

Capitalist "Planning" and Socialist Planned Economy

Planned Economy in the USSR

by Jay Lovestone

(Concluded from last issue)

Striking and Significant Contrasts

A few remarks about these problems in order to particularize. In the U.S.S.R., we have mastered planning in general. We are now learning detailed operation as well as general construction. We are now learning shop management based upon planning, scheduling, dispatching, etc., as well as planning of industrial production in general. Our attitude towards planning for detailed operation is essentially the same as our attitude towards general planning. We have no rigid, fixed blue-print approach. To us progress in planning means reaching certain stages in our program of continuous progress. The fulfillment of every concrete task is to us only a goal in the midst of the flux of progress.

From this angle it is interesting to strike a contrast between the already fully developed efficient capitalist operation of industries in America and the initial stages of Socialist operation of industries in the U.S.S.R. At present the United States is still ahead in the development and perfection of scientific methods in detailed operation of shop management. But the Soviet Union is bound to catch up and surpass the United States even in this field of individual shop operation. When this stage is reached by the U.S.S.R., then the advantages and achievements of its social, planned economy, its large scale planning, will be even more obvious to many millions of workers. The well-known American engineer, Polakov, in his attempt to answer the query "How efficient are the Russians?", correctly said:

"The difference between the American and Soviet conception of planning, however, is as great as the gap between capitalism and socialism. Whereas our industrial planning is devoted to individualistic pursuit of profit thru the production and sale of goods, Soviet planning embraces all aspects of the national life, in aiming to provide the highest possible standard of living for all within a given period of time."

Discipline in industry is a vital need long recognized by all revolutionary Socialists, by all Communists and stressed with particular force by Lenin at the outset of the Revolution. In capitalist economy all such discipline is secured through repressive measures and threats of starvation. Let Mr. Polakov again enlighten us:

"The Russian worker, both in theory and in fact, is a part owner, along with his fellows, in all of Russia's industries. Without actually having any stock certificates to show for it, his position is the same as the American stock holder's. In other words, the working class is the boss, the judge of its general conduct, subject only to the collective decisions of the workers. The executive is working for them and is held strongly accountable for all his actions."

The mechanics of securing socialist discipline are portrayed by Polakov in this interesting fashion:

"In every factory is a 'Red Corner', a room where workers and their leaders gather daily to discuss their problems. Here there is a different attitude towards suggestions for improvement. They are debated earnestly and eagerly, but once an agreement is reached it becomes practice forthwith. . . . Every mistake and shortcoming is subject to merciless crossfire in the newspapers, on factory bulletin boards, and in workers' mass meetings."

"Often their admonitions are personal and amusing, as for instance . . . which I copied from bulletin boards: 'It would be a good idea if comrade Petronov got himself some ammonia. He is drinking too much for his own good and for the good of the Communist Party.'

"The Soviet newspaper, a unique institution in itself, is also made up in large part of disclosures of deficiencies among workers, criticism of management, and demands for improvement."

Mr. Polakov has also examined the question of incentive and promotion in Socialist industry and has answered these questions as follows:

"It is a mistake to assume that in Russia workers lack opportunity for self-advancement. They have more opportunities than workers have in America, subject to the restrictions of the Soviet system. True, they cannot amass capital or operate any enterprise for personal profit, but they can advance to a position of trust and responsibility in industry, and in the Government, limited by their own abilities."

"Not only are there different 'categories' of work in the shop routine with wage rates in proportion to the class of work, but there is also an institution known as 'Workers Promotion'."

"The fostering of workers inventions is also an important part of the Soviet incentive plan. The recognition for such achievements is generous, and there are several types of rewards, promotion, money awards up to 10,000 rubles, or the coveted distinction of the Order of Lenin."

"Competition between factories is encouraged to promote general efficiency. Plants will challenge one another to make the best showing in respect to such matters as absenteeism, tardiness, spoilage, total tonnage," etc.

It is unnecessary and useless to hide the fact that it will take time for the U.S.S.R. to solve the above and similar problems on its road of Socialist construction. The engineer Polakov admits his:

" . . . deep-seated conviction that no forces either within Russia or without can halt the forward march of this nation towards her destiny. She has tremendous problems in abundance, but it seems only fair to assume she will overcome them with the same ruthless vigor, that same intentness of purpose with which she is now forging the foundations of a new civilization."

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Toward the Second Five Year Plan
The second Five-Year Plan now being developed will continue along the basic lines of the first Five Year Plan of Socialist economy. Every effort is to be made to increase the industrialization of the country, to enhance the

economic independence of the U.S.S.R. in relation to other countries, to improve and raise to a higher level the collective farm development, etc. It would be folly for anybody to assume that the U.S.S.R., in its second Five-Year Plan, is intending to relax its drive for the construction of heavy industry. That there is no such intention is shown especially by the fact that for this year there is planned an increase of 43% in the output of heavy industries and an increase of 29% in the articles of mass consumption.

We may be sure that the Soviet workers will utilize to the utmost their achievement of the *absolute predominance of the Socialist factor in agriculture, which is one of the decisive world historical factors for Socialism*, as a means of the general strengthening of the power of the working class in the U.S.S.R., for the enhancement of the popularity of the Soviet Government thruout the world.

Having achieved such socialist successes in the creation of the *means of production*, the U.S.S.R. will naturally now be able to produce more adequate *means of consumption*. Quibsheff, the head of the State Planning Committee, thus recently stressed that:

"In the coming year we propose to concentrate on 'light' industry; that is the production of consumers' goods for the benefit of the populace, rather than, as heretofore, devoting the greater part of our energy to 'heavy' industry or the production of the means of production."

The hopes of the world bourgeoisie for a slackening of tempo and pace are vain. Likewise empty are the hopes of some bourgeoisie for a retreat from Socialist construction because of Stalin's recent emphasis on the need for developing more skilled workers; on securing forces thru contact with collective farms; on mechanizing production processes; on increased personal responsibility; on developing a proletarian technical intelligentsia, while at the same time using to the utmost the old engineers and technicians because of their changed attitude towards the Soviet power arising from the failure of intervention as well from Socialist success; and finally on the application of business principles in order to accelerate the accumulation in industry.

Capitalist "Contributions" to Socialist Planning

Time and again enemies of the Soviet Union chide us for adopting capitalist methods in the construction of Socialism. Norman Thomas and Newton D. Baker have made especially strong "indictments" against the Soviet Union on this score. The "Socialist" Thomas is ready to rave about the individual's initiative which the U.S.S.R. is developing and to conclude therefrom that this means a reversion to capitalism. For instance, Mr. Thomas harbors and propagates the illusion that under capitalism everyone gets paid according to his deeds and services. The average worker in any factory can produce, even in the heydays of prosperity, his pay envelope as a painful and eloquent refutation.

Mr. Thomas, in an impromptu debate with the writer about a year ago at the Johns Hopkins University, further elaborated his thesis along the following lines: Russia is planning to catch up to the United States in productive capacity. Up to this point the U.S.S.R. can successfully plan. But the moment it reaches the level of technical development already attained by the United States, that moment there will be no guarantee that the Soviet Union will be able to plan and then the U.S.S.R. will really begin to face the problems that the United States already faces. Merely to state Mr. Thomas's thesis is to portray its shallowness and worthlessness. Apparently Mr. Thomas is that stripe of Socialist who cannot see the *fundamental difference between the U. S. and the Soviet Union—the class difference, the fact that in the U. S. production is carried on for individual profit while in the U.S.S.R. the economy is social, production being carried on in the interests of society as a whole*. Being opposed to the proletarian dictatorship in the U. S., Mr. Thomas does not understand and refuses even to see the meaning and the political, social and economic consequences of the very existence and development of a workers Soviet Republic, a proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union.

(To be continued)

For A United Front Of Labor

TRUTH ABOUT THE MARINE DEFENSE

Statement Of The Marine Defense Committee

We publish below the declaration of the Marine Workers Defense Committee.

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The case of Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer, the marine workers indicted in the New York "dynamite plot," is on the calendar for trial and the whole conspiracy will soon be unfolded before the court. At this moment of deepest peril for the indicted workers, when the question of their liberty or imprisonment is about to be decided for many years to come, the defense committee, which was formed at their request and which has conducted the struggle from the beginning in their behalf, turns again to the working class with an appeal for solidarity and support.

All the work of the committee has been carried on under the slogan of unity and solidarity, for we have been convinced that the united support of the workers is the best defense of the men on trial and the strongest safeguard against another frame-up, tragedy. For the same reason the committee, which is comprised of delegates representing various organizations and many diverse views, has refrained from all controversy and has endeavored to concentrate attention on the single issue of the defense of persecuted workers in the court of the class enemy.

Thru no fault of design of the committee the whole public discussion of the case has not been maintained on this level. Attempts have been made to disrupt the defense movement on the eve of the trial by the International Labor Defense. These attempts at disruption have been furthered by an article in the *Daily Worker* of January 25, which falsifies facts and jeopardizes the interests of the defendants at the time of their greatest need.

It becomes imperative, therefore, to reply to these attacks and bring out the truth of the situation with facts and documents. An exposure of these disruptive attempts, as a form of assistance to the prosecution, is at present a necessary means of defense. From this point of view, a chronological statement of the facts of the case is herewith submitted. This bare statement of the case as it really stands will suffice to enable the honest workers of all camps to judge the disrupters and call them to order.

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The Work of the Defense Committee

The first and most important answer to the accusations against the Marine Workers Defense Committee is the record of its work. Coming together for the defense of persecuted workers, who were deserted and without any other means of defense, the committee succeeded in securing able counsel to look after the legal inter-

ests of the defendants; it brought the case to the attention of the labor movement through systematic publicity work, distribution of leaflets, speakers before organizations and a public mass meeting. It succeeded in uniting in a common fight organizations and groups of conflicting tendencies and views on a broader basis than has been seen for many years.

In harmony with the wishes of the defendants, the committee dedicated itself from the very beginning to the principle of the united front of labor against the frame-up system. On that basis it invited every important labor organization, party, group and tendency to participate in the common work on an equal basis. The committee now contains representatives of two Communist groups, the C.P. I.A., the I.W.W., the Young People's Socialist League, trade unions, Anarchist groups and other organizations. The I.L.D. and the Communist Party are absent only because they refused specific and repeated invitations to participate.

That record alone, made in the face of many difficulties in a few weeks time, could stand as a refutation of any attack against the committee. But there is one more accomplishment, and the most important one of all: The Marine Workers Defense Committee established the fact that no worker, no matter how obscure he may be, who falls into the hands of the class enemy, shall be deserted and left without means of defense. Those who try to infringe this principle and deny assistance to a persecuted worker—as the Communist Party and the I.L.D. did in this case—will find a defense movement arising spontaneously without them. This is the greatest appeal to the honest workers of all organizations.

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How the Disrupters Acted at the Time of the Arrest

When the *Daily Worker* comes for-

The usual urge towards seasonal expansion is not only absent but business is even becoming duller. The stock market has alternated violently between action and reaction. The week witnessed the first increase in brokers loans after twenty-three consecutive weeks of decline. But Federal Reserve credit in use failed to increase appreciably. Steel sagged again to about 27% capacity. And all hope for seasonal