

PROBATION

Some confusion has arisen about the question of probation. The PB circulated a document last year headed 'Elaboration for Rules of Membership'. This document among other things, contained rules and regulations governing probationary membership which were formulated in terms of the Constitution. In order to ensure a uniform approach the PB has decided to clarify the position by the following summary.

1. In general all those wishing to join the Party must serve a probationary period of six months. The purpose of probation is to enable a Party collective to make up its mind about the suitability of finally recruiting a person at the end of a probationary period.
2. While a comrade is on probation he/she is not a member of a unit. The reason for this is that at the end of a probationary period it may be decided not to recommend membership and the unsuccessful applicant should not, from the security point of view, have information on the composition of any Party collective.
3. During the period of probation, the probationary member must undergo study courses, acquaint himself/herself with the basic Party programmatic documents and the contents of publications and propaganda material. The probationary member must also carry out whatever political and organisational tasks allocated to him/her by the Party collective which is supervising his/her probation.
4. Since a probationary member is not a member of a unit, how do we ensure that the tasks referred to in (3) above, are allocated and supervised by a Party collective? Again, since a probationary member is not yet part of a Party collective, how does that collective make up its mind to accept or reject a probationary member at the end of a probationary period, or, if necessary, to extend the period of probation. In order to answer these questions we set out a process as it would apply to a hypothetical probationary applicant by the name of "X".
 - a) As a result of an application by X himself/herself or as per recommendation from a unit, the Regional Committee (which must be unanimous in its decision) authorises an approach to X to be recruited into the Party in the first place, as a probationary member.
 - b) The unit under the Regional Committee is allocated the task of carrying out this first step. The unit must decide on one of its members to make an approach to X. The comrade appointed for this purpose will then maintain individual Party contact with X throughout his/her period of probation. He/she will not give direct or indirect information to X about the identity of other members of the unit.

- c) The unit under which X falls must collectively determine and supervise the duties and tasks of X during his/her probationary period. The unit does this through the member who, as we have already mentioned, is specially allocated to be in touch with X. Such a member must be called upon to report at each meeting on the progress of X and the unit, based on such reports, gives whatever further directives are considered necessary.
 - d) In the case of each probationary member, the Regional Committee shall decide which internal Party documents shall or shall not be shown to a probationary member.
5. At the end of the probationary period the unit shall assess whether X's probationary period should be extended, or whether X should be admitted to full membership or finally rejected. The unit's recommendation shall be given to the Regional Committee. The Regional Committee must then decide whether or not to accept the unit's recommendations. Once the Regional Committee has decided to admit X into full membership, it shall also decide to integrate X into a Party unit or other structure. The Regional Committee must inform the PB of its decision and the PB has the Constitutional right of reversing or amending the decision.
 6. The PB has the power to exempt any applicant for Party membership from having to go through a period of probation. It can do so on its own initiative or accept the recommendation of the Regional Committee which must set out good reasons for such an exemption.
 7. In general there are two main purposes for the probationary period. On the one hand it enables the Party collective to observe a potential member under the conditions where he/she is subject to the Party's disciplinary control and to make sure that the applicant in fact understands both the Party's main policies and programmes by the time he/she is confirmed into membership. On the other hand it gives the applicant himself/herself an opportunity of finally deciding to make a permanent commitment to the Party. Under our conditions, especially inside the country, considerations of security require this cautious approach with the least exposure of membership and other information to the applicant.