

# SOVIET TRADE UNIONS

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ons and Answers



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TRADE  
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*Questions and Answers*

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### *About This Book*

This book deals with Soviet trade unions. It is compiled in the form of questions and answers.


We have selected the questions which, as a rule, are asked more frequently by foreigners interested in the activities of the Soviet trade unions.

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## I. THE TRADE UNIONS, THE PARTY AND THE STATE

### *WHAT RADICAL CHANGES HAVE BEEN WROUGHT IN THE LIFE OF THE TRADE UNIONS BY THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION?*

The Soviet people regard their trade unions as the school of communism.

The term "school" was first applied to trade unions by the founder of scientific communism Karl Marx. It was during his lifetime that workers began to unite into trade unions for common struggle in defence of their interests.

Following the first steps of the unions Marx concluded that this form of organisation was a school for rallying and consolidating the forces of the working people.

The path covered by the Russian unions before the October Revolution vividly illustrates their contribution in defending the vital interests of the working people, rallying the working class and developing its class consciousness for decisive struggle against tsarist autocracy and the bourgeois-landlord system that ended half a century ago in the triumph of the socialist revolution. The working class, allied with the toiling peasantry, eliminated once and for all the exploitation of man by man. The formerly oppressed and exploited class

became the ruling class of the country.

It is quite natural that the new conditions brought about a radical change in the character and content of the activities of trade unions. This change was determined primarily by the nature of the new social system under which land, factories and means of production became public property.

After the victory of the October Revolution the prime concern of the unions was to develop socialist production in the interest of the new masters—the workers and peasants themselves.

The Soviet Government, formed as a result of the October Revolution, expressed the will and aspirations of the masses. Transforming Russia into a mighty industrial power, building socialism and raising living standards—these aims coincided with the basic goals of the trade union movement. Therefore under the new conditions the unions became a powerful creative force for consolidating and developing the new state of the workers and peasants.

In 1919, Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, wrote: "In this greatest revolution in history, when the proletariat has taken state power into its own hands, all the functions of the trade unions are undergoing a profound change. The trade unions are becoming the chief builders of the new society, for only millions can build this society."

The Soviet trade unions, the broadest organisation of the working class, regard teaching the working people the art of managing enterprises and governing the state as their prime function. Thus, under socialism, the unions preserve their function of teaching. As Lenin put it, under new conditions the Soviet trade unions are a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of education, a school of communism.



*WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
STATE AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE USSR?  
DOES THE STATE INTERFERE IN THE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE TRADE UNIONS?*

The Soviet trade unions are militant organisations of the working class, expressing its basic interests and enjoying the full support of the working people. As organisations of the new ruling class they participate actively in building up the state and its economy. But this by no means signify that they have become state organisations. At the dawn of Soviet power Lenin rejected categorically the thesis on converting the trade unions into "state-like" organisations. He pointed out that the unions were organisations of an educational character. Lenin's thesis on the trade unions proved itself to be true for socialist construction and it remains valid for the present period of wide-scale construction of communism in the USSR.

The cooperation of the Soviet trade unions with the state is successful because this state incorporates the interests of the workers, peasants and working intellectuals who stand at the steering wheel of the state.

Even under these new conditions the unions preserve their protective functions. The interests of an employee may be affected by improper actions of a certain manager who has violated Soviet law. Under such circumstances the unions take immediate measures to protect the rights of their members. We shall deal at length with this question later.

The Soviet trade unions are independent of the state. Their entire work is carried out on the basis

of their rules. Neither the unions nor their rules should be registered by state organisations which do not interfere in the affairs of the trade unions. Article 126 of the Constitution of the Soviet Union guarantees the right of setting up, as well as freedom of activities, of all working people's organisations, including the trade unions.

The trade unions, as well as all other public organisations of the country, participate equally in nominating candidates to all bodies of the state, including the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Soviet labour legislation is drafted with the direct participation of the unions. State and economic bodies at all levels consult the trade union organisations on all basic issues in this field.

The trade unions exercise control over the implementation of safety regulations and measures to promote industrial hygiene. They likewise administer the state social insurance funds, exercise control over social services and endeavour to raise the cultural and educational level of the working people.

There is no doubt that with the development of Soviet society, the role of the trade unions in the USSR will continue to grow.

## *ARE THE TRADE UNIONS SUBORDINATE TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY?*

The rules of the Soviet trade unions read: "The Soviet trade unions are a mass, public, non-party organisation, uniting on a voluntary basis workers and employees of all trades, irrespective of race, nationality, sex or religious conviction..."

The Soviet trade unions carry on their work under

the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—the organisational and directing force of Soviet society. They have travelled a long and successful road under the leadership of the Party and have become the broadest mass organisation of the working class, which exerts its fruitful influence upon all aspects of the economic, cultural and social life of the country. The unions rally the workers and the employees around the Party and inspire them for the successful construction of a communist society.

The unity of aims of the Communist Party and the unions is conditioned by life itself. The labouring masses regard the decisions and practical activities of the Party as an expression of their own aspirations. The leading role of the Communist Party was recognised voluntarily by the unions as a historical fact. Half a century ago, when the labour movement in Russia was emerging as an independent force, the Communist Party headed the struggle of the workers and peasants for the satisfaction of their economic and social demands and for the liquidation of the ruthless tsarist regime and of the oppression by the landlords and the capitalists.

After the defeat of the first Russian revolution of 1905-07, when savage persecution by the tsarist autocracy forced the greater part of the trade unions to go underground, the Communists helped the workers rally their ranks. As a result the trade unions continued to exist as militant workers' organisations, under most difficult conditions of reaction.

It was under the leadership of the Communist Party that the working people of Russia carried out the revolution in October 1917, the first socialist revolution in the history of mankind, and took over state power.

In their drive to develop a socialist economy, the Soviet trade unions mobilised the working people to restore the national economy, so seriously damaged by the First World War and Civil War, to industrialise the country and collectivise agriculture. It was under the leadership of the Party that an end was put once and for all to the exploitation of man by man and for the first time in the history of mankind socialism, a new social system, was built.

At the present time the Soviet trade unions are working to realise the most important task set forth by the Communist Party for the Soviet people—the construction of a communist society. The interests and aims of the Party are identical with those of the entire people and its mass organisations such as the trade unions.

The guiding role of the Party in the life of the unions and other public organisations is not to be understood in the sense that Party organisations replace or patronise them. It would be equally incorrect to speak of any kind of control by the state or Party apparatus over the trade union organisations. The relationship between the unions and the Communist Party is based upon confidence and respect, not subordination. The Party has won the confidence and support of the mass organisations by hearkening to the voice of the people and expressing their aspirations, convincing them of the correctness of its policy through practical results.

### *HOW DOES THE COMMUNIST PARTY EXERCISE ITS LEADERSHIP OF THE TRADE UNIONS?*

It is done by the Communist Party through its members who are at the same time members of the

trade unions. The Communists give their full support to the trade unions regarded by them, as well as by non-Party workers, as a reliable friend and protector of their economic interests.

The Soviet unions are 80 million strong, while the Communist Party numbers 12.5 million members. The latter represent the most advanced section of the working people, whose authority among the popular masses is very high.

Great numbers of non-Party trade union members take an active part in the work of the unions. Here, the true attitude of the masses to the Communist Party finds expression. This can be seen during the elections to leading trade union bodies.

All trade union members participate in these elections. Candidates are nominated at meetings and are openly discussed. The elections are through secret ballot. The returns usually show that alongside with non-Party members Communists are elected.

This fact demonstrates the high authority and confidence the Communist Party and its members enjoy among the masses. Advancing the policies of the Party in the unions and displaying great concern for the needs and demands of the working people, the Communists, though a small part of the trade union membership, enjoy great influence and receive solid support from non-Party trade union members.

## II. STRUCTURE AND METHODS OF WORK OF SOVIET TRADE UNIONS

### *WHAT ARE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE TRADE UNIONS ARE ORGANISED?*

How to organise the unions so that they can best cope with the problems confronting them is a burning question for every trade union leader.

The experience of the trade union movement in different countries has prompted different decisions. The trade unions in Russia, having considered international experiences, concluded that the best results would be achieved if the industrial principle and democratic centralism were the basis of the practical activity of their work.

Industrial principle. What should be the criteria for rallying workers into this or that union? Should it be a craft or a branch of the people's economy? In other words, should there be a single trade union organisation embracing all workers of a given enterprise, or several craft unions?

Practice has shown that the industrial principle of organisation has great advantages over the shop or narrow craft principle.

Dozens of different unions existing at one enterprise prevent the organisation from powerful, joint action by workers of all trades, and enable the capitalist to suppress the attempts of the labourers of a certain craft to improve their position. The industrial principle of organisation eliminates the division

of the union organisation at a plant and secures unity of action in struggles against the exploiters.

That is why, already in pre-revolutionary Russia, the unions decided to have at an enterprise a single organisation, embracing all workers and employees irrespective of trade or job. This principle is equally advantageous when power is in the hands of the working class.

The principle of democratic centralism determines the inner structure of the unions and the relationship between union members and their elected bodies, as well as between the leading bodies themselves, at higher and lower levels.

The Rules of the Soviet Trade Unions define the principles of democratic centralism as follows:

a) all union bodies, from lower to higher, are elected by the members and accountable to them;

b) trade union organisations deal with all questions of union life and work in accordance with the Rules and the decisions of the higher trade union bodies;

c) decisions of trade union organisations are taken by majority vote of their members;

d) the lower trade union bodies are subject to the higher ones.

This basis of organisation makes it possible to combine broad democracy and the initiative of the masses with discipline and unity of action.

Let us see how democracy is combined with centralism.

Members of the unions run their organisation themselves and decide all issues at general meetings and conferences. Leading bodies, elected and controlled by the members, direct day-to-day work. The rights and obligations of members are the same for all, the minority being subject to the will of the majority, just as lower bodies to higher ones.

Every organisation acts in unity with all others. The entire activity of the trade unions is based on convincing the workers and employees, their initiative and strict observation of union democracy.

Thus, democracy in combination with centralism constitutes a powerful and effective means for solving all problems facing the Soviet trade unions.

### *WHAT UNIONS ARE THERE?*

As we have seen, the basic principle of organisation of the Soviet trade unions is not craft or trade but place of work, each union embracing the workers of a particular branch of the national economy.

There are 25 trade unions in the USSR. To name but a few: Engineering Workers Union, Metallurgical Workers Union, Textile and Light Industry Workers Union, Coal-Miners Union, Power Station and Electrical Industry Workers Union, Railway Workers Union, Building Workers Union, Agricultural Workers Union, Municipal Service Workers Union, Medical Workers Union, etc.

The supreme body of each union is its Congress, convened biannually. Between congresses activities are directed by the Central Committee elected at the Congress. Plenary sessions of the Central Committees are convened not less than semi-annually. For day-to-day work the plenary session of the Central Committee elects a Presidium with a Chairman, Secretary and other members. In Union and Autonomous Republics, territories, regions, districts and cities the congresses and conferences elect corresponding committees of the union.

There also exist such union bodies as Inter-Union Councils which are elected at the republican, terri-



torial, etc. congresses and conferences. These deal with problems of common interest for all union organisations of the republic, territory or other administrative unit.

### *WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?*

There exist no restrictions upon a worker or employee joining a union. The Soviet trade unions unite on a voluntary basis working people of all crafts regardless of race, nationality, sex or religious conviction. The Rules permit every worker and office employee, urban or rural, to join a union. The right to be a member is extended to chairmen of agricultural cooperatives, technicians and machine operators on collective farms, students of higher educational institutions, technical and vocational training schools.

Over 82 million people or 96.5 per cent of the workers and employees are trade union members.

### *IS ANYONE OBLIGED TO BECOME A UNION MEMBER?*

The answer is—no. Nobody forces a person to join. Every worker or employee decides this question independently and voluntarily. Anyone who wishes to become a member applies in writing to a union group organiser. Each case is individual, and is dealt with at the meeting of the union group. The decision is confirmed by the shop union committee, and where there is no such committee, by the union local committee of the plant or office.

The number of workers and employees in the USSR grows continuously. Every one is willing to

become a union member for he knows that the unions work actively to satisfy the material and cultural demands of their members. Besides, union members have a number of advantages compared with non-members. These are registered in the Rules of the Soviet Trade Unions.

Among young workers there may be cases where some people do not yet realise the importance of belonging to a union. The union activists explain to them the significance of the unions for the working people. However, it is entirely up to the individual to decide whether he will join.

### *WHAT ADVANTAGES DOES A UNION MEMBER HAVE?*

The trade union members have a number of advantages.

In accordance with labour legislation they receive higher social insurance allowances as compared to non-members. In case of urgent need a member may receive material assistance from union funds. They get legal help from union lawyers gratis. A member also has priority in going to rest homes and sanatoriums, as well as in sending children to pioneer camps, kindergartens and crèches.

The unions have a wide network of cultural and social establishments to serve their members. They have thousands of clubs, palaces of culture, libraries, reading rooms, stadiums, swimming-pools and skiing stations for members and their families.

### *WHAT RIGHTS DOES A UNION MEMBER ENJOY?*

Every union member can actively influence the life of his organisation, take part in its work and

control it, display initiative in any of its activities. The work of the trade unions is based on the widest activities of the masses. Union bodies consistently protect the interests of their members.

The rights of union members are specified in the Rules.

What are these rights? Every member may elect and be elected to all union bodies, conferences and congresses. He may propose or oppose any candidate, as well as criticise them. Regular reports and elections, provided for by the Rules, guarantee systematic control by members over the activities of all union bodies, helping to point out shortcomings and find the way to remove them.

Here are some examples of how the members use these rights.

In 1965, in the election campaign 550,000 union meetings and conferences were held at enterprises and offices, involving 66 million members. The reports delivered were discussed and commented upon by 8 million people. The best workers and the union activists were elected to union bodies. Newly-elected members made up 66 per cent of the total number elected. 2,370 workers, technicians and engineers engaged in production were elected delegates to the 13th Congress of the Trade Unions of the USSR.

A member participates in the discussion of all the problems dealt with at meetings. The scope of these problems is wide. Among them are questions concerning the life of the particular trade union organisation, the work of the entire enterprise or office, cultural and welfare services, and questions concerning the political and economic life of the country. A union member may criticise (at meetings and in the press) the activities of the union, economic and governmental bodies and their functionaries, irrespective of post.

A union member may raise with the union bodies all problems concerning its activities and those of the enterprise, as well as propose means of improving work. He may present to any union body proposals on economic activities, cultural and social services and protection of his rights in case the administration violates the collective agreement or existing labour legislation.

No issue involving the activities or conduct of a trade union member may be considered in his absence. It is his right to participate in the discussion of his activities and behaviour. No worker can be discharged without the sanction of the trade union committee.

The trade union organisations protect the rights of their members and guard the enforcement of labour legislation.

### *WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A UNION MEMBER?*

A union member enjoys extensive democratic rights and has a number of advantages compared to a non-member. But the privileges are accompanied by duties. These are registered in the Rules of the Soviet Trade Unions.

First and foremost, a trade union member must work honestly and contribute to the fulfilment of the plan of the enterprise, shop or team, participate actively in socialist emulation, protect and increase social property, which is the basis of the might and prosperity of the country.

A member is obliged to advance systematically his educational and cultural level as well as his political outlook. It is a general concept recognised by the Soviet trade unions that the more intelligent and ad-

vanced a person is, the more efficiently he takes part in the life of his union as well as in governing the state.

Among other duties are presence at trade union meetings and fulfilment of whatever work he is given by union bodies.

Trade union committees assist the members to carry out their duties more effectively. They organise socialist emulation and facilitate it in every possible way. The trade unions organise schools, seminars and courses to improve the professional skill and the political level of their members.

### *WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF A UNION?*

At every factory, mine, construction project, office, educational institution, state farm, etc., members of the union form a basic unit. As all organisational and educational work is carried on by the trade unions among the masses, these units constitute the core of the Soviet trade unions.

The work of the unit is directed by the union committee of a factory, plant or office. The committee and a control commission are elected at the general meeting, or conference of members by secret ballot. The committee elects its chairman, his deputy and the treasurer. Trade union organisations numbering less than 25 members elect a trade union group organiser.

On the decision of the union committee of big industrial enterprises, shop committees are formed and entrusted with the same functions as the factory or plant union committee. The factory, plant and shop committees, as well as the group organisers, are elected for a year.

The factory, plant and shop committees rely in their activities upon the members of standing commissions which deal with production, wages and norms of labour, social insurance, living conditions and social services, children's institutions, cultural activities, etc.

## *ON DEMOCRACY IN THE UNIONS*

The trade unions consider that the main prerequisite for solving their tasks in the building of a communist society is the constant development of the activity of the masses of workers and office employees. The better the knowledge of the masses, the more active their participation in social life, and the greater possibility for success in any undertaking. That is why the work of the Soviet trade unions is based on the broadest democracy which facilitates and develops initiative on the part of the members. The basic principles of union democracy are reflected in the Trade Unions Rules. Every union organisation must adhere to the letter and spirit of these principles.

What are they?

Firstly, the maintenance of the closest bonds with the masses, working among them, assisting them in labour and in everyday life, attending to their needs. This guides the work of every union body, functionary and activist.

The ties of the unions with the masses are preconditioned by a number of obligations set forth in the Rules. They provide for a general discussion by the members of all questions dealt with at their meetings, conferences and congresses. The members have the right to criticise shortcomings in the work of the unions and state organs. True democracy is inconceivable without criticism and self-criticism.

Secondly, the democratic method of electing union bodies by secret ballot, and the regular reports on their work which the union bodies make to the rank and file.

Thirdly, the democratic method of adopting decisions at meetings and conferences.

A decision is passed by a majority vote of those present. If the minority disagrees, it must abide by the decision and work for its fulfilment.

Collective leadership is also an expression of democracy. This principle excludes the possibility of one-man management and presupposes collective work. Thus, all members of a trade union committee or council take part in discussing questions and making decisions.

The trade union councils and committees organise various commissions, groups and bureaus to carry out daily activities involving rank and file members working on social basis.

The realisation of this principle actively develops the creative initiative of the masses, making them feel themselves masters of their organisation. The majority of the union branches (96 per cent) are run by activists—not by fulltime functionaries; every third member has one or another function.

Important decisions are passed at general meetings, conferences and congresses and between them, at plenary sessions and presidiums of the trade union committees and councils.

Another expression of collective leadership is the regularity of meetings, convened to discuss various issues of union life. The principle of collective leadership makes it possible to avoid mistakes that would be inevitable under one-man management, to use the experience of the masses, to have millions of workers and employees go through an important and multi-sided school of social work.

Last, but not least, among the principles of trade union activities, is that of persuasion. The success of a union activities is guaranteed if they are supported by the masses, who understand their significance, as well as the ways for their realisation. A powerful means of persuasion is the personal example of an activist, his ability to influence his comrades by his own work and his attitude towards labour, socialist property, state and social duties, his family and friends.

The above principles of the Soviet trade unions characterise them as an educational organisation, as an actual school of communism.

### *ELECTIONS AND TERMS OF OFFICE*

The Rules define precisely the order of elections and the terms of office of union bodies.

The secret ballot is used to elect leading bodies. This gives members an opportunity to express their attitude toward a nominee. Candidates are elected by simple majority at a general meeting, a conference or a congress.

The terms of office of leading bodies is as follows: the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) is elected for four years;

the central, republican, territorial, regional, city and district committees as well as the inter-union councils of these bodies are elected for two years;

the factory, plant and office committees and group organisers serve for one year.

The Rules provide for the expulsion of any committee or a council member who ceases to enjoy the confidence of the members.

The elections are preceded by reports of committees to the rank and file. Regularity of elections, re-



ports and discussions create conditions under which the masses can control the work of the committees and help improve it.

### *ON THE TRADE UNION DUES*

Union dues are uniform throughout the Soviet Union and their amount is stipulated in the Rules. They are small and depend on the income. The maximum per month is 1 per cent of wages. Pensioners, students, receiving no fellowships and women temporarily not working in order to bring up children pay 5 kopecks a month.

Initiation fees are 1 per cent of one's wages.

Dues are paid irrespective of kind of wages, system of payment, or its source. But not all sources of income are counted. From these are excluded sick-leave payments, pensions of people who continue to work, state allowances to mothers of large families and unmarried mothers, social assistance allowances, prizes that do not come out of wage funds, etc.

As one can see the amount of dues is not large. But because the unions embrace almost all workers, their dues add up to a tremendous sum, which makes it possible to carry on large-scale cultural activities, to provide financial assistance to the members, etc.

### *WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE UNIONS AND HOW ARE THEY USED?*

Union funds grow annually and in the last twenty years have increased more than fivefold. They are spent to raise the cultural level of the workers, improve their daily life, organise leisure time, and develop physical culture and sports activities.

What are the main sources of union funds?

Dues are the most important item. They make up 60 per cent of the total income.

Next in importance are the proceeds from entertainments and sports events, as well as publications. These contribute 30 per cent to the income. Most shows and concerts at clubs, as well as most events at studiums, gymnasiums, skiing stations and swimming pools are free for union members and their families. Expenditures involved in some plays, films, concerts and sports events are fully covered by admission charges.

A third source of funds is allocations by the management of an enterprise for cultural work and sports. The size of this portion has been determined by the Government at 0.15 per cent of the total wage fund.

What does this large amount go for?

In 1965, 85.3 per cent of the total income was used for cultural purposes, the development of sports, material assistance and the improvement of social services. Organisational expenditures and those for maintenance of the unions made up 14.7 per cent.

Seventy per cent of dues collected remain at the disposal of factory, plant or office trade union committees. Material assistance to members is substantial, each case being decided individually. The union committees pay for the stay at pioneer camps of children of disabled persons and children from large families. The mutual benefit funds, financed by the trade unions, also help members materially.

### *WHO CONTROLS UNION FUNDS?*

The Rules provide for effective control of union finances by the membership.

Financing cultural, educational and sports activi-

ties, subsidies to members, purchases of books and equipment, maintenance of the union apparatus, etc., are based on financial plans approved at general meetings and conferences. At these meetings every member may propose alternative to both parts (income and the expenditure) of the budget and in this way facilitate a more rational use of funds.

Union funds are managed by responsible bodies which also look after their allocation, examine the condition of properties and equipment owned and control their rational utilisation. No person can manage single-handedly the property and the money of a union.

Public control over finances of union committees is exercised by the control commissions, elected at general meetings, conferences and congresses for the same term as the trade union committees.

A control commission is a permanent body. It is independent of the trade union committee and is accountable only to a higher body or to the general meeting, conference or congress by which it has been elected.

The Rules define the responsibilities of the control commissions. They supervise the spending of the union funds as well as those for social insurance, the distribution of property, and the accounting. They also consider complaints.

But this is not the only method through which rank and file members are able to control the finances. Another means, guaranteed by the Rules, provides for regular financial reports by all committees to the rank and file. How is this done?

The factory, plant and office committees publish their financial reports in the union press or on posters which are put up on notice-boards at clubs and in factory canteens.

Financial reports are discussed at general meetings.

Each quarter the factory, plant and office committees report to higher union bodies on financial matters. Thus, these bodies may correct in time any violations as well as breaches of financial discipline.

Wide information and collective control guarantee correct distribution of union funds and prevent abuses.

### III. THE TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

#### *HOW IS INDUSTRY MANAGED? WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNION AND DIRECTOR?*

Soviet people manage factories, state farms and other socialist enterprises primarily through the Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Directors of enterprises are appointed by state administrative bodies. Soviet economy is managed on the basis of democratic centralism worked out by Lenin. Essentially this means that the masses and their broadest organisation—the trade unions—participate in managing industry along with the state agencies.

The working class, through the unions, controls the economic activities of the enterprise whose management is based on one-man responsibility and check on the director himself.

One of the most important aspects of democratic centralism, as applied to the management of the economy, is the unity of collective and individual responsibility. In practice this means a combination of the individual experience of the directors and the collective experience of the masses.

The rights and duties of the director and those

of trade union committees, as well as their relations, are reflected in a number of legislative acts.

Various forms of collective participation of workers in the management of enterprises were created in the process of socialist construction. The most important form is socialist emulation. By taking part in it the workers, as the true masters of their plant, try to raise productivity, look after the efficient functioning of the enterprise and improving of the management apparatus.

Permanent production conferences are an important form of workers' participation in management. These deal with questions of the organisation of labour, introduction of the latest equipment, and other economic aspects of production.

An important role at an enterprise is played by regularly convened general meetings of the workers. These serve to develop the initiative of the masses and the feeling of mutual responsibility for the results. General meetings are an effective form of participation in management and a real school of education for the working people. The workers gathering at a general meeting hear the report of the manager on the extent of fulfilment of the production plan, and have the right to demand the elimination of existing shortcomings. Every director or manager must listen carefully to the collective opinion of the workers and their criticism; he must support all valuable proposals.

The workers (through trade union committees) and administration sign collective agreements, in which mutual obligations are set forth. These obligations provide for the fulfilment of production plans, the carrying out of technical and economic measures to improve production, coordinate norms and wages, and the satisfaction of cultural and social needs of workers and employees.

## *WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS OF TRADE UNION COMMITTEES?*

The unions play an important role in involving workers in social activities as well as in management of the enterprises. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government consider the participation of the broadest masses in social and political life to be one of the most important conditions for the successful solution of economic and political tasks facing the state.

The factory, plant and office trade union committees are granted extensive rights which guarantee their active participation in management. They represent the workers and the employees on all questions concerning labour, daily life and cultural services, take part in working out production plans, plans of capital construction and those of construction and repair of housing and cultural establishments. The trade union committees hear the reports of the managers on the fulfilment of the production plan and the obligations registered in the collective agreement. They have the power to demand immediate elimination of any shortcomings.

The factory, plant and office committees in accordance with existing legislation handle all matters concerning social insurance: they send workers and employees to sanatoriums and holiday homes; they control the implementation of labour laws and regulations on safety measures and occupational health by the administration; they allow or prohibit (in accordance with legislation) overtime; they supervise the state and cooperative trade or catering services at a given enterprise.

The following issues are dealt with jointly by the committee and administration:

expenditures of the enterprise fund for the cultural and everyday needs of the workers, for bonuses and allowances, for the development of production;

socialist emulation—summing up its results, and determining the winners and settling the matter of prizes.

The administration has no right to determine unilaterally the crafts and the types of work paid on the basis of piece-work and time rates, for strenuous work, work in hot or other conditions detrimental to health. The approval of the union is necessary to establish individual norms of production, sizes of bonuses and grades of skill. Without the permission of the union no worker can be dismissed by the administration.

### *WHAT IS SOCIALIST EMULATION AND WHY DO UNIONS CONSIDER IT THEIR DUTY TO DEVELOP IT?*

Competition in labour is inherent in everyone participating in production. While engaging in this people enter certain relationship with each other.

What kind of relationship is this? It depends upon the social system. It may have the character of severe competition or one of comradely cooperation and mutual help.

Under conditions existing in the Soviet Union competition signifies the socialist attitude of a person towards labour—labour for himself and for society. It is the expression of a new type of relationship between people based on mutual assistance and



cooperation, not on a competitive struggle for existence.

Socialist emulation, consciously raising the productivity of labour to fulfill the obligations, tends to develop among workers responsibility for what goes on at their enterprise.

Such is the essence of socialist emulation, which involves almost all the working people of the USSR. That is why it is considered to be a method of communist construction and its organisation is a major task of Soviet trade unions.

### *WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN SOCIALIST EMULATION?*

Socialist emulation emerged in the Soviet Union spontaneously on the initiative of the most advanced workers.

The history of the heroic deeds of the Soviet people includes such an episode as this: On Saturday, May 10, 1919, (this was a difficult period for the young Soviet state, engaged in repelling the attacks of foreign interventionists and the White Guards) 405 workers of the railway repair shop Sortirovochnaya of the Moscow-Kazan line decided at their general meeting to work overtime so as to help the state by their unpaid labour. The result was 1,014 extra working hours, in which 4 engines and 16 cars were repaired and 170 tons of wheat unloaded. This day went down in history as the first "Communist Subbotnik" when the workers volunteered not for their own sake but in the interests of society. (*Subbota* is the Russian for Saturday). The initiative of the workers of this depot was continued by thousands of other enterprises and construction projects.

The number of workers involved in socialist emulation increased each year. By 1933 (the end of the first Five-Year Plan) the number of industrial workers involved was 70 per cent of the total, as compared to 29 per cent in 1930. The emulation itself was becoming more complex. The workers saved on material and labour resources. They tried to organise their work on a more rational basis, introducing all kinds of technical improvements and perfecting their methods of labour.

This movement was crowned by the development of its highest form—the movement for communist labour. This marked the entrance of the USSR into the phase of wide-scale construction of a communist society. The individual workers, as well as whole collectives, expressed their will to work and live in a communist manner. The obligations they undertook concerned not only working methods but cultural and moral standards. By 1967, there were 32 million people involved in the communist labour. Over 8,000 enterprises and 291,000 odd workshops and teams received the honorary title of “communist labour collectives” and 9.3 million workers—the title of “communist labour workers.”

It is natural that the attained scope of the socialist emulation movement presupposes unfolding trade union work to help the workers fulfill their obligations. The unions are striving to guarantee the observation of the principles of socialist emulation, worked out by Lenin. This is, first of all, widespread information on and comparison of the results obtained. The persons involved in emulation are to be kept informed of its progress, the achievements and the methods used to attain the best results. The widest dissemination of information on the results of socialist emulation is a major condition for its

success. Emulation also requires comparison of results. Such comparison, accompanied by analysis showing who is ahead and why, makes clear the way to achieve a general upsurge of production. It also indicates who is in need of assistance and in what way.

Thus, information and comparison are powerful means for developing socialist emulation. However, the wider the knowledge and use of the best experiences, the greater the effectiveness of work. Socialist emulation presupposes the development of comradely help, sharing the best and most advanced experiences, cooperation of the more experienced with less experienced workers, etc.

The content of the daily work of the unions in developing socialist emulation flows from what has been said above.

One of the effective ways in which the unions influence socialist emulation is to sum up the results regularly and collectively. At enterprises this is done jointly by the administration and the trade union committee each month, and in a specific branch of industry—by the Central Council of the Union and the corresponding ministry once in three months. Thus, the achievements of each enterprise are evaluated just as the rate of fulfilment of obligations undertaken. The best enterprises, workshops and teams are granted prizes. Popularising their methods enables the union to help other collectives catch up with them.

### *HOW ARE THE BEST ENCOURAGED?*

There are various ways of rewarding the winners in socialist emulation.

Enterprises winning in emulation receive the

challenge Red Banner and a large prize to be divided among deserving members of the staff. There are over 5,500 such banners: those of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the AUCCTU, of the Central Councils of individual trade unions and corresponding ministries, the Councils of Ministers of different republics and the corresponding republican union bodies. There are 2,000 second and 2,400 third money prizes.

Besides their own challenge banners the enterprises have books and lists of honour. The names of the best workers are given in these books and lists; for the fulfilment of obligations in emulation for communist labour the individual workers, teams and workshops are granted the honorary title of "communist labour worker" or "communist labour collective."

### *WHAT IS A PERMANENT PRODUCTION CONFERENCE? HOW DOES IT WORK?*

The production conference is a method of attracting the working people to participate actively in economic life. It emerged in the first years of Soviet power and has developed since. Each new year saw a greater number of participants. At present permanent conferences exist at 66,000 industrial enterprises, construction projects and state farms. They encompass 5 million elected workers, engineers, economists, etc. Their contribution to the national economy has a considerable effect.

The production conference deals with many problems of the enterprise. It helps work out long- and short-term production plans, deals with the introduction of new technique and equipment, the

use of reserves and the lowering of production costs, the coordination of the norms and wages, etc. The administration is obligated to carry out on time the constructive proposals approved by the production conferences.

Permanent production conferences are formed at enterprises employing over a hundred workers. Their members are elected at general meetings for a similar term as their trade union committees. Millions of workers take an active part in the work of the production conferences, for not only the elected members but anyone who wishes may participate. In the last 5 years, 10 million constructive proposals were made on various aspects of production. The greater part of them was carried out.

### *WHAT CREATIVE SOCIETIES ARE THERE AT SOVIET ENTERPRISES AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE UNIONS?*

Many creative societies supervised by the unions play an outstanding role in promoting progress in science and technology and strengthening the national economy.

One such society is the All-Union Society of the Inventors and Innovators (AUSII) which unites millions of people at factories, plants, construction projects, research institutions, etc.

There has been a steady growth in the membership of the AUSII. It is now 4,300,000 strong as compared to 520,000 in 1956. In the course of the Seven-Year Plan the inventions and innovations introduced totalled 18.8 million and saved 11,200 million roubles.

The members discuss proposed innovations and

control their introduction. They see to it that the authors of innovations and inventions are paid. The size of royalties depends on the extent of annual saving effected. The personnel are also encouraged for developing innovation activities by awarding badges "For distinguished service in socialist emulation," testimonials and inclusion in the "Book of Honour" and at the "Board of Honour."

The scientific and technological societies (STS) help realise the basic tasks of technical reconstruction of the economy. They are based on the industrial principle and unite engineers, technicians, research workers and other personnel. These societies help to draw masses into work for the solution of problems of scientific and technological progress; they link up science and production, and facilitate the fulfilment of research plans and their practical implementation.

At present there are 22 scientific and technological societies with a membership of more than three million. Their basic organisational unit is a primary organisation of members working at one plant, establishment or office.

In the course of the Seven Year Plan over two million recommendations and proposals of these societies helped considerably to increase technological and economic levels of production.

There are many other self-initiated creative groups at enterprises engaged in improving production: designing bureaus, economic analysis groups, scientific information bureaus, research institutions, laboratories and groups, etc.—all run on a voluntary basis by the workers, engineers and economists.

The designing bureaus mentioned above constitute a team of engineers, technicians and workers-innovators brought together by their desire to work creatively in the process of production. They

help the workers with technical calculations, draft designs for implements to replace strenuous manual labour, etc. There are more than 25,000 such bureaus in the country.

A major way to involve the workers in the economic activities of enterprises is the economic analysis groups of which there are over 50,000. Members of these groups study the results of work in a shop or an enterprise, work to discover all possible reserves of production, prepare recommendations to increase production and improve the quality of goods.

The above mentioned and other societies and associations directed by the unions serve to enrich their activities in educating the masses and involving them in creative social life.

## IV. MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS

### *WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT?*

One of the first acts of Soviet power was the Decree of July 2, 1918, on obligatory collective agreements determining the order of hiring and dismissing, working hours, wages, etc.

Under the socialist system the obligations are mutual, for both parties—management and workers—pursue the same aim of advancing production and improving the material and cultural standards of the people.

The significance of the collective agreement has risen in the recent period due to the economic reform aimed at extending economic independence of enterprises and increasing the material incentives of the working people in attaining economic effectiveness of production.

The latest Socialist Enterprise Statute obliges the management to consult the union on all details concerning assignment of profits, distribution of the prize fund, housing construction, and construction of cultural, children's, social service institutions. The norms of production also cannot be changed without the approval of the union.



## *WHAT CLAUSES DOES AN AGREEMENT CONTAIN?*

1. Obligations of the management and the union to fulfill the plan and develop socialist emulation.
2. Wages and planned norms of output.
3. Training and improving the skill of the workers, technicians, engineers or office employees.
4. Labour discipline.
5. Labour protection measures.
6. Housing and living conditions.
7. Consumer supplies and public catering.
8. Cultural activities.

Each clause of the agreement contains concrete obligations undertaken by the management and trade union committee on behalf of the workers.

## *HOW THE AGREEMENTS ARE DRAFTED AND DIFFERENCES, IF ANY, SETTLED BETWEEN THE UNION COMMITTEE AND MANAGEMENT?*

Agreements are signed each year, not later than February. The proposals of the workers make up the basis of the draft which is preliminarily discussed at a joint meeting of the management and union committee.

If in drafting and discussing the agreement differences occur between the trade union committee and management, these are, as a rule, settled favourably for the union. The approved draft is further discussed at general meetings of the workers and office employees or, at larger enterprises, by the conferences of their delegates.

The text approved by the general meeting or con-

ference is signed by the director, on the one hand, and by the trade union committee chairman who acts on behalf on the entire personnel, on the other.

If there occurs any violation of the agreement by the management, it is taken up by the higher union bodies and economic organisations. These may resort to sanctions against the guilty administrative personnel to the point of firing them from posts. Gross and systematic violations are punished under criminal law. While on the demand of the union a legal action may be brought against the management which systematically violates its obligations, the obligations undertaken by the trade union committees are of a moral and social character, and their fulfilment cannot be secured through the courts.

The signed agreements are registered by the higher union bodies and superior economic organisations. This registration makes the agreement a legal document.

### *WHAT PART DO THE UNIONS PLAY IN DETERMINING WAGES?*

Wages are a traditional concern of unions. Soviet legislation grants unions extensive rights in all matters of wages and labour. The unions are vitally interested in both a steady increase of the total wage fund and of the national income, the well-being of the people being based upon the growth of production. The unions, through their lower and higher committees, directly participate in all decisions connected with wages.

Raising material incentives of the workers is a major task of the unions, which they carry out

jointly with the management. To realise this aim unions exercise permanent control over the legally established conditions of remuneration.

They concentrate on working out wage scales which determine the relationship and difference between wages of the skilled and the unskilled, and see to it that the existing methods of paying wages are completely understood by every worker.

The principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his labour," is the cornerstone of socialism. Proceeding from this principle, the wage system in the USSR is based upon concrete values, the quantity and quality of work.

The Wage and Payments Commissions of the union committees concentrate upon this area. Such commissions study and work out recommendations as to the norms, tariff scales and wages for various categories of workers, etc.

The commissions examine regularly the distribution of wage funds and the scales of payments and skills. They try to raise productivity of labour more rapidly than wages, thus improving the material well-being of the workers.

### *HOW ARE NORMS OF OUTPUT ESTABLISHED?*

The standards of production are fixed on the basis of technical possibilities and of the most advanced methods of production. They are established by the administration in consultation with the union committees. If these standards remained unchanged the productivity of labour would lag behind the rise in wages. This would tend to slow down the general improvement in the well-being of the people. The unions are interested in productivity increasing

faster than wages and so support the initiative of the masses and of the administration in reexamining the norms of output. These are also affected by the introduction of new techniques and machinery.

The reexamination of norms of output is carried out only with the permission of the union committee. It is worth while mentioning that the chairman of the committee has no right to decide the question independently.

### *HOW IS OVERTIME COMPENSATED FOR?*

Labour legislation strictly regulates overtime. Provision is made for special cases, such as disasters, accidents, urgent repairs, difficulties in transport, water-supply and electric systems, etc.

Extra hours may be put in only with the permission of the union. They must not exceed four hours in two consecutive days.

Payment for extra work is as follows: 150 per cent for each of the first two hours and 200 per cent for every hour thereafter. Piece-work is paid for differently: regular rates plus 50 per cent of whatever is paid on a time-work basis to a worker with the same skill, for the first two hours, and another 100 per cent for every next hour.

### *WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF THE BONUSES GIVEN TO THE WORKERS? WHAT ARE THEY GIVEN BONUSES FOR?*

The wage fund itself is a source. Bonuses are given from this fund for saving fuel and raw materials, introducing the latest types of machinery, and overfulfilling the production plan.

The enterprise that wins in the socialist emulation campaign receives the money prize to distribute among the shops, where the amount of the individual awards is determined.

A part of the factory profits also goes to build the incentive fund which is used permanently to encourage the best workers of the month. At the end of the economic year, based on the results of the entire plant, workers receive a bonus equal to a fortnight's or a month's wage.

The administration may not touch these funds without the consent of the union organisation.

### *HOW DO THE UNIONS RAISE THE SKILL OF THE WORKERS?*

Advancing the knowledge and the skill of the workers is an important state task in the USSR. It is provided for by the national economic plan and by those of each industry. The enterprises and trade union committees have special funds for this purpose.

Workers with all grades of skill are trained in special groups, courses and seminars. During the last Seven-Year Plan alone 39 million workers improved their qualifications.

The union committees and the management draft the plans for technical training. The unions provide books, visual aids and other facilities for training and encourage the workers in every possible way.

A popular practice is to demonstrate advanced methods at work. The Councils of Innovators set up in a number of cities and at some enterprises do a lot to promote the idea. In the last two years the Leningrad Council of Innovators organised 300 "days of innovators," when the most advanced me-

thods of work and the latest equipment were demonstrated, the innovators teaching their comrades the most effective methods of work.

A fruitful method of sharing experiences is the system of "advanced experience schools," attended annually by nearly a million workers. There are two types of such schools: schools attended by the workers of the same crafts of one factory or plant and schools for workers and engineers in similar fields from different industrial establishments.

A new and successful form of sharing advanced experience is the system of the "communist labour schools." Here people study the methods of work of the innovators, of communist labour workers and communist labour teams.

Other forms and means of popularising advanced experience are most varied: lectures and talks, films, press, radio and television programmes, exhibitions, etc.—they help the workers acquire and apply in practice the most advanced experiences.

### *WHAT MEASURES ARE TAKEN BY THE UNIONS TO HELP YOUTH MASTER THEIR PROFESSION?*

A considerable part of young workers receive fundamental training in vocational training schools the number of which grows annually. Young people here enter the trade union and through its committee establish contacts with the union committee of the enterprises where they are going to work. The factory union organisation helps vocational school pupils to familiarise themselves with the work of the enterprise and get practical experience. Along with pupils of these schools another

2 million young people from general schools replenish the industry and agriculture. They are assisted in choosing the appropriate field of work and in getting necessary experience. Special courses and circles are organised for young people. Young people are quite often put under the wing of older, more experienced workers. This "adoption" is widely practiced at many enterprises, with good results.

## V. INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE

### *WHAT DO THE TRADE UNIONS DO TO IMPROVE LABOUR CONDITIONS?*

Soviet trade unions have extensive rights of supervision over the working conditions of wage earners and salaried employees and unlimited opportunities to initiate measures aimed at improving them. The Soviet Government respects these rights, making decisions affecting workers only after consultation with the unions. Unions often submit draft laws or legislative amendments and work for their adoption. Union-initiated legislation includes: Law on the Shorter Workday; Regulations on Labour Arbitration; Decree on Wage Increases to Low-Paid Wage Earners and Salaried Employees; Decree on Shorter Working Hours and Longer Holidays for 16-18 Year Old Workers. "Measures for Further Improvement of Labour Protection in Undertakings and on Construction Projects," and many other decrees were jointly adopted by the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the All-Union Central Council of the Trade Unions.

The Government has established a State Committee on Labour and Wages, which supervises the work of ministries and other governmental departments in the field of labour and wages and drafts labour legislation. Here, too important decisions



are taken by the State Committee jointly with the trade union governing bodies.

Central committees of trade unions and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions are directly responsible for drawing up rules and regulations on safety and accident prevention. The unions have several labour protection research institutes located in industrial centres. These institutes help develop up-to-date ventilation, improve safety and accident prevention measures, lighting, occupational hygiene, individual protective devices and work clothes. Unions conduct public inspections of safety and occupational hygiene in plants and offices and on construction sites.

### *WHAT IS THE LENGTH OF THE WORKDAY AND WORKWEEK IN THE USSR?*

The decree on the eight-hour workday was one of the first issued by the Soviet Government, an outstanding achievement of the October Socialist Revolution. In tsarist Russia the factory and plant workday was 10-11 hours, as a rule, and at small enterprises and for farm-labourers it was 13-15 hours.

Inherent in socialist society is the shorter workday, concomitant with economic development and rise in labour productivity. The Soviet Government has always pursued a policy of the steady reduction of working hours.

The introduction of the seven-hour workday for wage earners and salaried employees and the six-hour day for miners was completed by the end of 1960. Those whose work constitutes a health hazard and miners have a shorter day. Certain groups of intellectual workers also have a shorter

day: specialised secondary and vocational training school-teachers have a three-hour day; first to fourth form teachers have a four-hour day; fifth to tenth form teachers a three-hour day; doctors fully engaged in out-patient departments and dentists work 5.5 hours. Wages are not affected by the shorter workday. Those who have a seven-hour day work only six hours on Saturdays and on days before holidays. At the end of 1960 the average industrial workweek was 39.4 hours.

In March 1967 the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions adopted a decision "On the Transfer of Workers and Employees of Industrial Enterprises, Offices and Organisations to a Five-Day Working Week With Two Days Off," in order to lighten the work load, expand opportunities for improving skills and for cultural development. Also envisaged were rationalised production, further increase in labour productivity and efficiency in production methods.

Vast numbers of factories and plants and the entire population of towns and cities switched to the new workweek at the beginning of the year. Sociological research shows that although the five-day week does not reduce the total working time, it does reduce by 17 per cent the time spent by the average worker on the commuting, changing of work shifts, etc.

Further shortening of the workweek will be based on the increase in labour productivity.

### *ARE ALL WAGE EARNERS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES ENTITLED TO PAID HOLIDAYS?*

The USSR Constitution guarantees annual paid holidays to all wage earners and salaried employees,

without exception. The only requisite for a paid holiday is that the person be a wage-earner or salaried employee. Full-time or part-time work, the amount and form of pay, staff worker or not—all these conditions do not affect the right to a paid holiday.

The worker or employee is entitled to his holiday after 11 months of uninterrupted service at the given industrial enterprise or office. Time of service includes periods of illness when the worker received social insurance, of study at school or qualifications courses, of time given to public duties, etc. Transfer to another undertaking or office by order of the management does not interrupt service record.

The holiday for wage earners or salaried employees is 12 or more working days, exclusive of days off and holidays occurring during the worker's holiday. Wage earners and salaried employees under 18 receive a month's holiday. Longer holidays—from 18 to 48 working days—are granted to those in research, educational and cultural establishments, libraries, timber industry and forestry, pre-school children's establishments, etc.

Additional holidays (over and above the usual holiday) are granted to those who work under special conditions—if the work constitutes a health hazard; if it is work without fixed hours; for long, uninterrupted service; and for work in the Far North and some other areas of similar status.

All workers directly engaged in the mining, metallurgical, metal-working, chemical, textile and building materials industries, in railway, waterway and motor transport and on large construction projects who have worked at the same undertaking or building project without interruption for at least two years are given an additional annual three-day holiday or monetary compensation equal to three

days' pay. Workers in the timber and forestry industries are granted an additional 24-day holiday after each three-year period of uninterrupted service.

*IS IT TRUE THAT IN THE SOVIET UNION  
SPECIAL WORK CLOTHES AND PROTECTIVE  
DEVICES ARE GIVEN TO WORKERS FREE OF  
CHARGE?*

Special overalls, footwear and protective clothing and devices reduce labour hazards. Trade unions naturally make great efforts to provide workers with work clothes of high quality and pleasing appearance.

State expenditure for these purposes and the number of workers receiving special overalls and footwear free of charge are increasing. As far back as 1964 the number of workers receiving such clothes and footwear at the expense of the management reached 22 million and nearly 750 million roubles was spent for these purposes. During the new Five-Year Plan period, the number of workers receiving work clothes will be considerably increased.

In August 1966, the USSR Council of Ministers and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions adopted a decision "On Further Improvement of Provision of Special Clothing, Footwear and Protective Devices for Workers and Employees."

It outlined measures providing for the manufacture of materials with increased protective qualities, new patterns of work clothes, construction of factories manufacturing special overalls and protective devices.

Union organisations supervise and check the quality of overalls and footwear and their distribution. Usually special commissions are set up in industry including management and union representatives which check whether new consignments of clothing and footwear comply with state and technical standards, as well as with pattern, style and size as ordered by the enterprise.

Most enterprises have their own disinfection and airing centres, laundries, dry-cleaning and repair shops for special overalls and footwear. Collective agreements also provide for the building of such shops. The network of specialised shops where these work clothes are sold at very reasonable prices is being expanded.

### *HOW ARE WOMEN WORKERS PROTECTED?*

Millions of women are engaged in production. Women in the USSR constitute half the trade union membership. The Soviet state and the trade unions do their utmost to make it easier for the woman wage-earner or salaried employee to combine her duties as a mother with work, studies, social and state activities.

Special attention is given to the needs of women engaged in production, and special laws limit the work that they can do. Female labour in industries with arduous or hazardous conditions is prohibited. In a number of cases regular medical check-ups are stipulated. On the doctor's order the management is obliged to transfer the woman to an easier job immediately.

During Soviet years the working conditions of women have changed beyond recognition. Industrial

undertakings have come into existence everywhere in which working conditions fully meet the requirements of safety and industrial hygiene and where any injurious effect upon the health of women workers has been eliminated. In constructing new and renovating old factories and plants, full attention is given to eliminating labour hazards, and to making female labour as light as possible.

Trade union committees and numerous activists strive to make work healthy, safe and non-exhausting. A few years ago special commissions to carry out work among women were set up in undertakings employing much female labour.

Let us take a look at the Dzerzhinsky sewing factory in Bobruisk, Byelorussia, where women constitute the majority. In summer the factory grounds are covered with greenery and flowers. The workshops are clean, spacious and airy, with excellent ventilation systems. Everywhere fluorescent lamps cast an even, bluish light, pleasant to the eye, and there are many evergreen plants in wooden tubs. There are daily breaks for gymnastics. The instructors and the factory doctors have elaborated a special set of exercises.

At many factories and plants the trade union activists make a thorough study of working conditions of each woman worker. Those doing arduous work are taught, on an in-service training basis, other trades and then are transferred to easier jobs. No pay cut is permitted in such cases.

Much has already been done to lighten the work of women in the USSR. Nevertheless there are women still engaged on construction sites and utility services requiring manual labour. But here, too, working conditions are being made easier with each passing year; manual labour is giving way increasingly to machinery coming to the aid of people.

## HOW ARE OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES COMBATED?

Pre-revolutionary Russia was one of the most backward countries in Europe as regarded industrial safety and accident prevention. The work of mine and pit workers was especially exhaustive. The miner would spend nearly 12 hours underground, often working waist-deep in water or in drifts so low that he could not straighten up. Working conditions in other industries were also very hard. Many people became incapacitated long before their time, many died of serious occupational diseases and poisoning. Today even old people seldom recall this unsavoury past, the slave work and slums of workers' settlements.

Let us take the miners as an example. The primitive miner's pick that sapped the entire strength of even powerful men can be seen today only in museums. Modern Soviet mines are fitted with the latest machinery and equipment. The main processes of mining—excavation, loading and delivery—have been mechanised and automated. The workday has been cut in half and is immeasurably easier than it used to be. The state has provided for maximum safety in mining and excavation work. The mines have been well equipped with hygienic and personal services, health posts and photariums—rooms where the people working underground are exposed every day to ultra-violet rays. As a result there has been a sharp decrease in influenza, tonsillitis and such "miners' diseases" as radiculitis and other nerve inflammations.

Other branches of industry have also changed beyond recognition. Thousands of new factories and plants built in Soviet years are equipped with modern safety and sanitation devices. Old factories and

plants have been modernised and renovated. Mechanisation and automation of many production processes have led to the disappearance of many old crafts and the advent of new ones which do not require muscular effort, but rather high level of general and technical culture. For instance, in engineering and metal-working industries all kinds of manual loaders have been replaced by crane and hoisting-machine operators. Riveters, whose occupational disease was deafness, have disappeared and given way to welders.

There are ten research institutes of industrial hygiene and occupational diseases which contribute to making working conditions safe and non-detrimental to health. Thousands upon thousands of workshop doctors, together with trade union activists, study working conditions and, together with management, take measures to promote health and prevent occupational diseases. Many occupational diseases formerly wide-spread and cases of industrial poisoning have disappeared completely today.

### *WHAT ARE THE PRIVILEGES OF WORKERS DOING HEAVY LABOUR OR ENGAGED IN HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS?*

Soviet labour legislation provides for a number of important privileges for workers in occupations where hazards have not yet been completely eliminated, and for those doing heavy labour.

What are these privileges? Shorter working hours, usually six hours a day, have been established for miners and for wage earners and salaried employees whose working conditions involve a health hazard.

Wherever there is a health hazard workers receive extra holidays each year, in addition to regular hol-



idays. The length of the extra holiday has been fixed at from 6 to 36 working days, depending on working conditions.

In trades with poisoning hazards, fats and other antidotes are issued to the workers. In many trades where working conditions constitute a health hazard, substantial nourishing breakfasts are issued to workers and employees free of charge. If the work involves handling substances injurious to the skin, management is obliged to provide detergents free of charge.

Workers engaged in underground work, in trades involving health hazards, in hot shops or on jobs with other difficult working conditions, are entitled to old-age pensions on privileged terms—they may retire 10 years earlier than ordinary workers and their pensions are higher rated. The wage scale in such work is, naturally, also higher than that of workers on lighter jobs.

### *HOW DOES DISABILITY COMPENSATION WORK?*

The number of accidents in industry, as well as the number of cases of occupational diseases, has been decreasing steadily. Many formerly widespread occupational diseases have disappeared. But still there are cases when a worker is seriously injured or falls ill at work through the fault of the management.

There are strict regulations providing for compensation to workers and employees in such cases. Management is obliged to compensate the worker if the injury occurred on the premises or territory of the establishment or outside it, while discharging labour duties or while going to or from work by

factory transport. If the injury causes temporary disability the worker receives throughout the course of illness a benefit equal to 100 per cent of his monthly earnings, regardless of service record. In case an injured worker is transferred temporarily to an easier but lower-paid job the difference between his previous and new earnings is paid until he is completely recovered or declared permanently disabled.

If, as a result of accident or occupational disease, a worker becomes incapacitated the management or the union committee sends him to a special medical commission. After the commission ascertains the loss of capacity for work a pension is fixed by the social insurance authority. This may be equal to half or over half his previous earnings. The difference between the pension and previous earnings is paid by the enterprise. A worker who is completely incapacitated through the fault of the enterprise is ensured his average monthly earnings.

It sometimes happens, however, that not only the enterprise but the worker himself is to blame for the injury to his health, through his gross violation of labour-protection and accident-prevention rules. In this case compensation is fixed depending on how much each side is to blame. The degree of responsibility is established by the labour protection commission of the local trade union committee.

If the "victim" does not agree with the decision of the management he lodges a complaint with the factory or plant union committee. The committee makes a decision which must be implemented immediately. Even in cases when the management does not agree with the decision they are obliged to pay up to the average monthly compensation.

If one of the parties is not satisfied with the union committee's decision, it has the right to bring the case to court.

## *HOW DO UNIONS PARTICIPATE IN SUPER- VISING THE CONSTRUCTION OR RENO- VATION OF INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES?*

Working conditions have changed beyond recognition in Soviet years. Thousands of new enterprises have been built and old ones brought up-to-date. Electrification, mechanisation and automation, new machinery and equipment and new technical know-how make work immeasurably easier, safer and healthier. The state demands strict observance of industrial hygiene and scientifically-elaborated labour-protection standards. Industrial enterprises must be made clean, airy and well-lighted, congenial for the labour of human beings.

Soviet unions give questions of labour conditions top priority. Hence, their deep interest in capital construction. They participate in planning new plants and renovating old ones, establish constant public supervision of construction and the installation of ventilation and air-conditioning in workshops; they see to it that the plant installed meets labour protection and safety requirements, and that rooms for personal use are light, spacious and well-furnished.

Common form of check-ups in construction are observation posts and groups. They are set up by union committees in building offices, on construction sites, in workshops and undertakings of the building industry, in designing and construction offices and in undertakings which supply equipment. Supervisors are chosen from among workers, trade union activists, representatives of economic organisations and the trade union and Young Communist League committees, newspapers and radio. Their activity is directed by the trade union committee.

Supervision posts and groups of the Construction Workers' Trade Union act in close contact with the public supervisors of the union of the "client organisation" for which the enterprise or shop is being built. A case in point is the new section of the Novomoskovsk chemical combine in the Ukraine. The builders' trade union committee jointly with union committees of the designers and the chemical combine arranged a discussion of the blueprints on the construction project itself. After studying the plans, rank and file workers, foremen and engineers contributed many important amendments aimed at improving working conditions. All the amendments to the design were adopted.

The unions have a staff of technical experts with a knowledge of the given industry. Their directions for eliminating violations of labour-protection rules are compulsory for managers of industrial enterprises and building organisations. No factory or workshop can be put into operation without the approval of the technical inspectors and other representatives of the trade union committee.

*WHAT RIGHTS ARE GRANTED TO LABOUR  
PROTECTION COMMISSIONS OF LOCAL  
TRADE UNION COMMITTEES? WHAT ARE  
THEIR DUTIES?*

Labour protection commissions are established to render assistance to the trade union committee in supervising the observation of labour legislation, sa-

fety, accident prevention and industrial hygiene regulations.

The commission supervises the management's observance of laws concerning working hours, days off, holidays and labour protection of women and young workers. The commission members check the legality of over-time work, the use of money allocated for improvement of working conditions; they examine each case of injury at work or occupational disease and press for measures aimed at eliminating accidents and occupational diseases.

The commission has extensive and varied duties. It participates in drawing up a contract with the management on labour protection and the corresponding clauses in the collective agreement, considers plans for preparing the enterprise for winter and summer working conditions and supervises implementation of these plans. The commission sees to the proper training of workers in industrial safety techniques, provision of special overalls and footwear, protective eye-glasses or goggles and respirators and other devices for individual protection. It carries out systematic check-ups on the hygiene of industrial and service premises, on lighting, safety railings around machines, etc.

Everything connected with labour protection and safety and accident prevention is the concern of the commission. It has the right at any time to inspect shops and has access to all documents dealing with labour protection. If a flaw or violation comes to light, the commission demands its elimination by the management and, if the need arises, submits the question to the trade union committee.

In its activities the commission is backed by numerous public inspectors. The commission guides their work and provides for exchange of experience among them.

## *WHO CAN BECOME A PUBLIC LABOUR PROTECTION INSPECTOR?*

Public labour protection inspectors are elected at trade union group meetings of wage-earners and salaried employees. Any worker, employee, technician or engineer who is a union member, and not a member of the management staff, is eligible for the post of inspector.

There are approximately 1.5 million such inspectors in the country. They are the keen eye of the trade unions, guaranteeing strict and undeviating observance of labour legislation and safety and industrial hygiene regulations in industry.

## VI. SOCIAL INSURANCE AND TRADE UNIONS

### *WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF SOCIAL INSURANCE IN THE USSR? WHY HAS CONTROL OF SOCIAL INSURANCE BEEN ENTRUSTED TO THE UNIONS?*

The Constitution of the USSR guarantees to all Soviet citizens the right to social maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or incapacity for work. "This right," reads Articles 120 of the Constitution, "is ensured by extensive development of social insurance of industrial, office and professional workers at state expense, free medical service for the working people and the provision of a wide network of health resorts for the use of the working people."

Social insurance in the USSR encompasses all wage earners and salaried employees, regardless of the nature of their work, length of service or mode of remuneration for the work done. Wage earners and salaried employees do not have to make social insurance contributions. The social insurance fund is made up of contributions from industrial enterprises, construction projects and institutions, as well as special state budget allocations.

The chief aim of social insurance in the USSR is labour and health protection, prevention of disease

and the improvement of working and living conditions. An important feature is provision of insurance not only for the worker himself but for the members of his family as well.

Since 1933 social insurance has been directly controlled by the unions. Thousands of millions of roubles of state funds have been entrusted to them with the aim of enabling the broadest sections of the working people to supervise expenditures of social insurance funds. Today nearly 2.5 million union activists take part in practical activity in this field. General policies with regard to operating social insurance plans are laid down by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and those in republics, territories and regions, respectively by the republican, territorial and regional union councils and committees.

### *WHERE DO THE THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE BUDGET GO?*

The growth of the Soviet Union's economy is accompanied by increasing expenditures on social insurance. Here are a few figures to illustrate the steady increase of the social insurance budget (in thousand million roubles):

Year:	1940	1950	1960	1965	1967 (projected)
	0.860	1.960	7.100	10.430	12.392

The largest social insurance expenditure item is old-age pensions and temporary disability compensations. Every year over 2.5 million women—wage earners and salaried employees—receive maternity leave allowances and money to buy necessities for



their newly-borns. Allowances and benefits are also granted to those temporarily transferred to another job because of T.B. or an occupational disease, those on leave to nurse an ill family member, etc.

A considerable part of social insurance funds is spent on free and reduced-rate vouchers for workers going to sanatoriums, holiday homes, tourist and mountaineering camps, on maintenance of pioneer camps, other facilities for children, providing dieto-therapy, and promoting physical education and sports activities among the working people.

One item is non-existent under social insurance budget—unemployment relief: there has been no unemployed in the Soviet Union for over thirty-five years.

### *WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FACTORY, PLANT, OR OFFICE TRADE UNION COMMITTEES IN SOCIAL INSURANCE?*

The bodies directly concerned with questions of social insurance for wage earners and salaried employees are factory, plant or office union committees. They supervise medical care of workers and employees and their families, determine temporary disability compensation, maternity and other allowances, send workers to health resorts, sanatoriums and holiday homes, through their representatives they participate in the granting of pensions by social insurance authorities, supervise construction of health centres and pre-school children's establishment and provide for school children's winter and summer holidays in pioneer camps.

The factory, plant or office union committees en-

sure that management pays its social insurance contribution on time, and are authorised to exact it from management.

Many activists aid the work of the committee, as members of social insurance commissions and elected insurance delegates. Such commissions are set up at enterprises with a staff of 100 and more, and they have a membership of 5—7 or 15—19 depending upon the size of the enterprise. The union committee chairman is *ex officio* chairman of the social insurance commission.

The commission has the right to grant temporary disability compensation, maternity and other allowances in accordance with existing legislation. An allowance may be granted only by the entire body of the commission at its meeting, and never by the chairman alone.

The commission's main task is to decrease the number of injuries at work and occupational disease rates. To accomplish this, they, together with labour protection commission, doctors and managers, elaborate and help implement complex plans for sanitation and systematically study the reports on industrial injuries and occupational diseases to take practical measures to improve working conditions and medical services.

The social insurance commission is also in charge of distributing sanatorium and rest-home vouchers, sending wage earners' and salaried employees' children to kindergartens, creches, and pioneer camps, and organising health education lectures and talks. It considers workers' complaints on social insurance and medical services and take appropriate measures.

At undertakings with a staff smaller than 100 social insurance work is done directly by the trade union committee through social insurance delegates elected by union groups.

## *WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF SOCIAL INSURANCE DELEGATES?*

Social insurance delegates are elected at general meetings of trade union groups for a term of one year. They play an important role in implementation of various tasks of the state social insurance system. With public labour protection inspectors they supervise the carrying out of measures taken by management to prevent occupational diseases and injuries and improve industrial hygiene. They also assist doctors in organising medical aid for and enforce systematic medical check-ups of workers and employees, check hygienic conditions at work, make certain that workers in poor health are under constant medical supervision.

The approximately one and a half million social insurance delegates are highly esteemed for their understanding and selfless devotion to public work. It is they who come to the rescue of a friend in need, and often voluntarily shoulder the burden of someone else's troubles. All sick workers may count on the friendly help of the social insurance delegate. If his work-mate has failed to report he, without thinking of his own time, goes to the sick man's home to see what has happened. If necessary, he will call in the doctor, run down to the chemist's for the medicine, and make sure that the sick man is taken care of at home or sent to hospital. If need be, he asks the union organisation for financial aid to the sick person or to place his or her children in kindergartens or creches. Friendly help, considerate attention and solicitude of union organisations and their voluntary activists contribute to speedy recovery of the sick.

## *WHAT TEMPORARY DISABILITY ALLOWANCES DO WORKERS GET?*

In case of industrial injury or occupational disease the worker receives 100 per cent of his average earnings through the period of disability. If the illness is unconnected with employment, the allowance depends on service record. When the term of uninterrupted service exceeds 12 years trade union members receive 90 per cent of earnings; if 8—12 years—80 per cent, 5—8 years—70, 3—4 years—60, and if less than 3 years—50 per cent. Union members under 18 get no less than 60 per cent, regardless of length of service.

Workers and employees who are not union members receive half the amount set for union members, except for industrial injuries and occupational diseases.

Sick-leave allowances are not all one gets. The doctor treats him at home free of charge, all analyses, treatments and specialists' consultations being free too. If the illness requires hospitalisation, this is free and the allowance is retained.

Finally, if need arises, convalescents are sent to health resorts or holiday homes also free or at a discount.

## *WHAT PRIVILEGES DO EXPECTANT AND NURSING MOTHERS HAVE?*

On the doctor's recommendation management is obliged to transfer expectant mothers to lighter work without pay cuts. Night and overtime work by expectant and nursing mothers is prohibited. Nursing mothers also have additional breaks, with no de-

ductions. The unions see to it that management observes strictly these regulations.

Maternity leave is 112 working days—56 before and 56 after birth. This leave is an addition to regular holiday, which they can take after the end of the maternity leave. If during maternity leave the woman falls ill, she receives sick-leave benefit and maternity leave is prolonged for the duration of the illness.

If a child falls ill the mother receives a leave for taking care of it and gets a benefit. Mothers of large families get special grants in amounts depending on the number of children.

### *HOW DO UNIONS PARTICIPATE IN ORGANISING HEALTH PROTECTION?*

Health protection is a paramount duty and unions assist the health authorities in improving the medical services and implementing sanitation measures.

Industrial workers get priority in obtaining medical service. Health establishments exist at undertakings—large factories and plants have their own medical and sanitation departments and smaller ones doctor's and assistant doctor's posts.

### *WHAT IS THE MEDICAL AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT OF AN ENTERPRISE?*

This is an independent organisation providing all health services needed by the workers. Thus, over 100 doctors care for personnel at the Gorky

Automobile Works. The medical and sanitation department here has a large, well-equipped hospital and an out-patient clinic staffed with specialists. There are also a physical therapy clinic and a prophylactorium (sanatorium where workers can stay after work and get medical treatment), a dietetic canteen, maternity and children's consultation centres, doctor's posts in the shops, and sanatoriums situated in picturesque spots of the country.

Aided by union activists, the doctors of the department study thoroughly working and living conditions of the car builders, elaborate illness preventing measures and carry out medical check-ups. The doctors keep a constant check-up on people suffering from chronic diseases or working in shops with health hazards. The medical and sanitation department also took after the members of workers' families.

### *WHAT ARE COMPREHENSIVE SANITATION SCHEMES?*

Union activists take part in improving industrial hygiene through participation in the drawing up and implementation of sanitation schemes. This activity is sponsored by union committees. The comprehensive scheme comprises all the sanitary, hygienic, curative, preventive and organisational measures. If such a scheme envisages the construction of a new hospital or out-patient clinic, the appropriate item is included in the collective agreement.

The comprehensive scheme is the result of the joint efforts of the union, management and respective medical establishments. The following bodies and individual social workers participate in drawing it up: social insurance and labour protection commissions, shop union committees, union group

organisers, social insurance delegates, engineers, doctors and Red Cross activists. They study the working conditions and collect workers' proposals. Then the draft scheme is discussed at shop union meetings. The co-ordinated draft, which takes account of all the proposals advanced, is discussed and approved by the union committee and management. The comprehensive scheme is supplementary to the collective agreement and the union organisation sets up public supervision over its implementation.

To expand the participation of workers in the improvement of medical services, public councils are formed at health establishments. The trade union committees take an active part in setting them up. They comprise doctors and union activists, who have had experience in labour protection and social insurance, and representatives of public organisations.

### *HOW DO WORKERS AT ENTERPRISES GET SPECIAL DIET FOOD?*

There are dietetic canteens at most larger industrial enterprises and diet departments in the canteens of smaller factories and plants. Here workers who need a special diet are served breakfasts and lunches under doctor's prescription.

Dietotherapy is organised by the unions, management and authorities in charge of public catering. The unions provide the bulk of money for this purpose from the state social insurance fund. The managements provide comfortable and well-lighted premises and equipment for the canteens and repair the dining-halls, kitchens, etc. The public cater-

ing authorities operate the canteen, supplying it with quality foodstuffs, the cooking being supervised by dietitians.

Permission to eat at the diet canteen is given by the union on the shop doctor's recommendation. As a rule, the worker is allowed to have meals at such canteens for two months. If he must continue his diet, a commission extends this period. Every fifth worker receives special diet food free, the others paying only 30 per cent.

### *WHAT IS A FACTORY PROPHYLACTORIUM?*

The prophylactorium, or as it is also called after-work sanatorium, is a special type of medical establishment providing an opportunity for workers to build their health while continuing to work.

Observation by doctors over many years has shown that it is not always rational to send people who are ill or predisposed to illness to health resorts which are sometimes far away from their homes. For many the journey is tiring and many adapt themselves slowly to the new climate. In such cases people are sent to sanatoriums in the same climatic zone. But often a person does not need hospitalisation or specialised sanatorium, and it is more advisable for him to take a course of treatment while continuing his work, and use his regular holiday for mere recreation and rest. It is just this kind of opportunity that the prophylactorium offers, where one can take treatments at any time of the year.

There are about 1,400 prophylactoriums maintained by state social insurance fund, the workers paying only a third of the voucher cost—the rest being paid by the trade union.



*ARE TREATMENT AND RECREATION IN  
SANATORIUMS AND HOLIDAY HOMES  
ACCESSIBLE TO BROAD SECTIONS OF THE  
WORKING PEOPLE?*

In March 1919, at the time of the Civil War and foreign military intervention Lenin signed a decree of the Council of People's Commissars making all health resorts the property of the state, and another one on utilising the Crimean seaside health resorts for the treatment of the working people. On his initiative unions opened the first holiday homes.

The Soviet State opened the doors of sanatoriums and holiday homes to working people who needed rest and treatment. Today, at any health resort one can meet wood-cutters and scientists, miners and fitters, teachers and milkmaids, postmen and railwaymen—people of all trades and occupations. Over 3,000 sanatoriums and holiday homes, boarding-houses and health-resort hotels have been erected in the parts of the country where the climate is most beneficial for health—on the Black Sea shore, in forests near rivers and lakes and in places abounding in medicinal springs and muds. Every year over 8 million workers spend their holidays there.

In 1960 the Government handed over to the trade unions the overwhelming majority of sanatoriums (except T.B. sanatoriums), holiday homes, health-resorts, out-patient and in-patient clinics and boarding houses. The trade unions keep on extending the network of their sanatoriums and other health-resort and holidays facilities. In six years their capacity has increased by over 100,000 places. In the new Five-Year-Plan period the scope of construction of holiday and health centres will become unprecedented. On the proposal of the All-Union Central

Council of Trade Unions the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a decision on the construction in 1966—70 of new holiday homes and tourist hostels with a total capacity of 358,000 places. This means that in 1970 the union holiday and health centres will accommodate 6 million more persons than in 1965. The construction plan is being successfully implemented.

Besides building holiday homes, sanatoriums, etc. in accordance with the Government plan, an increasing number of sanatoriums and holiday homes are being set up, without involving state expenditure, on the initiative of factories and plants, mines, and state farms. For instance, the Kuznetsk metallurgical combine has built its own sanatoriums at several resorts and has set up many holiday homes and summer holiday centres in picturesque spots near the city of Kuznetsk.

In expanding the network of sanatoriums and holiday centres the unions draw support from numerous activists. A few years ago more democratic principles were introduced into the management of such centres. The state health resort and holiday centre management boards were reformed into union management councils, comprising representatives of trade union councils, public, administrative, state and research organisations as well as sanatorium and holiday home workers. There are also public councils operating in sanatoriums and holiday homes.

Sanatorium and holiday home vouchers are issued to workers by factory, plant and office union committees. If a worker wants to go to a resort he applies to his medical and sanitation department or outpatient clinic. There he receives advice as to which health resort is best for him. Then the social insurance commission makes a decision to issue a vouch-

er, this decision being subject to approval by the union committee. Workers directly engaged in production are given priority. Free vouchers are granted firstly to disabled war or labour veterans, mothers and teenage workers, account being taken of their financial position. Each fifth voucher is issued free of charge. For the others, the wage and salaried employees pay only one-third of the cost, the remainder being met by the union. If the worker or employee who has a voucher is in straitened circumstances the union also meets his travelling expenses.

Holiday home accommodation is given to workers who do not need any treatment and go to holiday centres just to have a good time and rest.

### *WHAT ROLE DO UNIONS PLAY IN PROVIDING PENSIONS?*

Pension provision, which is a matter of great importance to many workers, is an essential part of the unions' work. To understand what they do one should know what the pension provision scheme is.

Pensions have become a major concern of the state. To ensure a pension the worker need not make deductions from earnings or savings. Pensions are granted from state social insurance funds, which are made up of contributions from undertakings and institutions.

Almost 11,000 million roubles are spent annually in the USSR on pensions—a considerable part of the national income.

In summer 1956 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a new law which almost doubled the average pension. Life-time old-age pensions are at from 50 to 100 per cent of earnings. The lower the earnings the larger the rate of the pension, which makes it

possible to narrow the gap between highest and lowest pensions.

From early 1965 on state pensions were established for collective farmers. Towards the end of that same year the number of farmers receiving pensions from the All-Union Collective Farmers' Social Insurance Fund totalled nearly 8 million.

### *WHO IS ENTITLED TO A PENSION?*

Men are entitled to full old-age pensions at 60, after 25 years of service, and women—at 55, after 20 years. Those who have worked less are still entitled to a pension. Many categories of workers are entitled to old-age pensions at an earlier age, men at 50—55 and women at 45—50. These are persons working underground, in trades with health hazards or arduous conditions, in hot shops, as well as women who have given birth to 5 and more children and have brought them up to the age of 8, and to some other categories. Workers who are completely or partially unable to work and have been declared permanently disabled are eligible for disability pensions.

Thousands of union members have become members of pension and labour-medical commissions. On an equal footing with state authority they decide on pension matters. Union representatives in labour-medical commissions help doctors to determine degree of disability and advise on suitable employment for disabled persons who can still work.

Pension commissions with a membership of 370,000 volunteers have been set up in union committees of large undertakings. The composition of these commissions is approved by the factory or shop union committee. (In small establishments with

less than 100 workers all pension work is done directly by the union committee.)

One of the commission's main tasks is to prepare, together with management, all documents required for granting pensions.

Pension commissions are also concerned with cultural and everyday needs of pensioners and public supervision of proper jobs for those disabled.

In many factories union pension commissions provide legal consultation to familiarise workers with regulations. They also arrange patronage of homes for disabled and aged people by the workers of their undertaking.

## VII. HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND WELFARE

### *HOW DO UNIONS HELP SOLVE THE HOUSING PROBLEM?*

All union bodies—from the central to local ones—take part actively in elaborating plans for housing construction. Union committees of undertakings have extensive rights here. They supervise the construction plans for dwelling houses, the standard of work, and the use of funds for these purposes. The union committees exercise supervision through housing and welfare commissions, in whose work nearly one million union activists take part.

The USSR is carrying out a huge housing programme both in town and country. In the last six years (1961—66) 13.7 million new flats were built and over 65 million people moved into them.

The rate of housing construction is exceedingly high. The Soviet Union builds more dwellings than all European countries taken together.

But why are there still not enough flats?

The Soviet Union faced the housing problem from the very first days of its existence. It was a legacy received from tsarism. Even cities had mainly old wooden houses without any conveniences—no electricity, water-supply or sewerage. The living

conditions of the masses, cooped up in small closets of rooms and damp basements, were appalling.

At the earliest opportunity the country tackled this problem. Ramshackle houses were pulled down to make way for modern ones.

But despite the high rate of construction the shortage was not eliminated. This was a consequence of the country's rapid economic growth, and the unparalleled leap forward in industrialisation, which caused a tremendous shift of population from country to town.

The housing problem was made even more acute by the Second World War. The fascist barbarians destroyed 30,000 industrial enterprises, 1,700 towns and cities, over 70,000 villages; 25 million people were left homeless. That is why housing still remains a top priority problem. The scope of construction in the new Five-Year-Plan period (1966—70) will be increased, 65 million people will move into new flats.

Union representatives participate in commissions for the acceptance of houses built for the workers of their undertakings. The house cannot be occupied without the written approval of the union representative. No less important is public participation in and supervision over the assigning of flats.

Thanks to low rent and service rates flats are accessible to everyone. Although dwellings become increasingly more comfortable, rents in Soviet towns and settlements have remained fixed for over forty years—since 1926.

Prior to the October Revolution rent used to take a fifth or a fourth of the worker's income, and sometimes more. At present rents together with communal services average 4—6 per cent of the family budget. The worker actually pays only a tenth to a fourth of the cost, the rest being paid by the state.

The regulations on the rights of factory, plant and office union committees state that flats are allotted only by joint decision of management and the trade union committee. To decide priority in allotment of flats union committee, housing and welfare commissions, together with activists, consider whose need is greatest and keep a record of such persons. Then a waiting list is drawn up.

The unions take an active part in house management. They organise voluntary supervision by workers of maintenance of houses, repairs, sanitation, etc. A few years ago the unions set up public house committees in which participate thousands of workers, housewives and pensioners. These committees supervise the work of state authorities in charge of house management and maintenance. The committees help draw up finance and economic plans of state house management bodies and discuss implementation reports. They conduct meetings of the inhabitants, at which questions of maintenance, planting of greenery and improvement of amenities are taken up.

### *HOW DO UNIONS EXERCISE SUPERVISION OVER TRADE, PUBLIC CATERING AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES?*

In recent years there has been a considerable expansion of the union supervision over the public services. The unions have many rights in exercising control over construction of new and operation of existing services and welfare and cultural institutions, trade and catering establishments, and municipal transport. Union committees set up special commissions for this work.



The unions' active influence on the work of trade, public catering and other service establishments and the supervision over their work by thousands of activists have contributed to eliminating many shortcomings in servicing the working people.

## VIII. HOW ARE LABOUR DISPUTES SETTLED?

### *HOW DO UNIONS SETTLE LABOUR DISPUTES?*

There are various causes of labour disputes. One worker has been transferred to another job against his will, and knowing that this is illegal, he demands this be revoked; another has been given a holiday at an unsuitable time; a third considers he is underpaid. . . It is hard to enumerate all causes of conflict. There are managers who take a bureaucratic attitude toward the rights and legitimate interests of wage earners and salaried employees and their needs. And there are also workers who are guilty of gross breaches of discipline, working negligently and attempting to get the utmost from the state while giving it as little as possible.

In 1957 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR approved the Regulations Regarding the Settlement of Labour Disputes. Responsibility for this has been placed on union committees. This strengthened considerably the role of unions in fighting breaches of labour legislation.

A democratic way of settling conflicts has been established.

They are submitted for consideration to:

- a) labour dispute commissions;
- b) factory, plant and office union committees;

c) people's courts of justice.

Labour dispute commissions at enterprises comprise union and management representatives. They may also be set up in shops with their own union committees.

The union representatives are appointed to the commission by decision of the union committee for one year.

The commission considers conflicts with regard to labour legislation, collective agreement, factory or office regulations, etc. The commission is obliged to discuss a worker's application within five days, in his presence. It may be discussed in the worker's absence only with his written consent.

At the meeting the duties of chairman and secretary are performed alternately by the union and management representatives, all decisions being taken not by voting, but by agreement between the two parties. The commission's decision is compulsory and is not subject to approval or confirmation. The management is obliged to implement it within ten days. If it fails to do so the trade union committee issues a document to the worker which has the force of a writ of execution.

If the parties fail to reach agreement or if the worker is not satisfied with the commission's decision he can apply to the union committee, which is obliged to consider the appeal or complaint within seven days. It may confirm the decision of the commission or repeal it and pass a new decision. Previous to the meeting, the union committee analyses the causes of the conflict and helps the worker obtain the necessary documents, call witnesses and invite specialists for consultation.

After collecting all material the union committee informs the worker when and where the case will be discussed. At the meeting, which must be attend-

ed by two-thirds of the committee, all union members of the undertaking may be present and take the floor. But only the union committee members vote. This way of settling labour disputes at open meetings of elected union bodies contributes to a just settlement of the conflict, and inculcates respect for labour legislation in management and workers.

The decision of the committee meeting is final and cannot be repealed by any higher union body or even by the very committee that has taken it. But the worker who has lodged the complaint may continue the dispute in the third instance—the people's court. The management can appeal against the union committee's decision only if it runs counter to labour laws.

### *HOW DO UNION MEMBERS RECEIVE LEGAL AID AND ADVICE?*

Legal aid and advice is given free of charge in republican, territorial and regional capitals by experienced lawyers at consultation centres run by trade unions. When the need arises these lawyers contact managers or union committees and visit enterprises for settling conflicts on the spot. In complicated cases, they take part in court proceedings, acting as counsel for the defence. The lawyers also hold legal seminars for union activists. In recent years there have appeared and become widespread public legal advice bureaus organised under union committees of large enterprises and regional union committees. If during the consultation the specialist in labour legislation finds out that the workers' rights have been encroached upon he takes immediate steps to rectify the breach of law. There are over 1,500 such bureaus in the USSR.

## *CAN A WORKER BE DISMISSED WITHOUT THE UNION'S CONSENT?*

In the USSR people have long forgotten what unemployment is. Any person can find a job suitable to his knowledge, ability and skill. If he should be dismissed he will not have to look for a job long. But even so, being discharged is always unpleasant and painful. For this reason, Soviet legislation is solicitous for every worker and defines the grounds on which the management can discharge him.

These reasons may be as follows: curtailments of staff, incompetence, constant failure to fulfil duties, breaches of discipline, absence from work without good reason, etc.

A person cannot be dismissed on grounds not specified in labour law. Dismissal for a single breach of discipline is prohibited. The law stresses that dismissals are extreme measures, and provides for clearly-defined regulations to protect the workers from illegal dismissals. The management can only initiate dismissal but the formal order is issued only with the consent of the union committee. The union committee chairman or a member has no right to decide this important matter. A decision can be taken only at a formal union committee meeting attended by two-thirds of its members. The members of the union committee check carefully whether management's reasons are well grounded and the worker to be dismissed is made familiar with the material submitted by management.

Defending the interests of the worker, the union committee nips in the bud any attempt to dismiss him without sufficient grounds. Even in cases of gross breaches of discipline the committee consents to dismissal only after all other disciplinary and public condemnation measures have been exhausted.

If the union committee meets and finds the reasons for dismissal unconvincing, it withholds consent. This decision is final. It cannot be repealed by a higher trade union or any other body.

If the union committee has consented to the dismissal, the discharged worker may appeal to court within a month. The criminal code of the Union Republics provides for prosecution of managers guilty of illegal dismissal. Often, after reinstatement of an illegally discharged worker the court decrees that compensation for forced unemployment should be paid him out of the earnings of the manager.

## IX. CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

### *HOW DO UNIONS ORGANISE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK?*

Day-to-day educational and cultural work is regarded by the unions as one of their main tasks. Its aim is to inculcate lofty ideals and principles, devotion to their motherland and to the cause of socialist internationalism; to help workers improve their general and professional standards and develop their abilities and talents.

Cultural work is manifold in form. It is increasingly being conducted on a voluntary basis, the unions numbering eight million activists doing this work. The unions have at their disposal a wide network of cultural facilities—19,000 workers' clubs and palaces of culture, over 110,000 Red Corners (rooms reserved for education or recreation in institutions and factories), etc.

At present seven million people take part in amateur art activities. Every club has several art groups, studios, etc. These are directed by gifted art enthusiasts. The unions run schools for training amateur group leaders. Many of the best theatres, such as the Moscow Art Theatre and Maly Theatre have assumed the patronage over amateur groups and help them improve their standards of performance.

## *HOW DO THE UNIONS ADVANCE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS?*

The 12th USSR Trade Union Congress, held in 1963, paid much attention to the workers' general education and professional training. It stressed that the unions must seek to advance cultural and professional standards, expand the network of young workers' and farmers' night schools, evening and correspondence departments of secondary technical schools and higher educational establishments, etc.

The unions of a vast number of factories have pledged themselves to ensure that, within the next few years, each worker will obtain a secondary education and acquire a solid technological and economic grounding.

Many workers have to attend evening classes after work, which is not easy. But the desire for knowledge is immense. The state encourages part-time students. Thus, a shorter working week was granted to 5th-11th form pupils of workers' and farmers' evening and correspondence secondary schools. Eighth-form pupils are entitled to special extra 8-day paid holidays during exam periods and 11th-form pupils to 20 days. Additional annual 30-day paid holidays are granted to first- and second-year part-time students of higher educational institutions who combine work with studies and an additional 40-day holiday—to undergraduates.

## *HOW DO THE TRADE UNIONS PROMOTE SPORTS AND TOURISM?*

Sports and tourism are very popular in the USSR. The sports enthusiasts are young, middle-aged and



even elderly people. Millions of people go in for sports regularly and take part in tourist trips and excursion in their native land and abroad.

In enterprises and construction projects the union committees have organised 80,000 sports clubs and groups. The union-sponsored athletic associations have a membership of 20.5 million. Sports have become accessible to everyone.

The unions also devote much attention to gymnastics—over 12 million go in for them at present. Exercises most suitable for a job have been worked out by factory doctors and union workers.

The unions have done much to promote mass tourism. By spending millions of roubles of state social insurance funds to provide free or reduced-price tourist trips they have made it possible for every worker to go in for tourism.

Tourist councils have been set up under the central, republican, territorial and regional trade union councils. There has been a rapid growth of tourists' clubs—there were 126 in 1960 and five years later, 1,500.

The unions have created substantial facilities for mass tourism. 460 tourist hostels in the country's most picturesque spots, over 5,000 tourist camps, nearly 2,000 fishermen's and hunters' hostels and 7,000 shops where tourist equipment can be rented, operated in 1966.

The current Five-Year Plan provides for a rapid growth of the network of tourist facilities. 325 million roubles is earmarked to expand old and build new ones. By 1970 the tourist hostels will have accommodation for 150 per cent more people and four more tourist camps will be opened.

## WHAT IS A PIONEER CAMP? WHO MEETS ITS EXPENSES?

Union councils and committees organise summer and winter pioneer camps for the 1st—8th form pupils aged 7—15. Children's holiday centres are set up in most attractive spots—in pine forests, in birch and oak woods, on the shores of forest lakes or on river banks. Here one can find a library, a club and all kinds of sports and games facilities. Food is nourishing and varied and health is taken care of by children's doctors.

The number of pioneer camps is growing rapidly and totalled 7,000 in 1966. In 1960 such camps accommodated 3,360,000 children, and in 1966 the number increased to nearly 6 million. Recently sanatorium camps for weaker children have come into being, where over 100,000 children spend their annual holidays and receive treatment.

The cost of the camps is met from the state social insurance fund, trade union budgets and funds of undertakings.

## HAVE UNIONS THEIR OWN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES?

The Soviet trade unions attach much importance to their press. It plays a great role in the education of the workers, improvement of union work, bringing to light production flaws, social and cultural service deficiencies and labour law violations. Each worker is aware that if he turns to a union newspaper or magazine they are sure to help protect his rights.

For 47 years the daily newspaper *Trud* (Labour) has been published. It is the organ of the All-Union

Central Council of Trade Unions and has a circulation of two million. It covers such items as work in industry, construction projects, agriculture, and transport; socialist emulation; economic activity of the unions and their participation in planning production, improvement in industrial hygiene and living conditions, advancing the worker's cultural and professional standards; international trade union and workers' movement, etc. The paper devotes much space to readers' letters, answers to their questions and consultations on labour regulations and laws. The paper also covers sports and publishes stories, essays and poetry written by workers.

The unions publish independently or jointly with state and public organisations 10 central newspapers and over 70 magazines and journals. Some of these are: the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions organ, the bi-weekly magazine, *Sovietskiye Profsoyuzy* (The Soviet Trade Unions); the magazines *Klub i Khudozhestvennaya Samodeyatelnost* (The Club and Amateur Art) and *Okhrana Truda i Sotsialnoye Strakhovaniye* (Labour Protection and Social Insurance). Magazines and journals of their own have the All-Union Inventors and Innovators Society, the All-Union Scientific and Technological Societies Council, as well as some central union committees.

The trade unions have their own book publishing centre, the Trade Union Publishing House (Profizdat) which publishes hundreds of books and pamphlets annually: manuals on trade union work, literature on the international trade union and workers' movement, the history of the working class and the USSR trade union movement, documentaries, stories and essays about the life of Soviet workers, books on culture, education, sports and tourism.

Large industrial enterprises', state farms' and con-

struction projects' union committees take part in publishing over 5,000 local newspapers which are called *mnogotirazhki* (printed in a large number of copies as distinguished from wall newspapers, which are typed or hand-written).

The most widespread type of union press is the wall newspaper. There are hundreds of thousands of these. Their editors, staff and volunteer correspondents are millions of wage earners, salaried employees and union activists.

The editors seek to ensure that all criticism the paper publishes be heeded and that a clear answer be given to each letter published showing what measures have been taken in response to it. In this they are helped by the union committees.

## X. SOVIET TRADE UNIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

### *HOW ARE INTERNATIONAL TIES OF THE SOVIET TRADE UNIONS DEVELOPED AND STRENGTHENED?*

Lenin always stressed the necessity of personal contacts with foreign workers.

Soviet unions seek to develop friendly ties with those of foreign countries, fighting indefatigably for world peace, strengthening unity and international proletarian solidarity, to form a mighty, united front capable of resisting the forces of reaction and war.

The Soviet unions believe that events today and the development of the international workers' movement bring to the fore the importance of proletarian internationalism.

The Soviet unions actively participate in the World Federation of Trade Unions and maintain contacts with unions of over 100 countries.

The international ties of the Soviet unions are becoming closer and broader. The exchange of trade union delegations, tourists, exhibitions, films and union literature is encouraged.

Fraternal ties between the Soviet unions and those of the socialist countries are unshakable. The distinctive feature of this cooperation is the wide exchange of experiences in economic, cultural, and

educational activities. This enables the unions to better solve common problems.

The Soviet unions supports workers in capitalist countries fighting for their rights and interests, and seek to extend cooperation with the unions of all countries. In recent years solidarity has been strengthened between the Soviet unions and the French General Confederation of Labour, the Italian General Confederation of Labour, the All-India Trade Union Congress and others affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

There has also been widening contacts with unions affiliated to other international alliances, as well as with various autonomous organisations. In recent years, nearly two-thirds of delegations to the Soviet Union from capitalist countries were sent by unions affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The Soviet unions have established permanent contact with trade unions of Britain, France, Italy, Finland and Japan, and closer links are being established with the unions of Austria, Australia, Belgium, Federal Germany and the Scandinavian countries. These ties promote the struggle for unity of the world trade union movement. Toward this end, the Soviet unions come out for co-operation with the central labour organisations of the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Federal Germany, Sweden and other countries.

Soviet unions actively support the peoples of colonial countries, fighting for national liberation, and render every kind of assistance to the workers of newly-freed countries.

Soviet unions give vigorous backing to the heroic Vietnamese people in their just struggle against the criminal aggression of US imperialists. By way of aid the Soviet trade unions have shipped Vietnamese

trade unions medicines, clothing and foodstuffs. Millions of union members participated in the Week of Solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese people, held in the USSR on trade union initiative. Voluntary contributions were given for ambulances, thousands of bicycles and large quantities of clothing and food for Vietnam.

When the polio epidemic broke out in Japan and many workers' children were stricken the Soviet unions allocated special funds to the Japanese unions to purchase special medicines and also sent its own medicines. Thanks to this brotherly help thousands of children were saved.

Hundreds of workers' delegations from all over the world come to the Soviet Union at the invitation of the trade unions to observe the life of the Soviet people. Soviet union envoys go abroad to establish new contacts and strengthen old ones, spread the truth about the life of the Soviet people and promote the solidarity of all the working people.

In the last 4 years alone, 1,500 union delegations from various countries visited the USSR, and over 800 Soviet trade union delegations visited 50 countries.

### *WHAT DO SOVIET UNIONS DO TO DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM?*

The Soviet trade unions have always sought to develop a spirit of proletarian internationalism. In clubs, palaces of culture, libraries and in workers' hostels, lectures are given on proletarian internationalism; on the friendship of the peoples of the USSR; on the fight of the working people of capitalist countries for their rights and vital interests, for

peace and against preparation for a destructive nuclear war; on the international trade union movement. An important aspect of this work is the organisation of lectures and meetings devoted to outstanding foreign scientists, poets, artists and writers, as well as of displays of books and other material illustrating their activities.

The trade union newspapers and magazines give the working people extensive information on the life of workers in other countries and the international trade union movement.



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