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THE STAKHANOV MOVEMENT.

THE NATURE AND ORIGINS  
OF THE  
STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of studying the Stakhanov Movement in the Soviet Union is to examine and discover the nature of new attitudes towards work as embodied in this movement. The recognition and practice of regarding work as a creative activity; an activity which forms an essential part in the development of mans creative capacity in accordance with changes in the material conditions of society mark a turning point in the history of labour. Each historic epoch-from primitive communism to socialism- demand not only new modes of production but corresponding changes in the state of mans intellectual development. A crucial expression of such changes are reflected in new attitudes towards work and the role this activity plays in mans total activity. In examining the Stakhanov Movement, we are not only discovering the practical expressions of such changes but also emphasizing the role such changes played in eroding divisions between mental and manual labour which is of fundamental importance in creating a socialist society. The Stakhanovites by actively participating in this process are in practice eliminating such divisions and in so doing overcoming the one sided development of man inherited from capitalism. It is to an analysis of this new Soviet Man that we now turn.

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## PREFACE

"No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself". 1

This paper represents an enquiry into a page of the Soviet Union's labour history as embodied in what was to become known as the "Stakhanov Movement". Marx states that existing relations of production correspond to definite stages in the development of the material forces of production.\* Thus to replace the capitalist mode of production with a socialist mode of production in which private property of the means of production has been abolished and replaced by the collective ownership and control of the majority i.e. the working class, stands as a fundamental aim of revolutionary change. Such fundamental changes produce new social relations: relations that correspond to the new productive forces, the new conditions of material life. It is in this area, men's relations of production, the relation of men to each other in the process of production and the society they are constructing that is the subject of this essay. An area that can be regarded as a

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1 Marx. K., Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", (Moscow 1970), p.21.

\* Ibid., pp.20-21, cf.19-23.

touchstone in evaluating whether a given society is indeed a socialist one or pursuing such a path. Has each for all replaced or replacing each for himself? The main contradiction of capitalism is that the relations of production lag behind developments in the capabilities of the productive forces; i.e. private ownership of the means of production becomes a fetter on their full development while the actual processes of production have become socialised in character; the collective carrying out of production. This contradiction is eliminated in a socialist society by the abolition of private property and in conformity with the freeing of society's productive forces men's relations of production, their economic relations change; i.e. social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production. Thus while the development of the relations of production are dependant on the releasing of society's productive forces they in turn react upon,retarding or accelerating the development of the productive forces. If the relations of production fail to come into correspondence with the state of development of the productive forces then new contradictions appear which may create new crisis similar to that experienced by capitalism. In analyzing social development then the absence or presence of such contradictions should reveal or indicate a given society's stage of progress.

It is hoped to substantiate that the Stakhanov Movement represented one of the forces that were acting to bring the lagging relations of production into correspondence with the rapid and vast expansion of society's productive forces as experienced by the youthful Soviet State. The Stakhanov Movement thereby acted as a major accelerating force on the development of the productive forces. This in turn increases the store of social wealth from which the whole working class benefit whether it be in the form of a shorter work day, the end of unemployment, higher wages, free education and social services, improved and better housing, increases in the amount of articles of consumption available, etc. It is important to note that there can be no 'pure' socialist state as envisaged by utopians of various stripes. Defects, mistakes, inequalities (although not derived from forms of ownership that allow one man to exploit another) will persist precisely because Socialism is a society created out of capitalism and is a period during which the final remnants of capitalism, physical and ideological, are eliminated. The Stakhanov Movement was only possible because of and the product of the very real political, material and cultural changes achieved in the Soviet Union. Stakhanovism was an expression not only of these changes but of the development of a new kind of Soviet man. A new maturing working class that battled on the economic and



theoretical fronts for the construction and consolidation of the Soviet State. It is the creation of new attitudes towards work, the use of political education and differential wages as a means of incentive for workers to participate in socialist emulation movements such as Stakhanovism that constitute the basis of the debates and myths concerning Stakhanovism: e.g. Stakhanovism equals speed-up; Stakhanovism equals exploitation; Stakhanovism equals revisionism; Stakhanovism represents a retreat on the use of political incentives by utilizing material rewards, etc. Implicit in such arguments is the question of whether the Soviet Union was truly a socialist state or not. This paper will substantiate that the Stakhanov Movement was in strict accordance with the kind of socialism perceived by Marx and Engels and therefore if critics wish to deal with such questions they must first of all deal with the writings and scientific analysis of the classics i.e. Marx, Engels and later Lenin and Stalin. In short a scientific approach as opposed to that of prejudice is required. It should be added that the purpose of this paper is not to establish whether capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union today or whether the Soviet Union represents some aborted form of socialism. These issues are well beyond the scope of this essay.

Stakhanovism will be shown to be a movement initiated and developed by the working class as a method

which would not only benefit each individual but one that raised the material and cultural levels of the whole working class. A method which played an important role in expanding the productive forces of the Soviet Union at a very rapid rate. While piece-rates and differential wages were an instrument in providing incentives for the unskilled to become skilled and for the steady growth of the Stakhanov Movement it will be emphasized that Stakhanovism was essentially a political movement. A movement that guaranteed more than rhetoric for those who participated. A movement totally in keeping with the socialist slogan of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work", which characterizes the socialist stage of construction. Stakhanovism was a movement which did'nt put "politics in command", but rather put "Scientific Socialism" in command. A case of petty-bourgeois mechanical materialism versus scientific socialism. Stakhanovism played a major role in the construction of heavy industry which was regarded as the key for the development of all other sectors of the economy e.g. light industry and agriculture. Upon the successful construction of large-scale industry rested the political successes achieved by the Soviet Union. Political movements guaranteed economic success; economic success guaranteed political success; both changed the class composition of the USSR. It is to the development of these processes that we now turn.

## CHAPTER 1

### TRANSITION: SOCIALIST RATIONALISATION OF PRODUCTION.

#### Introduction:

"Social-Democratism today is an ideological pillar of capitalism...We cannot get rid of capitalism unless we rid the working class movement of Social-Democratism".<sup>1</sup>

The successful socialist revolution of 1917, marked the intensification of this struggle with "Social-Democratism". A crucial sphere of this conflict was in the area of production particularly with regard to the role of labour productivity, large-scale industry, the payment of wages and the question of equality. While the N.E.P. period had restored industry to at least some of its pre-war levels it was not a period of new construction. The goals of the Five Year Plans were in effect to achieve the Soviet Union's industrial revolution, a revolution which would assure her own rapid and expanding development and place her outside the domination and influence of foreign capital. The Soviet Union's industrial revolution created a socialist camp in a capitalist world. The key to success was to be the creation of a heavy industry which would necessarily delay the creation of a mass consumer and light industry. Lenin clearly stated in 1921 that:

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1 Stalin. J. op.cit. "Stalin", A Collection of Essays on Stalin by the C.C.C.P. (B), 1939. (New York, Workers Library, 1940). p.183.

"Large-scale machine industry and its application to agriculture constitute the sole economic basis for socialism, the sole basis for a successful struggle for the liberation of mankind from the yoke of capital".<sup>2</sup>

and further in his report to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922:

"We are economizing on everything, even on schools. This must be so, because we know that unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall be unable to build any industry at all, and without it we shall perish altogether as an independent country. This we know very well.... Heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we do not find them, we, as a civilized state, - let alone a socialist state - are doomed".<sup>3</sup>

In order to achieve this goal major obstacles had to be overcome: the productive forces of the Soviet Union, particularly labour, had to be fully and scientifically utilized and developed; the last bastion of capitalism in the countryside - the Kulaks - had to be eliminated economically and administratively; the mastering of technique and the creation of skilled personnel for all branches of industry; and the systematic lowering of the cost of production and reducing the selling price of industrial goods, all had to be achieved. The effect of such reductions would be to maintain and increase the real wages of workers while also determining the stability of prices for agricultural produce consumed in the city. Stalin considered the

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2 Lenin, V.I. op.cit. "Soviet Union 1935", ed. A. Fineberg, (Moscow, June, 1935), p.227. in a report by G.K. Orjonikidze.

3 Ibid., p.227.

systematic reduction of the price of industrial goods as one of the essential requisites for a progressive rise in the material and cultural levels of the working class. It was also essential to the preservation of the bond between the peasantry and the proletariat and the further development of agriculture. It was this bond that constituted the base of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat".

Instituting a "socialist rationalisation of production and economic administration"\* involved the adoption of new and better techniques; the adoption of a new and better organisation of labour; a radical simplification and reduction in the cost of economic apparatus and a determined struggle against bureaucracy.

"Socialist Rationalisation of Production":

Socialism is a system in which all the means of production belong to society as a whole. This system is engendered in the womb of capitalism by the development of the material prerequisites for the socialisation of industrial processes, the growth of machine production, large-scale enterprises, etc.

"The development of the productive forces of social labour is the historical task and privilege of capital. It is precisely in this way that it unconsciously creates the material requirements of a higher mode of production". 4

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\* The phrase is Stalin's used in a speech to the Fifth All-Union Conference of the Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union, March 29, 1927. cf. "Tasks of Youth", (Little Lenin Library, Vol. 27, International, 1940).

4 Marx, K., "Capital", Vol. 3, p. 304 (Kerr edition, Chicago, 1909).

The socialisation of the means of production signifies the abolition of classes and class distinctions. However while a revolutionary movement may formally declare this as its aim the end of such distinctions and their actual elimination can only rest on concrete physical and ideological changes brought about by raising the material and cultural levels of the working class. In order to achieve this state society's productive forces, particularly labour productivity, must be expanded as rapidly as possible. Thus the socialist rationalisation of production produces such questions as what are the significance of production, labour productivity, and the method by which workers are rewarded, i.e. wages? This further involves the issue of equality and the distribution of society's products created by the working class. In turning to these questions it is hoped to clarify the role played by the Stakhanov movement in this rationalisation process and construction of a socialist economy.

(a) Productive Forces Under Socialism:

"The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation". 5

"With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by plan-conforming, conscious organization. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first

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5 Marx-Engels., "The Communist Manifesto", (Moscow, 1973), p. 58.

"...time man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of nature foreign to, and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organization, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, with full consciousness, make his own history - only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom". 6

This does not mean that man under a socialist society can now create or transform the laws of economic development which exist objectively outside of man but rather that the law of the political economy of socialism can be discovered and utilized in the interests of society precisely because the anarchic forces of capitalism have been replaced by a regulated planned economy which considers the interests of the community and the individual. Engels puts the case clearly:

"Active social forces work exactly like natural forces: blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand, and reckon with, them. But when once we understand them, when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will, and....

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6 Engels, F., "Anti-During", (Moscow, 1969), pp. 335-36.

"...by means of them to reach our own ends. And this holds quite especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we obstinately refuse to understand the nature and the character of these productive forces- and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production and its defenders -so long these forces are at work in spite of us, in opposition to us, so long they master us, as we have shown above in detail.

But when once their nature is understood they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is as that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production - on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment." 7

The existence of a planned economy means that crisis of overproduction characteristic of capitalism will end. Rather 'overproduction' is a material condition of socialism. This is achieved by large-scale industry supplying society with a sufficient quantity of products to satisfy all and acting as a means whereby distinctions between town and country are eliminated through the industrialisation of agricultural production. Such was the purpose of the

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7 Ibid., pp.331-32.



Collectivization movement in the Soviet Union which provided a new impulse for agricultural development. However in order to achieve this common management of production dramatic changes have to be made. The one sided development of individuals characteristic of capitalism must be overcome through raising the material and cultural levels of the peasantry and proletariat i.e. improving their political education, raising the general standard of knowledge and technical skill, training in the methods of public work and administration, combatting and destroying survivals of the narrow, stifling influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois prejudices, etc.

"The common management of production cannot be effected by people as they are today, each one being assigned to a single branch of production, shackled to it, exploited by it, each having developed only one of his abilities at the cost of all the others and knowing only one branch, or only a branch of a branch of the total production. Even present-day industry finds less and less use for such people. Industry carried on in common and according to plan by the whole of society presupposes moreover people of all-round development, capable of surveying the entire system of production. Thus the division of labour making one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, which has already been undermined by machines, will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from that one-sidedness which the present division of labour stamps on each one of them".<sup>8</sup>

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8 Engels.F., "Principles of Communism", 1847, cf. Marx-Engels, "Collected Works", Vol.6, 1845-48. (International, New York, 1976)., pp.341-57., p.353.

Further:

"The general association of all members of society for the common and planned exploitation of the productive forces, the expansion of production to a degree where it will satisfy the needs of all, the termination of the condition where the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of others, the complete annihilation of classes and their antagonisms, the all-round development of the abilities of all the members of society through doing away with the hitherto existing division of labour, through industrial education, through change of activity, through the participation of all in the enjoyments provided by all, through the merging of town and country- such are the main results of the abolition of private property". 9

The Stakhanov Movement was one such example of attempts to overcome the one-sided development of man. Mastering a "multiplicity of skills" was a prominent feature of the second phase of Stakhanovism whereby workers not only mastered their own job but went on to master a series of skills and trades. Thus the direct aim of capitalist production -profit- is replaced with the aim of socialist production - the satisfaction of man's material and cultural levels. Or as Stalin put it: it is not a question of pursuing production and higher productivity as aims in themselves

"but the subordination of socialist production to its principal aim of securing the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society.

Consequently, maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society is the aim of socialist production; continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques is the means for the achievement of the aim.

Such is the basic economic law of socialism". 10

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9 Ibid., p.354.

10 Stalin.J., "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR", (Peking Press, 1972), p.80, cf. pp.59-86.

Thus by relying on the law that the relations of production must necessarily conform with the character of productive forces the Soviet Union was able to introduce and practice the concept of a planned and balanced economy. The planning of social production rests on socialization of the means of production and the abolition of the capitalist law of anarchy of production and competition which fetter the full development of society's productive forces. Planning's role is to ensure that no major contradictions develop between the relations of production and the productive forces. The appearance of socialist emulation movements, and their offspring, Stakhanovism, may be considered as the lagging relations of production coming into conformity with the character of the productive forces. A process which at first tended to knock the Plan out of joint (see below). By giving full play to these new relations: i.e. the complete identification with the construction of a socialist state and economy, in theory and practice, as manifested in higher levels of labour productivity, the mastering of technique, acquiring a multiplicity of skills, new labour discipline, etc, the old petty-bourgeois prejudices concerning work, each and everyone for himself, which were a brake on the productive forces are replaced by new relations that eliminate such stagnation and become the decisive force in determining the further and rapid development of the productive forces.

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In this manner not only does increased social production take place but men's relations to one another in the process of production are dramatically changed.

Marx's truism is appropriate,

"It is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness". 11

Further:

"This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production". 12

and

"Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., - real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process". 13

It is clear then that productive activity is a crucial aspect in the formation of social consciousness and that the manner in which this activity is carried out is of paramount importance. Stakhanovism represented, as will be substantiated below, a new approach to productive activity,

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11 Marx.K, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", p.220.

12 Marx-Engels., "The German Ideology", (International, New York, 1974), p.42, cf. pp.39-48.

13 Ibid., p.47.

an approach produced by and essential to, the new conditions under a socialist society. By mastering technique and seeking to obtain a complete knowledge of the production process they were in practice breaking down the barriers between mental and manual labour and thereby overcoming the exclusive sphere of activity and one-sided development forced upon them by capitalism. A condition of alienation which is being eliminated by the powerful, un-fettered development of the productive forces. Productive forces which under capitalism become for the working class destructive and oppressive forces. As Marx and Engels state:

"The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves".<sup>14</sup>

and

"Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting off of all natural limitations." <sup>15</sup>

The abolition of private property, the appropriation of the totality of productive forces, the subjugation of the instruments of production to each individual, these are necessary conditions for overcoming the division of labour and its inherent inequalities. It is to the question of equality under Socialism and the role of Stakhanovism which

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14 Ibid., p.92.

15 Ibid., p.93.

is accused of perpetuating inequalities rather than eliminating them that we now turn.

(b) Equality and Bourgeois Right.

"Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew". 16

While revolution may convert the means of production into common property it does not necessarily remove the defects of distribution and inequality which continue as long as products are divided according to the amount of labour performed and not according to need. These defects Marx recognised as the continued existence of "bourgeois right". Marx adds;

"But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined". 17

In regard to Stakhanovism the question of equality is usually posited as one of material versus political incentives. The argument runs that the use of material incentives, via differential wages, is somehow a retreat, a failure, revisionist, etc, and that in the construction of a truly

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16 Ibid., p.94.

17 Marx.K. "Critique of the Gotha Programme", (International, New York, 1970), p.10., cf. pp.6-14.

socialist society political incentives and preferably political incentives alone should gain pre-dominance. This quasi-religious view, a case of ivory tower 'socialism' versus living dynamic socialism, is merely another example of gross utopianism which is at best mechanical 'Marxism' based on subjective idealism. The history of social thought and practice are conveniently forgotten. Socialism by decree replaces the arduous task of physical and ideological change through the heat of class struggle. Marx is crystal clear on the matter:

"You must pass through fifteen, twenty, perhaps fifty years of civil war and national conflict, not merely in order to change the system, but also to change yourselves and to render yourselves fit for political rule". 18 .

and further:

"They (the working class) know that in order to work out their own emancipation and along with that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending, by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men". 19

Secondly the distinction posited of political versus material incentives is really a misnomer. Rather both aspects form a concrete whole, each conditioning, developing and dependant on the other. It is important to note that such ideas as equality in wages are ideas only appropriate to a latter stage of development i.e. Communism, and cannot be imposed upon an existing mode of production which

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18 Marx.K. op.cit."Speech to the Communist League",1850, in "Dialectical Materialism".Adoratsky.A.(International, 1934),p.33. cf.pp.22-44.

19 Marx.K., "The Civil War in France", op.cit. Ibid.,pp.33-34.

cannot sustain or implement such a policy i.e. Socialism. Socialism is a process of transition, a period of intense class struggle, economic construction and consolidation of a socialist economy from which the latter Communist society will develop. Equality under socialism is the abolition of classes:

"..the real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes. Any demand for equality which goes beyond that, of necessity passes into absurdity".<sup>20</sup>

Equality under Communism is the elimination of distinctions between town and country; between mental and manual labour; the overcoming of the one-sided development of man characteristic of capitalism; the guaranteeing of individuality through working for the community; the creation of the conditions whereby the state is replaced by the administration of things. A state where the "free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".\*

The question arises then what is the economic basis and essence of Socialism? Stalin furnishes the reply;

"Is it the establishment of a 'paradise' on earth and universal abundance? No, that is the philistine, petty-bourgeois idea of the economic essence of socialism. To create the economic basis of socialism means welding agriculture and socialist industry into one integral economy, subordinating agriculture to the leadership of socialist industry, regulating relations between town and country on the basis of an exchange of the products of agriculture and industry, closing and eliminating all the channels which facilitate the....

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<sup>20</sup> Engels. F., "Anti-Duhring", (Moscow, 1969), p. 128

\* Marx-Engels., "Communist Manifesto", p. 76



"..birth of classes and,above all,of capital, and,in the long run,establishing such conditons of production and distribution as will lead directly and immediately to the abolition of classes". 21

Thus

"By equality Marxism does not mean the levelling of personal requirements and conditions of existence,but the suppression of classes, that is to say equal enfranchisement for every worker after the overthrow and expropriation of the Capitalists....The equal duty of everyone to work according to his capacity and the equal right of all workers to be remunerated according to their needs(communist society). Marxism starts from the fact that the needs and tastes of men can never be alike nor equal either in quality or in quantity,either in the socialist or the communist era. Marxism has never recognised and does not now recognise any other form of equality.

Primitive utopian socialism is no more than universal ascetism and clumsy levelling". 22

#### Bourgeois Right:

"He who does not work,niether shall he eat".

The utopian and misleading notion that socialism means the equal distribution of the proceeds of labour is a recurring one in the history of social thought. One would have thought Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme" had dealt this petty-bourgeois prejudice its death blow but unfortunately the influence of petty-bourgeois ideology is a sticky thing. Lenin debated the issue in his "State and Revolution" with the anarchists,Plekhanoff, and what he disparingly called the "yellow second and a half internatinal", i.e. Kautsky, Bernstein,etc. Later

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21 Stalin.J.,"Works", Vol.9.(Moscow,1953), p.23.

22 Ibid., Vol.13., p.361. cf.pp.288-388.

Stalin faced the question in the struggle for collectivisation and with regard to differential wages for unskilled and skilled workers. It is this issue which is the turning point of the Stakhanov question, and the erroneous claim that the Stakhanov Movement was somehow a retreat, a reversal, etc, on the path to socialism. It may cloud the pure 'socialist' vision entertained by petty-bourgeois ideologists but revolutions are not made to construct utopian schemas for the satisfaction of petty-bourgeois prejudices.

Marx first demonstrates the phrasemongering nature of Lasalle's notion that every worker must receive the undiminished proceeds of labour in return for his labour.

"Let us take first of all the words "proceeds of labour" in the sense of the product of labour, then the cooperative proceeds of labour are the total social product.

From this is then to be deducted:

First, cover for replacement of the means of production used up.

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance fund to provide against mis-adventures, disturbances through natural events, etc.

These deductions from the "undiminished proceeds of labour" are an economic necessity and their magnitude is to be determined by available means and forces, and partly by calculation of probabilities, but they are in no way calculable by equity." 23

In addition Marx notes that out of the part of the total product which serves as means of consumption further deductions have to be made before it can be divided: (a) the general costs of administration not belonging to production

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23 Marx.K., "Critique of the Gotha Programme", p.7.

in diminishing proportions as the new society develops.

(b) a portion for the satisfaction of such needs as education, health services, etc., (c) funds for those unable to work. Engels adds:

"It is, moreover, self-evident that, with social production conditioned by large-scale industry (that is, under communism), it is possible to assure each person 'the whole proceeds of his labour', so far as this phrase has any meaning at all. And it has a meaning only if it is extended to mean not that each individual worker becomes the possessor of the whole proceeds of his labour', but that the whole of society, consisting entirely of workers, becomes the possessor of the total proceeds of its labour, which it partly distributes among its members for consumption, partly uses for replacing and increasing the means of production and partly stores up as a reserve fund for production and consumption". 24

Thus to distribute the whole product by giving the worker his "full proceeds of labour" is to leave society in a state of want. For by distributing the whole product society remains as rich or poor as it was. It is clear that from the "undiminished proceeds of labour" accumulations must take place: the accumulations represent a surplus value that is materialised in such as the above in order to guarantee the necessary and progressive expansion of the processes of reproduction.

Stakhanovism by creating more use-values through a greater productivity of labour in effect shorten the time devoted to material labour.

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24 Engels, F., "The Housing Question", (International, New York), p.31.

"The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of a continued expansion of its process of reproduction, do not depend upon the duration of the surplus labour, but upon its productivity and upon the more or less fertile conditions of production, under which it is performed". 25

The thrust of the Stakhanov movement was to accomplish this task with the least expenditure of energy and in conditions favourable to the development of each and all. If under socialism, workers now own and control the "material conditions of labour"\* they therefore collectively possess and control all the use values created in process of production. The Stakhanov movement by rationalising and developing processes of production are actively diminishing divisions between mental and manual labour and thereby consolidating the base from which this collective ownership can be maintained and guaranteed. Further the condition of labour under capitalism which;

"In proportion as labour develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and neglect develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non-workers". 26

is reversed and it is working class movements such as Stakhanovism that indicate such processes taking place. The working class controls production; by the scientific application and understanding of technology on the job less physical effort is required to increase productivity;

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25 Marx.K., "Capital", vol.3, (Chicago, Kerr, 1906), pp.955

\* Marx.K., "Critique of the Gotha Programme", p.3.

26 Ibid., p.5.

and this increased productivity means not only greater social wealth but a higher quality of living for all. Any attempt to impose vague notions of class 'justice' and equality upon such a movement as Stakhanovism which represents a leading section of the working class who daily demonstrate their determination to raise both their own and the total working class's material and cultural levels and thereby deny them the right to greater rewards for their actions would be no more than simple reaction. An action calculated to create class antagonisms and impede the construction of socialism rather than aid it. Differences in wages or rewards are in strict accordance with the first phase of transition to a Communist society i.e. Socialism. Marx states;

"What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly the individual producer receives back from society - after the deductions have been made - exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual amount of labour." 27

and further in the "Communist Manifesto";

"We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus where-with to command the labour of others". 28

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27 Ibid., p.8.

28 Marx-Engels., "Communist Manifesto", p.64.

and

"Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation". 29

While private ownership has been abolished and the means of production socialised the degree of equality consists in the fact that "so much labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form". Marx recognises this equal right as still in principle - bourgeois right: the continuation of inequality.

"The right of the producers is proportional to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an equal standard, labour." 30

Hence as the Stakhanovites labour output is greater, their greater return is quite justifiable and serves to encourage the lesser skilled to become skilled and master their jobs by applying similar techniques and thereby achieve similar rewards. Because labour is differentiated according to individual endowment and productive capacity the measure of labour remains an "unequal right for unequal labour".

"It is therefore a right of inequality in its content, like every right....Further, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another and so on and so forth. Thus with an equal output, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal". 31

This is why Marx states such defects are inevitable and that, "Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined".

Thus bourgeois right only disappears to the extent that private ownership of the means of production is abolished and the exploitation of man by man through this ownership becomes impossible. In the lower stage of Communism - Socialism- inequality in the distribution of articles of consumption on the basis of the amount of labour performed remain. Socialist labour can not be equated with labour under Communism for it is only the lower, primary stage of development for the new socialist system which is being created out of capitalism. Stalin puts it bluntly in regard to attempts which were made to impose communes on the peasants in place of the agricultural artels. Artels combined the personal and everyday interests of the collective farmers with their public interest. This in effect was a process of education which in adopting the everyday interests to the public interests created the spirit of collectivism in yesterdays peasant. Communes on the other hand attempted to socialise everything; the means of production and the everyday life of its members. Significantly they failed which was because they were attempting to impose a higher form of collective farming on the basis of undeveloped technique, shortages of

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30 Marx.K., "Critique of the Gotha Programme", p.9.

31 Ibid., p.9/10

produce and generally low levels of cultural and material development. In short the communes represented a petty-bourgeois attempt at creating socialism by decree particularly when the economic/political conditions did not exist as yet to sustain this form of production.

As Stalin put it;

"..equalisation in the sphere of requirements and personal, everyday life is a reactionary petty-bourgeois absurdity worthy of some primitive sect of ascetics, but not of a socialist society organised on Marxist lines; for we cannot expect all people to have the same requirements and tastes, and all people to mould their personal, everyday life on the same model." 32

and further;

"By equality Marxism means, not equalisation of personal requirements and everyday life, but the abolition of classes, i.e., a) the equal emancipation of all working people from exploitation after the capitalists have been overthrown and expropriated; b) the equal abolition for all of private property in the means of production after they have been converted into the property of the whole of society; c) the equal duty of all to work according to their ability, and the equal right of all working people to receive in return for this according to the work performed (socialist society); d) the equal duty of all to work according to their ability, and the equal right of all working people to receive in return for this according to their needs (communist society). Moreover, Marxism proceeds from the assumption that people's tastes and requirements are not, and cannot be, identical and equal in regard to quality or quantity, whether in the period of socialism or in the period of communism". 33

It is clear that the Marxist conception of equality differs dramatically from the petty-bourgeois notion that

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32 Stalin. J., "Works", Vol. 13, p. 361.

33 Ibid.



everyone should wear the same clothes and eat the same food. Equality as such is reactionary and primitive utopianism, it is "universal ascetism and social levelling in its crudest form". As Stalin says;

"Bourgeois writers are fond of depicting Marxist socialism in the shape of the old tsarist barracks, where everything is subordinated to the 'principle' of equalisation. But Marxists cannot be held responsible for the ignorance and stupidity of bourgeois writers". 34

This is an absurdity usually invented by those who adhere to various forms of socialist thought in word but in practice sabotage any attempts to organise and move the working class forward, i.e. Kautsky and Bernstein of Lenin's time. Communists stand for equality in that they want to abolish classes: no more no less. Socialism does not mean poverty and privation based on want but the organisation of a cultural and prosperous life for a society of workers. Unequal rights such as higher wages paid to Stakhanovites are inevitable under Socialism. However, Stakhanovites, by increasing the productive forces upon which Socialism can be consolidated and developed are thereby adding to the totality of society's funds and increasing the quality of life for the whole working class. The principles, "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"; "An equal amount of labour for an equal amount of products" are realized but

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34 Ibid., pp.362-3.

bourgeois right still exists as an inevitable defect in the first phase of Communism i.e. Socialism. Thus while the continued existence of bourgeois right is inevitable at this stage it represents a weakness and possible breeding ground for the creation of a new bourgeois which only serves to emphasize that during this period of transition and the existence of the right of inequality the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" must be particularly severe in stamping out any abuses or counter-revolutionary activity that may occur. It is only in the higher phase of communist society that the situation of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" comes truly into being.

(c) Transition: Capitalism - Socialism - Communism.

"Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labour, irrespective of quotas; it is labour performed without expectation of reward, without reward as a condition, labour performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realisation (that has become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good - labour as the requirement of a healthy organism". 35

"Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period which must combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period has to be a period of struggle.....

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35 Lenin.V.I., "From The Destruction of the Old Social System to the Creation of the New", (1920), Selected Works, Vol.3., p.343. (Moscow, 1971).

"...between dying capitalism and nascent communism - or in other words between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but is still very feeble". 36

In short the transition from capitalism to communism involves a whole historical epoch. In the Soviet Union this took the form of violent revolution which destroyed the capitalist mode of production; a period of offensive retreats (N.E.P.); steps forward achieved by the collectivisation of the land and industrialisation; pauses, brought on by war, a result of fascist invasion; but generally a period which steadily moved towards the goal of communism. The epoch of transition is one of intense class struggle during which the expropriated attempt to recover their losses whether it be in the form of foreign intervention or internal counter-revolution. This is particularly acute if the revolution has only been successful in one or a few countries which remain surrounded by a capitalist encirclement. The vacillating petty-bourgeois in turn hop back and forth between revolution and counter-revolution depending on the distribution of forces. It is clear that in this period of revolutionary transformation, from capitalist to communist society, the corresponding political transition necessitates nothing less than the "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat".\* A dictatorship that is,

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36 Lenin.V.I., "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", Ibid., p.289.

"bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative - against the forces and traditions of the old society". 37

Lenin clearly states the difficulties involved in overcoming the deadweight of capitalist influences inherited by the newly born socialist society;

"It will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate millions of peasants and small proprietors, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, to subordinate them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, to overcome their bourgeois habits and traditions", just as we must " - in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat - re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the bidding of the Virgin Mary, at the bidding of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against petty-bourgeois influences". 38

Thus proletarian democracy is based on the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against any attempts on their part at counter-revolution. In order to achieve and progress from socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, a planned economy, large-scale industry, raising the levels of labour productivity, and rapidly expanding the productive forces are all basic prerequisites. The material and cultural levels of the working classes i.e. the peasant and proletariat need to be raised to those of engineers, scientists, etc., in order

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37 Lenin.V.I., op.cit. Stalin.J. "Foundations of Leninism", (Peking Press, 1965), p.43

38 Ibid., p.44.

\* Marx.K., "Critique of the Gotha Programme", p.18

not only to maintain their dictatorship but to overcome divisions of mental and manual labour also. In so doing the groundwork is being laid for the transition to Communism. The period of Socialism is the construction of this foundation by eliminating all remnants of capitalism: ideological and physical.

"The workers were never separated by a Chinese Wall from the old society. And they have preserved a good deal of the traditional mentality of capitalist society. The workers are building a new society with out themselves having become new people,cleansed of the filth of the old world; they are still standing up to their knees in that filth. We can only dream of cleansing ourselves of that filth. It would be utopianism to think that this can be done all at once. It would be utopianism which in practice would only postpone socialism to kingdom come". 39

During this interregnum;

"As long as the 'highest' phase of Communism has not arrived, the Socialists demand the strictest control, by Society and by the State, of the quantity of labour and the quantity of consumption; only this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the control of the workers over the capitalists, and must be carried out, not by a Government of bureaucrats, but by a Government of the armed workers". 40

As outlined above this maintains degrees of inequality particularly with reference to the question of rewards for labour: articles of consumption are received according to work done and not needs. Thus the distinctions between mental and manual labour still exist. However such movements as Stakhanovism by creating new and higher standards of technique and introducing changes in planning at both

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39 Lenin.V.I., "Tasks of the Trade Unions", (1920),  
"Collected Works", (International, 1945), Vol. 23. p. 514.

local and national levels are actively overcoming such distinctions. To enable the working class to become active agents of social development and to choose their occupations without being tied to one occupation for life such steps as the shorter work day, compulsory and universal poly-technical education are necessitated. If one group of workers such as the Stakhanovites by raising labour productivity and thereby increasing society's store of social wealth which permits the systematic reduction of prices of consumer goods and the continuous expansion of all social production are helping to achieve this then attempts to halt this creative initiative on the grounds of 'equality' can only be regarded as criminal. The use of differential wages to reward such efforts or on the basis of skilled, unskilled, heavy or light work, etc., guarantees the existence of a steady labour force, creates better labour discipline and provides greater incentive for workers to obtain higher technical qualifications. A policy of egalitarianism in a society where "bourgeois right"; where equal right is still unequal right, as proven by the experience of the Soviet Union only leads to chaos and stagnation and directly impedes the progress of social development. Even under Communism the kind of petty-levelling and regimentation ideology of the petty-bourgeois is still rejected. The slogan "from each according

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40 Lenin.V.I., "The State and Revolution", (Unwin Books, London, 1971), p.233. cf.pp.147-255.

to his ability, to each according to his need" presupposes the simple everyday but ignored fact that people, their needs and forms of satisfaction are necessarily different. The point being that Communist society guarantees the satisfaction of such differences, a fulfillment dependant upon the full expansion of society's productive forces. Their continued expansion in the service of society rests on a new ideology and system of morality and science created by and being the very foundation of such developments. Economic and political change and development necessarily feed on each other.

"Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class". 41

Thus new conceptions and views towards social life are produced as man's material production and social relations change. The Stakhanov movement in demanding new attitudes towards work in effect revealed such processes in action. The Stakhanov movement, by applying thought to the whole process of production sought to eliminate unnecessary labour, expenditure of energy, boredom, etc; by raising labour productivity they were creating the conditions for a further shortening of the work day which would therefore

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41 Marx-Engels., "Communist Manifesto", p.72.

enable workers to spend more time in other pursuits; by developing a movement to acquire a multiplicity of skills they in practice were overcoming man's one-sided development; by carrying out such actions in the name of constructing socialism the Stakhanovites demonstrated their complete identification with the aims of the socialist state under the banner of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Through their experience in the production process the Stakhanovites were learning how to administer both the state and industry and thereby taking the first steps in not only eliminating divisions between mental and manual labour but also in guaranteeing the final triumph of Socialism and the possibility of transition to Communism.

Socialism is a period of transition: a period of the final defeat of capitalist remnants by which the foundations are laid for the transition to a higher phase, namely, Communism. Utopian schemas of equality cannot be imposed upon the construction of such a society, particularly when the material conditions do not exist to sustain such utopias. Equality with regard to wages is clearly wrong and the Stakhanov movement is totally in accord with this stage of development. Any attempts to implement such a policy would not only be economically disastrous but would represent political capitulation to petty-bourgeois ideology leading to the inevitable restoration of capitalism. Lenin provides an adequate summation of the nature of



the Socialist stage of transition.

"If we were to ask ourselves in what way communism differs from socialism, we should have to say that socialism is the society that grows directly out of capitalism, it is the first form of the new society. Communism is a higher form of society and can only develop when socialism has become firmly established. Socialism implies work without the aid of the capitalists, socialised labour with strict accounting, control and supervision by the organised vanguard, the advanced section of the working people; the measure of labour and remuneration for it must be fixed. It is necessary to fix them because capitalist society has left behind such survivals and such habits as the fragmentation of labour, no confidence in social economy, and the old habits of the petty proprietor that dominate in all peasant countries. All this contrary to real communist economy. We give the name of communism to the system under which people form the habit of performing their social duties without any social apparatus for coercion, and when unpaid work for the public good becomes a general phenomena. It stands to reason that the concept of "communism" is a far too distant one for those who are taking the first steps towards complete victory over capitalism". 42

As Lenin states the stages and practical measures through which humanity will proceed to this higher aim we cannot know but we do know that in the first stage, socialism, bourgeois right will continue to exist. It is only

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly - only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"<sup>43</sup>

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42 Lenin.V.I., "Report on Subbotniks", Dec. 20, 1919, "Collected Works". Vol. 30, p. 284, cf. pp. 238-88 (Moscow, 1962).

43 Marx.K., "Critique of the Gotha Programme", p. 10.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

#### Introduction:

The following is an examination of the origins of the Stakhanov Movement and its latter developments. This necessitates a detailed account of the practical activities of the Stakhanovites and their theoretical significance. It will also be demonstrated that while the Stakhanovite Movement represented a spontaneous outburst of creativity on the part of the working class for the movement to achieve full fruition it had to be organised and opposition overcome to prevent chaos and disorganisation of the planned economy. A few comments on the Stakhanov Movement's role in the Second World War are also included.

STAKHANOVISM: PUTTING SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM IN COMMAND

"Victory never comes off itself it usually has to be dragged by the hand".(Stalin)

During the period of the First Five Year Plan unemployment was eliminated in the USSR. Wages increased 67% while the mean wage of the industrial worker reached 991 rubles by 1930 and 1,519 by 1933. The number of pupils in various forms of education numbered 60,000,000-one person out of every three in the Union- all financed by the State. The Soviet Union had become a major producer of general machinery, electrical energy, petrol iron and steel, etc. Economic production had increased by 391%. In capitalist countries education was disappearing, public construction was minimal with more money going into munition factories as they prepared for their 'solution' of war to economic crisis. During the period of the "Plan", unemployment in England rose from 1,290,000 to 2,800,000; in France, 1,600,000 were completely unemployed with 2,900,000 on short time; unemployment in the U.S. reached 17,000,000 by March 1933; Italy 1,300,000 and in Spain by September 1934, 650,000 which was an increase of 23,000 from January alone; and in Germany the numbers of unemployed grew from 3,376,000 to 5,500,000. Wages sank rapidly: in the U.S. by 35%; Germany by 50%; England by 50% and in Italy 45% by 1931. The bankruptcy and collapse of capitalist of capitalist economies provide a stark contrast to the

forging developments in the Soviet Union. 1

While workers in the West and the U.S. were being cast upon the capitalist scrap heap the phenomena of the Stakhanov movement made its appearance on the socialist stage of the USSR. This was a spontaneous development initiated by the working class and represented a higher and logical stage of earlier movements such as the Subbotniks and Shock Workers. Stakhanovism while reflecting the economic and technical gains of the First F.Y.P. also indicated the raised material and cultural levels of the working class. These gains allowed the Stakhanovites to go beyond the limitations of Subbotnik or Shock work because they now had the technique and the opportunity to master it and thereby ensure the education and increase of the productive forces of the working class.

Origins of Stakhanovism: Subbotniks and Shock Work.

The changing relations of production, from that of capitalist private property to that of socialised public property; changes between men, from that of antagonistic competition for a limited personal gain to that of co-operation and socialist emulation for a collective gain depended upon active participation and initiative from

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1 Barbusse.H., "Stalin", (International, New York, 1935), pp.201-5. cf. "International Labour Review", (Geneva, League of Nations) which provides extensive statistics on unemployment in capitalist countries for both, before, during and after the Plan. See Vol.34 for figures covering 1935-36 which illustrate the intensification of unemployment and economic crisis for the above mentioned countries.

below: from the forces of the peasantry and proletariat. This took the form of a transformation of attitudes from the worker to his work, of identifying his work and his product, as his and the property of the working class. Such a change necessitated changes in the quality of economic life. A combination of political consciousness, collective responsibility and wage incentives played a key role. Payment depended on results.

One of the earliest forms of working class initiative in production was the Subbotnik movement. Lenin hailed this as a "Great Beginning" in July 1919.

"It is the beginning of a revolution that is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over our own conservatism, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits left as a heritage to the worker and peasant by accursed capitalism. Only when this victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, be created: then and only then will a reversion to capitalism become impossible, will communism become really invincible." 2

Subbotniks were formed of Communists and workers, a movement Lenin saw as the "living facts of communist construction" and as "one of the cells of the new socialist society, which brings to all the peoples of the earth emancipation from the yoke of capital and from wars".\* The Subbotniki were embryos of new socialist forms of labour, an expression of a new attitude and approach to labour by workers. However, as significant as this was, it could not provide any practical example of a new form of organisation for labour. Subbotnik work was voluntary work carried out by groups of workers on Saturdays or in their free time to

accomplish some urgent task. As such it called for extra physical effort and precisely because of this limitation a consistent national plan for increasing labour productivity and rationalising production methods could not be built upon it. To do so would have been to increase the burden of labour rather than lightening it. This was a goal which later movements such as Stakhanovism would achieve.

"War Communism" was a period of economic collapse, exhaustion by war, disease and under nourishment. Consequently productivity of labour fell catastrophically. Taking 1913 as 100, productivity per annum in large scale industry was 86.3 in 1917 and by 1920 had fallen to 29.0.

Year	Productivity in large-scale industry. <sup>3</sup> Index of gross output per worker.			Index of productivity (corrected for weighting of branches)		
	Annual	Daily	Hourly	Annual	Daily	Hourly
1913	100	100	100	100	100	100
1917	66.4	71.8	80.8	86.3	93.4	104.0
1918	36.1	42.2	49.5	37.3	43.8	60.4
1919	32.9	46.1	55.3	33.6	47.2	56.7
1920	29.2	34.0	39.0	29.0	33.7	39.3

By 1921 productivity reached its lowest ebb and thereafter began to rise. The fact that it fell no further was in large part due to the development of Subbotniki and the heroic attitude and political enthusiasm displayed by these pioneers. In these spontaneous forms of organisation were the laboratories from which new forms of socialist organisation were derived. The main feature of the movement

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2 Lenin.V.I., "Selected Works", (Moscow, 1971), Vol.3. p.223.

\* Ibid., p.229, p.234. cf. "Collected Works", Vol.29.

3 Barker.G.R. "Incentives and Labour Productivity in Soviet Industry", (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1956), p.35.

was the "production conferences" in which rationalisation schemes were studied and discussed. This allowed for criticism and an opportunity for developing the creative capacity of workers in methods of organisation and rationalisation of the work process. By examining achievements, failures, production plans, the distribution of work, etc; every worker obtains an idea of the work of the body to which he belongs. Trade Union's whose members constitute 80-90% of the USSR's total work force engaged workers in further activity directly concerning their welfare in the field of production and social life. Such factors provided an important stimulus to improving the quality and quantity of work as workers learned through practice that they indeed held their destiny in their own hands.

Socialist Emulation\*:

During the period of War Communism the militarization of labour played an important role. The creation of a new labour discipline was placed in the hands of the T.U.'s with the Party recommendation that special "comradely worker's courts" be used to enforce it. The fuel crisis of the 1919/20 winter called forth the mass application and mobilization of the population for labour service to gather and collect fuel. With the lessening of the war danger at the beginning of 1920 the formation of "labour armies" was

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\* This is usually referred to as 'Socialist competition' but "Emulation" is a better rendering of the Russian term as it is more precise and avoids unnecessary connotations associated with 'competition'. The Soviets replaced the old word for competition, Konkurs, with its selfish connotations of struggle for oneself with, sorevnovaniye, friendly contest or emulation. Stalin explains: "The old capitalist comp ...

approved by the Ninth Congress of the Bolshevik Party (March 1920). Whole armies not needed for combat duty would have their front line transferred to attacking such problems as improving railway transportation on the Moscow-Kazan line or the procurement of foodstuffs for the towns, etc. The ending of the Civil War partly removed the militarization of labour from the field of necessity to that of principle. A major political debate took place in March 1921, prior to the Tenth Party Congress in which Trotsky pushed for the continuation of military methods in T.U.'s and the organisation of labour. Stalin called for reliance on the method of conviction - "normal methods of proletarian democracy" - to increase levels of productivity rather than the force of outright compulsion.\* The Congress accepted the "militarization of labour", but only when "called forth by necessity" and thereby defeated Trotsky's notion of making it the normal practice for organising labour. The transition to N.E.P. would eliminate its necessity. The Congress stressed that the normal democratic methods of work inside the T.U.'s - comradely courts, T.U. plenipotentiaries - should be the

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...-etition says: 'Devil take the hindmost'. Socialist contest says: 'Help the ones behind to catch up to you so all may take part in the general advance'." op.cit. Williams. A.R., "The Soviets", (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1937), p.267, cf. Barbusse.H., "Stalin", pp.110-57, pp.145-6.

+ The term "labour discipline" in Russian conveys a wider meaning than the English usage. As well as discipline at work it covers the concepts of morale at work and self-discipline arising out of satisfactory labour relations, effective systems of incentives - moral and material - etc.

\* Stalin wrote in an article prior to the congress: "There exist two methods, the method of compulsion (the military method) and the method of conviction (the T.U. method). The



main methods of maintaining labour discipline and upholding levels of productivity. Thus under War Communism forms of compulsion played an important part but it should be emphasized that the crucial element in practice was that of personal conviction. As in the Red Army, because of the great revolutionary enthusiasm for the new regime by the industrial workers, great successes were made with incredibly small material resources.

From the Subbotniks developed the Socialist Emulation movement which gave added impetus to the First F.Y.P. In this period when production and construction plans were particularly demanding, masses of unskilled, inexperienced peasants poured into industry and with the supply of consumption goods still rationed, the collective stimuli expressed in the various forms of socialist emulation was extremely important. Enthusiasm for building and producing in the name of future productive possibilities was very significant. Workers who popularised socialist emulation were the stabilising element in industry and actively fought against the decline of labour discipline, productivity and the deterioration in the quality of work. In November 1928, on the eve of the F.Y.P. the Plenum of the Party Central

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...first method does not at all exclude elements of conviction, but the elements of conviction are here subordinated to the demands of the method of compulsion and for it, constitute an auxiliary means. The second method, in its turn, does not exclude elements of compulsion, but the elements of compulsion are here subordinated to the demands of the method of conviction and constitute for it an auxiliary means. To mix up these two methods is as inadmissible as to heap in one pile the army and the working class". Stalin argued that to use military methods would be to cause splits and lack of confidence in the Soviet regime and hinder the development of initiative. The T.U. resolution of the Tenth Congress subse-

Committee called upon,

"..all Party members to concentrate their efforts on overcoming economic difficulties and mobilizing all the creative powers of the working class in order to maintain at any cost the pace set by us for industrialisation and socialization and to carry out the proposed economic plan". 4

By the end of 1928 the first Shock Brigade came into being when 49 young Communist workers in the Ravensto (Equality) textile mill, Leningrad, undertook to fulfill the plan for yarn, to set an example of labour discipline, to utilise their machinery and time to the full and to eliminate wastage. This initiative soon spread to other brigades and within threemonths 30% of the mill's workers had become "exemplary workers".\* In January 1929 the paper "Komsomolskaya Pravda" suggested organising an All-Union socialist competition among enterprises. On 5th March workers of the Leningrad factory "Krasny Vborzhets" published an appeal calling on workers of the USSR to join in socialist emulation for the fulfillment of the F.Y.P. economic programme, for raising productivity, improving labour discipline and lowering production costs. In December 1929 the First All-Union Congress of Shock Brigades was held in Moscow and by January 1st, 1930, 29% of

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...-quently proclaimed the method of conviction as the main method of the T.U.'s and emphasized the necessity of the election and not the nomination of officers. op.cit. Barker.G.R., p.31, cf. pp.17-37.

4 "The Communist Party in Resolutions", p.297, op.cit. Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", (Macmillan, New York, 1946), p.221.

\* The usual translation is 'shock worker' but "exemplary worker" is preferable. The worker turns out more by working harder or longer and participates in emergency tasks.

all industrial workers were taking part in various forms of socialist emulation.+

1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
29%	65%	68%	71%	73%	72%

Baykov is of the opinion that while these figures may include 'psuedo-exemplary' workers or sham adoption of socialist emulation they nevertheless clearly illustrate the general tendency of development among the working class, particularly so when the unwilling feel compelled to join. The AUCTUC attacked the "bureaucratic degeneration of socialist competition" where attempts were made to "violate labour laws or rates and standards set in collective agreements and thus to depress the workers condition".<sup>5</sup> Actions that impeded the development of the Revolution and the class consciousness of the working class were merely evidence of the intensification of the class struggle with the remnants of capitalism. This situation was alleviated with the creation of the Soviet Union's own industrial and technical working class intelligentsia and such major blows as the Industrial Party and 1937 purge trials.

The obligations which exemplary workers took upon themselves varied according to individual factories and the nature of the work involved. The following provides a general indication: to surpass standards of output, to prevent spoilage by the fault of the worker, to keep equipment from standing idle either through his own or the adminis-

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+ Eskin.M., "Fundamental Ways of Development of the Socialist Forms of Labour", p.43 (Moscow, 1935), op.cit. Baykov., p.222. Cf. Markus.B., "Labour in the Socialist Society", (Moscow, 1939), for details on the various forms of socialist emulation.

trators fault, to maintain his tools and working place in perfect cleanliness, to arrive at work on time, to take an active part in production conferences and contribute suggestions towards rationalising production and above all, by methods of mutual aid and experience to bring the levels of laggard workers up to the level of the foremost workers. The description of exemplary worker was reserved for those who apart from participating in socialist emulation passed on their experience to others and set them an example of better work.

The forms of socialist emulation varied according to the particular problems of industrial development. Individual emulation was soon replaced by emulation between factories, whole branches of industry or agriculture and different regions. The competitors would set themselves specific tasks such as reduction of costs, the more rational use of fuel and raw materials, improvement in the quality of work, etc. For example when the Turk-Sib railway between Siberia and Turkestan was being built during the First F.Y.P. the workers entered into socialist competition with adjacent villages. The villages increased tax payments, eliminated illiteracy, completely returned the government seed grain loans and increased their contribution to government loans. The workers in turn raised their level of productivity by 11% and decreased costs by 3%.\*

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5 Schwarz.S.M., "Labour in the Soviet Union", (London, Cresset Press, 1953), p.190, cf. pp.130-99.

\* Ward.H.F., "The Soviet Spirit", (International, New York, 1944), p.92, cf. pp.90-106; Barker.G.R., pp.87-125.

It is this force of example whereby workers themselves through practice in organising and solving problems, large and small, that creates a new, competent and mature working class capable of constructing and going beyond a socialist society. Competition clearly plays an important role in this process. Lenin stated:

"Among the absurdities which the bourgeoisie are fond of spreading about socialism is the allegation that socialists deny the importance of competition. In fact, it is only socialism, which, by abolishing classes, and, consequently, by abolishing the enslavement of the people, for the first time opens the way for competition on a really mass scale. And it is precisely the Soviet form of organisation, by ensuring transition from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to real participation of the mass of the working people in administration, that for the first time puts competition on a broad basis. It is much easier to organise this in the political field than in the economic field; but for the success of socialism, it is the economic field that matters". 6

The chief distinguishing characteristic of this competition is the extent to which it unites the principle of mutual aid with that of emulation. Molotov in a speech on socialist competition said:

"..the worker becomes conscious of his worth as a member of the collective in which each works as links in a chain. Some of the backward workers reason as follows: 'Well, what do I, a single locksmith, mean? I do little work and if I do not do it the USSR will not suffer'. When we bring the agreement about competition to the workbench it becomes clear to everyone that the Five-Year Plan is the result of our common work and of our industrial exertions". 7

In such a manner the Bolsheviks put theory into practice.

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6 Lenin.V.I., "Selected Works", (Moscow, 1970), Vol.2, pp.663-4.

7 Molotov.V., op.cit. Ward.H.F., "Soviet Spirit", p.95.

Mixed brigades (Skvoznye Brigady) were formed which included workers employed in different departments in other undertakings. "Social training groups"(Buksir) developed through which the more experienced workers helped the less skilled attain their level. A system of "public towing" was initiated by workers in May 1930. This involved the best labour organisation of a successful pit or mine giving practical demonstrations of their experience to works that were lagging behind. The AUCTUC appealed to workers to pool the experience of the "public pull" among all factories and works. Workers "counter-plans" developed which showed how to exceed the plan requirement without increasing cost or lowering quality. This was known as the "cross productive-financial plan". Enterprises drafted their own productive-financial plan which aimed at higher targets than the official plan. Individual factories competed with each other along these lines. The success of such workers participation is illustrated by the testimony of a member of the "Industrial Party" who stated such methods defeated all the efforts of sabotaging engineers to hold down production.\*

The Sixteenth Party Congress (1930) passed a special resolution which set the T.U.'s,

"..the goal of mobilizing and organizing the working masses for the purpose of building a socialist society. Trade unions must be the closest and most permanent collaborators of the State, whose political and economic work is directed by the conscious vanguard of the....

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\* Chamberlin.W.H., "The Soviet Planned Economic Order"; (World Peace Foundation, Boston, Mass; ,1931), p. 70.

"..working class- the Communist Party. All this alters trade union aims, demands of them a more active and direct participation in economic construction and an increased interest in production...While struggling against bureaucratic abuses in the State and economic machinery and promoting and training new thousands and tens of thousands of progressive proletarians, trade unions must fully co-ordinate their work aimed at improving thw worker's material position and that dealing with production problems..Socialist emulation and its offspring, the exemplary workers movement, are decisive and fundamental factors vitalizing and improving trade-union work, and bringing wide working masses to participate in industrial management...That is why socialist emulation and shock brigades must become the corner-stone of trade-union production activities in enterprises and workshops. A radical change in the work of the production conferences is made necessary by the development of socialist emulation and of the exemplary workers movement. The shock brigade must become a primary cell for drawing workers into industrial administration. Exemplary workers are called upon to become the backbone of production conferences. The increasing importance of planning in the national economy, which determines for lengthy periods relations between various elements of the national economy, construction tempo and the workers' material position, makes it imperative for trade unions actively to participate in the drafting of economic plans. Moreover, it is necessary once and for all to do away with a bureaucratically formal attitude towards trade union participation in the drafting of the economic plan, both on the part of trade unions themselves and of economic and state institutions. Without directly interfering with the administrations operation-al work, trade union organs must nevertheless combat personal management of a faulty bureaucratic type, and any disregard, on the part of management of the productive initiative and self-expression of the masses. A most important function of all trade union organisations is the promotion of workers and members of the technical personnel who have most distinguished themselves and in particular of exemplary workers to posts of factory directors, workshop stewards and their deputies". 8

This long extract gives a clear picture of the work which T.U.'s were expected to and did carry out. It also indicates

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8 "The Communist Party in Resolutions", op.cit. Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", pp.224-5.

the regard in which movements for socialist emulation were held. In 1931 the "model quality shock brigades" and the "Khozraschet" brigades set themselves the task of raising the quality of work. They took socialist emulation beyond the question of labour discipline and training the less skilled and began to deal with the complicated technical and economic problems of their undertakings. In 1932 the "technico-production-financial plan" (Techpromfinplan) came into being; its slogan was, "Given the same material means, on the basis of greater economy, better utilization of possibilities, better mobilization of force and better practical leadership, to give the country more and better production".\* They examined the technical and economic details of the government plans in great detail looking for possibilities of improving the technological processes, of economizing in materials and equipment, of raising output norms, etc. The shock brigades based on the cost accounting (Khozraschet) principle, undertook not only the above but also to improve the financial results of where they worked to reduce the costs of production while maintaining efficiency, to reduce wastage and to make better use of existing materials. This movement to promote technical education spread widely with workers vying with each other both in preparing the technical examinations (introduced in 1933) and improving the quality of their products. The aim

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\* Ibid., p.223.



of the examinations was to keep a check on young workers preparing to use complicated machinery and so to increase the sense of responsibility and zeal of those training for the technical minimum or other qualifications. By July 1st, 1935, 700,000 workers in heavy industry had passed the State technical examination.\* In 1935 a movement called "Otlichnichestvo" appeared whose aim was to produce goods of excellent quality only. The worker would deliver his work to be grade as excellent, good or satisfactory. In this way the quality of production was to be improved. However while such movements, along with the great strides made in technology and industrial development during the First F.Y.P., the seven and six hour day, rising standards of living and the elimination of unemployment, all helped to increase labour productivity considerably, the material and productive forces embodied in the above were still not being utilized to the fullest. Problems remained: high labour turnover, the failure of management to keep pace with general economic development, the unscientific distribution and utilisation of labour, a badly structured wage system, poor systems of supply and transport; factors such as these directly impeded increases in the quantity and quality of production. The thrust of the Second F.Y.P. and the birth of the Stakhanov Movement in 1935, was to eliminate these problems by mastering the technical processes and

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\* Ibid.

progress created by the First F.Y.P. To achieve this numerous and adequately trained cadre were necessary. Enter Alexei Stakhanov.

Stakhanovism: Theory.

Gorky called this movement

"a fiery eruption of mass energy, an eruption evoked by the colossal successes achieved by labour, by the realization of its cultural significance, of its power to emancipate toiling humanity from the yoke of the past".<sup>9</sup>

Molotov in a speech to the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites, November 16, 1935, stated that the Stakhanov movement came from yesterdays shock workers who have gained from their experience in production. "In essence the Stakhanovites have achieved a combination of shock work methods and the mastery of technique".\* The mastery of technique was the crucial element in Stakhanovism's success. At the same conference, Nov.17, Stalin stated the significance of Stakhanovism is: "the fact that it is the expression of a new wave of socialist emulation, a new and higher stage of socialist emulation".\*\* This was because Stakhanovism was necessarily associated with the utilisation of modern technique which simply wasn't available to the earlier forms of socialist emulation. Stalin considered Stakhanovites as "new people, people of a special type",+ precisely because they had completely mastered the technique of their jobs. Stakhanovism was considered profoundly revolutionary due to

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9 Gorky.M., op.cit. Ward.H.F., "Soviet Spirit", p.81.

\* Molotov.V., "What is Stakhanovism", (International, New York, 1936), p.23. cf. Williams.A.R., "Soviets", pp.222-23.

\*\* Stalin.J., "Leninism", (International, New York, 1942), p.366.

its revolutionizing of industry by surpassing old standards and demanding new and higher technical capacities and production plans. It was regarded as a model of productivity of labour which only a socialist society could produce. Models and developments that were a key to defeating capitalism, ideologically and physically.

"Why is it that socialism can, should, and certainly will defeat the capitalist system of economy? Because it can furnish higher models of labour, a higher productivity of labour, than the capitalist system of economy; because it can provide society with more products and can make society richer than the capitalist system of economy can". 10

Stalin attacked the petty bourgeois notion that socialism would be consolidated by a certain equalization of people's material conditions, based on a poor man's standard of living.

"In point of fact, socialism can succeed only on the basis of a high productivity of labour, higher than under capitalism, on the basis of an abundance of products and of articles of consumption of all kinds, on the basis of a prosperous and cultured life for all members of society. But if socialism is to achieve this aim and make our Soviet society the most prosperous of all societies, our country must have a productivity of labour which surpasses that of the foremost capitalist countries". 11

Differences in work incomes, according to the character and amount of work will remain under socialism. Only when the material and productive forces of society have sufficiently developed so that economic scarcity is banished can the ideal equality of a Communist order become an economic

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+ Ibid., p.366, cf. pp.366-78.

10 Ibid., p.367.

11 Ibid.

possibility. Stakhanovism was a major step towards achieving a "mastery" of these productive forces via a combination of political consciousness and economic incentives. The principle of differential wages in helping to reach the stage of communism of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", is thereby helping to eliminate its necessity. Stakhanovism, in raising labour productivity and by involving workers in the total work process, mental and manual, is actively preparing the conditions for the transition from socialism to communism. In this manner it raises both the material and cultural levels of the working class and represents a step further in the undermining of the basis for the distinction between mental and manual labour.

Stalin made the point that the key to eliminating such a distinction was not by a "certain cultural and technical equalization of mental and manual workers by lowering the cultural and technical level of engineers and technicians, of mental workers, to the level of average skilled workers".\* But rather the exact opposite is the case. By raising the cultural and technical levels of the working class to those of engineers, technicians, etc, it is assured that not only do the working class have control of socialist production, but also a complete knowledge of all the aspects of production. This means sabotage by 'experts' can be defeated, distinctions between mental and manual labour are eroded, and the high levels of productivity and abundance of articles

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\* Ibid., p.368.

for consumption necessary to begin the transition from socialism to communism are guaranteed.

"In this connection, the Stakhanov movement is significant for the fact that it contains the first beginnings - still feeble, it is true, but nevertheless the beginnings- of precisely such a rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class of our country". 12

This is not to say that Stakhanovites were completely aware of the implications of their practice when they initiated it. However in working to overcome the particular problems of their job or enterprise they had to surpass and overcome old technical standards and methods; opposition by 'experts' and in some cases their fellow workers; they had to master technique and achieve high levels of productivity of labour; and in doing so they had to teach other workers by force of example in order that the development of the total technical and cultural capacities of the working class were assured. In the Stakhanovites were embodied the future of Soviet industry and one of the seeds which would secure the development of socialism into communism.

Practice: "Cadres Decide Everything".

The absence of a parasitic class, the existence of a state plan of national economy that directed the economy "in the interests of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standard of the working people.."; the implementation of the socialist

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12 Ibid., p.369

principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" as expressed in the slogan, "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"\*; the elimination of unemployment and barriers to the continuous advance of technical science that predominate under capitalism and make machinery the enemy and master of the working class instead of his faithful and productive servant; such factors as these produced an emotional passion for production among workers by hand and brain which would be impossible under the antagonistic and exploitive system of capitalism. These workers were the heroes in a socialist state; 'stars' whose "heroism consists not in an isolated courageous act under the stress of emotion, but in continuous application of courage and intelligence, initiative and self-discipline".+ Workers who achieve something concrete are held up for admiration and example replacing the cheap celluloid figure promoted by capitalism.

Stalin stated in 1935:

"It is time to realize that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and most decisive is people, cadres. It must be realized that, under our present conditions, "cadres decide everything". If we have good and numerous cadres in industry, agriculture, transport, and the army, our country will be invincible. If we do not have such cadres, we shall be lame on both legs". 13

Stakhanovism was the most striking example of the accelerated growth and training of such cadre. Cadre who had fully

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\* "Constitution of the USSR", (1936), Articles 11 and 12, Ch.1, The Social Structure, pp.17-18.

+ Webb. Sidney and Beatrice., "The Truth About Soviet Russia", (Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1942), op. cit. p.70, cf. pp.15-86.

mastered technique and played a crucial role in the continued rise in productivity of labour. A few detailed examples will illustrate the widespread nature of the movement. Stakhanovism had its origin in the record set by Alexei Stakhanov, a coal miner, who on August 31, 1935, cut 102 tons of coal in six hours. This was not achieved by greater effort on Stakhanov's part as previous forms of socialist emulation had relied upon, but through a rationalisation of his working methods and technique. Orjonikidze, Commissar of Heavy Industry, stated;

"There is nothing strange, nothing bewildering in all this... Correct division of labour, correct organization of the work place, correct arrangement of the technical process - there you have the secret of the Stakhanov movement". 14

Stakhanov's innovation at the Irmino mine in the Ukraine involved the simple separation of two processes: coal cutting and propping timbers. This eliminated the necessity of changing from one operation to another and thus enabled picks and mechanical drills to be continuously utilized throughout the shift. Previously the hewer had done only 2½-3 hours actual coal hewing, the rest propping, with a third shift being a repair shift. Thus in three shifts, the pneumatic drills functioned only five to six hours out of twentyfour. The new methods enabled Stakhanov and two timberer's to achieve the remarkable output of 102 tons in a shift of five and three-quarter hours when the normal requirement was only seven tons! A later improvement for

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13 Stalin, J., "Address to Graduates of the Red Army", Kremlin, May 4, 1935, op.cit. "Leninism", p.365, cf. pp.361-65.

working a vertical seam reduced the strain of the hewer and facilitated a more rapid removal of coal from the coal face. The initial skepticism and in cases opposition by both workers and management was soon replaced with enthusiasm in other industries and awoke the creative initiative of many workers.\*

In the iron alloys factory at Zaportestal, engineer Eremenko and Korenev a skilled worker, exceeded the text book standard of 38 tons for the output of an electric furnace by increasing it to 44.48 tons of ferrosilican a day. The vice-president of "Autolite" confirmed that Stakhanovites making electrical equipment for motor tractors surpassed the U.S. productivity rate 1.5 times. In the

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14 Orjonikidze.G.K., Speech at the Plenum of the CCCP., Dec. 21, 1935, op.cit. Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour in Peace and War", (International, New York, 1943), p.66. cf. "Soviet Union 1935", ed. A. Fineberg. (Moscow, 1935), pp.225-291, for the Commissar's report on Heavy Industry.

\* A brief biography of some Stakhanovites will indicate the type of people they were: Stakhanov, 29, peasant family, began work at age 12 for a Kulak owned mill. In 1927, went to work at the Irmino mine as a coal hewer and qualified in the use of the pneumatic drill. Received excellent marks in the state technical exam and became a member of the CP. sympathizers group in 1934. Busygin, 28, forgerman in the Gorky Automobile Works. Poor peasant family, worked as a peasant until 1931 then as a carpenter in above. Became an oiler on a power hammer in the forge shop. Since autumn of 1934 has operated a steam hammer and on Sept. 27, 1935, applied to join the sympathizers group. Smetanin: shoe worker, Skorokhod factory, Leningrad, since 1939. In 1916, age 13, he went to work in a shoe factory separating basts, ten hours a day. In 1928 he graduated from the factory school and was in the Red Army 1928/9, before going to work in Leningrad. E. & M. Vinogradova: weavers, working class family; E.V., 21, graduated from factory school 1931. Passed minimum technical exam, 1935, with excellent marks. Member of Y.C.L. from 1930 and working from 1931. M.V., 25, working since 1925, passed technical exam in 1935, with excellent marks. Krivososs, 25, locomotive driver, working since 1926, graduated from factory school 1929, passed tech



"Molotov" motor-car factory at Gorki the average time for production of a valve was 2.7 minutes compared with 3.4 at Ford works; a piston, 2.8, compared with 5 at Ford; The result of these enormous increases in labour productivity meant that 100,000 more cars a year were produced without any change in equipment as originally planned.\* At the Kaganovich ball-bearing works in Moscow, the forging shops doubled their production of 75,000 ball bearings a day using Stakhanovist methods and by August 1936, out of 19,000 workers, more than 2,000 were Stakhanovites.+ Stakhanovites at the Sulinsk metal works succeeded in reducing time spent on periodical overhauls of Martin furnaces by three-quarters:-the application and extension

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-nical exam-excellent-1935. Communist since 1939. Awarded Order of Lenin for work on the railway. Dyukanov, 36, father was a miner, age 12 became an agricultural labourer, at 17, worked for Kulak sugar plantation until 1917. Fought in Red Army during the Civil War, which included being a P.O.W. under Deniken. In 1924 he went to work as a coal hewer, passed the technical exam-excellent-in 1935 and has been a Communist since 1929. Thus the general character of Stakhanovites is youth, a zeal to learn and usually non-Communist members., op.cit. Molotov.V., "What is Stakhanovism", pp.3-7, cf. pp. 1-23.

- \* Markus.B., "The Stakhanov Movement in the USSR", International Labour Review, Vol.34, July-Dec., 1936, (Geneva, League of Nations), pp.12-13. Markus defines the term Stakhanovist as one that is applied to workers who have completely mastered the technique of their trade, regularly exceed standards of output and utilize their equipment most efficiently and work rationally without waste. The extent to which a worker must exceed standards to be called a Stakhanovite is fixed for each undertaking with reference to particular technical conditions. The best Stakhanovites whose output is double or more are given the title of "Master of Socialist Work", which involves both material and moral rewards.
- + Friedmann.G., "De la Sainte Russie a l URSS", (1938), p.104, op.cit. Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning.....", p.69.

of new methods made it possible to increase the working period of the furnaces from 300 to 330 days per year.

B.Preis, a German expert on forging stated that the standard time required for preparing the ends of the spokes of a wheel weighing 65 kilograms for welding should be 1hr.17. minutes. The standard time in the USSR for this was 2hrs. Stakhanovities carried out this operation in 48 minutes!\*

Similar enthusiasm and desire to master technique were also expressed in agriculture. Some combine drivers succeeded in harvesting with a single machine over 900 and sometimes 1,000 hectares. In the Volocin brigade the area worked by CTZ tractors (from the Stalingrad Tractor Works), was 1,671 hectares per tractor. The average for the Chkalov region was 378 hectares per combine but two brothers driving a tandem of two Stalinets combines harvested in one season approximately 5,238 hectares which was 14 times the average.+ During the cotton harvest certain groups of collective farm workers- Shalimov, Fayzula, Yunusov- established a record of 57-60 quintals of cotton per hectare. Some Stakhanovite shock harvesters, harvested as much as 190 to 200 and even 395 poods of wheat per hectare. Zuyev of the state stock breeding farm "Raskhovets" succeeded in obtaining daily increases in weight over 80% which was higher than the maximum figures thought possible by the standard

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\* Markus. B., "The Stakhanov Movement in the USSR", p.13.

+ Andreyev.A., Speech Delivered at the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B), March 12, 1939, op.cit., "The Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow"., (Moscow, 1939), pp.255-6, cf. pp.235-69.

textbook on the subject.\* Maryo Demchenko, a digger of sugar beets in the Ukraine, and her brigade set an example for other farm workers. They weeded the fields nine times, poured water onto the parched soil and kept fires blazing throughout the night which destroyed moth pests in the flames. This unaccustomed care produced a crop of 50 tons per acre instead of the usual 13 tons of sugar beets.+

Such results as these provide an idea of the intensity and pace of the movement. One consequence of this was that scientists, professors, specialists, etc, went to the factories and farms to study these methods in order to revise and criticise existing textbooks, technical encyclopedias, abstracts, etc. The Bolshevik Party and government recognising the immense implications of the Stakhanov movement gave its fullest support. A number of conferences at the end of 1935 and early 1936 in Moscow gave Stakhanovites in industry and agriculture a chance to exchange experience and inform the government. It also gave an added thrust to Stakhanovism and before long every factory had its' groups of Stakhanovites with substantial achievements to their credit. Markus states that these conferences showed that many manualworkers had surpassed certain engineers and managers in their general knowledge and mastery of technique in the process of production. Their spirit of initiative and inventiveness was leaving the "experts" behind. Many Stakhanovite workers were selected to teach their methods on

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\* Markus.B., "The Stakhanov Movement in the USSR", p.13.

+ Williams.A.R., "The Soviets", p.221.

the job and by force of concrete example and daily practice to spread the results of their own experience as widely as possible. However all this did not occur without mistakes or opposition.

Opposition To, and Organisation of the Stakhanov Movement.

In Stalin's speech to the All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites, Nov.1935, he stated that their spontaneous initiative had succeeded in smashing antiquated standards of output and introducing amendments into the estimated capacity of industry and the economic plans prepared by the leaders of industry\*. It was precisely here, where the 'expert' had previously held sway that the surge of working class creative capacity and initiative met its severest opposition. The Stakhanovites were "mostly young or middle-aged working men and women, people with cultural and technical knowledge, who show examples of precision and accuracy in work, who are able to appreciate the time factor in work and who have learned to count not only the minutes, but also the seconds". Their 'secret' was the ability to "squeeze out of technique the maximum that can be squeezed out of it".+ Workers such as Busygin, a black-smith who in one day forged 1,146 crankshafts instead of the standard 675; Smetanin, a shoe-factory worker, who turned out 1,820 pairs instead of the standard 680. The Vinogradov weavers, who instead of tending the normal 26

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\* Cf. Stalin.J., "Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites", NOV.17, 1935, "Leninism", pp.366-78.

+ Ibid., p.369.

automatic Northrup looms, began to operate 216 looms each; Zhmurin, a bricklayer who laid 6,554 bricks in 7½ hours, etc.\* The Stakhanovites greatly exceeded the old standards by eliminating all unnecessary waste and effort and ensuring their skills, time and tools were utilized to the full. Yugow is of the opinion that even before the advent of Stakhanovism, existing standards were habitually exceeded 75 to 90%. † It is clear the old methods of organising work and establishing output standards had to be revised.

Many among management actively fought against Stakhanovism by claiming it was against all scientific norms and rules, it exceeded temperature norms, technical rules, all limits, etc. However with Party backing the defeat of such reactionary technical 'science' in favour of the work-ers was assured. Interestingly enough the fundamental aspect of Stakhanovism is described as a vice by some commentators: "It transfers the center of gravity from the realm of scientific management and organization of production to the intensification of the individual effort of the worker". ‡ The writer fails to explain the nature of this 'intensification' which is that the role of science, the organisation of production, establishing limits, etc, are now practiced and tested on the production lines by workers themselves. The development of counter-plans, production conferences, pledging to overfulfill the Plan,

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\* Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front for War and Peace", (Harper & Bros., New York, 1942), p.189, cf. "Plan", 1935, Nos. 22, 24; Yermanski.O.A., "The Stakhanov Movement and Stakhanov Methods", (Moscow, 1940), pp.5, 6.

† Ibid., p.190

are illustrations that the working class of the USSR led by such as the Stakhanovites are acquiring a complete knowledge of the production process. Further they are putting their knowledge and valuable work experience to good use in consciously consolidating and constructing a socialist state. The center of gravity had indeed changed.

In some cases the hostility of management forced workers to burst existing standards in secret and even risk being fired or harassed on the job.\* Mussinsky, a gangsaw operator, worked a Swedish machine with a standard output rate of 98 cubic meters. The technical 'experts' plan for 1935 was 95 meters per gangsaw per shift. In secret discussions with his brigade, Mussinsky devised methods to produce 130 cubic meters per shift. Mussinsky then requested technical and quality verification from management who then had to revise their views on wood-sawing. Thus in the face of 'scientific maxims' Mussinsky and others successfully left technical backwardness and routine behind. The Stakhanovites demonstrated that many of the 'technically justified standards' were in reality quite unjustified.\*\* The tide could not be stopped. Even Yuri Pyatakov, the long standing Deputy Commissar for Heavy Industry was forced to show enthusiasm for Stakhanovism:

"The essence of the Stakhanov movement lies in the fact that the Stakhanovite -actually, with his own hands, not just in theory but in practice- overthrows all so-called technical work norms...Technically based

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+ Ibid., p.192.

\* Not all management were hostile for political reasons,

"..norms represent a phantom that served to intimidate us, a brake that held us back". 15

the significance of this was that Pyatakov was later convicted in the 1937 "Wreckers Trials". He was accused of sabotage in industry and in the construction of industrial enterprises by wrecking the co-ordination of construction and production work. Pyatakov and other highly ranked workers in industry and the State Planning Commission carrying out acts of sabotage had every reason to fear the development of Stakhanovism. For as workers acquired technical knowledge and mastered production they discovered that defects in industrial production and construction which previously had been regarded as unavoidable or inevitable due to peculiar circumstances were in many cases acts of wilful destruction.

For example, a report from State Watch factory No.1, where performance norms had been raised in the spring of 1936, on the initiative of Stakhanovites, on condition that workers "are provided with good tools and with a sufficient number of measuring instruments, the entire equipment(of the factory) is put in good condition, etc." declared:

"Many of our demands were adopted in the plan for organizational-technical measures. But not one of the demands was fulfilled. The equipment was not put in good condition; it is more run down today than it was before. The work tools are of even worse quality today...All this has led to deplorable results. In our section, the established performance norms are fulfilled by only 58%.

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..some merely suffered from routine, technical backwardness and ignorance.

\*\* Molotov.V., "What is Stakhanovism", pp.15-17.

"...The earnings of Stakhanovites, to say nothing of other workers, have declined. The turnover in personnel has reached extreme proportions, More and more Stakhanovites are leaving the plant..." 16

Many Stakhanovites put forward complaints in the various plant newspapers telling of outrageous behaviour by the plant administration towards workers. The results were high labour turnover and falls in productivity and wages. In a large textile factory in the Moscow region which employed 3,000 female weavers of whom 1,000 were Stakhanovites, half of them no longer fulfilled their performance norms.\* The same picture held for other areas of agriculture and industry. The neglect of social requirements and safety standards grew. President V. Sivachev of the Tractor Works Union wrote in an article concerning conditions at the Stalingrad and Kharkov plants:

"The plants were designed to turn out 72 tractors per shift. With output more than doubled, they cannot meet safety requirements in their present neglected condition. The factories have been converted to Stakhanov methods, but the ventilation systems are unchanged and as a result large quantities of gas accumulate on the premises. Checkups in the Kharkov Tractor Works showed, for example, that the air at the upper end of the conveyor belt contained ten times the permissible maximum of gas".

He added,

"Very little attention to safety is paid by plant committees, by middle-level officials and by the central boards of the unions". 17

In a chemical plant a similar situation existed:

"Stakhanovite workers Burmin, Fedorov and others advised the organisations in the plant ( the plant committee...

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15 Za Industrializatsiyu, Oct. 24, 1935, op.cit. Schwarz.S.M., "Labour in the Soviet Union", p.194. cf. pp.188-199.

16 Trud. Sept. 9, 1936, op.cit. Ibid., pp.197-98.

\* Trud. Aug. 5, 1935, op.cit. Ibid., p.198.



"and the secretariat of the Party organization) and the management of these abuses and acts of sabotage. The outcome was that the workers who had brought the villainies of the wreckers to light were denounced as opportunists and accused of dodging work". 18

Workers of the "Sickle and Hammer" metal plants in Moscow called upon "all workers of the Soviet Union" for "Vigilance, vigilance above all":

"We know that plant installations do not become unusable by themselves, that machine-tools do not wreck themselves, boilers do not explode on their own. Somebody's hands are behind every one of these deeds. Are they not the hands of the enemy?". 19

In their plant the department chief, Zagaidak, stated: "I don't want criticism. I want blind obedience. Don't forget that, if you want to work with me".\* Criticism was muzzled while working conditions deteriorated and accidents increased. Heavy industry was particularly effected. In May, 1937, at the Leningrad Provincial Conference of the CPSU, the public prosecutor for the province spoke out against "grave infractions of the labour laws, mounting accident figures, and the indifferent and at times criminal attitude of some Party, industry and union leaders with respect to the workers life and health".\*\* This intensification of the class struggle clearly demanded severe action. A general purge (1936-38) of the whole administrative and economic apparatus of the country removed many wreckers including

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17 Trud. Dec. 8, 1935, op.cit. Ibid., p. 290.

18 Za Industrializatsiyu, April, 8, 1937, op.cit. Ibid., p. 291.

19 Pravda, January 31, 1937, op.cit. Ibid., p. 291.

\* Za Industrializatsiyu, March 15, 1937, op.cit. Ibid., p. 292.

\*\* Pravda, March 26, 1937, op.cit. Ibid., p. 293.

those hiding behind the Party badge and the merely incompetent. The personnel that replaced them were young cadre who had been trained in the technical schools; new cadre which had grown up during the First and Second F.Y.P.'s. They constituted the Soviet Union's new industrial and technical working class intelligentsia; workers who had proved themselves at work and in education.

Opposition from workers to Stakhanovism took the form of suspicion or hostility to what they at first considered to be a case of 'speed-up' which would lead to a loss in wages. However this initial skepticism was soon dispelled when the above was proven to be without foundation.\*

#### Organisation:

The weakness and excesses of Stakhanovism were produced by failures in the over-all organisation of industries and the supply of raw materials. This produced a situation of enforced idleness and disruption in the plants because the Stakhanovites had used up all available resources. Thus failure in organisation and supply directly impeded the development of society's productive forces as expressed in the Stakhanov movement. Bootikov, an oil drilling foreman relates;

"..there we were drilling away at the oil wells by the Stakhanov method, we drilled for ten days, speeded up our work to eight times what it had been before, and then we had to stop work and loaf for fifteen days because the next job had'nt been made ready. We could have hung some records".<sup>20</sup>

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\* Cf. following chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Soviet Oil Industry, 1938, No. 4, ,op.cit. Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front for War and Peace", p.192.

Artificial Stakhanovist records were also arranged by sectors of management to make themselves look good. On the eve of a Stakhanov record day the best workers would be equipped with good tools and an uninterrupted flow of materials organized for them. Competition would then be 'turned loose' and unprecedented records established but the following day output levels would drop again below the pre-Stakhanovite level.\* This kind of activity which had become known as "storming" during the First F.Y.P. had been condemned because it represented a short term acceleration at the expense of long term achievement. Increases, say, in the number of looms attended in some weaving establishments was at the expense of the efficiency of each loom. Changes in output by increasing the demand for raw materials and machinery sometimes dislocated other parts of the plan. To eliminate such defects it was clear the Stakhanov movement had to be organised and the efforts of the workers as a whole co-ordinated. The 'rear' - the supply of raw materials, fuels and semi-finished products - had to be efficiently organised and work in the preparatory workshops improved. Progress in certain branches of industry had to be met with similar progress in related industries to avoid breakdown and chaos. By making reciprocal adjustments of the work throughout all departments of an undertaking and all related undertakings a constant and balanced development would be achieved. While it is a relatively simple matter for a brigade or individual worker to

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\* Ibid., p.193, cf.pp.158-197.

reorganise their work, the extension of Stakhanov methods to a whole industry necessitates such reciprocal adjustments, both at the national and local levels. By applying Stakhanov methods to the whole operation -preparatory work, transport, supply,organisation,-all workers can achieve the level of those with the highest productivity. The record then becomes the standard.

The tendency to lay on ideal conditions for a short spell of "storming" to create records or the concentration by individuals on smashing records was condemned by the Central Committee of the C.P. (Dec.28,1937).\* The goal was to make Stakhanovism, a normal all the year round method of working by such means as the mastering of one or more trades, the simultaneous working of several machines, working to a precise time schedule and organising work to keep productive equipment in as constant use as possible. The Party stressed that the Stakhanov movement must become a mass movement and that it was a part of a Stakhanovites' duty to train backward workers to follow their example and give them continual aid. Stakhanovism spread rapidly: Stakhanov made his record at the end of August 1935, by the 1st,Nov., 15.5% of those employed in the oil industry were working with new methods and by 1st August,1936, the number reached 57.7%++By the end of August,1936, Stakhanovites comprised between a third and a half of the workforce in many industries.+ Trade Unions urged workers to become Stakhanovites

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\* op.cit.,Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", p.73.

++ Barker.G.R., "Incentives and Labour Productivity...",p.80.

and to ensure that strict attention was paid to the quality of work and not quantity alone. Special Stakhanovite schools and exchanges between the various factories where the foremost labour pioneers gave instruction in their methods was organised. Conferences of workers belonging to related branches of industry were held. The best workers in one branch arranged to spend more or less time in other branches to see that Stakhanovite methods were widely known and practiced. To meet the new requirements produced by Stakhanovism: better distribution of labour, modification of technical processes, supply of materials, etc, "Stakhanovite days", "decades of days", and "months", were organised. During these periods efforts were concentrated on finding the best methods of increasing and co-ordinating production not only within a single workshop or department but in the whole of an undertaking or branch of industry. As Stalin stated earlier, "Without people who have mastered technique, technique is dead";\* the F.Y.P.'s had eliminated the dearth in technique and it was the Stakhanovites who were overcoming the dearth of workers who had mastered the hard won gains in industry and agriculture. The majority of the Stakhanovites were aged between 25-30, or 30-45, with long years of industrial experience and qualifications gained in the industrial training schools. In fact their most common experience was that of passing the technical minimum

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+ Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", p.73.

\* Stalin.J., "Leninism", p.364.

exam.\* They were conscientious workers who would be the first to emphasize that their methods be popularized and to exert themselves to teach these to others. As these innovators taught and spread their methods, along with higher productivity came higher wages, both of which had an unforeseen effect on the Plan. This led to a necessary revision in standards of output.

Revision of Norms:

In December 1935, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, set heavy industry the task:

"of developing an all-in Stakhanov movement, starting in all the extracting industries and primarily in the coal - and ore-mining industries, the oil industry, heavy and non-ferrous metallurgy, in construction, in production of building materials and in chemical industries not dependent on limited resources of raw materials. The principal aim in organizing the Stakhanov movement is to achieve a maximum increase of production and a reduction of production costs, assuming that the production programme is a compulsory minimum target. In machine building the Stakhanov movement must be directed towards achieving a better use of metal, improving the utilization of machine-time and raising quality of production. The People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry is invited to complete by 1936 the revision of technical standards of equipment and productive capacity in order to increase these standards and in revising new planned capacities to adopt these higher technical standards, as a rule. These technical standards determining the capacity of individual machine aggregates are to be established in accordance with the experience of the best Stakhanov workers...to proceed early in 1936 to the revision of standards of output ensuring a certain measure of increase, and as a preliminary, to convene according to the calendar plan approved by the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry, branch conferences composed of factory and works directors, heads of workshops, foremen and Stakhanov workers; at these conferences the problem of revising the technical standards of equipment and capacities of enterprises as well as standards of output are to be worked out carefully,.....

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\* Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", p.74.

"concretely and in detail...In heavy industry the categories of workers required to take up the training for the compulsory technical minimum are to be extended with the aim of making, within the 3-4 coming years the training compulsory for all workers in heavy industry \* and the syllabus of the new technical minimum is to be revised in the light of the new possibilities and problems of heavy industry..special courses of master of socialist labour are to be organized for outstanding and Stakhanov workers without taking them away from production, and Stakhanov workers achieving a high labour productivity are to be admitted to these courses". 21

Old standards had become a brake on industry. The problem as stated by Stalin, was that the old technical standards and capacities which had been drawn up according to the previously technically backward conditions were still being defended as the maximum modern standards:

"People talk about science. They say that the data of science, the data contained in technical handbooks and instructions, contradict the demands of the Stakhanovites for new and higher technical standards. But what kind of science are they talking about? The data of science have always been tested by practice, by experience. Science which has severed contact with practice, with experience - what sort of science is that? If science were the thing it is represented to be by certain of our conservative comrades, it would have perished for humanity long ago. Science is called science just because it does not recognize fetishes, just because it does not fear to raise its hand against the obsolete and antiquated, and because it lends an attentive ear to the voice of experience, of practice. If it were otherwise, we would have no science at all;...". 22

The Stakhanovites test of science through practiced proved that a readjustment of technical standards in a real and scientific manner in accord with the new methods and

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\* Up to the time of this regulation, technical minimum training was only compulsory for the 255 leading skilled trades in heavy industry.

21 For details see "The Communist Party in Resolutions", pp.627-35, op.cit. Baykov. A., "Soviet Economic System", p.278 and p.338.

22 Stalin. J., "Leninism", pp.374-75.

developments was necessary. This does not mean that technical standards are to be abandoned for:

"Without technical standards, planned economy is impossible. Technical standards are, moreover, necessary in order to help the masses who have fallen behind to catch up with the more advanced. Technical standards are a great regulating force which organizes the masses of the workers in the factories around the advanced elements of the working class. We therefore need technical standards; not those, however, that now exist, but higher ones". 23

In short technical standards must conform to the highest stage of development. This doesn't mean the records of the best Stakhanovites should be taken as the norm but rather that a general standard between the present technical standards and those achieved by Stakhanovites is necessary.

Output standards and piece-rate scales were revised every year in order to meet changing rates of productivity, economic advance, etc. This was fairly simple as long as it was due to growth in capital equipment per worker. One of the principles of the F.Y.P's was that the enormous capital investment should result in increased productivity and lowered money costs of production. Wages were to rise in a smaller but constant proportion to productivity via a combination of real wage increases and lower priced consumer goods.\* However the improvements introduced by Stakhanovism had the anomalous effect of disturbing both the planned costs of production and the financial plan. Being primarily

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23 Ibid., p.375.

\* Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", pp.79-85, cf. Barker.G.R., "Incentives and Labour Productivity...", pp.56-85.



based on workers' initiative and not new equipment the achievements of Stakhanovism were something unforeseen in the original estimates. Since (a) a high proportion of workers were employed on piece rates (69.8% in 1935; 74.9% in 1937 in large scale industry) and (b) of these 43% were working on progressive piece-work rates at the end of the Second F.Y.P. it was inevitable that where productivity rose sharply, wages rose even faster.\* This created short term disadvantages of rising costs with money wages increasing more than planned. The earnings of Stakhanovites increased considerably and as it became a mass movement raising the average output per worker, the total wage bill swelled in excess of all estimates. The unit cost of production increased instead of lowering. Many Stakhanovites trebled and quadrupled their wages in a few months. Stakhanov who had previously earned 500 to 600 rubles a month, was earning 1,000 rubles in eighteen shifts of work by Sept. 1935; some of his colleagues earned between 1,000 and 1,600 rubles. Busygin raised his earnings from between 300 - 350 to over 1,000; Krivonoss from 400 to 900; Vinogradova from 216 to nearly 1,200.+By 1937 the actual average wage was 3,047 rubles instead of the planned 1,755; the wages fund was 82,247 million rubles as against the planned

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\* Ibid., In 1937, 75% of all workers in iron and steel were on piece-work; half of these were on progressive piece-rate scales. The latter is when all output in excess of the standard is paid 50% above the basic piece-rate for the job. Workers who fall below the standard get the standard rate but no more; if this is due to causes outside his control, he receives a guaranteed minimum of two-thirds of normal earnings. In some cases a 10% increase on standard is paid at a 50% higher rate, a 20% increase at double the usual rate, and so on.

51,808 million rubles.\*\* When this kind of movement is repeated amongst a working class of approximately 28.7 millions\* the problem is no small one.

It is clear norms had to be revised upwards. In the meantime confusion occurred. Certain managers faced with an inflated wage bill insisted on raising the output standards whereby a piece-worker qualified for the basic wage. The trade unions and others found it necessary to remind these managers of the Commissariat's for heavy industry order which stated that output standards adopted in the spring of 1935 should not be revised within less than twelve months from that date.++ Within a year of Stakhanovism' appearance three-quarters of workers on jobs where normal productivity had been raised by new methods were able to reach the new levels of output.24 The revision of norms upwards in accordance with the new levels of productivity was postponed to defeat those who attacked Stakhanovites as 'rate-busters' and until it was felt the new methods were sufficiently spread so that all workers could attain the new levels. This was done in the course of 1936. During the first half of 1936 branch conferences

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+ Ibid., p.86.

\*\* Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.345.

\* Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front...", p.159. The figure is for office and factory workers and excludes rural workers and family dependants., cf. "International Labour Review", vol.33, 1936, January-June. L.L.Lorwin & A.Abramson, pp.19-24, for further details.

++ Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", p.86.

24 Barker.G.R., "Incentives and Labour Productivity...", p.80.

of managers, engineers, technical workers and Stakhanovites were widely held to examine the productive capacity of enterprises and existing norms. The contribution and participation of workers not only revealed untapped reserves of productive capacity but also marked a major new step in the development of rationalisation of production. As the output norms constitute the basic units of all economic plans by giving greater attention to the drawing up of these norms and to the analysis of their fulfillment, the whole planning process was put on a sounder basis. In August 1936, it was announced that in heavy industry 70 to 80% of all piece-workers were able to attain or exceed the new standards. They had assimilated the more rationalised methods of work sufficiently and would suffer no loss in earnings from the change.\* The new methods allowed all workers to develop and gain in skill and earnings. Compulsory training was implemented for all workers and training for the technical minimum was to be completed by all workers (in the People's Commissariat of Light and Food Industries) in the course of 1936 and 1937.\*\* Substantial efforts and campaigns were made to enable lesser trained or slower workers to attain new standards in order that a system of differential privileges or a better paid minority did not occur. When the demands were being met on a wide scale the revision of standards was inaugurated in 1936. The increases

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\* Pravda. Aug.30,1936, op.cit. Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour....",p.88.

\*\* Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.338.

varied from 15 to 50%;\* e.g. machine construction, 22-40%; metallurgy, 23-37%; textile industry, 35-50%; and in different branches of the building trades 54-80%. 25

Many Stakhanovites suffered a reduction but still earned substantially more than previously and in 1937 the lowest paid workers received a general wage increase. A grant of 600 million rubles per annum was given to establish a base minimum of 110 rubles per month for time workers and 115 rubles per piece worker. 26

The transition of course was 'nt achieved without mishap. Cases occurred where the introduction of new norms was merely a formal affair without the necessary adjustments in organisation and technical conditions being made. The result of this was that workers found themselves unable to fulfill the new norms and lost wages.\*\* However on the whole the transition was successful and led to the considerable expansion of industrial output and increases in labour productivity that marked 1936.

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\* Ibid.

25 Arutinian.A., "Great Triumphs of the Land of Socialism", (Soceciz, 1939), p.71, op.cit. Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front...", p.193.

26 Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...", p.89, cf., Barker. G.R., "Incentives and Labour Productivity...", pp.77-85.

\*\* "The new norms have not been adequately propped up by the necessary organisational and technical measures. As, however, the norms had been revised, and labour productivity did not increase correspondingly, the result has been a reduction in wages. As a reaction there has been a drop in labour productivity and labour has been leaking away from the Donbass". "Today the main difficulty is the failure to train collectives in Stakhanov methods of work. Hence..."

The characteristic of all Stakhanovite achievements was that they changed the old method of carrying out some definite production process. By a new approach to the division of labour and the utilization of working time they sharply raised production results per unit of labour and time employed. Herein lies the essential difference between Stakhanovism and the earlier forms of socialist emulation between a Stakhanovite and a Subbotnik or Shock worker. The latter fulfilled and exceeded the old standard requirement based on the old methods of organising the labour process by more zeal and a greater personal, physical effort. The course of the labour process and the relations between its various points however remained unchanged. The Stakhanovite revolutionized the old standards of output by rationalizing the production process. They were pioneers and inventors in their own right. A development which was a result of the material and cultural changes achieved by the working class in the Soviet Union. The working class under the First and Second F.Y.P.'s trained in special skills and with a high level of practical experience had mastered their own trades and the production process.

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...e.g. in the Donbass high individual records and yet a low average standard of work in coal-mining as a whole... It is necessary, considering the new methods used by Stakhanov workers to introduce changes into the technological processes and the organization of production, and also to train every worker in these new methods". Za Industr., 30 June, 1936, Pravda, 20 June 1936, op.cit., Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.339.

### Stakhanovism's Second Phase:

In 1939 the impetus of the movement entered a new phase which originated in the Urals and at Kharkov. Its particular emphasis was the mastering by the worker of several processes of production and multiple machine minding. The new trend was known as "multi-lathe working" and "plurality of trades". Its aim was to further increase labour productivity and to enable workers to change from one field of work to another. Combined with this were recurrent campaigns for socialist emulation which achieved satisfactory results in the expansion of production and improvements in quality. The "Second Phase", was to play a key role in Soviet war industry.

I. Gudov, a metal worker and member of the Supreme Soviet, achieved an output fourteen times over the established standard for a German milling machine. Instead of operating one cutting tool and milling one part at a time Gudov fitted the machine with two cutting tools and began to work two parts simultaneously. By further increasing the number of tools he correspondingly increased the number of parts worked.\* When the Nazis invaded in 1942, Stakhanovites initiated an extensive rationalization movement known as the "200 per cent movement". Workers pledged to double their peace time output quotas and issued challenges for other workers to do the same. A few examples

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\* Edelman.M., "How Russia Prepared", (Penguin, New York, 1943), p.38.

provide striking illustrations of this development.

Zeletsky, a Stakhanovite worker at a Voronezh Works stated:

"Two of my brothers are at the front. We are still together. They with their rifles and I with my Stakhanovite work. My production indices are three, four and five days of normal work in one day. Ivanov and Alexiev, who work beside me, were only fulfilling their usual quotas. I took them under my care and succeeded in helping them to achieve double their production plan".<sup>27</sup>

Workers daily sought and discovered new methods of overcoming production problems such as having tank treads cast instead of forged and thereby accelerating output and saving metal. At the Kagonvich Ball Bearing Plant, Moscow, 1,000 rationalisation suggestions were made by workers in the first 2½ months of the war. Out of these 600 were capable of immediate application.\* By the spring of 1942 the "200 percenters" were left behind and surpassed by the "1,000 percenters".

"A new production record has been achieved by a milling machine operator in the Urals. In one day the Stakhanovite Dmitri Bosev fulfilled his quota fifteen times over and then began to give ten quotas per shift as a matter of routine. Bosev was immediately followed by a number of rivals..(and) in this Ural plant alone there are 302 Stakhanovites with similar records".<sup>28</sup>

One of Bosev's imitators from another Urals engineering works gave the following explanation:

"My work is divided into three stages. Some time ago I got a few ideas about simplifying, and had several chats with our engineers about it...We received an urgent order for the army not long ago...The way it was done

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<sup>27</sup> Soviet War News, Oct.23,1941,op.cit.,Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...",p.114, cf. pp.101-24.

\* Moscow News, Sept.19,1941, op.cit.,Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Pravda., op.cit., Ibid.,p.115.

"was by first of all eliminating one of the three stages completely. Then after changing the structure of the lathe somewhat, I was able to machine eighteen parts at a time instead of one. We also perfected the third stage. The outcome of it all was that I began to produce eighteen times the scheduled output". 29

The chief method by which these tremendous results were achieved was the introduction of new jigs and fixtures which enabled workers to machine many parts simultaneously. These workers played a crucial role in relieving the strain in problem areas of production where shortages of skilled, experienced workers and equipment existed as a result of the war. They and other workers trained new labour reinforcements, many of whom were entering industry for the first time and were unable to turn out even one quota.\* Patronage would continue until the new workers learned to cope independently with their jobs. A turner in a Urals machine factory taught his trade to 300 new men and women workers; in a cartridge factory nearly 80% of the workers had been trained by the factory's own engineers, chargehands and Stakhanovites on the job.\*\* Management who refused to take on inexperienced workers were heavily criticised. Education and training were to take place on the job.

Another interesting characteristic of the war period was the phenomena of the "leap-frog industries".+ Soviet

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29 Moscow News, April, 14, 1942, op.cit., Ibid.

\* Soviet War News, March 27, 1942.

\*\* Soviet War News, June 5, 1942, and August 8, 1942.

+ Cf., "The USSR in Reconstruction", ed. H.L. Moore., (American Russian Institute, New York, 1944); Edelman.M., "How Russia Prepared".



industries retreated with their armies; from the Donetz Basin to the Urals and as far East as Irutsk in Central Siberia. This was not a haphazard, hastily beat retreat but a long foreseen possibility. The construction of plants had been planned so that they could be easily adopted for such a move. Machines had been made detachable and numbered to facilitate reassembly; boring machines were lightly clamped down with screws instead of the usual concrete beds. Some of the new sites and buildings had been ready for years but where this was'nt the case, the whole population of an area would turn out after work and perform economic miracles.\* At one new factory a department covering 17,000 sq.yards was built in only 27 days; a whole new aircraft factory was reassembled inside five weeks; a Urals Defense Committee, using spare-time labour, in mid-winter constructed two factory blocks in a fortnight - a project normally considered a six months job.\*\* The Vorishlov tank factory which was evacuated form Dniepropetrovsk to the Urals arrived in the middle of September and by October 11th had resumed output. By December 1st, it was already exceeding its former output.+ Such impressive feats were merely an extension of the prevailing attitude of the Soviet worker from peaceful and defensive construction to that of wartime and offensive construction. Pravda stated:

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\* Edelman.M., "How Russia Prepared", p.57, cf. pp.35-40, pp.55-60.

\*\* Economist, June 13, 1942; Soviet War News, Jan.2, 1942; Feb.9, 1942. op.cit., Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour..", pp. 108-110.

+ Economist, June 6, 1942, op.cit., Edelman.M., "How Russia Prepared", p.56.

"In this war there are no peace-time jobs. There is no dividing line between front and rear",\* and as Edelman put it:

"..the Soviet Union organised the retreat of its industries on certain elementary principles which fitted in with its comprehensive plan. It established, to begin with, that the worker and his machine should be as inseperable as the engine from a moving automobile. Not for the Soviet Union the panic desertion of the bench which occurred in France as the enemy approached the industrial towns. Two factory managers who suggested in September,1941, that the approach of the Germans to Moscow made it hardly worth while to continue production were shot as saboteurs. The Soviet worker withdrew with his machine as a soldier withdraws with his guns". 30

The Stakhanovites took care of the rear while the Red Army took care of the front. The Soviet worker's machines whether in peace time or war, are the weapons of the socialist state. This explains the terminology often used in the struggle for increasing labour productivity and rationalisation,-brigades, batallions, shock workers, labour front, attack production, face towards production, etc.- the war is a constant one with the only difference between war and peace time being the form this struggle takes. Lenin and Stalin regarded increases in labour productivity,up to and beyond that of capitalist countries as the key to the Soviet Union's success or failure, or for that matter the construction and survival of any socialist state. There can be no doubt the Stakhanovites played a major role on this front.

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\* Pravda,op.cit.,Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour..",p.123.

30 Edelman.M., "How Russia Prepared",p.57. Incidentally in the year before the war,of the 14,500 blind employed in the USSR,fully 3,500 were Stakhanovites.A true case of the physically blind leading the politically blind.Cf., "USSR in Reconstruction",p.55,pp.45-71.

## CHAPTER 3

STAKHANOVISM AND TAYLORISM.

## Introduction:

In this chapter we shall deal with the erroneous accusation that Stakhanovism is the simple equivalent of Taylorism or capitalist methods in socialist clothing. Thus we shall deal with the role of technology and science under capitalism and socialism by emphasizing that the 'objective' nature or 'neutrality' of science totally depends on the nature of the social system within which it occurs. Science and scientific research merely reflect and serve the social conditions of its social environment. We shall also examine what the actual nature of "Taylorism", is with reference to Taylor's writings on the subject which will lead into what the distinguishing features of Stakhanovism are from Taylorism. The last section deals with Stakhanovism's effects on health and safety. This provides further clarification to the nature of Stakhanovism and demonstrates that the Stakhanov Movement cannot be considered to be an oppressive force or enemy of the working class. Rather the very opposite is the case.

STAKHANOVISM VERSUS TAYLORISM:

"Socialism alone will make possible a wide expansion of social production and distribution and the actual subordination to scientific considerations with a view to easing the lives of the working people and making it possible for them to live in prosperity. Socialism alone can achieve this. We know it must achieve it, and in the understanding of this truth lie the whole difficulty of Marxism, and its strength". 1

To achieve such a state of development it is essential that a new labour discipline as expressed in new attitudes towards work be created. An attitude which embodies the realization and practice of the fact that work under Socialism is indeed a different affair to work under capitalism. Hostility between two antagonistic classes, capitalists and workers, is replaced by co-operation among peasant and proletariat under the banner of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". This is no simple process but a long drawn out affair of creation which involves many pitfalls, mistakes and retreats, yet always striving to achieve the ultimate victory upon which a socialist society must rest. Without such a change the result will be stagnation and defeat.

"We must not forget that this is the first time this turning point in history has been reached, when a new discipline, the discipline of comradely relations, Soviet discipline, is being created by millions of toilers and exploited. We do not claim, nor do we expect quick successes in this field. We know that this task will take up a whole historic epoch. We have begun this historic epoch, an epoch in which we are breaking up the discipline of capitalist society in a country which is still bourgeois, and we are proud of the fact that all

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1 Lenin.V.I., "Collected Works", vol.23, p.55., Speech at the First Congress of Councils of National Economy, May 26, 1918. (International, 1945), cf. pp.47-51, 52-59.

"the class-conscious workers, absolutely all the toiling peasants are helping this destruction in every way; an epoch in which the masses, voluntarily, on their initiative, are becoming imbued with the conviction that they must - not on instructions from above, but following the dictates of their own living experience - discard this discipline, based on the exploitation and slavery of the toilers, for the new discipline of united labour, the discipline of the united organised workers and toiling peasants of the whole of Russia, of a land with a population of tens and hundreds of millions. This is a task of enormous difficulty, but it is a thankful one, because only when we have fulfilled it in practice shall we have driven the last nail into the coffin of capitalist society which we are consigning to its tomb". 2

This is why Lenin in his "Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", declared:

"Particular significance now attaches to measures for raising labour discipline and the productivity of labour. Every effort must be exerted for the steps already undertaken in this direction, especially by the trade unions, to be sustained, consolidated and increased. This includes, for example, the introduction of piece work, the adoption of much that is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, the payment of wages commensurate with the general results of the work of a factory, the exploitation of rail and water transport, etc. This also includes the organisation of competition between individual producer's and consumer's communes, selection of organisers, etc." 3

It is clear that Lenin is not declaring for the complete wholehearted transplanting of Taylorism to the Soviet Union but that which is merely "scientific and progressive". The following details will elaborate on the nature of Taylorism and distinguish what its' progressive aspects were and how the erroneous accusation that Stakhanovism equals simple Taylorism is without foundation.

One of the goals of socialist society is to eliminate all forces that impede the development of society's

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2 Ibid., pp.58-59.

3 Lenin.V.I., "Collected Works", vol.27, Pamphlet of 1918, (Moscow, 1965), p.316, cf.237-77, 314-17.

productive and material resources. Revolution in destroying private property relations- private ownership of the means of production which are essential conditions for the existence of capitalism - is only the first step in overcoming these contradictions. The development of a Planned economy, the full utilization of the forces of labour and technology, existing and potential resources, are major second steps in ensuring the ever-rising political and economic progress of a socialist society on which increases in the material and cultural levels of the working class depend. The basic condition of ever-expanding society's productive forces is what distinguishes socialism from the barbarity of capitalism. The latter when faced with economic crisis and falling profits creates wars, intensifies exploitation and destroys the productive forces of society. Under capitalism the worker is reduced to the life of just another commodity, one to be chewed up and cast off at the whim of the capitalist who effectively owns him "lock, stock and barrel".

Thus Marx/Engel's state:

"Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the...

"wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc.....Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is". 4

Marx here is not condemning the use of machinery per se but merely emphasizing that technology which should serve man and lighten his load becomes an oppressive force which controls and puts the worker out of a job under capitalism. Hence the workers' just hostility to the introduction of new techniques of production which only serves to re-emphasize that capitalism is not a progressive system but one that breeds stagnation and prevents economic and cultural growth. In the construction of a socialist state where unemployment has been eliminated and technology serves the working class a new attitude towards work and technology is necessitated.

The significance and intent of Taylorism "is a striving to transform the worker into an automation, a blind fool, a living cog in a fast-moving machine creating profits for the capitalists. Stakhanovite methods mean scientific use of all the available labour power of modern advanced Socialist technique, combined with a well-thought out approach to labour by the workers themselves".\* Taylorism demands

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4 Marx/Engels., "Communist Manifesto", (Moscow, 1973), pp. 51/52.

\* "Bolshevik", op.cit., Williams.A.R., "The Soviets", p. 222, cf. pp. 214-223.

a non-thinking worker; it ensures that the creative capacity and intelligence of the workers remains inert. Stakhanovism, on the other hand, was a movement initiated by the working class which depended on the utilization of workers' intelligence, the acquisition of greater skills and a broader education on the part of the worker. Stakhanovism demanded an understanding of the whole process of work. Taylorism simply requires a worker to carry out the most and simple menial tasks. Stakhanovism raised the earnings and cultural levels of the workers and was a step towards eliminating differences between mental and manual labour. Taylorism is the extreme opposite.

Nature of Taylorism:

Taylor regarded his methods as a new science, a new morality that would eliminate conflict between capitalist and worker. He considered wastage and low labour productivity were a result of (a) faulty management who knew nothing about the science of their work, i.e. knowledge of the machinery and materials involved; and (b) "soldiering on the part of the workers", i.e. when workers deliberately did less work than what they were capable of doing. Taylor recognised two types of 'soldiering': "natural" which he attributed to the innate laziness of men and "systematic", - deliberately slowing down production while giving the appearance of working at full speed.\* Taylor's state of mind is

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\* Taylor, F.W., "The Principles of Scientific Management", (Harper & Bros., New York, 1911), p.19, cf. Ch.1.



perhaps best indicated by his rejection as a fallacy of the workers' position that increased production and speed-up mean't lower wages and unemployment. He condemned unions and labour leaders for "spreading this fallacy and at the same time telling them (the workers) that they were over-worked".\* To correct soldiering and provide management with the proper knowledge for their functions in the factory the old rule of thumb of methods were to be replaced and management was to assume new duties. These new duties were the principles of Taylor's scientific management, which he believed would obtain complete co-operation from the workers. These duties were grouped under four headings:

- "First. They develop a science for each element of a man's work, which replaces the old rule of thumb method.
- Second. They scientifically select and then train and teach, and develop the workman, whereas in the past he chose his own work and trained himself as best he could.
- Third. They heartily co-operate with the men so as to insure all for the work being done in accordance with the principles of the science which has been developed.
- Fourth. There is an almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between the management and the workmen. The management take over all work for which they are better fitted than the workmen, while in the past almost all the work and the greater part of the responsibility were thrown upon the men". 5

The last constituted a new role for management: the active analysing, planning and controlling of the whole manufacturing process in detail. However Taylor's 'equal'

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\* Ibid., p.17.

5 Ibid., pp.36-37, cf.Ch.2.

division of labour simply mean't that the workers share of responsibility was to "do what they are told promptly and without asking questions or making suggestions...it is necessary for every man in an organisation to become one of a train of gear wheels".\* The basic principle underlying Taylor's system was the view that the workmen carrying out a given job were unable to understand the scientific process behind it. The workers' job was to do, to practice procedures created by the 'thinkers'. Taylor's science externalised work and attempted to remove all thinking from it on the part of the workers. As one mechanic who worked under Taylor recounts, when problems of the shop were under discussion Taylor would remind him he was "not supposed to think, there are other people paid for thinking around here".\*\* The centre of power and direction was to be the planning department and not the single authority of a manager or rule of thumb methods practiced by workers. Authority was to be based on scientific laws and the science of production. Taylor's object was,

"that of taking the control of the machine shop out of the hands of the many workmen, and placing it completely in the hands of the management...under our system the workman is told minutely just what he is to do and how he is to do it; and any improvement he makes upon orders given to him is fatal to success." 6

"The system is aimed at establishing a clear cut and novel division of mental and manual labour throughout the workshops. It is based on the precise time and motion study of each workman's job in isolation and relegates the entire mental parts of the tasks in hand to the managerial staff". 7

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\* Taylor.F.W., "Why Manufacturers Dislike College Graduates", p.202, op.cit., "Efficiency and Uplift", (Univ. Chicago Press, 1964), Haber.Samuel., p.24, cf. Ch.2.

The object of Taylor's science is clear: divisions between mental and manual labour are to be intensified by the clarification and regulation of such divisions in a systematic manner. Taylor summarises scientific management as :

"Science, not rule of thumb. Harmony, not discord. Cooperation, not individualism. Maximum output, in place of restricted output. The development of each man to his greatest efficiency and prosperity".\* Taylor regarded as an inevitable and essential product of his system the ending of discord (class struggle) between workers and capitalists and the creation of a new mental attitude towards capitalists (subservience). Taylor and some of his leading followers went as far as claiming their 'science' was a new social programme, one that would allow capitalists and workers to live in sweet harmony "happily ever after". The problems of society and capitalist production were to be solved by the creation of an elite body of experts, preferably engineers and other 'scientific' men who would be long on facts and short on opinions. Some Taylorites even condemned the under-utilisation of the country's productive capacity in peace-time and war which guaranteed high profits by ensuring a continual shortage of goods.+ However the

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\*\* Copley.F.B., "Frederick Taylor", (New York, 1923), I, pp.189, op.cit., Callahan.R.E., "Education and the Cult of Efficiency", (Univ., Chicago Press, 1962), p.28.

6 Taylor.F.W., "The Art of Cutting Metals", (1906), Presidential Address to The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Dec., 1906.

7 Taylor.F.W., "Shop Management", (Harper & Bros, 1911), first published, 1903, under the auspices of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, June 1903.

author of this truism soon died and the Taylorites returned to utilize their 'facts' to fight unions and create unemployment. .

Time and motion study was an essential mechanism and basic element in achieving Taylor's first principle for the development of a true science for a particular job. Taylor would select what he termed a "first class man", and by carrying out detailed studies over a given period of time he would work to eliminate all unnecessary movements on the job. When he believed the job was being done in the fastest and best possible manner, the new procedure would become the standard manner for carrying out the job. Equally important was the detailed study and improvement of the tools being used. Taylor believed that when standards are set in such a scientific and 'objective' manner soldiering and clashes between employers and workers over what was a fair days work would be eliminated. 'Science' would reign supreme. He further believed that the increased surplus produced would become so large that there could be no quarrel over its distribution as everyone would get a fair share. Leaving aside Taylor's political naivety (but not his contempt for the working class as shall be shown below) he was correct in emphasizing productivity as "the one element more than

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\* Taylor.F.W., "Principles of Scientific Management", p.140.

+ "Efficiency Expert's View of National Outlook", New York Evening Post, June 4, 1917; Gantt.H.L. "Organising for Work", (N.York, Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1919), pp.3,4,6,7,24,108; "Efficiency and Democracy", Trans.ASME,XL(Dec.1918),800, op.cit., Haber.S., "Efficiency and Uplift", p.47.

any other which differentiates civilized countries from un-civilized countries - prosperous from poverty-stricken peoples - is that the average man in one is five or six times as productive as in the other".\* However while productivity rates are a crucial factor to growth in any society it cannot be taken alone. The nature of the social system -capitalist or socialist - will determine the role of productivity and the nature of its distribution and extraction. Under capitalism there can be no 'mental revolution' or meeting of the ways between capitalists and workers as desired by Taylor. Capitalism makes increased labour productivity the enemy of the working class: workers are forced into the ranks of the unemployed and when there is a 'glut' of products on the market their enforced destruction is carried out.

A third and prominent element in the mechanism of scientific management was the task idea and the bonus plan which formed a part of it. Management would work out each man's task in detail which was given to the worker on an instruction card stating "not only what is to be done, but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it."\*\* Taylor added that if the worker felt "overtired by his work, then the task has been wrongly set and this is

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\* Ibid., p. 27, cf. "Principles of Scientific Management", pp. 141-42. It should be added that this comment is more akin to a socialist society where the working class benefit directly from increased productivity. Whereas under capitalism, increased productivity benefits the working class according to the strength of organised labour and their ability to gain concessions from the capitalists - higher wages, holidays, shorter work day, etc. There

as far as possible from the object of scientific management". With regard to the development of a bonus system as a means of increasing productivity he stated; "The workman must however, be fully assured that this increase beyond the average is to be permanent".+ In practice however, once it was discovered what could be produced the men were forced to work for the previous wages and frequently the revised production rates put them out of a job. R.F.Hoxie in investigating the actual operation of the Taylor system for the US Commission on Industrial Relations noted there was "a strong tendency then, under all these systems of payment, to keep the workers going at top speed as long as the work lasts, and then to send them home or lay them off; or where this is not done, they are put temporarily on day work. In the one case, continuity of employment is sacrificed, in the other stability of income". 8

Taylor also stressed that workers who failed to meet the standards of "first class men", the new methods and higher speeds must be discharged by management.\* The fourth mechanism to scientific management was that of functional foremen which called for an increase in non-productive

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..is also the question of an imperialist power dominating and exploiting other countries. Here increases in productivity are not necessarily accompanied with improved or prosperous conditions of living. Thus productivity while an important factor can never be taken as the decisive factor in evaluating how 'civilized' a country is.

\*\* Taylor.F.W.,op.cit. Callahan.R.E.,"Education and the Cult of Efficiency",p.31,cf,Ch.2;"Shop Management",p.39, pp.35-64.

+ Taylor.F.W.,"Principles of Scientific Management",p.121, cf.pp.119-24.

personnel. Each was to be confined to the performance of a single function: inspector, gang boss, speed boss, repair boss, time clerk, route clerk and disciplinarian. These foremen were to be in the shop at all times, instructing, helping and checking on the men and if necessary they were to be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the job they were ordering the worker to do. The whole process would be controlled by a centralised planning department which planned and established rules and laws for every job in advance. The creation of such a workforce was at first rejected by capitalists who claimed it would eat into their profits. Taylor confronted them with his successes at Bethlehem Works (Pa) which at the end of his third year there clearly showed increased profits, production and a reduction in the workforce. "The number of yard labourers had been reduced from approximately 500 to 140; the average number of tons moved per man per day was increased from 16 to 59; the average earnings of these men were increased from \$1.15 per day to \$1.88; and the average cost of handling a ton of material was reduced from 7 cents to 3 and one third cents. This figure included the costs of wages for foremen, clerks, time study men and all other costs of his system. Overall he claimed that in a six month period

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8 Hoxie.R.F., "Scientific Management and Labour", (New York, 1921), p.83, op.cit. Callahan.R.E. "Education and the Cult of Efficiency", p.31.

\* Taylor.F.W., "Principles of Scientific Management", p.83.

when all of the work in the yard was under his system, the company was saving at a rate of between seventy-five and eighty thousand dollars per year. 9 In another factory where Taylor got to work he managed to reduce the workforce from 120 girls to 35.\* Taylor reports one example in proud detail of his system at work which is worth quoting in full because it not only reveals the nature of Taylor's 'objectivity' and 'scientific' approach but also his racist and arrogant attitude towards the working class. Taylor considered the following to be an excellent example of the nature and practice of his system of scientific management.

Schmidt: A First Class Man.

Schmidt's job was to lift a pig of iron weighing 92 pounds, carry it approximately 30-40 feet and dump it into a railway car. Seventy-five handlers worked at this job each loading an average of 12½ tons per day. Taylor divided the work into its basic elements and then timed each element. These elements were as follows: 10

- a) picking up the pig from the ground or pile (time in hundredths of a minute); b) walking with it on a level (time per foot walked); c) walking with it up an incline to car (time per foot walked); d) throwing the pig down (time in hundredths of a minute), or laying it on a pile (time in hundredths of a minute); e) walking back empty to get a load (time per foot walked). In case of important elements which were to enter into a number of rates, a large number of observations were taken when practicable on different first class men and at different times, and they were averaged.

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9 Ibid., pp. 70-71, cf. Callahan. R.E., pp. 33-34.

\* Ibid.

10 Taylor. F.W., "Shop Management", pp. 48-49, cf. Callahan. R.E., pp. 34-41.



the study revealed that a first class man could handle between 47 and 48 tons per day. This surprised even Taylor but after double checking he watched the 75 men for a few days and then chose four men out of whom Schmidt was finally selected to carry out the experiment. Taylor gives his own description and recollection of Schmidt. 11

"He was a little Pennsylvania Dutchman who had been observed to trot back home for a mile or so after his work in the evening about as fresh as he was when he came trotting down to work in the morning. We found that upon wages of \$1.15 a day he had succeeded in buying a small plot of ground, and, that he was engaged in putting up the walls of a little house for himself in the morning before starting to work and at night after leaving. He also had the reputation of being exceedingly "close", that is, of placing a very high value on a dollar. As one man whom we talked to about him said, "A penny looks about the size of a cart wheel to him". This man we will call Schmidt.

The task before us, then, narrowed itself down to getting Schmidt to handle 47 tons of pig-iron per day and making him glad to do it. This was done as follows. Schmidt was called out from among the gang of pig-iron handlers and talked to somewhat in this way:

"Schmidt are you a high-priced man?

Vell, I don't know vat you mean?

Oh yes, you do. What I want to know is whether you are a high-priced man or not.

Vell, I don't know vat you mean?

Oh, come now, you answer my questions. What I want to find out is whether you are a high-priced man or one of these cheap fellows here. What I want to find out is whether you want to earn \$1.85 a day or whether you are satisfied with \$1.15, just the same as all those cheap fellows are getting.

Did I want \$1.85 a day? Was dot a high priced man? Well, yes, I was a high-priced man.

Oh, you're aggravating me. Of course you want \$1.85 a day- everyone wants it! You know perfectly well that that has very little to do with your being a high-priced man. For goodness sake answer my questions, and don't waste any more of my time. Now come over here. You see that pile of pig-iron?

Yes.

You see that car?

Yes.

"Well, if you are a high priced man, you will load that pig-iron on that car tomorrow for \$1.85. Now so wake up and answer my question. Tell me whether you are a high-priced man or not.

Vell - did I got \$1.85 for loading dot pig-iron on dot car tomorrow?

Yes, of course you do, and you get \$1.85 for loading a pile like that every day right through the year. That is what a high-priced man does, and you know it just as well as I do.

Vell, dot's all right. I could load dot pig iron on the car tomorrow for \$1.85 and I get it every day, don't I? Certainly you do - certainly you do.

Vell, den, I vas a high-priced man.

Now, hold on, hold on. You know just as well as I do that a high-priced man has to do exactly as he's told from morning till night. You have seen this man before, have'nt you?

Well if you are a high-priced man, you will do exactly as this man tells you tomorrow, from morning till night. When he tells you to pick up a pig and walk, you pick it up and you walk, and when he tells you to sit down and rest, you sit down. You do that right straight through the day. And what's more, no back talk, Now a high-priced man does just what he's told to do, and no back talk. Do you understand that? When this man tells you to walk you walk; when he tells you to sit down, you sit down, and you don't talk back at him. Now you come on to work here tomorrow morning and I'll know before night whether your are really a high-priced man or not.....

Schmidt started to work, and all day long and at regular intervals, was told by the man who stood over him with a watch, "Now pick up a pig and walk. Now sit down and rest. Now walk- now rest", etc. He worked when he was told to work, and rested when he was told to rest, and at half-past five in the afternoon had his 47½ tons loaded on the car. And he practically never failed to work at this pace and do the task that was set him during the three years that the writer was at Bethlehem. And, throughout this time he averaged a little more than \$1.85 per day, whereas before he had never received over \$1.15 which was the ruling rate of wages at that time in Bethlehem. That is, he received 60% higher wages than were paid to other men who were not working on task work. One man after another was picked out and trained to handle pig-iron at the rate of 47½ tons per day until all of the pig-iron was handled at this rate, and the men were receiving 60% more wages than other workmen around them".

However attempts to implement scientific management on a wide scale met with hostility from workers and unions.

e.g. A French sports journal published an article on Taylorism which received wide attention from French workers. The article was passed hand to hand among the workers arousing great hostility and indignation as it went. The article's conclusion illustrates the essence and class nature of Taylorism:

"The Taylor System is pitiless; it eliminates the unfit and those who have passed the age of the greatest muscular activity. Here we are reminded of a story formerly related by Fraser.

On visiting Pittsburg, the English engineer, struck by the fact that he encountered only young and vigorous workers, asked the American who was guiding him, "Where are your old workers"?

At first the American did not answer; but finally on the insistence of Fraser, he offered him a cigar case and said casually, "Have a cigar, and while we are smoking we will go visit the cemetery". 12

Taylor's utter contempt for the working class is further illustrated by the following comments:

"Now one of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig-iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type".

Speaking of Schmidt, Taylor adds:

"He merely happened to be a man of the type of the ox, - no rare specimen of humanity, difficult to find and therefore very highly prized. On the contrary, he was a man so stupid that he was unfitted to do most kinds of labouring work, even". 13

The effects of capitalist rationalisation of production stemming from Taylor's pioneering work upon one of today's

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12 L'Auto, Feb. 1913, quoted in Dubreuil.H., "Robots or Men", (New York, 1930), pp. 65-66, op.cit. Callahan.R.E., pp. 39-40, "Education and the Cult of Efficiency".

13 Taylor.F.W., "Principles of Scientific Management", pp. 59, 62.

modern 'oxes' is adequately exemplified by his following comment:

"Try putting 13 little pins in 13 holes 60 times an hour, 8 hours a day. Spot weld 67 steel plates an hour then find yourself one day facing a new assembly line needing 100 an hour, fit 100 coils to 100 cars every hour: tighten seven bolts 3 times a minute, do your work in noise "above the safety limit" in a fine mist of oil solvent and metal dust. Negotiate for the right to take a piss - or relieve yourself furtively behind a big press so that you don't break the rhythm and lose your bonus. Speed up to gain the time to blow your nose or get a bit of grit out of our eye...wonder each morning how you are going to make it until Saturday. Reach home without the strength to do anything but to watch tv, telling yourself you'll surely die an idiot...". 14

The latter developments of modern assembly line continuous process production logically proceeds from Taylor's early steps towards placing work on a scientific and rational basis rather than relying on inefficient haphazard methods of rule of thumb. This is not to say that a socialist society should attempt to restore some primitive method of production based on an irrational desire to 'get back to nature'; but the above merely re-emphasizes that the role and nature of the application of science totally depends upon the nature of the social system which it occurs in. Similarly a lathe or any other tool will perform the same job under capitalism as under socialism but the condition and attitude of the respective workers to their workplace will be fundamentally different. This will be because the nature of society will have undergone fundamental changes physically and ideologically. This is why movements

such as Stakhanovism could occur in the Soviet Union but never under a capitalist state. Workers who exceed the norm under capitalism stand justly condemned as class traitors.

Distinguishing Features of Stakhanovism:

What Lenin regarded as "scientific and progressive in the Taylor system" and desired to adopt along with piece work in making wages commensurate with the general results of work were its positive aspects. Being a better Marxist than his detractors Lenin saw that exploitation does not lie in the creative art of work itself or production per se but depends on the particular social relations built upon it. Thus as long as the latter differ fundamentally many techniques can be adopted from capitalism and utilized in the construction of a socialist state. Taylorism's positive aspects were its abhorrence of waste; the attempts to utilize existing technology to its fullest; the standardisation and mechanization of machinery; detail given to choice and make of tools; the introduction of a planning department to give a scientific basis to the production process; the elimination of unnecessary processes and movements by the work force;\* and Taylor's emphasis on increased productivity as the guarantee of wealth and security for the US (in this case the US capitalists).

Such techniques under capitalism, however, work to

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\* Under capitalism the elimination of unnecessary movements and processes as shown above was directed against workers as a tool to reduce the size of the workforce and increase rates of productivity without corresponding increases in wages. Stakhanovism, on the other hand eliminated unnecessary movements and processes for the benefit of the working

secure greater profits for the capitalist and intensify the hardship and exploitation experienced by the working class. This does not mean that a given technical process embodies an attack on the working class in itself but merely illustrates it is the nature of the social system which determines the uses and functions of science, technology, education, etc. Lenin was correct in calling for the adoption of the creative and engineering aspects of Taylor's work. Those who accuse Lenin of wishing to adopt Taylorism wholesale are simple slanderers holding vested interests in discrediting the first attempts at constructing a workers' state.

Capitalism and its science ensure that

"labour is external to the worker, i.e. it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is not working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it". 15

Thus a method such as Taylorism functions to stifle man's social consciousness and his material and cultural activities by reducing the worker to the equivalent of another gear wheel at work. But as

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class, by reducing labour fatigue and introducing techniques that enabled workers to increase their wages and raise productivity without detriment to themselves.

15 Marx.K., "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844", (New York, International, 1964), pp. 110-11, cf. pp. 106-19.

"Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and which man of his own accord starts, regulates and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature...By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature". 16

A Socialist state must fundamentally change this "external world" in order to release the pent up energy and creativity of the working class both within and without the workplace. Increases in production become a contribution to a civilized life for all. The spectre of over-production creating unemployment and war as capitalists attempt to conquer or re-divide old and new markets was totally alien to the Soviet Union at this time. The Soviet Union regarded the ever increasing levels of labour productivity as crucial to the consolidation of socialism and for creating the basis from which the transition to Communism could be made. Thus workers such as the Stakhanovites, who lead in the sphere of labour productivity by innovating, inventing, discovering new techniques, better methods of organisation, etc, are rightly hailed as "Labour Heroes" of the Soviet Union. These titles -"Heroes of Socialist Toil", or medal for "Distinguished Labour", for "Prowess in Labour",etc, were awarded to workers and employees who because of "their self-sacrificing labour activity are the front-line fighters in socialist construction, setting the example of a Stakhanov-like utilization of technique and achieving high standards of labour productivity, thus contributing to the advance of

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16 Marx.K., "Capital", Vol.1, (Moscow, 1954), p.173, cf. pp.173-92.

science, technique and culture".\* Many of the awards carried material as well as moral rewards: for outstanding material and cultural achievements a worker could receive "Stalin Prizes" to the value of 100,000, 50,000 and 20,000 rubles each.\*\* All awards were made on the basis of personal effort and achievements and related to the person not the nature of the job. The glitter of a Hollywood star pales into insignificance and is upstaged by a new kind of 'star', a worker who has made a beneficial and concrete contribution to the construction of a socialist state.

Stakhanovism represented a movement to rationalise working methods initiated by the working class. What would rightly be greeted with hostility by workers under capitalism was introduced by workers under socialism. Stakhanovism stressed the rationalisation of working methods and technique and not greater physical effort on the part of the workers. It demonstrated a concern for both quality and quantity. Stakhanovism's most significant aspect was that it was a product of thought: of thought about the job and by necessary extension about the role of himself as a part of the productive forces constructing a socialist society. A unity of theory and practice was achieved. Stakhanovism is distinct from Taylorism in that Taylorism is imposed from above and requires a non-thinking worker whereas Stakhanovism is based on the inventive genius of the workman

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\* Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.349, cf. pp.355-64.

\*\* Ibid.



himself. Its underlying principle was that of applying thought to the method of work as well as to the work itself. A "mental revolution" of a different nature and under radically different conditions was occurring.

Stakhanovism's distinguishing features were the expression of new attitudes towards work and that a major part of their achievements represented permanent improvements in working methods. Once pioneered they were easily adopted and thereby rapidly raised productivity. Unlike Taylorism the Soviet Union waited until the majority of workers became "first class men" before standards were raised. A few details towards defeating the erroneous notion that Stakhanovism equalled speed-up and exploitation are necessitated.

The unlimited potential of Stakhanovism is illustrated by the example of the Stalingrad Tractor Works which was the first concrete realization of the Soviet policy of industrialisation. The factory had become a standard joke in the West due to the difficulties it experienced in even achieving the prescribed production of 144 tractors in two shifts. A few years later it barely exceeded this level but once Stakhanovist methods were introduced production actually rose to 200 tractors per shift! Other factories - Toretsk engineering works, Voroshilovgrad locomotive factories, doubled or trebled their original standards. In railway transport an average of 92,000 wagons a day were loaded in May, 1936, as compared to 55,000 wagons in the first quarter of 1935. Another effect of Stakhanovism was capital

saving which released capital for development in other areas. e.g. In the Urals (Uralmash) the big mechanical engineering works which had gas generators with an estimated ( by the German firm which installed them) daily maximum of 67,000 cubic meters of gas per generator reached a daily output of 100,000 cubic meters. Consequently five of the twelve generators installed were put on reserve. In the "Krasny Kotelscik"(Red Boiler-maker) at Taganrog, the turners, locksmiths, boring and milling-machine minders increased their production three, four and five times which eliminated the necessity of constructing new workshops which would have cost six million rubles.\*

Stakhanovites achieved these results by completely mastering the technique of their job; studying it in detail, counting the minutes and seconds involved in completing a task, eliminating all unnecessary movement and physical exertion and thereby lightening the load of work. e.g. In the building trade the Russian bricklayer had traditionally prepared his own mortar and carried and laid his own bricks. These separate tasks were now divided among members of a team. The lay out of bricklaying was altered by placing bricks on a raised plank which meant the bricklayer lifted each brick only one foot instead of more than a yard. These and other simple but significant changes reduced the energy expended in laying a given quantity of bricks to less than a third of its previous level.

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\* Markus.B., "The Stakhanov Movement in the USSR", I.L.R., Vol.34, July 1936, .All examples unless otherwise stated are derived from this source. cf.pp.16,17,12,13.

Other examples are:

"In the Kuntsovskaja worsted factory the woman weaver Chekunova changed over from working two looms to eight looms and increased her output from 40 to 172 meters (by) persuading the head of the workshop to alter the construction of the beam of the loom and to have the driving belt cleaned periodically, which prevented slipping, and this increased the speed of the loom from 130 to 145 revolutions per minute; at the same time she had the shuttles made larger".

In a factory engaged on X-ray apparatus,

"the milling-machine minder Kolobov has increased his productivity six times by taking the initiative in having the faces of the bolts shaped by means of a milling machine, and not, as before, a planing machine; in this way they can be worked out simultaneously on both sides by the use of two milling machines. In the Uritsky factory the metal turner Likhoradov succeeded in turning 11 metal bands per shift instead of 2.5 by using two supports instead of one and arranging his cutting tools in a certain manner. In the agricultural machinery factory at Rostov the turner Prusachenko has increased his productivity 6½ times simply by using a shaped chisel instead of an ordinary one". 17

Stakhanov himself stated:

"To extract 102 tons of coal and more per 6 hour shift does not call for an exceptional effort. All that is needed is to organise the work properly...I can say so without hesitation: when my work is done I want to go for a walk, amuse myself, work with a tutor, I feel fresh in body and mind".\*

Smetanin made similar comments:

"Many people think that increased productivity of labour can be obtained only at the cost of physical strain. Nothing can be more mistaken. Labour productivity can be increased only by a perfect mastery of technique".

and further.

"In order to work well you must know your machine well: you must know its inner life...I did my 1,400 pairs,

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17 Markus.B., pp.27-30, op.cit.Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour..", pp.69-70. cf.Freeman.J., "The Soviet Worker", pp.220-23; Dobb.M., "Soviet Economic Development Since 1917", pp.407-52.

\* Markus.B., p.23.

"not as a result of physical strain but solely by maintaining a rhythm and because I made a careful study of each operation". 18

Another Stakhanovite in an Ivanovo textile mill, Kirianova, added: "If the Stakhanov movement is to make progress, more intelligent methods must be applied....I have arrived at excellent results by abolishing unnecessary movements and that is the whole secret of my work".\*

Clearly the Stakhanov movement was a product of thought and not extra physical effort: a movement derived from the new political situation presented by a socialist state; a movement expressly political as it embodied the realization in practice made by the working class that by increasing labour productivity they were in effect increasing the social wealth of the Soviet Union for themselves and other workers. A complete and thorough knowledge of the work process was the key.

#### Health and Safety:

The accusation that Stakhanovism and the spread of piece work represented the introduction of new sweat shop methods on further investigation also proves to be without foundation. As early as 1919, Schmidt in the name of the communist fraction of the trade unions, stated, concerning piece-rates stated:

"..all of our industry is nationalized, and in the regulation of wages as well as in the work of increasing the productivity of labour participate the very trade unions which themselves establish the necessary norm

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18 First Conference of Stakhanovites, Nov,14,1935,op.cit. Dobb.M., "Soviet Planning and Labour...",p.71.

"in accord with the food problem and with the general position of the country. But once they establish this norm, once they control it, then all objection that such a system can be understood or interpreted as excessive exploitation of the workers or as a return to old forms of wage payment - as the establishment of a sweating system - without question fall to the ground". 19

The existence of a six and seven hour day, the concern for the health of the worker, by the Party, trade unions and management combined with the fact that the gains from increased productivity were reaped by the working class rather than by capitalist exploiters were all circumstances attendant upon the use of piece-work in the Soviet Union. This gives it a totally different significance and role than under capitalism. To satisfy the cynical a few examples and statements from workers are called for. A common saying among Stakhanovites was "The systematisation of movements, the saving of seconds, and the rationalisation of work, here are the reasons for our success".\* Smetanin said "I love my factory, my tools and my work. This is why I think I can even break my own records".+ If a worker declared this under capitalism he would be thought insane. However the goal of a socialist society is to change existing social relations by changing the mode of production from one of capitalist private ownership and exploitation by the few to that of collective socialist ownership whereby the

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\* Ibid.,Markus.B.,op.cit. pp.23-24.

19 Vtoroi Vserossiikoi S'ezd Professional'nykh Soiuzov,16-25 Ianvaria 1919 goda,Stenog.Otchet (Moscow,1921), Part I,p.151. op.cit. Bergson.A.,"The Structure of Soviet Wages", (Harvard Univ. Press,1944),p.159.

material and productive forces of society are utilized to the full. The above comments reveal that the physical changes wrought by revolution are being complemented by a corresponding 'mental' revolution on the part of the workers. Fear and suspicion of the state created by hundreds of years of exploitation are being replaced by the realization that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is more than a formal workers' power but a living, dynamic, democratic one.

The following will give an idea of the possible effects of Stakhanovism on health, frequency of disease and accidents. Data collected by the medical officer of "Donbassantratsit" Trust during the first months of Stakhanovism's growth found 8.4 cases of sickness per 100 non-Stakhanovite workers as compared with only 1.3 per 100 Stakhanovites. The number of accidents for the same ratios was respectively 2.1 and only 0.4 among Stakhanovites. The "Bokov" hospital which was assigned to four mines in the Donbass region noted the accident rate in January 1936 was reduced to 0.5% among Stakhanovite workers. In mine No.4/21, the "Petsovsky" mines administration of the "Stalinugol" Trust registered the number of days incapacity for work per 100 non-Stakhanovite workers as 29.6 in November and 34.7 in December. The corresponding figures for Stakhanovites in

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\* Markus.B., op.cit. p.24.

+ Ibid.

the same mines were 7.2 and nil respectively. These figures are reinforced by a study carried out in one of the mines with the heaviest and most dangerous work. Out of 300 Stakhanovites in the mine 256 had passed the state technical minimum exam with good and excellent marks. Their efforts to increase productivity and master technique produced an increase of 63% and a sharp decline in the rate of accidents. From Sept. 1935 to Jan. 1936, there was not a single serious accident. During December and January, the number of workers forced to suspend work as a result of accidents was 2.1 per 100 non-Stakhanovites and 0.7 per 100 Stakhanovites. By calling forth the creativity and ingenuity of the worker on the job not only does productivity increase but because the technique of operation has been mastered and studied in detail the rate of accidents decline and the health of the workers improved. In the Kirov works during a Stakhanov "decade" accident rates among Stakhanovites declined by 30%. In the second half of February 1936, another "decade" reduced the above figure a further 50% while among non-Stakhanovite workers the decrease was only 5%. Martekov, a smith in the "Electrosyla" factory and other workers explained this phenomena to Soviet scientists at a conference in Leningrad. They showed that the use of Stakhanovist methods had led to the introduction on a genuinely scientific basis, rhythmical and regular working methods which eliminated all unnecessary movement, loss of energy and nervous strain and by doing so encouraged a better equilibrium of the

human organism.\* By working calmly and regular work was carried out more efficiently and all unnecessary exertion was eliminated. All the record results were produced by simple methods of technical rationalisation which if the worker has acquired a perfect knowledge of his trade and desires to increase productivity holds unlimited potential. The creative capacity, attitude, knowledge and qualification of the individual or team of workers were put to the best account which simultaneously made work more satisfactory and increased earnings accordingly.

Summary:

What was specifically new in the Stakhanov movement was the combination of workers' initiative with functions usually considered to be the concern of management and traditionally resisted by workers under capitalism. The application of workers organisational ability rather than greater physical exertion increased labour productivity rates dramatically. The object was to make Stakhanovism an all the year round method of working as opposed to the temporary spurts and stops which characterised the earlier forms of socialist emulation. Stakhanovism was the complete opposite of Taylorism. The former worked to benefit the material and cultural levels of the working class by increasing productive capacity; the latter works to deprive the worker of any semblance of thought at all and results in the intensification of exploitation, speed-up, accidents,

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\* Markus.B.,op.cit. p.27. The preceding examples were derived from pp.25-27, 28-31.



exhaustion and unemployment. The only real similarity between the Stakhanov Movement and Taylor's 'scientific management' is an unfortunate coincidence of initials.

The Stakhanov movement expressed a new spirit in work; the workers' will to learn and make a better use of modern technique and a deep interest in improving their output and increasing production. Its historical and profound significance is that it represented a major step towards raising not only technical standards but also the cultural standards of workers; Stakhanovism by striving to raise workers to the level of "engineers, technicians, and scientists", is thereby creating the conditions upon which existing differences between mental and manual labour can be eliminated. The direction of Stakhanovism was to make work a continuous creative activity; a source of satisfaction which gives expression to personality while also developing the economy and creating an abundance of consumer and industrial goods. The history of the Soviet Union illustrates it is not enough to vaguely speculate about the distribution of wealth or equality; the existence of Socialism depends on the immediate and total expansion of the productive forces of society. Stakhanovism was a major step in this direction. The Stakhanovites were among the leading descendants of the class that took destiny into its own hands in 1917 and began the construction of a new and socialist society.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

"...Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach; living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves". 1

"They (the workers and peasants) must understand that the whole thing now is practical work; that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice; when the words of Marx, "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes", become particularly true -..". 2

The testing of theory through practical experience was a major characteristic of the Stakhanov Movement. The essence of the movement's achievements was a fresh analysis of the whole process of work in which they introduced a new division of labour separating principal from accessory operations. While this made labour easier for the worker it was also usually accompanied by increases in the quantity of output. One of the Soviet Union's main problems was to improve the qualitative side of both capital construction and production. The lack of skilled personnel; the necessity of sometimes hastily carrying out construction work; the existence of a home market which absorbed any goods produced; such factors as these tended to intensify the problem. In

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1 Lenin.V.I., Meeting of the All-Russia C.E.C., Nov.4, (17), 1917, "Coll. Works", Vol.26, p.288. (Moscow, 1962).

many cases quality was sacrificed for quantity. The Stakhanov movement however declared its' aim to be the production of quantity without disregarding quality and to overcome technical deficiencies by educating themselves both on and off the job. A crucial aspect of the movement was that it took great pains by force of example and daily practice to teach other workers the new methods and thereby ensure all moved forward together. No one was to be left behind and any sense of elitism was absent. The spread of piece-rates and differential wages guaranteed increases in labour productivity, a flow of skilled labour into definite trades and demonstrated to the workers that creative initiative on their own part would be rewarded with more than rhetoric. We should add in passing that a simple index of real wages loses any significance as a legitimate measure of changes in the wage earners standards of living. Additions to wages took the form of increased socialized expenditure - health services, education, housing, cultural and welfare improvements, the absence of unemployment, the general reductions in prices of all basic foodstuffs and mass consumption goods as part of the F.Y.P.'s, increases in the number of women and members of the family working, etc, such factors as these must be considered when evaluating the general rise in the social and material levels of the populations existence.

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2 Lenin.V.I., "How to Organise Competition?", 1917, "Coll. Works", Vol.26, pp.404-415.

In the USSR administrative judicial measures were utilized with social incentives to encourage production and contributions to civilized life, to enforce labour discipline, regulate the distribution of labour, improve skills. etc. Thus the role of compulsion i.e. measures carried out by the state must still exist in the labour process in order that counter-revolutionary elements are defeated and to ensure the proper organisation of labour. A compulsory force which must be combined with a voluntary class consciousness discipline at work until work does indeed become a voluntary and satisfactory activity which is a feature of the higher stage of Communism. In the period of transition compulsion cannot be cast aside in favour of an anarchist type principle which depends on 'spontaneous' organisation as its primary form and method of social organisation and construction. In the long run such a mistaken reliance can only lead to disorganisation and chaos. A socialist state is not only a superior political form but also a more efficient economic one.

"We must consolidate what we ourselves have won, what we ourselves have decreed, made law, discussed, planned - consolidate this in stable forms of everyday labour discipline. This is the most difficult, but the most gratifying task, because only its fulfillment will give us a socialist system. We must learn to combine the "public meeting" democracy of the working people - turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood - with iron discipline while at work, with unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work." 3

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3 Lenin.V.I., "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", 1918, "Coll. Works", Vol.27, pp.257-271.

The supremacy of this political/economic social structure rest on the development of a planned socialist economy in which the structure of wages plays a key role. The practice of wage 'levelling' had detrimental effects on the development of the economy and created dissatisfaction among the workers. The remedy to this was the widespread implementation of differential wages and piece-rates on the basis of the socialist principle of remuneration according to work performed and not according to needs. This helped to raise both the material and cultural levels of the working class and labour productivity rates. Increased labour productivity mean't more capital accumulation for the fuller development of agriculture and industry, the raising of wages and lowered costs in consumer and industrial goods. The Stakahnov movement revealed the enormous latent potential in industry and agriculture for increasing output and the Stakhanovites examples of socialist-consciousness work and high standards created the conditions necessary for a fundamental improvement in labour discipline. This was expressed in new attitudes towards work giving Stalin's speech of 1930 new significance:

"The most remarkable thing about emulation is that it it is causing a radical revolution in people's views about work, for it is transforming work from the disgraceful and painful burden it used to be considered, into a matter of honour, a matter of glory, a matter of valour and heroism". 4

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4 Stalin.J., "The Tasks of the Youth", (International, 1940), Little Lenin Library, Vol.27, p.38.

Molotov declared that one of the chief tasks of the Third F.Y.P. was to surpass the foremost capitalist countries economically.\* While the Soviet Union was surpassing them in production technique and capitalist economies were in a state of decline and crisis Molotov makes the point that the Soviet Union still failed to equal per capita production of capitalist states. In 1937 a special committee of the Gosplan calculated relative productivity rates of the USSR, US, and Germany. They found that the average production of all industries in the USSR was 40.5% of US and 97% of Germany. The following estimates are provided by taking the output per productive worker alone and eliminating all those not engaged in actual production. In 1937 the average production of coal per worker in the USSR was 370 tons; France, 195 tons; Germany, 435 tons; and the US, 1,260 tons. In machine building the productivity of labour in 1936 was 41.4% of that of the US in 1929. In the chemical industry productivity of labour was in the US, 2.4 times and in Germany 1.2 times the level of the USSR. In the cotton textile industry the amount of finished goods per worker in the US for 1929 was 16,800 sq.meters while in the USSR for 1937 was 8,200 sq.meters.<sup>5</sup> It is

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\* Molotov.V., "Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow", (Moscow, 1939), pp.417-18. cf. "The Third F.Y.P....", (1938-42), Resolution of the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B) on the Report of Comrade Molotov. (Adopted unanimously), pp.412-446, March 20, 1939.

5 Heinman.S., "Surplus Labour and Productivity", Problems of Economics, 1940, Nos. 11, 12, p.106, op.cit. Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front for War and Peace", pp.184-5, cf.

clear that the goal of all the F.Y.P.'s to increase labour productivity was a crucial task the new emphasis of which is on increasing per capita production. In order to "overtake and outstrip" the most advanced capitalist countries, Molotov declared:

"This requires a further considerable increase in the technical equipment of every branch of the national economy, and consequently, a maximum development of machine building and of all heavy industry, a decided improvement in the whole organisation and technology of production, accompanied by an extensive application of the latest achievements of science and invention. It further necessitates a numerical and particularly, a qualitative increase in trained production personnel and a thorough mastery of technique in industry, transportation and agriculture. Following Lenin's tenet that "the productivity of labour is, in the final analysis, the most important, the chief thing, for the victory of the new social system", we must ensure the utmost development of socialist emulation, and the Stakhanov movement, a steady improvement of labour discipline in all factories and offices and on all collective farms, and a degree of labour productivity for workers, peasants and intellectuals that is worthy of a socialist society". 6

During the first F.Y.P. each increase of 1% in labour productivity meant an increase of production of 310 million rubles; in the second F.Y.P., 500 million rubles; and in the third F.Y.P., a 1% increase yielded more than

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pp.183-97. Baykov.A. gives the following clarification. In the three pre-war years (1938-40), the total output of the textile industry was: '10,870 million m. of cotton textiles, 335 million m. of woollen, 175 million m. of silken materials and 786 million m. of linen'. Thus, in these 3 years a total of 12,166 million m. of fabrics were produced. These figures indicate how low the per capita level of textile production still was. In the official 1940 report it was emphasized that all available quantities of flax, wool and silk cocoons were completely utilized, but the supply of these raw materials was below the productive capacity of the mills. Consequently, an expansion in the production of these kinds of textiles depended on an increased production of these textile raw materials. "Soviet Economic System", p.290.

one billion rubles in increased production.\* The Third F.Y.P. called for a 65% increase in labour productivity. "Out of a total increase in industrial production of 88.5 milliard rubles, 62 milliard rubles or 79% of the increase will be obtained through the growth of labour productivity".\*\* The demand for reducing production costs was placed at a modest 10% and up until the outbreak of war industrial output steadily grew. 7

	1937	1938	1939	1940	(Plan) 1941
Gross output of industrial production in milliard rubles in 1926-27 prices.	95.5	106.8	123.9	137.5	162.0
Of which:					
Capital goods	55.2	62.6	73.7	83.9	103.6
Consumer goods	40.3	44.2	50.2	53.6	58.4
Production of coal(million tons)	127.9	132.9	145.9	164.6	191.0*
" oil "	30.5	32.2	*	34.2+	38.0
" pig-iron "	14.5	14.6	-	14.9+	18.0
" steel "	17.7	18.0	-	18.4+	22.4
" rolled metal "	13.0	13.3	-	13.4+	15.8
" aluminium(thousand tons)	37.7	56.8	-	59.9+	99.4
" copper "	99.8	103.2	-	164.7+	215.7

\* No figures for 1939 have been published. + Estimated.

Considerable rises in the material and cultural levels of the workers in town and country were regarded as the key to generating increases in labour productivity and movements like Stakhanovism. Molotov stated that " a great step

6 Molotov.V., "Land of Socialism ...", p.418.

\* Yugow.A., "Russia's Economic Front..", p.187.

\*\* Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.290.

7 Ibid., p.291.



forward must be taken in the historical task of raising the cultural and technical level of the working class, the most advanced and the guiding force of socialist society, to the level of engineers and technicians".\*

In remunerating labour the underlying principle was to differentiate not according to physical or intellectual work, 'lower or higher' category of work but to differentiate between work varying in qualification, responsibility, difficulty, effort involved, etc. Significantly under the Third F.Y.P., in accordance with Molotov's statement, the average pay of workers was to be increased more than that of engineers and technicians and particularly more than that of employees. The discrepancies between the average pay of these categories were to be reduced..8

Average wages in industry (in rubles).			
	1937	1942	1942 as % of 1937
Workers	2,820	4,050	144.0
Engineers and technicians.	6,533	8,360	128.0
Employees.	3,471	4,000	115.2

Because Stakhanovism took on a mass form the difference between the earnings of a Stakhanovite and an average worker tended to decrease. In the late 30's and immediately after the war workers' wages rose faster than those of employees. Conditions favoured the skilled worker more than the salaried employee. Those with a secondary technical

\* Molotov.V., "Land of Socialism...", p.419.

8 The Third Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the USSR:(1938,1942), p.200,op.cit. Baykov.A., "Soviet Economic System", p.349.

school education, the lower ranked employee, began to rapidly replace and grow faster than the more specialised engineer or higher educated. During 1928-34 wage differentials widened between workers and specialists but with the creation of a working class industrial and technical intelligentsia and the rise of Stakhanovism workers wages rose faster than those of engineering and technical personnel (in %). In 1937 the employees average wages were 123% of the workers wages, by 1942 the latter exceeded the former. The difference in pay between workers on the one hand, engineers and technicians on the other was to be reduced from 231% in 1937 to 206% in 1942. As a result an average employee i.e. in a bank would earn in 1942 less than the average worker and the average employee in a State or public institution (the highest paid branches of clerical work) would earn in 1942 only 11% more than an industrial worker.+ This tendency continued with the wage revisions of 1946.\*

It is clear that the wage policy of the Soviet Union, the development of Stakhanovism and other forms of Socialist Emulation, do not act to oppress the working class or hinder their material and cultural development. On the contrary these forces are weapons which guarantee such progress; forces which daily work to eliminate distinctions between mental and manual labour and to consolidate the construction of a socialist state.

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+ Ibid.,pp.349-50.

The Soviet economic system rested on the coincidence of all the workers' common interest in increasing the efficiency of their collective work and each workers' individual interest in increasing his output. The importance of individual interest was never ignored but because of the absence of a parasitic capitalist class of non-producers, the elimination of unemployment, the State's clear duty to provide for all, the worker no longer had any grounds for the belief that by increasing his output he was in conflict with the personal interests of other workers. Workers like the Stakhanovites led the way in grasping this profound fact and demonstrating through practice that increased productivity and new attitudes towards work benefited workers as a whole by consolidating the construction of a socialist state. Personal interest coincided with the interest of the community as a whole. Thus only under Socialism can the role of wage incentives be put to their fullest use. The draft of the Second F.Y.P. clearly stated the role of the wage system to be "to the highest degree stimulatory of the personal interestedness of those working in raising the productivity of labour, in rooting out hold-ups and other defects in the organization of labour". It demanded,

" such forms and systems of payment as would encourage work directly in the shop, in the sector, in the enterprise, as would strengthen labour discipline, ensure

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\* Cf. Yanowitch.Murray., "Trend in Soviet Occupational Wage Differences", (1960, Theses, Phd., Columbia Univ., 1960, Ann Arbor, Mich., Univ., Microfilms, 1960).

"the most speedy eliminataion of 'fluidity', the raising of skills and the mastering of technique. To this demand of the plan the piece-work form of payment most corresponds, supplemented on key sectors of the national economy by incentive-bonus forms (progressive, etc.). The consistent implementation of the socialist principle of distribution in accordance with work done will lead to a growth in real wages for leading branches and trades and for the most qualified section of proletarian cadres one considerably above the average".<sup>9</sup>

Wages represented a share of the social wealth which the community assigns to the work of each on the basis of the Plan. Distribution is based on the fundamental principle that each must be remunerated in proportion to the quality and quantity of work done. This principle is a characteristic of the early stages of socialism until the productive forces of society are developed to a point whereby a full abundance of goods can be provided for each member of the socialist state. Until then inequality in wages will necessarily persist but private ownership will exist only in regard to goods of consumption. The notion that Socialism means the establishment of a system of primitive equality is a complete and dangerous distortion, a poor mans' level of equality which must be rejected. The demands of the working class to meet their cultural and material requirements cannot be based on such a policy which would only lead to economic and political stagnation and decay. Too often the simple but profound fact is

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9 "Proyekt vtorovo pyatiletnevo plana razvitya khozyaistva SSSR", Partizdat, M., 1934, Vol. I, p. 323, op. cit. Barker. G. R. "Incentives and Labour Productivity in Soviet Industry".

'overlooked' that Socialism is more than the distribution of existing wealth, it is the ever increasing creation of new wealth; socialist wealth and accumulation for the working class. The levels of productivity achieved will determine the extent of such economic and political growth. The chief source for creating this wealth is in raising the output per head of industrial workers hence the crucial role of wage incentives. Differential wages ensure the utilization of both existing and potential resources of manpower and materials by attracting labour to production and the services within industry; by rewarding workers for increased effort, raising the standard of living and encouraging workers to obtain higher technical education and training. However the interest and co-operation shown by a worker in such steps is determined by the nature of the economy and the political system controlling it. The Soviet Planned economy can increase labour productivity more than a capitalist economy because the absence of a non-productive class, means more goes to the development of the whole of society than to a few individuals; the absence of economic crisis prevents the under-utilization and wastage of material and human resources. A stable and expanding 'market' is a condition of socialism under which a proportionate development of all branches of the national economy can be carried out. Such development is determined by the needs of the socialist state and its working class and not

a private capitalist whose interest is short-term profit at the expense of everyone but himself. In short the raising of the productivity of labour is of unconditional desirability for the development of the whole national economy. The reduction of costs from the national economic point of view is in fact the economy of labour and a rise in productivity cannot be accompanied by a rise in social costs since all incomes are directly or indirectly labour incomes. Differential wages guarantee this economy of labour in order that the material and cultural levels of workers can be raised and the development of the socialist economy achieved as rapidly as possible.

As Lenin states;

" Although our ultimate aim is to achieve full communism and equal remuneration for all kinds of work, we cannot introduce this equality straightaway, at the present time, when only the first steps of the transition from capitalism to communism are being taken. For a certain period of time, therefore, we must retain the present higher remuneration for specialists in order to give them an incentive to work no worse, and even better, than they have worked before; and with the same object in view we must not reject the system of paying bonuses for the most successful work particularly organisational work; bonuses would be impermissible under a full communist system but in the period of transition from capitalism to communism bonuses are indispensable, as is borne out by theory and by a year's experience of Soviet power." 10

Thus the chief characteristics of the socialisation of the means of production under the dictatorship of the proletariat is an immense increase in the productivity of labour, a reduction in working hours, the end of unemployment,

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10 Lenin.V.I.,Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B),1919,"Coll. Works", Vol.29,pp.113-114.

the absence of egalitarianism in regard to wages and the elimination of the remnants of petty, primitive individual production by collective and perfected labour\* The perfection of labour is achieved via a unity of theory and practice; an achievement which is only made possible by the recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production and by subjecting them to the control of society as a whole The social regulation of production upon a definite plan permits the needs of the community and the individual in society to be satisfied through their active participation in production and the control of production. To become real active social agents and not simple bystanders;

" a race of producers with an all-round training who understand the scientific basis of industrial production as a whole, and each of whom has had practical experience in a whole series of branches of production from start to finish,..."<sup>11</sup>

The acquisition of a multiplicity of skills in various occupations which was the predominant characteristic of the Stakhanov movements' second phase can be regarded as a major step in producing this all round training. A necessary step which not only enabled workers to transfer to other fields of production but also provided practical experience for ending divisions of labour by training workers to administer social production independently. By

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\* Cf. Lenin, V.I., "Teachings of Karl Marx", in "Marx-Engels -Marxism", (Progress, 1968)

<sup>11</sup> Engels, F., "Anti-Duhring", p.352, cf. pp.339-354.

working collectively for the community the working class are merely asserting their right to personal freedom and individual development which rests on the continued expansion of society's productive forces. However such expansion is not just any expansion of the productive forces but increases which will guarantee the systematic supremacy of socialist forms of economy over any remnants of capitalist forms of economy. Forms of economy which give full freedom to the development of working class creativity and ingenuity. As Marx states:

"Modern Industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to a mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers". 12

The working class through social revolution have made themselves the ruling class and thereby created new conditions of production ; new conditions that call for new men, with new attitudes towards work and themselves. The worker having gained complete security in his job and other fields of activity, the shortening of the work day and general rises in the material and cultural levels of society is now free from the preoccupation with his immediate needs which characterises the activities of workers under capitalism and is now able to develop his critical sense, the power

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12 Marx.K., "capital", Vol.1, op.cit. Tucker.R.C., ed., "Marx -Engels Reader", (Norton, New York, 1972), pp.301-2.



to reflect and creative faculty. This new man is to be found in the like of the Stakhanovites who quietly but dramatically were constructing a socialist state and in doing so changing their own and others very nature. These efforts were an expression of the Stakhanovites heightened political consciousness, conscientious and conscious workers, who by defeating capitalism without unnecessary polemics were laying the foundations for both the Socialist state and its later transition to the higher phase of Communism. Such workers are actively leading their class along the path to complete and independent control of socialised production.

"For when all have learnt to manage, and really do manage, socialized production, when all really do keep account and control of the idlers, gentlefolk, swindlers, and suchlike 'guardians of capitalist traditions', the escape from such general registration and control will inevitably become so increasingly difficult, so much the exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are very practical people, not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that very soon the necessity of observing the simple, fundamental rules of any kind of social life will become a habit. The door will then be wide open for the transition from the first phase of Communist society to its second higher phase, and along with it to the complete withering away of the State". 13

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13 Lenin.V.I., "The State and Revolution", in "Essential Left", p.238.

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