

Questions  
*Answers*  
on

**Working  
Conditions  
in Soviet  
Industry**

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# WORKING CONDITIONS IN SOVIET INDUSTRY

*Questions and Answers*

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## Foreword

**T**HE numerous trade union delegations that come to the U.S.S.R. from other countries, in studying Soviet life, are especially interested in the position of the workers.

This booklet aims to answer questions most frequently asked by foreign guests about conditions of labour in Soviet industry.

## THE QUESTIONS

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*1. Is it true that in the U.S.S.R. a worker does not have to hunt for a job? Are there plenty of jobs to choose from?*

**Y**ES. Unemployment was completely abolished for all time in the U.S.S.R. as far back as 1930. At that time the labour exchanges were closed, since there was no longer any need for them.

Every able-bodied citizen, irrespective of sex, nationality or race, can always get work in the U.S.S.R. in conformity with his vocation and skill.

This has become possible because the Soviet state has established a Socialist economy founded on public property—property owned by the whole people—and not on private capitalist property. This means that the country's national economy is developing in accordance with a single state plan aimed at raising systematically the material and cultural standards of the people. Soviet economy knows no rivalry, anarchy of production, or crises. On the contrary, in the U.S.S.R. there is a balanced, uninterrupted and rapid development of all branches of Socialist economy.

Here are some figures illustrating this point. In thirteen pre-war years (1928-1940), 8,900 large state industrial establishments were built, tens of thousands of miles of new railway lines were laid and thousands of machine and tractor stations were set up in agriculture.

Construction did not cease in wartime, and has developed on a vast scale since the war. During 1946-1950, over 6,000 big and medium-sized industrial establishments were restored or newly built and put into commission. The plan for the country's further economic advancement envisages doubling capital investments in industry in 1951-1955 compared with the preceding five years.

The constant expansion of industry fully precludes the possibility of unemployment and ensures the permanent, full employment of the population and a steady increase in the number of workers.

In 1940, on the eve of the war, 31,500,000 workers—three times as many as in 1913, the peak year of tsarist Russia—were engaged in industry in the U.S.S.R. By 1950, the end of the first post-war Five-Year Plan, the number had increased to

39,200,000 ; in 1951, to 40,800,000 ; and in 1952, to 41,700,000. In the twelve months ending June 1953 the number of persons engaged in the national economy increased by another 1,150,000.

Far from having the problem of providing jobs for unemployed, the Soviet state is faced with the task of ensuring sufficient workers for the rapidly expanding industries. For this purpose planned training of skilled workers is carried on in the chain of state vocational and trade schools. Individual or brigade instruction and training courses on the job are widespread in industry, helping many people to acquire skills or raise their qualifications. The state bears all expenses in the maintenance of such schools and training. (*See Questions Nos. 22 and 23*).

In the Soviet Union the right of citizens to work and to education, recorded in the U.S.S.R. Constitution, is materially guaranteed and is exercised in practice. Each Soviet citizen is able to study and to work in conformity with his wishes, knowledge and acquired vocation. Every Soviet worker can raise his skill or acquire a new trade. Under these conditions, naturally, **it is not the man who looks for the job but the job that looks for the man.**

## **2. How does a worker get a job in the Soviet Union ?**

**A** SOVIET industrial establishment or office in need of workers advertises in the newspapers, posts notices on billboards, etc. Advertising organisations put up such "help-wanted" notices in the trams, buses and other

public places.

On finding a job that conforms to his wishes and ability, a worker applies directly to the management of the particular establishment. The worker is engaged on the presentation of his Labour Book (the Labour Book carries information about the worker's education, his trade, his employment record, his awards and premiums).

It should be noted that there are no restrictions in the Soviet Union on taking up employment. The only thing required is that the worker be suitable for the job. In the case of it turning out that the worker's skill is not in accordance with the job he has chosen, he is offered other, more suitable work, or sent to technical courses to raise his skill.

When a worker is engaged or transferred to another job, the management explains to him the requirements of his new job and the correct handling of the machinery and tools; he is taught the safety and industrial hygiene rules, and precautions against fire. A worker is not allowed on a new job before getting such instruction.

To safeguard the health of women and young people there are special rules as regards their employment. Soviet law prohibits the employment of persons under fourteen years of age. Apprentices, whose training lasts from the age of fourteen to sixteen, may be employed only after a special medical examination and with the permission of a higher (regional or territorial) trade union committee. Their working day is limited to six hours, for which they receive a full day's pay.

The employment of women in arduous trades or those injurious to their health is forbidden in the U.S.S.R.

Executives of Soviet industrial establishments or offices cannot refuse employment to a woman on the grounds that she is an expectant mother. (*See also Question No. 18*).

### 3. Why are Soviet workers interested in greater output?

**I**N the Soviet Union there are no exploiters, that is, people who live on the labour of others. All factories, mills and mines, the land and its mineral wealth, the banks and the transport facilities belong to the people. And, similarly, everything that is produced in industry belongs to the people. The working people are the sole masters of all this wealth. Consequently, Soviet workers work, not for the enrichment of exploiters, but for themselves, for their own society. Therefore, the aim of production in the U.S.S.R. is not making profits, but the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society. This is attained by the continuous expansion and improvement of production on the basis of higher techniques.

Consequently, Soviet citizens are vitally interested in the constant expansion of socialist production. The bigger the output of each worker, shop or establishment, the richer the Soviet state becomes, the higher the national income and the better the life of each worker, because in the U.S.S.R. the whole national income is used in the interests of the working people. Three-quarters of it goes directly for satisfying the personal material and cultural requirements of the members of society. The rest is used for various needs of the entire state, in the first place for the expansion of production, which is the foundation of the further advance of the people's living standards.

The socialist principle of payment for work, "**From each according to his ability, to each according to his work,**" is applied in the U.S.S.R. This principle of remuneration also makes each Soviet worker interested in increasing output. The higher the labour productivity of the worker, the bigger his earnings and, consequently, the higher his living standard.

The advance of socialist economy enables the Soviet government to reduce prices of consumer goods systematically. Since 1947, prices of goods have been reduced six times in the U.S.S.R. Today the prices of food and manufactured goods are less than half of what they were in 1947. This has substantially raised the real wages of the workers and improved their well-being.

At today's prices, for example, a worker can buy for the same money he spent in 1947, 2.5 times as much bread, 2.4 times as much meat or butter, 2.3 times as much macaroni, 2.2 times as many potatoes, treble the amount of fruit, and so on.

All branches of Soviet industry and agriculture are being rapidly developed for the good of the people, for the satisfaction of their requirements. Hence the great, vital interest Soviet people have in the continuous increase of output and the reduction of production costs. This is graphically confirmed by the broad scale of socialist emulation.

### 4. What is Socialist Emulation?

**S**Ocialist emulation in the U.S.S.R. is a mass movement of the working people for higher labour productivity, for the fulfilment and overfulfilment of production plans ahead of schedule.

The movement, started on the initiative of the workers, has embraced the whole people, thanks to the socialist nature of labour in the U.S.S.R. Free labour in the Soviet country, every worker's awareness of the fact that he works for himself, for his society, have aroused in all Soviet people a feeling of patriotic responsibility for the expansion of production and for consolidating in this way the might of the Soviet state. It is natural, therefore, that the main principle of socialist emulation is **comradely help by the foremost workers to those lagging behind in order to achieve a general advance.**

In 1952 more than 90 per cent of all the working people took part in socialist emulation.

How does socialist emulation operate?

Workers, engineers, technicians and others engaged in industry and transport, collective farmers, the staffs of trading establishments and other working people, on their own initiative assume socialist pledges—to complete production programmes ahead of time, to save materials and money, to improve quality

of goods, etc. The establishments and individual workers that join in the emulation conclude agreements, which list all these pledges. The trade unions, ministries and managers of the establishments, together with those taking part in the emulation, at definite intervals summarise the results and announce the winners. The best teams, shops and establishments as well as the best individual participants are awarded premiums and certificates of merit.

Participants in socialist emulation who have mastered technique to a high degree and who, through the application of advanced methods and technical improvements, attain high labour productivity are recognised as the foremost workers in the U.S.S.R.

Foremost workers are cultured and technically educated people who are constantly augmenting their knowledge. In their practical work they refute obsolete conceptions of the potentialities of machinery and substantially exceed existing capacities and technical standards.

They are not individual record breakers by chance, found here and there; there are millions of them.

Four factors have brought about the rise and development of the movement of foremost workers. *Firstly*, the living standard of the workers has been radically improved and it continues to rise still further. *Secondly*, Soviet people work, not for exploiters, but for themselves, for their own society. *Thirdly*, the Soviet national economy is getting more and more of the latest machinery, which lightens the labour of the worker and enables him to raise his productivity. *Fourthly*, new cadres of workers have been trained who have mastered technique and are constantly improving it.

Naturally, the fact that work in the U.S.S.R. is paid for in accordance with its quantity and quality, provides a personal incentive, stimulating the movement of foremost workers.

The emulation movement is growing in numbers and strength every year. Its successes strikingly mirror the constructive and patriotic efforts of the Soviet people. Today, for example, there are many teams, shops and establishments where all the workers are exceeding their plans and turning out goods of high quality only.

Socialist emulation and the movement of foremost workers have been brought into being by the socialist system, the system of free socialist labour.

### **5. Why do Soviet workers willingly use new machinery?**

**T**HE development of production in the U.S.S.R. is effected through the constant improvement of machinery and technology. This process is continuous, with old machines being scrapped and replaced by new, which in turn are superseded by still newer machines. Parallel with this there is large scale construction of new establishments and the extension of existing plants. (See Question No. 1).

Because of the continuous expansion of production, workers released in one section do not become unemployed but get jobs in other sections. The worker does not even have to look for a job. New work is offered him in an organised way, even before he is released from his old job. If he accepts the offer made by the management, he is simply transferred to another section in the same establishment or to another plant in need of workers in the particular trade.

Thus, the introduction of new machines in Soviet industry does not result in unemployment and, consequently, in no way runs counter to the interests of the workers. Moreover, Soviet workers are greatly interested in the constant improvement of technique because this contributes to the development of production and greater output, to a growth in the national income, making for the systematic economic and cultural advancement of society and hence for better living standards for each member of society. (See Question No. 3).

Soviet workers are interested in the application of new technique also because it lightens work, makes for higher skill, greater labour productivity and a corresponding rise in earnings.

Soviet workers willingly use new machinery and, moreover, strive to utilise it more efficiently, to develop and improve it.



**6. Why are there so many workers who make production improvement suggestions and inventions ?**

**T**HE movement for production improvement and invention is widespread among Soviet workers. In 1951, for example, about 700,000 inventions and improvement suggestions were applied in the Soviet Union, and in 1952 about 800,000.

This is explained first of all

by the fact that Soviet workers, as the owners of the means and instruments of production, are vitally interested in the development of their factories and mills and of the national economy as a whole. Moreover, workers who improve production are not afraid that the machine will leave them without a job (See Question No. 5).

This is also explained by the fact that favourable conditions are provided for the development of the workers' creative abilities. The state highly appreciates the services of inventors and encourages them materially.

After an improvement suggestion or invention has been accepted, the worker who submitted it is given a money premium, the size of which is dependent on the annual saving effected by his idea. He is also given a premium even if his proposal does not yield a direct saving, but helps to improve the quality of output or lightens the labour of the workers.

Special production improvement and invention bureaux are established at Soviet factories to help the workers. These bureaux have on their staff engineers who give free help and advice to inventors and workers striving to improve production processes, select the necessary technical literature for them, help to rectify errors in their projects, etc. They help to direct the workers' creative energies to the solution of the most urgent technical problems.

The managements provide worker-inventors with the necessary premises and facilities for the manufacture of their models and for experimenting, and with materials and tools. The services of technical offices and factory libraries are put at their disposal. Engineers and scientists often take worker-inventors under their patronage.

Trade union organisations give much attention to worker-inventors. Every factory trade union committee has a special

commission which follows up workers' proposals, sees that they are examined promptly by managements, and if they are of value, applied. The commissions also see to it that the authors of proposals receive promptly the full premium to which they are entitled under the law.

Every Soviet worker knows that he will always receive the support of both the trade union and the management in his work, that he will be helped in elaborating and introducing his proposals for improvements in production.

**7. What questions are regulated by Soviet labour laws ?**

**S**OVIET labour legislation is founded on the principles recorded in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Control over the observance of labour laws is exercised at all industrial establishments and offices

both by the trade unions and by state organs, in particular the Procurator's Office.\*

Soviet labour legislation strictly protects the right to work recorded in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. The right to work means that all Soviet citizens, irrespective of sex, nationality or race, are ensured the real possibility of getting work in accordance with their abilities, knowledge, experience and skill. Every citizen of the U.S.S.R. receives equal pay for equal work.

Labour legislation regulates the relations between workers and managements of industrial establishments and offices, promoting socialist discipline of labour and ensuring the right of workers to conclude agreements.

The law establishes the strict responsibility of executives of industrial establishments, office and economic organisations for any violation of the labour laws in force. Cases when the management can dismiss a worker on its own initiative are strictly limited by law. In the case of groundless dismissal, the

\*The Procurator's Office has supervisory power to ensure the proper application and strict observance of the law by all government institutions, officials and citizens of the U.S.S.R. Any citizen of the U.S.S.R. may file a complaint with the office against any institution or official who violates the law.

worker can defend his right by applying to the Wages and Disputes Commission or to the People's Court (*See Question No. 21*).

Labour protection forms an important section of the labour laws. The law regulates the length of the working day for different categories of workers, forbids overtime work, and establishes length of annual statutory and additional holidays (*See Question No. 11*). Much attention in the labour protection laws is given to safety measures and the provision of hygienic working conditions (*See Question No. 18*). There are special laws for women and juveniles, granting them considerable privileges and advantages.

The labour laws also fully regulate the questions of state social insurance. The right of citizens to material maintenance in old age, on the loss of a bread-winner, in the case of temporary or complete disability, etc. is protected by law (*See Questions Nos. 15 and 16*).

Soviet laws ensure legislatively the genuine freedom of labour, which means freedom from exploitation, freedom from unemployment, freedom from material insecurity, freedom to work for the common good of all the people.

***8. How long is the working day? Is there any overtime?***

At establishments working in three shifts, if the process is not continuous, the night shift is reduced to seven hours. The reduction in the working time does not entail lower wages, since the night work is paid at higher rates.

As a rule, overtime is not allowed in the U.S.S.R. The exceptions are the few cases when overtime is necessary to prevent natural calamities, to eliminate unforeseen conditions which upset the normal supply of electric power, water, etc., to industrial establishments and offices of towns and industrial settlements, and in cases when interrupting a job may cause spoilage of materials and machinery. But even in such cases the management may not resort to overtime work without the permission of a higher trade union committee.

The first two hours of overtime are paid at one-and-a-half times the usual rate, and all subsequent hours at double the rate.

***9. Do Soviet workers have to provide their own tools and working clothes?***

**M**OST Soviet workers have an eight - hour working day. For a number of arduous trades the working day is reduced to seven or six hours, and in shops with particularly arduous conditions to four hours.

**M**ANAGEMENTS of industrial establishments provide the workers with all the necessary tools and appliances free of charge.

In the case of a worker using his own tools for some particular job, the management pays him for

the wear and tear of the tools.

In many trades the workers are given, free of charge, special working clothes and footwear in addition to individual safety appliances (goggles, respirators, helmets, masks, etc.) in accordance with lists and standards fixed by the ministries in agreement with the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions.

**10. Are there factory regulations in the U.S.S.R. ?**

**Y**ES, there are. Regulations in force at Soviet industrial establishments are aimed at ensuring the smooth and co-ordinated work of the whole factory and they stipulate the obligations of both the management and the workers.

The management, for example, has to provide the best conditions for carrying out production assignments, to organise properly the labour of the employees, and to make use of each one in accordance with his knowledge and skill. It is the duty of the management to show daily care for labour protection and safety.

On their part, the employees of factories have to observe the established rules, to work honestly and conscientiously, to fulfil their production quotas, to take good care of their machines, tools and supplies, and to observe labour discipline.

Without discipline the fruitful, purposeful work of the people comprising a single industrial unit is impossible. Socialist labour discipline is conscious, voluntary, comradely discipline, the need for which is appreciated by the working people themselves. The strengthening of discipline contributes to the successful operation of each establishment, of the entire national economy, which forms the foundation for the constant advance in the living standard of the whole Soviet people.

Standard factory regulations have been drawn up by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and approved by the Soviet government. On the basis of these standards, the ministries, operating on the scale of the U.S.S.R. as a whole or on the scale of a union republic, by agreement with the central committees of the respective trade unions draw up regulations which take into account the specific conditions in the given branch of industry or economy. These regulations are posted up in prominent places and the management is obliged to acquaint new workers with them.

Factory regulations fully meet the interests of both the workers and the management, because both are equally interested in the progress of their establishment, in the economic progress of the entire country.

**11. Do Soviet workers get annual paid holidays ? How long are holidays ?**

**A**LL workers get an annual paid holiday ranging from two weeks to two months, depending on the working conditions and the nature of production.

Workers engaged directly in production in the key industries (metal, coal, textile,

railways, etc.) receive after working in one place more than two years an additional three-day holiday annually. Workers and other employees in the timber industry receive a month's annual holiday, and once in three years a two-months' holiday.

Workers get full pay for the whole of their holiday.

Workers in need of health treatment are given, in addition to their regular holiday, the extra time necessary for complete treatment in the sanatorium and for the return journey. The additional holiday is paid for from the social insurance funds.

The government devotes much effort and money to providing the working people with holiday facilities. A big network of sanatoriums and health resort institutions has been established in the U.S.S.R. Up to 5 million workers were accommodated in sanatoriums and rest homes in 1953. About three million of them received accommodation free of charge or at a 70 per cent discount, the difference being covered by the social insurance fund. (See Question No. 15). In addition, workers and their families are able to spend their holidays at mountain camps, at hunters' and fishermen's lodges, or touring the country.

*12. How are Soviet workers paid? What wage systems are there?*

**T**HE principle of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" is applied in the U.S.S.R. This is recorded in Article 12 of the U.S.S.R. Constitution. Every Soviet worker gets paid in accordance with the

quantity and quality of his work. Women and youth get equal pay for equal work with men in all branches of the economy.

The U.S.S.R. has the following wage systems: piece work, progressive piece work, time and time plus bonus.

Individual piece work is the main wage system in Soviet industry. It is applied in the case of the overwhelming majority of workers. It most fully conforms to the Soviet principle of payment in accordance with the quantity and quality of the work performed.

The application of the piece work system is based on established technical standards of the labour expended (in time per unit of output), which are fixed on a strictly scientific basis. The quotas are usually set for a year, in the course of which they are not changed. The revision of quotas is done in connection with the introduction of new machinery, the improvement of technological processes, the wide-scale mastering of advanced labour methods.

An increase in a worker's output is due not to physical overexertion, but to higher skill, better organisation of labour and further mechanisation, which lightens labour. That is why in the U.S.S.R. the revision of quotas cannot and does not cause a reduction in wages but, on the contrary, increases them.

For each branch of production there are wage scales and rates, drawn up with the participation of the trade unions and approved by the government; these are differentiated by categories conforming to the skill and complexity of the work, the intricacy of technology and the specific conditions of the production processes.

The work of a skilled operator, or one employed in more arduous conditions, is rated higher in the wage scale than the work of an operator of lesser skill or one engaged on an easier job. The rates per unit of output are fixed on the basis of the

wage scales and the quotas. A worker is paid at piece rates for the number of units he turns out. No limit of any kind is set on the wages of a piece worker.

Soviet industry also has a progressive piece work system, which is a combination of the piece work and the bonus (incentive) systems. In this case the worker is paid at progressively increasing piece work rates for his output above quota. This system is usually employed in important sections of production and also in cases when it is necessary to give special encouragement to the initiative and inventiveness of the worker.

The piece work system conforms to the interests of the workers and is supported by them because it creates a direct material incentive for each worker, encourages them to increase their skill and to raise their labour productivity.

Under the time work system the workers are paid according to the wage scale, or the wages fixed in each industry for each type of job. The time work system is used only in cases where it is impossible, or very difficult, to apply the piece work system. In many cases a time plus bonus system is used as a form of encouragement for overfulfilment of plans, improvement of quality, and economy of supplies.

The trade unions have the right to control the correctness of wage calculations.

The cash and real wages of Soviet workers are rising all the time. In 1952, the income per worker rose 7 per cent compared with the previous year. Under the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1951-55) real wages of workers, taking into account the reduction in retail prices, will rise not less than 35 per cent.

**13. Are there fines in Soviet industry ?**

**N**O, there are not. The system of fining, widespread in industry in tsarist Russia, was abolished by the Soviet government. Soviet labour legislation forbids the imposition of fines on workers. The management of a Soviet industrial establish-

ment has the right to employ disciplinary measures against violators of labour discipline (a reproof, reprimand, strong reprimand, transfer to another job for not more than three months, demotion). In every case of breach of discipline the management must seek an explanation from the person concerned and justly examine the account he gives. No penalty may be imposed later than a month after the breach of discipline has been brought to light. If the offender does not commit another breach of labour discipline within a year, the penalty imposed on him is revoked. It may be revoked even before the year is out.

**14. What does a Soviet worker get in addition to his wages ?**

**T**HE income of Soviet workers is not limited to wages. They receive in addition a number of payments and privileges from the state which increase real wages by more than a third. Among these are: allowances

and grants from the state social insurance fund; pensions from the social maintenance fund; annual paid holidays; accommodation in sanatoriums and rest homes free of charge or at reduced prices; accommodation for the children in nurseries and kindergartens, in country homes and camps during the summer, and in children's sanatoriums and health resorts; free medical aid to the whole population; allowances to mothers of large families and those without breadwinners; free education of all children in schools and free professional and trade instruction; payment of grants to students in technical schools and higher educational establishments; various premiums and bonuses for good work, service bonuses and other payments and privileges.

All this state expenditure represents additional income for the working people.

In 1951, these payments and privileges received by the population at the expense of the state amounted to 125,000 million roubles, and in 1952 to 129,600 million roubles. In 1953, the sum was increased to 139,500 million roubles, exclusive of the cost of reducing state retail prices—representing a gain of 46,000 million roubles a year to the population—and other measures directly aimed at raising the wellbeing of the people.

Altogether, the Soviet people received in 1953 at the expense of the budget 192,000 million roubles, or over 36 per cent of all budget expenditures. Moreover, this figure does not include the huge state outlay for housing construction.

**15. How is social insurance organised in the U.S.S.R. ?**

**S**Ocial insurance for the workers is maintained at the expense of the state. The social insurance fund is made up of payments by all industrial establishments and offices, which contribute a definite percentage of their

total payroll, the workers themselves making no payment whatsoever.

As socialist economy expands, the state social insurance budget grows. In the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1928/29-1932/33) it amounted to 10,400 million roubles; in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-1937), to 32,500 million roubles; in the period of the post-war Five-Year Plan (1946-1950), to 80,100 million roubles. The social insurance budget in 1953 totalled 22,700 million roubles, or 1,300 million roubles more than in the preceding year.

The social insurance funds are administered solely by the trade unions.

**16. What benefits and pensions do Soviet workers get?**

**S**OVIET workers receive from the social insurance funds benefits in case of sickness or disability, and old age pensions, pensions for families who lose their breadwinner, and maternity leave with full pay with an

additional lump sum for the purchase of a layette and as a nursing grant.

Social insurance funds are also used for building and maintaining trade union sanatoriums and rest homes, for providing the workers with accommodation in sanatoriums, rest homes or mountain camps free of charge or at a discount, for maintaining workers' children in summer camps or special sanatoriums, for the repair and equipment of cultural and educational institutions and sports facilities, for the organisation of tourist trips. Social insurance funds are also spent on providing dietetic food in special dining rooms, and for rest and cure at overnight sanatoriums and one-day rest homes maintained at factories and mills.

**17. What sickness benefits do Soviet workers get?**

**S**OVIET workers get temporary disability (sickness) benefits from the first day of illness until the doctor certifies that the patient has fully recovered. Benefit is paid to a worker also if he has to be off work to take

care of a sick member of his family. These benefits range from half to full wages, depending on the worker's length of continuous service at the given enterprise.

**18. How is labour protection and safety organised in Soviet industry?**

**C**ARE for man is the paramount object of Soviet society. It is therefore natural that the Soviet state should devote great attention to improving working conditions. Huge and ever-increasing sums are spent for these purposes. In the Fourth Five-

Year Plan (1946-1950) appropriations for labour protection and safety were five times greater than in the First and Second Five-Year Plans combined.

In the U.S.S.R. labour protection and safety in industry is based on truly scientific principles. Many scientific institutions carry on research in this field. Among them are institutes of the Academy of Medical Sciences, departments of higher educational establishments, and special research institutes of various industries and of the trade unions. The trade unions alone maintain six labour protection research institutes and ten laboratories located in the biggest industrial centres of the country.

Special labour protection departments function at ministries, factories and mills. These departments are staffed with competent engineers who watch over the observance at all plants and shops of the established safety standards and rules and requirements of industrial hygiene. Large and medium-sized plants also have ventilation bureaux and chemical laboratories which regularly analyse the air conditions in all production premises.

Special exhibitions and lectures are organised in factories and mills to acquaint the workers with safety equipment. In a number of industries (chemical plants, non-ferrous metal plants, print shops, etc.) workers are supplied, free of charge, with additional butter, milk and other foods that help to prevent occupational ailments. Workers on jobs that might be injurious to the health are given regular medical examinations.

Soviet industrial establishments are getting more and more up-to-date equipment, and comprehensive mechanisation is being increasingly applied. The latest machines are installed not only to raise output but also to lighten the labour of the workers and to increase safety. Such labour-consuming jobs in coal mining as cutting, breaking and transporting coal have been fully

mechanised at Soviet mines in recent years. At metallurgical plants machines perform many operations which were formerly hazardous, such as charging blast and open-hearth furnaces, pouring pig iron, breaking the tap hole in blast furnaces, etc. There are a large number of devices and installations in industry that improve working conditions.

As a result of all these measures accidents in Soviet industry have been cut by two-thirds in the past twenty years, and in some industries—engineering, iron and steel and chemical—by three-quarters. Many occupational ailments have been totally wiped out.

Special care is paid to safeguarding the labour of women and juveniles. Their employment is forbidden in arduous and injurious trades. Women and juveniles are not allowed to lift or carry weights beyond certain limits. Expectant mothers are transferred to easier work with no reduction in pay. In addition to the regular annual holiday they are granted paid maternity leave of 77 days (35 days before and 42 days after confinement). The working day of juveniles is cut to six hours, but they are paid for an eight-hour working day. Strict medical examination of young workers under eighteen is the rule.

The trade unions take an active part in labour protection and safety. Every trade union central committee has a technical inspection service. Trade union technical inspectors have the right to visit an industrial establishment at any time. Their instructions are binding on the management. An inspector has the right to bring administrative or legal charges against any plant or shop executive who violates labour laws. Without the permission of the technical inspectors no new establishment may begin operation.

The technical inspection services of the trade union central committees are supplemented by labour protection commissions in shops and factories and public inspectors elected by the workers themselves at every establishment.

The Soviet trade unions have as many as 1,300,000 public inspectors and members of labour protection commissions. They check up on how the management makes use of the funds assigned for labour protection and safety measures, and watch over the strict observance of the respective labour laws. Trade unionists also see to it that work clothes, footwear, protective devices, special foods, soap, etc., are issued promptly and in the quan-

ties stipulated by law. The commissions collect workers' proposals for improving labour conditions and recommend them for incorporation in the collective agreements.

### *19. How are collective agreements concluded?*

**E**VERY year collective agreements are concluded at Soviet industrial establishments between the management and the factory trade union committees, which act on behalf of the workers, engineering and technical personnel and other employees.

Collective agreements represent the obligations of both sides to carry out the state plans, to create working and living conditions which best promote the further expansion and improvement of quality of production, and ensure a rise in the material and cultural standards of the workers. The agreements outline ways and means of achieving these aims. The agreement records what is to be done by the management and the trade unions in improving the technology of production, installing new machinery, raising the skill of the workers, improving labour protection and safety, building homes for the workers, providing facilities for cultural recreation, and expanding the network of children's and service institutions. Definite time limits are set for each point.

Workers take an active part in drawing up the collective agreements. They submit proposals and discuss at their meetings both the specific proposals and the agreement as a whole. In 1952, for example, the drafts of collective agreements were discussed at over 250,000 shop, shift and general meetings and conferences. In the process of considering the drafts, about a million proposals were submitted for improving socialist production and bettering cultural and other services to the workers.

After the agreement is signed, it is published in the form of a pamphlet, or a poster, and is distributed widely among the workers. Once every three months the director and chairman of the trade union committee give an account at a general meeting of how the collective agreement is being carried out. At the end of the year factory trade union committees organise a mass check-up on the fulfilment of the agreement and the collection of proposals for the next year's agreement.

**20. Who manages  
Soviet industrial estab-  
lishments ?**

**S**OVIET industrial establishments belong to the whole people. The ministry responsible appoints a director to manage the given enterprise. The director has charge of the material and financial resources of the establishment

and is fully responsible to the state for the people's property entrusted to his care and for the work of the establishment. The director is responsible for the fulfilment of the production programme and for the observance of labour laws.

Directors of Soviet industrial establishments are men and women who, coming from the ranks of the people, have gone through the great school of life and possess a wide range of experience and knowledge.

Workers of state establishments, and their Party and trade union organisations take an active part in the operation of their establishment, help the management to eliminate shortcomings in production and improve the work of the enterprise. For this purpose meetings of executives and foremost workers, and production conferences are held.

At production conferences, called by trade union organisations, shortcomings in the operation of the establishment and proposals of the workers are examined. Reports of factory executives and departmental heads are discussed at these conferences in an atmosphere of friendly criticism and self-criticism.

The management takes into account the proposals made at these conferences and applies them.

**21. Are there labour  
disputes ? How are  
they settled ?**

**I**N Soviet conditions the worker and the manager are not representatives of antagonistic classes. The one and the other are members of socialist society who have one aim—to produce more goods for the people.

Nevertheless, in the course of the daily round there may arise disputes between the management and individual workers.

The procedure for settling such labour disputes is foreseen

in detail in Soviet labour legislation. All labour disputes are settled either in the Wages and Disputes Commission or in the People's Court.

Wages and Disputes Commissions are special conciliation bodies functioning at all industrial establishments and offices; big plants also have such commissions in the different shops. The commission consists of an equal number of representatives of the management and the trade union committee.

Any worker may apply to the Wages and Disputes Commission if he wishes to complain of the way his wages are calculated, if he does not agree with his dismissal or transfer to another job, etc. The commission has to hear his complaint and take a decision within three days of it being filed. Both sides taking part in hearing a labour dispute (the trade union and the management) have equal rights in the commission. Decisions are taken by the agreement of the sides.

The decision of the Wages and Disputes Commission may be annulled only by a higher trade union body, and then only if it violates the law or obviously runs counter to the facts of the case.

When a worker takes a labour dispute to a People's Court he is not required to bear any legal expenses.

**22. How are skilled  
workers trained in the  
U.S.S.R. ?**

**I**N view of the constant expansion of production and the absence of unemployment in the U.S.S.R., there is planned training of skilled workers.

In 1940 a system of vocational and trade schools was organised. These schools train skilled workers for the metallurgical, engineering, mining and oil industries, the railways, merchant marine and inland water transport, building and other branches of the economy. Workers for the highly skilled trades are taught in schools with a two-year period of study, and those for the less skilled trades, in schools with shorter training periods.

Youths and girls with a general education are enrolled in the vocational and trade schools. The pupils are fully maintained by the state; their tuition is free, they live in well-appointed hostels and receive free board, clothing and textbooks.



These schools have already provided the country with more than seven million young workers—skilled reinforcements for the Soviet working class.

Besides the vocational schools, industrial establishments train their own workers. Factories and mills have individual and group training on the job, and various courses and schools for raising the skill of the workers.

Schools for the study of foremost labour methods are widespread. Foremost workers act as instructors and the period of training varies, depending on the programme.

In 1952, 7,800,000 workers received technical training on the job.

*23. Can a Soviet worker become a highly skilled technician without leaving his job?*

**Y**ES, he can.

Many higher educational establishments and technical schools have evening sections and correspondence departments. The Soviet Union also has special correspondence institutes. The U.S.S.R. Polytechnical Correspondence Institute with

its nine departments, for example, has a student body of 16,000.

Many educational establishments have evening sections at the big plants themselves, where students can attend lectures and laboratory studies after their shifts.

Correspondence students do not attend lectures, but have home assignments. Several times a year they take part in seminars.

In this way workers taking evening or correspondence courses acquire a higher education without leaving their job.

Soviet labour laws grant them a number of privileges. During consultations, examinations and work on their diplomas they are granted special leave.

After completing their term of studies, evening or correspondence students sit for their state examinations and receive diplomas that carry the same weight and are on the same basis as those of graduates of regular higher educational establishments.

In 1952 more than 400,000 people studied at correspondence departments of higher educational establishments and at correspondence institutes.

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