

Nikolai Rogovsky

**WORK
AND
EMPLOYMENT
IN THE USSR**



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The Economic Basis

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The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics covers a greater area than any other state—22,400,000 square kilometres. It stretches for more than 4,500 km from north to south and nearly 10,000 km from east to west. When people in Byelorussia or the Baltic states are hurrying off to the theatre for the evening performance, a new day is dawning in the Soviet Far East. On Soviet territory there are 11 of the 24 time zones into which the world is conventionally divided.

The USSR borders on twelve states. It has longer frontiers than any other country—they extend for 60,000 km, or the equivalent of one and a half times round the equator. Two-thirds of them are sea frontiers, for Soviet shores are washed by twelve seas and three oceans.

The economic basis of Soviet society is the socialist system of economy, with public ownership of the means of production and natural resources. In mineral wealth the USSR is without equal, occupying first place in the world for reserves of coal, iron ore, manganese, natural gas, lead, nickel, cobalt, tungsten, molybdenum, antimony, sulphur,

apatite, asbestos and a number of other minerals.

Altogether the Soviet Union has about 50,000 big industrial enterprises, more than 31,000 collective farms and more than 17,000 state farms.

The Soviet economy is governed by an overall state plan—this is possible because the means of production are socially owned. The result is that production can be organised in the most effective way, society is free of the ruinous consequences of anarchy in production, from economic crises and recessions, and the working people no longer have to fear unemployment. The economy can develop without hindrance.

The ultimate aim of production in the Soviet Union is an abundance of material and cultural wealth for everyone. The maximum development of social production is considered an essential condition for building a communist society, in which the governing principle will be: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

A modern highly developed economy was created in the USSR within an extremely short time. It took the Soviet people less than four decades to transform pre-revolutionary Russia, which in 1917 was 50-100 years behind developed countries in the West economically and technically, into a powerful industrial state. About half this period, moreover, was taken up by repelling invaders and rehabilitating the war-ravaged economy.

The fact that public ownership of the means of production has been established, an end put to the exploitation of labour, the soil for economic crises removed, unemployment ended and planned economic management introduced has given socialism decisive advantages over capitalism in the sphere of production.

Industrial production is growing in the USSR much faster than in the major capitalist countries. In the 21 years from 1951 to 1971 the average annual growth rate for industrial production in the USA was 4.1 per cent whereas in the USSR the figure was 10 per cent. While it took the USA 18 years to double industrial output, Britain 22 years and West Germany over 11 years, the Soviet Union did it in eight and a half years.

These are the advances being made by the socialist economy, convincing evidence of its dynamic development.

Today the USSR is a big industrial power with well developed agriculture equipped with modern machinery. This can be seen from the following figures. In 1974 it produced 975,000 million kilowatt-hours of electricity, extracted 459 million tons of oil, 261,000 million cubic metres of natural gas, and 684 million tons of coal, and turned out 99.9 million tons of pig iron and 136 million tons of steel.

Agricultural machinery consists mainly of tractors, combine harvesters and lorries. In 1973, 2,180,000 tractors, 670,000 combine harvesters and 1,284,000 lorries were in use on Soviet farms.

In 1974 the farm machinery industry produced 347,000 tractors, and over 190,000 combines designed for a variety of purposes, while the chemical industry provided agriculture with 63,900,000 tons of mineral fertiliser.

On the basis of economic growth, consistent measures have been taken to raise standards of living. Between 1971 and 1973 there were wage rises for 31 million people, or one in three of Soviet wage and salary earners. Twenty-three million people were better off as a result of higher

pensions, allowances, grants and other benefits. Better housing was provided for 34 million.

The Soviet state pays constant attention to the improvement of working conditions and safety measures and the preservation and improvement of the environment. More than 4,000 million roubles were spent on labour protection and better safety measures in 1971-73 while the state invested about 2,000 million roubles in combating environmental pollution.

Population

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Only China and India have greater populations than the USSR. Although the fascist onslaughts of 1941-45 led to tremendous loss of life—over 20 million Soviet people died—the population of the USSR today numbers over 253 million, over 50 million more than in 1940.

Yet the country is still suffering from population imbalances brought about by the war. Among the over-48s, for example (those who fought in the war) there are only 525 men to every 1,000 women.

The tremendous losses of men, and the low birth-rate during and immediately after the war were to a considerable extent responsible for a certain drop in the birth-rate observed in the mid-sixties, when the comparatively small generation born in the mid-forties came of marriageable age.

Today more than half the population of the USSR is under thirty. As regards the birth-rate there was a certain increase on the 1969 figure in

the period 1970-74. But although the natural population growth is at a fairly satisfactory level, the Soviet state is interested in seeing it increase still more.

Stable population growth is made possible by better living standards, improvements in the universal free medical service, and state social security. The overall death-rate is only 25 per cent of what it was in Russia before the revolution, and the child mortality rate less than 9 per cent of the old figure. The Soviet Union's natural population growth is one of the highest for any economically advanced country. Average life expectancy in the country has more than doubled since pre-revolution times, having increased from 32 to over 70 years.

Population density is not uniform throughout the Soviet Union. In certain areas of the Russian Federation (the industrial heart of the Federation), the Ukraine, Moldavia, and Uzbekistan the figure equals that of the densely populated states of Europe. In the vast expanses of northern and north-eastern regions, however, there are mountainous areas where the density does not even amount to one person per square kilometre.

Average density for the USSR as a whole is roughly 11 per sq. km.

Because of the rapid economic development of the eastern areas of the country since the war, especially Kazakhstan, Central Asia and Siberia, the population increase in these regions is far above the national average. This is due partly to the migration of people to those areas from central regions, and partly to the higher birth-rate in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The Soviet Union is a multinational state, with more than a hundred nationalities. The 1970 cen-

sus figures show that along with the large population of Russians (129 million, or 53.4 per cent of the total) or Ukrainians (40.7 million), there are some very small nationalities, numbering less than a thousand (Kets, Orochi and Nganasani) or even less than 500 (Aleutians or Yukagirs).

The basis of the Soviet policy on the nationalities question is equal rights and opportunities for free national development for all peoples.

Article 123 of the USSR Constitution states: "Equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity, is an indefeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of any direct or indirect privileges for, citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, are punishable by law."

The Soviet multinational state has shown how to combine harmoniously the interests of society as a whole with the interests of each nationality—the first such example in history.

Tremendous credit is due to Lenin, leader of the Communist Party and the people, for his part in the creation of the multinational state. Developing in a creative way the ideas of Marx and Engels he created a consistent body of theory on the nationalities question, and worked out the scientific principles of the Communist Party's policy on this question. Marxism-Leninism has pointed out the place and role of the nationalities question in the revolutionary transformation of the world and has shown how it is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle, the interests of socialism. It has shown the vital need for unity of the proleta-

riat of all nationalities in the fight against capitalist enslavement and for social and national liberation.

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in October 1917 was the principal political condition for carrying through radical social and economic changes and putting into effect Lenin's programme on the nationalities question.

The Soviet state was the first in the world to immediately grant complete freedom to all oppressed nationalities. The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, adopted on Lenin's initiative in the early days after the establishment of Soviet power, proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of peoples, the right of each one of them to self-determination, to the extent of separation and the formation of independent state, the abolition of all national or religious privileges and restrictions, and the free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups living on the territory of the Soviet state.

These principles were not simply proclaimed but were put into practice. Furthermore, it was the efforts of the Soviet Union that later led to the principle of self-determination of nations becoming generally accepted and being incorporated in the United Nations Charter.

After the revolution in October 1917 a number of independent Soviet republics were formed on the territory of the former Russian empire. Their joint struggle against internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention from 1918 to 1922, the close co-ordination of their activities in foreign affairs and their common efforts to restore and develop the national economy convinced the young national republics that if they were to preserve their independence and people's power it was essential

to set up a stable state entity—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Lenin gave a scientific exposition of the historical necessity for the Soviet republics to unite, and worked out the internationalist principles governing the building of a multinational state. “We want a *voluntary* union of nations,” he said, “a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another—a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent.”

The decision to come together in one union was adopted by congresses of Soviets, the supreme organs of power in each republic.

On December 30, 1922 the First All-Union Congress of Soviets considered and unanimously adopted the Declaration on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The fact that the Soviet republics voluntarily came together to form the USSR ensured favourable conditions for reorganising society on socialist principles and for the economic and cultural advance of all the Soviet nationalities.

Guaranteeing the Right to Work

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At the beginning of every year Soviet newspapers publish the report of the Central Statistical Board of the USSR on how the economic plan for the previous year was carried out. It includes a diversity of figures indicating the state of the Soviet national economy under the headings “Industry”, “Agriculture, Transport and Communications” and “Capital Construction”.

Another section is headed “Growth of the People’s Material Well-Being and Cultural Standards”. It contains data on wage increases, on payments and benefits paid out to the population from public consumption funds, on the growth in real incomes, on state allocations for education, health, etc.

Then comes a line without a single figure in it, but is far more eloquent than a wealth of figures: “As in previous years there was full employment. . .”

The years pass, and this line goes on from one Central Statistical Board report to the next. It attracts no attention, for it is something people have become quite used to. For over forty years now—since 1930—there has been no unemployment in the Soviet Union. At the same time notices can always be seen posted up outside factories announcing a need for weavers, electricians, building workers, technicians, engineers, and so on.

A different picture entirely is to be seen today in the world of free enterprise. In the leading capitalist countries the army of unemployed is constantly on the increase. The United States, for instance (according to 1975 figures), has nearly 9 million unemployed, while Britain, West Germany and Italy have all passed the million mark. In capitalist society production is organised first and foremost on the basis of the owner’s desire to extract the maximum possible profits, that is, on the maximum exploitation of hired labour, with the threat of dismissal hanging over every worker, the possibility of being deprived by the bosses of his means of livelihood. So under capitalism work is a heavy burden for the worker, an enforced necessity.

The character of labour under socialism is radi-

cally different. Public ownership of the tools and means of production has ruled out forever any form of exploitation of the working man. Comradely co-operation and mutual help between people unburdened by exploitation prevail everywhere, in their turn giving rise to a new attitude to labour. More and more labour is becoming a matter of honour and prowess for every worker, and from this results the free, socially conscious working discipline of people engaged in production, united by the common aim of building communism.

The right to work is guaranteed by Article 118 of the USSR Constitution: "Citizens of the USSR have the right to work, that is, the right to guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality.

"The right to work is ensured by the socialist organisation of the national economy, the steady growth of the productive forces of Soviet society, the elimination of any possibility of economic crises, and the abolition of unemployment."

The Soviet state is constantly concerned to ensure that everyone does in reality enjoy the right to work. Each new five-year plan provides for millions of people to be drawn into employment. In the 9th five-year plan period alone, i.e., 1971-75, the number of people in employment increased by about 10 million, bringing the number employed to over 92 per cent of the possible work force—the highest figure for any country in the world. On the whole the only people not engaged in social production are women with large families or with very young children.

In the Soviet Union work has become the chief yardstick of a person's worth—not the amount of wealth or property he has, nor his national origin, but only his own labour. This is what de-

termines the position of a man or woman in socialist society.

Under socialism the fruits of man's labour belong to the whole of society and are distributed in the interests of the entire people. In other words, work has ceased to be the means of one man exploiting another and is now seen as the source of the progress of society as a whole and of each of its members individually. Labour is held in high public esteem. The best workers receive orders and medals, or the title of Hero of Socialist Labour.

Work is regarded as a service to society, as the supreme meaning of human existence. This is one of the most vital features of the socialist way of life.

In socialist society everyone works both for himself and for society in general. Every achievement in production, every success in work helps improve the material prosperity and cultural standards of the people. Everyone in the Soviet Union knows quite confidently that if today he works better and produces more than he did yesterday, then tomorrow he will receive more material and cultural wealth, and this cannot help giving him a more active attitude to his job.

Speaking of labour under socialism, Lenin said: "For the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work." This gave rise to a new attitude to labour.

An example of this new type of attitude to labour is socialist competition, which is carried out between individual workers and also between entire collectives to see who can do best on the job.

Such competition is only possible in the new socialist society, after the working people's awareness that they are the bosses of production, the masters of the country has led to a new, creative attitude to work, has given each one a direct interest in the results of his own labour and the work of the whole industrial enterprise at which he is employed.

There is nothing of self-aggrandisement or the desire for personal gain about socialist competition, and it is nothing like the competition seen in the capitalist world. Its principles are: "One works well, another better, and another hangs behind. Catch up with the best and help those lagging behind." This accords with the character of socialist society, in which relations between people are based on comradely co-operation and mutual help among working people who have been liberated from exploitation. In friendly competition they have extensive opportunities to display personal initiative and their individual creative abilities.

Today virtually all working collectives in the country and tens of millions of individual workers are competing to complete ahead of time the socio-economic programme laid down by the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for the 9th five-year plan period.

Their own initiative and creative attitude to work are constantly giving rise to new forms of competition among the workers. Today they are united by a common aim—to produce more goods, of better quality, and with less expenditure.

Many collectives are adopting "counter-plans", which put forward higher targets than are included in the state plans. They are competing to cut costs to a minimum in production, to make better

use of new machinery and equipment and to make production as efficient as possible.

In the USSR socialist competition has become a powerful factor in social progress.

Industrialisation and the creation of new industrial centres have led to a rapid increase in urban population. In 1940 there were 63 million people living in the towns—a third of the total population of the USSR. By the beginning of 1972 the figure was over 142.5 million, or 58 per cent. Today the share of urban population in the whole population considerably exceeds the world average and is roughly equal to the average for Europe.

More than half the Soviet population are women—at the beginning of 1974 there were 134.7 million. They play an immense role in economic, cultural, social and political life. They have equal rights in all spheres of endeavour and are guaranteed equal pay with men for equal work.

If one day all the women in the Soviet Union suddenly stayed at home and did not turn up for work, half the factory shops would be empty. (Women account for 49 per cent of those working in Soviet industry). The schools would have to close, for 72 per cent of staff of educational and cultural establishments are women. There would be no one to deal with the sick—85 per cent of health-service workers are women. The harvest would be in jeopardy, and work would come to a halt on dairy farms, for 45 per cent of the people working on Soviet farms are women.

Perhaps Soviet women do not advance so well as men in their chosen trades or professions, despite the fact that they receive the same training? Here are some figures: 41,000 women are heads of industrial enterprises of various kinds. Women

account for 50 per cent of the heads of institutions of the health service, trade and public catering, and public services. . .

The working class of the Soviet Union numbers 69.1 million. It creates the principal tools and means of labour and a considerable proportion of the consumer goods. It is upon the efforts of the working class above all that the level of production and the standards of material prosperity of the Soviet people depend. Almost three-quarters of the public wealth of the USSR is created by the hands of the workers.

The working class is the leading force in Soviet society. This position of the working class in society is not an artificially contrived privilege.

The position of the working class in the system of socialist social relations results from its revolutionary traditions, disciplined character, collectivism, selfless devotion to communism, its internationalism, staunchness, heroism and other lofty moral and political qualities.

"The working class has been and remains the main productive force of society," Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, pointed out at the Party's 24th Congress.

The working class, the most organised and politically conscious class, is the most active socio-political force in developed socialist society. It stands at the head of the people in the building of communism and takes part in the formulation and practical implementation of the Communist Party's policy, in the drawing up and carrying out of plans for communist construction and in running the state and public affairs.

The workers are the backbone of the Communist Party, of the Soviets, and of public organisations. Workers make up 40.7 per cent of the Par-

ty's membership and 31.7 per cent of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Standards of Soviet workers, both as regards general education and special job qualifications are steadily rising. In 1959 a total of 396 out of every thousand workers had higher or secondary education, whereas today's figure is 660.

Growth of Labour Productivity— the Main Way to Develop the Economy

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At all stages of Soviet economic development the steady growth of labour productivity has been a significant indicator of the rise in the efficiency of production and the decisive condition for creating the material basis for communism and further raising material and cultural standards of the Soviet people.

In the very early years after the establishment of Soviet government Lenin put forward well-founded arguments showing the prime importance of increased labour productivity for the success of socialism. "In the last analysis," he said, "productivity of labour is the most important, the principal thing for the victory of the new social system."

In the years of Soviet power labour productivity in industry has increased 20.7 times over, and in agriculture 5.2 times.

Only in the first three years of the 9th five-year plan period labour productivity in industry rose 19 per cent, and in agriculture 17 per cent.

These stable growth rates are due above all to the provision of new plant and machines and the renewal of old ones at industrial enterprises, state and collective farms, in railway, water and road transport and in other spheres. For example, between January 1, 1960 and January 1, 1973 the value of plant and machinery in use in the Soviet national economy increased 2.9-fold.

Particularly big changes have taken place in industry—the most important branch of the national economy. In 1966-70 industrial plant and machinery increased 34 per cent and labour productivity by 32 per cent.

An important indicator of the growth of production efficiency is the amount of electricity used in production. In 1973 the USSR generated 915,000 million kilowatt-hours of electricity of which 523,600 million were consumed by industry and 64,700 million by transport.

Throughout the entire period of socialist construction the chief task has remained production of the means of production, which determines technical reequipment of all branches of the economy, and also ensures high growth rates in the production of consumer goods.

During the 8th five-year plan period (1966-70) the growth rates for means of production and consumer goods drew nearer to each other. This was evidence of the high level of development in the former category, which constitutes the essential basis for speeding up the output of consumer goods. Because the growth rates in the two categories approximated more closely, supplies of consumer goods substantially improved. In the 9th five-year plan period (1971-75) there were further increases in growth rates, especially in the production of consumer goods.

Data on numbers of metal-cutting machine tools and forging-and-pressing equipment is an equally revealing indicator of the growth of efficiency in production. At January 1, 1973, the Soviet Union had 4,080,000 metal-cutting machine tools and 948,000 units of forging-and-pressing equipment as against 710,000 metal-cutting machine tools and 119,000 units of forging-and-pressing equipment in 1940.

In four years of the current five-year plan period (1971-74) about 16,000 new types of machines, equipment, apparatus and tools and means of automation were designed in the USSR. The technical levels achieved in operation and also the economic indicators considerably surpass those of previously produced equipment.

In the last 10-15 years a great deal has been done in the Soviet Union to create complex-mechanised, automated and complex-automated industrial enterprises.

Whereas on July 1, 1965 there were 1,900 such enterprises, in 1973 the figure was 5,500. In 1973 alone over 9,000 mechanised production lines and about 2,000 automated lines were installed in Soviet plants, and 5,000 sections, shops and production departments went over to complex mechanisation and automation.

Changes in the internal structure of production due to increasing the use of gas and liquid fuels for power, technology and simply for heating have also had a good effect on the growth of labour productivity in industry.

Another equally important potential for increasing efficiency of labour is the correct siting of productive forces. A great deal of work of all kinds precedes a decision on the choice of a site for each new enterprise. Preference is given to areas where

cheap raw materials and power are available, since these factors ultimately determine the economic efficiency of production and the level of labour productivity. In this connection such areas as the Far East, East and West Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan, are the most attractive, having large power resources and big reserves of a variety of minerals.

Industrialisation has ensured the existence of the material and technical base for the development of large-scale agricultural production. At the beginning of 1975 the collective and state farms had 2,527,000 tractors, 753,000 grain-harvesting combines and 1,534,000 lorries.

The considerable increase in labour productivity observed in leading branches of the economy has been made possible by technical advances in production. In 1974 alone, the fourth year of the ninth five-year plan, labour productivity in industry rose by 6.5 per cent, and this accounted for a considerable increase in production.

Yet there are potentials for raising labour productivity of which sufficient use is not being made. That is why the 1971-75 economic plan provided for high growth rates of labour productivity: 39 per cent in industry, 37 per cent in construction, 37-40 per cent in agriculture, and 23 per cent in rail transport.

Socialist Principle of Remuneration of Labour

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In an article entitled *Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution*, Lenin wrote of the need to build socialism "not directly relying on enthusiasm,

but aided by the enthusiasm... personal incentive and business principles". This statement of Lenin's constitutes the basis of the policy followed in the Soviet Union on remuneration of labour. The socialist principle operative in the USSR on this point envisages that every participant in social labour will be rewarded for his work, in accordance with its quantity and quality, in money wages.

To carry this through, there must first of all be equal pay for equal work, and in this connection socialism has eliminated the formerly existing discrimination in payment according to sex, origin or nationality.

Secondly, work that differs in quantity and quality must be rewarded differently. This is what ensures that there is a material incentive for the worker to increase the quantity and raise the quality of his labour.

Wage levels in the USSR depend on the increasing of social production, and not on the market situation, as happens in capitalist countries. The level is laid down by the Soviet state, on the basis of the relationship between funds of consumption and accumulation.

In the Soviet Union there is a national system of wage scales and rates of payment for the workers and of salary scales for the remaining employees—engineering and technical personnel, including managers of factories, offices, etc., clerical workers of various levels, service personnel, trainees, and so on. Most widespread are scales in which the top rate is twice the lowest rate (i.e. Grade I, according to which the unskilled workers are paid).

Wage scales and rates of payment, salary scales and bonus systems are approved by the Soviet government. This centralisation means that correct

differentials are maintained between those employed in the same field of work, wherever they may be, and creates barriers to the emergence of arbitrary decisions on this score in separate institutions and localities. It prevents a levelling down of remuneration and ensures the maintenance of levels consistent with the quantity and quality of work done.

The rate of pay of a particular worker at an enterprise is fixed in accordance with his qualifications and also with account for the difficulty and the extent to which there may be any deviation from the desirable conditions of work (work in hot or particularly cold shops, in the air or underground, with high levels of radiation, smoke, gas, etc.).

The main form of remuneration for labour in industry is payment by the job. This is subdivided into what is known as the individual direct and unrestricted system; progressive payment by the job; payment by the job plus bonus; piece rate; the team and indirect systems. Two-thirds of the workers are paid by the job.

The time-rate system is also subdivided. It can be simply what its name suggests, or may be linked with a bonus system.

With the individual direct and unrestricted system of payment by the job the rate remains unchanged for all output handed in by the worker. The rate is achieved by dividing the appropriate wage under the wage scale by the output quota.

With the system of progressive payment by the job the worker is paid according to a sliding scale that increases progressively as he overfulfils the output quotas established.

With the payment by the job plus bonus system a direct and unrestricted system of payment by

the job is combined with the award of bonuses for achieving certain qualitative and quantitative showings.

Under the piece-rate system the actual earnings of the worker for a certain amount of work are fixed beforehand. If a group of workers with identical qualifications carry out work collectively, and it is assessed as a whole on a group rate, they are paid by the team (or group) system.

Payment by the time-rate system depends on the actual time spent working and on the workers' qualifications. Under a simple time-rate system the size of earnings is determined by the wage scale and the length of time worked. In practice hourly, daily and monthly rates are in use.

With the time-rate and bonus system bonuses are paid on top of wages or salaries.

The overwhelming majority of managerial, engineering, technical and clerical staff in the Soviet Union are paid salaries plus bonuses. The degree of responsibility and the character of the work are taken into consideration, and also the complexity of the production processes and the economic significance of the branch of the economy or the enterprise in which they work.

The management of an enterprise has the right to decide which system of payment for labour will be used, with the agreement of the appropriate trade union organisations.

Freedom of choice of a trade or profession creates conditions for a constant growth in real incomes.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government pay unflinching attention to improving systems and forms of remuneration for labour. As a rule, fundamental measures in this connection are taken on a country-wide scale, in accordance with the

USSR's five-year economic development plans. A characteristic feature of such measures is that they tackle a number of important problems at once: raising minimum wages; raising wages and salaries for middle-income industrial and office workers; remedying payment systems for separate groups of working people, and raising the general income level of the population.

The successes achieved in Soviet economic development have created a firm material base for a continually rising standard of living. The national state income, the only source from which wages and salaries can be raised, in 1974 alone rose by 14,000 million roubles to a figure of almost 300,000 million roubles.

Wages and salaries and various increments are established with a view to attracting people to work in the most vital branches of the economy, the most important areas of the country from this point of view. For example, for work underground or in hot shops (in the coal or metallurgy industries) higher wage and salary scales obtain than in other industries. In addition, length-of-service increments are paid to certain categories of people working in the industries referred to. Such increments are also paid to forestry workers and farm machinery operators.

With a view to attracting man-power to the Far North and equivalent regions, wage and salary increases of 50 to 100 per cent have been introduced for people working in these parts of the country, the actual size of the increase depending upon length of service in these conditions. Here, as in parts of the Far East, East and West Siberia and the north European part of the USSR a proportional increase is paid to compensate for the additional expenditure necessitated by the na-

tural and climatic conditions in these areas, which involve extra outgoings for food, warm clothing, heating, etc.

In some regions of the Far North and equivalent areas all people working in state, co-operative and public enterprises, institutions and organisations receive a supplement to their monthly pay irrespective of the local coefficient or their length of service. For instance, those working in the Chukchi National Area, the North Evenk District of the Magadan Region, the Koryak National Area, the Aleutian District of the Kamchatka Region, or on the islands in the Arctic Ocean and its seas (apart from islands in the White Sea) receive an additional 10 per cent at the end of the first six months, and another 10 per cent for each subsequent six months of work. The increase may rise to a limit of 100 per cent of a wage or salary.

People who work in parts of the Far North for at least 15 calendar years, or in equivalent areas for at least 20 years, receive pensions at 55 (men) or 50 (women).

The introduction of these privileges has made it possible in the main to solve the problem of finding manpower for areas of the Far North and equivalent areas, which has facilitated the successful opening up of natural wealth there, as well as for other parts of the Soviet Union with unfavourable climatic conditions, and also for a number of branches of the economy, including industries with comparatively hard conditions of work.

There are a number of special features of remuneration of labour in the USSR which are present only in a socialist economy. For example, the wages fund is formed on the basis of the cost of production or the direct expenditure on the pro-

duction of a product plus part of the profits left at the disposal of the enterprise concerned. This money is spent both in accordance with wage rates and with the bonus arrangements in force, and also on salaries for engineering, technical and other staff. Bonuses for workers on the year's production results at the factory are also paid out of this fund.

There is another source from which payments can be made to the workers. From this fund, set up by the state, bonuses are paid for introducing new machinery and mechanisms, for bringing into use newly constructed capacities, achieving high results in socialist competition between factories, saving fuel and power, making consumer goods from production waste and scrap material, for increasing the production of export goods, etc.

The wages fund is one of the most important indicators of the economic plan. Its size depends on the amount of work envisaged in the plan (industrial and agricultural output, amount of building work, passenger and goods transport, etc.), and also on the tasks set for increasing labour productivity and the accepted levels of average earnings and the number of wage and salary staff. It includes not only payments according to the rates of remuneration in force and the position with regard to bonuses but also various types of supplementary payments—for overtime, for normal and additional holidays, for deviations from normal conditions of work, for payment of local coefficients and long-service increments (where these are in force), etc.

The fund does not remain constant for branches of material production. Its size may increase or diminish, since the issue of funds to enterprises for the payment of wages is carried out by agen-

cies of the State Bank to the extent that the plan of work is fulfilled. For example, in industry, when a factory fulfils its output plan by, say, 98 per cent, it receives the same percentage of the money due to it for wages, while if it overfulfils its plan, the money it gets for wages is increased by an approved coefficient (from 0.6 to 1) for each percentage by which the output plan is overfulfilled.

A similar system prevails in agriculture, transport and building. As for people working in non-productive branches of the economy, their wage funds remain at a fixed level, and there do not have to be any recalculations.

The wages fund plays a major role in determining such important economic proportions as the balance of income and expenditure of the population, total retail trade turnover, cash plan, etc. From the fund come 90 per cent of the wages and salaries of factory and office workers. Consequently it is the most important factor in determining incomes and living standards of the population.

The material incentive fund is formed at each enterprise, its size depending upon the extent of sales of its products, on its profits, its level of efficiency and growth in labour productivity. Today it amounts to about 10 per cent of the total wages fund.

The material incentive fund plays an important part in raising production efficiency, as can be seen in the growth of profits in the past few years. In 1970 profits of industrial enterprises and economic organisations were 87,000 million roubles as against 37,000 million in 1965, that is, an increase of 140 per cent during the eighth five-year plan period. In 1973 the figure was 98,000 million roubles!

The payment of bonuses on the results of the year's work of an enterprise—a so-called thirteenth month's pay—increases the incentive for both factory and office workers to achieve higher economic indices and also encourages people to remain in their jobs.

Working Hours and Conditions

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In June 1918 Lenin signed a decree granting factory and office workers the right to annual paid holidays of two weeks. Even earlier, five days after the socialist revolution was carried through in October 1917, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR passed a decree establishing an eight-hour working day and a 48-hour working week. This is what Lenin had to say on the subject: "Our adoption of a code of laws which firmly lays down the principles of labour legislation such as the eight-hour day... is a tremendous achievement for Soviet rule."

The working week in industry was cut by 18 hours and the working day by 2-4 hours—in tsarist Russia it was 10-12 hours.

Today, a 40-hour week is in force in Soviet industry, while other branches of the economy have a 39.4-hour week.

Everyone in the USSR who works has the right to an annual holiday for which they receive their average pay. Those who work in difficult conditions (underground, in hot shops, etc.), in areas of the Far North and equivalent areas get extra paid holiday. The extra holiday period ranges from

3 days to 36, and 55 million workers enjoy this additional time.

Average annual holidays are now about three and a half weeks.

People also have other kinds of paid leave—for study, to do creative work, sick leave, maternity leave, etc.

The constant improvement of conditions of work is a law of the development of socialist production. The Soviet state and the trade unions devote a great deal of attention to this question. One of the state's main concerns is to protect the health of the working people, to ensure good safety conditions at work, and to cut out occupational diseases and industrial injuries.

Standards of working conditions are laid down in Fundamental Labour Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics. For example, the Labour Code of the Russian Federation contains a special chapter on labour protection which lays down the responsibility of managements to ensure healthy and safe conditions of work at all enterprises, offices and organisations.

The management's responsibility includes the introduction of modern means for ensuring safety which will rule out industrial injuries, and of standards of hygiene precluding the development of occupational diseases. Labour protection requirements must also be met during the construction and use of production premises, machinery and equipment. These requirements cover, among other things, the rational use of territory and production buildings, the correct use of equipment and proper organisation of production processes, protection of workers from harmful conditions of work, the maintenance of production premises and working places in accordance with health and hygiene

norms and the provision of washrooms, lavatories, sick rooms, etc.

Designs of machine tools and other production equipment have to conform to the demands of safety and industrial hygiene. It is forbidden by law to bring into use or to put into serial production equipment that does not accord with the rules of labour protection.

Considerable funds and the necessary materials are made available to enterprises by the state for carrying out labour protection measures, and it is forbidden to use them for any other purpose. Soviet trade unions check to see that these funds and materials are not misused. Furthermore, their agreement is required before any new industrial enterprise can be put into use—this is refused if it does not provide all essential services for its workers or does not satisfy health requirements. Trade union committees have the right to demand that work stop in a shop or in an entire enterprise if safety requirements there are not observed.

Replenishing the Work Force

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Because of the Soviet Union's high economic development rates vast numbers of workers have constantly to be drawn into production. The scale and complexity of this problem may be judged from the fact that between 1928 and 1973 the number of workers employed in the economy has risen by 60 million.

The problem of keeping the developing national economy supplied with manpower year by year is complicated by the fact that in a number of

areas the demand for manpower exceeds the supply. This is true, above all, of parts of the Far East, East Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan, which have vast sources of power and raw materials. The problem of supplying them with manpower is being tackled in a variety of ways—firstly, by providing new enterprises with advanced modern machinery and equipment.

Secondly, measures are taken to attract manpower to the Far North, Far East, and Kazakhstan from other parts of the country where it is being used to less effect. The chief way of doing this is by offering material incentives—big supplements to wages and salaries, long-service increments, extra holidays and privileged pension conditions.

Thirdly, training and re-training facilities are provided at state expense in accordance with the needs of particular branches of the economy and of economic regions. In 1974 alone about 25 million people learnt new trades or improved their skills at industrial enterprises, institutions and organisations.

How can new forces be found for the Soviet economy? Primarily by drawing in young people as they reach working age. Then come housewives and people engaged primarily with work on their own plot of land, and after that pensioners and people who have retired because of industrial injury or occupational diseases—many of these can be employed on certain types of work.

A differentiated approach is required to draw in these groups of people. For example, as young people leave higher, secondary, specialised secondary, or vocational schools they receive their appointment to jobs on a planned basis. Each as he leaves his educational institution is offered a job in accordance with his qualifications. In 1974

a total of 3.7 million people from higher schools, specialised secondary schools and vocational schools started work in the national economy, 1.4 million more than in 1973.

During the summer holidays student detachments consisting of young people studying at universities, institutes, specialised secondary schools and vocational schools, and also senior school pupils take part in social production. This gives them practical experience of production and an opportunity to see more of the life of their country. In addition they earn good money.

In order to satisfy additional needs for manpower there is also a redistribution going on of people within individual branches of the economy and between different branches—these are people who are already working in production. This redistribution of forces is carried out on a purely voluntary principle, by the organised transfer of workers.

Local bodies concerned with the use of manpower systematically bring to public notice the manpower requirements of construction sites and industrial enterprises. With workers who want to go off and work on projects short of manpower these bodies conclude on behalf of the site or enterprise one- to three-year labour contracts, which provide for the transport of the worker, his family and his baggage to the place of work.

Workers who go off in this way to work elsewhere are given non-repayable grants, the size of which depends upon the length of the labour contract, the area and the branch of the economy to which the enterprise or site belongs. Fares and transport of baggage are paid for, and there is a daily subsistence allowance covering the time of the journey.

As regards the recruitment to production of able-bodied people engaged solely in household duties or looking after their little plot of land, for example, between 1969 and 1971 more than 2.9 million such people were drawn into social production.

In a number of branches of the economy and economic regions pensioners are attracted to work to the extent of their capabilities, and they continue to receive their pensions in addition to their wages.

It must be emphasised that all forms used for drawing Soviet people into work in the economy are purely voluntary. Only the planned allocation of jobs to graduates of full-time educational institutions is compulsory (for a period of two years).

The USSR has an extensive system of vocational schools, courses and other facilities for training skilled workers, and in the 8th five-year plan period (1966-70) they trained more than 30 million people for the economy—skilled workers of all kinds. The figure for the 9th five-year plan period is 38.5 million.

Vocational schools have a special role to play in training skilled workers. There are nearly 6,000 of them in the country, with a total of about 3 million students. In 1974 they turned out 1.9 million skilled workers and took in 2.2 million boys and girls.

Today there is not only a demand for skilled workers—they must also have an all-round education. Quite justifiably, young people want to finish vocational schools with a complete secondary education so that they may go on if they wish to enter a higher educational institution. In 1974 more than

400,000 boys and girls entered vocational schools in which they will be able to learn a trade and finish their secondary education.

Full Employment and Its Problems

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Full employment of the population of the USSR in socially useful work brings in its train specific problems and certain difficulties in its implementation following from the concrete situation. One such problem is the relative shortage of manpower in various fields of the economy.

The natural growth of the able-bodied population is no longer sufficient to cover the needs of production for additional manpower.

Difficulties like this are tackled by constantly, and in a planned way, raising the technical level of production and increasing labour productivity, which make it possible to release workers and redistribute them in accordance with need. For example, the rise in the level of industrialisation of work in agriculture and forestry has made it possible to halve the percentage of the population working in these spheres and consequently to increase the percentage engaged in other fields, particularly in non-productive spheres.

Other problems arising from full employment under socialism include the use of labour resources of small towns and villages, and timely guidance in the choice of occupation.

In small towns and rural areas young people cannot always find employment that suits their tastes and inclinations, and they are obliged to leave their home town or village. This problem

is now being tackled by transferring industry from big cities to small towns and also by creating in such towns branches of large enterprises, developing industrial-agrarian complexes in rural areas, and so on.

The rise in the general educational level of young people has brought to prominence the question of giving timely guidance in the choice of occupation. Boys and girls with ten-year secondary education have naturally begun to look for work in accordance with their qualifications. But this tendency is also in the economic interests of the country, as can be seen from the fact that general ten-year secondary education has been introduced in the USSR. Automation and mechanisation of production processes is going on a wide scale, which increases efficiency and provides opportunities for young people to make fuller use of their knowledge.

One big problem arising from the scientific and technological revolution is the need for a rapid increase in skilled people at all levels, from worker to manager. In 1971-75 nine million skilled workers were trained in vocational schools, and a similar number of trained specialists graduated from higher and specialised secondary schools. Furthermore, tens of millions of workers in various branches of the economy have undergone or are undergoing retraining without charge or are mastering related trades.

It is, I think, obvious that this problem can only be tackled on so vast a scale if education is available to all. In the USSR there are no obstacles of a material nature (education is free, from school to university), of a class or any other character. Entry to any educational establishment depends only on one's own efforts and abilities and the

knowledge already acquired in life. The problem in fact lies in its very magnitude—unprecedented even in the Soviet Union, which has more people studying than any other country. Its solution involves immense expenditure by the state, the construction of schools and colleges of all kinds, the supply of equipment to them and the provision of highly competent teaching staff. Finally, it involves the popularisation of new trades and professions born of scientific and technological progress, the concentration of creative forces on new fields of science.

Any student of the educational institution knows that the diploma he will receive will be more than a mere piece of paper. The possessor of a diploma is appointed to work in the field, in the organisation which he himself selects from the applications received by the educational institution at which he studies.

There are also questions of making the most effective and rational use in production of people who though they have reached pension age are still capable of working and want to continue, to pass on the experience they have accumulated (in the Soviet Union the pension age is 55 for women and 60 for men. In some occupations the age levels are still lower).

One of the major problems is how best to improve the system of management, distribution and redistribution of the country's work force. Soviet society conducts constant research to discover solutions to the problems that arise—and it finds solutions. But life all the time throws up more and more new questions. The forecasting of those problems, and the search for ways and means of tackling them are part of the very essence of planning the national economy as a single entity and manag-

ing it on the principle of democratic centralism which combines activity of selected and accountable central bodies with the creative initiative of the people.

* * *

In the transition period from capitalism to socialism Soviet economic growth was to a considerable degree due to extensive methods, that is, by increasing capital investments, the construction of new enterprises and the recruitment of new work force. In the new conditions of mature socialist society in the USSR intensive factors of economic development have become predominant, that is the raising of production efficiency by substantially speeding up scientific and technological advance. This is facilitated by an improved structure of production, the output of technically more modern machinery and equipment and new materials, the production of a wider range of goods and of better quality, and also by improvements in the system of planning and managing the economy.

The socialist planned economy opens up the widest possible horizons for the all-round advancement of science and technology. The radical turn taken in the development of productive forces under the influence of science will become increasingly significant and far-reaching. Progress in science and technology is the main instrument for creating the material and technical basis for communism. That was why the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union set the task of organically combining the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of the socialist economic system.

In the current five-year plan period (1971-75) high and stable growth rates in all branches of production, a constant increase in labour productivity and a constant rise in living standards have been secured by the wide use of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution in the interests of the whole of Soviet society and improvement in the structure of the economy and its management.

The 1971-75 economic plan envisaged that increased labour productivity, not the recruitment of more manpower, would account for 80-85 per cent of the growth of national income, 87 per cent of the increase in industrial output and the entire increase in agricultural output.

In these five years labour productivity in industry has risen by 39 per cent above the 1970 figure, while in construction the increase is 37 per cent, and in agriculture 38 per cent.

Lenin's idea that high labour productivity is the main and decisive condition for the victory of the new social system is today as valid as ever.

Н. Роговский
ТРУД И ЗАНЯТОСТЬ В СССР
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