

World Socialism

THE 'PLAN' CONGRESS IN HOLLAND

By HERBERT ZAM

SINCE the advent of the crisis a series of "plans" have been adopted by various sections of the labor and Socialist movement, aiming at regulating industry, overcoming the crisis and eliminating unemployment. The best known of these plans is the DeMan Plan of Belgium, whose adoption paved the way for a coalition government; the latest accession to the field is the Dutch Plan, adopted at a special Congress of the Socialist Party and Trade Unions of Holland the end of October.

There can be no objection to plans as such. They have great propaganda value, provided they make clear that real planning can only come with Socialism, and that Socialism can only come through the class struggle. If these plans give the impression that they will either bring Socialism without a struggle, or what is worse, that they make Socialism unnecessary, then these plans are not plans, but "schemes"; they cannot promote Socialism, but on the contrary they discredit it if linked with the Socialist movement, and in the last analysis they are used by the capitalist class as a substitute for Socialism.

Not Even Liberal

The Dutch plan suffers from every one of the indicated disadvantages. It is by far the worst and most opportunist scheme yet produced in any section of the movement. Not only has it nothing to do with Socialism, but even a Tugwell or Roosevelt, to say nothing of LaFollette or Olson, would scornfully reject it as reactionary. And it is indeed true that the platforms of the American liberals are far to the left of the Dutch Plan.

The basic feature of the Plan and its point of departure is the abandonment of the class struggle and the elaboration of a system of planned class collaboration, with the objective of overcoming crises within the limits of capitalism. This was made clear by every reporter. The chairman of the Plan Congress, Kupers, the head of the trade unions, declared that the object of the Plan was "so ordering economic life that first we emerge from chaos, and second that we are protected against fresh disorders." The reporter on the Plan as a whole, H. Vos said that "the Plan endeavors to find an economic basis for the regulation of the mutual relationships of the groups which make up the population, and strives for a just valuation of the services of all." J. W. Albarda, the leader of the Socialist parliamentary fraction declared that the appeal was not merely to the workers. "We appeal, too, to other social classes. There are, in the life of a nation, moments when the differences between the classes recede into the background and all forces are pressed into the service of a common cause. Such a cause is the Plan."

Thus, at a time when the working class is suffering from the ravages of a capitalist crisis, instead of telling the workers that capitalism is responsible and only the overthrow of capitalism can abolish crises forever, the impression is created that the crisis is a sort of natural calamity, an "act of God" for which no one is to blame, that workers and exploiters must work together like good children of God in order to save the capitalist system. The ancient dogma that workers must not take advantages of calamities to overthrow capitalism,

which kept capitalism in power in Germany and Austria and paved the way for fascism, is again fished out to lull the indignation of the masses and prevent them from developing revolutionary ideas.

No Marxian Analysis

Of course it would be too much to expect any sort of Marxian analysis and we are not disappointed. For example, unemployment is explained as due to: "1. defective adaptation as between the various branches of production; 2. the unequal development of the machinery of production; 3. too rapid or too slow rationalization; and 4. the hindering of international trade." And this brilliant analysis, worthy of a bourgeois text book on elementary economics, is seriously offered as a substitute for "worn-out Marxism!" The complete bourgeois-mindedness of the authors of the Plan is further shown in the section dealing with the colonies. Are the colonies perhaps to be liberated? God forbid! We must civilize them. "The Plan does not overlook the colony. It includes all the elements essential to the building up of a great empire..." Of course, the pious phrase which all imperialists know by heart is not forgotten in the Plan. Everything done with the colonies will naturally be for their own interests!

After all these pretensions, the actual proposals of the Plan are ridiculously trite and uninspiring. The five main points are: 1. Public works; 2. Expansion of the merchant fleet; 3. Replacement of worn-out machinery; 4. Raising the school-leaving age; 5. Institution of the 40-hour week. "These first measures would have to be followed by a second series: The expansion of industry to render imports unnecessary on the one hand, and to satisfy new needs on the other. For this an Industrial Bank is necessary." No detailed analysis is required. Any group of liberals in this or any other country could devise a plan far more impressive and deep-going than this one. Every item in the Plan could be safely adopted by capitalism without in any way limiting its exploitation of the workers. Every item has been adopted in one or another country without in any way relieving the crisis. This Plan is so thoroughly reformist and pro-capitalist that even Socialist language is not employed. Throughout there is not a mention of Socialism, of the class struggle or of the interests of the workers as a class. The concluding speech of Koos Vorrink, the chairman of the Dutch Party was a fitting dedication to such a plan.

"Democracy is no longer a means to an end; it is the blood of our blood and the most sublime confession of our faith in civilization, in the value of the personality of each one of us. We are the heirs of the great spiritual heritage of the past, and we are conscious of the task of democratic Socialism, of the fostering soil of which the Christian civilization of Western Europe has also been a part."

This speech was not made by Ramsay MacDonald. It was not made by a Christian Socialist. It was not made by a Woodrow Wilson. It was made by the chairman

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It is not true that Italy lacks land for cultivation. There is plenty of land that is not cultivated for want of adequate roads. The stupid government of Italy is spending tens of millions for the construction of roads in distant Ethiopia instead of constructing them in Italy. It is not true that Italy lacks oil or metal mines. The fact is that they are neither explored nor exploited. In Calabria and other areas in the south there are many iron mines that extend for miles. They were at one time exploited by the old Bourbon government, but when the new united government was formed, after the "risorgimento," the industrial manufacturers of the north wanted to use the south only as a colony. For this reason the mines were abandoned and the whole south and center left undeveloped.

There are great, extensive soft coal mines in the region of Basilicata and Calabria, called "lignite," but they are not exploited. Instead, the supine government and the private industries in the north buy coal from England, the United States, France and Germany. This soft coal could be used for cooking and heating and could be had very cheap. But no, the people instead have to de-

of one of the largest parties in the Labor and Socialist International six years after the outbreak of the world's worst economic crisis!

In the United States we have been fortunate in that all the freak movements, Technocracy, Epic, Townsend, with their resulting damage to the labor movement, have materialized outside the Socialist and labor movement. In Europe they seem to find fertile soil inside the labor movement. In Europe they seem to find fertile soil inside the labor movement. They will have to be rooted out before the working class can make any real headway in the struggle against capitalism.