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WE MUST INVOLVE THE WOMAN MORE ACTIVELY IN THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIETY

*From a conversation at the daily meeting
with the secretaries of the CC of the PLA*

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The Party must always carry out an intensive ideological and social activity everywhere, especially in the remote zones of the Highlands, in which patriarchal leftovers, which express themselves in diverse forms such as clannishness, attachment to private property, feeling of kinship and preservation of the patriarchal family, etc., still exist. Therefore, the Party comrades of these districts should look at these problems very carefully, because they are among the main causes of backwardness of the countryside in the economic field, too. I say this because most of the men of these zones work in the economic enterprises or the mines of their districts, while the main work force in the cooperatives is made up of women. And for the cooperatives to advance, women must affirm their personality everywhere, at work, in society and in the family.

In the first place, women should become conscious of their social value and their leading and productive capacity in the economy, because this is how their authority is enhanced and strengthened. In this manner they will be able to join their economic strength with their husbands'

and no longer remain under their «chains». It is true that if the husband works in the mine he is a little bit more advanced, but still he retains patriarchal concepts and leftovers which he manifests, in one way or another, in family relations. These leftovers are retained to a greater extent by those who work in the cooperative.

In some agricultural cooperatives, in general, there is a spirit of conservatism about the replacement of the work force with farming machines. This conservatism will be rooted out if women, who are the main work force, raise their voice more resolutely and insist on using cultivators, which would facilitate their work enormously. So, in the remote mountainous zones, too, still more work must be done to raise woman to a level at which she can speak out courageously, boldly demand the introduction of the progressive new into life and production and can decide about the latter. However, if women have not yet understood that the utilization of these means is to their advantage, this speaks also of weaknesses in the political work of the Party in that district. Production, too, has its specific policy. And for the progressive to be introduced into production a good explanatory work must be carried out. This is one aspect of the matter.

The other aspect is that the social condition of our people and the degree of their technical knowledge must be taken into account, because this is the only possible way to do fruitful work and achieve an all-round political, moral, cultural and technical development of the working people, In other words, in all its complex work the Party must carefully look at problems in their interconnection. Any state problems should be tackled by an intelligent policy of the Party, and not in a cut-and-dry manner, but in conformity with the situation, with the terrain in which it carries out its political work. Treatment of women and children in the Highlands and in the lowland zones poses

greatly differing problems. People in the lowlands are more advanced in this direction. Why has it come about that they are more advanced in the lowland zone? Because people there have applied the Party line for the development of the cooperativist economy better, and, as a result, have created greater income, which they have known how to utilize properly to improve their well-being.

That is why in the northern districts, in which these weaknesses are manifested, political work should be differentiated. For this purpose, the Party in these districts must handle the policy of cadres with the greatest seriousness.

Let us take the problem of admissions to the Party. The criterion for admissions, of course, must be applied on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the socio-economic situation of the district, the views which exist there, etc. Perhaps, these may be different for different districts, for different zones, but the main thing on which the Party must insist is that only the most advanced should be admitted to the Party and this question should not be left to spontaneity, but should always be solved properly. If in a district this problem has not been handled in this manner hitherto, this means that the Party there has not been in command in this work. The particular makes up the general, and this enables you to compare one district with another so as to make them all advance in the same direction.

In general, the districts have made progress in their economic development. There is a general progress, but there is also partial progress; some districts are more advanced. And then, there are also zones which still do not keep up with the development of the whole district. Hence, there are nuances, which the Party must pick up and study, because only in this way can it lead, advise, approve or disapprove the decisions taken by the basic or-

ganizations. This enables the apparatus of the party committee to exercise realistic control on the accomplishment of the planned tasks in various regions of the district.

It was said here that a brigade of the agricultural cooperative of Maqellara took in high yields in maize, because the brigade leader, besides his leading and organizational capacities, constantly learned from advanced experience. In this case we should not only be glad that this brigade leader took in high yields in maize, but also reach the proper conclusions about how he took in that much, while the others took in less. This fact constitutes an objective for the work of the Party organization there.

It seems to me that the Party cadres and workers must be taught to follow up the development of the country simultaneously in its political, ideological, moral and social aspects, in order to strengthen the feeling of collectiveness and socialism, and the new moral-political norms of our society. This will create possibilities for studies to be carried out not only by teams, but also by instructing all the basic organizations of the Party to observe and detect those moral, political, or patriarchal elements which inhibit economic development.

If we know the situation in a district, region, or cooperative, etc., thoroughly and work seriously to improve it, working not only in an individual manner but also in an organized manner, by means of reports, by means of serious meetings and not phrase-mongering, by putting the finger to the wound or making a clean breast of it, then we shall certainly have results. That would mean lively Party work for the political, ideological and moral education of our people, and only then shall we see how their consciousness will rise, and how the vanguard example of the communists will become fully evident.

Fulfilment of the plan requires that all people, indiscriminately, party members or not, should be raised to the

political level required by the time and the problems which emerge, so that they understand the importance of the new methods of work, advanced technology in production, etc., etc. Only in this way shall we make perceptible progress in the accomplishment of economic tasks. If the secretary of the party committee of a district keeps to his desk the whole day and from there demands information about the results achieved by one or another brigade, about the fulfilment of the plan by this or that sector, he will not be in a position to do the work of the Party. This must be taken into account. In my opinion, duplication of the duties of the chairman of the executive committee by the party secretary of the district creates the impression as if the latter is doing something, while in fact he is engaging in a work which belongs to someone else. The secretary is supposed to engage in other important work and activities, without performing which the plan cannot be fulfilled. Cultivators cannot be put to work if we fail to carry out constant work to convince women politically of their usefulness, if the women are not encouraged and prompted by the Party so as to be aware of their capacities in thinking, working and managing, both at home and outside home. This is Party work. When I was in Puka a few years ago, I was surprised at the progress women had made. We entered the hall in which we were to dine, and I was extremely impressed by the lively manner women and girls came in to meet me and talk with me. And they really talked better than men did, they had no inhibition at all.

In their work the Party workers must review all those measures and achievements which have given an impulse forward to our country, as is, for example, the emancipation of women, in order to see the great changes which have been made in the epoch of the Party, the evolution of customs, etc., so as to be in a position to strengthen their

ideo-political, propaganda and organizational work and carry it out more correctly. The Party began its work for the emancipation of the women from the time of the National Liberation War. Right then it put the stress on the decisive role of women, both in the struggle for the liberation of the country and, later, for the building of socialist society. Since that time a great step ahead has been taken in their emancipation, and a great evolution or, better say, a revolution in the life and the activity of women has taken place in our country. Now the situation and the meaning of emancipation is not what it was many years ago. Albanian women, in general, are emancipated. Broad sections of women are in working relations, especially in the cities. Now you can no longer speak to them in the same terms as to highland women, although the latter have advanced, too. However, townswomen are more advanced, because their participation on a large scale in production, in various sectors of the country's economy, has developed their personality more. They live their lives in an independent manner, love their life companions, listen to them and respect them, but with the authority and personality they have created in society, in family and everywhere else, they know how to tell their husbands that they must be respected and heeded, too.

Emancipation in cities has risen to a higher level, therefore, the work of the Party among women here is aimed at further objectives, is intended to help them raise their personality still higher. By working ever better, women will be able to express their opinions more freely, either individually or, when the occasion presents itself, collectively, and to uphold them more forcibly, especially in the countryside. The emancipation of women has not been achieved in the same degree for all the villages or for all the districts. Each district has peculiarities of its own. In the district of Dibra, for instance, the work of the

Party for the emancipation of women should continue to be done with greater persistency than in some other districts, because clannishness and man's feeling of his superiority exists in a latent manner within the family there. What on the face of it may seem an achievement in the field of emancipation, may be only a form of disguise. The peasant is shrewd, he tries not to expose himself to attack by public opinion and to maintain his authority over the woman. He says to his wife, of course, not in public: «Out of home I will do like the rest, but at home I'll make you behave.»

Those who still have not properly understood the ideological and political importance of women's strength and role exert a negative influence. Therefore, in this direction the Party must bring its influence to bear on and strengthen its political work with the masses. Some progress has already been made in the correct understanding of this problem, but much work remains to be done. It is true that women now are engaged in production, but they worked before, too. We must not forget that, in general, peasant women have worked in all times, but they worked like slaves. Now, after all this revolution, in the emancipation of women we have reached such a situation that women feel men's equals at work and in society. However, at home submission to man's authority still exists in the form of respect shown to him. Anyway, it must be understood correctly that respect does not mean that the woman should not tell her husband what she thinks and be subservient to him. She must respect her husband for his correct opinions, but should also have the courage to tell him where his opinions are not right.

Therefore, we must not get stuck up with old formulae and with concepts of work in the emancipation of the women. To each problem we must find new solutions

and more advanced forms of ideological and political work, in conformity with the more advanced circumstances which we have reached in the solution of this question. In the Highlands, too, we have to do now with an element of social relations which is a far cry not only from the time of the Canon of Lekë Dukagjini, but also from 1939, and even more recent times. This is true, life has advanced there, too. But the question is how emancipation should be understood. Therefore, here we must strengthen the work of the Party.

Emancipation means a high political, ideological, moral and social level, the achievement of which requires intelligent Party work in conformity with the degree of consciousness women have already attained. Taking into account the degree of consciousness of our women today, we can no longer address them with cliches; our approach should be realistic, on the basis of the degree of development reached by that group of women with whom we intend to work. The important thing is to make the women more active in coping with the problems emerging before our society, to make them more capable of weighing with their own heads the pros and cons of the actions they take about a problem that faces them and the society.

It seems to me that this is how we must understand the question of the emancipation of women. The time is gone when the struggle for the emancipation of women meant, in the first place, the work that had to be done with the women to convince them to abandon the yashmak, or to eradicate religious prejudices, etc. Of course, now, too, the struggle against religious remnants and backward customs should not be overlooked, but the main thing in this direction is the political and ideological elevation of all people, not only the highlanders, not only the peasants, but also the townspeople and the communists, a thing which leads to the creation of correct concepts about

society, about the various sections of the youth, about the relations between boys and girls, husband and wife, and about all other problems.

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