

ALWAYS INNOVATE WHILE LEARNING CONSTANTLY FROM PAST EXPERIENCE

*Speech of Comrade Meir Vilner
on the occasion of the 65th.
anniversary of the Communist
Party of Israel.*

This month, 65 years ago the Communist Party in this country was established. The Central Committee has decided to mark this historical date by organizing a meeting with veteran members, who in the course of many years have contributed their energy and strength to the struggles of the Party, to the attainment of its noble aims. We invited to the meeting with the Party's veterans, the members of the Party District Secretariates, the members of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Israel, the members of the Editorial Boards of the Party press and some comrades who head democratic organizations.

The conditions of our work in this country are not easy. Numerous tasks are imposed on us. Tension around us is great and our life is under pressure. Precisely under these circumstances we, communists, are obliged to keep a cool head. Under such circumstances it is especially important to preserve and foster friendship and comradeship, brotherhood of the communist militants, to stand all as one and each one for all.

The experience of the last years strengthens us still more in our sureness of the correctness of our world outlook and our policy. We express the aspirations of the Jewish and Arab working people, the interests of both peoples in our country. If the State of Israel was conducted by our policy, the whole situation would be different. Already a long time would have passed in peace and security, and Israel would already have become the home and homeland of the working people.

Our party has till now twice marked its anniversaries - the 50th and the 60th. At both occasions we made a pioneering research into the history of the Party. At the first occasion we analysed the development since its establishment in 1919

up to 1924. We also drew up general lines for continuation of the development. At the second occasion we evaluated the policy of the Party in the years which immediately preceded the establishment of the State of Israel, at the end of the second world war, and also the 1948 war. At the next stage we will have to analyse and evaluate the period between the years 1925 - 1945. Let us act in such a manner that this work will be accomplished towards the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Party which will take place in the year 1989. Let us also prepare the summing-up of the history of the Party in the State of Israel, from 1948 to 1989. This part in our history is relatively easier, because we have done that at our congresses and also because our generation, of the Party leadership and its basic organisations, know that period from their own experience.

This does not mean that we have already today a comprehensive evaluation of the whole history of our Party. However, in order to write history, one is not only obliged to be equipped with the general lines of development, but also with data and a detailed analysis of the great lights and shadows in the history of our Party. We must do this in order to generalise the historical experience, learn from it and educate according to it. We have done this with reference to two periods, as mentioned above, and we must consider it a vital necessity for our Party to continue this important work until its accomplishment.

THE VETERANS AND THE YOUNG

To the veteran comrades, for whom this festive meeting is devoted first and foremost, all respect and appreciation is due. You are worthy of receiving warm feelings, comradely consideration and simple human attention, caring for your health and suitable Party work in any situation.

Among the veterans present there are many who are real heroes. If we had medals for heroism, we would bestow them upon them. What is the heroism of a communist? This heroism is constancy in the revolutionary struggle, ideological and political loyalty, and first and foremost the fact that one can rely upon him in any situation, in every task which the Party imposes on him. Such were the heroes of the anti-imperialist underground movement throughout the period of the British colonialist rule; such are the heroes of the legal period, which in many aspects is no less difficult.

The experience of many Communist Parties shows that among the special tasks which the veterans can fulfill are: passing on experience, steeling the character and personality of the young communists, passing on the tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice of the generations of communists in this country.

Of course, not all the veterans have persevered. A part of them have lost their conscience in the middle of the way, but have found it again. Now they are again members with equal rights and take up important positions in the Party and the democratic organisations.

A few words about the relation of the veterans towards the young communists: Our young generation is not worse than the previous young generation, not worse than we, when we were young. The new young generation is different and cannot be otherwise. The young people search, and justifiedly so, for new methods, new paths which will suit the new conditions the new period.

One must not growl: "Youth today is egoistic; were we such?" Of course among young people, just as among older ones are different types. Our young communists, are in their great majority revolutionaries, convinced communists, ideologically and politically firm, with all their hearts devoted to our ideals. They are the future of our Party's leadership.

Of course, there are among us also other young people, passive ones, tending towards petty bourgeoisie, egoism and arrogant, but these are exceptions.

We evaluate the comrade not in accordance with his age, but in accordance with his character and contribution, in the past and the present, to the struggle of the communist Party. We must get out the greatest possible contribution from the veterans the young people and the medium generation. Our human potential is not big enough to fulfil the numerous tasks. Therefore, under our conditions it is particularly important to help each and every comrade, veteran and young comrade, to contribute his share. We will do this by correct planning and strict upholding of relations of friendship and comradeship.

PRINCIPLES AND INNOVATIONS

The members of the Party know to evaluate appropriately

the heroic past of our Communist Party which acted and acts under unusual and most complex conditions.

There are comrades who have no correct criteria on that subject. One must understand that the conditions today are different, the period is different. Therefore also the Party applies new solutions, new methods. Together with that one must emphasize that many positions and methods of work of our Party in previous periods, which are not appropriate in our present period, were correct in those periods. Truth is not abstract, absolute, but concrete; under given conditions, at a given time and a given place.

We were and are a link in the internationalist Communist movement, in the movement of the revolutionary working class, whose teaching is the teaching of Marx, Engels and Lenin, whose central slogan is: "Workers of all countries unite!". That is to say: Proletarian internationalism, international solidarity of the working class.

Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action. Our doctrine is a living doctrine, which renews itself incessantly, in accordance with the changing conditions and the accumulated experience. Such was our doctrine from the start, since the appearance of "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" in 1848. In the preface to the German edition of the Manifesto in 1872, Marx and Engels wrote:

"Despite the fact that the conditions have very much changed in the last half century, the general principles which were developed in this Manifesto, they are valid and are completely correct till this very day. It is possible that this or the other detail needs correction. However, the concrete application of those principles, as explained in the Manifesto itself, will depend at every place and at all times on the existing historical circumstances. Therefore one must not put any special weight on the revolutionary steps which are proposed at the end of the second chapter. Today we would formulate that paragraph in a formulation which would be different in many respects. This platform has today partially become obsolete, following upon the tremendous development of big industry in the course of the last twenty-five years, and especially the party organisation of the working class which has developed parallel, and following upon the practical experience which had been accumulated before that, in the February Revolution, and at an incalculable measure in the Paris Commune, when the proletariat for the first time held political power in their hands. The Commune has proved especially that the working class cannot take into its hands

the state apparatus as it exists and put it in action for their own aims".

Thus, it is not Marxism which is dogmatic but its opponents have a dogmatic attitude towards it.

Our Party can be proud for the fact that, in spite of all the difficulties, in spite of the severe external struggles and the internal crises which took place - it has maintained its ideological and political independence. Our Party has not yielded to the pressures either of the Zionist ideologists or of those of the Arab chauvinist ideology. We applied in our work many innovations. We ceaselessly innovated, in accordance with the objective conditions which have changed in this country and in the world; in accordance with the general interest of the struggle for peace, national liberation and socialism. We innovated and will innovate. But we must always be loyal to our principles, and ideals and defend them. Those who made pseudo-innovations by means of abandoning the principles - where are they today?

We must utilize, on one hand, everything positive and efficacious in the experience of our 65-year old struggle. On the other hand, we must avoid repetition of past mistakes and also in order to do this, we must learn from experience.

Not everything that is new, is good. Not all that glitters is gold. There are things which do not glitter and are worth gold. Ingrained habits and past experiences must not disturb innovations, acceptance of non-routine action. Veteran communists must make use of experience, just as they did that more than once in the past, in order to orient themselves in new situations and must analyse new problems. The feeling for the new is vital for advance. Drawing lessons from experience is vital in order to know how to act correctly in new conditions to solve correctly new problems.

*

Experience teaches that one must not sweep under the carpet difficult ideological, political or organisational questions, which spring up within the Party or in work with others. One must struggle against them. Otherwise we will not be able to overcome the obstacles, the stumbling blocks on the path to consolidating the Party, strengthen its revolutionary spirit and expand its influence and ranks.

The experience of our Party also teaches that we must not exchange biology for ideology. It is not the age of the com-

rade which determines our attitude towards him, but his loyalty to our ideology and politics, his perseverance in revolutionary duty, his devotion to the ideals of the Party. Moreover: one must not confound sureness in the justness of our path with haughtiness, arrogance, empty bickering, whether within the Party or outside it. Modesty and businesslike attitude are qualities of a communist.

Ideological work means, first of all, always to study, do one's homework, substantiate, listen to another opinion, take it seriously, also when contradicting that opinion.

JEWISH- ARAB UNITY

In their struggle against our Party, our enemies and rivals make use of their whole arsenal, including the falsification of the history of our Party. Quite a lot of books have already been written about our Communist Party, in Hebrew as well as in Arabic and also in other languages.

Two lines pass like threads of scarlet through the hostile writings about the history of our Party: The one which claims that its history proves the impossibility of Jewish-Arab brotherhood, even of communist brotherhood; and the second line states that our Communist Party acts in accordance with "orders from Moscow". I will not, today, speak about the second line, which is completely refutable. Our relations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, our attitude towards the Soviet Union, are based upon the Marxist-Leninist ideological partnership, on the principles of the proletarian internationalism and mutual solidarity. This relation of ours towards the Soviet Union stems precisely from our own independent recognition that the Soviet Union is the bulwark of peace, independence of the peoples, and the socialist democracy in the world; that the Soviet Union is the main barrier to a third world war and the main contributor to the revolutionary process in the world. Anti-Sovietism was and remains the main weapon of all the enemies of peace and freedom of the peoples of all the enemies of social progress and socialism. We fought against it and will struggle against it to the end.

I would like to dwell today on the question of the poisoned arrow which is aimed at our Communist Party, its past and present.

The theory, according to which Jews and Arabs cannot live together is an evidently racist theory.

The enemies of the peoples and of progress attempt to inject this theory. As far as they are concerned, also Christians and Muslims, Ashkenazis (European-American Jews) and Sephardim (oriental Jews) cannot live together

The truth is that everything depends on the social regime, ideology, policy. The nationalist and reactionary point of departure poses at the top the question: to what people religion or community do you belong; and in accordance with that, the attitude is fixed. Our point of departure considers firstly the human being as a human being and inquires whether he is a reactionary or progressive, a democrat or a fascist, a peacemaker or war-monger, an exploited or an exploiter etc...

The truth is that the history of our Party shows that on the basis of our Marxist-Leninist ideology and the internationalist policy of our Party, which expresses the interests of both peoples in our country, the brotherhood and friendship of the Jewish and the Arab Communists in our Party is not only possible but a fact.

Our rivals base themselves in substantiating their abortive assumption, inter alia, upon the crisis in our Party in 1965. They depict it as a struggle between Jews and Arabs. This is a gross falsification which has no connection whatsoever with reality, with the historical facts.

In the report of the Central Committee to our 15th. Congress we said: "The discussion in our Party was not held between Jewish and Arab comrades, as various circles assert erroneously or maliciously. It was held between the Jewish-Arab majority of the Central Committee and members of the Party on one side, and that part which has the minority and tried by every means to bring about a revision of the policy of the Party and lead it to bourgeois Jewish nationalist and opportunist positions, on the other side" ("The 15th. Congress" p.67). This is the historical truth.

We also said in the report to the 15th. Congress: "In Israel there will not be two Communist Parties. The Communist Party of Israel is a revolutionary, free and democratic organisation of the Israeli working class. Its policy is determined by the majority of its members, which is true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism in its creative adaptation to the particular national conditions of Israel" (p.72/3). "In Israel exists one sole Jewish-Arab Communist Party,

whose delegates have met today in the 15th. Congress" (same place). And it was thus that things developed: In Israel exists one sole Jewish-Arab Communist Party.

Our Party is and will always be a Jewish-Arab, Marxist-Leninist Party, and whoever betrayed and whoever will betray will land in the waste basket of history - as experience has shown.

The attempt of our enemies and rivals to say that before 1965, our Party had been better, different, and but since the tag "Rakach" was stuck to it, it has allegedly changed its essence, its principles, is empty talk. The opposite is true. We continue the glorious revolutionary tradition of the Communist Party of Israel and of the Palestinian Communist Party from which it grew. We continue the policy which is to the interest of both peoples in this country, to the interest of the general cause of peace and progress in our region and the world. We continue being a Jewish-Arab, Marxist-Leninist Party. We will guard, like the apple of our eyes, this policy and this unity, and will struggle against anyone who will attempt to hit it.

COMMUNISM AND LOVE OF THE HOMELAND

In the Jewish public, especially our rivals accuse the Party that by its deep friendly bonds with the Soviet Union, that by our solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people for its just national rights, that by our consistent struggle against the policy of discrimination and oppression towards the Arab population in Israel, that by all this, our Party proves that it is not a patriotic party, that it is indifferent to the homeland and the people. In short: its internationalism allegedly arises at the cost of patriotism.

The opposite is true. By our policy we show the path for Israel for establishing just and realistic peace with the neighbouring peoples, including the independent Palestinian state which will arise; for an Israel which live in security and will break out from the vicious circle of war; for an Israel which will maintain relations of friendship, economy and culture with all peoples of the world, with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, with the independent and free countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and also with the countries of the West like the USA, but on the basis of national independence and neutrality in foreign policy. Thereby an essential change will also occur in the economic

situation of Israel, a road to social progress will be opened up, and in the end to socialism.

Our internationalism and our patriotism are two sides of the same medal. In the history of our Party, there are numerous examples, how precisely after joining our Party, people started understanding and feeling deeply the meaning of homeland and the methods of struggle for ensuring a happy future for both our peoples in this country.

An instructive example is the poetess Haya Kadmon, who joined the Communist Party of Israel in 1954.

In her speech at the 13th. Congress of our Party, which was held in 1957, she said:

"The Communist Party taught me to understand the homeland. This is the first Congress which I attend as a Communist... I was bred in this country from my childhood on, but I want to say, in all sincerity and without any pretty phrases that the feeling of homeland I acquired only in the Communist Party".

In continuation of her speech she said: "Also the sense of closeness to the class, to the working class, to the class which creates the material and spiritual values- this sense too was given to me by the Party".

Allow me to quote yet another fragment from the speech at the 13th. Congress, made by the comrade poetess, who to our deep regret died in the prime of her life:

"In the last months, especially after the 20th. Congress, all sorts of trumpets and horns, including some of our own comrades, started commending as a rescuing medicine the slogan of 'the freedom to err and be confused, and the right to confusion'. I wish to say about this a few words because I have the experience of being confused throughout many years until I arrived at the Communist Party. I want to say that this is a very degrading freedom of persons who try to ignore the chains which tie them to the bourgeois regime. I regret very much those years of confusion, the poems which I wrote then..."

It is comprehensive to me that young creative persons exist among us who consider that degrading freedom is the ideal of proving their alleged rational independence... I call upon those comrades who long for 'a little confusion, a little decadence': Look at the vast expanse which the Marxist outlook has opened before you: feel the deep creative breath which marching in the ranks of the proletariat and our revo-

lutionary Party is giving you!" ("The 13th. Congress")

One of the historical lessons of the 65 years of existence of our Party is that correct ideology, correct policy, correct tactics will not succeed if they are not connected with a Leninist organisation whose main principles are; Democratic centralism and collective leadership. Violation of these principles caused us more than once crisis.

Therefore let us guard as the apple of our eyes, the Leninist organisation of our Party, internal party democracy, discipline and democratic centralism. This means: Encouraging the independent thinking of our comrades and of their initiative. And at the same time - maintaining the principle, according to which the majority decides and a lower institution is subject to a higher one.

Let us strengthen the revolutionary spirit in our Party through deepening the ideological and political education, by personal example of devotion and self-sacrifice, by constant concern for a democratic and warm comradely atmosphere in the Party.

It is very important to see that not only in the future, but also in the present there are results due to our struggle.

Our Party is the only one which shows the path to a good future.

Our Party is the bridge and link with the revolutionary forces in the world, with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, with the International Communist Movement.

Our Party is the bridge and the link with the anti-imperialist forces in our region, with the Communist Parties of the Arab countries, and particularly with the nearest fraternal party - the Palestinian Communist Party.

Our origin is from the Palestinian Communist Party since the establishment of our Party in 1919 until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. We speak about two states and of course two Parties. There is no doubt that the socialist future will be common to us in this or the other form.

Our Party approaches its 20th. congress, which will take place in 1985. We all have done a very great work in the last years. These were stormy years in Israel, in the region and the international arena. We will have to sum up and generalise our new experience and map out our road in the future.

Let us prepare for our 20th. Congress by further consolidating and expansion of its ranks, by intensification of our struggle for a fundamental change of Israeli policy, against the policy of wars and occupation, for just peace, for the defence of the rights of the workers and democratic rights, for equality of rights and the widest possible front for the aims of progress.

ZO HADEREKH, MARCH 21, 1984

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

Issued by the Committee for defence of Arab land

The Committee for Defence of Arab Land has decided this year to hold three central events in commemoration of the 8th anniversary of the "Land's Day". In 'Arraba village in Galilee, in Taibeh village in the Triangle and in Rahat in the Negev.

Many issues are the subject of concern for the Arabs in Israel and they underlie the activities of the Committee for Defence of Arab Land.

We wish to point out the statements of incitement against the Arabs in general, the policy of national discrimination, racist laws adopted by the present Knesset, the strong discrimination against Arab local authorities with regard to financial allocations and development, town planning (where less than 10 planning maps for Arab villages were certified since the inception of the State) - this last issue created the problem of unlicensed house-building in the villages and the demolition of such houses, which constitutes a great threat to many Arab villages. The housing question in the Arab sector, as statistics reveal show that more than 40% of the Arabs live more than 5 persons to a room.

The continuation of Land expropriation covered so far around 68% of the Land belonging to Arabs in Israel. The water for irrigation allotted to Arab farmers does not exceed 1.8% of the total irrigation water reserve for an Arab population comprising 15% of the total population.

Our immediate concern focuses on specific issues in Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev:

Galilee:

Huge budgets are allocated for the setting up of more lookouts (Mitzpim) in Galilee for so-called potential settling in the future. The Judaization of Galilee brought development to Jewish settlers on the one hand, and a policy of evicting Arabs from their homes on the other.

On Mount Kammun in Galilee 2 "lookouts" were set up, settled by 70 persons, while 2 Arab Beduin-villages nearby on the same mount, comprising about 1000 people face the threat