

About the Stakhanovite Movement in the People's Democracies

(Fifteenth Anniversary Of Comrade Stalin's Speech at First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites).

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I.

Fifteen years ago—on November 17, 1935—Comrade Stalin delivered his historic speech at the first All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites. In this speech, Comrade Stalin, with brilliant foresight, pointed out that, in the young Stakhanovite movement, a powerful social driving force had appeared on the scene which would pave the way for the transition from Socialism to Communism. The rich experience of the past fifteen years has fully confirmed Stalin's remarkable prevision.

The Stakhanovite movement, to a considerable degree, enabled the Soviet people to reach a level of labour productivity far in advance of the productivity of labour in the most highly developed capitalist countries.

The Stakhanovite movement played no small role during the Great Patriotic War when, despite exceptionally severe difficulties, the Soviet rear was able to supply the Soviet Army with everything it needed for victory over fascism.

After the Great Patriotic War, the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union helped to reveal new, enormous reserves in the sphere of production. The incredibly rapid rehabilitation of the thousands of factories, mines, towns and villages destroyed by the fascists would have been impossible without the view, remarkable development of the Stakhanovite movement and without that constructive, creative energy of millions of working people embodied in the Stakhanovite movement. This force has manifested itself, incidentally, in the fact that there are now entire Stakhanovite workshops and even Stakhanovite enterprises, that there have appeared on the scene Stakhanovite innovators and workers—Stalin prize-winners—people who are blazing untrodden paths, demolishing the wall between manual and mental labour, taking the other workers with them and bringing them up to their own level.

Construction of such gigantic undertakings—undertakings characteristic of the period of transition from Socialism to Communism—as the Kuibyshev, Stalingrad and Kakhovka hydro-electric stations, the Main Turkmenian, South Ukrainian and North Crimean canals, the new irrigation system, and, in general, the Stalin Programme of changing the face of nature, making fantasy a reality, would have been unthinkable without this development of the Stakhanovite movement.

The powerful development of this movement in the Soviet Union after the Great Patriotic War has demonstrated once again that, in Socialist conditions, there are no limits to increasing labour productivity. It has demonstrated that the Socialist system of society is infinitely superior to the capitalist and to any preceding economic and social system: it demonstrated that Socialist society can quietly reckon on peaceful competition with the capitalist social system because—and there is no doubt about this—it has all the possibilities for victory in this peaceful question.

Analysing the Stakhanovite movement which came into being in the Soviet Union fifteen years ago, Comrade Stalin referred to the conditions which gave rise to this movement with its great future. Comrade Stalin pointed to four main conditions, namely:

1. Higher standard of living for the working people.
2. Abolition of exploitation.
3. New technique.
4. New people who have mastered the new technique.

In the People's Democracies, each of the four Stalin conditions exists only as a basis as yet. By 1935, exploitation of man by man had been completely abolished in the Soviet Union following the

complete collectivisation of agriculture and the complete victory of Socialism throughout the national economy. This cannot be said, as yet, about any of the People's Democracies. In these countries there are still relatively large numbers of rural bourgeoisie (the class of kulaks), and in the towns—true, on a different scale in each country—one still finds considerable remnants of the exploiting classes. In these conditions, it is impossible to say that in the People's Democracies there is such pre-requisite for the appearance of a Stakhanovite movement as complete abolition of exploitation.

A similar situation prevails with regard to the technique. It cannot be denied that in all the People's Democracies there is already, in greater or less degree, new technique. However, in most of the People's Democracies, new technique accounts for a much smaller share at present than it did in Soviet economy in 1935. The point is that, after the war, most of the People's Democracies had to direct nearly all their efforts towards restoring the war-devastated national economy, and during the first few years they lacked the strength with which to build modern enterprises in any great numbers. In the majority of the People's Democracies, the working class, in alliance with the working peasantry, had to wage a persistent struggle over a period of years to strengthen the State power of People's Democracy. Consequently, it was only in recent years that the vital means of production became public property and not in full measure, even then.

Most of the People's Democracies embarked on planned economy only in the last few years, and it is not at all fortuitous that their first national economic plans were for terms of one, two and three years. Due to the specific conditions of their development, these countries were able only recently to elaborate and begin work on national economic plans of longer duration.

Hence, the question may be asked: is it possible, in conditions when exploiting classes have not yet been completely abolished and when in most People's Democracies, the new technique is, as yet, available in insufficient measure, for these countries which are building Socialism to speak about a Stakhanovite movement in the real sense of the term—about a movement which, “at bottom, is a profoundly revolutionary movement” and which, as defined by Comrade Stalin, “contains the first beginnings—still feeble, it is true, but, nevertheless, the beginnings” of that cultural-technical development of the working class, essential for the transition from Socialism to Communism? Can one say of the countries which have not yet arrived at the victory of Socialism throughout their national economy that such a process as the Stakhanovite movement has already appeared?

We think that the answer to this question is definitely in the affirmative. Not that there is a “specific” Stakhanovite movement of a “new type” in the People's Democracies, differing in essence from the Soviet Stakhanovite movement. No! About this there can be no question, just as there can be no question of the People's Democracies arriving at Socialism by some “specific” path differing in essence from the path of development taken by the Soviet Union. Such nonsense can be peddled only by imperialist hirelings like Tito and his associates who, as is known, far from building Socialism, have turned Yugoslavia into a fascist State, into prey for the imperialists and into a military base dependent upon them. There can be no doubt that Comrade Stalin's classic definition of the conditions for the appearance of a Stakhanovite movement is, in essence, valid not only for the Soviet Union but is of general significance.

In view of all what has been said above, it might be argued that if in the People's Democracies there are not, as yet, in full measure those conditions which, according to Comrade Stalin's definition, gave rise to the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union, and if, at the same time, the appearance and development of the Stakhanovite movement in the People's Democracies is a fact, then we are confronted with a contradiction. The contradiction, however, is only apparent, it is not real. On this basis one could see a contradiction in the fact that the People's Democracies, small countries and relatively backward economically—are building Socialism, although by themselves they quite clearly do not dispose of all the conditions essential for building Socialism.

And if it is not a contradiction that these countries, going the way of People's Democracy, have actually taken to building Socialism, then there can be no contradiction also in the fact that, taking the road of building Socialism, they can have, and actually do have, a Stakhanovite movement. The People's Democracies can build Socialism because they are not alone, because they rely on the Soviet Union, enjoy its direct aid, utilise its rich theoretical achievements which are of common significance, and also its practical experience and adapt this to their concrete conditions.

This enables these countries, in the first place, to withstand the pressure of the imperialists who encroach upon their national independence, the freedom and peace of their peoples. At the same time, however, this means that these countries can go forward, meeting relatively fewer difficulties and at a relatively faster rate than did the Soviet Union—the first country in world history which paved the way to Socialism—in the corresponding period of its development. This also explains why, although in the People's Democracies any one of Stalin's conditions for the rise and development of a Stakhanovite movement does not, as yet, exist in full measure, nevertheless, a Stakhanovite movement is possible and actually exists in these countries.

Certainly, it would be absurd to assert that since the People's Democracies rely upon the Soviet Union, upon its direct and indirect aid, the appearance of a Stakhanovite movement in these countries does not depend on their internal development. Were this the case, then the Stakhanovite movement would have emerged and developed in the People's Democracies, not in 1949-50 as actually happened, but much earlier. It goes without saying that the People's Democracies had to reach a definite level of development, to effect a change in the structure of the national economy in class relations and the conditions of power, and also an expansion of the productive forces, taking into account the help of the Soviet Union and the utilisation of Soviet experience, for Stakhanovites and the Stakhanovite movement to appear on the scene. Hence, it cannot be regarded as being fortuitous that in the People's Democracies outstanding Soviet Stakhanovites and innovators became well-known at a certain moment, that at a certain stage of development, Rossiiky, Bykov, Shavlyugin, Bortkevich and Maximenko, for example, became popular in Hungary, that their methods quickly spread in our country, that our leading-workers and engineers eagerly studied everything that could provide any information about these people and their methods of work. But the situation was and still is the same in most of the People's Democracies. In all these countries, the Stakhanovite movement spread rapidly from the very outset, as was the case in the Soviet Union. This shows that in the People's Democracies—as was the case in the Soviet Union 15 years—ago conditions are ripe for the rise and development of the Stakhanovite movement, resulting in new, higher labour productivity.

It is clear that for the appearance of the Stakhanovite movement in the People's Democracies there was needed such a minimum advance along the road of Socialist construction, in which, if not fully then in essence, there were already present all the basic Stalin conditions for the birth of the movement. Let us now examine more closely and concretely to what extent there exist in separate countries of People's Democracy these Stalin conditions necessary for the rise and development of the Stakhanovite movement.

II.

Among the conditions which brought about the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin mentions “above all, radical improvement in the material wellbeing of the workers.”

How do matters stand in this respect in the People's Democracies? Undoubtedly, in the countries building Socialism in conditions of a People's Democracy, the material position of the workers has not only radically improved compared with the period immediately following the end of World War II, but also in comparison with pre-war. Thus, in Hungary, for example, the standard of living of the working people is over 40 per cent higher than pre-war, in Poland, 30 per cent and so on. It must also be borne in mind that while in the capitalist countries, which enjoy the “benefits” of the notorious

“Marshall Plan” the standard of living of the working class and working people in general is steadily declining, in the People’s Democracies, despite the enormous construction which requires considerable investments, the standard of living is steadily rising.

In the People’s Democracies the rising standard of living is not only evident in the rise in real wages of certain categories of workers but also in the fact that there is to a greater degree an increase in the real wage fund of the working class as a whole, of all working people. In Hungary, for instance, the general wage fund increased almost 47 per cent last year alone, and prices, far from rising, were lowered on a wide range of consumer goods. And last but not least, the rising living standard in the People’s Democracies is also strikingly reflected in the fact that beginning with 1950, (in some of them even earlier), unemployment—the cursed heritage of capitalism—has been abolished in all People’s Democracies. Abolition of unemployment as one of the major factors in raising the standard of living of the working class, in no small degree facilitated the rise of the Stakhanovite movement in these countries.

Among the conditions which led to the birth of the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin mentioned, along with radical improvement in conditions for the workers, the absence of exploitation.

How do matters stand, in this respect, in the People’s Democracies now building Socialism? Clearly, and this has been mentioned above, it is as yet impossible to speak about the complete abolition of exploitation in the entire national economy of these countries. However, exploitation has been done away with in the decisive branches of the national economy. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, 98 per cent of industry (this figure does not include cottage industry) is owned by the people’s State. There too, the State owns 96 per cent of transport, 100 per cent of wholesale trade and foreign trade and 70 per cent of retail trade. A similar situation prevails in Poland, where 96 per cent of industry (also excluding cottage industry), and the entire wholesale and foreign trade are in the hands of the State, which also holds practically the whole of transport and 70 per cent of the retail trade. Generally speaking, conditions are much the same in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In all these countries almost the entire industry, all transport, all wholesale and foreign trade as well as the lion’s share of the retail trade belong to the State, i.e., the Socialist sector. However, in those spheres where exploitation still exists, such as agriculture, for example, the people’s democratic State rigidly restricts the exploiters until conditions ripen for the complete abolition of exploitation. The tens of thousands of tractors and other agricultural machines which, through the machine and tractor depots, help the peasants in the People’s Democracies, simultaneously help them shake off the yoke of kulak usury and exploitation; the entire economic policy of the governments in the People’s Democracies is directed to the same aim: weakening the exploiting elements and strengthening the working class, the working people.

Among the conditions which brought about the Stakhanovite movement In the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin listed as third the new technique.

How do matters stand with regard to new technique in the People’s Democracies? Have they any considerable new technique, have they this technique in such quantity as would enable it form one of the basic conditions for the rise of the Stakhanovite movement? Or are the people right who allege that the Stakhanovite movement can also arise without new technique? (Recently, we heard such talk in Hungary too).

The new technique undoubtedly occupies quite a considerable place in all the People’s Democracies. If we take into account the fact that in Poland, for example, industrial output is now 220 per cent of pre-war and that in Hungary, it is over 200 per cent, in Czechoslovakia, 150 per cent and in Bulgaria, almost 300 per cent, it becomes clear that this tremendously increased production could not have been achieved without mass use of new technique. In the majority of the People’s Democracies the

number of new industrial enterprises compared with the old, still lags behind in relation to the number in the Soviet Union 15 years ago. But there is not a single People's Democracy in Europe which has not already dozens of new and modern industrial enterprises.

On the other hand, the new technique in the People's Democracies in the present situation appears not so much in the form of new enterprises as in general reconstruction of old enterprises and in equipping them with new, up-to-date machinery, in standardising works which, under the capitalist regime, were virtually universal enterprises. I want to illustrate what this means by two examples from the Hungarian national economy.

Hungary produced tractors in the old days too. But, actually, production was carried out on the basis of manual labour. With the specialisation of the existing plants, when tractor production was concentrated in a single plant equipped with new, modern machinery, output increased 10-12 times compared with the old level. The same applies to the production of lorries where an even greater advance was recorded with the help of the above-mentioned methods. Similar examples can be found in any of the other People's Democracies.

This shows that the People's Democracies already possess the minimum of new technique, which, considering the constant aid and support of the Soviet Union, is essential for the rise and development of the Stakhanovite movement.

Finally, how do matters stand with regard to Stalin's fourth and most essential condition—new people, without whom the new technique is useless, people capable of harnessing the new technique and making it an instrument of Socialist construction? Do these people exist, have they appeared in the People's Democracies? They have, or, at any rate, are making their appearance. People like Victor Markewski are appearing on the scene in Poland, Imre Musca in Hungary, Anna Wazkova in Czechoslovakia, Lilian Dimitrova in Bulgaria, Josef Barta in Rumania and hundreds and thousands of their comrades, who, as pupils of the Soviet Stakhanovites, have made the old technical norms obsolete in their countries, and in doing so, created the basis for a general rise in norms, a basis which, in turn countries building Socialism, enabled labour productivity, at least in industry, to outstrip the highest level ever achieved in these countries under the old, capitalist regime.

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Comrade Stalin's speech, delivered 15 years ago at the first All-Union Stakhanovite Conference, has considerably advanced the theory of Marxism-Leninism. The theoretical theses contained in this speech are vitally important for the titanic practical work which enables the peoples of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, to effect the transition from Socialism to Communism.

Simultaneously, the beacon light of Stalin's brilliant theory also illumines the path of the working class building Socialism in the countries of People's Democracy. Although the People's Democracies, in their development, are still a long way behind the Soviet Union, which is doing everything to help them to reach its level as speedily as possible, their development follows but one path—the path of Lenin-Stalin.

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