

World Socialism

A PEOPLE'S FRONT IN ENGLAND?

By HERBERT ZAM

The People's Front wave seems to have reached England, which is perhaps the last country one would expect such a movement to take root, since the workers are concentrated in the Labor Party, with a fair proportion of the middle class already in it. Stimulated by the electoral victories of the People's Front in France and Spain, the remnants of the old Liberal Party have begun a vigorous campaign for the formation of a "people's front" to fight reaction. Lloyd George and his Reconstruction Council have become vigorous advocates of this idea, as have also some of the "left" members of Ramsay MacDonald's "party." It is easy to see their reason for doing so. A "people's front" needs middle class liberals, liberals with "names." They offer themselves. For them a people's front would be a windfall. Discredited and deserted, they have been continually flirting with every breeze that came along. This seems to be a promising one at present.

So far Labor has been cool to these proposals. After all, the Labor Party has very little to gain from any new alliances which bring no additional support. A section of the Labor Party may welcome such a new set-up because it will present another opportunity to water down the already thin program of Labor a little more. But the trade unions, which in the last analysis control the Labor Party, will be very reluctant to permit such a development. They have been traditionally opposed to what was derisively referred to as "Lib-Lab" alliances in the past. So far the Communists also have had a somewhat different line than elsewhere. They argue that in England, the Peoples' Front would have to consist of labor organizations only, without the Liberals. Thus the prospects for a people's front in Britain appear to be rather slim.

Socialist Strength

American Socialists accustomed to small parties are usually surprised at the size of the European Socialist parties. Since the fascist victories in Germany and Austria, many believe that there are no really large Socialist parties. Recent reports, however, show such views to be mistaken.

The latest figures for Sweden, for instance, show a Socialist membership there of 338,000. In Denmark the Social-Democratic Party has 195,000 members, and the youth organization has 25,000 members. Czechoslovakia shows 170,000 members and Holland close to 90,000. Tiny Iceland has a Party with 12,300 members, probably the largest in the world in comparison with the population. These examples show that Socialism is a mass movement still, in spite of the loss of the two largest sections.

Labor Unity In Australia

After five years of division, a united Labor Party has again been established in Australia, where Labor is the largest party. The 1931 split was two ways—one toward the right, and one toward the left. The right wing, led by Lyons, rapidly became the rallying point for anti-labor and reactionary elements, and soon united with the Nationalists, an anti-labor group, in the United Australian Party, thus removing itself from the labor movement.

The split to the left was much more serious, involving first the New South Wales Labor Party, and later spreading to the rest of the Dominion. The issues involved were financial policy (involving the policy of repudiation

of debts sponsored by Lang, the Labor-Premier of Australia), and provincial autonomy. As a result of this split, the Labor movement suffered many losses.

Unity was restored at a special Interstate Conference at Melbourne in February of this year. On the one hand the New South Wales Labor Party, which had been independent since the split, agreed unreservedly to accept the platform, rules and constitution of the Australian Labor Party and to become the State Branch of that Party; it agreed to reinstate all members who had been expelled as a result of the difficulties with the national organization. On the other hand the National Labor Party rescinded its resolution of March, 1931, expelling the Lang organization.

The Conference further moved to do away with the conditions which had made a split possible in the first place. The triennial conference was moved forward from October to July, and proposals for constitutional changes were worked out. It is suggested that the powers and functions of the Federal Conference should be limited to the formulation of Federal policy and platform; that the existing Federal Executive be replaced by a Federal secretariat limited to routine duties; that the Interstate conference meet annually; and that representation from the states at this conference be on a more democratic basis. Thus in effect, the movement has been decentralized and real power will now reside in the Interstate Conference.

Argentine Elections

In spite of the instability in the political situation in Argentina, and the rapid rise and decline of parties, the Socialist movement remains a stable and permanent force. This was shown by the partial elections in March in the city of Buenos Aires. The Socialist Party polled 103,000 votes, elected five deputies to parliament and six members of the municipal council.

While this was a loss compared with 1934, it was a large gain over 1930, when the Radicals also had a ticket in the field. In 1934 the Radicals did not run (they had just been turned out of power) and the Socialist Party was the only opposition party thus obtaining many of the Radical votes. Next to the Socialists and Radicals (who obtained 187,000 votes) the strongest party was that of the Independent Socialists, with 12,000 votes. All of these parties are anti-government, which is supported by the capitalists, big landowners—and American imperialist representatives. Thus, it appears that the entire population of Buenos Aires is opposed to the government.

Are You a ?

CALL Press, Inc.
21 East 17th Street.
New York, N. Y.

I wish to subscribe to the SO
the special rate of \$1.00.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY