

TRY TO MEASURE UP TO MORE RIGOROUS REQUIREMENTS OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP

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I. OUR PARTY IS GREAT, GLORIOUS AND CORRECT, BUT PROBLEMS STILL EXIST

Over the past few days the discussion of my report²⁹ has centred on issues of Party consolidation and Party building, particularly on requirements of Party membership. While agreeing on the fact that our Party is great, glorious and correct, you acknowledged that some problems remained to be solved, and criticized shortcomings in the building of the Party in the past. In my view, this discussion was correct because it reflected the current conditions of our Party.

Some people asked: Isn't it contradictory to claim that our Party is great, .glorious and correct when a number of undesirable elements have sneaked into the Party and quite a considerable number of members of some grass-roots Party organizations are unqualified or not fully qualified for Party membership?

Our answer is no. Only a few undesirable elements have sneaked into the Party. Relatively large proportions of unqualified or not fully qualified Party members are found only in some grass-roots organizations. As far as the Party as a whole is concerned, the majority of its members meet or basically meet the Party membership standards. More important, the ones who are playing decisive and leading roles in the Party are not the unqualified or partly qualified and certainly not the undesirable, but good Party members who comprise the

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majority of the membership, the large numbers of fine Party cadres, the Party Central Committee and the Party's leader Comrade Mao Zedong. Therefore, despite the various problems, our Party, taken as a whole, is great, glorious and correct.

One reason our Party is great, glorious and correct is that it is not afraid of making self-criticism or of exposing its defects. We have never denied or covered up our defects, even if they were very serious. Rather, we admitted them and revealed them in the presence of Party members and tried to find ways to rectify them. For this very reason we have decided to consolidate the Party,³⁰ which precisely indicates that our Party is great, glorious and correct. Some comrades are reluctant to admit shortcomings in the Party or try to conceal them. This is not the correct attitude for our Party to take.

II . WHY ARE THERE MANY UNQUALIFIED PARTY MEMBERS?

Why are so many Party members unqualified or not fully qualified for Party membership?

Chiefly because in the past we lowered standards when admitting new members to the Party, and after they joined the Party, we didn't give them adequate education to help them to measure up to the requirements. However, so long as we strengthen education among them, some of them will meet the requirements. A secondary reason is that some Party members, unable to adjust to the changed situation and unwilling or unable to shoulder new revolutionary tasks, have lagged behind and become unqualified. Still, some of them will meet the requirements through education.

Is it an error in principle for some local Party organizations to lower standards when admitting new members?

Yes, it is. A Leninist party never allows members' qualifications to be degraded to the level of the ordinary people. It always upholds the principle that Party members, as the vanguard of the working class, must possess higher political awareness than men in the street and steadfast revolutionary will. Obviously, randomly reducing standards runs counter to this Leninist principle.

So why did some local Party organizations make this mistake? As

I explained in my report, it was because higher leading organs of our Party failed to exercise strict control and inspection over admissions and explain this principle extensively in the Party. As a result, some local Party organizations went their own way to some extent in admitting new members. The Party Central Committee should bear the responsibility for this situation. So now it instructs all provincial Party committees and bureaus of the Central Committee to strictly control and inspect membership admissions and instructs all Party organizations to uphold these requirements in the future.

III . PARTY MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE RAISED

It was wrong for local Party organizations to lower requirements in recruitment in the past. But in those days we did not yet win victory in the revolution and China remained under the rule of reaction. So, those who joined the Party risked persecution. Since the Party was in the midst of a grim war, conditions were extremely difficult. Naturally, against such a background few or no backward persons, careerists or reactionaries would join our Party. The unfavourable conditions served as a natural barrier to such persons. Victory in the three campaigns of Liaoxi-Shenyang, Huai-Hai and Beiping-Tianjin,³¹ however, changed the situation completely and settled the question of who would win. Following nationwide victory in the revolution, the situation today is far different. It seems to some people that joining the Party today brings, not hardship or danger, but security, honour, position, and so on. Now backward elements, careerists and reactionaries all hope to enter our Party. Quite a few undesirable elements are trying to sneak into it. With no longer any natural barriers in the way, a large number of them will succeed, posing an extreme danger to our Party. Thus we must tighten control, set more rigorous requirements for Party membership and more strictly enforce admission procedures.

After victory in the Liaoxi-Shenyang, Huai-Hai and Beiping-Tianjin campaigns we did not immediately raise Party membership requirements or enforce strict admission procedures. Instead, a number of local Party organizations expanded greatly, nearly doubling total Party membership over the last two years. It was not the right

thing to do. The Third Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee,³² held in June last year, decided that in general Party organizations in the old liberated rural areas should stop recruiting new members. In the newly liberated rural areas the Party organizations should not admit new members until land reform⁹ is completed. However, a few local Party organizations still presumptuously expanded their membership by lowering standards. This was definitely wrong.

Although the situation today is not the same as before 1949, when we ran the constant risk of being persecuted by counter-revolutionaries, the war is not yet over and we are just beginning to carry out economic and cultural development. The imperialists and their lackeys, in a vain attempt to stage a comeback, are every day planning to sabotage our cause. As Comrade Mao Zedong said, "To win countrywide victory is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand li.... The Chinese revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous."³³ Following the triumph of the Chinese revolution, we are confronted with new revolutionary tasks, which are still greater and more arduous. So, Party members should be stricter with themselves, for otherwise they cannot accomplish these tasks. Therefore, we should set higher Party membership requirements. It would be very wrong to lower them for future admissions.

Thanks to victory in the Chinese revolution, China's working class and the vast labouring masses are now able to freely come in contact with and study Marxism-Leninism. We have already launched a nationwide class struggle and a struggle against imperialists. Against this background the political awareness of the ordinary workers and other labouring people has been heightened, so qualifications for Communists, the vanguard of the working class, must and can be raised to a new level. Outside our Party there are now non-Communist revolutionaries and believers in communism whose political awareness and revolutionary initiative exceed even those of some of our Party members. This will become more and more evident as time goes on. The gap will not only impel us to raise membership qualifications, but also push veteran Communists with inadequate political awareness and revolutionary zest to improve themselves. This is a favourable condition for future Party consolidation and Party building, and we should make use of it.

Now it is imperative for us to raise membership requirements to as high a level as possible. That is to say, all candidates will have to

undergo a process of test and education; they must have a good family background — either a worker's or other labourer's family — or if they come from families of the exploiting classes, they must abandon their exploiting class stand, viewpoint and work style and resolve to struggle for the emancipation of the working class and other labouring people; they must have clear past records and be politically sound; they must be faithful to the Party and willingly dedicate themselves to its cause; from mass struggle they must have received class education and possess essential political awareness. In addition, they should display that awareness and revolutionary initiative in their work, production and study. Basically qualified candidates will still have to be educated in communism and the Communist Party in order to enhance their awareness to the level of a Communist's before they can be admitted. In short, they must come from reliable families, have clear past records and be faithful to the Party. They should have high class consciousness, work hard, have a good understanding of communism and the cause of the Communist Party and abide by the Programme and Constitution of the Party. These are the membership qualifications we must adhere to in admitting new members in the years ahead. As for veteran Party members who have not undergone adequate test or received sufficient education, they should be helped to measure up to the standards through more tests and education.

In reference to the education of Party members, the Draft Resolution on Party Consolidation proposed eight requirements for Party membership. They are essential. Thus, besides the foregoing qualifications, candidates must meet these eight, too. This will be attained primarily through education. And these are the qualifications all Party members should try to meet.

IV . IN ADDITION TO HIS OR HER REGULAR WORK, EVERY PARTY MEMBER MUST UNDERTAKE WORK ASSIGNED BY A PARTY ORGANIZATION

In our Party many members are professional revolutionaries working full time for the Party and the masses in leadership positions. Far more members, however, are engaged in all sorts of occupations in society at large. In the coming years, as economic and technological work becomes increasingly important, more and more Party members

will engage in occupations in society. Now, many among these have little enthusiasm for Party and mass work and political work. So, more often than not, they are concerned only about their professions and put, for instance, technical and military work before everything else. Meanwhile, as many Party members do not often undertake Party and mass work and political work, the Party's ties with the masses of people and its leadership over them have been weakened. Obviously, it is a great loss for the Party.

In order to rectify these shortcomings and have Party members play a greater role among the people, the Draft Resolution on Party Consolidation proposed eight qualifications, including "In addition to his or her regular work, every Party member must undertake work assigned by a Party organization. Otherwise, he or she cannot be a Communist." This stipulation accords with the Party Constitution and is necessary. Without it, some Party members would attend only to their own occupation and not undertake any Party or mass work, or do any political work.

Party members should do Party and mass work and political work assigned by a Party organization. They may serve as leaders of Party committees or leading Party members' groups at different levels, conduct education in the Party or propaganda among the masses, recruit new Party members, work in mass organizations or do social service work — to be assigned as appropriate by the Party organization, to which they belong, in light of the time they can spare, their ability and objective needs. Party organizations should check up on the work and give guidance. With the exception of professional revolutionaries, who concentrate on leading Party and mass work, and certain individual cases, it is compulsory for all Party members to take at least one job outside their social occupation and to do it well. Some comrades may be very busy in their work and can hardly find time, but it should be possible for them to spare a few hours every week or every month at least. So, we make it one of the requirements for Party members.

V . OPPOSE REDUCING MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Some comrades raise questions, suggesting lowering membership requirements. I am afraid I cannot agree with them.

They argue that in the past there were many people who were not qualified or were quite confused in their thinking when being admitted into the Party, but they became fine Communists through education and tempering in struggle. “Can we not do as we did before?” they ask.

Our answer is no. In future, candidates who do not qualify should receive education and tempering outside the Party. They cannot become Communists until they meet the requirements. We must not admit them hastily. It is true that after joining the Party, members should continue to be educated and tempered and the Party will help some unqualified members to become qualified. But if we continue a wrong practice, trouble will crop up and our Party will find itself in a passive position. This has happened to a number of local Party organizations. Of course, when we hadn’t yet gained revolutionary victory, such practices were permissible, especially among those who for a long time had led a hard life under the supply system. However, these practices will no longer be allowed. Now that we have all the favourable conditions for educating and tempering those who wish to enter the Party, there is no need whatsoever to admit them before they are qualified and then educate and temper them.

Some worry that raising membership qualifications would discourage the initiative of some Party organizations in recruiting new members. I think this is likely, so we must guard against such deviation. Leading Party organs at all levels should carry out regular inspections and criticize, supervise and give guidance to organizations that should grow slack in recruitment and Party building. That is to say, they must recruit new members, especially in areas where there are none or very few. They should also, in light of actual circumstances, fix the time and numbers for recruitment. However, at the same time they must adhere to the requirements and strict procedures for recruitment and conduct adequate examination and education.

VI. WILL UNDULY HIGH QUALIFICATIONS BE SET FOR PARTY MEMBERSHIP

While stressing the need for higher qualifications for Party membership, some Party organizations may set them unduly high.

People in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union once suggested that a good mastery of the Party's programme should be one of the qualifications for membership. That suggestion was criticized by Comrade Stalin.³⁴ The Soviet Party had a detailed Party programme that only university professors could master and Party members from among ordinary working people would find hard to master. Therefore, such an unduly high qualification proved inappropriate. Our Party doesn't have a detailed programme, only a simple one. Although after explanation Party members from among ordinary working people can acquire a rough idea of the programme, which is essential, it is still difficult for them to master it.

As far as Party members from among the working people are concerned, the important thing is helping them raise their class consciousness in the course of class struggle instead of dogmatically demanding they recite Marxist-Leninist words and phrases. Some people in our Party favour such demand. According to them, Party members who have learned more dogmas by rote are more politically aware than others. This is inappropriate, too. However, I do not mean that we don't have to educate Party members in line with Marxist-Leninist principles. On the contrary, today there is urgent need for them to have such education.

Some of our Party members pay much attention to trifles — unprincipled, trivial matters concerning other people's personal lives that have nothing to do with politics. They placed stress on them and make inappropriate demands on Party members. We should guard against that undesirable practice, too.

A serious problem that is plaguing Party members and non-Party activists engaged in production is endless meetings and too many social activities. Many Party members working in factories daily spend two to four hours or even longer on activities after Work. The same is true of Party members in the countryside and in schools. It is particularly true of cadres and model workers in grass-roots organizations. Party members and non-Party activists hold too many concurrent posts, and, without proper scheduling and organization, activities and meetings waste too much of their time. To solve this problem, Party committees at all levels must consult the departments concerned and exercise effective readjustment and control. They must see to it that no Party member or activist spend too much time on such activities; otherwise he cannot keep his enthusiasm for long. While it is necessary to require that all Party members who have regular social

occupations spend a certain amount of time on various activities, it is obviously unreasonable to ask them to spend too much time on these activities for nothing.

Under the supply system it was often beyond the ability of Party members not engaged in production to solve the financial problems of their families. Some of them, finding no way to support their parents and wives, applied to go back home to do farm work. Our Party should sympathize with them and consider their applications. They are entitled to our permission if they really have no alternative. Under normal circumstances it is inappropriate to ask our Party members to ignore their families unnecessarily.

In short, it is wrong to lower qualifications for Party membership, and it is also wrong to make inordinately high demands. We must take into account the members' true difficulties.

VII. WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT UNQUALIFIED PARTY MEMBERS?

After raising the standards for Party membership, what should we do about those who have already joined the Party but remain unqualified? To help them measure up to the standards, during Party consolidation we should test those who have not undergone a thorough test and educate those who have not received adequate education. I believe that in this way we can bring quite a number up to standard. If those unwilling to accept education or still below standard after education are undesirable elements, they should be expelled from the Party. Otherwise, we should decide each case on its own merits, explicitly pointing out to him in what respects he is unqualified before asking him to withdraw from the Party. If he is unwilling to withdraw, we may set requirements and fix a time limit. When we examine his problems again after this period and find him still unqualified, we can ask him a second time to quit the Party. Our purpose is, on the one hand, to protect the inviolability of the Party members' qualifications and, on the other hand, not to hurt the members' feelings. To do otherwise will not serve the purpose and, worse, it will have an adverse effect on good Party members and the masses. At the same time it is necessary to educate and wait patiently. We should consider

the members' demands and not hurt their feelings. It is not right to treat them in a simplistic and rude manner.

In Party consolidation and in dealing with the problems of Party members, we should uphold the Party's principles and, under ordinary circumstances, win the approval and support of all good Party members in primary organizations and the masses outside the Party. In other words, only when these people are on the side of the Party, can problems be solved properly. We can and must get the masses outside the Party to help with Party consolidation and Party building and listen to their comments and suggestions.

VIII . SET MORE RIGOROUS REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTY MEMBERSHIP

In Party consolidation and Party building we should draw two clear lines: a line between the enemy and ourselves and a line between Party members and the masses, or between the vanguard and the classes. As the two lines are different in nature, we must use different methods to make distinctions. After making distinctions, we should adopt different approaches. On no account should we mix the lines up. This is the principle we uphold.

It is not easy to be a Communist Party member. One must first meet all qualifications, make up one's mind and receive adequate education. After joining the Party, one must continue self-improvement through study, work and struggle. Only in this way can one, under the leadership of the Party, render better service to the people. Therefore, not just any worker, peasant or intellectual can enter the Party; only the most advanced and the most determined ones among them can become Party members. This is why being a Communist Party member is a great honour.

Fifty years ago Lenin waged a firm struggle to establish an advanced revolutionary party of the proletariat and set high standards for its members. Afterwards, that struggle went on steadily within the ranks of the Soviet Communist Party. It thus became the most advanced party of the proletariat in the world. Also, it led the Russian proletariat and working masses to victory in the revolution and established the first socialist state. In line with Lenin's principles for party building and the experience of the Soviet Communist Party, the Chi-

nese Communist Party, since its founding, has conducted a constant struggle to uphold high standards for Party members. Our Party Central Committee and Comrade Mao Zedong have persisted in this struggle of principle at all times. Thus the Chinese Communist Party, leading the Chinese working class and the Chinese people, won victory in the revolution and founded the People's Republic of China. Our Party has become a great, glorious and correct Communist Party. In the years ahead we should continue to work hard to maintain high standards for Party membership.