

Loreism and Maneuvers -

By Wm. Z. Foster

THE breath of life of every Communist Party is a policy of struggle, of maneuvering against the capitalist class. In the Communist sense maneuvering means fighting, it means to attack the enemy, a Communist Party must grow by fighting. Through the actual struggle it establishes its leadership over the masses, consolidates its own ranks, develops its spirit of discipline, and links its intellectual life closely to the actualities of the class struggle. Without this policy of struggle, of maneuvering, no party can be a Communist Party in the real sense of the word.

It is an unflinching characteristic of the right-wing in every Communist Party to shrink from the Communist policy of unrelenting struggle. The Lore tendency in our party sharply manifests this characteristic, thereby demonstrating clearly that it is opportunistic and menshevistic. On all sides the comrades following Lore express their opposition to party maneuvers. Lore himself has stated this opposition many times. Now comes Comrade Askell in his article and says the same thing. But the point of view of these comrades regarding maneuvers was perhaps best stated by Scott Nearing in his letter a year ago dealing with the policies of our party. He proposed the following program, as against our policy of "maneuvering":

1. Realize that its (the Workers Party's) available clientele together is small, no thought of leadership of the masses, and highly localized, and rendered in part ineffective by its foreign admixtures.
2. Aim to hold this clientele together at all hazards; to preserve its morale and efficiency; to train it in effective and cooperative activities; to teach it to trust itself; to try it and discipline it until it becomes a really effective working force; and during

all this time to avoid decisive struggle which will almost surely wreck the organization.

3. Husband the resources of the organization carefully; admit members only after long probation and after careful scrutiny; making each move with the idea that the struggle is being waged against immense odds, in a hostile territory, and against skilled generalship.

4. Expand the organization and its work slowly; taking no step that will unnecessarily expose it to destruction; making no move that will enable the enemy to deal a crushing blow.

SUCH a program, which is a true expression of Loreism, has nothing of Communism in it. It is based upon a great underestimation of the power of our party and the fighting spirit of the working masses. It betrays a complete lack of faith in the revolutionary movement. To put it into effect would be to condemn our party to isolation from the masses and to a life of sterile sectarianism. Opposition to party maneuvers, that is to party struggle, is the sign manual of menshevism. It is the high road to class collaboration and the eventual repudiation of the revolution.

But the comrades of the Lore tendency hasten to assure us that their opposition to maneuvering by the party relates only to this epoch when our party is young and weak. This is a sophistry. The fact is the further we go along the greater their opposition will become to the party participating in the struggle. Our immediate tasks will constantly become greater courage and more Communist daring will be required to fulfill them. The opposition of the right wing will become keener and keener, and it will culminate in its utmost bitterness at the supreme "maneuver" of the revolution. These comrades say

our party is not strong enough and well enough disciplined to make a real fight at present. And if we leave it to them to decide it never will be strong enough. Their policy will always be as it is now, so long as they remain Loreites, to shrink from the struggle.

ABUNDANT revolutionary experience demonstrates this fact. In the Russian movement before the revolution of 1905, the mensheviks opposed every effort of the Bolsheviks to really put the party at the head of the growing revolutionary upheaval, and arguments were always essentially the same as those of the Loreites now, that the party was too weak, that the workers were unprepared for a struggle. They stabbed in the back the men who made the heroic uprising in Moscow. In 1917 their policy was the same. They did not hesitate to take up arms against the Bolsheviks who were determined upon a real struggle against the capitalists. With their constant policy of underestimating the strength of party and of the working class as a whole, they maintained, and their position was that of the whole Second International, that a proletarian revolution was impossible in Russia. In Germany, Brandler, again underestimating the forces making for the revolution, shrank from the struggle and brought the whole movement to a disastrous debacle. In Italy in 1920, when the workers, during the time of the metal workers' strike, were ready to deliver a final blow at capitalism, D'Aragona and the other menshevik leaders were on hand to tell them that they were not yet well enough organized and educated to take over society, and that if they attempted to do so their effort would be drowned in blood. Then these mensheviks, in the name of more complete organization, better discipline, and more thorough education

of the working class, betrayed the revolution by demoralizing the masses in the struggle. The present opposition in our party to a policy of maneuvers and struggle is only a faint forecast of the tremendously increased opposition of the same character that will come from the mensheviks in the period of the revolution.

THE Loreite right wing in our party covers up its fear of struggle by the use of many high sounding revolutionary phrases. This is also an orthodox tactic of the right wing. In 1905, in Russia, when the question of the organization of a provisional revolutionary government stood before the party, Lenin advocated participation of the party in this government. The mensheviks, on the other hand, animated by their fear of the workers assuming leadership in the desperate struggle, bitterly opposed such participation. And characteristically they did it under the cover of revolutionary phrases. They denounced Lenin as an opportunist and condemned his policy as in opposition to that formerly enunciated by the Second International, which discounted the participation of socialists in bourgeois governments. They pretended not to see any difference between participation in a bourgeois government during the pre-war period, and participation in a revolutionary democratic government engaged in a death struggle with Czarism. Their real aim was not to preserve holy the principles of the Party, but to avoid the struggle. Their cries of "opportunist" at Lenin were merely a cloak for their own timidity and lack of faith in the Party and the working class.

IN our party we have had a classical illustration of the same tactics by the right wing. This was in the case of the proposed third party alliance. The Loreites denounced this in all keys. The burden of their song

was that we who advocated this alliance were the opportunists and that they who opposed it were the real Communists. The facts of the matter were these: The Loreites opposed the third party alliance not because they were too good Communists, but because they were not good enough. The basis of their opposition was to be found in their opposition to maneuvers in general. Their revolutionary phrases were so much camouflage. Their position was not sustained by the Comintern. They opposed the alliance because of opposition to maneuvers in principle. The Comintern opposed it because it was the wrong kind of a maneuver. Between these two points of view there is a broad ocean of difference, the difference between menshevism and Bolshevism.

We must defeat the Loreistic tendency in our party which opposes maneuvers and our general policy of struggle. Our party is a fighting organization. It must live and grow in the battles of the working class. This does not mean that we shall have a reckless policy of maneuvering. On the contrary, the greatest skill will be necessary to steer our party between the left Scylla and putchism and the right Charybdis of opportunism. But fight and struggle we must to the best of our ability. Our party cannot postpone its active participation in the class struggle to some far off day when, by a policy of careful education and organization, as the Loreites propose, it might have assembled sufficient strength to make a showing in the struggle. Communist parties are not built that way. That is the way to build menshevik parties. Our party must fight today, tomorrow, and every day. That is the only way it can become in fact as in name the vanguard of the proletariat.