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BY I. GUDOV



WORK  
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WAGES  
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SOVIET  
UNION



By I. GUDOV

Order of Lenin  
Member of the Supreme Soviet  
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Metal Worker


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ВНЕШНЕПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ  
ДИПЛОМАТИЯ  
И  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ  
ПРАВО

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 **UNEMPLOYMENT** is unknown in the Soviet Union. The number of employed persons is increasing from year to year.

There are today twenty-eight million workers by hand and brain in the U.S.S.R., or two and a half times as many as there were in Russia in tsarist times.

All these people are employed by the state. How are they faring? The Great October Socialist Revolution brought them not only freedom, but tangible material benefits as well. With the growing wealth of the country, the well-being of the working population is steadily rising.

In the U.S.S.R. the whole national in-

come belongs to the people and is used for the benefit of the people. In tsarist Russia three-quarters of the national income passed into the pockets of the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists.

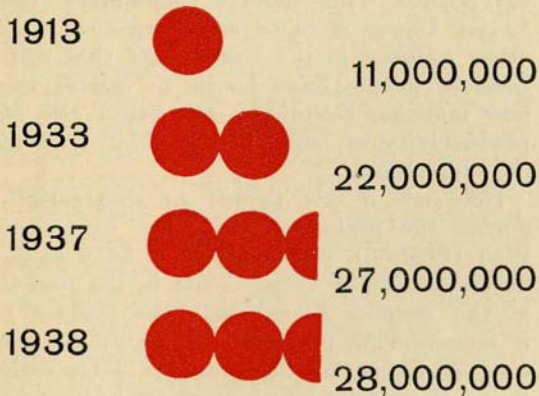
But there has been a change not only in the distribution but also in the size of the national income: the national income of the U.S.S.R. in 1938 was five times as large as the national income of tsarist Russia in 1913.

In the U.S.S.R. the principle of Socialism is applied: from each according to his ability, to each according to the labor he performs. The Soviet people—the workers, peasants and intellectuals—work for themselves, for their own benefit, and they therefore strive to give their best efforts to the state. This national endeavor coincides with the personal interest of the citizen, for he is remunerated in accordance with the amount and quality of the work he performs.

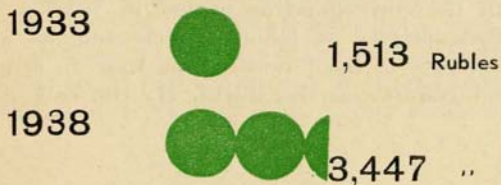
If, in addition to this, we bear in mind that a technical revolution has taken place



## TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS



## AVERAGE YEARLY WAGE OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS



in Soviet economic life, that as regards the degree of saturation of industry and agriculture with modern machinery the Soviet Union is more advanced than any other country in the world, and that millions of people have learnt to master the new machine technique, the rapid rise of productivity of labor in the U.S.S.R. will be understood.

Here are a few figures in illustration: during the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-32), productivity of labor in industry increased 41 per cent; in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37), it increased 82 per cent (as against 63 per cent envisaged by the plan) in large-scale industry, and by 83 per cent (as against 75 per cent envisaged by the plan) in the building industry. Productivity of labor in heavy industry in the first half of 1938 increased by a further 15.5 per cent compared with the corresponding period in 1937.

Productivity of labor is increasing at a faster rate in the Soviet Union than in any other country in the world. By the end of



the period of the Second Five-Year Plan it was already higher than in Great Britain, and is close to being the highest in Europe, although still lower than in the U.S.A.

One of the most important aims envisaged in the Third Five-Year Plan (1938-42) is a further rise of productivity of labor by 65 per cent in the manufacturing industries, and by 75 per cent in the building industry.

Numerous cases may be cited of individual Stakhanovites and whole groups of Stakhanovites who have broken world records in productivity of labor, and who are surpassing the old, supposedly maximum standards of output of machinery. They are thereby solving the problem of the all-round mechanization of labor. They are discovering new methods of production. They are creating a Socialist culture in industry.

In addition to being highly productive, the work of the Stakhanovites is also of high quality. And one of the most important features of this movement is that the Stakhanovites not only show a high productiv-

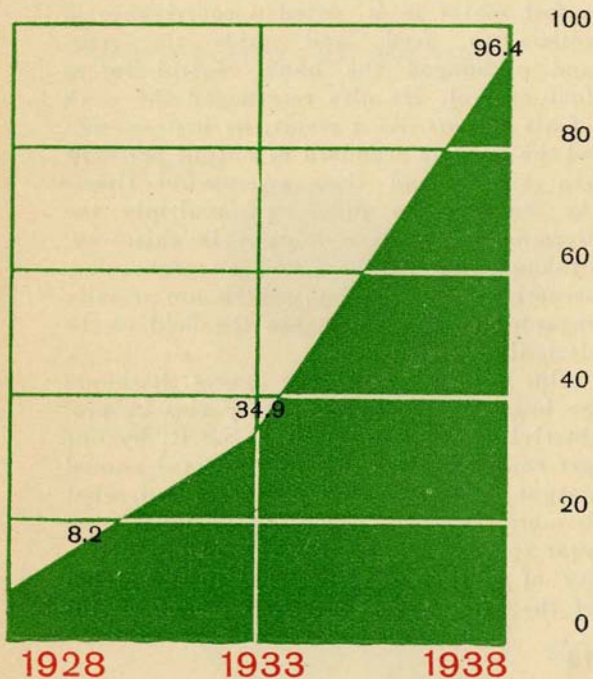
ity of labor, but, having mastered up-to-date machine technique, are proving themselves to be organizers of production, initiators of perfected methods and processes. This is but an illustration of the fact that the workers of the Soviet Union are attaining to the cultural and technical level of engineers and technicians.

My own case is an example. I am a metal worker. Operating a German milling machine, I attained an output over fourteen times the established German standard for that machine. How? Instead of operating one cutting tool and milling one part at a time, I fitted the machine with two cutting tools and began to work two parts simultaneously. Then I increased the number of tools and the number of parts worked correspondingly. Hence the result. But in order to achieve this result I had to perform work in adapting the machine which rightly comes within the province of a designing engineer.

Or take the case of Zamkov. He operated a German bending machine which is cal-

# NATIONAL PAYROLL

Billions of rubles



culated to bend iron rods at the rate of 4,585 lbs. per shift. He decided to make some improvements to the machine: he attached a fast motor to it, fitted a contrivance of rollers to feed and guide the rods, and exchanged the hand control for a foot control. He also rearranged the work of his helpers. As a result, he first exceeded the German standard of output per shift ten times, and then twenty-five times. As we see, in order to multiply the German standards of output in this way, Stakhanovite Zamkov had to make constructive improvements which are usually regarded as coming within the field of the designing engineer.

But let us return to our figures. It should be borne in mind that every rise in productivity of labor in the U.S.S.R. by one per cent implies a rise in the total annual output of the country's industry, and, what is more, that this rise itself increases from year to year. Thus every rise in productivity of labor by one per cent in the period of the First Five-Year Plan meant an in-

# LABOR PRODUCTIVITY (INDUSTRY)

INCREASE DURING FIRST FIVE-YEAR  
PLAN PERIOD

1928-1932



41 PER  
CENT

INCREASE DURING SECOND FIVE-YEAR  
PLAN PERIOD

1933-1937



82 PER  
CENT



crease of total industrial output by roughly 250,000,000 rubles, and in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan by over 430,000,000 rubles. In the period of the Third Five-Year Plan every one per cent increase in productivity of labor will increase the total output of manufactured goods by over 950,000,000 rubles.

During the last five years industrial output in the Soviet Union increased by 139 per cent, a rate of industrial progress unknown to any other country in the world. Compared with pre-war times, industrial output in 1938 had increased by over nine times in the U.S.S.R., whereas in the major capitalist countries (U.S.A., Great Britain, Germany and France) it had either remained at the level of 1913 or else exceeded it by only 20 or 30 per cent.

The rising productivity of labor, the growing output of industry, the progress of the national economy as a whole and the accompanying increase in the national income, all lead to a steady improvement in



the material and cultural standards of the Soviet people.

Wages are rising from year to year. The national payroll has increased nearly twelve times in the past ten years: in 1928 it amounted to 8,200,000,000 rubles, in 1933 to 34,900,000,000 rubles, and in 1938 to 96,400,000,000 rubles. The average annual earnings of the industrial worker rose from 1,513 rubles in 1933 to 3,447 rubles in 1938.

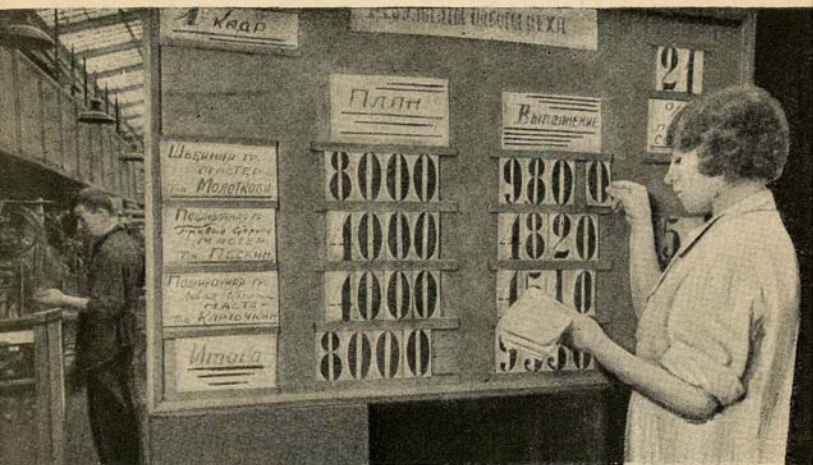
But the standard of living of the Soviet manual and intellectual worker is measured not only by the steady increase in the national payroll, but also by the rise in real wages.

This was pointed out by V. Molotov, the head of the Soviet Government, at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, when, referring to the considerable improvement in the material and cultural standard of the working people and to the increased national consumption in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37), he said: "While there was an 18 per cent increase in the number of workers

and employees, the national payroll showed a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -fold increase, or a rise of 151 per cent, as against 55 per cent specified in the Second Five-Year Plan. Real wages of workers doubled during the Second Five-Year Plan (a 101 per cent increase).”

One indication of the rise in the standard of living is the big expansion of retail trade. During the period of the Second Five-Year Plan the sales of the state and cooperative trading system increased more than two and a half times. This is due both to the growing food resources of the country and to the tremendous increase in the output of consumers' goods.

It is a characteristic fact that in the period 1935-37 the consumption of black (rye) bread considerably declined, whereas the consumption of white (wheat) bread increased  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times. Even greater was the increase in the per capita consumption of meat and meat products. The per capita consumption of eggs and fruit doubled during this period, and the per capita consumption of butter more than doubled.



Notice board in a department of the Skorokhod Shoe Factory showing daily plan of output and actual output

In 1938 the output of the food industry of the U.S.S.R. was nearly six times as large as the output of the food industry in Russia in 1913. These food products now almost entirely remain within the country to be consumed by the population.

The increase in the output of industrial goods may be illustrated by the fact that 8,300,000 pairs of boots and shoes were turned out by the factories of Russia in 1913, while 189,500,000 pairs were turned out by the Soviet factories in 1938. The increase is even more striking in the case of the garment industry, whose output, valued at 1926-27 prices, increased from 13,500,000 rubles in 1913 to 1,699,000,000 rubles in 1938.

There is a steady increase in the demand for the higher grades of goods at the expense of the lower grades. In particular, there is a growing demand for good furniture and other domestic articles.

But in spite of this great increase in the output of consumers' goods, we find that owing to the rising standard of living and the increasing purchasing power of the



working population, the demand grows faster than the supply, and it is still not fully satisfied.

To get a correct idea of the standard of living of the workers, it should be borne in mind that there is scarcely a family where there are not two, three or more working members who contribute to the family income. There is a great demand for labor power in the Soviet Union, and nearly every factory or office is constantly seeking additional workers.

But the standard of living of the workers is measured not only in wages. Both the state and the trade unions provide an extensive system of free services. Compulsory insurance of workers at the expense of the state is universal. With the progress of industry, the number of employed persons increases, and so does the budget of the social insurance fund. The number of insured persons increased from 11,000,000 in 1929 to 26,700,000 in 1937. Insurance covers sickness, permanent disability, old age and death. The total expenditures of

the state on social insurance amounted to over 10,000,000,000 rubles in the period of the First Five-Year Plan, and to 26,500,000,000 rubles in the first four years of the Second Five-Year Plan. It should further be borne in mind that medical service in the Soviet Union is free, and that all working people receive an annual vacation with full pay at the expense of the state. The trade unions have their rest homes and sanatoria where workers may spend their vacations. The expenditure of the trade unions under this head amounted to 900,000,000 rubles in 1936 and exceeded 1,000,000,000 rubles in 1937. In the latter year the trade unions provided places in rest homes and sanatoria for about three million persons, or nearly 400,000 more than in the previous year.

To this should be added that education in the Soviet Union—from elementary school to university—is free, that the state spends vast sums annually on cultural services for the working people, and so on.

These additional expenditures of the





Board of Honor at a machine-building works showing list of Stakhanovites and their output

state, over and above the monetary earnings of the workers, represent of course an addition to real wages.

Particular care and solicitude is shown in the U.S.S.R. for the working woman. Maternity benefits granted by the state in 1937 amounted to 1,145,000,000 rubles. In addition, there are the special grants made by law to mothers of large families. The expenditure of the state in 1937 on maternity homes was 488,000,000 rubles, on lying-in centers in rural districts over 90,000,000 rubles, on dairy kitchens over 1,000,000,000 rubles, and on the building and maintenance of crèches over 1,000,000,000 rubles. Extremely favorable conditions have been created both for the welfare of the mother and for the health and upbringing of her children.

Such, in brief, is the position with regard to the work, wages and welfare of the working people of the Soviet Union.



