

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

is concerned. The National Council set up a party education department committee at its first meeting itself after the Party Congress with Dr. Adhikari as convenor. But no separate department of party education was set up. The committee held a few meetings. There was some attempt made to prepare model syllabus. But it was not completed or finalised and made available to the state councils.

As far as the state councils were concerned, there was no serious attempt in most of the states to organise party education till after the fourth general election when the National Council at its Calcutta meeting in April 1967 in a resolution on 'Immediate Organisational Tasks' called upon the state councils to organise minimum three-day schools to cover all branch secretaries before the party conferences. Let us see what has been done or not done in various states.

A N D H R A: The pradesh council has constituted an education subcommittee which has run education campaign for party members. Syllabuses were drafted and distributed to the teachers. 5,000 members were covered.

It drew up a programme for a 10-day school for training student and youth cadres in 1966. 187 students attended this school. The course consisted of dialectical and historical materialism, Marxist political economy, aspects of our Party Programme, history of Indian national movement, outlines of the world communist movement, principles of party organisation, etc. The entire syllabus was prepared in advance and made available to the teachers. There was also a system of tutorial guidance in addition to regular classes on each subject.

The party school for students was conducted in 1967 summer from 24 May to 1 June. Just over a hundred students attended.

Twelve-day political school for higher level organisers—members of pradesh council and district organisers—was held in the second half of August 1967. 62 leading cadres attended this school.

Party school for TU cadres was conducted for 7 days. 30 comrades attended.

Nothing has been done to train branch secretaries. Short-term schools were conducted in different districts for the entire membership. Some 3,000 members were covered in these schools.

D E L H I: A two-day school for women comrades was held on 7 and 8 August 1967. Attendance varied from 12 to 25. A three-day school for cadres was organised on 12-14 August 1967. A little more than a hundred cadres including branch secretaries, wholetimers working in party and mass organisations attended this school. The subjects covered were fundamentals of Marxism, present situation in the international communist movement, history of the CPI, significance of the Party Programme and tasks of the party.

H I M A C H A L P R A D E S H: Two three-day schools for leading cadres and branch secretaries were organised, attended by 75 comrades. There were two two-day schools also.

K E R A L A: The state council set up an education department committee in April 1965. It was entrusted with the work of organising party education as a continuous task. The committee discussed and worked out a one-year plan of party education:

(1) Classes for the party members on the Seventh Party Congress documents; for this purpose, notes were prepared on the following four subjects and printed: (a) The new epoch; (b) Party Programme; (c) Political Resolution; (d) What is party. On the basis of these notes, three-day schools were conducted in each district (there are nine districts) to train teachers for taking classes for members. About 200 comrades selected by district councils attended these schools. Together with these instructors, state party teachers were also allotted to each district. One-day classes were conducted on the basis of branches or taluq (mandalam) committees from October to December 1965. More than 3,000 members were covered in these classes.

(2) The party education department committee met in November 1965 and decided to prepare five textbooks for training functionaries: (a) What is Marxism; (b) Features

of contemporary capitalism; (c) Communist Party and social revolution; (d) India's path to socialism; (e) Short history of the Communist Party of India. They were prepared and printed in the first half of 1966. First, it was planned to have five-day schools for party functionaries, mainly branch secretaries. But that was found impracticable; so it was decided to take the 5 classes based on printed textbooks in three days. These schools continued till the general election. They were held on the basis of taluq/mandalam committees. Branch secretaries and taluq (mandalam) committee members were to attend. These schools continued after the general election also. Already a thousand functionaries have gone through these classes, half of whom are branch secretaries. Still an equal number of branch secretaries remain to be trained.

(3) After the general election, the education department committee met and decided to hold a state party school for leading cadres selected from districts. It was for two weeks. Subjects were: (a) Dialectical materialism; (b) Historical materialism; (c) Marxist political economy; (d) History of the Indian national movement; (e) Strategy and tactics. Soviet textbooks translated into Malayalam were used as basis. Comrades were fixed up to prepare the syllabus for each subject. The school was held in the latter half of September 1967. Fifty comrades attended.

What the education department committee decided upon as a one-year plan in May 1965 could be completed only in 2 years and that, too, not fully.

MAHARASHTRA: In the course of one year, the Maharashtra state council organised 25 party school camps in nine districts of which 10 were held in Bombay city. They were of one to eight days' duration. 800 activists from 350 villages attended these classes. The subjects taught were: Outlines of Marxism, History of the freedom struggle, History of the party, Party's policy and programme, Policies of the CPM and other parties, International communist movement, Current Indian situation, and Principles of party

organisation. Naturally all the subjects could not be taken in all the camps. It is noteworthy that 100 women members attended these schools.

PUNJAB: The last state conference had laid down the task of education, training and promotion of cadres as the first and key task in the field of organisation. Immediately after the Bombay Congress education on Party Programme and other documents of the congress was organised.

(a) Outlines of lectures were prepared by the secretariat members and circulated to districts to help them to reach the ranks; (b) the secretariat members themselves gave lectures in extended district council meetings, thus covering about seven hundred cadres; (c) in some cases districts were also helped but mostly they were asked to do the job themselves so far as ordinary members are concerned. This was done only partially.

After this occasionally lectures were organised on different problems—as for example, the Kerala election, the ideological differences, the CPI and CPM, the national question and the problem of state reorganisation, devaluation. Some lecture-notes were provided to the districts and a few pamphlets brought out but no systematic plan of education was put in operation as the Indo-Pak conflict, the self-immolation threat of Sant Fateh Singh and the general election upset the proposed time-table. After the general election, however, a four-phase plan was drawn up and carried out for the most part. This was as follows:

(a) A six-day state-level school at Jullundur for party and mass leaders and teachers. It was attended by 153 comrades. The subjects taken were: Party history and the evolution of the Party Programme, differences in international communist movement, CPI and CPM, party organisation, problems of the movement in the state (UF and mass fronts), agrarian question. The proposed lectures on Marxist philosophy could not be delivered as Com. Dange could not come.

(b) Three-day schools for branch secretaries and area organisers. Eleven district schools were held covering 970

cadres. Subjects taken included: Dialectical and historical materialism, development of society, differences in the international communist movement, CPI and CPM, Party Programme, party policy and the postelection situation, principles of party organisation and duties of a party member, functions of a party branch and duties of a branch secretary.

Outline lectures were prepared, discussed by a small sub-committee and then cyclostyled and distributed to districts. Two teams consisting of secretariat and other executive members were organised to deliver lectures. Sale of party literature was also organised in seven of the schools. These schools proved very useful but all the district committees had not paid full attention to preparation and mobilising branch secretaries with the result that in some districts the attendance was bad. Almost half the branch secretaries were covered.

(c) Areawise one-day schools were organised throughout the state to reach ordinary members and new recruits. Special attention was paid to industrial areas. In all 3,700 members and militants attended.

(d) Of schools for different fronts only two could be held, others are yet to be organised.

The whole campaign for party education was reviewed by the state executive which felt that in order to meet the needs of the movement permanent apparatus was necessary so that education and training could go on continuously. For this (a) a permanent school was needed at Chandigarh where cadres could be given one-month course by rotation, (b) three to five-day areawise schools in districts periodically to train branch secretaries, (c) at least two state executive members to be relieved of all other jobs and put exclusively on education, along with other suitable cadres and at least one leading cadre in every district. Steps have already been taken in the above direction.

R A J A S T H A N: The state council decided to hold five zonal schools for cadres so as to cover all the units in the state. There were to be three-day schools. Time allotted was

one day each for ideology, Party Programme and party organisation. The syllabus for this had been worked out by the state secretariat. The first zonal school was held at Bharatpur from 13-15 August 1967. It was attended by 50 comrades.

H A R Y A N A: A three-day state party school was organised on 18-20 June 1967. It was meant for DC and branch secretaries and a few other functionaries. About 60 comrades were invited. But actually 93 came to attend the classes.

T A M I L N A D: After Calcutta (April 1967) National Council meeting, party classes were held in 7 districts attended by nearly 1,000 functionaries on the whole.

U T T A R P R A D E S H: One state school of a week's duration, attended by about 60 comrades. Seven schools for branch secretaries covering 15 districts. About 300 comrades attended these schools.

W E S T B E N G A L: The state council formed an education subcommittee which conducted schools and classes in different districts particularly after the last general election. Under the guidance of this committee party teachers' training classes were held in Calcutta and 24 Parganas and zonal schools were organised in Calcutta, 24 Parganas, Birbhum, Malda, West Dinajpur, Nadia, Burdwan, etc. The subjects discussed in these classes included (a) History of international communist movement and the recent controversy, (b) History of Indian national movement, (c) Party Programme, (d) The concept of united front and postelection political situation, (e) Agrarian problems in West Bengal, and (f) Organisational tasks and party functioning. In the district schools of Birbhum and Malda-Dinajpur more than 100 cadres, mostly kisan cadres, attended. These central schools were preceded by zonal and subdivisional schools.

K A R N A T A K: Party schools have been conducted in Mangalore and Bangalore in 1965 and 1967 for branch secretaries, taluq committee secretaries and DC members. Special classes for comrades working in TU front were conducted in Bangalore and Mangalore.

ORISSA: The state council formed an education sub-committee with three members and classes were conducted for youth cadres at Kujang, for student cadres at Berhampur, Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar. A special class for trade-union cadres of western Orissa was held in Sambalpur. Classes of branch secretaries in Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Puri and Sambalpur districts were held. The total number of cadres covered in these classes are about 400.

From what has been stated above, it is clear that:

- (a) Most of the state councils have not taken up seriously the question of party education, though it was given as one of the specific and priority tasks in the Organisational Report of the Seventh Congress. Whatever little has been done in some states, it was after the general election during the last few months.
- (b) Except in Kerala, Punjab and Maharashtra, there was no attempt in any other state to take elementary knowledge of Marxism-Leninism to the ranks. In other states, education was confined to cadres.

At the same time, the experience we have of organising party education during the period after the Seventh Congress is very important and valuable. Party members and cadres are thirsting for knowledge; they are eager for study; they want to be ideologically and politically equipped to carry on the struggle more effectively. There is an impression very prevalent that comrades cannot be persuaded to attend party schools because of the pressure of mass campaigns and mass struggles. Only when there is less mass activity can there be party education. Experience has exploded that myth. It has been proved that comrades are prepared to attend party schools of one or two weeks' duration. Actually they are demanding longer schools for deeper and more detailed study.

Ideological and political education has not yet become an integral part of our regular party activities only because of the criminal negligence resulting from the belief in spontaneity of the central and state leaderships.

Radical steps have to be taken to remedy this state of affairs. Hence the following steps are proposed:

- (1) There should be a department of party education, under the National Council. It should not be a subcommittee that meets occasionally and makes proposals to be implemented by somebody else. One important comrade should head this department. He should be relieved of all other heavy responsibility. There should be two or three other comrades of the National Council and state council levels to assist him. It is the full-time job of this department to organise party education on an all-India basis of doing the following minimum jobs:
 - (a) Work out a common model syllabus on fundamentals of Marxism, history of the Communist Party of India, history of the Indian national movement, strategy and tactics of world communist movement, outline of Indian history, etc. by pooling experience already gained in conducting classes on these subjects in different states.
 - (b) Run a permanent central party school for training advanced cadres and teachers from different states as well as for cadres from Hindi-speaking states. This school must be set up before the end of the year 1968.
 - (c) Help state committees to organise party education and to organise exchange of experience through periodical meetings of comrades in charge of party education in the states.
 - (d) Prepare and publish popular pamphlets and books on Marxist theory, Party Programme, Indian history and economics and on other topics of general knowledge for the education of party members and militants. These pamphlets should be cheap and easily understandable to our worker and peasant militants.

Immediately after the Party Congress, the National Council should discuss the details and make necessary organisational guarantees to set up and function the all-India department of party education.

(2) There should be departments of party education in all the major states—West Bengal, UP, Punjab, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnad and Kerala; and in other states at least a comrade at the state centre solely in charge of party education. The states should organise party education at three levels:

- (a) Permanent or semi-permanent schools at state level for members of state and district councils and for leading cadres working in various mass fronts as well as for training party teachers.
- (b) Periodical short-term schools should be run for training of secretaries and assistant secretaries of branch committees and local committee members.
- (c) Series of lectures should be planned on fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and party organisation, as well as current national and international political issues for the entire party membership and militants.
- (c) Popularisation of Marxist theory, programme and policy of the party and scientific knowledge by publishing pamphlets and books.

Party education has to be a continuous process. For that what is absolutely necessary are specialised cadres and separate apparatus. That is why it is necessary to set up party education departments at the all-India level and in major states. There are good number of intellectuals and teachers who are either party members or are very close to the party. They have to be drawn into the work of party education, in preparing syllabus, in conducting classes, giving lectures, writing pamphlets, etc.