

# World Socialism

## THE FORWARD MARCH OF UNITY

By HERBERT ZAM

In spite of superficial evidence to the contrary, the idea of a united front of Socialists and Communists for a common fight with all other workers against fascism and the menace of war is rapidly gaining ground. This was strikingly demonstrated at the recent meeting of the Executive of the Labor and Socialist International.

The decision on the Executive on this point is:

"As regards the invitation from the Communist International to meet four representatives appointed by that body, the Socialist Parties in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Czechoslovakia have stated that they cannot accept this invitation, not merely because of the composition of the delegation from the Communist International but also because they reject any unity of action with the Communist Parties in their own countries and any joint action between the two Internationals.

"The Executive of the LSI is obliged to take into account the views of these great parties of the working class and is therefore unable to accept the invitation of the Communist International.

"The Executive of the L. S. I. desires to make every effort to coordinate all effective action against war and the fascist fomentors of war. It therefore goes without saying that its chairman and secretary are at liberty, in the exercise of their functions, to hold conversations for purposes of information with persons and representatives of other international working class organizations, or other organizations carrying on action against war, as they may think fit.

"But as the resolution of the Executive of the LSI of Nov. 17, 1934, in which it gave its affiliated parties liberty to decide for themselves whether they wish to take joint action with the Communist Parties of their respective countries, is still in force, it is clear that the above-mentioned Parties have no intention of undertaking joint action with the Communist Parties of their own countries."

### Imposed by Minority

From the wording of the resolution, it seems that the refusal to negotiate with the Comintern was not the voluntary decision of the majority, but was imposed by the minority. Indeed, a report is current to the effect that the British Labor Party, supported by the Parties of Holland, Denmark and Czechoslovakia, threatened to split and leave the International if it was decided to enter into negotiations with the Communists! Under these conditions, the Executive had no alternative except reluctantly to adopt the above decision, at the same time making clear where the responsibility lay, and that the Executive was "obliged" to reject negotiations.

One cannot help wondering at the lack of consistency of these parties which are continually wrapped up in "democratic procedure" but are themselves seemingly unwilling to abide by the results of democratic procedure in their own International, when such results do not coincide with their own ideas. Their attitude is all the more difficult to appreciate, since on all the current issues which would enter into a united front, they hold the same point of view as the Communists; indeed they can safely boast that they have won over the Communists to their side against the

position of the revolutionary Socialists!

### Not A Cure-All

There is no need for making a fetish of the united front. It is certainly not the cure-all which the Communists make it out to be. Neither must we make a fetish of anti-united front, as the right wing does. A united front, established on a proper basis, would certainly help the action of the working class, and therefore it is necessary to overcome the many prejudices which have been built up in the past, and which make a united front difficult to establish. This revolutionary Socialists must do, realizing at the same time that they will very likely have to reject the basis upon which the Communists wish a united front.

The extensive support for a united front in the Executive of the LSI reflects the growing sentiment in the individual parties. In a whole series of countries the united front is being forged. In Belgium, for the first time since the split, there has just taken place a meeting of representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the Federal Council of the Labor (Socialist) Party to discuss a united front. Further meetings will be held. This is a continuation of the fraternal relations begun when the Communists were permitted to participate in the series of anti-war demonstrations some time ago, with their own speakers in some of the cities.

In Switzerland, an election agreement has been reached between the Socialist and Communist Parties whereby in the cantons of Zurich, Basle and Geneva there will be joint lists decided upon by the respective local organizations, while in the rest of the country, the Communist Party undertakes to support the candidates of the Socialist Party.

### Unity Against Fascism

In Latvia, the Socialist Workers and Peasants Party, which, because of the semi-fascist terror is compelled to work underground, decided at its recent convention that "the chief condition for a successful fight against fascism and its most frightful consequence, war, is the united front of the Socialist and Communist workers on an international scale." It was decided to continue to collaborate with the Latvian Communist Party.

A united front conference of great international significance took place in Brussels, Belgium, October 12-13. This was the anti-fascist conference of Italian emigrants, with delegates coming from Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland and North America. Adler and de Brouckere, of the LSI, Fimmen of the International Transport Workers, Braecke and Zyromski, of the French Socialist Party, Tellen of the Sailors and Dockers International sat in the presidium together with Politt and Thorez, representing the Communist International and Monmousseau, representing the Red Trade Union International. One may doubt the wisdom of such action as sending a telegram to the League of Nations demanding the application of sanctions. But can one doubt the value of such a manifestation of united opposition to fascism assuming the decisions to be taken ones