

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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WORK
UNDER CAPITALISM
AND SOCIALISM

Publisher's Note

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Stanley Jevons, the well-known English economist, defined work as repugnant physical or mental effort made partly or wholly for the purpose of procuring its useful product. The American writer, Ambrose Bierce, in his sharp and biting satire on bourgeois society, *The Devil's Dictionary*, defines work as a process by which *A* procures property for *B*. The connection between the two definitions is obvious. Where men work for the enrichment of others, that work must inevitably be repugnant.

What Is Work?

Work is the fundamental condition of human existence. By working, man takes command of the vital forces of nature, of her generous gifts and of her immortal powers. This primary necessity of human life has been transformed into slavery, into a curse, to which even death sometimes seems preferable.

This is how Marx describes the slavish, degraded position of the toiler under capitalism:

“He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labour itself as a part of life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he

has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is *wages*; and the silk, the gold and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessaries of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins and into a basement dwelling. And the labourer who for twelve hours weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods and so on — is this twelve hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shoveling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern seat, in bed. The twelve hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern and to lie down in a bed. If the silkworm's object in spinning were to prolong its existence as caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.”*

In capitalist countries wage-labour is by its very nature wage-slavery. While the Roman slave was fettered in chains, the wage-worker, as Marx expressed it, is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The fines book is as effective as the lash of the overseer. The inexorable laws of the capitalist mode of production tie the worker securely to the chariot of capital. Under capitalism the vast masses of the proletariat are forced to work by the gaunt hand of hunger. Hunger is the all-powerful slave-driv-

* Karl Marx, *Wage-Labour and Capital*, p. 19.

er.

But capitalist exploitation is disguised by illusions engendered by the very features that distinguish it from preceding forms of exploitation. The bourgeoisie, especially in the period of ascendancy in the development of capitalism, skilfully takes advantage of the illusions created by the wage system to drive its slaves to physical and spiritual effort inconceivable either under slavery or under feudalism. Capitalism has invented a multitude of cunning methods and systems to achieve this purpose: from profit-sharing to Taylorism and Fordism, which simultaneously disguise and enhance the coercive power of "King Hunger."

The life of the toiling peasantry, who constitute the majority of the population of the globe, is also wholly and entirely determined by the general system of capitalist exploitation. The exploitation of the peasants under capitalism differs from the exploitation of the workers only in form; but it is very skilfully disguised. The small working-farmer toils and moils all his life, clinging to his plot of land to save his seeming, but actually long lost, "independence." But the fruits of his super-human efforts flow to an increasing degree into the coffers of the exploiting landlords, rich farmers, merchants and banker-usurers. His sweat and blood are minted into good money for the various groups of the bourgeoisie.

Work is a primary necessity for human society. As Marx said, a nation would perish from hunger if it ceased to work even for a

couple of weeks.

Work is not only the foundation of human society. In a certain sense we may say that *work created man*.

A man who lives by the labour of his hands or brain cannot help seeing the enormously creative effect of his work. He cannot help seeing that, as William Petty* so aptly expressed it: "Labour is the father of wealth; the earth is its mother."

But centuries of arduous and enforced toil for exploiters have killed the joy of work; they have benumbed the consciousness of its great creative power, and have transformed work into a wearisome and heavy burden.

What is work, a blessing or a curse? This is how religion puts the question. True to its power of adaptation, it has, according to circumstances, given the most diverse, although always false, answers to it. Work has been depicted as a means of redemption from original sin; as a penance imposed upon the human race for the sins of its forefathers; as a burden to be borne in this vale of tears, from which the righteous will be delivered and carried to the kingdom of heaven. And the purpose of it all is to imbue the masses with the spirit of obedience and resignation to the system of violence and tyranny.

In the Book of Job we read: "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." The parsons say that not only is poverty blessed, but so also is meekness. "Blessed are the poor

* Sir William Petty (1623-87), English political economist. — *Ed.*

in spirit," they say. Poets and artists, by word and with brush, paint the beauties of "sublime suffering." And all this is done to justify and defend a social system which dooms vast masses of people to a joyless life of toil and privation; and to proclaim as natural and immutable a system of society in which a few can live in idleness and luxury out of the endless sufferings of the vast majority.

The centuries of wearisome toil for the exploiters have even resulted in the idealization of primitive times. The folklore of nearly all nations contains vivid descriptions of the "Golden Age." This legend has been passed on from generation to generation for many thousands of years. As a matter of fact, there has never been a "Golden Age." Primitive man was borne down by the difficulties of fighting nature; he was merely the sport of step-mother nature. Nature's power over man was unlimited. She was the complete and sovereign ruler over man's destiny, over human life. How great must be the sufferings, the privation and horrors of the exploiting system if the primitive period of man's existence is surrounded with the halo of a "Golden Age"!

Exploitation existed before capitalism. Under the slave system the slaves worked all their lives to satisfy the whims of the idle slaveowners. Under the feudal system the serf peasants wore themselves out by arduous toil for the lord of the manor, who wallowed in luxury and idleness. Under capitalism, countless armies of wage slaves toil all their lives for the benefit of the modern slaveowners, the

capitalists.

One of the features that distinguishes capitalism from the exploiting systems of society that preceded it is that it engenders a truly insatiable lust for exploitation, an insatiable desire to appropriate the unpaid labour of others. Under previous systems the limits of exploitation were set, as Marx picturesquely expressed it, by the size of the exploiters' stomachs; for the product of the labour of the exploited served the direct needs of the slave-owners and feudal lords, and of their menials and hangers-on. The capitalist system has enormously expanded these limits. The labour of the workers enriches the capitalist, it increases his capital. And his greed for wealth in the form of money, in the form of capital, is truly limitless.

Capitalism calls into being gigantic productive forces in order to increase the rate and volume of the surplus value that is squeezed out of the proletariat. Capitalism gives rise to machine production; but machines are introduced not to lighten human toil, not to improve the conditions of the workers, but to create surplus value, to intensify exploitation to the utmost. They are used to pauperize the masses of the workers; to convert a large section of the workers into "superfluous hands," into a reserve army of unemployed.

The employment of machinery under capitalism, and the contradictions it gives rise to, increases the torments of the wage slaves. The whole life of the worker is transformed into continuous labour time. Capital deprives the

workers of sunlight; it compels them to work at night; it transforms their mealtimes into episodes in the productive process, like oiling machines. Thomas Hood* depicted the lot of the wage slaves in his *Song of the Shirt*:

Work — work — work!
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work — work — work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!

Stitch — stitch — stitch,
In poverty, hunger and dirt
Sewing at once with a double thread
A shroud as well as a shirt.

As Marx and Engels predicted in the *Communist Manifesto*, capitalism is unable to ensure its slaves an existence even within their slavery. All his life the proletarian is haunted by the menace of unemployment. And when that menace becomes real, and the worker is thrown on the scrapheap, the torments of arduous and exhausting toil are replaced by the even greater torments of enforced idleness, poverty, hunger and despair.

And side by side with this we see the idle, parasitic lives of the capitalists, who, to use Paul Lafargue's** not very elegant but very

* Thomas Hood (1798-1845), English poet and writer. — *Ed.*

** Paul Lafargue (1842-1911), leader of the Marxist wing in the French workers' movement and one of the founders of the French Socialist Party. A member of the First International, he took an

true description, labour only in the toilet: they eat and drink, and produce manure.

Socialism and Work Are Inseparable

Work is a necessary and natural condition of existence of human society, no matter what form of society it may be. Popular art, poetry, the works of the great artists provide us with innumerable examples of the mighty creative power of work, which transforms man into the ruler of nature.

The real place and importance of work in human society were first revealed by Marxism. This discovery ushered in a new era in the evolution of human thought and knowledge, and laid the unshakable foundation of scientific socialism.

For hundreds and thousands of years, work was — and it still is on five-sixths of the globe — a curse for the overwhelming majority of the human race; because this work is not performed for the benefit of the workers, for a commonwealth of free men, *but for exploiters*. This is the fundamental feature of work under the exploiting system, and it determines the position of the worker in society; it determines people's views on work, their attitude towards work, and so forth.

For the first time in history, socialism has freed work from the fetters of the exploiting system. After hundreds and thousands of

active part in the Paris Commune. Lafargue was the author of many Marxist works. He was married to Marx's daughter, Laura. — *Ed.*

years of enforced labour for exploiters, man can now work for himself, for the commonwealth of free people, for his country, for the good of the whole people.

In the Soviet Union, the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, and the whole product of social labour, all its fruits, without any exception, go to benefit the Soviet people, the whole of society. This abolishes the division of labour into necessary and surplus labour, which was of cardinal importance under all forms of exploiting society.

Having the socialist system in mind Marx wrote:

“Only by suppressing the capitalist form of production could the length of the working day be reduced to the necessary labour time. But, even in that case, the latter would extend its limits. On the one hand, because the notion of ‘means of subsistence’ would considerably expand, and the labourer would lay claim to an altogether different standard of life. On the other hand, because a part of what is now surplus-labour would then count as necessary labour; I mean the labour of forming a fund for reserve and accumulation.”*

Under the socialist system of economy that prevails in the USSR, Marx’s forecast has already become a fact. All the labour of the workers, collective farmers and intellectuals is necessary labour in the Soviet Union, for it goes to benefit the workers themselves, to benefit the whole of society. At the same time the conditions of life of all workers by hand

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 540-41.

and brain have immensely improved; their standard of living has risen enormously compared with what it was under the system of wage slavery.

The steady rise in the material and cultural standards of the worker is one of the fundamental laws of development in socialist economics. How this law operates in the Soviet Union is revealed by the striking figures and facts of the fulfilment of the Stalin Five-Year Plans. In the period of the Second Five-Year Plan alone (1933-37), the standard of national consumption more than doubled.

There has also been a large increase in the national income. From 21 billion rubles in 1913, and 25 billion rubles in 1928, it rose to 105 billion rubles in 1938 and to 125,500 million rubles in 1940,* that is to say, nearly a six-fold increase, whereas in the biggest capitalist countries the increase in the national income even in the best years ranges only from 3 to 8 per cent.

As there are no parasitic classes, and as the USSR is independent of capitalist countries, all this wealth passes directly or indirectly to the workers. The fact that the national income more than doubled in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan in itself shows how rapidly the prosperity of the workers in the Soviet Union is increasing.

The national payroll increased from 32,700 million rubles in 1932 to 82,200 million rubles in 1937 and to 120,700 million rubles in 1940.

* All figures given at 1926-27 price levels.

The plan for 1941 provides for a further increase in wages of an average 6.5 per cent per worker compared with 1940.

There has also been an increase in the individual incomes of the collective farmers. In 1937 each collective farm household throughout the country received on the average nearly three times as much grain and three and a half times as much money income as it received in 1932.

The total money income of the collective farms increased from 14,200 million rubles in 1937 to billion rubles in 1939.

The abolition of unemployment and the steady increase in the number of persons employed in every family are resulting in a diminution in the number of dependents upon each worker. The steady rise in the standard of living of the working people in the USSR is proved by the steady increase in the output of consumers goods.

During the period of the Second Five-Year Plan the rate of consumption among workers and office employees increased as follows: pork, 3.5 times; sausage and similar products, nearly four-fold; butter, 2.5 times; wheat bread, nearly three-fold; fruit and vegetables, nearly four-fold.

There has been a marked increase in the cultural standards of the working people. State expenditure on cultural and welfare services for the workers increased from 4,400 million rubles in 1932 to 14 billion rubles in 1937, more than a three-fold increase.

The rise in the cultural level of the working

people is proven by the cultural and technical revolution that has taken place in the USSR during the period of the Five-Year Plans. The census figures show that from 1926 to 1939 the population of the Soviet Union increased 16 per cent. But the rate at which the ranks of the skilled workers and intellectuals have grown during this period is shown by the following figures: From 1926 to 1939 the number of mechanics increased 3.7 times; metal turners, 6.8 times; milling-machine hands, 13 times; locomotive engineers, 4.4 times; and tractor drivers 215 times. Among the intellectuals, the number of engineers in this period increased 7.7 times; agronomists, 5 times; scientific workers, 7.1 times; teachers, 3.5 times; and doctors, 2.3 times.

The above figures show that the national economy of the USSR is developing according to plan, according to the laws of expanded socialist reproduction. And this implies a steady increase in output in all branches of the national economy, an increase in socialist capital accumulation and a steady improvement in the standard of living of the working people. These figures demonstrate the mighty power of socialist labour.

Enforced labour for exploiters has been displaced by free labour for the workers themselves, for society, for the whole country. But does this mean that work has ceased to be a necessity for the members of socialist society? Of course not.

When the bulk of the peasantry in the USSR had turned toward collective farming,

the class enemy tried to disrupt the collective farms from within by carrying on agitation to the effect that there was no need to work under socialism. Stalin immediately exposed this manoeuvre. In plain and simple language that the vast masses of the collective farmers understood, he explained that socialism is based on work; that it is inconceivable without work; that socialism for the first time created a truly great field for the activities of every honest worker. He said:

“Sometimes it is said: If we are living under socialism, why do we have to toil? We toiled before and we are toiling now; is it not time we left off toiling? Such talk is fundamentally wrong, comrades. It is the philosophy of idlers and not of honest working people. Socialism is not the negation of work. On the contrary, socialism is based on work. Socialism and work are inseparable from each other. Lenin, our great teacher, said: ‘He who does not work, neither shall he eat.’ What does this mean? Against whom are Lenin’s words directed? Against the exploiters, against those who do not work themselves, but compel others to work for them and get rich at the expense of others. And against whom else? Against idlers who want to live at the expense of others. Socialism demands not idling, but that all should work conscientiously; that they should work, not for others, not for the rich and the exploiters, but for themselves, for the community.”*

In the Soviet Union capitalists, landlords, usurers and other exploiters have been abol-

* J.V. Stalin, *Speech at the First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock Brigade Workers*, pp. 17-18. (Edited.)

ished forever, and so has the private ownership of the means of production — the land, factories, railways and so forth.

The economic basis of the USSR is the socialist system of production and the socialist ownership of the means of production.

“The consciousness [says Stalin] that the workers work not for the capitalists, but for their own state, for their own class, represents an enormous driving force in the development and perfection of our industry.”*

In capitalist countries a man is evaluated by his money. In the USSR it is different. In socialist society, the workman is honoured and respected. At the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites Stalin said:

“People in our country do not work for exploiters, for the enrichment of parasites, but for themselves, for their own class, for their own Soviet society, where power is wielded by the best members of the working class. That is why labour in our country has social significance, and is a matter of honour and glory. Under capitalism labour bears a private and personal character. You have produced more — well, then, receive more, and live as best you can. Nobody knows you or wants to know you. You work for the capitalists, you enrich them? Well, what do you expect? That is why they hired you, so that you should enrich the exploiters. If you do not agree with that, join the ranks of the unemployed and get along as best you can — ‘we shall find others who are more tractable.’ That is why people’s labour is not valued very highly under capitalism. Under such conditions, of course, there

* J.V. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 378.

can be no room for a Stakhanov movement. But things are different under the Soviet system. Here the working man is held in esteem. Here he works not for the exploiters, but for himself, for his class, for society. Here the working man cannot feel neglected and alone. On the contrary, the man who works feels himself a free citizen of his country, a public figure in a way. And if he works well and gives society his best — he is a hero of labour and is covered with glory.”*

And as far back as 1925 (*Pravda*, June 13, 1925), Stalin wrote:

“...The working class feels that it is not only the working class, but also the ruling class — such a class is capable of performing miracles.”

Sixteen years have elapsed since these words were written. At that time the country was only beginning to restore industry to the pre-war level. Large-scale industry was only producing one-fourth of what it had produced in pre-war Russia, which was a backward, agrarian country. At the end of the period of restoration, large-scale industry towered aloft like an island mountain in a sea of small peasant farms. By that time the larger part of industry was already socialist industry; but agriculture was still conducted on the basis of small commodity production. In these numerous, small and scattered farms the elements of capitalism germinated daily and hourly.

Since then the face of the Land of the Soviets has been transformed. Socialist indus-

* J.V. Stalin, *The Stakhanov Movement in the Soviet Union*, p. 16. (Edited.)

try has grown into a mighty force. The Soviet Union is now a mighty industrial power. The industrialization of the country helped to revolutionize agriculture. The small individual farms have been collectivized, and today agriculture, too, is being conducted on large-scale socialist lines. Capitalism has been completely eliminated. Formerly, in the USSR there were five different economic systems at different stages of development; today the Soviet Union is based on a single economic system — the system of socialism.

Work — A Matter of Honour

What will happen when the visible and invisible chains of slavery fall? What incentive will there be for people to work? These questions were bound to come up in the minds of those who pondered over the destiny of human society.

The bourgeoisie and their scientific hangers-on said that everybody would become lazy, nobody would want to work, nobody would produce anything and society would perish.

The utopian socialists, whose noble hearts felt and hated the crying evils of capitalism, but whose minds were not equipped with the knowledge of the laws of social development, found a very easy solution for the problem. While the narrow-minded bourgeoisie could not conceive of any other society than capitalism, the utopian socialists regarded capitalism as a terrible blunder of history, an unnatural monster and contrary to human nature. They argued that as soon as this monster was got

out of the way, human nature would at once assert itself and the problem would be solved.

Marx and Engels, who changed socialism from a utopia to a science, were the first to prove scientifically that society could and would be transformed only by a victorious proletarian revolution that would establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. They took their stand on the firm foundation of reality, and on this basis outlined the general course of the socialist transformation of society.

They showed that after the victory of the proletarian revolution, socialism would spring up and develop out of the elements that had been created by capitalism. They foretold that society would pass through a transition period in the course of which the proletariat would not only have to transform all aspects of social life, but also transform itself. This transition period, which Marx called the lower phase of communism, would be the preparatory period for the higher phase, a communist society proper, in which work would become a necessity of life, like air and water. In the lower phase, however, in the period of socialism, society would have to resort to definite measures to stimulate its members to work.

Fourier* was of the opinion that with the abolition of capitalism, work would become an amusement, play. Marx strongly opposed this

* Francois Charles Fourier (1772-1837), French utopian socialist. (Cf. Frederick Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, International Publishers, New York; also, Albert Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man.*) — Ed.

view. In one of the studies written in preparation for his great work *Capital* — in the manuscripts of 1857-58 — which have only recently been published in full, Marx twice mentions this mistake of Fourier's. In one passage he writes: "Work cannot become play, as Fourier wants it to." And in another passage he writes that the liberation of work from the fetters of exploitation "does not signify that such work becomes simply play, simply amusement, simply pleasure, as Fourier thinks, with the extreme naivete of a Parisian grisette. Really free work, the work of a composer, for example, is damned serious work, intense strain."

The opponents of socialism have reiterated over and over again that man will work only if he is forced to do so; only the lash of hunger drives him to work. But as early as in the period of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels derided the absurd notion that the abolition of private property and of exploitation would cause the cessation of all work and lead to the reign of universal indolence.*

The bourgeois scientists proclaimed man to be an indolent animal by nature. To prove this "discovery" they falsified the history of primitive society. They depicted the life of primitive man as a pastoral idyll, when as a matter of fact it was a life of unceasing, arduous toil in an unequal struggle against nature. They even advanced the "theory" that primitive man did not have to work.

Needless to say, these inventions have

* *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 25-26.

nothing in common with genuine history. Nor were they advanced with the object of throwing light on the historic past. Their object was to “prove” that man began to work only when he was driven by the lash of class exploitation. And it is from this they drew the conclusion that if the lash were abolished all progress would cease.

The victory of socialist construction in the USSR has torn down this web of lies spun by the hacks who serve the moneybags; and it has refuted the malicious slander they spread about man’s alleged inherent indolence. Practice has proven beyond doubt that work freed from the fetters of exploitation acquires a creative power far greater than it ever possessed in the history of human society.

One of the most current fables about socialism is that it will destroy all incentive to work. Whole volumes have been written on the subject of “the incentives to economic activity” with the special object of proving that there would be no such incentive under socialism, where private property and the opportunity of living on the labour of others would be abolished. But the writers of these tomes “forgot” a tiny “detail”: that where private property exists, the overwhelming majority of the members of society own no property, and that only an insignificant handful of exploiters have opportunities for making profit.

Socialism provides incentives to creative work before which much lauded “private enterprise” pales into insignificance.

When the bourgeoisie and their scientif-

ic lackeys talk about the “common good,” it is downright and cynical deception. Marx, in *Capital*, pours withering scorn on Jeremy Bentham,* who was the chief advocate of this “common good” theory. According to Bentham, the actions of individuals under free competition result in the common good of the whole of society. But the realities of capitalism refute this legend at every step. How can the enrichment of a small handful of capitalists and the impoverishment of the masses; how can crises and the senseless waste of productive forces resulting from them; how can unemployment, which dooms millions to death from starvation, be to the “common good”? As long as the capitalists are in power, all talk about the “common interest” only serves as a screen to conceal the narrow, selfish class interests of the capitalists.

Only the abolition of capitalist exploitation, the victory of socialism, can create real possibilities for combining individual with common interests. In the Soviet Union, where socialism is victorious, the common interest is the interest of socialist society, which is nothing more nor less than a vast community of workers released from the yoke of exploitation. Between the interests of the individual and the interests of the community there can be no irreconcilable antagonism.

Under socialism, the combination of individual and common interests is embodied

* Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), English political writer. (Cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 622, International Publishers, New York.)

in the principle: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work." Adherence to this principle protects the interests of the whole of society; for it acts as an incentive to every worker to produce as much as possible, and thereby produce the greatest good for society. And adherence to this principle protects the interests of every individual worker, for it creates wide opportunities for him to improve his conditions in direct proportion to the degree to which he improves the quality of his work, his own qualifications and so forth.

The servants of the bourgeoisie sing the praises of private interests, private property, private enterprise. But the realities of capitalism have long ago proven that the law of this highly praised world of private enterprise based on private property is the law of the jungle; that this world is governed by the greed of the wolf and the jackal. This highly praised competition has proven to be a brutal struggle in which every man's hand is turned against everybody else. This was perceived long ago by the great utopian socialists whose genius lay in the fact that they saw the ulcers of the capitalist system and fearlessly exposed its profound and irreconcilable contradictions.

The following, for example, is what Fourier wrote about capitalist competition:

"The physician wants his fellow citizens to be sick with fever often and for long periods; the lawyer wants every family to be engaged in endless litigation. The architect wants a fire to consume a fourth of the city, and the glazier rejoices at the

hail which breaks all the windows... The judges think it desirable that 120,000 crimes should continue to be committed in France every year so as to provide sustenance for the officials of the criminal courts. Thus, under civilization every individual is in a state of deliberate war with the masses; this is inevitable under an anti-social industrial system. This ridiculous situation will vanish in the new society, where the good of the individual will coincide with the well being of the masses.”

Fourier foresaw that work, freed from the fetters of exploitation, would fill man with emotions the like of which he could never feel while a wage slave under capitalism.

Marx was the first to make a scientific analysis of the competitive system and its contradictions, and with his penetrating mind he perceived the difference between competition and emulation. In *Capital* he wrote that in the process of collective labour, social contact itself stimulates emulation and elevates the spirit, which increases the efficiency of the individual workman. In bourgeois society, this force, like the productive power of social labour in general, goes to benefit capital. When capitalism is abolished, this mighty force must be made to serve society.

The power of emulation under socialism was discovered by Lenin. In the very first months of the Soviet regime Lenin’s mind was constantly engaged with the problem of how to organize the lives of millions of people on new lines, without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie; how to build the new, free and happy life with the aid of the human material brought over from the past; how to

bring about the great change from enforced labour for exploiters to free work for the workers themselves, for their own class and for the good of the whole community of workers.

In January 1918, Lenin wrote an article entitled "How to Organize Competition,"* every line of which breathes unshakable confidence in the creative power of the masses who had brought about the great socialist revolution. In this article, he points out that socialism alone provides the workers with the opportunity to reveal their talents and develop the abilities that the exploiting system had cramped, suppressed and strangled. Where the landlords and capitalists have been expelled, where the fetters of private ownership have been broken, where socialist public ownership has been established and where labour has been freed from the yoke of exploitation, the workers can straighten their backs and feel they are human beings. The much belauded capitalist competition actually crushed the initiative and creative power of the masses. Socialism alone creates the ground for genuine, comradely competition, which will result in the uplifting, the growth and prosperity of the vast masses of the working people. But this friendly rivalry, this emulation, must be stimulated and organized.

In his pamphlet, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*,** Lenin treats the organiza-

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, Russian ed.

** V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, pp. 313-50.

tion of competition on socialist lines as one of the urgent tasks connected with the building of the foundations of socialist economy and the creation of new, socialist productive relations. He set the task of achieving a productivity of labour higher than that achieved under capitalism; for, he said, in the last analysis, productivity of labour is the primary and most important factor that would ensure the victory of the new system.

During the period of the Civil War (1918-21) and in the early years of the New Economic Policy (1921-25), Lenin did all he could to encourage the symptoms of the new, communistic attitude towards work and of the new labour discipline that was arising. In the spring of 1919 he made public throughout the country the great beginning made by the advanced workers on the Moscow-Kazan Railroad who had organized the first communist *subbotnik*.* In his article "A Great Beginning," and in a number of other of his writings in which he dealt with the *subbotniks*, he showed that this form of heroic, self-sacrificing work for the common good contained the seeds of communism. He wrote:

"Communism begins when the *rank-and-file workers* begin to display self-sacrificing concern that overcomes all obstacles for increasing the productivity of labour..."**

* From the Russian word *Subbota* — Sabbath. Voluntary work performed gratis after working hours, originally on a Saturday. — *Ed.*

** *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 439.

This self-sacrificing concern of the rank-and-file workers for their socialist industry performed miracles. It strengthened the Red Army in the years of the Civil War and did away with the post-war ruin and devastation in an incredibly short time.

When the vast masses of the people flung themselves into the great campaign to drag the country out of its backwardness, to eradicate all the capitalist elements and to lay the foundation for socialist economy, shock-brigade work and socialist emulation developed on an unprecedented scale. On April 29, 1929, the Sixteenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which initiated the First Five-Year Plan, issued an appeal to the workers and to the working peasants of the Soviet Union calling upon them to enter into socialist emulation. Throughout the vast territory of the USSR challenges were issued and accepted by whole districts, industries, factories and mines, departments of factories, and individuals, for the best and quickest results in the great work that was being undertaken.

Just as Lenin welcomed the *subbotniks* as the first rays of communism, so Stalin welcomed this mighty upsurge of labour enthusiasm of the vast masses of the working class in proceeding, in the “year of great change” (1929), to lay the foundation of socialism. He welcomed it as the first decisive turning point in the productivity of labour, which marked the beginning of that rapid growth that was essential for the complete victory of socialism over capitalism.

Some people imagined that socialist emulation was only one of the numerous "campaigns" conducted at that time, raging hotly for a time and then subsiding. But Stalin very emphatically opposed this point of view and showed that socialist emulation was something more profound and lasting. He said that socialist emulation was "*the communist method of building socialism.*" At the Sixteenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held in 1930, he summed up the first practical results of mass emulation, of the creation of new forms of social ties, and of the rise of a new type of relations in production. He said:

"The most remarkable feature of competition is the radical revolution it has wrought in men's views of labour, because it transforms labour from a disgraceful and painful burden, as it was considered before, into a matter of *honour*, a matter of *glory*, a matter of *valour* and *heroism.*"*

Every victory gained in the work of socialist construction served still further to stimulate the ardour of competition and to reveal more manifestly than ever the tremendous creative power of labour freed from the fetters of exploitation. The triumph of the public ownership of the means of production and the consolidation of socialist relations in production completely and utterly refuted the bourgeois lies about work always being done with reluctance. Work performed with reluctance, repugnance and discontent could not give rise to the shock-brigade movement, socialist

* J.V. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 303.

competition and the Stakhanov movement.* Such movements can spring only from free socialist work — the source of joy and the fullness of life.

When, as a result of the fulfilment of the Stalin Five-Year Plans, the Land of the Soviets was equipped with up-to-date machinery, and when men and women had been trained to handle this machinery and to improve it, the Stakhanov movement arose. This wonderful movement arose in response to Stalin's appeal to the workers to master technique, and to his call for the greatest care and attention to be given to those who are mastering it. The Stakhanovites are Stalin's disciples. Stalin showed that the Stakhanov movement is a higher form of socialist competition and thereby revealed its historic importance; for it paves the way for the transition from socialism to the higher phase, to communism. By revolutionizing the methods of production the Stakhanov movement opened the road to the achievement of a higher productivity of labour than can be achieved under capitalism; and this is the decisive condition for achieving communism. Moreover, the Stakhanov movement has shown how another condition for reaching this higher phase can be achieved — the disappearance of the antithesis between mental and physical labour.

* Named after Alexei Stakhanov, a coal miner in the Donetz Basin, who was the innovator of this movement. Stakhanov, completely mastering the technique of his job, was able to multiply his standard output of coal fourteen times. — *Ed.*

Stalin, too, emphasized the fundamental difference between socialist emulation and capitalist competition.

“Sometimes [he wrote] socialist emulation is confused with ordinary competition. This is a great mistake. Socialist competition and ordinary competition represent two entirely different principles. The principle of ordinary competition is: *defeat and death for some, victory and domination for others*. The principle of socialist competition is: the advanced must give comradely *assistance* to those who fall behind so as to achieve a *general advance*. Ordinary competition says: *crush those who fall behind* and secure your own supremacy. Socialist competition says: some work badly, some work well and others work still better; *catch up with the best and secure a general advance*. It is this that explains the unprecedented labour enthusiasm that has spread among the vast masses of the working people as a result of socialist competition. Needless to say, ordinary competition can never rouse anything like this mass enthusiasm.”

Socialist emulation is so tremendously effective because with the victory of socialism the *force of example* plays an extremely important role.

Can the force of example be effective under capitalism? Can we imagine a worker in a capitalist enterprise voluntarily, and on his own initiative, following the example of one of his fellow workers who, for some reason or other, has turned out twice as much as the average rate? Of course not. On the contrary, the workers in capitalist enterprises would feel the greatest contempt and hatred for anyone who established such records, and would just-

ly accuse him of betraying the interests of his class; for under capitalism an increase in productivity of labour benefits not the proletariat, but its sworn enemy, the bourgeoisie. The capitalist would take advantage of the record output produced by *one* of his wage workers to reduce the rate of pay and increase the rate of output for *all* the workers; and those who were unable to keep up with the new pace would lose their jobs. The result would be that the capitalist would become richer and the workers poorer. All the fruits of the increased productivity of labour would go to the capitalist; the workers would get nothing out of it.

In socialist society the situation is entirely different. In the USSR, the example of the foremost men and women in socialist labour, the example of the pioneers in introducing new and better methods of production stimulates millions to emulate them. These foremost people enjoy universal respect and honour. As Mikhail Kalinin, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, said: "Such people we exalt; we award them orders and medals, we honour and reward them as the best Soviet citizens."

The working class in the Soviet Union is an entirely new working class, the like of which has never existed in human society before. It is a working class that has thrown off the yoke of exploitation and has become complete master of its life and destiny. It is the leader of all the working people in the Land of the Soviets in their effort to consolidate and develop the socialist system.

The working class of the Soviet Union behaves like a prudent housekeeper; but the household is a vast country. Jointly with all the other working people in the country, the working class owns incalculable wealth, the property of the whole people, and it exercises the care of a real owner towards this public, socialist property, which is the economic foundation of Soviet society.

The Right and Duty to Work

Socialism has made the cherished dream of the working class come true; it has established the right to work. As a result of the victory of socialism, unemployment has been abolished in the USSR.

Under capitalism, unemployment is an essential condition for the existence of the system, and the system itself creates unemployment. Under capitalism, periodical crises are inevitable. During these crises, tens and hundreds of thousands, and, in the present period, millions of workers are thrown out of work.

When a crisis has passed and industry begins to revive, a section of the unemployed finds work again. Thus, the army of the unemployed constitutes a reserve from which the capitalists can obtain labour power when they desire to increase their output. The unemployed fulfil another and still more important function for the capitalists. Driven to despair by hunger, unemployed people are ready to accept work at any price. The capitalists take advantage of this to lengthen the hours, reduce the pay and worsen the conditions of the

workers.

The growth of unemployment is due to the operation of the laws of capitalist production. The more wealth accumulates in the hands of one section of bourgeois society, the more the other section sinks into dreary and hopeless poverty. From the day he is born to the day of his death the proletarian is filled with anxiety for the morrow; he is forever haunted by the dread spectre of unemployment, which looms ever larger in capitalist countries.

In Great Britain, for example, from 1900 to 1914, the average rate of unemployment was a little over 4 per cent. From 1920 to 1929, the average was 10.9 per cent, and from 1930 to 1936, it was 17.8 per cent. Even in 1940, when the war was already in full swing, unemployment still stood at 10 per cent. If we take the average for the last fifteen years we will find that every year one worker in seven was unemployed.

In the United States the average rate of unemployment in the period of 1903 to 1907 was 7.3 per cent. The average for 1907 to 1913 rose to 10.1 per cent; that for 1920 to 1929 rose to 13.6 per cent, and that for 1930 to 1936 rose to 37.7 per cent. According to the figures of the American Federation of Labor, in 1932-33, when the industrial crisis was most acute, one out of every three members of the unions affiliated to the Federation was unemployed. But even after the crisis, in 1934-35, one out of every four member was unemployed. In the first half of 1940, one out of every five members was unemployed, and in spite of the war

boom, over 10 million workers in the United States remain unemployed.

In 1933, the number of unemployed workers in the principal capitalist countries totalled 30 million. In 1937, on the eve of the new world crisis, it dropped to 14 million, but in the middle of that year it began to rise again rapidly, and at the beginning of 1939 it reached, according to official figures, 18 million.

Millions of officially registered unemployed, tens of millions who do not come into the statistics, hundreds of millions of starving peasants, tied to their wretched plots of land and representing a vast “concealed” army of unemployed — this is how the “right to work” is honoured in that part of the world where capital reigns.

Socialism has relieved the masses of the working people in the Soviet Union from the curse of unemployment. The right to work is one of the inalienable rights of the Soviet citizen that are recorded in the Soviet Constitution.* The Soviet Constitution “does not merely proclaim the right to work, but ensures it by giving legislative embodiment to the fact that there are no crises in Soviet society, and that unemployment has been abolished.”** The workers in the Soviet Union look confidently towards the morrow, untroubled by fear of being thrown on the scrapheap.

* Constitution adopted on December 5, 1936.
— *Ed.*

** *Stalin on the New Soviet Constitution*, p. 16.
(Edited.)

In capitalist society rights are enjoyed by a small upper class of exploiters, while the overwhelming majority of the exploited people have to bear a multitude of duties. Socialism has closed the gap between rights and duties. In socialist society the two are inseparably connected. Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, foresaw that this would be so. For example, in 1891, Engels, in criticizing the draft of the Erfurt Program* suggested that the vague formula “equal rights for all” be replaced by the more precise demand for “equal rights *and equal duties for all...*” Commenting on this he wrote: “For us, equal duties are a particularly important supplement to bourgeois-democratic *equal rights*, and deprive the latter of their specifically bourgeois meaning.”

It is easy to understand why Engels considered that the demand for equal duties was necessary in order to draw a distinction between the socialist program and bourgeois chatter about “equal rights.” It is common knowledge that in capitalist society formal equality of rights goes hand-in-hand with the most crying inequalities — the well-fed and the hungry; exploiters and exploited. What

* The Erfurt Program, accepted at the Social-Democratic Party Congress in Erfurt, Germany, in 1891, served as a model for nearly all the programs of the parties in the Second International. For Engels’ criticism of the weaknesses of the Program, see *Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, pp. 485-87, International Publishers, New York. — *Ed.*

the bourgeoisie fears is equal duties. What equality can there be between the “duty” of the worker to toil all his life for the exploiter and the “duty” of the bourgeois to clip coupons, to squander the wealth created by the enforced labour of the worker?

In socialist society all citizens have definite rights and also definite duties, the fulfilment of which serves to protect their rights. The right to work that is guaranteed by the social system of the USSR imposes upon every Soviet citizen the duty to work honestly and devotedly on the job on which he is engaged. This connection between the right to work and the duty to take part in the work of society is excellently expressed in the Soviet Constitution. Article 12 of the Constitution of the USSR reads:

“In the USSR work is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: ‘He who does not work, neither shall he eat.’

“The principle applied in the USSR is that of socialism: ‘From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work.’”*

And Article 118 reads:

“Citizens of the USSR have the right to work, that is, are guaranteed the right to employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality.

“The right to work is ensured by the socialist organization of the national economy, the steady

* *Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, pp. 15-16.

growth of the productive forces of Soviet society, the elimination of the possibility of economic crises and the abolition of unemployment.*

Under the socialist system of production, work and leisure are not divided between two sections of society. In socialist society, it is impossible for one class to live in idleness while the life of another class is transformed into continuous labour time. It is the duty of every citizen of the USSR to work conscientiously for the benefit of the whole of society. By abolishing the parasitic exploiting classes, socialism has put a stop to what might be called deliberate idleness, idleness as the “profession,” as it were, of whole groups in society. At the same time, it has put a stop to enforced idleness, to unemployment, to that cursed idleness to which millions and tens of millions of healthy and able-bodied people are doomed under capitalism.

“He who does not work, neither shall he eat” — these words embody the socialist principle that work is a universal duty; and this is the principle that is being applied for the first time in human history in the Soviet Union.

As we have already said, in the Soviet Union every citizen has the right to work and every opportunity to exercise this right. He has wide possibilities of acquiring education, of improving his skill, of advancement and, as a consequence, of increased earnings. Socialist work freed from the fetters of exploitation is the realization of the dream of many gener-

* *Ibid.*, pp. 101-02.

ations of the working class.

The socialist organization of work presupposes strict public control of the amount of work each performs and of the amount each consumes. Marx said that under socialism, labour time would also “serve as a measure of the portion of the common labour borne by each individual and of his share in the part of the total product destined for individual consumption.”*

And Lenin wrote:

“Socialism implies the performance of work without the aid of capitalists, it implies social labour accompanied by the strictest accounting, control and supervision on the part of the organized vanguard, the most advanced section of the toilers. Moreover, it implies that standards of labour and the amount of compensation for labour must be determined.”**

Socialist Labour Discipline

Every social system rests upon a form of labour discipline that is peculiar to that system. As Lenin wrote, the feudal organization of social labour rests on the discipline of the rod; while the capitalist organization of labour rests on the discipline of hunger. The communist organization of social labour — towards which socialism is the first step — is based on the free and conscious discipline of the workers themselves. Thus, socialist labour discipline differs fundamentally from preced-

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 91.

** V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 239.

ing forms of labour discipline.

Marx in *Capital* gives a vivid picture of the process by which capitalist labour discipline arose out of the ruins of the old feudal system. For centuries bloody laws were passed against the common people who had been driven from hearth and home and forced to wander over the country; against the so-called vagabonds, the forefathers of the modern proletariat. Those who refused voluntarily to accept the yoke of capitalist exploitation were ordered by the laws of "Merrie England" to be whipped "until the blood streams from their bodies." The bourgeoisie had to resort to laws of this kind for very many years to secure the labour discipline it needed. With the introduction of machinery and the rise of unemployment, however, the whip of hunger drove the wage slaves into the clutches of capitalist exploitation far more effectively than the most brutal laws. Hunger and poverty compelled the workers to submit to the alien and inimical power of capital. As Marx said, "The dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist."*

And Marx, in the same work, quotes a glaring case showing what this subjection means. He writes:

"In the last week of June 1863, all the London daily papers published a paragraph with the 'sensational' heading 'Death from Simple Overwork.' It dealt with the death of the milliner, Mary Anne Walkley, twenty years of age, employed in a high-

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 761.

ly-respectable dressmaking establishment... This girl worked, on an average, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours, during the season often 30 hours, without a break... It was just now the height of the season... Mary Anne Walkley had worked without intermission for 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours, with sixty other girls, thirty in one room, that only afforded one-third of the cubic feet of air required for them. At night, they slept in pairs in one of the stifling holes into which the bedroom was divided by partitions of board... Mary Anne Walkley fell ill on Friday, died on Sunday... The doctor, Mr. Keys, called too late to the deathbed, duly bore witness before the coroner's jury that 'Mary Anne Walkley had died from long hours of work in an overcrowded workroom, and a too small and badly-ventilated bedroom.'"*

This is only one of thousands and thousands of cases that could be quoted in the history of every capitalist country. Capital marched forward triumphantly over the corpses of men, women and children, done to death by overwork.

Three-quarters of a century have elapsed since the case of Mary Anne Walkley; but in this period capital's lust for profit has increased a hundredfold. The capitalist methods of maintaining labour discipline spring from the antagonism inherent in the capitalist mode of production. They arise from the contradiction between the social character of production and private capitalist appropriation. This fundamental contradiction of capitalism manifests itself most glaringly and catastrophically during the storms that periodical-

* *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

ly arise in the world market, during crises; but it is felt at every step in the everyday activities of bourgeois society, in the daily round of factory life.

Only the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of capitalist exploitation can eliminate the contradiction of social production and private appropriation, and with it abolish capitalist labour discipline, which is maintained by the threat of hunger, by force and by the enslavement of the workers.

The new and superior type of social organization of labour that socialism creates calls for a new, socialist labour discipline. But this new socialist discipline, although it is conscious and voluntary, cannot, as Lenin emphasized, be created merely by pious wishes. It does not drop readymade from the skies. It has to be forged on the anvil of fierce struggle, during which the dictatorship of the working class re-educates vast masses of the workers by precept and example; and also by resorting to coercion in respect to those who attempt to disrupt socialist discipline.

In the very first days of the Soviet regime, Lenin urged the necessity of creating iron *socialist* discipline and declared that this was one of the fundamental tasks of the day. In his *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, he wrote:

“In every socialist revolution, after the proletariat has solved the problem of capturing power, and to the extent that the task of expropriating the expropriators has been carried out in the main, there necessarily comes to the forefront the fun-

damental task of creating a social system that is superior to capitalism, *viz.*, raising the productivity of labour and in this connection (and for this purpose) securing better organization of labour.”*

In his article, *A Great Beginning*, Lenin wrote that after establishing its dictatorship, the proletariat must in the place of the shattered and overthrown discipline of hunger:

“...build new, higher social connections, social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united workers, who know no yoke, who know no authority except that of their own unity, of their own more class-conscious, bold, compact, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard.”**

And again in his *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, he pointed out that “the victory of socialism is inconceivable without the victory of proletarian conscious discipline overspontaneouspetty-bourgeoisanarchy.”*** He called for a ruthless struggle against those who violated socialist discipline; against those who served as the conduits of petty-bourgeois anarchism, against idlers, shirkers and hooligans; and against all those who strove to give society as little as possible and to take from it as much as they could. “Weakness, hesitation or sentimentality in this respect,” he wrote, “would be a crime against socialism.”****

Communism is not built by ideal, abstract

* V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 330.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 434.

*** *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 332.

**** *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 418.

beings, but by the men and women who were reared by capitalism. This determines the methods by which the attitude of these men and women towards work is moulded after the bourgeoisie has been overthrown. Lenin said that “the task of remoulding all labour habits and customs will require decades.”* The ethics that had been built up in the course of centuries of oppression had to be fundamentally changed, for “capitalist society has left us such relics and habits as uncoordinated labour, lack of confidence in social economy, the old habits of the small producer, which prevail in all peasant countries.”** Lenin realized the enormous importance of overcoming the force of habit and routine connected with small production. That is why he so eagerly welcomed the communist *subbotniks* as the manifestation of a new and vital principle. Concerning these *subbotniks* he wrote:

“This is the beginning of a revolution that is much more difficult, more material, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over personal conservatism, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits that accursed capitalism left as a heritage to the worker and peasant.”***

Force of habit is a terrible force, because it has its roots in the conditions of age-long tyranny, in the old society, which was “based

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, Russian ed.

** V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 239.

*** *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 423.

on the principle: rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slave-owner or a slave.”* Living under this tyranny for ages, it is not surprising that large numbers of workers were imbued with the desire to escape, if only for a little while, from this crushing toil and find easier ways of obtaining a livelihood for themselves and their families.

History teaches that new methods of production were never introduced at one stroke; that a long and persistent struggle had to be waged against the old relationships, habits and customs. We must always remember that “vestiges” of the old customs survive for a time after the revolution and predominate over the new customs that are just coming into being. Referring to this Lenin said:

“When the new has just been born the old still remains, and for some time it will be stronger than the new, as is always the case in nature and in social life.”**

And he urged that the new must be carefully studied and carefully tended; that everything must be done to help it grow.

The great work of socialist construction in the Soviet Union has called into being many new customs and habits, which have already permeated wide spheres of public and private life. What Lenin foretold has come true. Innumerable facts have proved that the creation

* V.I. Lenin, *The Young Generation*, p. 40. Little Lenin Library.

** V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 437.

of this new attitude to work is a long and difficult process.

The methods of changing the labour habits and customs of the working people in the course of building up socialist society have been theoretically summed up in the works of Stalin. They represent an invaluable contribution to Marxism-Leninism and mark a new stage in the evolution of the doctrines of socialism. He indicated the methods of creating new labour discipline and the new socialist organization of social labour at every stage in the work of socialist construction. In 1926 Stalin said:

“Lastly, we must launch a campaign against absenteeism in our factories, to increase the productivity of labour and to reinforce labour discipline in our factories. Tens and hundreds of thousands of working days are lost to industry as a result of absenteeism. And as a result, a loss amounting to hundreds of thousands and millions is caused to our industry. We shall be unable to advance our industry and unable to raise wages if we do not put a stop to absenteeism and raise productivity of labour to a higher level. We must explain to the workers, especially to those who have just come into the factories, that by absenting themselves from work and failing to increase the productivity of labour, they are acting to the detriment of our common cause, to the detriment of the working class as a whole and to the detriment of our industry. To combat absenteeism, to fight for higher productivity of labour in the interests of our industry and in the interests of the working class as a whole — such is the task.”

Stalin repeatedly emphasized the enor-

mous importance of labour discipline in the matter of solving economic problems in the USSR and of advancing towards the goal of the new communist society.

It is a well-known fact that one of the favourite methods of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite wreckers, diversionists and spies who were operating on behalf of foreign governments was to undermine labour discipline and to encourage shirkers and idlers to the detriment of conscientious and self-sacrificing workers. Stalin exposed the designs of these enemies and mobilized the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet people as a whole to combat wrecking in all its forms. In socialist society, the creation and maintenance of the necessary labour discipline are a matter of vital interest for all the working people; this discipline is conscious voluntary discipline, the discipline of the master towards his own affairs. Where the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, where the public ownership of the means of production is the unshakable foundation of society, and where the worker has unlimited prospects and opportunities for free and creative effort and for the development of all his faculties and talents, labour discipline cannot be merely a private matter; it is a matter that concerns the whole of society; it is a public matter.

Following the lines laid down by Lenin and summing up the practical experience of millions, Stalin has shown how also to change the habits and customs of the *peasant masses* who for centuries had been accustomed to

working individually and in isolation, and who had obtained the opportunity of taking part in common, collective labour only after the socialist revolution. All the enemies of socialism banked on the petty-proprietor instincts of the peasantry. But their hopes were shattered. The peasantry of the USSR rallied to the scarlet banner of socialism. But it would be utopian and harmful to imagine that the peasants abandoned their small farming habits as soon as they joined the collective farms. Just as the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class marks not the end, but the beginning, of the socialist transformation of society, so the collectivization of the countryside marks only the beginning of the long and complicated process of remolding the mentality of the peasant masses and of transforming them into workers in classless socialist society. Man's mentality lags behind his place in production; and this shows how important are the measures that have been taken to eradicate the private property instincts that still prevail among large numbers of collective farmers, and to overcome the habits fostered by petty-bourgeois economy.

In the period of the gradual transition from socialism to communism, when the edifice of socialist society is being completed, the vital task is to overcome the survivals of capitalism in the minds of the builders of the new society. Hence, the inculcation and maintenance of socialist labour discipline in this period are a matter of exceptional importance. In his report at the Eighteenth Congress of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union, V.M. Molotov said:

“Even among the workers, some are advanced while others are backward, not to speak of degenerates. It is the same among the peasants: some are advanced and others are backward. Some, of course, are worse than simply backward. The advanced people of our day are the active and devoted builders of communism, the best champions in the struggle for the consolidation of our state. These advanced people of our society are already consciously followed by the overwhelming majority of workers and peasants. But even among workers, not to mention [office] employees, petty-bourgeois habits are still very much alive. There are still quite a few left who are ready to grab from the state as much as they can, without caring a rap for the consequences. It is therefore necessary to fight for the interests of the state and for the strengthening of labour discipline in our offices and factories, to fight against loafers, good-for-nothings and those who flit from job to job. There are also quite a few among the peasantry who take no interest in the weal of the state or even of their own collective farm, who think only of stuffing their own pockets with money and goods at the expense of the state and the collective farm. Here, too, energetic steps must be taken to improve discipline and educational work. If such steps are not taken and intensive work is not carried on to bring up the working people in the spirit of consolidating socialist property and the state, it will be impossible to change backward people into conscious and active builders of communism.”*

It was for these reasons that on Decem-

* *The Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow*, p. 111.

ber 28, 1938, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions adopted a series of measures to stop the aimless drift of labour from one place to another; to combat absenteeism, loitering at work and changing from job to job. Those who stayed away from work without good reason were temporarily suspended from sick insurance and certain other benefits. These measures had a good effect upon a section of those workers and office employees who had been somewhat lackadaisical in their duties. They pulled themselves together, and began to work honestly and conscientiously. But there was a section consisting of inveterate flitters and absentees, who continue in their disruptive habits. These elements were striving to revive in socialist society the ethics and customs of the capitalist system. They took advantage of the absence of unemployment, one of the greatest achievements of socialism, to serve their own selfish ends. With criminal light-heartedness they flitted from job to job, seeking the highest pay for the least amount of work, knowing that the demand for labour made it easy to get a job anywhere.

The harm these people cause was far greater than the proportion they represented to the total mass of workers and office employees. As a result of their disruptive activities, the country failed to get the large quantity of goods that it had planned for and should have received. Thus, in the first quarter of 1940, the

coal industry fell short of its output plan by 100,000 tons as a consequence of absenteeism. For similar reasons, the cotton industry failed to come up to its plan by millions of yards of cotton cloth. In the first five months of 1940, the Locomotive Repair Yard in Leningrad lost 66,500 working hours as a result of absenteeism. The Urals Heavy Engineering Works suffered a loss amounting to 5,000,000 rubles for the year for the same reason.

Who are these shirkers who grossly trample upon the common interests of the people and violate the elementary laws of socialism?

In his report at the ninth plenary session of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, the General Secretary, N.M. Shvernik, quoted the cases of two typical flitters named Goncharov and Krasnobayev. The first of these, a young man twenty years of age, changed his job no less than six times in less than eight months. The other man, Krasnobayev, worked in nine different factories in a little over a year.

Obviously, people like these degenerate into parasites, living at the expense of the conscientious and self-sacrificing workers who constitute the overwhelming majority of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia in the USSR. These idlers try to live at the expense of the state, at the expense of the people. Their parasitism reduces the productivity of labour of the honest and conscientious workers. It is not surprising, therefore, that they should be treated with contempt by the overwhelming majority of the work-

ers, and that stern measures should be taken against them.

The harm these people do is particularly great in the present complicated international situation when the capitalist world is again plunged into the conflagration of war, the flames of which threaten to spread to the USSR; and when the Soviet government is compelled still further to strengthen the economic and military power of the country. To meet this situation, the Central Council of Trade Unions — the general staff of the largest working-class organizations in the world, with a membership of 25,000,000 workers and office employees — recommended a number of measures. On June 25, 1940, it issued an appeal to all members of the trade unions in which, after describing the international situation, it went on to say:

“Under these circumstances, our country, remaining true to the policy of peace, is obliged, in the interests of the peoples of the USSR, still further to increase its economic and defensive power. Our country cannot be less prepared to produce armaments and other essential goods than the capitalist countries. We must become many times stronger than we are in order to be fully equipped to meet all trials and contingencies. We must make our country still more powerful economically and militarily. It is our duty still further to strengthen the defences of our country; to strengthen our red army, navy and airforce; to improve and increase their equipment; to strengthen socialist industry, which provides our armed forces with all they need. It is our duty to exert all our efforts still further to develop our industry and to strengthen

our state. We must have more metals, coal, oil, aircraft, tanks, guns, shells, locomotives, railway cars, machine tools, automobiles and more output in all branches of our national economy!”

This appeal expressed the thought of all the advanced people in the USSR; and it strengthened their determination to work harder and better for the good of the Soviet Union. And so, on June 26, 1940, on the recommendation of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, which expressed the will of the vast masses of the Soviet people, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree introducing an eight-hour working day and a seven-day calendar week* and prohibiting workers and office employees from changing their jobs without permission. As the Central Council of Trade Unions stated in its appeal, “even with the addition of another hour, the working day in the USSR is shorter than anywhere else in the world.”

The peoples of the Soviet Union are voluntarily making these necessary sacrifices in the interests of their socialist country, in order to strengthen her defences. They realize that in the relations between states the capitalist world recognizes only one argument — the argument of force and might. The Soviet Union is building a communist society in the midst of a capitalist world. The peoples of the Soviet Union cannot look on indifferently at

* Hitherto the calendar week in the USSR had consisted of six days, the rest day being every sixth day. — *Ed.*

what is going on beyond her frontiers; and they are drawing their own conclusions from the present international situation.

The working people of the USSR are the masters of their country; their position differs fundamentally from that of all working people in capitalist countries, who are groaning under the yoke of capitalism. The fact that the peoples of the Soviet Union are voluntarily making these necessary sacrifices is further proof that the socialist attitude towards work that prevails in the Soviet state differs fundamentally from what the attitude towards work is, or can be, in any other country.

Labour Reserves

Socialist society, freed from the fetters of private property and exploitation, creates all the conditions for a flourishing national economy. In the USSR, socialist industry and collectivized agriculture are making continuous and rapid progress. Every year large numbers of new, huge factories and works are put into operation. This creates a steadily increasing demand for labour.

The problem of training workers has always been one of the first cares of the Bolshevik Party and Soviet government. As a result of the measures already taken, the number of workers and office employees in the USSR increased from 11,600,000 in 1928 — the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan period — to 28,000,000 in 1938 — the beginning of the Third Five-Year Plan period — and reached 30,400,000 in 1940. This is a vast army of

labour that is advancing the socialist industry of the Soviet Union; but its ranks must be steadily augmented with new workers, particularly skilled workers. It is, therefore, the duty of the state to prepare large reserves of labour by introducing a special system of training young workers. Without such reserves, socialist industry cannot develop; the process of expanded reproduction of the whole of the national economy cannot be carried on and the task of building communism in the USSR cannot be fulfilled.

But where are these reserves to be obtained? In capitalist countries, these reserves are created, in addition to the permanent army of the unemployed, by the decay of the countryside and the steady stream of ruined farmers into the industrial centres. In the Soviet Union, however, the countryside is not decaying. Agriculture is flourishing, and the collective farms ensure the peasants a life of security. There are no ruined farmers pouring into the towns, knocking at the gates of factories and begging for work. Hence, labour reserves cannot be formed as they are in capitalist industry.

As early as 1931, at a conference of business executives, Stalin pointed out that with the abolition of unemployment in the towns and of poverty in the rural districts, they could no longer count on labour power drifting into the factories of its own accord, and that it was necessary to recruit workers for industry in an organized manner. He said:

“Formerly, the workers themselves usually came to the factories and mills to seek work — hence, to some extent, things were left to take their own course in this sphere. And things could be allowed to take their own course because there was unemployment, there was class differentiation among the rural population, there was poverty and fear of starvation, which drove people from the countryside to the towns... Conditions have now radically changed. And because conditions have changed we no longer have a spontaneous influx of labour power. What, in point of fact, has changed during this period? First, we have done away with unemployment — hence we have abolished a force that weighed heavily on the ‘labour market.’ Secondly, we have cut at the root of class differentiation in the countryside — hence we have abolished the mass poverty which drove the peasant from the countryside to the towns. And, finally, we have supplied the rural districts with tens of thousands of tractors and agricultural machines; we have smashed the kulak, we have organized collective farms and have given the peasants the opportunity to live and work like human beings. The countryside can no longer be regarded as a stepmother to the peasant, and precisely because it can no longer be regarded as a stepmother, the peasant is beginning to settle down in the countryside; we no longer have the ‘flight of the muzhik from the countryside to the towns’ and a spontaneous influx of labour power.”*

To secure a more organized recruitment of workers for the rapidly growing industries, the heads of the various industries entered into contracts with the collective farms by which

* J.V. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, pp. 371-72. (Edited.)

the latter undertook to supply a certain quota of workers each year. For a time this helped to meet the requirements but is now inadequate. With the present scale of production and expansion of industry, on one hand, and the diminishing flow of labour power from the rural districts, on the other, organized recruiting of labour must be supplemented by the organized training of young workers.

On October 2, 1940, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree on "State Labour Reserves in the USSR," which provides for the enrolment of nearly a million young people every year to be sent to special trade, craft and railway schools that have been established all over the country, to be trained as skilled metal workers, chemical workers, miners and workers in other industries, and also as skilled workers for the transport system. For the more highly skilled trades the course of training is to last two years, and for semi-skilled trades, six months. On completing their course of training the youth will have to work for four years at a state factory, to which they will be allocated by the Labour Reserve Board, in charge of the whole scheme of training.

Training in these schools is entirely free; and in addition, the youth are provided with board, lodging, clothing and all their dormitory requirements at state expense. The state has already spent large sums on organizing and equipping the schools and the dormitories in which the youth are to live. Twenty-three thousand machine tools have already

been allocated for the use of the schools. To provide the young people with clothing, the government set aside over 116 million yards of woolen and cotton cloth and 2.3 million pairs of boots. This year the government proposes to spend over 4,200 million rubles on the training of labour reserves.

In the course of the next three years these schools are to supply the industries and the transport system with over three million skilled and semi-skilled workers. By next June, industry and transport will receive reinforcements of about 250,000 semi-skilled workers.

The organized training of skilled and semi-skilled workers while they are still young is an integral part of the whole system of socialist planned economy and is an extremely important measure for the further expansion of industry and for strengthening its base. Planned socialist economy means that the state plans not only the material and financial resources of industry, but also labour power. Without this, planned economy would be impossible. Consequently, the state training of reserves of skilled labour power is the logical corollary of planned socialist economy. Moreover, it is dictated by the capitalist environment in which the Soviet Union finds itself.

Naturally, large numbers of the youth to be called up for industrial training will come from the cities; but the bulk of them will come from the rural districts. Will this not affect the future supply of labour power for the collective farms? No, because as a result of the

extensive mechanization of agriculture in the Soviet Union large numbers of workers can now be dispensed with and trained for transport and industry. It has been estimated by the government's planning department that with the further mechanization of the work of the collective farms, agriculture could release from 6 million to 8 million workers. Consequently, the young rural workers can leave the farms without any harmful effect upon agriculture.

Even before this decree was issued many of the youth of the collective farms longed to go into industry, but this was not so easy to arrange. Now all the conditions have been created to enable country youth, equally with city youth, to learn a trade and to join the ranks of the skilled workers. As might have been expected, the youth all over the country eagerly responded to the first call that was made on November 10, 1940. The whole enrolment was completed within ten days. The enrolment offices were flooded with applications from volunteers. Of a total of 601,378 youth enrolled in the first enrolment, more than two-thirds were volunteers.

The Soviet government is displaying such care and solicitude for the coming generation of workers as is possible only in the Land of the Soviets. Outstanding specialists, the best engineers, celebrated Stakhanovites, men with progressive ideas on industry, have been engaged to impart to these youth skill and organization, discipline and efficiency in their trades. How different is their lot from that of

their fathers when they started out in life and desired to learn a trade! In one of the building schools in Moscow, Peter Orlov, a well-known Stakhanovite bricklayer and a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic,* came to visit the young people, and among other things told them of the torments he had to go through in pre-revolutionary days to learn his craft. He fired their imaginations with the grand work of construction that is now going on in the Soviet Union, and in which they are destined to take part. So enthused were they by his story that then and there they formally resolved to master their crafts of bricklaying, plastering, carpentering, painting, etc., at the shortest possible time.

Care for the welfare of these young people is not being left entirely to the official departments of the government but is being taken up by the general public. For example, a number of professors in the Moscow State Conservatory, Professors Goldenweiser, Oistrakh and others, have issued an appeal to all cultural workers to undertake the patronage of these schools and provide for their spiritual requirements. A group of authors and scientific workers have written to the newspapers offering their services as lecturers on popular literary and scientific subjects. Thus, the organized training of skilled workers for industry will also give a powerful stimulus to cultural development of the working class.

It is common knowledge that the develop-

* Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic — a component republic of the USSR — *Ed.*

ment of capitalism leads to the deterioration of the working class. Not only is labour being largely robbed of its skill, but *all* avenues of occupation are being closed to large sections of the younger generation. A non-skilled youth has become as permanent a feature of modern capitalism as unemployment.

The authors of a book on unemployment among adolescents in England write that in many parts of the country, particularly the northern districts, most affected by the crisis, the age of fourteen to eighteen has ceased to be for the majority of adolescents the age for acquiring technical skill by constant practice in the factory or technical knowledge at school. It has become the age of casual employment, often of a "blind alley" nature, or else in branches of industry that are already overcrowded with adult workers. It has become the age of interrupted industrial training, the age of dull and soul-destroying unemployment.

The characteristic tendency of socialist society, however, is steadily to raise the cultural and technical standards of labour. And this steady progress will lead to the abolition of the antithesis between mental and physical labour, which can be abolished only under socialism. In his speech during the celebration of the twenty-third anniversary of the socialist revolution (November 7, 1940), Kalinin said that in capitalist countries "they had to worry not about creating labour reserves, but about finding some kind of employment for at least a part of the unemployed. The army of unem-

ployed constitutes very unpleasant and very dangerous inflammable material for the capitalist world.”

Only the socialist state, which plans its economy with a view to securing the steady improvement of the material and cultural conditions of the workers, to strengthening the independence of the country and increasing its power of defence, can take up and successfully solve the problem of creating a national labour reserve. The creation of a national reserve of skilled labour marks a new stage in the expanded socialist reproduction of labour power; a new stage in the planned distribution and rational utilization of labour in the various branches of national economy. The mass training of skilled workers is one of the most important conditions for increasing productivity of labour, for producing an abundance of products and thereby creating the conditions for the transition from socialism to communism.

The Victory of the New Social System

Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly emphasized that, in the last analysis, the productivity of labour is the decisive factor for ensuring the triumph of the new social system. Capitalism defeated feudalism because it created a higher productivity of labour. Socialism will defeat capitalism by creating a productivity of labour that the capitalist system cannot achieve.

The Soviet Union, which suffered more than any other country from the first imperialist war and from the ensuing civil war, suc-

ceeded in restoring her economy in five years, approximately twice as fast as the capitalist countries. Reorganizing her economy on the basis of modern technique, and on the basis of new human relationships, the Soviet Union achieved rates of development that far surpassed those of any capitalist country in the world. Extremely characteristic is the index of production of the USSR in recent years compared with that of the USA. Taking 1929 at 100, the index of production of the United States in 1940 was 111, while that of the USSR was 534; that is to say, while production in the USA increased by only 11 per cent in this period, that of the Soviet Union increased 434 per cent. Thanks to her modernized industry and her rapid rate of industrial development, the USSR firmly holds first place in Europe for total volume of industrial output, and in the output of specific branches of industry. The total volume of industrial output in the Soviet Union in 1938 was nine times that of Tsarist Russia in 1913. In 1913, the total output amounted to 11 billion rubles, while in 1938 it amounted to 100,400 million. In 1940 the total industrial output showed an increase of 11 per cent over that of the previous year.

The USSR holds first place in Europe in output of tractors, combine-harvesters, motor trucks, locomotives, railway cars, agricultural machinery, etc.; and she also holds first place in Europe in output of gold, oil, peat, iron and manganese ore, superphosphates, crude copper and beet sugar.

Although she has surpassed the most high-

ly developed capitalist countries in Europe in volume of output, the Soviet Union still, however, lags behind them in output per capita of the population. As regards annual production of electricity, France produces about two and a half times, Great Britain nearly three times, Germany about three and a half times and the United States about five and a half times more per capita than the USSR, although total production in the USSR amounts to 36,400 million kwh per annum, whereas in France it amounts to only 18,300 million kwh and in Great Britain to 29,800 million kwh.

To catch up to Great Britain in annual output of pig iron per capita of the population, the Soviet Union must increase her output to 25 million tons per annum, compared with 15 million tons in 1938; and to catch up with Germany she must increase it to 40-45 million tons per annum. To catch up with the United States' output of pig iron in 1929, her peak year, the Soviet Union must increase her annual output to 50-60 million tons.

On February 22, 1941, the Soviet newspapers reported that the Communist Party and Soviet government had instructed the State Planning Department of the USSR to draw up a general economic plan covering a period of fifteen years with the view to surpassing the principal capitalist countries in the production per capita of pig iron, steel, fuel, electricity, machines, and other means of production and consumers goods.

The achievement of victory in economic rivalry with the capitalist world is a task of

gigantic proportions, and far exceeds the limits of the Third Five-Year Plan (1938-42). The factor that will decide the issue is productivity of labour. During the whole course of the 19th century productivity of labour throughout the capitalist world increased only two-fold. Some capitalist countries were able, in the very best years, to increase productivity of labour 4 to 5 per cent per annum. In the USSR, however, from 1917 to 1937, a matter of twenty years, which historically is a very short period indeed, the productivity of labour per worker per annum increased 3.3 times, while the output per hour increased more than 4.5 times compared with the highest level reached in pre-revolutionary Russia. In socialist agriculture the productivity of labour in 1937 was approximately two to three times higher than on the individual farms of the middle farmers before the revolution. During the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-32), productivity of labour in large-scale socialist industry increased 41 per cent; and during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37) it increased another 82 per cent.

These figures show that in recent years the rate of increase of productivity of labour in the USSR has doubled compared with the period of the First Five-Year Plan; and this rate is higher than in any capitalist country at any period of its development. They thus prove the superiority of the socialist system, which ensures a rate of increase of productivity of labour that capitalism could never attain. This was achieved as a result of the technical

re-equipment of industry and of the national economy as a whole, and as a result of the creation of new cadres of workers who have successfully mastered this up-to-date technique. It is due also to the planned distribution of the productive forces and of the utilization of the natural resources of the country, and to the superior forms of combining and specializing industries that are possible only under socialism and the Soviet forms of administration.

An important contributing factor in the increase in the productivity of labour is the improvement in the material conditions of the working people, the rise in their cultural standards, the inculcation of the new labour discipline and the steady application of the socialist system of payment for work performed. Other powerful factors have been the change in the attitude towards work, the development of socialist competition and the Stakhanov movement.

The Third Five-Year Plan provides for a big step forward in raising the cultural and technical standards of the working class, the advanced and leading forces in socialist society, to the level of the engineer. It also provides for an increase in national consumption of 50 to 100 per cent, which will go a long way towards satisfying the growing requirements of the people of the Soviet Union. Thus, with the increase in the productivity of labour comes a rise in the cultural and general standard of living of the producer. As the resolution of the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union states:

“It is now not a question of abolishing unemployment and of doing away with poverty in the countryside — this we have already accomplished in full and for all time. The task now is to promote the popular welfare and culture until they reach a level in consonance with the growing demands of the Soviet people, a level that is beyond the scope of possibility for even the richest capitalist countries, a level that denotes the commencement of real florescence of the forces of socialism, the flourishing of a new culture, of socialist culture.”*

The Stalin Constitution defines work under socialism as a duty which is not a burden, but an honour; and at the same time it lays down the principle that in socialist society work is a means of livelihood.

There is no affinity whatever between the duty to work in socialist society and enforced labour under capitalism, where hunger drives the proletarian under the yoke of exploitation. In the USSR an entirely new, communist attitude towards work has arisen and become deep rooted. The advanced workers, peasants and office employees in the Soviet Union, her Stakhanovites and shock-brigade workers, love their work, their machine, their factory and their office. While at work they feel and realize that what they are doing is above all a matter of public importance. They know that the more and better they work the higher will be their standard of living, and the respect and honour they earn. But it is not only personal incentive that inspires men and women

* *The Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow*, p. 441.

to deeds of heroism at their work. The greatest stimulus to labour enthusiasm is the desire to devote all one's strength to the good of the socialist fatherland. It is the desire to serve the commonweal. It is genuine Soviet patriotism.

This attitude towards work is the first step in the transformation of work as a duty into work as a prime necessity of life, into work for the pleasure of it. The work of a Stakhanovite, during which he displays all his physical and mental talents, is a source of added human dignity, a source of joy; it is a particle of the future in the present; it is a genuine ray of communism.



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