

The Struggle Against Loreism in Our Party

By Max Bedacht

I.

WHAT IS LOREISM?

A PARTY of action must strip itself for action. In order to be able to overcome all the numerous obstacles in the path of action the party must cleanse itself of all inner obstacles to action for one on that path.

Loreism is such a serious inner obstacle to action for our party. To eliminate Loreism is a major task of our party at the present time. Our coming convention must mobilize our party completely for the accomplishment of this task.

What is Loreism? Loreism is an American variety of opportunism which manifests itself internationally in this period of temporary lull in the world revolution. This opportunism makes its appearance as Brandlerism in Germany, as Trotskyism in Russia, as Bubnickism in Czechoslovakia and as Loreism in America. Thus we find that while Loreism is a specific American product, yet, it is made of a substance that must supply the opportunists in all Communist parties with material for their "platforms."

THE rapid development of American capitalism in the last decades has long shut up completely all avenues of escape from an existence as a wage slave that existed for energetic American workers in a limited way in the pioneer days. And the effects of the world war upon the economic structure of America has consolidated

the working class. This consolidation is gradually, but surely, killing whatever illusions of "chances" may still exist in the heads of American workers and is thus offering the basis of the formation of the American workers into a political entity as a class.

This process represents a revolutionary event of first importance. It accelerates the development of consciousness and militancy among the workers. It confronts the conscious revolutionary section of the workers with tasks that demand imperatively to stop talking and philosophizing and begin action and organizing. Thus, while in the revolutionary movements and parties of old all sorts of tendencies could philosophize about the labor movement alongside each other within the same organization this "harmony" is no longer possible in this period of action. Action demands ideological unity of the revolutionists.

It is for these reasons that seemingly little differences in conception develop in our movement at the present time into deep going and important deviations. Loreism is such a deviation. The more our party develops into a revolutionary party of action, a Bolshevik party, the more will the foreign substances within our party come to the surface. The tremendous task of our party will need readiness and ability of action. Foreign substances, standing in the way of such action, either must be speedily assimilated in the fire of active Bolshevization and Bolshevik action, or it must be finally eliminated.

LOREISM is such a foreign substance. It presents the American variety of vacillating centrism. Eternal hesitancy before action, vacillation between one road of action and the other, and when action can no longer be avoided the invariable choosing of the wrong road, are the outstanding characteristics of this tendency.

The attitude of this tendency toward the tasks of the party are determined by an essentially petty bourgeois approach. The Communist Party for them is not an integral and inseparable part of the working class, fighting the battles of the workers—not for them, but with them—but it is a sort of settlement work with the task of uplifting. These comrades reason this way: The emancipation of the workers can only be accomplished by the workers themselves. But the workers need education to accomplish it. The party must convey this education to them. That is done with lectures, books, programs, etc. No action is needed. Action is even detrimental—because the education of the workers is not yet completed, they are not ready for action, and under these conditions action becomes adventurism and putchism.

THE total lack of understanding of the tasks of a Communist Party, paired with an utter lack of confidence in the abilities of the working class, itself, always supplies an excuse to these comrades why a certain thing should not be done at a certain time. And their aversion to action is

invariably cloaked in a mantle of "realism." This pseudo realism leads to paralysis and is one of the most dangerous manifestations of Loreism.

At the same time we find this opportunism parade under the tune of radical phrases. The division of society into two classes is a very rigid one in the eyes of these comrades. On one side is the proletariat, on the other the bourgeoisie. This concept determines the attitude of these comrades toward the farmers. The farmers belong to the bourgeoisie, ergo they are reactionary enemies of the proletariat and must be combated. No compromise with them—No alliance. That all sounds very radical, but it is not. It is, in the last analysis, only another argument against hated action. It is fundamentally anti-revolutionary because it attempts to prevent the revolutionary movement from exploiting the inner divisions of the capitalist class which are especially serious between petty and big bourgeoisie. In place of revolutionary action they want to put on the throne the revolutionary phrase.

THE more rapidly capitalism pushes onward in America, the more the growing class antagonisms call for action, the more dangerous becomes the opportunist, even tho, and the more so when, he covers up his lack of revolutionary energy and understanding with a revolutionary phrase.

A shining example of this manifestation of Loreism is an article written and published by Comrade Lore

two months ago about the Chinese situation. In this article Lore declares that the present struggle in China is a nationalist one, that the workers fighting under the banner of nationalism hope to free themselves from oppression. But that is Utopia, says Lore. First English, French, Japanese, etc., imperialism is so strong that the Chinese workers have no chance of victory. And even if they would accomplish the impossible it would not mean anything because the foreign exploiter would be replaced by the Chinese exploiter and things would remain for the Chinese workers as they are today. The only way to emancipation for the Chinese worker lies in the Communist revolution. But, so concludes Lore, the time for that has not yet come.

HERE we have opportunism in "Reinkulture." Here is the logical conclusion: A nationalist fight useless—a Communist fight premature; therefore why fight. No understanding of the dialectics of social struggles which can make and do make a Communist fight out of a national one, which made a proletarian revolution out of a bourgeois one. No understanding of the international character of all proletarian struggles in the age of imperialism; no inkling of the possibility that what may start as a nationalist revolt in India or China may end as a proletarian revolt in England or elsewhere. Revolutionary in phrase, but anti-revolutionary in practice, that is the leading characteristic of Loreism.