

# TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

## Problems of Unity In Italian Socialism

ARNALDO CORTESI, the Rome correspondent of the N. Y. Times, has been far from candid in reporting the negotiations between Pietro Nenni, leader of the Left Wing Socialists, and Guiseppe Saragat, leader of the Right Wing Socialists.

The Times correspondent is trying to prove that closer relations and even ultimate merger of the two Socialist groups necessarily means the ending of united front relations between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Nenni has said nothing of the sort, even if we rely exclusively on the Cortesi cables. Nenni did say, according to Cortesi, that Socialist-Communist relations "are evolving toward new forms more attuned to the changed international climate."

To tell the whole truth it's necessary to add that Palmiro Togliatti and the Italian Communist Party which he heads, have spoken up very favorably about the trend toward reconciliation between the Left and Right Wing socialists.

FOR A GOOD NUMBER of years Togliatti has been addressing himself to the very real question that confronts working people of varied affiliations in Italy. That question is how they can move toward socialism under conditions where the majority of the workers follow parties dedicated to socialism but the majority of the population still does not back these parties.

Long before the Soviet Communists and Marxists in other lands discovered the dilemma of Western socialism the Italian Communists were trying to cope with it. This was in sharp con-

trast with the French Communists who successfully maintained their leadership over the decisive sections of the working class but in essence ignored the problem of how you go on the next stage—winning a majority and moving toward socialism.

The first thing that was necessary, in Togliatti's view, was working-class unity. This meant united action between the Communist and Socialist parties. Such unity was attained. It was also necessary to get unity of the whole socialist-minded working class. This meant bringing Right Wing and Left Wing Socialists closer together. Togliatti encouraged every trend in that direction.

BUT EVEN this was not sufficient for a party seriously concerned with moving the first Western country in the world toward socialism. So a big campaign began in Italy for "an opening to the Left" in the Italian government.

Italian democracy was confronted with a real challenge: how can you preach democracy and keep the working class out of the government? In such a campaign it became possible to win allies not only among socialists, Right and Left, but also in the Left Wing of the dominant Christian Democratic Party. It was as a result of this campaign, in which the Communists played a leading part, that the left wing Christian Democrat Gronchi was elected president of the Italian republic. In order to spur the "opening to the Left," Togliatti did all he could to encourage unity between the Left Socialists and the Right Wing Saragat group. The latter group has

been allied with the Christian Democrats.

All this presents a complex political picture to a Marxist party. It requires not only of good tactics, which bring about unity, but questions of theory came up—such as the peaceful transition to socialism; also the possibility of a coalition transition to socialism. Obviously the Russian experience was far from adequate to cope with the problems of Italian socialism. For that matter the Russian experience cannot and never could be the pattern for socialism in any country of the West. Lenin was quick to realize that and he excommunicated the Communist International in 1922 for having adopted procedures which he said were suited for Russia but not for the rest of the world.

THE STERN FACT is that 108 years ago Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote a Manifesto based upon the struggle for socialism in Western Europe. In the more than century that has gone by socialism has triumphed in one third of the world. But it was victorious in precisely that part of the globe with which Marx did not deal in his Manifesto and in most of his writing.

It would seem obvious that Marxists who follow a scientific method should address themselves specifically to problems of Western capitalism and of Western socialism. Togliatti had to wage a battle of ideas within his party in order to advance socialism as a reality. He had to hurt the feelings of some who were more concerned about dogma, sacred texts and ingrained superstitions than in a real struggle for socialism. But the results will show up in Italy. And Marxists throughout the West are also grappling with the problem of dealing with the real world not the world of imagination.