

World Socialism

CRISIS IN PEOPLE'S FRONT

By HERBERT ZAM

Is the People's Front in France breaking up? That is the question which must be asked as a result of recent developments which have provoked an internal crisis in that movement.

In carrying out the decisions of the National Conference of the French Socialist Party, Vincent Auriol, its Secretary, sent a communication to Radical Parliamentary fraction asking that a joint election program be drawn up as a condition for agreement on common candidates on the second ballot in the coming elections.

The Radicals decided not to reply to this letter. Instead, a resolution was adopted to the effect that the Radical Party should participate in the elections with its own program and candidates, without regard to the program of the People's Front. The question as to which candidate should be supported on the second ballot was left to the local organization to decide.

Radicals' Action Close to Betrayal

Considerable indignation exists in the ranks of the parties of the People's Front at this act of the Radicals, which is looked upon as close to betrayal. The Socialist Parliamentary fraction expressed its extreme dissatisfaction with this decision. It reiterated its decision to support on the second ballot only those candidates who expressed themselves in favor of a minimum program on the first ballot.

In effect, this decision means that unless the Radicals change their decision and come around to the point of view of the Socialists, they will not obtain any Socialist support on the second ballot even in those districts where their candidates were first among the parties of the People's Front.

Action Not Unexpected

This action by the Radicals is not unexpected to those who have been critically following developments in the French movement. This column pointed out some weeks ago that the position of the Radicals on the question of proportional representation meant that they were preparing to make deals with reactionary parties in numerous districts, in accordance with their traditional procedure. Their present decision simply bears out this interpretation. Thus the Radicals want to have an election alliance with the working class parties in the industrial areas and with the reactionary parties in the backward areas.

This development may easily lead to the breaking up of the People's Front, for it is the adherence of the Radicals which makes it a People's Front. Otherwise it would be a workers' front. It further demonstrates the futility of trying to win over the petty bourgeoisie by making constant concessions to them. The parties of the People's Front had made so many concessions to the Radicals that when the program was finally adopted, it consisted almost exclusively of these con-

cessions—it was the electoral program of the Radicals. Having obtained everything they could out of it, the Radicals are now preparing to abandon the People's Front entirely. Even if some sort of compromise is reached over the present differences, there can be no doubt that the People's Front is headed for disintegration.

Concessions of Limited Character

Does this mean that the working class organizations cannot, under certain conditions collaborate with organizations of the middle class? Not at all. It simply means that collaboration on the lines of the People's Front should be shunned. In any alliance with non-proletarian elements, the hegemony must always be in the hands of the proletariat. Concessions made to the petty bourgeoisie must be limited in character, not in conflict with the interests of the workers and aimed at developing the petty bourgeois masses toward a Socialist point of view.

Alliances with such powerful movements as the Radical Party, which is by no means entirely petty bourgeois, or even dominated by the petty bourgeois, must be extremely temporary, and instead of making constant concessions to them, they must be under constant pressure from the proletariat, so as to push their following in a revolutionary direction.

Shtime Marches On!

The Socialist "Shtime" is growing more mature as the Jewish spokesman of revolutionary socialism with every issue. The April number is rich in material and deserves the widest possible circulation. Among the articles included are:

1. "Power of Forward Shattered," an editorial on the results of the primaries.
2. "What the Forward Failed to Say."
3. Articles by Kantorovitch on "Norman Thomas and the 'Day'" and "The Trotskyites and the Socialist Party."
4. "The Peoples Front and Proletarian Unity" by Kaplan.
5. "On the Polish Pogroms" by Feinerman.
6. "The Farband and its membership Campaign" by Sobotko.
7. "A Review of the Trade Unions" (monthly feature).
8. "A Wonderful Gift (The attitude of the communists toward Socialists in Russia and abroad).
9. "International Review" (monthly feature).
10. Review of the party activities.

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