

World Socialism

SOCIALISM AND ETHIOPIA

By HERBERT ZAM

All Socialists are vigorously opposed to the Italian efforts to swallow Ethiopia, and are entirely in sympathy with the resistance of the Ethiopians. For that very reason it is essential to have a clear view and a clear position on all the questions involved. That is the difference between realistic Marxists and Utopian humanitarians. Three specific questions deserve some attention.

Should Socialists support the so-called "neutrality" positions adopted by a number of countries, particularly the United States?

No. Because neutrality which strikes only in one direction is no neutrality at all. The Executive of the Labor and Socialist International has properly come out in favor of an embargo on arms and munitions against Italy, but not against Ethiopia. Italy is in a position to produce its own supplies, but not Ethiopia. Therefore to place an embargo against both countries is to help Italy. This is what Britain has been doing almost from the outbreak of the struggle, and it is well to keep this in mind in discussing the further role of England.

Sanctions Mean War

Should Socialists support any move for the application of sanctions by the League of Nations against Italy? Again we must answer in the negative. Sanctions mean war. If Socialists are opposed to war, they cannot support measures which will lead to war, and thus share responsibility for war. It will be argued that this will be a war in defense of a weak nation, of a colonial country and therefore justified.

This is an argument worthy of the believers in Wilsonian democracy. Has the League of Nations suddenly become the defender of the small nations? Did the League apply sanctions against Japan for seizing Manchuria? Has the League tried to help in liberation of a single portion of the earth which is under the imperialist heel? We all know that the League is the instrument of the big imperialist powers, the "victors of Versailles."

We all know that the League is not interested in the preservation of the independence of Ethiopia. Only a few weeks ago, the Council of the League worked out a proposal for the division of Ethiopia among England, France and Italy. Ethiopia scornfully rejected this proposal as suicide, and its representative wisely remarked that they would prefer to be murdered, as they could then at least call for help!

"The Defender of the Weak"

It ill becomes Great Britain, "perfidious Albion," to try to play the role of the "defender" of the weak. Great Britain has under its heel almost half of Africa. Four and a quarter million of Africa's twelve million square miles, and 63 million of its 130 million inhabitants slave under the emblem of the Union Jack. If the government of Great Britain has suddenly begun to speak about war against Italy, it is certainly not due to any new-found love for the people of Ethiopia.

England has expressed its perfect willingness for an "equitable" and "peaceful" division of Ethiopia. It will not stand for a one-sided division. England may go to war with Italy—to protect British imperialist interests in Africa and the sea route to India. The League of Nations may apply sanctions against Italy—because British imperialist interests domi-

nate. President Keane of the British Trade Union Congress performed a great service for British imperialism when he advocated war against Italy.

Of course, the British Trade Union Congress is truly interested in helping Ethiopia, just as many were really fighting for democracy in 1914-18. But if the policy of the British Trade Union Congress is carried out by the British Tory government, it will be because such a policy is necessitated by the interests of imperialism, rather than by the interests of peace. Does any one really believe that Ethiopian independence will be preserved through a war between England and Italy? Such a war will merely determine, among other things, whether England or Italy will annex Ethiopia.

The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union has come in for a good deal of criticism in recent months as a result of the Ethiopian situation. Some comrades seem to think that the Soviet Union should go around issuing ultimatums to various imperialists and send out detachments of the Red Army to help colonies free themselves. A policy like that would not only not help the small nations, but would lead to war and perhaps even to the end of the Soviet Union.

Just as the revolutions in capitalist countries will have to be made by the workers in those countries, the freeing of the colonial countries is the task of the people of those countries. The Red Army has the task of defending the Soviet Union, not of freeing the world from the yoke of imperialism.

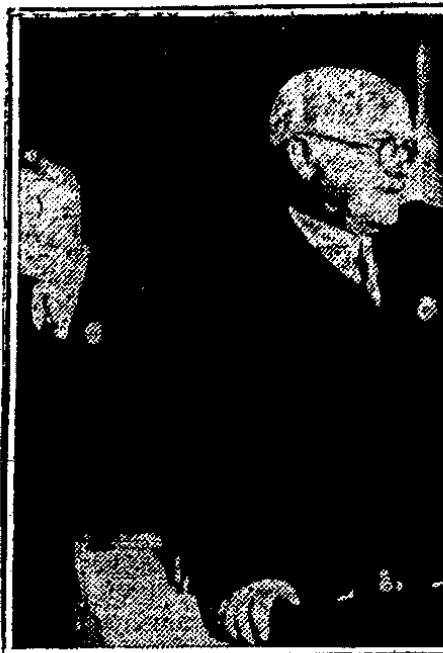
Within these limits, however, some of the actions of the Soviet Union are open to criticism. When the Soviet Union sells wheat, coal, oil and coal tar to Italy, supplies which go directly for war purposes, workers cannot help questioning the correctness of such a policy. Or if Litvinov, in his speech at the League of Nations meeting, makes a severe attack on the "internal regime" of Ethiopia, without a single word of criticism of the internal regime of fascist Italy, is he not lending objective force to the charges of Italian imperialism?

In the first case the material gain to the Soviet Union is in significant; the material assistance to Italy is considerable; but above all the loss of prestige to the Soviet Union is enormous. It is certain that the Soviet Union could easily find a means of avoiding the sale of this material to Italy. Just as Litvinov could easily find a means of being diplomatic, and yet not lend objective aid to the Italian charges against Ethiopia.

Must Help Ethiopia

The position of Socialists is, therefore, clear. They must be against war. They must be against Italy and for Ethiopia. They must advocate a course of action which will help Ethiopia fight effectively against Italy, and will hinder an effective Italian war against Ethiopia. Above all, they must place their reliance upon the action of the international

OPPOSES IT



President William Keane of the calling for economic and financial Duce carries through his war plan

The Role Of Farmer

This is the second of a series of Socialist Party members, by Glen Trimble. articles will discuss various phases of

By GLEN TRIMBLE

Half the active party workers responding to my questionnaire did not believe the Socialist Party could gain power in time to avert war, fascism, or capitalist collapse, 36 per cent were doubtful, only 14 per cent, eight persons, believed it could. Even more striking was the response to the question, "Should the Socialist Party join a Farmer-Labor Party?" Ninety per cent said yes, four per cent were doubtful, six per cent said no. These answers came from 29 states. One state, Washington, was unanimous against any sort of Farmer-Labor Party. Only one person in the other 28 states was unequivocally opposed.

All the answers to the Farmer-Labor Party question hinged, of course, on the word "genuine." What is a "genuine" Farmer-Labor Party? It seemed simplest to answer this by asking the minimum requirements for our participation in such a party.

proletariat, for only it can, in the long run, put an end both to war, and imperialism. In this connection the united front which has been established between the Socialist and Communist Parties of Italy, with the approval and participation of the Labor and Socialist International, must be welcomed as a step in the right direction. It is to be hoped that this united front will develop along correct Socialist lines and will not be sidetracked on any false road of appeal to the imperialist powers.

P. S. In a recent issue of the New Leader, John "Powers" reported that the "united front negotiations" between Communists and Socialists in Czechoslovakia had been "broken off." Some explanation is required from "Powers," as he had previously vehemently denied that the Socialist Party had any intentions of negotiating. Even his newest news is incomplete, as he forgets to inform his readers that the communists had agreed to support the candidacy of Benes for the presidency, and as he is also being supported by the Socialists, there has thus been established an electoral united front.