

The Problem of Planning

by Jay Lovestone

Scarcely a day passes that some capitalist economist, engineer, college president, legislator, movie star, Jesus jizzer, "Socialist" savior or labor bureaucrat does not come forward with some master "plan" to end the crisis and make impossible its recurrence. But most of these "plans" have—like the flowers that bloom in the spring—nothing to do with the realities of capitalism, with the hopelessly unsolvable, ever-sharpening, in the capitalist system of production. Really, if Captain Gulliver could make a tour of the United States today, he would find, in the various "plans", stranger things than ever befell him in Brobdingnag or Laputa.

Thus, Hoover has given us a twenty-year plan on how to increase the country's population. God's leading light on earth, the Pope, has begun to plan as well as pray for us! Matthew Woll is there with his brand of shoddy "planning" goods. Stuart Chase, McAdoo, Brookings, Donham, Beard, Roosevelt, Baker, Butler, and even Eddie Cantor have all toyed with or joked about some plan to bring back prosperity and to keep it.

Why So Many Plans

Why this sudden interest in the "best brains" of capitalism in planned economy? Why has the rainbow-chase for a plan, for a "cure" to end the present and prevent future crises become the "big idea" of today among capitalist thinkers?

For this phenomenon there are three main reasons. They are:

(1) The profound crisis of capitalism, particularly as manifested in the violent came down, which has awakened even the most ardent defenders of the present economic system to a realization that something, at least outwardly new and different, must be tried in order to stifle the mass protest and action which are bound to flow from the widespread chronic unemployment.

(2) The phenomenal progress of Socialist construction in the U. S. S. R., despite the severest handicaps, at the very time of the most acute capitalist crisis, at the very moment that international capitalism is going down its steep and slippery path of decay.

(3) The ever-more intense competition in the narrowing world market and the resulting need for "efficiency" in normal world competition as well as in the highest stage of capitalist competition—imperialist war. Capitalist "planned economy" an imperialist war preparations are inseparable.

The more educated and conscious of the bourgeoisie apologists and experts are frank enough to admit that capitalism is facing the fight of its life, is confronted with the most dynamic challenge in its history by the rapid advance of Socialist economy on one sixth of the earth—the Soviet Union.

Thus, so frantic and desperate have become some would-be saviors of the capitalist system that they are now prepared to try thru many a "reform" measure which but yesterday they damned up hill and down dale. A guaranteed minimum wage, unemployment insurance, some perverted form of a supreme economic council are among the most advertised panaceas in the bumper crop of capitalist plans. Some defenders of the capitalist faith have been ingenious enough to look for a way out of the economic chaos in fencing in certain industries with the bayonets of the National Guard (recent actions of the Governors of Oklahoma and Texas in declaring martial law in the State oil fields). Most vociferous among these "life-savers" of capitalism are the "Socialist" Stuart Chase and Dean Donham of the Harvard School of Business. Of late, the latter has repeatedly been stressing:

"Capitalism is on trial and on the issue of this trial may depend the whole future of Western civilization. The justification of capitalism is efficiency. Our present situation both here and in all the great industrial nations of the world is a major breakdown of capitalism."

And none other than Sir Arthur Salter, Director of the Economic and Finance Section of the League of Nations, groaned the other day before a highly select group of captains of finance and industry at the New York Bond Club:

"Our system (capitalism) is on trial the more because there stands in another great country (the U.S.S.R.), as an increasing and alternative system to some, and a bogey and a terror to others, a conceivably preferable system."

This is going some for the official high-prize of bourgeois economists in Europe. One might think that only in Europe is there such a recognition of the potentialities of Soviet Socialist economy. This is not the case. So regular and recognized an authority among the Wall Street economic seers as the financial editor of the New York Times recently told the world that this plethora of schemes and

proposals for a definite program of business development in this country obviously owe their origin to the headway being made by Soviet Russia, which furnishes a distinct contrast to the muddled condition of economic affairs in other countries."

A Serious Menace To The Workers

It would be easy to dismiss all these capitalist plans as just a lot of hokum which doesn't concern the workers and doesn't involve their fundamental interests or even their every-day affairs. But to do that would be the height of folly for the revolutionary workers. These plans are plans of capitalist attack on the workers, are plans elaborating new, more

effective, and more dangerous methods of capitalist exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses. In short, these plans aim to devise ways and means of perpetuating the capitalist system. As such they vitally concern every working man and working woman. These plans must, therefore, be understood, examined, and exposed in their true light as capitalist war plans against the working class.

In the objective consideration of the various proposals for "planned economy" under capitalism is involved a fundamental analysis of capitalism as an economic, as a social order. Unfortunately, in the Communist International there has been no adequate examination of the economic situation, of the economic position of world capitalism, since Lenin's masterly analysis at the Third Congress, some ten years ago. The attempts of Bukharin and others at the Sixth World Congress, three years ago, to examine seriously the elements of capitalist crisis, proved only an aggravating factor for the worst crisis in the Comintern itself. Since then, not a single Plenum of the Comintern Executive nor of any of its sections has even attempted to understand and analyze the basic economic questions raised for the international proletariat and its vanguard, the Comintern, by the present crisis of world capitalism—a crisis unprecedented in intensity and inestimable in its potential social and political consequences. There is too much fear of bureaucratic vengeance, of "deviations" from the "new" line, in the various sections of the Comintern, to permit a free, Leninist objective discussion of the present world crisis and the various capitalist plans for its "solution"

I don't even for a moment, want to give the impression that this fear of examining and discussing economic facts and theories is something entirely new in the Comintern, developing since the faction war which broke out seriously at the Sixth World Congress. Many times, before the 1928 World Congress the writer discussed with Bukharin, Stalin, Zinoviev, Kuusinen and Varga the lack of interest shown by the leading forces of

the different Communist Parties in the basic problems of capitalist economy. Bukharin, especially, always lamented this lack of appreciation of economic theory and problems in the Comintern. I recall how Bukharin time and again emphasized his regret that this condition was, in no small measure, due to the fear of making "deviations" in handling the different questions of economic theory. Of course, within the last couple of years this fear has been much aggravated. And Bukharin's present political plight is, in a large measure, due to his very persistent and systematic efforts to study and explain the latest phenomena of capitalist developments from the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint.

Some Basic Questions

In this series of articles, I propose to examine some of the recent phenomena in the development of capitalism in its imperialist stage, in its period of decay and decline. I do not propose to examine these questions solely from the theoretical angle. Rather, it is my purpose to explain these new problems of capitalism in the light of their practical consequences for the working class. Hence, the pivotal question will necessarily revolve around those phenomena and conditions which have literally stirred the whole bourgeois world into "a veritable furor of theories" about "crisis-proof" production and exchange, about planned economy.

What is the underlying theory and what are the fundamental features of the sundry blueprints and plans to secure a "sound" and "stable" capitalism in the United States and elsewhere? Which are the leading bourgeois "plans" and what do they propose to do? What about public works as a "prosperity reserve"? What are the possibilities and impossibilities, limitations and inherent characteristics of all capitalist planning? Finally, what is genuine, social, planned economy, Socialist economy, and how is it working out in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics?

It is these basic questions that we will try to answer in the coming articles.

THE RECENT FURRIERS CONFERENCE

by J. R.

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workers into one powerful union.

5. This preliminary conference, in order to show its good faith and readiness to fight militantly in the interests of the fur workers, herewith recommends the adoption of the following immediate program for the protection of the fundamental interests of the fur workers:

1. An aggressive policy against the bosses to bring back conditions which the fur workers won thru many years of struggle.
2. A campaign to increase the wages of the fur workers in every section of the trade.
3. Against overtime in the slow period.
4. No expulsions for political opinions.
5. An energetic campaign against clique control in the union and for a broad and genuine rank and file leadership.
6. No officer of the union to be paid more than the average wage a worker earns in the shop.
7. Local meetings to be called twice a month.
8. Membership and mass meetings to be called as often as possible to acquaint the members and draw them into the activity of the union.
9. Freedom of speech to be guaranteed to the members, regardless of their political affiliations.
6. In view of the fact that the agreement in the fur industry is expiring, this preliminary conference proposes that steps be taken to mobilize all fur workers on a united basis for one struggle to insure the adoption of an agreement based on the following demands:

1. 40-hour, 5-day week.
2. Equal division of work during the whole year.
3. During slow period, the working week to be 5-days, 6 hours, each day paid accordingly on the 40-hour rate.
4. 25% increase on the minimum scale.
5. Unemployment insurance to be paid by the bosses and distributed by a workers committee elected from the membership.
6. Regulation of overtime work.
7. Overtime to be paid at the rate of time-and-a-half.
8. Complete abolition of finishing contracting.
9. Contractors be recognized by the union only when they produce the full garment in their place. Such contractors must employ not less than five workers.
10. Manufacturers be permitted to give work to such contractors only when their shop is working full capacity.

The "rank and file committee" (the cover name for the Industrial Union) did not come prepared with any positive program because they had confidently expected to be thrown out of the conference. They contented themselves with abuse and disturbance. Finally, they patched up some proposals which, in the end, reduced themselves to the demand for a "mass trial" of the union leaders!

Characteristically, Sorkin (Progressive Bloc) opened his remarks by expressing his readiness to "accept both of the proposals!" Kaufman, the International pre-

sident, whose group had been recently defeated in the union elections, did not once take the floor at the conference.

On a motion of Shapiro a joint committee of two delegates from each group represented, was set up, empowered to consider the proposals laid before the conference and to prepare the calling of another conference in the future to which the Industrial Union (Fur Department) would also be invited. This motion threw the "rank and file committee" into consternation. They did not know whether to support these proposals or not—they had not consulted Gold! Finally they proposed that the conference postpone consideration of this motion to some future time! Nevertheless, the proposal of Shapiro carried. When it came to the selection of the two representatives from each group, the "rank and file committee" again hesitated, but at last consented to name two of their delegation.

The conference, it is clear, did not itself lay the basis for unity in the fur trade. It, however, and the conferences that will follow it, will make it possible for those elements among the fur workers who do have a practical and comprehensive program to meet the extremely critical situation, to mobilize the masses of the organized furriers for effective action.

GORKI ON LITERATURE OF SOVIET UNION

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classics, but also from our arch enemies, in case they are intelligent and talented. Learning doesn't signify copying, but simply absorbing the method and taking thought about the way to create a work of art. Our Soviet authors really are too young to march alone, without any support. And the classics offer them this contact with the mass of the creative support."

The Dole

Yonkers is to receive \$200,000 from the State Fund to help the unemployed. The local bankers and business men propose to lend it to Yonkers industries. And since it comes from the relief funds it is called unemployment relief!

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