

# SOME OF OUR MAIN WEAKNESSES

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1952

PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE LIMITED,  
BOMBAY.

Annas 2

DURING THE SIX YEARS that have elapsed since the ending of direct British rule, India has witnessed events of far-reaching significance. In the Programme of the Communist Party, the Election Manifesto and the review of the general elections, the most important of these events have been dealt with.

The last general elections revealed that the Congress Party, which only a few years ago enjoyed unrivalled prestige and authority among the people, had lost the backing of the majority. This process has continued, becoming accentuated in the months that have passed since the general elections, as pointed out by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party at its meeting held in August.

Further, the movement of the Indian people for defence and extension of national freedom, for the complete destruction of the imperialist grip and of feudal exploitation, for a life of happiness and prosperity is becoming more and more linked with the battle which progressive humanity is waging for peace. The great response which the Peace Congress of the countries of Asia and the Pacific evoked among all sections of the people, the successful observance of the "Asian Week" in many parts of the country, the collection of 50,000 peace signatures in Bombay within 10 days, the gigantic peace rally at Madras, the big peace conference held in August and September in several provinces, culminating in the All-India Peace Conference held at Jullunder—all these are indicative of the growing strength and sweep of the peace movement.

Opposition to the policies and methods of the Government has spread to new strata and sections of the people, including sections of the national bourgeoisie itself. Mass struggles are growing in volume and intensity. The ruling party, the Congress, is in the midst

of a deep crisis. Conflicts inside the Congress have sharpened.

Reviewing the events that have taken place since the elections, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of India stated that "the developments of the last six months are not fortuitous. Nor can they be considered of a temporary nature. They will continue and grow, for they arise from deep-rooted economic and social causes."

From what has been said the conclusion should not be drawn that the enemy is already on the verge of defeat or that the tasks confronting us are comparatively simple. On the contrary, the enemy still holds much of the balance of power, still wields immense influence. He has still immense reserves and immense capacities for manoeuvring. His strength lies not only in the direct influence of the Congress Party itself, but also in the influence that feudal and communal reaction still exerts in many parts of the country. Further, its strength lies in the constitutional illusions that set in after the general elections, illusions about the possibilities of the ballot box, illusions that are being strengthened by the newly formed Praja-Socialist Party which is trying to form a bourgeois-reformist "oppositional consolidation".

The tasks facing our Party are therefore immense. They have been described by the Political Bureau as "broadening the mass movement", of developing a continuous mass movement by helping the people win their immediate demands, of building their mass organisations and of enlisting the best sons and daughters of the people into the Party while carrying out these tasks."

The Political Bureau points out that the difficulties confronting the Party today are of a specific nature. They are connected with the growth of the mass movement, with the growth of the influence of the Party and therefore with the growth of the responsibilities which the Party has to fulfil.

Today, with the growth of the mass movement, with political awakening spreading to new strata, new

sections, new areas and with the immense growth in the influence of the Party, our tasks and responsibilities have grown many-fold. We have to lead the people in the struggles for their immediate demands. We have to organise workers, peasants, agricultural workers; as well as youth, students, women, middle-class employees, artisans and handicraftsmen. We must wage struggle on the cultural front. We have to champion the cause of the people in Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies. We have to run a large number of daily and weekly journals. We have to produce literature on current national and international issues. We have to negotiate with other parties for a United Front, to negotiate with the Government and local authorities. We have to participate in elections to local boards and municipalities. We have to work among and establish contacts with all strata and sections of the people in order to formulate and champion their demands in conformity with the basic interests of the Indian people, with their democratic rights and national independence. We have to organise relief for the unemployed and the famine-stricken. We must develop a powerful movement for peace. All this work must be co-ordinated, directed and helped by Party units in every area.

It would be no exaggeration to say that today men from every social strata who are moving in step with their people look to the Communist Party for help and guidance. Even in areas where no Communist Party units exist, people know the Communist Party as the Party that fights for the poor, for the common man. They approach us to organise them, to tell them what to do.

To discharge even a fraction of the new responsibilities, to carry out even a part of the immense tasks, the Party needs cadres—a vastly enlarged number of cadres. And here it should be remembered that the Party is strong not only in the number of its members, but especially in their quality, in their devotion to the Party and in ideological training. We need effective agitators, journalists for Party organs, educators, organisers of the people and their movements,—cadres

ideologically developed and politically trained who have capacity for initiative and leadership, who are able to apply the general line of the Party in a flexible way in each area and constantly to raise the political and organisational level of the masses.

Of such cadres we have too few. And those few are overburdened with work. The result is we cannot undertake and carry out many of the innumerable tasks confronting us.

It must be realised that today we have reached a stage when success in organising the popular movement is inseparably linked with and even *dependent upon*, the planned, organised growth of the Communist Party itself, its strengthening in those areas where it already exists, its spreading to new areas where as yet it does not exist. Without this the popular movement cannot be appreciably strengthened and even the existing movement cannot be properly guided and its achievements consolidated in the form of mass organisations. Today, organisation becomes a most important political factor.

What we need today, above all, is a strong Party—strong in its expanding membership, embracing a truly large number of cadres prepared to fight selflessly in the ranks of our Party, strong in discipline, strong in politics—a party firmly entrenched among the masses, linked with them through a thousand ties forged through multiple forms of activities; a party with live and active units in factories and workshops, in villages and localities, in each section of our people. These units must function in a way that they will be looked upon by the people among whom they work as their leaders in every sphere of life. Without a sufficiently large, sufficiently firm and sufficiently developed Party core in every province and area, on every front of struggle, leadership of the masses is impossible of realisation. Most of our difficulties today arise from the absence of this.

The present position can be appreciated from the fact that even in Madras State where we polled 2.6 million votes in the general elections and could have polled much more if we had contested more seats—even in this

State our Party membership is far less than 1 per cent of the votes polled by us. A similar situation prevails in other States. And even this membership is not properly organised and only a fraction of it is ideologically-politically developed.

This is the biggest single problem facing the Party. As the Political Bureau stresses, organisation, more so than ever before, has become a major political factor. It determines the tempo of the growth of the mass movement itself.

This is not yet clearly realised by most of our comrades. Many of them tend to look upon our present difficulties in the same way as they looked upon our past difficulties. In the past whenever difficulties arose in our work, whenever we received a setback or failed to advance as rapidly as we wanted, the explanation was sought mainly in terms of immediate political slogans and forms of struggle. The result was that while some slight progress was made with correct slogans and correct forms of struggle, the basic weakness, the weakness of the Party itself, remained as before. Even the advance registered could not be consolidated.

Today, however, the difficulties are of a different nature. They arise primarily and above all from our organisational weakness. They arise *despite* correct immediate slogans and correct tactics as outlined in the Political Bureau resolution. Therefore, the organisational problem itself has to be tackled as the biggest political problem before the Party.

For this, it is first of all necessary to achieve theoretical clarity with regard to Party organisation and to abandon the wrong ideas, the wrong notions that have prevailed till now.

It has been incorrectly held—though never specifically expressed—that organisation—Party organisation—is a *by-product* of economic and political struggles; that is, if we give correct slogans and wage struggles correctly, the Party will grow, almost automatically.

An equally wrong notion is that the Party will grow along with and as a result of the “growth of the movement”. It is not realised that the “growth of

the movement" itself can take place in the correct manner and in the correct direction only under the leadership of the Party and that this leadership itself can be exercised only if the Party itself grows, in other words, that the growth of a real mass revolutionary movement depends to a great extent on the growth of the Party, that without this the movement itself ends in defeat.

Another notion is that the Party grows by building mass organisations of workers, peasants, etc. Our own history shows how wrong this notion is. Many times did we build mass organisations but we could not expand them, could not even maintain them in face of repression in most areas because we lacked sufficiently big, sufficiently firm and sufficiently developed Communist Party cores in the basic units of the organisations.

Still another notion is that the growth of the general anti-imperialist consciousness—which takes place in a colonial country almost spontaneously—is a sufficient basis for the growth of the Communist Party itself, that if the Party deepens this consciousness, if it appears before the people as the most militant anti-imperialist Party, that in itself will enable the Party to grow. It is not realised that the Communist Party can grow not merely by basing itself on anti-imperialist and national revolutionary consciousness, but by *taking it further*, by imparting a *specific* consciousness to the working class and the advanced masses, Marxist-Leninist consciousness, socialist consciousness, which requires sharp ideological struggle against the theories and ideas of the bourgeoisie and mass popularisation of the all-conquering ideas of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and Stalin.

Many wrong concepts about the Party have appeared. This has led to the notion that the Party's sole task is to conduct agitation on immediate issues and lead strikes and demonstrations. The organisational implication of this concept is that practically the entire day-to-day work of the Party is carried on by "wholetimers", the bulk of Party members having little to do except in periods of big mass struggles or big campaigns. This leads to bureaucratisation at one end and organisational looseness

at the other. It leads to fossilisation of cadres and arrests their growth. It arrests the growth of the Party itself.

Utterly wrong concepts about the nature of the tasks and role of the Party are widespread. Mass political education on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, concrete exposure of the Government, rousing women against their social degradation, mass popularisation of the Five-Power Peace Pact appeal, creation of mass literature on current issues, expansion of the sale of Party journals, working in and forming cultural, educational, sports and other bodies and associations, and even the building up of mass organisations and of the Party itself—all are looked upon by many comrades not as struggles but only as certain "activities",—and not of a revolutionary kind.

What is the source of all these wrong ideas? Where are their roots?

Basically they arise from the worshipping of spontaneity. They arise from a narrow, restricted, non-Marxist concept of class-struggle. This narrowness is not something new. It existed in the past also.

If we broadly review the struggles waged by us in the past, we get the following picture. As in all other countries of the world, the struggle that developed in our country had three aspects, three fronts—economic, political, ideological.

On the *economic* front the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of their militant class organisations and the Communist Party waged numerous battles—in some of which the participants numbered hundreds of thousands. They displayed heroism, initiative and capacity for sacrifice in face of ruthless terror. Important demands and concessions were won as a result of these struggles and mass organisations were built in many areas.

On the *political* front, despite the many political actions organised by the working class, despite the struggles for basic agrarian reform and political rights that developed in Telengana and Tripura, despite the growing influence of the Communist Party, the advance registered was far less striking. In the days of direct

British rule even the working class in many important mining and industrial areas remained under bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influence and went into political action only under the direct impact of the national movement led by the Congress.

But it was on the *ideological* front that our weakness, the weakness of the movement led by us, was most strikingly manifested. Not only was Marxist-Leninist ideology not inculcated in the working class but also the bulk of the working class understood even national freedom in the way that it is preached by the bourgeoisie—the ending of direct British rule. With regard to the content of national freedom, with regard even to such a key issue of democracy as the structure of a democratic state, no mass political education was carried on by us. We not only failed to expose the treacherous character of the leadership of the national bourgeoisie but on many occasions glorified it in the name of building the “united national front”. No ideological struggle worth the name was carried on against the pernicious theories of Gandhism.

It was assumed that political propaganda and agitation among the masses should not go beyond the general democratic framework, that Marxist-Leninist ideas are meant only for those who join the Party or become sympathisers of the Party. In practice even the latter were not adequately educated.

We translated a number of the works of Lenin and Stalin into Indian languages but without such introduction as would make them comprehensible to the worker or peasant. The literature produced by us in India was exclusively of an agitational nature. No attempt was made to produce literature on Indian problems from the Marxist point of view. Current events were evaluated only and exclusively from a general democratic point of view; their importance from the point of view of the ultimate aims of the working class were not taken into account. We did not even produce history of the trade union and peasant movements in the country, history of the struggles which we ourselves had led, did not draw lessons from those struggles and equip our own

cadres with those lessons, did not combat the bourgeoisie ideologically in their effort to obliterate in the working masses the real lessons of the struggles.

The result of all this was that not only the working class, but even a large number of our Party members failed to develop Marxist-Leninist consciousness. Inevitably our work on the economic and political front also suffered; because, not merely must the class struggle be conducted simultaneously on all fronts, not merely are the three fronts of class-struggle inter-related but also the ideological front occupies a key position in this inter-relationship.

Almost all our weaknesses today, including our organisational weakness, can be traced to this failure, failure to pay attention to ideology, failure to emphasise the role of consciousness and organisation.

As Comrade Stalin teaches:

“It must be accepted as an axiom that the higher the political level and the Marxist-Leninist knowledge of the workers in any branch of state or Party work, the better and more fruitful will be the work itself, and the more effective the result of the work; and vice versa, the lower the political level of the workers and the less they are imbued with the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, the greater will be the likelihood of disruption and failure in the work, of the workers themselves becoming shallow and deteriorating into paltry plodders, of their degenerating altogether.”

Correct political slogans, correct united front tactics, correct forms of struggle—all these are essential. But they are essential not merely for the higher committees but also for each unit of the Party. This itself requires the ideological-political development of the entire Party. Moreover, correct political slogans, correct united front tactics, and correct forms of struggle, while they extend our mass influence and forge our links with the masses do not themselves develop the Party as such.

The Party grows by raising the ideological-political level of its cadres. The Party grows by inculcating Marxist-Leninist consciousness in the working class,

among the agricultural workers, poor peasants and among the revolutionary intelligentsia who constitute an extremely important section in our country. The Party grows by conducting political education among the broad masses in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. The Party grows by conducting a sharp battle against all varieties of bourgeois ideology. The Party grows by conducting struggle on all fronts and among all social strata.

The ruling classes and their spokesmen preach salvation for the country by means of their Five-Year Plan and Community Projects. They parade their foreign policy as a policy of independence and dynamic neutrality. They create illusions about the efficacy of the ballot box. They try to efface from the memory of the people the lessons of the working class and peasant struggles of the past. Many of them join in the chorus of denunciation of the Soviet Union and People's China as "dictatorships" where "no freedom exists" in contrast to the capitalist countries. They sow hostility between people speaking different languages and divert the democratic movement for linguistic provinces into disruptive channels. In all this, they are aided by the Rightwing Socialists who have given up all pretence to Marxism and present the exploded ideas of the bourgeoisie in a new garb in order to deceive and mislead the masses. The need for ideological struggle is therefore greater today than ever before.

But the strengthening of the Party and its growth are not merely an ideological question, not merely a question of equipping our cadres ideologically and of conducting ideological struggle among the masses. It is also an organisational question, a question of restoring Party forms and Party discipline, which were seriously undermined in the period before the adoption of the Programme of the Party. On the question of organisation also, as on the question of the importance of ideology, wrong, anti-Marxist, anti-proletarian ideas are prevalent at all levels—ideas which Lenin combated in his celebrated work "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back".

Party forms are looked upon by many comrades as something mechanical and bureaucratic. Anarchistic

concepts of inner-party democracy manifest themselves in many units and in an extremely harmful way. Many comrades regard their individual views as more important than the view of the unit to which they belong and even the view of the higher unit and freely express their differences outside the unit. Some comrades speak in the unit only in order to convert others to their own point of view and not in order that they themselves may also learn and get converted to the point of view of others. Some comrades, if their views are not accepted by the unit, draw the conclusion that the unit is wrong and fail to co-operate wholeheartedly in implementation of the majority decision.

In many areas either no reporting is done by higher committees to lower committees, or reporting is done only in general body meetings which become a substitute for the basic units of the Party. Campaigns and struggles are not promptly and adequately reviewed, their lessons drawn and the Party unified from issue to issue.

In some units past prejudices, a legacy of the period of inner-party struggle, stand in the way of unified functioning, prejudices which colour the outlook in determining organisational questions. This leads to lowering the quality of work.

Very often there is planlessness in work, failure to co-ordinate activities on various fronts, the tendency to entrust a few leading comrades with more work than they can do, the tendency to substitute in practice leadership of committees by leadership of individual comrades. Even in this way many jobs get done but without developing rank and file initiative, without developing the Party units as the real leaders of the masses in the locality, without training and developing Party cadres which is essential in order that the Party may expand rapidly and grow into a mass force.

Therefore together with the task of developing the Party we have simultaneously to undertake the task of organisational strengthening of the Party—organisational check-up, organisational purification.

Of all this we have done too little till now. Hence our difficulties. Not to see this, leads to attempts to

discover short-cuts. Some people argue that if somehow or other we could form a united front with other parties in all the legislatures in the form of a bloc, abandoning the leadership to nominees of other parties, if somehow or other, by means of this or by means of other tactics, we could organise a few "effective" actions, then the problems confronting us would get solved. They fail to see that such "solutions" are not solutions but lead to the liquidation of the Party itself. Others, while they talk of organisation, understand organisation in a narrow "practicalist" sense, understand the organisational and political problems confronting the Party in the old way, exclusively or mainly as a problem of "forms of struggle", and in practice advocate tactics of passivity on the plea of organisational weakness. Their mental digests, their basic outlook, are the same. Hence, while speaking of the need for organisation, they fail to do anything concrete.

All these tendencies must be combated and rooted out. What Lenin taught in his immortal work "What Is To Be Done" and in "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", what Stalin teaches on the role and importance of the Party—must be made a part of the consciousness of our entire Party. On this basis, on the basis of the History of the C.P.S.U.(B), on the basis of the works of Comrades Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi and the documents of the fraternal parties, on the basis of the lessons of our own movement, work must be started inside our Party for the re-education of the entire Party, for the liquidation of all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas with regard to the role and function of the Party, with regard to organisation, and, in keeping with this, to change our method and style of work. All this must be done with the utmost rapidity and while intensifying mass work, as emphasised in the resolution of the Political Bureau. Struggle for immediate demands has assumed exceptional importance and must form the pivot of our mass activities.

We must ensure that all Party units discuss not only their immediate tasks but also broad political issues such as the peace movement, the manoeuvres of the

ruling classes, the tactics and slogans of other parties, the question of languages and linguistic provinces, the question of the united front, etc. We have to re-introduce reporting at all levels of the Party, from lower committees to higher committees, and from higher committees to lower committees. We must see that each Party unit regularly reviews its activities, assigns suitable work for each comrade, checks up the work and improves its functioning by criticism and self-criticism. We must put an end to the present planlessness in work, an end to the looseness of discipline and to the scant regard for Party forms.

Our journals must be not simply agitators but must also educate the masses in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism on all the problems facing the people. We must take steps for Party education on a big scale and in every area, make education a key job for all Party units and produce suitable literature for the purpose.

We must follow a bold policy of promoting cadres, of selecting cadres for the jobs which they can do best, of each unit checking up the work done by each of its members, of improving their work and of even removing from leading positions those who prove incapable of improvement.

We must activate the entire Party and all its units and remove those who cannot be activated or refuse to do the assigned day-to-day work.

What has been said should not be taken to mean that we have no achievements to our credit. The Party would not have been what it is today—a major force in our country—if its history had not been a history of bold leadership of mass struggles, of unflinching courage in face of heavy odds, of determined championship of cause of the people. The Party could not have withstood the fierce onslaught of the Government and frustrated the attempt to crush it if its cadres had not been deeply entrenched among the masses in many areas, had they not won their love and admiration by selfless and hard work. No party in the country can boast of such cadres as we have. Our discipline, our



organisation, our devotion to work are the envy of every party.

But we cannot afford to ignore the fact that irrespective of our superiority to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties in our own country, our record falls far short when compared to the record of the glorious Communist Parties of the Soviet Union and China, our achievements are far behind the achievements of the Communist Parties of France and Italy. Nor can we afford to ignore the fact that an economic and political crisis is rapidly maturing in India that the responsibilities and tasks confronting us today are more gigantic and more complex than ever before, that they will become more complex and more gigantic in future.

Also we cannot afford to ignore the fact, as emphasised in the Central Committee's review of the elections, that despite the big headway we have made in the recent period, our position among the working class, among the agricultural workers and poor peasants—the classes which constitute the granite foundation of the proletarian party—is still extremely weak, that in the greater part of the country we have yet to secure a firm foothold, that even in those provinces where we are a major force, our effective strength is still confined to certain districts. Hence, there can be no complacency, no sliding back, no resting on our oars. On the contrary, our efforts, our work must be intensified a hundredfold in all directions, in all areas and on all fronts. And for this, the Party itself must be purged of all weaknesses and reformed in the fire of criticism and self-criticism.

This alone will enable us to carry out the responsibilities facing us.