

CADRE QUESTION

THE QUESTION OF CADRES is the most crucial one in strengthening party organisation. To have enough number of cadres and of the right type with enough training is a must in order that the party can discharge the various responsibilities. *The present position at all levels, right from the centre down to the local councils and all fronts is an acute shortage of cadres.* This shortage inhibits the growth of the party, its activities and makes the neglect of work in many fields inevitable. Due to this shortage, some comrades have to attend to so many tasks that some of them get only partly done or not done at all. There is a continuous loss of cadres due to ill-health, old age, death and such natural causes. The split in the party also reduced our cadres but not our responsibilities. As against such losses, the acquisition of new cadres even at lower levels is very little and slow. The Party still depends mainly on cadres of the middle-age group who joined it 20 years ago. That this should be so even at district level is very disturbing and calls for serious attention.

This crisis of cadres is a result of years and decades of neglect of this most crucial aspect of party building. The party has never seriously applied itself to this problem. No conscious and systematic effort to study, select, train and promote cadres was ever made. Selection of cadres has been mostly spontaneous. Promotions were done only when a vacancy occurred due to death or defection and they were not always based on a proper study of cadres, their work and qualities. Promotion of comrades during the 10 years before the split, when the party was sharply divided, became difficult. Every case of promotion became a controversial question. While large promotions became necessary after the split (and due to the split) to fill the vacancies caused by the defectors, there was neither the time nor condition for a close study of the cadres. Promotions were inevitably haphazard and *en masse*. Despite this, many comrades so promoted have already revealed their capacities

and effectiveness.

It is high time that we face the crisis of cadres and solve it in a more systematic and conscious way. Unless this is done, it is likely to grow more acute and the very growth of the party and its mass work will be arrested. In many places, deserving people are not enrolled on the plea that we cannot educate and activate them. It is another way of saying that we have no cadres to do so.

A party as old as ours, with a large mass base and history of many a glorious struggle, cannot really be so poor in fighting ranks as not to be able to give us enough cadres. It is the duty of the leading committees to make a proper search for cadres and discover them. In order that they can do so, the committees must have correct approach to the problem and discard many conservative views of which we are prisoners. The search for cadres has to be a constant task and not one to be done hastily on the occasion of a party conference or when a vacancy has occurred. Every committee must know not only its own members, but comrades in the lower units, their strong and weak points, their potentialities. The most promising of them must be promoted. It is through promotions alone that the shortage of cadres is solved. When the party committees make a proper study of the ranks, they will discover many valuable comrades hitherto unnoticed, who, given the opportunity and training, will fill the gaps.

However, there is conservatism in the party towards promotions which prevents bold promotions. We are afraid to entrust higher responsibilities to new comrades. We are afraid that they may not be able to discharge them. Yet experience shows that the full latent capabilities of comrades are revealed only when they are put in positions of responsibility. A break with conservative hesitation to promote new people and a bolder approach is necessary.

One more source of resistance to promotion of cadres comes from lower units. They generally resist promotion of one of their members to work on the higher committee because of fear that he cannot be replaced. Many do not

consider that such replacement has to be found by more promotion from below. It is true that due to the neglect of training of cadres and party education for a long time, replacements are not always got quickly. Yet this is by no means an insurmountable problem. By undertaking training of cadres in a systematic way, it can be solved.

There are a large number of old comrades, with long periods of selfless service. They are well-known names in the country or in their states and their prestige and experience are an asset to the party. Yet a considerable number of them are not very active or not active enough to function in executive posts. They can and should be continued in the councils, where they can help us much in discussions. But to continue them in executive posts which demand more energy, will weaken the effectiveness of those bodies and also keep out of them promising new cadres. Smooth methods of replacing such old comrades by younger and more energetic ones have to be adopted.

In the preparation of panels during the election of executive committees we should be guided by only one consideration. That consideration ought to be to get the best, most loyal, most trustworthy, effective and militant team, a team of comrades who can not only participate in discussions but also implement the decisions. Unfortunately, long years of liberalist organisational traditions deflect us from this prime consideration. Quite a number of undeserving names are proposed and elected in order to avoid bitterness and trouble. Such a concession brings into the executive committees many people who attend the meetings only casually and who do not take up specific responsibilities and who never participate in the implementation of decisions. Retaining of such people in any committee is harmful in two ways. Active comrades have to be burdened with more work and many active comrades have to be kept out to find place for the inactive people. Hence, in proposing panels, greatest care should be taken to propose only the deserving. If, in spite of this, comrades are found to be habitually inactive, they will have to be replaced if they

do not improve. This should not wait till the next conference. If the change is not made in time, it will nevertheless have to be made after much damage is done. Every member of a party committee (council, executive or secretariat) must send in writing his reasons for not attending a meeting to that body. If any member does not attend three consecutive meetings without valid reason he should be removed from membership of that body.

Every executive committee must devote some time periodically, say once in six months, to assess the work of each of its members. Such a practice puts the work of each member under collective scrutiny. This, we are sure, will help in implementing the principle of collective leadership and individual responsibility. It will introduce the practice of criticism and self-criticism and help to create a team. All executive bodies should be made to observe this practice. The CEC, the highest executive body, should set an example by being the first to do it.

The criteria to be observed in the selection of cadres are well known. The following well-known guidelines set by Comrade Dimitrov in this regard should help us:

- (a) knowing one's people, i.e. systematic study of cadres;
- (b) proper promotion of cadres; promotion shouldn't be something casual but one of the normal functions of the party... promotion should take place on the basis of ability of various party workers to discharge particular functions and their popularity among masses.
- (c) Ability to use people to 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. [Each must be given work that they are] better fit to do.
- (d) Proper distribution of cadres. First of all, we must see to it that the main links of the movement are in the charge of the capable people, who have contact with the masses, who have initiative and are staunch.

- (e) Systematic assistance to cadres. This assistance should consist of detailed instructions, in friendly check-up, in correction of shortcomings and errors and in concrete day-to-day guidance of cadres. [Cadres should be brought up] as a gardener cultivates his favourite fruit tree.

- (f) Care and preservation of cadres.

The main criteria in selecting cadres, according to Comrade Dimitrov, are:

- (a) Absolute devotion to working class, loyalty to party, tested in the face of class enemy—in battle, in prison, in court.
- (b) Closest possible contact with 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.
- (c) Ability independently to find one's bearings and not afraid of assuming responsibility of making decisions.
- (d) Discipline... and irreconcilable opposition to all deviations from Bolshevik line.

In the selection of cadres, preference should be given to 'a staunch comrade possessing initiative and contact with the masses, and is capable of going into battle and leading others into battle' though he 'may not be able to write or speak so well' rather than to a comrade who 'is able to write well and is a good speaker, *but is not a man of action.*'

In view of the specific conditions in which our party finds itself today, we should also pay special heed to two other considerations:

- (a) The working-class component of our party is very weak in the leadership. Though the members of our party are overwhelmingly from the toilers, because of the educational backwardness of the country and the poor work in party education, they are very few in the leading committees. This is unfortunately so even at the levels of the local and district councils. This is very undesirable and affects the militancy and

class partisanship of the party. Conscious and deliberate attempts must be made to improve the class composition of the committees, by inducting more comrades from the working class and agricultural labour. In selecting them, the same yardstick to measure their political knowledge as is applied to others should not be used. Special arrangement for their political education has to be made.

- (b) A study of even such little material as we have reveals that majority of our councils and committees are of the middle-age group. These comrades, with twenty or more years of party life, are the mainstay of our party. It is so even at the district level. Those who are less than 40 are very few and those under 30 are almost nil. This is an alarming position. In spite of all the devotion of these elderly comrades, they will have less and less physical stamina to endure the strain of work in the local and district levels where the only means of transport are the legs and the cycle. Hence the youth component must be increased. A combination of the rich experience of the older generation with the vigour and zeal of the young must be constantly endeavoured.

In selecting cadres, overstress on formal education or book knowledge will be harmful. Our party is a party of revolutionary action. It is, therefore, men of action we want, dynamic leaders who move without being prodded and move others into action; those who know the reactions of the masses and can respond to them. The gap in education of such comrades must be made good by party schooling.

The question of party wholetimers is an integral part of the question of party cadres. They are the core of cadres. No revolutionary party can survive, let alone advance, if it has not got a large body of what Lenin called professional revolutionaries. Party wholetimers are professional revolutionaries. Their position needs serious consideration by the party. Many of the wholetimers are veteran comrades who

took to full-time party work years ago when they were young, healthy and generally not burdened with big families. Today their life is difficult. Many of them have families with all the attendant problems like children's education, health and marriages. The party allowances are meagre and often irregular. Some of them who were unable to stand privations have left full-time party work and gone into some trade or profession. The most steadfast among them alone have stayed in their posts.

The party must do its utmost to preserve them. Their difficulties and problems must be understood. Help must be given in time to solve them. Organisational departments at central and state levels should study the problem of party allowances for wholetimers as an urgent problem and lay down some norms and minimum standards. Party allowance must be made to correspond to the present cost of living. Such problems as education and marriages of his children should also be considered as problems deserving attention of the party committees. His wife or other members of the family should be helped to earn and supplement family income. Committees must take a very responsible attitude to the problem of preserving wholetimers.

There have been cases of wholetimers who have ceased to grow politically and become more or less ineffective. When they cannot fulfil jobs, others will have to be assigned to it. In such cases, party has to make some arrangement to rehabilitate them so that they can earn their living and work for the party as parttimers.

In some places there is a tendency to fix up a large number of wholetimers on very small allowance. If the comrades have some private means to which the small allowance is intended as a supplement, the arrangement would work. But if the comrades have no other means, they must be given full allowance. Then only those comrades to whom the party has the ability to pay must be taken. It is better to have one wholetimer who is fully paid than two or three who are half-paid and are forced to earn some more otherwise.

We must use people, as Dimitrov says, to the best advantage and utilise valuable qualities of every comrade. Some in agitation and propaganda, some as organisers and some others as writers. Comrades must be given the nature of work for which they have the talent and aptitude.

However, under the present conditions of the party, too much emphasis should not be laid on the 'aptitude'. There is a tendency among some comrades to show aptitude only for light jobs or jobs which give publicity or frequent visits abroad. Some have aptitude only for work as MLAs or MPs. Some other comrades have aptitude and time only for trade-union work and none for party organisation. While ability to specialised work and excel in this is to be welcomed, the tendency to avoid hard, patient and unostentatious work like party organisation, education, etc. should not be encouraged. It is true that party organisation is a special work which requires some comrades at every level to devote their full time. But it is also necessary that mass leaders must take interest in functioning, building and expanding the party among the masses they work in. If this is not done, the party will not grow even if the personal stature and influence of the mass leader grow. Such a lopsided development is most harmful.

It is not only necessary that cadres are trained and promoted but their correct distribution also is important. If we cannot find people to man all jobs, the most important of them must be given priority. The most important places and fronts must be given cadres. It may not be always possible to shift comrades from place to place. But as far as possible, the distribution of cadres must be based on the priority of the party needs.

When a comrade is put in charge of a job he should be given full responsibility, sufficient guidance and help. Frequent check-up and guidance will enable him to acquire soon the necessary competence and self-confidence to do the new jobs. The present practice of giving a job to a comrade and allowing him to learn from himself as best as he can by trial and error is not correct. Only those with extra-

ordinary capacities succeed and the less capable get demoralised.

The problem of cadres, difficult as it may seem, is not insoluble. A search for cadres will reveal to us many comrades with talent. With a sound cadre policy of selecting, promoting and training them we can solve the present crisis. But the effort has to be serious, determined and continuous.

PARTY EDUCATION

THE ORGANISATIONAL REPORT, adopted by the Seventh Congress underlined the supreme importance of party education in building up a mass party. It said, 'Party education should be a regular part of work of every party unit. But special responsibility and initiative in this respect will have to be taken by the party centre and state councils.' It also suggested the following immediate steps to begin with:

A separate department of party education has to be set up both in the all-India centre and state centres in order to discharge one of the most important and urgent tasks of political education of cadres and also train them for discharging the responsibility of different fronts. It will also help the state committees in giving political education to the party members and militants.

It was also decided that this department will discharge the following responsibilities:

- (1) Run a permanent central party school for training advanced cadres and teachers for the schools in the states;
- (2) Run a permanent central school for training cadres from Hindi-speaking states;
- (3) Help the state committees to organise schools for the experienced cadres who did not have the benefit of modern education. The state committees have also to make arrangements for training branch secretaries;
- (4) Publish popular pamphlets and books on Marxist theory, Party Programme and other topics for the education of the party members and militants.

These decisions of the Party Congress have practically remained unimplemented as far as the all-India party centre