed as a declaration, but as something to be carried into effect....But in order to carry a correct political line into effect, we must have cadres, people who understand the political line of the Party, who accept it as their own line, who are prepared to carry it into effect, who are able to put it into practice and are capable of answering for it, defending it and fighting for it. Failing this, a correct political line runs the risk of being purely nominal.

— Stalin

NEW HORIZONS
PUBLICATION

Price : 35^{RS}