INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

THE TRADE UNION SITUATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

Report of a Mission from the International Labour Office

GENEVA 1960
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INTRODUCTION

A factual survey relating to freedom of association in the Soviet Union was undertaken by the International Labour Office in 1959 at the invitation of the Government of the U.S.S.R. The survey was carried out by a Mission from the Office which was in the Soviet Union from the end of August until the end of October of that year. Previously a similar mission had been carried out in the United States.

As was pointed out in the report on the trade union situation in the United States\(^1\) a great deal of attention had already been paid to the subject of freedom of association by the I.L.O. for many years. The decision to undertake on-the-spot surveys in the member countries was the latest step in a long series which has included the adoption of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948\(^2\) (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949\(^3\) (No. 98), and certain other instruments.\(^4\) Other steps have involved the creation of a Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission in 1950, the appointment of an I.L.O. Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association in 1952—which has investigated a large number of complaints concerning alleged infringements of the

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\(^2\) This Convention is in force for the following Members of the Organisation, which have ratified it: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussia, Republic of the Cameroons, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, Republic of Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Federation of Mali, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, Republic of Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom, Uruguay, U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia.

\(^3\) This Convention is in force for the following Members of the Organisation, which have ratified it: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Republic of Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Rumania, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom, Uruguay, U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia.

\(^4\) In particular the Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921, the Collective Agreements Recommendation, 1951, and the Voluntary Conciliation and Arbitration Recommendation, 1951.
principle of freedom of association—and the preparation of a report regarding the extent of the freedom of employers’ and workers’ organisations from government domination or control (the McNair Report) which was circulated to the members of the Governing Body at its 131st Session (Geneva, March 1956).  8

When the McNair Report was discussed by the Governing Body at its 133rd Session (Geneva, November 1956), the Workers’ Group of the Governing Body proposed that—

... machinery be set up to obtain not just the legal but the real facts about conditions in each member State. The factual inquiry envisaged would be broader in scope than the reporting under the Convention procedure in the Constitution, and broader than the work of the Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association, although it might draw upon both these sources for information.

This proposal was approved by the Governing Body at its 138th Session (Geneva, March 1958). The ideas behind the Governing Body’s decision may be understood from the following quotation from the introduction to the report of a similar Mission sent by the I.L.O. to study the situation of the trade unions in the United States 3:

The purpose of a factual survey—which was in effect to be a series of national surveys—as understood by the Governing Body, was to provide a full picture of the actual conditions in each country which affect the extent to which freedom of association is respected. For the factual survey in a country to yield realistic results it was agreed that its scope should be wide enough to cover all aspects of national life relevant to freedom of association. It was also agreed that to be fully factual, comprehensive and authentic, such a survey should not be limited to official and other documentary sources but

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1 The reports of the Committee on Freedom of Association appear in the following publications of the I.L.O.:
Seventeenth and Eighteenth Reports: ibid., Vol. XXXIX, 1956, No. 1, pp. 1-43 and 44.
Later reports of the Committee on Freedom of Association will also be published in the Official Bulletin.
3 The Trade Union Situation in the United States, op. cit., p. 4.
should include the possibility of studying the situation on the spot in the different countries.

It will be noted that the procedure for the factual surveys was completely separated from that for dealing with allegations. The surveys were designed to elicit the facts in an objective manner and not to investigate disputes, and they were entrusted to the International Labour Office rather than to any committee inside or outside the Organisation.

Invitations to carry out factual on-the-spot surveys were extended to the I.L.O. during the 42nd Session of the International Labour Conference (June 1958) by the Governments of the United States and the U.S.S.R. On 1 January 1959 a new Freedom of Association Survey Division was set up in the Office to carry out these and other factual surveys. The Division was also entrusted with the completion of the studies initiated by the McNair Committee.

The implications of the decision to carry out these surveys were brought out in this further passage from the report mentioned above:

The decision to undertake on-the-spot surveys was of great significance. By supporting this decision the governments agreed that representatives of an international organisation should be permitted to make independent inquiries in the member countries with a view to ascertaining the facts concerning a much-disputed subject. Governments had already furnished information on this matter but they were now agreeing that further inquiries should be made by an outside body on their respective territories. Added significance was lent to the decision by the fact that the first two Governments to invite the I.L.O. to undertake such inquiries were those of the United States and the U.S.S.R., which are the greatest industrial powers in the world, and which represent two different economic and social systems.

Debates on freedom of association have taken place both in the International Labour Conference and in the Governing Body of the I.L.O. These discussions took on a particularly acute form after the U.S.S.R. had rejoined the I.L.O. in 1954 and two points in particular have aroused considerable controversy. In the first place the Employers' Group in the Governing Body and in various I.L.O. conferences and meetings has contended that the delegates appointed as employers to represent the U.S.S.R. were not free employers in the generally accepted sense of the term but officials who were obliged to carry out the policy of their Government. Secondly, some members of the Government, Employers' and Workers' Groups have maintained that the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. were not freely constituted organisations set up by the workers themselves but merely bodies for ensuring that the orders of the Government were carried out by the workers. On this latter point a specific complaint was submitted to the I.L.O. by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and investigated by the Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association. The reports

1 The Trade Union Situation in the United States, op. cit., p. 5.
of the Committee on this subject contain an analysis of the complaint, the observations of the Soviet Government and extracts from the relevant documents.\footnote{I.L.O.: \textit{Trade Union Rights in the U.S.S.R.}, Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 49 (Geneva, 1959).}

Shortly before the Mission left for the Soviet Union a further opportunity for discussing the situation in relation to freedom of association in the U.S.S.R. arose at the 43rd Session of the International Labour Conference (June 1959), when consideration was given to a report by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations concerning the annual reports from Governments which had ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). These countries included Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the U.S.S.R.\footnote{Idem: \textit{Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations}, Report III (Part IV), International Labour Conference, 43rd Session, Geneva, 1959 (Geneva, 1959), especially the third part, which contains the conclusions concerning the reports received under Articles 19 and 22 of the Constitution of the I.L.O. on the effect given to Conventions and Recommendations relating to freedom of association and protection of the right to organise, collective bargaining and collective agreements, and co-operation in the undertaking. See also I.L.O.: \textit{Record of Proceedings}, International Labour Conference, 43rd Session, Geneva, 1959 (Geneva, 1960), pp. 667 ff., for the report of the Conference Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which examined the Report of the Committee of Experts.}

On 24 August 1959 a Mission composed of members of the Freedom of Association Survey Division left Geneva for the Soviet Union. Like the previous Mission to the United States it was headed by Mr. John Price, Chief of the Division and Special Assistant to the Director-General. The other members of the Mission were Mr. Jean Reynaud (who had also participated in the Mission to the United States), Miss Anna Fidler and Mr. Victor Ratnavale. Miss Maisie Cross acted as the Mission's Secretary. The Mission was accompanied by Mr. Y. I. Gouk, Counsellor in the International Labour Office. Mr. G. von Potobsky also participated in the drafting of the report. The Mission returned to Geneva on 23 October 1959. In 1960 a further visit was paid to the Soviet Union by the Head of the Mission. He left Geneva on 8 August and returned two weeks later, on 19 August 1960.

Before the Mission left for the U.S.S.R. the Director-General communicated to the Soviet Government his suggestions regarding the manner in which the survey might be carried out. He proposed that the Mission should begin by having discussions in Moscow with Government officials, representatives of the trade unions and other competent persons and that it should then visit a certain number of centres in the
Soviet Union in order to obtain a general view of the situation. He mentioned a number of places which might be suitable for this purpose and from which a choice could be made.

The day after their arrival in Moscow the members of the Mission were received by Mr. A. P. Volkov, Chairman of the State Labour and Wages Committee of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. They discussed with him the arrangements for a tour of the country such as that suggested by the Director-General and agreed on the general lines of a programme which was subsequently worked out in detail with officials of the State Committee. On the same day the Mission had a long discussion with Mr. I. V. Goroshkin, Vice-Chairman of the State Labour and Wages Committee, and with some of his colleagues, concerning the situation in the Soviet Union regarding freedom of association.

On the next day the members of the Mission were received by Mr. V. V. Grishin, Chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.), with whom they discussed at length the workers' right to form trade unions and the general trade union situation. Afterwards the Mission paid long visits to the various departments of the A.U.C.C.T.U., to the Trade Union Publishing House (Profizdat), and to the permanent exhibition of the A.U.C.C.T.U. on labour protection. These were followed by meetings with the chairmen and other officers of several of the 22 unions which make up the A.U.C.C.T.U., at which discussions took place on the activities of the unions in particular industries or occupations. By the time these meetings had been completed the Mission had been in Moscow for more than a week.

Several more days were occupied with visits to factories in the Moscow region. These visits each took up the greater part of a day. They included long discussions with the general manager and his colleagues and with the chairman of the factory trade union committee and some of its members. In each case the Mission also paid visits to the plant, the trade union offices and some of the social institutions connected with the factory, such as the first-aid and medical centres, polyclinics, schools, nurseries, kindergartens, libraries, clubs, sports grounds and housing schemes. This method was followed not only in Moscow but in all the other cities visited. In each factory the members of the Mission spent several hours, had lengthy meetings with the general manager and his colleagues and with representatives of the trade unions and visited one or more of the social institutions mentioned above, where they were shown round by the director and the representatives of the trade unions. As a result the Mission came into personal contact with a large number of people during the course of its journey.
At the end of the second week the Mission went by air to Irkutsk, then on to Bratsk on the River Angara. This journey enabled the members to learn something of the climatic and geographical conditions in which work is carried on in Siberia, and to discuss trade union activities with persons working in an area far removed from the capital. They had meetings at a hydro-electric power station at Irkutsk, where a relatively small number of workers are employed, and at a huge construction project at Bratsk where the labour force runs into many thousands. In both places they had long discussions with the general managers and the representatives of the trade unions. Meetings were also held with the chairman of the trade union council for the whole Irkutsk region. After three days in this area they returned to Moscow and visited a state farm outside the city before proceeding by train to Leningrad.

A week was spent in Leningrad, where visits were paid to several plants, a trade union palace of culture and the Research Institute on Labour Protection maintained by the A.U.C.C.T.U. The factory visits included, as already mentioned, visits to some of the social institutions. A meeting was also held at the offices of the trade union council for the Leningrad region.

Following their stay in Leningrad the members of the Mission moved away from the Russian S.F.S.R. in order to study the conditions in some of the other republics, namely Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Georgia and Uzbekistan. These, it will be noted, included two republics in the European part of the U.S.S.R., one in the Caucasus, and one in central Asia. In all of these republics the Mission discussed the legal situation, the constitution, structure and functions of the trade unions with the chairman and other representatives of the trade union council for the whole republic, as well as with representatives of management and the trade unions in individual plants.

Several days were spent in each of the republics. The cities included in the Mission's itinerary were Minsk (Byelorussia), Kiev, Odessa and Yalta (Ukraine), Tbilisi and Rustavi (Georgia) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan). In addition to factories and other industrial undertakings the Mission saw a state farm at Terezino in the Kiev region, a collective farm near Simferopol in the Crimea, and a state farm some distance from Tashkent. At the various factories and farms members were able to see that the social institutions mentioned above were available in these republics too, and that they were administered on the same lines as those in Moscow and Leningrad.

During their stay in Yalta they visited two sanatoria and a holiday camp for schoolchildren to acquaint themselves with this aspect of trade union activities. In Minsk they saw the Byelorussian Polytechnic
Institute and had talks with the Chairman of the Teachers' Trade Union Committee and the Chairman of the Students' Trade Union Committee and their colleagues. In Odessa they made a tour of the port in the company of the Port Director and representatives of the trade unions and saw some of the welfare facilities for dockers.

There was not enough time for them to attend many trade union meetings but they were able to see various examples, such as a meeting held to receive a report of the standing production conference in a factory in Minsk and a meeting of delegates of the personnel held in a factory in Leningrad to discuss production problems.¹

The members of the Mission also saw several instructional films which gave them valuable information about activities in the various parts of the country, including films on the development of the Lake Baikal region and the building of a hydro-electric station at Bratsk, on the reconstruction of Minsk after the Second World War, on the economic resources of Georgia and on developments in the Uzbek Republic.

From Tashkent the Mission returned to Moscow for a final week of visits and discussions. The time was spent mainly with representatives of the State Labour and Wages Committee and the A.U.C.C.T.U., but meetings were also held with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) and with a professor of trade union history.

During the visit paid to the Soviet Union by the Head of the Mission in 1960 he travelled from Moscow to Sverdlovsk by train and spent four days in the Urals, where he visited three factories in the Sverdlovsk region, the Urals Geological Museum, a pioneer camp, a palace of pioneers and various institutions for workers' welfare. He also had a meeting with the Sverdlovsk Regional Trade Union Council at their offices in Sverdlovsk.

The visits to the Byelorussian Republic and the Ukraine, which are States Members of the I.L.O., were preceded by invitations from the Governments of these republics in addition to the invitation which had previously been conveyed by the Government of the U.S.S.R. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these republics were away at the time of the Mission's visit. In Byelorussia the Mission met Mr. P. Y. Astapenko, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr. S. A. Slipchenko, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ukraine, was ill, but in his place the Mission met Mr. G. E. Buvailik of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹ The Office was also represented—though not by one of the members of the Mission—at the 12th Congress of Soviet Trade Unions, to which reference is made in this report.
Arrangements for the Mission’s travels and for its meetings and visits were greatly facilitated by the representatives of the economic councils and trade union councils in the various republics and regions. The Mission was accompanied throughout by a representative of the State Labour and Wages Committee and a representative of the A.U.C.C.T.U., who gave every assistance in overcoming the problems which inevitably arise on a long journey. In addition, the Mission was able to avail itself of the facilities and services accorded by the Branch Office of the I.L.O. in Moscow.

During its stay in the Soviet Union the Mission had talks with large numbers of people, often spending many hours in their company, and was everywhere received with patience and kindness. The thanks of the Office are due to all those who so willingly assisted the Mission during its visit.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

When the Mission began its study of freedom of association in the Soviet Union it had in mind the many questions that have been asked in regard to this subject—for example, whether the workers in the Soviet Union are free to join trade unions, whether they can set up any unions they please, and whether the unions are completely independent.

Many people in Western countries doubt whether workers in the Soviet Union are free to join or not to join trade unions; they have the impression that trade union membership in the Soviet Union is virtually compulsory. Others, on the other hand, think that large categories of workers in the Soviet Union are prohibited from forming trade unions even if they wish to do so. Again, the view is widely held that the Soviet trade unions are not independent organisations set up by the free choice of the workers themselves and having any form that the workers choose to give them. On the contrary, it is thought that the Soviet trade unions are, in effect, organs of the State and that their structure, policies and activities are fixed for them by the Government and the Communist Party.

It may be said that the prime function of trade unions in Western countries is to protect and improve the wages and working conditions of their members through collective action, whether by bargaining with the employers or by promoting legislation. In fact, historically one of the main reasons for the setting up of trade unions was that the workers might acquire a combined strength which would enable them to bargain more effectively with the employers and to replace the individual contract by a collective agreement. Many people refuse to believe that this is what happens in the Soviet Union: they think that the collective agreements there are fundamentally different in form and content from those arrived at in the West, that they do not govern the rates of wages, and that they are not arrived at by a free process of bargaining. Another widely held belief is that the workers in the Soviet Union are not free to withhold their labour if they are dissatisfied with their conditions of work. It is thought that they can neither change their employment without official permission nor go out on strike.
Freedom of association does not merely imply the right of workers to form or join an organisation and the right of that organisation to have a legal existence. It also implies freedom for the organisation to function. If freedom of association is to have its full value the workers must be able to use their organisation for collective action and must enjoy the right to strike if they regard their working conditions as unsatisfactory.

These and other questions were continually before the Mission during its stay in the Soviet Union. It is true that the situation of the workers and of the trade unions in the Soviet Union is very different from that which is found in the countries of the West. But there are resemblances as well as differences, and it is necessary to be aware of both if the position with regard to freedom of association in the Soviet Union is to be fully understood. One thing to be remembered is that the special position now enjoyed by the Soviet trade unions was not achieved at a single stroke but is the result of a historical process which had already started at the beginning of the present century. That process is still going on; significant developments in the trade union situation have occurred in recent years and it is conceivable that others are on the way. Another thing to be remembered is that the structure, functions and rights of the Soviet trade unions cannot be properly appreciated unless the economic, political, and social structure of the Soviet State is taken into account. This question of "background" or national circumstances is no less important in the case of the Soviet Union than it is in that of other countries.

The fact that private ownership of the means of production has been abolished is in the Soviet view of cardinal importance for an understanding of the situation of the Soviet trade unions and of the problem of freedom of association. This may seem obvious, yet its implications are often overlooked. When the means of production are no longer privately owned the place of the workers changes radically because these means then become the property of the people. Although there are no longer any private employers in factories and farms, the latter nevertheless need labour and the workers need employment. Their work must be organised and supervised, their working conditions must be settled and arrangements for their remuneration must be devised. In all this the workers’ organisations, namely the trade unions, have a vital part to play. Various methods for dealing with this situation have been adopted in the Soviet Union. But the net result has been—as far as the subject of the Mission’s study is concerned—that the trade unions have come to occupy a prominent position in the Soviet State.
Under the Soviet system the land and means of production belong to the people. The outlines of this system are shown by the following Articles of the Soviet Constitution:

ARTICLE 4

The economic foundation of the U.S.S.R. is the socialist system of economy and the socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production, firmly established as a result of the liquidation of the capitalist system of economy, the abolition of private ownership of the instruments and means of production, and the elimination of the exploitation of man by man.

ARTICLE 5

Socialist property in the U.S.S.R. exists either in the form of state property (belonging to the whole people) or in the form of co-operative and collective-farm property (property of collective farms, property of co-operative societies).

ARTICLE 6

The land, its mineral wealth, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, rail, water and air transport, banks, communications, large state-organised agricultural enterprises (state farms, machine and tractor stations and the like), as well as municipal enterprises and the bulk of the dwelling-houses in the cities and industrial localities, are state property, that is, belong to the whole people.

ARTICLE 7

The common enterprises of collective farms and co-operative organisations, with their livestock and implements, the products of the collective farms and co-operative organisations, as well as their common buildings, constitute the common, socialist property of the collective farms and co-operative organisations.

Every household in a collective farm, in addition to its basic income from the common collective-farm enterprise, has for its personal use a small plot of household land and, as its personal property, a subsidiary husbandry on the plot, a dwelling-house, livestock, poultry and minor agricultural implements—in accordance with the rules of the agricultural artel.

ARTICLE 8

The land occupied by collective farms is secured to them for their use free of charge and for an unlimited time, that is, in perpetuity.

ARTICLE 9

Alongside the socialist system of economy, which is the predominant form of economy in the U.S.S.R., the law permits the small private economy of individual peasants and handicraftsmen based on their own labour and precluding the exploitation of the labour of others.

ARTICLE 10

The personal property right of citizens in their incomes and savings from work, in their dwelling-houses and subsidiary husbandries, in articles of domestic economy and use and articles of personal use and convenience, as well as the right of citizens to inherit personal property, is protected by law.
ARTICLE 11

The economic life of the U.S.S.R. is determined and directed by the state national-economic plan, with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the working people, of consolidating the independence of the U.S.S.R. and strengthening its defensive capacity.

ARTICLE 12

Work in the U.S.S.R. is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: “He who does not work, neither shall he eat”.

The principle applied in the U.S.S.R. is that of socialism: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his work”.¹

These Articles bring out certain points which throw some light on the position of the workers and the trade unions. It will be noted, for example, that the Constitution refers to the abolition of private ownership of the instruments and means of production, and the elimination of the exploitation of man by man.

It further states that the socialist system is the predominant form of economy in the U.S.S.R.; that the economic life of the U.S.S.R. is determined and directed by the state plan; and that one of the aims of this plan is to raise the material and cultural standards of the working people.

The Soviet view is that, in these circumstances, the worker is not engaged in producing a return on capital invested by private individuals but is considered to be taking part in an effort to promote the welfare of the whole population. Whether he is employed in a factory or on the land, in mining or in forestry, on the railways or in the air, in an office or in a shop, he is either working on or making use of property which belongs to the people. The percentage of persons engaged in “small private economy” is extremely small and even for them activities must not include “the exploitation of the labour of others”. Every worker in the Soviet Union—and this means practically the whole population apart from the armed services—is therefore held to be participating in a common effort to raise the standards of living for everybody, including himself. His private interests and the sectional interests of his industry or locality are submerged in those of the country and population as a whole.

It is made clear to the workers in the Soviet Union that they have an interest in raising productivity, in increasing the output of their factories and farms, in achieving their personal production norms, in helping

to fulfil and over-fulfil the production plans for the undertaking in which they work, in keeping down costs and in eliminating waste. Their unions, too, are interested in the related problems of production and costs. As organisations representing the workers, they have the duty to struggle for better working conditions and to promote the welfare of their members; they accept a responsibility for helping to ensure the fulfilment of the production plans which they consider to be a means for achieving these ends.

The situation of the Soviet trade unions can only be clearly understood if the difference between the conditions of private capitalism and those of the Soviet State is considered. All the problems relating to the rights of the workers, the legal status of the trade unions and the exercise of freedom of association in practice must be viewed with this difference in mind.

On the other hand, as regards the techniques and methods of work, the system of remuneration and incentives for greater output, the offer of rewards for new inventions and the importance attached to efficient management and production control, there are marked similarities in the practices followed in all industrialised countries. These similarities originate in the modern industrial production process itself, which makes demands of its own and tends to produce certain consequences for the individual worker which must be dealt with under any economic system.

It must also be remembered that the system described above applies throughout the vast area of the Soviet Union. There were industries and trade unions in Tsarist Russia, but the economy was still essentially rural and at the time of the Revolution the unions were only just emerging from a period of repression. In the Soviet Union of today the programme of production—both industrial and agricultural—is planned for the whole country, the same objectives are pursued in every part of the Union, the same economic system exists in every republic, and the same kind of trade union structure is found in every undertaking.

Prior to the 1917 Revolution the mechanical age had started in the European part of Tsarist Russia, whereas most of the great empire south of and beyond the Ural Mountains had been left behind. Except in a relatively few towns, established by the European settlers, the peoples of the Caucasus and central Asia—though in the past they had lived through periods of imperial greatness—carried on the tradition of their pastoral civilisation.

Industrial revolution came late to the Tsarist Empire. It was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that machines began to oust the more primitive forms of manufacturing. For example, new textile mills and metal works sprang up in the regions of Moscow and St. Peters-
burg (then the capital of the empire), the iron and steel industry began to develop in the Urals, and oil started to flow in Baku, on the Caspian Sea.

The impact of industrialisation, brought about in part through investments of foreign capital, was, however, relatively slight in that huge land where industrial workers formed a very small proportion of the population. In those days Russia was still a country of land-hungry peasants and great landowners. The industrial workers were in the main peasants who had been freed from serfdom only since the agrarian reform of 1861. In 1851 the urban population accounted for less than 10 per cent. of the total. The middle class was mainly composed of merchants, a few industrialists, government officials and army officers, with a sprinkling of professional workers and intellectuals.

In such an unbalanced economy, predominantly dependent upon agriculture, with the nation's wealth in the hands of a few, no significant rise in the general standard of living could be expected. There were few schools, and indifference to education, if not fear of it, was shown by both the government and the ruling class. This resulted in low educational standards and widespread illiteracy. The absolute power of the Tsars and an oppressive political system tended to stifle independent thought and to forestall any attempts to improve the situation.

But in spite of administrative repression, dissatisfaction was growing throughout the country. Discontent smouldering among the peasants manifested itself in several revolts which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, had shaken some of the provinces of the Empire. The peasants' revolts lacked, however, both programme and organisation; these were to be provided by the enlightened minority of the urban population—industrial workers and intelligentsia.

From 1865 to 1890 the number of workers employed in the larger industrial undertakings increased considerably, and though they were still a handful as compared with those employed in agriculture, they soon became one of the most active sections of the population. This development was facilitated by a high concentration of manpower in particular industrial regions, and also in particular enterprises. Demands for improvements in working and living conditions were loudly voiced and strikes broke out in several important factories. But the workers' action became more effective when they joined forces with the intelligentsia.

The intelligentsia or, in other words, the professional workers and intellectuals, played a special part in Tsarist Russia. Small in number, often educated abroad and receptive to new ideas, they served as a weapon which pierced the armour of the autocratic Tsarist State.
A substantial proportion of the intelligentsia, in touch with the European revolutionary movements and convinced of the need for fundamental reforms in the economic and social system, became the organising force of the industrial and rural proletariat, for which it provided leadership.

The struggle for economic betterment and social progress soon became identified with the struggle for political freedom. Both the organised workers and their leaders came to believe that no significant improvement in the lot of the Russian worker and peasant could be achieved unless the political system was changed. When later on, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian working class became vocal, the pattern for its future activities had already been set. Political action and economic action were regarded as parts of the same process, and the conviction had grown that no solution to the economic problems could be found without the abolition of the Tsarist system.

The formation of trade unions was a part of the organised political drive and the clandestine left-wing parties had their cells in the various industrial centres of the empire. Although the Government applied a policy of repression, the workers' organisations had periods of legal existence and this enabled the clandestine parties to take firm roots among the workers and to carry on their activities under trade union cover. This development shaped the character of the trade unions; from the very outset, they were politically minded and constituted the main rank-and-file of the revolutionary parties. Unity of purpose and action and also, to some extent, identity of leadership between trade unions and revolutionary parties were among the chief factors which accounted for the close link which was forged between the Soviet unions and the Party.

The overthrow of the Tsarist régime and the establishment of the Soviet Union are now historical facts. A largely agricultural country has been replaced by a highly organised industrial State which is regarded as one of the greatest powers in the world. It comprises not only the Russian Republic but also 14 others—the Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Uzbek, Kazakh, Georgian, Azerbaijani, Lithuanian, Moldavian, Latvian, Kirghiz, Tajik, Armenian, Turkmen and Estonian Republics. The industrial and agricultural activity of the Soviet Union is on a scale which very few other areas can equal.

Some other aspects of the Soviet scene may help the reader to understand the position of the workers and the trade unions. The fact that the Soviet Union has made remarkable advances in the technical field is well known, and it is also realised that these technical achievements

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1 An impressive demonstration of this fact was the launching of the first moon rocket, which took place while the Mission was in the Soviet Union.
could be made only on the basis of a solid and extensive industrial structure. It may be worth pointing out, however, that the building up of Soviet industry and agriculture has entailed excursions into almost every field of economic and technical activity and has resulted in the employment of a huge labour force—men and women—possessing a wide range of skills and using modern equipment from the heaviest to the most delicate. This, of course, has brought problems of training, work organisation, remuneration, welfare and so on, which have had to be faced both by factory managers and by trade unions.

Other observers have already reported on the technical advances made in the U.S.S.R. Obviously the Mission could not study all branches of activity in every corner of such a large country, but it saw a sufficient number of examples of this progress and of the steps taken to deal with the social problems involved. The fact that the U.S.S.R. products great quantities of basic materials such as coal and steel is common knowledge, but it was nevertheless instructive to visit an integrated steel mill at Rustavi in Georgia, the construction of which was started shortly before the end of the Second World War. The plant produces coke, pig iron, steel, rolled products and seamless tubes. It was built on waste land some 20 miles from Tbilisi, where there were no homes, transport services or public amenities. It now employs 12,000 people and close to it a complete new town has been built.

Other examples might be drawn from the metal trades, which make tools and machines for industry as well as consumer goods. The Mission visited a machine-tool plant in Moscow which employs more than 6,000 workers and which was founded in 1857. It also saw a factory in Minsk which makes automatic machine tools and builds automatic lines of machines for other factories. This factory was started in 1955 and is still incomplete. It already employs over 3,000 people and by the end of the Seven Year Plan the number is expected to be 6,000, of whom one in six will be a trained engineer or technician. Another factory which was visited by the Mission and which produces radial drilling machines and other specialised equipment is in Odessa. This plant was built after the War and it employs about 2,000 people.

1 For a description of the steel industry in the Soviet Union reference may be made to the report of the American Steel and Iron Ore Mining Delegation which visited the Soviet Union in 1958: Steel in the Soviet Union, the report of the American Steel and Iron Ore Delegation’s visit to the Soviet Union, May and June 1958 (New York, American Iron and Steel Institute, 1959). The principal steel-making plants visited by the Delegation included those at Cheliabinsk, Magnitogorsk, Stalinsk, Zaporozhestal, Dneprospetstal and Krivoi Rog. The report includes chapters on raw materials, blast furnace facilities and practices, steel-making facilities and practices, rolling mills and rolling practice and management-labour relations.
In addition to such plants it is possible to see factories where delicate precision work is being done. For example, the Mission witnessed the production of radio and television sets in Minsk and electrical precision instruments, meters and so forth in Kiev.

Factories producing consumer goods exist, of course, and it is interesting to note not only that most of the machinery for these factories is made in the Soviet Union but that such machinery is now being exported as well. The Mission toured a textile mill in Moscow which was founded as long ago as 1867 and a textile “combinat” in Tashkent which was begun in 1932 and completed after the War. The “combinat” consists of ten factories, including three for spinning, two for weaving and two for finishing. It has over 300,000 spindles and 6,000 looms and it employs 17,000 workers. Spare parts for the machines are manufactured in the “combinat” itself. In the same city, Tashkent, there is a plant which manufactures spinning frames and other textile machinery both for the Soviet Union and for export. The Mission was told there that this was one of a number of plants in which modern textile machinery is now being built.

Examples from agriculture and the food industries are also interesting. Agriculture is carried on partly on state farms (sovkhoz) and partly on collective farms (kolkhoz). The activities of each type vary both in extent and variety. A state farm which the Mission saw near Moscow was mainly occupied in supplying potatoes and vegetables for the city, whilst another which it visited in Uzbekistan was principally devoted to breeding cattle for other farms in the surrounding area. This farm, however, also produced cotton. A collective farm in the Crimea was likewise largely concerned with cattle breeding, but it also produced wheat, maize and fruit. The workers must be accustomed to handle tractors, harvesters, trucks and other items of mechanical equipment used on these farms in large numbers. The farms practise artificial insemination for both cattle and sheep. They have laboratories and research stations, and the state farms, in particular, are used for experimental and teaching purposes, in order that modern methods may be tried out and adopted on state and collective farms alike.

In addition to the activities described above the collective farm in the Crimea grows great quantities of grapes, for which the local climate seems to be particularly suitable. A further large area of vines was being planted. A winery in the same district, near Yalta, was producing a variety of white and red wines in considerable quantities. These Crimean

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1 For an explanation of the difference between state farms and collective farms see p. 42.
wines, like the wines of Georgia, have a good reputation in the Soviet Union and the Mission was told that the U.S.S.R. will eventually produce as much wine as France. Production of champagne is increasing at various centres and in Tbilisi (Georgia), the Mission saw champagne being produced on a large scale both by the traditional method of fermenting in bottles and by the new and more rapid process which involves the use of large tanks. Incidentally, these wineries have up-to-date bottling plants in which a continuous mechanised process is used for washing, filling, corksing, sealing and labelling.

Technical advances in industry and agriculture have been accompanied by progress in other fields, such as construction, where needs are particularly great, and the development of communications. Construction activity on an impressive scale was apparent to the Mission in every part of the country which it visited. A few examples may suffice. Approaching Moscow from Vnukovo airport the visitor passes block after block of large apartment buildings built within the last few years on the fringe of a district which was one of the new parts of the city before the Second World War. Similar large-scale housing construction was to be seen in all the other places visited. The trade unions play a prominent part in stimulating housing construction, much of which is paid for by the factories, and the unions also participate to a large extent in the allocation of housing accommodation. Large public buildings, palaces of rest and culture, research institutes and universities, museums, theatres, schools, hospitals and clinics are visible everywhere, as well as new houses and factories. In every city large parks and sports stadiums were to be seen, and this was true of the Caucasus, central Asia and the Urals no less than of cities such as Moscow and Leningrad.

At Bratsk, which is over 350 miles by air north of Irkutsk on the Angara River, the Mission saw the construction site of a gigantic dam. When the work is completed there will be a deep storage reservoir 350 miles long and 35 miles wide. This development is in a remote part of Siberia which was previously very sparsely populated and was covered by virgin taiga. A new town is being built at the site, and factories will be constructed in the surrounding area to make use of some of the electrical power output. At the time of the Mission's visit 25,000 workers, men and women, were employed on this development and, when it is completed, the new power station will have twice the capacity of those at Kuibyshev and Stalingrad. Turbines and generators for this station are being built in Leningrad in plants which the Mission subsequently visited. The power station at present working on the Angara River at Irkutsk uses generators that were built in Novosibirsk, far to the east of the Urals in Siberia.
The generation of electricity in a large number of power stations, great and small, has been a considerable factor in the expansion of industry and agriculture. In the field of communications no less important developments have taken place. Naturally there have been extensions to the railways and inland waterways and improvements to the ports, where powerful mechanical equipment is in evidence. But the most striking examples of the development of the transport system are to be found on the roads and in the air. The Mission visited the well-known Likhatchev (formerly Stalin) Works in Moscow, where 40,000 people are employed in the manufacture of automobiles, buses, lorries and bicycles, and a tractor factory in Minsk, which employs over 10,000 people and turns out a tractor every quarter of an hour. Everywhere the traffic on the roads, particularly lorries and buses, is increasing. At the airports there is likewise considerable activity. All the Mission’s journeys, except between Moscow and Leningrad, were made by air and several of them with the TU.104 jet aircraft. The airports were always crowded with travellers, and large numbers of planes, including jets and turbojets, were seen. At several places the runways were being reinforced and extended for new jet services. The development of this huge country, not only industrially but in other ways, will be considerably accelerated by the fact that so many places are now linked by air routes. From Irkutsk to Moscow only six hours’ flying time are required with a stop of one hour en route, while Moscow can be reached from Tashkent in four hours non-stop.

The large-scale developments in industry and agriculture, the widespread construction activity, the opening up of new areas at great distances from the main centres of population and the extension of the network of communications have involved considerable movements of labour and appear to have resulted in a labour shortage. The shortage of workers in certain occupations has increased the importance given to training and to incentives, while the movements of labour have added to the problems of housing, transport and the provision of shops, schools, hospitals and facilities for entertainment. For instance, the fact that 25,000 people were employed at Bratsk, where the population was formerly sparse, has already been mentioned. The total population was estimated at 40,000 in September 1959, and in a few years’ time Bratsk will be an important industrial city. Another example which came to the notice of the Mission was that out of 17,000 workers in the textile combinat in Tashkent about 30 per cent. were Uzbeks, while the rest were mainly Russians, with sprinklings of other nationalities.

All the problems mentioned above directly and closely concern the trade unions. This is not the place for a detailed description of the way
in which such problems have been handled. Some of them are in any case outside the scope of the present report, while others will be dealt with under the heading of trade union functions. As part of the general background, however, some reference should be made to the work which is being done in connection with education and training.

In Tsarist Russia only a small proportion of the population was literate. The position has now been reversed and it is said that except for a few of the older people everybody can read and write, either in Russian or in one of the other languages. It appears to be common for non-Russians to be fluent in both Russian and the language of their particular nationality. Large numbers of schools for children—ranging from kindergartens to secondary schools—have been built. There are many technical, scientific, and foreign languages institutes for young people, and the universities are numerous.

Special evening courses in technical subjects are provided for workers who are encouraged to study both after work and subsequently at full-time institutes in order to qualify as engineers or technicians of other kinds. Big libraries are provided in the plants, on the farms and in the homes of rest and culture which are attached to them. Many plants have technical schools for boys and girls, who are trained as "labour reserves".

In the field of higher learning there is a similar profusion of facilities. Academies of science, research institutes and other establishments are to be found in all large cities and in widely separated parts of the country.

Everything that the Mission saw of the education and training facilities, especially for schoolchildren and workers, provided abundant evidence of the importance which is attached to these subjects by the trade unions. Wherever the Mission went its attention was drawn by the trade union representatives to the work done in the fields of education, training, research and culture.

All this is a far cry from Tsarist Russia, yet the break with the past has not been complete. Although there has been an economic, political, and social revolution there is nevertheless a certain measure of cultural and historical continuity. Although the Revolution produced such profound changes the peoples of the Soviet Union obviously could not divorce themselves completely either from their surroundings or from their past.

Alongside the efforts to unify the thinking of all the peoples of the Soviet Union in regard to economic and political aims, there is a noticeable diversity in the cultural activities which are carried on in the various Republics. And while the merits of the present system and the evils of the Tsarist régime are emphasised this does not mean that the past
is completely obliterated. On the contrary, great events in Russian history are recalled and there is much interest in the history of Russian art.

One of the most popular personages in Leningrad is still Peter the Great, who founded the city and whose statue looks out across the River Neva. The Mission was shown Lenin’s apartments in the Moscow Kremlin and in the Smolny Institute at Leningrad, but it was also taken to see Prince Yusupov’s palace outside Moscow and the Peterhof palace on the Gulf of Finland. The first of these is maintained in its original condition, complete with furniture, paintings and other works of art; the second, which formerly belonged to the Tsars, was severely damaged during the Second World War and is now being restored at great labour and expense. Performances of ballet and opera include many modern works but also some which were written before the Revolution and for which rich settings, splendid dresses and colourful uniforms are required. Many of the plays, operas and ballets are based upon folk tales and legends, some of them being of special significance to a particular nationality. In a régime which strives to achieve unity of purpose and concentration of effort, there is still room for this diversity in cultural activity.

The comments in the foregoing pages should not be taken to imply that the Soviet citizen’s life is a bed of roses. Naturally the visitor sees evidence of the shortages and difficulties with which the people of this country have had to contend and the Mission does not wish to gloss over them. But so much has been said and written about the hardships and privations of the Soviet people that the visitor is struck more particularly by the visible signs of the progress which is now being made. It is this side of the picture which seems to be the more significant at the present moment.

This background chapter has been mainly a summary of known facts accompanied by a description of things which the Mission saw and experienced. It does not hazard any opinions or judgments. How much of what the Mission saw is firmly rooted, how much is new and how much is subject to further change it is impossible to say. The Mission had long and searching discussions with factory managers and trade union officials. It was struck by their knowledge and ability and it noted their confidence in the future of their country. It learned that the aim of equalling the production of the United States is not merely a Moscow slogan but is regarded as a realistic programme upon which the whole people is confidently engaged. Over and over again the damage suffered by the Soviet Union during the Second World War was emphasised and the hope was expressed that peace would be maintained in order that the work of building up the standards of living of
the people could continue unhampered. The Mission reports these things without making any attempt to evaluate them. The U.S.S.R. is passing through a period of rapid development and the changes which have already occurred will no doubt be followed by others. This is of particular interest in the trade union sphere—which was the Mission’s immediate concern. The pattern of trade union organisation and activity may change but in subsequent chapters the Mission will attempt to describe the situation of the trade unions as it was at the time of its visit.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The organisation and functions of the Soviet trade unions at the present time can be more readily understood in the light of their history. The following pages touch on the main stages in the growth of the trade union movement before and after the 1917 Revolution and on the unions' place in the political and social structure of the Soviet Union.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN TSARIST RUSSIA

The imperial rescript of 1861 emancipating the serfs can be looked upon as the real starting point of industrialisation in Russia. At the time of the reform there were 522,000 workers employed in industry; by 1881 there were 2,750,000, and by 1897, 5,548,000. Industrial expansion was particularly rapid during the last decade of the nineteenth century. During this period, conditions of work were harsh and the workers' lot was a precarious one. Low wages and long hours were aggravated by the employers' high-handedness, the system of fines, wretched housing and the rule that workers must buy their provisions in company stores. The right to combine was non-existent and the criminal code laid down severe penalties for strikes and for membership of an association designed to interfere with relations between employers and workers.

Despite official bans and police supervision, the workers did sometimes stand up to their employers. Especially after 1870, explosions of discontent became increasingly common. Like the peasant revolts which occurred from time to time against the landlords and their agents, spontaneous and often violent strikes broke out in the towns. During the last 20 years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, the scale of these strikes increased spasmodically in accordance with economic fluctuations and the different phases of revolutionary agitation. It is important, as mentioned earlier, to emphasise this latter point because it brings out a fundamental feature of the Russian trade union movement, both in its early days and in its later stages, namely the close link between the workers' defence of their interests and political
24 THE TRADE UNION SITUATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

action. At an early stage in Russia, opposition to economic exploitation merged with the struggle for political rights.

The earliest recognisable occupational associations appeared before the end of the nineteenth century. A distinction should be drawn here between lawful associations and secret groups. The former mainly consisted of friendly societies or co-operatives, and organisations of this kind spread from Poland and the Baltic States to the whole of Russia; from 1890 onwards, their membership included large numbers of workers. Wherever possible, revolutionary parties took advantage of legally existing societies to cover up their organisational activities. However, it is usually considered that the real forerunners of the Russian trade unions were the secret associations which were formed around 1890 to gather strike funds so as to prepare or support direct action for better conditions. The leaders of these illegal organisations were hunted by the police, which also tried to fight them by setting up parallel organisations under official control (for instance the Zubatov movement, so called after the Chief of Police).

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Russo-Japanese War led to an economic crisis, unemployment and further discontent. On 3 January 1905 a strike broke out at the Putilov factory in St. Petersburg and on 7 January the strike became general throughout the city. This was followed by the events of "Bloody Sunday" (9 January 1905), which in turn led to disturbances in other cities, such as Moscow, Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Kharkov, Rostov-on-Don, Warsaw and Lodz. The protest strikes against the St. Petersburg massacre broke out at a time when a wave of strikes for mixed political and economic reasons was sweeping over the whole empire. Over 4 million workers took part in the 1905 strikes, which rose to a peak in December of that year. Factory committees, strike committees and councils of workers' delegates were formed in the factories, first to guide the strikes and thereafter to bargain with the employers over the workers' demands. These committees, which were frequently offshoots of the secret workers' groups linked with the Social Democratic Party, were a nucleus for a trade union organisation. As early as February 1905 a union of railwaymen was organised in Moscow, and in April of the same year delegates from ten railway networks held a congress to form an all-Russian railwaymen's union. The printing, metal and textile workers followed the same course. In September and October the First All-Russian Trade Union Conference was held in Moscow, attended by delegates from a variety of organisations, and it was proposed to call a congress of all the trade unions. On 17 October 1905 the Tsar published a manifesto in which he announced his intention of establishing a legislative body
and of granting freedom of the press, speech and assembly. The authorities' tolerance of the procedure whereby they merely had to be notified of the formation of an association, and the relaxation at the beginning of December of the legal provisions regarding participation in peaceful strikes, enabled the workers to begin to organise in a number of industries, such as bakeries, tobacco, petroleum, leather, docks, shipbuilding, etc. By the autumn of 1905 there were about 50 unions in Moscow, 44 in St. Petersburg, 30 in Odessa, 18 in Nizhni-Novgorod and 15 in Kharkov. The first "central trade union bureaux" to co-ordinate trade union action were set up in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kharkov. The crushing of the armed insurrection in Moscow in December 1905 was, however, a setback to the growth of trade unionism.

The Second All-Russian Trade Union Conference was held in St. Petersburg in February 1906 and was closely followed by the issue (on 4 March 1906) of the "Provisional Regulations on Trade Societies". The purpose of this enactment was to prevent trade unions from becoming anything more than friendly societies and to place them under the supervision of the authorities. Railwaymen, postal workers and farm labourers were not covered by the regulations. It was also forbidden for associations to form municipal, provincial or national federations. Despite this, strikes and lockouts occurred in 1906 and 1907, and during these years the first conferences of industry-wide trade unions were held (metals, textiles, printing, building, etc.). In the early part of 1907 there were in Russia 652 trade unions with 245,335 members and 36 central bureaux. In the political field, the first Duma \(^1\) was called in April 1906 but dissolved in July; the second Duma was called in February 1907, but speedily suffered the same fate.

During 1906 and 1907 there was a steady reversion to uncompromising absolutism. The revolutionary and trade union movements suffered a serious setback until the assassination of Stolypin in 1911. Most of the unions had to lie low or go underground, and their membership melted away. Between 1906 and 1910, 497 unions were dissolved and registration was refused to 604 others; over 900 persons were arrested and nearly 400 deported for trade union activities, while more than 180 trade union newspapers and periodicals were closed down. By the end of 1908 the number of trade unionists had fallen to 40,000 and by the end of 1909 to 13,000.

A fresh outburst of revolutionary activity and strikes in the years immediately before the First World War marked the end of the trade unions' decline. The shooting down of striking workers in the Lena

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\(^1\)A deliberative assembly or council. Under the Tsarist régime the Duma was the parliament or national legislative assembly.
goldfields in Siberia on 17 April 1912 led to protest strikes and street demonstrations by the workers' organisations. The first number of Pravda, the newspaper established by the St. Petersburg workers, appeared on 5 May 1912 and each issue contained a column dealing with the trade union movement. At the beginning of 1912, when the repression was less severe, there were 65 unions in the country, with 15,000 members, and by 1913 their number had increased to 118 and their membership to 45,000. Side by side with the growth of the unions, in which the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was gaining ground, large numbers of workers joined the sickness funds which were being encouraged under the Social Insurance Act of 23 June 1912. While this scheme was far different from Lenin's social insurance programme which had been endorsed by the Sixth Social-Democratic Party Conference in Prague in January 1912, the management committees of these funds nevertheless comprised representatives elected by the workers. The unions decided to make the most of their opportunity by actively helping to establish funds and by trying to federate locally, regionally and nationally. By the autumn of 1913 these funds comprised about 1 million workers and by the outbreak of war 1½ million. During 1914, and particularly at St. Petersburg in July, the strike movement continued to spread.

Russia's entry into the War cut short the growth of the unions. Shortly after the outbreak of war all workers' organisations in St. Petersburg were dissolved and repression spread through the whole of Russia; there were searches, arrests and deportations, trade union publications were suppressed, and so forth. The worsening of economic conditions during the War led to a revival of revolutionary agitation and strikes broke out in 1915 and 1916. The wave of political strikes and riots came to a head in January 1917.

THE OVERTHROW OF TSARISM AND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The Tsarist régime was overthrown on 27 February 1917 and a provisional government composed of members of the Duma was appointed in Petrograd, together with a soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies. The former represented the middle class and the landlords, while the latter was controlled by the Mensheviks and the Revolutionary Socialists, who together constituted the moderate wing of Russian socialism. The months which followed were marked by the rapid disintegra-

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1 The majority group in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.
2 The minority group in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.
tion of the provisional government, by internal strife within the Russian social democratic movement and by the gradual victory of the Bolsheviks after the return of Lenin on 3 April 1917. Here it will be necessary to refer only to those events of this stormy period which are directly connected with the history of the trade union movement.

On 8 March 1917 Pravda published an appeal from the Petrograd committee of the Bolshevik Party calling on the workers to form trade unions; this appeal was also issued in Moscow and other cities. A number of unions were in fact formed, but the Menshevik wing was predominant. By June 1917, when the Third All-Russian Trade Union Conference was held in Petrograd, there were 976 unions with some 1,500,000 members and about 50 central bureaux. At this Conference official approval was given to the idea of industry-wide unions, to the principle of democratic centralism and to the establishment of a temporary All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions. At the same time Lenin published two articles in Pravda on the need for forming a union of Russian farm workers. Meanwhile the conflict between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks was becoming sharper every day over both economic and political issues. Since the February Revolution the factory and works committees, which usually had Bolshevik leanings, existed side by side with the trade unions themselves, which were largely under Menshevik influence. These committees held their first conference in May 1917 and Lenin fought against the Menshevik proposal that the Government rather than the workers should control industry. Following the trial of strength between the provisional government and the Bolsheviks which took place in Petrograd in July and the campaign against "economic sabotage" by manufacturers, the Bolsheviks extended their influence in the soviets and the trade unions.

By October 1917 the unions had over 2 million members, and with the factory and works committees they supplied the nucleus of the armed Red Guard detachments which went into action during the October Socialist Revolution on the order of the revolutionary military committee. This armed insurrection, which swept away the provisional government of Kerensky, began on 24 October 1917 in Petrograd, and on 25 and 26 October the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies was held. A provisional workers’ and peasants’ government was formed and Lenin became Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars.

1 These factory and works committees, which should not be confused with the bodies which now carry that title, were new working class organisations. Although they were not part of the trade union system, they concerned themselves with certain matters that were also dealt with by the trade unions.
Towards the end of 1917 and in the early part of 1918 a series of Decrees was issued establishing a new régime based on the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Among others a Decree was published on 14 November 1917 regarding the control of factories by the workers. During the years 1918-20 countless problems had to be faced. At home the Government had to end the Civil War, defeat the enemies of Bolshevism and overcome the mistrust of the peasants. After the signature of the Peace Treaty with Germany at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, war broke out again at home: there was foreign intervention after June 1918, a campaign against bands of White Guards in 1918 and 1919 (defeats of Koltchak and Denikin), and fighting against Wrangel’s army in 1920 and against Poland until the Treaty of Riga in March 1921. Meanwhile, the Soviet State under the leadership of Lenin had come into existence, and on 10 July 1918 the Fifth Congress of Russian Soviets approved the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. However, it proved to be so difficult to put into practice the theses adopted by the Party conference in April 1917 (the April theses) regarding the seizure of power that in June 1918 the Government decided on a thorough-going policy of nationalisation and centralisation. During this period of “war communism” the unions played an active part in the reorganisation of the national economy. The First All-Russian Trade Union Congress, held between 7 and 14 January 1918, decided that the factory committees which had sprung up during the Revolution should be converted into local trade union branches. Within a few months of the adoption of this resolution these committees, which had exercised the “workers’ control” introduced by the above-mentioned decree of 14 November 1917, had ceased to exist as independent bodies.

Their duties and the ways in which the trade unions should cooperate with the Soviet State were defined by the First All-Russian Trade Union Congress, which approved the structure of the Central Council of Trade Unions, by the Second All-Russian Trade Union Congress (January 1919), by the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party (March-April 1920), which passed a resolution “on the trade unions and their organisation”, and by the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress (April 1920). In the difficult economic conditions of this period the unions concentrated all their efforts on production and food supplies and also on the function they had assumed with regard to wage regulation and social insurance. The following were the salient features of the trade union movement during these years: the steady growth in membership, which had reached 8,500,000 by the Fourth All-Russian Trade Union Congress in 1921; the consolidation of the system of industrial unions, there being only 23 central organisations
left after the Third Congress, in 1920; the continued debate on the position of the trade union movement in the Soviet State; and the continual decline in the number of Menshevik delegates to the Trade Union Congresses.

The launching of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 opened a period of consolidation for the Soviet Republic. More flexible and liberal methods coupled with a certain amount of decentralisation were introduced in order to raise agricultural and industrial output. For a time a socialist and a private sector existed side by side. The most significant events were the election of Stalin as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party at the 11th Party Congress (March-April 1922), the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (December 1922) and the death of Lenin on 21 January 1924.

In the trade union movement the doctrine that the unions should be a "school of communism" won the day, and the Labour Code of the R.S.F.S.R. which was adopted on 9 November 1922 defined their legal status. At the Fourth All-Russian Trade Union Congress, in May 1921, the New Economic Policy had only just been inaugurated, and it was not until the next congress, in September 1922, that the unions made the necessary policy shift along the lines laid down by the Central Council of Trade Unions at its session in February 1922. The unions, which under the N.E.P. were relieved of their responsibilities in the State apparatus and the management of industry, now concentrated on safeguarding the workers' interests, bearing in mind the interests of the community, and on their educational mission. The slogan of the union movement at this time was "closer to the masses". The system whereby workers were automatically enrolled in the unions was replaced by voluntary membership and individual payment of dues. There was an appreciable fall in union membership after the introduction of the N.E.P., but this was only a passing phenomenon since by the beginning of 1925 there were again some 8 million trade unionists.

By 1925 also, output had more or less regained the pre-war level, but the recovery was much sharper in industry than in agriculture, and a food shortage still persisted. The economic development of Russia now became the major objective, with the emphasis on heavy industry so as to overtake and pass the capitalist countries. Plans with this aim in view were put before the 14th Party Congress held in December 1925 (also called the Industrialisation Congress) and the 15th Party Congress held in December 1927 (also called the Agrarian Collectivisation Congress). The First Five-Year Plan was launched in 1928 and was completed in less than five years. Politically speaking, this period was marked by the
overthrow of Trotsky and his supporters at the 15th Party Congress and the defeat of the opposition led by Bukharin at the 16th Party Congress (June 1930). The unions played an active part in the industrialisation programme especially by fostering socialist emulation among the workers. Successive Congresses (known after the Sixth, held in November 1924, as Congresses of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R.) held in December 1926 and December 1928 defined the tasks of the trade unions in the common effort. In 1928 their membership totalled some 11 million workers.

However, the internal affairs of the trade union movement were inevitably affected by political struggles, especially since the same persons often sat on the policy-making bodies of the Party and the unions. In May 1929 the composition of the Central Council of Trade Unions was changed on the initiative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Some leading officials of the trade union movement were relieved of their functions so as to retain only persons who were faithful to the Party line.

From 1930 onwards there was no further fundamental disagreement concerning the respective roles of the Party and the unions. The latter strained every nerve to carry out the national objectives set under the official plans, namely the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37) and the Third Five-Year Plan (begun in 1938 but interrupted by the War). The slogan at this time was “turn towards production”. The unions paid particularly close attention to increasing productivity, and they were responsible in 1935 for the success of the Stakhanovist movement (named after Stakhanov, a Donbass miner). By the time the Ninth Trade Union Congress met in Moscow (April 1932), the unions had 16,500,000 members. After this no Congress was held for 17 years and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in practice took over full responsibility. On 23 June 1933 the People’s Commissariat of Labour was amalgamated with the central and local apparatus of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R.; its machinery and functions were transferred to the Central Council. In 1933 also the Central Council was given responsibility for operating the social insurance scheme and for supervising the enforcement of labour legislation and the regulations for labour protection and safety. In 1934, following decisions by the 17th Party Congress, the unions also accepted responsibility for the workers’ and peasants’ inspection of all undertakings, and the social supervision of shops, canteens and supply organisations. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the central trade union committees began to exercise more widely social supervision over the execution of some Government and Party orders regarding
conditions of work. However, in 1937 the repercussions of the events which were taking place in the country at that time were felt by the trade union movement and action was taken by the Central Council to re-organise the trade unions. In 1939 the unions had about 25 million members divided up, following the structural changes which had taken place since 1930, among 168 unions.

On 22 June 1941 hostilities began between Germany and the U.S.S.R. Throughout the War the unions made their contribution to the common effort of the Soviet people. They helped to transfer industries to the east, organised socialist emulation to increase production, and helped to operate the system of labour reserves instituted by the Government in 1940. In 1943 the Government made the unions responsible for the social inspection of commercial organisations and food supplies.

In the years after 1945 the unions' energies were taken up with the reconstruction and expansion of the national economy under the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1946-50), the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1951-55), the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1956-59) and the Seven-Year Plan (begun in 1959). The Tenth Congress of Trade Unions was held in April 1949 and approved a new Constitution for the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. By this time there were 28,500,000 members divided up into 67 trade unions. The 11th Congress was held in June 1954 and further changes were made in the Constitution; by this time there were 43 trade unions, with 40,420,000 members. The Constitution was once more revised at the 12th Congress, which was held in March 1959 and at which 52,780,000 trade unionists were represented.

The main political developments during the post-war years were the 19th Congress of the Communist Party, held in October 1952 (the first since March 1939); the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953; the 20th Party Congress, in February 1956; and the 21st (Extraordinary) Party Congress, from 27 January to 5 February 1959. During the last few years there have been far-reaching reforms in many spheres, including the trade union movement. These will be dealt with in later chapters.

**Place of the Trade Unions in the Soviet System**

*Orientation and Unity of the Trade Union Movement*

The Soviet trade unions are industry-wide and are affiliated to a single central body. These two features appear to be due to historical reasons rather than to any authoritarian decision.

Originally, both industrial and craft unions existed side by side in Russia, although the industry-wide unions predominated in key
industries such as metal working and textiles. The Mensheviks and the Revolutionary Socialists appear to have inclined towards craft unions of the British type, while Bolsheviks were in favour of unions comprising all the workers in the same plant, irrespective of their skills, and in all similar plants. In their view the craft unions would split the workers up into a mass of separate organisations which would often be bound to display a narrow guild-like outlook. In order to conform with the principle of unity from which the proletariat derives its strength, the Bolsheviks therefore fought against any tendency to allow the workers to be divided up into castes based on craft which would be reluctant to sacrifice their own interest to that of the community at large.

As the trade union movement expanded in Russia most of the smaller craft organisations merged on their own initiative with the bigger industry-wide unions. The principle of industrial unions was officially endorsed at the Third All-Russian Trade Union Conference (June 1917) and has never since been called into question.

The problem of trade union unity is bound up with this issue. Here, too, the Bolsheviks' argument prevailed. Whereas the Mensheviks would have accepted a fairly loose federal link between the various trade union organisations, the Bolsheviks, who were anxious to harness trade union energies for revolutionary ends, were determined to centralise and unify control over the movement. Before the Revolution central bureaux had been set up to ensure liaison between the unions. Immediately after the Revolution the trade union movement was systematically unified by decisions of the union Congresses. In fact, some of the fundamental principles governing the organisation of the Soviet trade unions at the present day were laid down at the first two Trade Union Congresses in 1918 and 1919, for instance, the existence of a Central Council of Trade Unions, the system of democratic centralism, a uniform trade union organisation and a special status for employees only temporarily employed in a plant or not connected with production (such as medical staff). The vertical and horizontal structure of the trade union movement is described in detail in a later chapter.¹

Originally, technical and white-collar workers were not very willing to be mixed up with manual workers in the trade unions. However, by 1920 the unity of the trade union movement was an accomplished fact, and by that date there were only 23 industry-wide unions headed by a Central Council of Trade Unions. During the N.E.P., the principle of a single trade union for each industry was relaxed—for a few years only—following the structural changes in the administration of industry.

¹ See Ch. IV.
From 1934 until the end of the Second World War there was a further trend towards increasing the number of unions in order to put them into closer contact with industry at the plant level. This trend was reversed in 1947 and at the present time the Soviet unions pride themselves on their unity and cohesion.

**The Unions and the Communist Party**

The preamble to the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., adopted in March 1959, contains the following passage ¹:

The Soviet trade unions, which are a mass non-party public organisation, unite, on a voluntary basis, workers and other employees of all occupations, irrespective of race, nationality, sex or religious beliefs. The Soviet trade unions conduct all their activities under the guidance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the organising and directing force of Soviet society. The trade unions of the U.S.S.R. rally the masses of workers and other employees around the Party and mobilise them for the struggle to build a communist society.

It is only possible to understand the part actually played by the trade unions under the Soviet system if the relations between the unions and the Communist Party are borne in mind. Here too a knowledge of history can be very useful in understanding the situation at the present day.

In Russia, a workers’ party existed before there were any real trade unions and the economic struggle was combined with political action. Plekhanov, the founder of the first Marxist group in Russia (Liberation of Labour) and the father of Russian social democracy, had earlier emphasised that working class action must be both social and political. For some years Plekhanov and Lenin worked together in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, founded in 1898, and in the Iskra (the Spark) circle, but their paths soon diverged, especially after the final split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the Second Congress of the Social Democratic Party, in Brussels in 1903. However, even before 1905 Lenin had worked out a coherent doctrine on the position of the trade unions, first of all in the draft Party programme drawn up in 1895-96 and subsequently in his pamphlet “What Is to Be Done?”, published in 1902. On this vital issue the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were at loggerheads. The former were against trade union political neutrality, against trade unionism on the British model, and against any opportunist approach. The Mensheviks were in favour of trade union neutrality towards a workers’ political party, and clung to a

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reformist rather than a revolutionary doctrine. The 1903 Congress of the Social Democratic Party passed a resolution on the trade union struggle, which under Bolshevik influence emphasised the need for a link between trade union action and the political struggle carried on under the direction of the Party.

In 1905, when the workers began to organise and to take industrial action, the problems of Russian trade unionism ceased to be theoretical. The unions took part in the political strike of October 1905 and were represented on the councils of workers' deputies (soviets) which were set up in that year. The systematic persecution of the trade union movement by the Tsarist Government was probably due in part to the fact that the unions entered politics immediately after their formation. In any case it is highly probable that the dissensions in the Russian socialist movement over the line to be taken towards the trade unions helped to retard the growth of the trade union movement. The Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Revolutionary Socialists could never agree on the part to be played by the unions in the fight against Tsarist absolutism and capitalism. Theoretically, the neutrality of the trade unions was condemned in 1907 both at the Fifth Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and at the Congress of the Socialist International at Stuttgart; and in 1908, in an article entitled "Trade Union Neutrality", Lenin advocated party leadership of the unions. Until the 1917 Revolution, the Bolsheviks endeavoured to increase their influence in such unions as existed and to infiltrate the key posts wherever they could in order to act as ideological leaders.

Between February and October 1917 the Bolsheviks gradually gained the predominating influence in the trade union movement with the help of the works and factory committees. The position and duties of the unions were radically altered with the establishment of the Soviet State:

With a membership of millions of workers, the trade unions as a school of communism became the leading organisers and active participants in the building of socialism, the pillars of the dictatorship of the working class and the faithful explainers of the policy of the Communist Party to the toiling masses. They served as a link between the Party and the masses, first and foremost at the production level.¹

Doctrine on the relations between the Party and the unions had been laid down in broad outline about a decade before. However, it was urgent to clarify—and above all to convert into a workable system—these principles regarding the form that co-operation should take between the trade union movement and the Party. In 1919 and 1920,

¹ Article in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia on "Trade Unions in the U.S.S.R." (Moscow, Second Edition), Vol. 35.
at trade union congresses and meetings of leading Party bodies, Lenin tirelessly explained his conception of the trade unions as a school of communism and the link between the masses and the vanguard of the proletariat, namely the Communist Party. The need for close links between the Party apparatus and the trade unions, however, did not alter the need to keep the unions officially outside the Party with an independent existence of their own.

The theory that the unions had an educational part to play in the building of a Communist society and that they should act as a transmission belt between the Party and the masses survived unchanged. On the other hand, the extent to which the activities of the unions were influenced by the Party varied from one period to another. For example, a resolution passed by the Ninth Party Congress (March-April 1920) stated that—

The Party brings its influence to bear on the mass of workers outside the Party by means of Communist fractions and cells in all other workers' organisations and above all in the trade unions. . . . There must be a disciplined, organised Communist fraction in each trade union. Each Party fraction forms part of the local organisation subject to the Party Committee; the fraction of the Central Council of Trade Unions is subordinate to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. . . . The local committees [of the Party], while being entirely responsible for the ideological work of the trade unions, must in no way exercise detailed control over them.

A further resolution passed by the Tenth Party Congress (March 1921) once more recalled that—

The Communist Party, represented by its central and local organisations, strictly supervises, as before, the whole of the ideological side of the trade unions' work. The Communist fractions in the unions are entirely subject to the Party committees. . . . The choice of officials in the trade union movement must of course be made subject to Party supervision and control. But the Party organisations must adhere as closely as possible to the normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions, which more than any other organisations must ensure that their leaders are selected by the organised masses themselves. In this way the Party organisations, while maintaining general supervision, will be able to avoid interfering with the detailed running of the unions.

Between 1929 and 1953 there were few opportunities of raising again this question of relations between the Party, the State and the unions. At that time final decisions on all questions were taken by the Party and, for example, in 1930 it was the Party that laid down the unions' tasks under the Five-Year Plans and stated that Party guidance was bound to coincide with the workers' interests.

After Stalin's death the idea gained ground at the 11th Trade Union Congress (June 1954) that the role of the trade unions should be enlarged now that the building of a socialist society was being completed and
the gradual shift from socialism to communism had begun. The 20th Party Congress, in 1956, which was held after a short period of transition, marked a change of course. Not only was the "cult of personality" denounced, but all departments of Soviet life came in for heavy criticism. A number of errors and shortcomings in the trade unions were brought to light, and the unions were urged to display more energy in promoting the workers' interests on the basis of collective agreements. Subsequently, the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a resolution at a plenary meeting on 17 December 1957 detailing the tasks allotted to the Soviet trade unions. The 12th Trade Union Congress, held in March 1959, ratified the Party's decisions and undertook that the unions would spare no effort to achieve these aims. A process of change is taking place.

Links between the trade unions and a political party are not peculiar to the Soviet system. At its 35th Session (Geneva, June 1952) the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution concerning the independence of the trade union movement which sets out certain circumstances in which such relations are not incompatible with freedom of association. This resolution envisaged that "when trade unions in accordance with national law and practice of their respective countries and at the decision of their members decide to establish relations with a political party or to undertake constitutional political action as a means towards the advancement of their economic and social objectives, such political relations or actions should not be of such a nature as to compromise the continuance of the trade union movement or its social and economic functions irrespective of political changes in the country". It also urged that "governments in seeking the co-operation of trade unions to carry out their economic and social policies should recognise that the value of this co-operation rests to a large extent on the freedom and independence of the trade union movement as an essential factor in promoting social advancement and should not attempt to transform the trade union movement into an instrument for the pursuance of political aims, nor should they attempt to interfere with the normal functions of a trade union movement because of its freely established relationship with a political party". To the Soviet mind, the nature of the relations between the Communist Party and the trade unions rules out any idea of subordination imposed from above. The Party exercises its influence on trade unions through members of the unions who are also members of the Party. The conduct and behaviour of these Party members within the unions are laid down in sections 67 and 68 of the Rules of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., which deal with Party groups within organisations outside the Party (including the trade unions) but
do not deal with these other organisations themselves.¹ This double allegiance involves trade unionist Party members in extra duties without any special rights. The part played by the Party at the top is made clear in the following extract from a letter written to the Director-General of the I.L.O. on 25 February 1958 by the representative of the Government of the U.S.S.R. on the Governing Body:

In the U.S.S.R. the supervision of the Communist Party has been accepted by the trade unions voluntarily, and not only by the trade unions but also by all the workers and all the Soviet people. . . . The supervision of Soviet trade unions by the Communist Party and the unity of the Russian trade union movement are the result of the historical development of that movement and are a natural and indispensable growth in view of the common task before the Party and the trade unions in their efforts constantly to improve the material and cultural conditions of life of the workers and to build socialism in our country. . . . These trade unions accepted the direction of the Communist Party of their own free will, since such direction is an earnest of success in their action in defence of the workers' interests, their fight for constant improvement of the material and cultural conditions of their existence, and their task of building socialism. . . . The activity of the Communist Party aims at extending the rights of the trade unions in every way, and at broadening the part they are called upon to play in every sphere of national life.²

The Unions and the State

The avowed aim of the trade unions in Tsarist Russia was not only to better the workers' economic lot but also to overthrow the social and political order. Periods of legal toleration were fairly short and most of the time the unions were forced to operate partly underground. All attempts to bring about a more liberal government policy towards industrial associations proved abortive. In fact, until the Revolution hostility between the authorities and the unions steadily increased.

The problem of the place of the trade unions in society and the nature of the relations between them and the State became a real one as soon as the Soviet Socialist State took the place of the Russian Empire.

¹ These provisions are as follows:

"XI. Party Groups in Non-Party Organisations.

67. At all congresses and conferences and in all elective bodies of soviet, trade union, co-operative and other mass organisations having not less than three Party members, Party groups are formed whose task is to strengthen the influence of the Party in every way and to carry out the Party policy among the non-Party people, to strengthen Party and state discipline, to combat bureaucracy, and to verify fulfilment of Party and soviet directives. Each such group elects a secretary to conduct its current work.

68. The Party groups are subordinated to the appropriate Party organisations (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, central committee of the Communist Party of the Union republic, territorial, regional, area, city or district Party committee)."

(Rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Adopted by the Nineteenth Party Congress (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953)).

The question of the control of production was in fact the main source of controversy in 1917. The new régime, however, did not take definite shape until after the Bolshevik victory in October 1917. Lenin believed that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the idea of a conflict between the State and the unions was absurd, whereas Trotsky thought that the unions had nothing to defend against a workers' State. The trade union movement itself was divided into several schools of thought. At the First All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, held in January 1918, a resolution proposed by the Bolsheviks was adopted which stated that, in their view, trade unions were organisations which were called on to build socialism together with other organisations of the working class. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, continued during the October Revolution to defend the theory of the neutrality of trade unions, and maintained that the tasks of the trade unions were different from those of the State, and, further, that even though the State had changed its class character, trade unions alone and not the State could be entrusted with the task of protecting the real interests of the proletariat.

In 1920-21, discussion on the role of trade unions and the State was renewed. With the end of the Civil War and with the beginning of the period of reconstruction the place of trade unions in the State had to be redefined. The discussions that took place at this time within the Party led to the definition of the official doctrine at the Tenth Party Congress (March 1921). One wing, led by Trotsky, urged that the unions should be taken over by the State and should act as state agencies in increasing output and productivity; in this way the unions would have been subordinated to the national economic authorities and would have been made responsible for carrying out the Government's economic policy. The Workers' Opposition, on the other hand, led by Shlyapnikov, with its anarcho-syndicalist outlook, called for a "complete workers' democracy" and the transfer of the whole administration of the economy and the management of industry to the unions, and in fact to a certain extent for the syndicalisation of the State itself; under its system the factory trade union committees would have been endowed with very wide powers. Between these two extreme positions, the thesis of the "Ten"¹ put forward by Lenin won the day. The unions stand between the State and the Party, while remaining distinct from each in order to be able to perform certain tasks which fall to them during the transition from capitalism to communism. They are essential for the purpose of

¹ This refers to a draft resolution on the role and the tasks of the trade unions which was published in Pravda on 18 January 1921 over the signature of the ten leaders, including Lenin, and which was subsequently adopted by the Tenth Party Congress.
building socialism and subsequently, as the State withers away, they will remain an "educational organisation, an enlisting and training organisation...a school, a school of administration, a school of management, a school of communism." This statement is still included in the preamble to the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. In later periods in the history of the U.S.S.R., especially during the years 1933-53, certain situations which arose may have given the impression that the unions had been absorbed in the Government apparatus, and had merely become a cog in the administration of the State, but the position of the trade unions as set out in the thesis of the "Ten" has never been modified to any extent.

The performance by the unions of major functions of a public character is not supposed to affect the independence of the union movement vis-à-vis the Government or the free exercise of their trade union rights. It does, however, imply constant co-operation between the authorities and the unions at all levels. In short, the trade unions must be looked upon as one of the mass organisations which go to make up the complex system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This participation takes three main forms—Independent activities, co-operation with state bodies, and direct discharge of certain functions which in other countries are functions of the State.

The first category includes the collective representation of workers at the factory level (union meetings, production conferences, negotiation and carrying out of collective agreements, comrades' courts, etc.), the organisation of socialist emulation, the running of cultural and social activities, etc.

Under the second type, the unions advise, assist and check the authorities in economic and social matters (production plans, output norms, scales of pay, application of labour legislation, the right of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions to issue regulations and initiate legislation, the links between the State Labour and Wages Committee of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, joint decisions by the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, etc.).

Lastly, the unions carry out certain functions which in other countries are performed by the State (social insurance, labour inspection, etc.).

The following chapters deal in greater detail with the legal status of the trade unions and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, as well as with the duties assigned to the unions in a socialist economy.

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CHAPTER III

THE LEGAL SITUATION

In 1865, four years after the abolition of serfdom, the Government enacted legislation under which strikes were declared acts of sedition; in 1886 the Penal Code was amended to make striking a crime and to lay down heavy penalties for persons promoting or taking part in strikes and for employers who provoked strikes by infringing the existing legislation. In December 1905 another law was passed prohibiting strikes on the railways, in telephone companies and in all undertakings where the security of the State could be affected.

As a result of the 1905 Revolution the Government, in March 1906, enacted the first statutory provisions governing the establishment and functions of workers' and employers' organisations. However, after the Revolution (1905-07) the persecution of the trade unions was renewed and they returned to clandestine activity, though there were periods in which they were tolerated.

The Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), promulgated on 10 July 1918, after the triumph of the Revolution, made it the duty of the State to support workers' organisations.

On 10 December 1918 the first Labour Code of the R.S.F.S.R. was adopted. It mentions trade unions and specifies some of their functions but contains no provisions relating to their constitution or methods of operation.

On 9 November 1922 the second Labour Code of the R.S.F.S.R. was adopted; this Code contains a special chapter dealing with trade unions of workers and salaried employees and still constitutes—as subsequently amended and supplemented—one of the basic legislative provisions on trade unions in the Soviet Union.

As mentioned earlier, the various agencies of the People's Commissariat of Labour were amalgamated on 23 June 1933 with the central and local organisations of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. and their functions were taken over by the latter body.

On 5 December 1936 the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was adopted. This instrument, as amended in 1957,
guarantees a number of basic rights relating to freedom of association to citizens of the Soviet Union.

Another statutory instrument of some importance is the Decree of 15 July 1958 adopted by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, which lays down the rights of factory and local trade union committees. Other legal instruments relating to freedom of association will be mentioned in the relevant sections below.

Further legislative provisions are included in the Constitution and Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., which were amended by the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions on 27 March 1959. The importance of these Rules lies in the fact that, because of the Soviet trade union system, they apply to every union in the country.

When this report was being written, a draft Bill had been circulated for general discussion, establishing basic principles for labour legislation in the U.S.S.R. and the various federated republics. Several sections of this draft Bill refer to trade unions, their rights and functions.

It should be recalled that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, originally constituted in 1922, is composed of a number of republics, each of which enacts its own legislation within the framework of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. The largest of these republics is the R.S.F.S.R. to which 76 per cent. of the territory and the greater part of the population of the Union belong; the Labour Code of the R.S.F.S.R., as adopted in 1922, has been followed in the legislation of the other republics of the Union. The following analysis of the legislation applicable in the Soviet Union is partly based on this Code, as subsequently amended.

**RIGHT TO ORGANISE**

Article 126 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., which guarantees all citizens the right to organise in trade unions, reads as follows:

In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to develop the organisational initiative and political activity of the masses of the people, citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed the right to unite in social organisations: trade unions, co-operative societies, youth organisations, sport and defence organisations, cultural, technical and scientific societies; and the most active and politically conscious citizens in the ranks of the working class, working peasants and working intelligentsia voluntarily unite in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to build communist society and is the leading core of all organisations of the working people, both public and state.

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1 The rights and guarantees accorded under the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. are available only to citizens of the country.
Article 151 of the Labour Code stipulates in this respect that—

The trade unions in which citizens employed for remuneration in state, public and private undertakings, institutions and businesses are organised, shall be entitled to appear before the various authorities in the name of persons employed for remuneration as parties to collective contracts, and to represent them in all matters relating to work and conditions of life.

Before they were last amended, the Constitution and Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. stated that "membership of trade unions is open to all citizens of the U.S.S.R." (Article 1). Although the Preamble to these Rules declared that the Soviet trade unions united workers and other employees without distinction of race or nationality 1 this did not exclude the requirement that no person might join a trade union in the U.S.S.R. unless he was a citizen of that country. However, at the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions, held in March 1959, this provision was struck out of the Rules, thus enabling aliens to join the trade unions.

An interesting problem arises in connection with workers on state and collective farms and in producers' co-operatives. 2 The Labour Code refers only to workers and employees and therefore does not regulate the rights of other citizens, including members of collective farms, to join trade unions. In addition the Labour Code implies that persons "employed for remuneration" may be members of trade unions. When the Code was drafted wage earners could be employed in state-owned, public and private undertakings and institutions. On the other hand, enumerating the possible members of occupational organisations, the Constitution and Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. stated before their amendment that citizens employed in industry, transport or construction, at machine and tractor stations or state farms (sovkhozes), or in establishments or attending institutions of higher learning, technical or occupational schools, could become members of trade unions. 3 At the same time the Constitution and Rules 4 established that members of producers' co-operatives (artels) were not eligible for trade union membership.

This last-mentioned provision, taken together with the fact that workers on collective farms and in producers' co-operatives were not specifically mentioned in Article 1 and with the provisions of Article 151

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1 Referring to the different nationalities within the U.S.S.R.
2 Workers on state farms are wage earners. Workers on collective farms are members of the co-operative organisation that has been given the use of the land "free of charge and for an unlimited time", and are remunerated from the collective income assigned for distribution, on the basis of the work-day units to their credit. They do not receive a wage. The general meeting of the members is the supreme authority in the management of the kolkhoz. In the intervals between meetings the authority is vested in the board of managers, whose chairman is at the same time chairman of the kolkhoz.
3 Art. 1.
4 Art. 10.
of the Labour Code referring only to people "employed for remunera-
tion ", made it appear that these workers, as part-owners of the organisa-
tions to which they belonged, could not belong to trade unions. However, the Mission was informed that their right to be members of trade unions is considered as deriving from Article 126 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

The prohibition contained in Article 10 of the Constitution and Rules was deleted when these were amended in 1959. However, collective farms and producers' co-operatives are still not specifically mentioned in Article 1 of the Rules as amended,\(^1\) nor in Articles 41 or 42 which, when referring to the membership and functions of primary trade union organisations, specifically mention only workers employed at a factory, maintenance and repair station, state farm, office or attending the same educational institution.

As no change has been made in Article 151 of the Labour Code, the legal provisions relating to such workers and the Rules mentioned above would provide grounds for doubting whether there is room for members of kolkhozes and artels in the existing trade union structure.\(^2\) It was, however, explained to the Mission that members of kolkhozes and artels were free to organise trade unions if they wished and that nothing in the legal provisions prevented them from exercising this freedom. Nevertheless, no trade union specifically for collective farmers has been established.

However, a development which took place even before the amend-
ment of the Constitution and Rules must be mentioned. With the progressive dissolution of machine and tractor stations since 1958, a number of the skilled workers from these stations who became members of kolkhozes insisted on retaining their trade union organisation for fear of losing their benefits. After prolonged opposition this demand was granted by a resolution of the Presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.) which recommended that these workers form trade union sections on collective farms with the participation of wage earners employed by the farms. The functions of these sections are limited to supervision of safety and health condi-

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\(^1\) "Membership in the trade unions is open to all citizens of the U.S.S.R. employed in industry, transport, construction, at maintenance and repair stations or state farms or in offices, or attending institutions of higher learning, technical or occupa-
tional schools." The English translation of this Article, published by the Trade Union Publishing House, still retains the reference to citizens, but the original Russian text refers to "workers and employees" and does not specify that they should be "citizens". Machine and tractor stations are no longer mentioned because they are being gradually dissolved. As regards the functions of maintenance and repair stations and machine and tractor stations see Ch. IV.

\(^2\) See also pp. 90-92.
tions, promotion of technical progress and socialist competition, and social security benefits. Labour disputes between these former workers of a machine and tractor station and the management of a collective farm are settled by the management in accordance with the rules of the collective farm.

Persons who wish to do so may join other organisations which are not entitled to call themselves trade unions. A Decree issued in January 1930 by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars empowered each of the member republics of the U.S.S.R. to enact legislation governing the procedure for the establishment and dissolution of associations and unions. The relevant legislation in the R.S.F.S.R. was enacted on 10 July 1932; it places associations of this kind under the supervision of certain administrative authorities, which may, in specified circumstances, order their dissolution in accordance with Article 18 of the Civil Code. Article 8 of the Act states that voluntary associations may not be formed for the defence of the legal or economic interests of their members except in cases specifically indicated in the Act. These cases refer to persons working on their own account and who belong to the liberal professions. The official manual of Soviet civil law explains that unions of members of the liberal professions (writers, artists, composers, etc.) differ from voluntary associations in that their aim is not only to promote Socialist culture and the creative activities of their members but also to safeguard and represent their legal and economic interests. It was mentioned to the Mission that members of these associations, if also employed for a wage or salary, were at the same time members of trade unions.

The preamble to the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. states that membership of trade unions is voluntary. There are no legal provisions under which a person can be required to join a workers’ organisation.

The right to organise is exercised within the framework of certain fundamental guarantees laid down in Article 125 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., which reads as follows:

In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law—

(a) freedom of speech;

1 That is, not trade unions, but other organisations such as those referred to later in this paragraph.


3 During the years 1918-22 membership of a trade union was compulsory.

4 See also Ch. IV.
(b) freedom of the press;
(c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings;
(d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organisations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.

On the other hand, an Order of the Council of People's Commissars dated 15 May 1935 states that no meeting, conference or congress may take place without the prior permission of the competent Federal Minister, or, in the case of a meeting held at the level of a federated republic, of the Minister of the republic within whose competence the matter lies. This Order might appear to be incompatible with the wide guarantees contained in Article 125 of the Constitution. It was explained to the members of the Mission that as far as trade union meetings were concerned no prior permission was required. According to the observations of the Mission, trade unions had numerous opportunities to hold meetings for which facilities were always available. At two of these meetings members of the Mission were present.

The Labour Code\(^1\) requires the authorities to furnish local trade union organisations with suitable premises, privileges in connection with the use of postal, telegraph, telephone and transport services, etc. The Decree of 15 July 1958\(^2\) lays similar obligations on undertakings and institutions.

However, it should be mentioned, in connection with freedom of the press, that a Decree dated 26 June 1932 establishes strict control over the opening of printing establishments and provides for supervision of the activity of all undertakings in the printing trades. Under a Decree dated 21 July 1935 the manufacture and use of stamps and seals are also controlled. Moreover, the Penal Code\(^3\) lays down penalties for breaches of the regulations concerning the publication and distribution of printed matter and of those concerning the "photocinema censorship".\(^4\)

**Registration of Trade Unions**

The Labour Code\(^5\) states that trade unions are entitled to appear before various authorities in the name of persons employed for remunera-

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1 Arts. 155 and 156.
2 Arts. 15 and 16.
3 Art. 185.
4 Censorship is exercised by Glavlit, the main office for literary and publication affairs (under R.S.F.S.R. legislation of 1931, the Glavlit Regulations of 31 July 1936, etc.).
5 Art. 151.
tion as parties to collective agreements and to represent them in all matters relating to work and living conditions. However, to be able to style itself a trade union and claim the rights attached to that status the organisation concerned must be registered with an inter-union body. The original (1922) text of Article 152 reads as follows:

The trade unions organised in accordance with the principles drawn up by the competent congresses of these bodies shall not be liable to registration by state offices as prescribed for associations and unions in general, but shall be registered with the inter-union bodies to which they are affiliated in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the All-Russian Congresses of Trade Unions.¹

The law does not actually stipulate with which inter-union body trade unions must register; it simply states that registration shall be effected in a manner prescribed by the All-Russian Congresses of Trade Unions.² This term refers to a particular body—in fact, the body which had laid down the broad lines of policy and adopted decisions for its member organisations at the various meetings held under that name—which was the highest authority in the trade union sphere in the R.S.F.S.R. The Congress was established before the Code was promulgated; thus the legislator has merely given legal endorsement to a situation which already existed.³ Subsequently (in 1934) Article 152 of the Labour Code was amended and the term “All-Russian Congresses of Trade Unions” was replaced by “congresses of trade unions of the U.S.S.R.”; the Article was thus made to refer to the congresses of trade unions of the whole Soviet Union.

Thus, unlike non-occupational associations, trade unions, instead of having to register with a state institution, are required to register with and affiliate to an inter-union organisation. Registration must be carried out in compliance with conditions laid down by the “congresses of trade unions of the U.S.S.R.”.

¹ The reference is to trade unions of the R.S.F.S.R.

² Art. 152 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian S.S.R. states that registration must be effected in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the Central Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R.

³ The Government representative of the U.S.S.R. on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, in his letter to the Director-General of the I.L.O. dated 25 February 1958, made a similar point in the following terms: “The historical development of the situation in Russia has been such that trade union organisations were already grouped in a single central union even before the victory of the great Socialist October Revolution. The workers have always followed the path which led to the setting up of a powerful unified trade union movement and not to the establishment of dissident and rival organisations which would weaken their own cause. The Soviet trade unions have followed this path of their own accord just because it helps them to defend the workers’ interests. The existence of one single central trade union federation in the U.S.S.R. is not the consequence of a legislative provision or a government policy but results from a natural, historical evolution of the trade union movement in that country.”
The Labour Code\textsuperscript{1} states that associations not registered with inter-union bodies under Article 152 shall not be entitled to style themselves trade unions (industrial unions) nor to claim the rights of such unions.

The only "congress" of trade unions which has ever existed for the Soviet Union as a whole since the latter was officially constituted in 1923 is the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions, which is a continuation of the former All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions.\textsuperscript{2} What happened, in fact, was that the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions decided at its Sixth Session (held in 1924) to change its name to the present one.

The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.) is the highest inter-union body in the U.S.S.R., and the Congress has decided that registration must be effected with it. Article 56 of the Rules adopted by the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions states that the rules of each trade union must be registered with the A.U.C.C.T.U. The same Article provides that the rules of each union, in addition to taking into account the distinctive features of that union, must conform to the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. In accordance with the principles of democratic centralism laid down in the Rules, lower trade union bodies are subordinate to the higher ones.\textsuperscript{3} The A.U.C.C.T.U. specifies the immediate tasks of the trade unions generally as well as in particular fields of trade union activity, approves the budget of the trade unions and defines the general structure of trade unions and their staffs.\textsuperscript{4}

As already mentioned, the first two trade union congresses, held in 1918 and 1919 respectively, laid down the principle that trade unions must be industrial in character (that is to say, organised vertically) and that there should not be more than one trade union organisation in any one undertaking. The Rules state\textsuperscript{5} that "all persons employed in the same factory or office belong to the same union; each trade union comprises the employees of one branch or several branches of the national economy". Under Article 56 of the Rules, this principle has to be accepted by all trade unions registered with the A.U.C.C.T.U. In these circumstances it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of the simultaneous existence of more than one union in any undertaking. During its visits to plants in various parts of the Soviet Union, the Mission did not come across any cases in which there was more than

\textsuperscript{1} Art. 153.
\textsuperscript{2} The sessions of these two bodies are numbered consecutively as a single series.
\textsuperscript{3} Art. 13.
\textsuperscript{4} The hierarchy of trade union organs is described in Ch. IV.
\textsuperscript{5} Art. 25 (a), (j) and (k).
\textsuperscript{6} Art. 14.
one union in the same plant. On various occasions trade union leaders explained to the Mission that the existing situation was a consequence of the historical evolution of the trade union movement in the Soviet Union and that the workers had no desire to set up new organisations outside the existing machinery.

The Mission was advised that the procedure of registration with the A.U.C.C.T.U. does not imply authorisation. It seems evident, however, that new trade unions could not be set up without the approval of the A.U.C.C.T.U. or of the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions.

The draft Bill mentioned earlier, which is intended to establish the new basic principles for labour legislation of the U.S.S.R. and the federated republics, no longer insists on the registration of a trade union with an inter-union body. It simply states: "The trade unions function in accordance with their statutes and are not obliged to register with any government office. The organs of the trade unions enjoy the rights of legal persons."

**LEGAL PERSONALITY AND DISSOLUTION**

The Labour Code states that trade unions are entitled to acquire and manage property and to conclude contracts, agreements, and so forth, of all kinds under the legislation in force. Central federations of trade unions have the same rights as individual unions.

This provision of the Labour Code certainly implies that trade unions and inter-union bodies are to enjoy legal personality. In this connection the Civil Code of the R.S.F.S.R. states that legal entities are such associations of persons, organisations or institutions as may, in their own name, acquire rights in property, assume obligations and sue and be sued in court. A Decree dated 23 January 1929 makes trade union organs possessing legal personality responsible in civil law for their economic activities.

In addition, Article 55 of the Rules of the Trade Unions states that "factory, office, city, district, railway-line, basin, regional, territorial, republican and central committees of trade unions, and also the A.U.C.C.T.U. and republican, territorial and regional trade-union councils enjoy the rights of a juridical person. They have a stamp and

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1 Except in the case of the medical staff. See pp. 52, 71.
2 Art. 66.
3 Art. 154.
4 The property owned by a trade union forms part of the system of Socialist property.
5 Art. 13.
seal of a pattern approved by the central committee of the trade union and by the A.U.C.C.T.U.”

The extension of legal personality to factory trade union committees \(^1\) under the Rules of the Trade Unions subsequently received legal sanction through a Decree of 15 July 1958 which granted legal personality to factory, works and local committees.

On the subject of the dissolution of legal entities Article 18 of the Civil Code of the R.S.F.S.R. contains the following provision:

The existence of a legal entity may be terminated by the proper organ of government authority, if the legal entity deviates from the purpose defined by the charter or contract or if the activities of the organs of the legal entity (general meeting or management) deviate in a direction contrary to the interests of the State.

In this connection, commentators on Soviet civil law have expressed the opinion that in the Soviet State the activities of legal entities are subordinate to the interest of promoting socialism. Business organisations are guided in their activities by the economic plan; public organisations \(^2\) are guided by the objectives laid down in Article 126 of the Constitution, as they are included in the general plan for the social and cultural construction of the Socialist State. Therefore, the termination of legal entities such as government institutions and government enterprises may take place only on the decision of a competent government agency; the existence of a co-operative or a public organisation may be brought to an end either by decision of a competent government agency or on the initiative of the organisation itself.\(^3\)

At first sight it would appear that a trade union may be dissolved by a government organ, because a union is a legal entity and a public organisation. However, the matter is also dealt with in the official manual of Soviet civil law, which refers to the dissolution of co-operative and public organisations by a government organ in accordance with Article 18 of the Civil Code, as well as to the voluntary dissolution of these organisations, “which should be carried out by the highest authority of the legal entity to which full power was conferred by the charter or contract ”.\(^4\) As regards trade unions specifically, the authors added that they “ may be dissolved by decision of their central organs as well as by order of the A.U.C.C.T.U.”.

It has been suggested that the above quotation implies that the A.U.C.C.T.U. is the proper organ of government authority that is

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\(^1\) Throughout the text, the term “factory trade union committee” covers “factory, works and local trade union committees”.

\(^2\) Trade unions are public organisations.

\(^3\) AGARKOV, BRATUS, GENKIN, SEREBROVSKI, SHKUNDIN : Grazhdansko Pravo (Moscow, 1943-44), Vol. 1, p. 153.

mentioned in Article 18. This argument is supported by the fact that on 23 June 1933 the Commissariat of Labour was dissolved and its functions were transferred to the A.U.C.C.T.U., which adopts decisions jointly with the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and other government organs concerning labour matters. The Soviet Government, however, maintains that the A.U.C.C.T.U. does not form part of the machinery of the State, that the trade unions are not liable to dissolution by the public authorities, and that Article 18 of the Civil Code does not apply to trade unions. The Mission was advised that this was indeed the position and that the trade unions could be dissolved only by decision of their own members.

Perhaps the situation can be explained by taking into account the Soviet authors' theory on the creation and dissolution of legal entities. According to them, the methods for dissolving legal entities are subject to the way of their coming into being. A legal entity may be dissolved on the initiative of a government authority or of the legal entity itself, depending on whether this legal entity has been created by an administrative decision (for state organisms) or following the procedure of authorisation or simple declaration. As explained above, the constitution of unions does not follow the procedure of authorisation in the strict sense of the word, "for authorisation to establish such associations is granted not by a state department but by the higher bodies of the social organisations in question".

The explanation given to the Mission was that, since it is not a government authority but the A.U.C.C.T.U. that has registered a trade union, it is not a government authority but the members of the organisation itself who have the power to dissolve it.

**Trade Union Representation**

There is no specific reference in Soviet legislation to the problem of trade union pluralism or to the possibility of disputes between unions concerning the representation of the workers in an undertaking or an administration. On several occasions trade union leaders explained to the Mission that the unity of the trade union movement which existed

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5 See p. 48.
in practice was the result of a historical evolution and the expression of the general desire of the workers, and that it was not imposed by law. Reference has already been made to the resolutions adopted by the first trade union congresses concerning the representation of all wage earners in a particular undertaking by a single organisation, and to the relevant provisions in the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., namely the provision that all persons employed in the same factory or office belong to the same union. There are no trade union organisations for separate trades or occupations in the Soviet Union.

A question which has aroused some interest is whether only one committee may be set up in each undertaking. The Labour Code states that the principal body representing the trade union in any undertaking or institution is to be the committee of wage earners and salaried employees or, failing that, an authorised representative of the union. Only this committee (which, in addition, must be approved by the competent industrial union) is entitled to exercise the rights mentioned in Articles 158-160 (representation of the interests of wage earners, supervision of application of labour legislation, legal protection of members of the committee, etc.).

The Decree of 15 July 1958 confirms the status of the factory or local committee as the representative of the wage earners and, in a sense, codifies the powers which it is generally recognised as possessing. Article 1 of this Decree states that such committees, elected in accordance with the rules of the union to which they belong, shall represent workers and salaried employees in the undertaking, institution or organisation concerned in respect of all matters regarding working, living and cultural conditions.

In none of these provisions, or in any similar or complementary provisions, is there any reference to the simultaneous existence of more than one factory or local committee; nor is the existence of more than one such committee expressly prohibited. On this committee, as will be seen later, the different parts of the undertaking are represented.

In addition, the factory or local trade union committees enter into collective agreements which, under Article 16 of the Labour Code, apply to "all persons employed in a specified undertaking or institution, whether they are members of the trade union which has concluded the contract or not".

As there is in fact only one trade union for each industry and only one committee in each factory no difficulty arises in the application of this Article.

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1 Art. 156.
The members of the Mission observed that in practice the system described above was applied everywhere. Medical staff working in factories, however, have their own union and they are in fact employed not by the undertakings concerned but by the Ministry of Public Health. Teachers and students in secondary and higher educational and training establishments also belong to different unions.

PROTECTION OF TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES

The Labour Code as amended and supplemented by a decision of the A.U.C.C.T.U. stipulates how many members of factory trade union committees are to be exempted from their regular work for the purpose of transacting the business of the committee. The number of persons entitled to this privilege is fixed in proportion to the number of workers and salaried employees in the undertaking or institution as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of persons employed of the committee</th>
<th>Number of privileged members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500 to 2,000</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 to 3,000</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 to 5,000</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 to 10,000</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 to 15,000</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 to 25,000</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000 to 35,000</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35,000 and over</td>
<td>ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In shops where more than 1,500 persons are employed, one member of the trade union shop committee may be released to perform trade union duties.

These delegates continue to receive remuneration corresponding to their qualifications, and on ceasing to perform their duties they return to their former employment on the basis of the contract of employment in force at the time of their election, subject to any amendments which may have been made subsequently.

A Decree of 25 March 1929, which was subsequently incorporated in the Labour Code, provided that, without prejudice to the general regulations concerning the termination and suspension of contracts of employment, members of trade union committees might not be dismissed without the approval of the trade union concerned.

To-day, however, some of these regulations must be considered as having been abrogated in so far as they conflict with the provisions of a Decree of 31 January 1958 amending the Labour Code, and the Decree of 15 July 1958 to which reference has been made previously. The
former Decree amends Article 160 of the Labour Code to provide that any member of a committee who is released from his work in the plant is entitled to return to his previous job or some other at least equally important position and that, without prejudice to the observance of the general rules for termination of contracts of employment, he may not be dismissed without the consent of the next higher trade union authority. The Decree of 15 July 1958 states that members of factory or local trade union committees are entitled to reinstatement in their former jobs or in other posts carrying at least the same rates of pay. Members of committees who are not released from their regular work may not be dismissed from the undertaking or transferred to other work, and are not subject to disciplinary measures by the management unless the consent of the trade union committee has been obtained.

The Labour Code provided that the moneys required to defray the expenses of committees were to be furnished by the managements of the undertakings or institutions concerned on the basis of an estimate approved by the trade union and amounting to not more than 2 per cent. of the total wage bill of the undertaking or institution. Since November 1937 the expenses for these purposes have been met from the budget of the trade unions.

The law guarantees the members of a central committee of a trade union, the representatives of such committees, members of factory committees and so on free access to all the workshops and departments of the undertaking or institution concerned.

Finally, a safeguard for the activities of trade union representatives is included in the Penal Code of the R.S.F.S.R. (1953 edition), which provides that:

Impeding the legal activity of works and factory committees and local committees of trade unions and their delegates is punishable by loss of liberty and by corrective labour for a period not exceeding one year, or by a fine not exceeding 1,000 roubles.

**Civil Responsibility of Trade Unions**

There are very few statutory provisions concerning legal responsibility which are applicable to trade unions. The Labour Code provides that trade union assets shall not be liable for the fulfilment of collective agreements. The responsibility for the fulfilment of the commitments arising out of such agreements is only of a moral nature.

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1 Art. 17.
2 Art. 135.
3 Art. 20.
On 23 January 1929 a Decree concerning the material responsibility of trade unions was issued; under that Decree organs possessing legal personality are materially responsible for any commitments entered into by them in the course of their economic activities. Within the trade union movement itself no trade union body can be held responsible to higher or lower organisations except to the extent that it has accepted such responsibility.

One Article in the Decree, part of which is now obsolete, provides that strike funds, cultural funds, unemployment funds and the premises and equipment essential for the normal fulfilment of the activity of the trade union in whose possession they are shall not be liable to seizure.

**LEGISLATION CONCERNING THE FINANCES OF TRADE UNIONS**

A Decree dated 16 August 1933 fixed membership dues to trade unions at 1 per cent. of wages. The dues payable by workers earning less than 700 roubles per month were subsequently reduced. The system is still in force and the dues payable are laid down in Article 48 of the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. The finances of trade unions, within the framework of these Rules, will be described in Chapter IV.

A Decree dated 1 July 1935 prohibited the organisation of voluntary collections by associations or organisations except in special cases and with government consent.

Although there are trade union auditing commissions in every union—the members being elected by the members of the union concerned—a Decree of 17 September 1947 referring to accountants in institutions, associations, co-operatives, state and social organisations instituted a post of chief accountant within their supreme bodies. All accounting services became directly responsible to the chief accountant.

**COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS**

The first important collective agreement after the Revolution was that covering the workers in the metallurgical industries in the Petrograd region. It was brought into force by the People’s Commissariat of Labour in January 1918 by means of a Decree. In order to encourage the use of collective agreements to determine wages and conditions of work the Government issued a further Decree concerning the conclusion of such agreements on 2 July of the same year. It provided that agreements were to be concluded between the union and the employer or the employers’ organisation concerned and approved by the People’s Commissariat of Labour; if the undertaking concerned was a state enterprise the agree-
ment was to be concluded between its delegates, under the control of the Council of National Economy, the Goskontrol (the state supervisory authority) and the People's Commissariat of Labour.

On 23 August 1922 new regulations concerning collective agreements were issued, providing that such agreements were to be applicable to both members and non-members of the union concerned. The terms of these agreements were not to be less favourable than those laid down by law, and once an agreement had been signed it had to be submitted to the People's Commissariat of Labour for registration.

Shortly afterwards (on 9 November of the same year) the Labour Code was enacted. This instrument contains a special chapter on collective agreements which repeats some of the provisions contained in the earlier Decree. Although the provisions of this special chapter still stand in the Labour Code they have been almost completely superseded as a result of changes in the status of collective agreements. Article 15 of the Code states that a collective agreement is one that is concluded between a trade union (within the meaning of Articles 152 and 153 of the Code, which have already been analysed), acting as representative of the wage-earning and salaried employees, and an employer. It must fix conditions of work and employment for individual undertakings and institutions or groups of undertakings and institutions and specify the contents of future individual contracts of employment. The agreement applies to all persons employed in the undertaking or institution concerned, irrespective of whether they are members of the union or not, but not to members of the managing staff who have authority to engage and dismiss others. Agreements may be either general (covering a whole branch of production) or local, and those of the latter type must conform with such general agreements as exist. The period for which an agreement is to be valid is fixed by agreement between the Central Council of Trade Unions and the People's Commissariat of Labour, and the agreement must be registered with the latter body. The conditions of work stipulated in an agreement must not be less favourable than those fixed by law. The concluding sections of the chapter on collective agreements deal with the procedure to be followed if an undertaking or institution is reorganised or is transferred to a new owner.

After the first few years of the N.E.P., as the scope of economic planning widened, the power to regulate relations between employers and workers was progressively taken over by the authorities, and the importance of the collective agreement as a means of determining wages and working conditions gradually declined.

In 1933 an Ordinance was issued prohibiting the inclusion in collective agreements of clauses granting greater rights or benefits to wage
earners than those provided for by law. On 2 January of the same year
the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions had decided that
piece rates and output standards (norms) should be fixed directly by
the management of each undertaking; the trade union representatives
were allowed to institute grievance proceedings only if these output
standards did not concord with the agreement. Output standards had
previously been fixed by joint committees consisting of representatives
of the employees and the management, in the manner stipulated by
the Labour Code.

Thus the conclusion of collective agreements practically ceased to
serve any purpose. In 1940 Mr. N. M. Shvernik, who was then Secretary
of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, made the following
statement on the subject:

If the economic plan is the real basis for the development of our national
economy, the problems of concern to wage earners cannot be settled without
reference to the plan or without taking its provisions into account. Thus
collective agreements have lost their raison d'être as a means of fixing wages.¹

Between 1934 and 1937 no collective agreements were concluded.
In 1937 it was decided to reintroduce them but no practical steps were
taken to implement this decision. More recently, on 4 February 1947,
the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. decided to reintroduce the
practice of concluding collective agreements in particular industries;
the list of industries affected was extended by a Decree of 5 April 1948.

To-day the subject of collective agreements is regulated partly by
the Labour Code, the Decree of 4 February 1947, various resolutions
and instructions by the Central Council of Trade Unions and the Decree
of 15 July 1958 concerning primary trade union committees.

The procedure for the conclusion of a collective agreement under
existing legislation is as follows. Under Article 3 of the Decree of 15 July
1958 the factory, works or local committee enters into an agreement
with the management of the undertaking on behalf of the wage earners
and salaried employees, including engineers and technical staff. Agree­
ments are renewable annually and apply solely to the undertaking
concerned; there are no national agreements. Usually drawn up in
Russian—although in the Republic of Georgia, for example, most of
the agreements also exist in Georgian—they are posted up in the work­
shops and are often distributed among the workers.

Until recently the agreements followed the directives issued by
the central committees of the trade unions and approved by the

¹ N. M. SHVERNIK'S article on the duties of trade unions considered in the light of
the decisions of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party, in Profsoiuzy S.S.S.R.
(Moscow), 1940, Nos. 4-5, p. 5.
A.U.C.C.T.U., as well as by the competent economic organs. In December 1957 a decision of the A.U.C.C.T.U. provided that collective agreements were to be drawn up according to the particular conditions of each enterprise and in accordance with the suggestions of the workers.

Since the Decree of 15 July 1958 the factory trade union committee has participated in the drawing up of the draft production and capital construction plans of the undertaking, as well as the draft plans of welfare projects, and therefore has wider possibilities of obtaining satisfaction for its demands. Negotiations for the conclusion of a collective agreement are carried out by the representatives of the two sides of the undertaking, but they cannot be finalised unless the workers as a whole have had their say. The draft, drawn up by the management and the factory, works or local trade union committee, is submitted to the meetings of workers convened for each workshop or team, at which the various questions that may be embodied in the agreement are discussed. These discussions and the demands put forward by the workers serve to guide the workers' representatives in their negotiations with the management. The original draft is revised in the light of the above proposals and submitted for final discussion to a general meeting of the personnel or, in big plants, to a meeting of delegates. All these meetings are held outside working hours.

On the basis of the proposals made by the general meeting or meeting of delegates, the director of the undertaking and the chairman of the factory trade union committee agree on the changes to be made in the draft agreement and then sign the document.¹

According to A.U.C.C.T.U. decisions of 10 February 1948 and 14 January 1949, the instrument had to be registered within seven days with the central committee of the union and the ministry concerned. These bodies were required to make the necessary changes in the text wherever any provision was contrary to the legislation in force or conflicted with the basic standards approved by the Government. This system was amended as from 1957, and the A.U.C.C.T.U. decided on 1 February 1958 that the procedure described above should be applied to the collective agreements for undertakings that reported directly to a ministry, and that the agreements applicable to undertakings that reported to the regional economic councils should be registered both with those councils and with the regional trade union councils.

Under the supervision of this higher trade union body, the factory trade union committee takes measures to ensure and check that the agreement is carried out. In practically all the undertakings it visited the

¹ Differences of opinion arising between the director and the committee are dealt with by a procedure described in the next section.
Mission was told that such checks were systematically carried out and that they included discussions at periodic general meetings of the workers or meetings of delegates, at which the management had to submit reports on the steps taken to carry out the agreement.

The subjects dealt with in collective agreements include the obligation of the management and the factory committee to fulfil production plans, develop Socialist emulation and extend the use of advanced techniques. A part of the preamble to each agreement emphasises the important tasks set out in the Seven-Year Plan and the need to use the industrial capacity in the best interest of the Soviet economy. The agreements also relate to the conditions and methods of wage payment and the fixing of output standards, training, labour discipline, labour protection and safety techniques, housing and welfare, catering arrangements and cultural facilities.

Wages are determined at the national level through special machinery, as explained later. In so far as they concern wages, collective agreements refer to the rates of pay, categories of skill and regulations currently in force for the given branch of the economy; they sometimes contain detailed wage scales. They do not include provisions regarding hours of work, holidays with pay and other basic conditions of employment because, as in a number of other countries, these matters are settled by legislation.

The collective agreements concluded today differ considerably from the instruments envisaged by the legislation of earlier years. To quote the words of a Russian commentator on labour legislation, they are—

... agreements between a trade union committee acting on behalf of the workers and salaried employees on the one hand and the management of the undertaking on the other, laying down the reciprocal obligations of the parties in the fulfilment and over-fulfilment of production plans and the improvement of the organisation and protection of work and of the material and cultural living conditions of workers and salaried employees.

Obligations arising out of collective agreements may be of either a moral or a legal character. The responsibilities of factory committees are entirely moral, in other words they relate to such matters as labour discipline, welfare, education, and so forth. It has already been mentioned that trade union funds cannot be held liable for the fulfilment of collective agreements.

1 See p. 98.
2 In the Soviet Union the trade unions take part in the legislative process concerning labour matters.
The responsibilities of the management are generally legal in character. Members of the management violating a collective agreement in bad faith are criminally liable under Article 134 of the Penal Code of the R.S.F.S.R. and the corresponding provisions of the other republics. In the case of violation of statutory or contractual provisions on industrial safety and health, members of the management are subject to fines imposed by trade union officials acting as labour inspectors. In all other cases the trade union committee can exert some pressure, either directly on management or on higher trade union bodies, on economic organs or the minister concerned, to obtain the adoption of measures against the responsible person in management. Finally, the individual worker himself can, either alone or through the trade union committee, file a complaint against the management in the case of a violation of the provisions contained in the law or in the collective agreement that affects him directly.

While the trade unions have rights of judicial and administrative action against management, in practice the number of cases is not great. It is technically very difficult to make a person responsible under Article 134 of the Penal Code, bearing in mind that sufficient evidence has to be submitted as regards his "bad faith", and administrative measures are possible only in matters of industrial safety and health. As regards the "social pressure" which can be exerted on management directly or through higher authorities, it appears that the trade union committees have not made sufficient use of this means and they were therefore criticised during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, in 1956. Since then the attitude of the unions has stiffened to some extent in order to ensure that the legal and contractual provisions are more strictly observed by management.

The obligations assumed by the workers in an undertaking may also be moral and legal. The former entail a moral sanction in case of violation, as for instance a public reprimand if the factory committee so decides, while the latter render the workers liable to disciplinary measures or material loss. It should be pointed out, however, that this is not due to the inclusion of these obligations in the collective agreement but to the strength of other legal texts in which they are comprised. For instance, a collective agreement states that workers, engineering and technical personnel and salaried employees "undertake to handle the equipment, instruments, material and other stock of the factory with care as sacred Socialist property"; the concrete cases are dealt with in Article 83 of the Labour Code, which refers in detail to financial liability.

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1 See p. 62.
of wage earners and salaried employees for damage caused by them in the performance of the duties of their posts.

LABOUR DISPUTES

Since 1922 many statutory provisions have been issued in the Soviet Union on the subject of labour disputes. The regulations provided for conciliation and arbitration machinery to deal with individual as well as collective disputes. Collective disputes might be "economic", that is, based on the fixing or alteration of conditions of work in connection with a collective agreement, or "juridical" when interpretation of an agreement was in question.

During the first stage, which lasted until about 1928, labour disputes were mainly settled under the provisions of the Decree of 3 November 1922 concerning the compulsory establishment of assessment and disputes committees in all state, public and private undertakings and institutions, and under those of the 1922 Labour Code and the Decree of 5 September 1923 concerning the classification of labour disputes.

Collective disputes arising out of the conclusion, implementation, amendment or interpretation of a collective agreement could, by mutual agreement between the parties, be submitted to either conciliation or arbitration. If the undertaking concerned was a state undertaking arbitration had to be adopted if the trade union so requested. In addition, if a serious dispute occurred threatening the security of the State certain government agencies were empowered by law to refer it to compulsory arbitration. In 1925 the management of the undertaking or institution concerned was also given the right to ask for disputes to be compulsorily referred to arbitration.

By agreement between the parties, individual disputes arising out of the application of an agreement could be submitted to assessment and disputes committees consisting of representatives of the employer on the one hand and of the trade union committee on the other. If no settlement was reached the disputes could be referred successively to a conciliation board and an arbitration court. The assessment and disputes committees were also competent to carry out all stipulations of the collective agreement and to work out internal factory regulations. All breaches of the labour legislation or collective agreements entailing criminal prosecution were dealt with by the people's courts.

In the mid-1920s most of the disputes which occurred arose out of the negotiation of collective agreements. On 29 August 1928 a Decree was issued by the Government of the Soviet Union introducing a number
of amendments to the legislation. The regulations issued at this time remained in force—at least nominally—until 31 January 1957; they were supplemented on 12 December 1928 by certain provisions relating to the composition of assessment and disputes committees. These committees, consisting of representatives of the two parties in equal numbers, became competent to settle disputes arising out of the administration of labour laws and out of collective and individual contracts, and in a number of matters concerning the determination and modification of working conditions. In addition, all disputes concerning transfers of workers, dismissals on account of unsuitability, payment of wages in different situations, and so on, had to be submitted to them before being referred to any other body. The assessment and disputes committees were not entitled to adopt decisions altering the terms of a collective contract unless such right had been stipulated in the agreement.

The conciliation boards and arbitration courts set up by agreement between the trade union and the employer were competent in all disputes arising out of the conclusion, modification or interpretation of a collective agreement and in disputes resulting from the imposition of new conditions of employment when no agreement had been reached before the assessment and disputes committee. In the case of state undertakings, the dispute might be referred compulsorily to an arbitration tribunal by the labour authority if either of the parties so requested.

The people's courts were competent to hear disputes of a legal character which assessment and disputes committees had failed to settle and disputes over subjects outside the competence of such committees (for instance, criminal violations of labour standards).

Assessment and disputes committees were competent to fix conditions of work and to settle disputes arising out of the application of statutory or contractual provisions. After 1930 the activities of the committees in the first of these fields slackened off considerably because conditions of work tended more and more to be fixed either by the undertaking or by government decision. When the People's Commissariat of Labour and the Central Council of Trade Unions were amalgamated in 1933 the conciliation boards and arbitration tribunals, dealing mainly with collective disputes, were abolished.

Thus when the 1928 regulations were abrogated, the bodies which had been set up under these regulations had long ago ceased to function in the manner prescribed. The assessment and disputes committees could only determine or modify conditions of work in cases of individual disputes (such as disputes between a single worker and an undertaking),

1 An Order amending the Labour Code of the R.S.F.S.R. to bring it into line with this Decree was issued on 25 March 1929.
and then only if the conditions in question were not already fixed by law
or by other standard regulations. These bodies generally had to confine
themselves to the consideration of individual disputes of a legal character
based on the application of the provisions of legislation or agreements.
A list of types of cases which had to be referred to such committees had
been drawn up; other types of cases could be heard either by the com-
mittees or by the people's courts. Appeals against decisions of a com-
mittee could be lodged with the trade unions. There were certain special
types of disputes (such as dismissal of supervisory staff) which could
be settled only by administrative procedures.

On 31 January 1957 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a
Decree—which was confirmed on 11 February 1957 by an Act—setting
up new machinery for the settlement of labour disputes. In cases where
direct discussion with the management fails to achieve results a dispute
must be referred through the factory trade union committee to the joint
committee on labour disputes at the workshop level. The worker may
appeal against a decision of the latter committee to the factory joint
committee and beyond that to the factory trade union committee,
which is also competent to hear cases on which the members of a joint
committee have failed to agree. Both of the parties to a dispute may
appeal to the people's courts against the decision of the factory trade
union committee.

The Act contains a list of the types of cases which may be referred to
joint committees and another which enumerates the types of cases they
are not competent to hear, and which includes dismissals and transfers
of workers in certain posts of management or authority, determination
of post allowances, bonuses and wage rates, and so on.

The case of a dispute arising during the negotiation of a collective
agreement between the factory trade union committee and the manage-
ment was covered by the Decree of 4 February 1947, which provided that
"differences between economic and trade union organisations which
may arise out of the conclusion of collective agreements will be settled
by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in agreement with the
competent ministries except for questions reserved for decision by the
Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.". In other words, any difference
between a trade union committee and a management was referred for
settlement to the next higher competent body and, if necessary, to the
All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the ministry concerned.
Questions which these bodies were unable to settle between them were
referred to the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. for final decision.

On 17 August 1957 the Presidium of the A.U.C.C.T.U. decided that
all differences during the negotiation of a collective agreement should
fall within the jurisdiction of the regional economic and trade union councils.

**THE RIGHT TO STRIKE**

At no time has Soviet legislation prohibited recourse to strikes, but there was a provision in a Decree of 23 January 1929 protecting strike funds, which seems to imply that the right to strike existed.

In the history of industrial relations in the U.S.S.R. reference has been made more than once to the question of strikes both in doctrine and in trade union resolutions. The attitudes of both theorists and trade unionists on the subject have varied.

In the first important collective agreement concluded in the Soviet Union immediately after the Revolution, striking as a means of trade union action was renounced. The attitude of the workers in accepting this clause was typical of the early years. Even where the right to strike was accepted in principle (i.e. in private employment) every attempt was made to avoid using it. In nationalised undertakings striking was considered foolish and criminal because it would constitute an act of violence by the workers against themselves as Socialist part-owners of the means of production. This attitude does not, however, mean that in practice direct action was never employed.

When the N.E.P. and its system of mixed economy were introduced in 1921 the trade unions openly admitted the possibility of strikes in state-owned as well as in private undertakings:

Previously it was the trade unions themselves which established conditions of labour (the executive authorities confining themselves to purely formal ratification of the methods adopted). Now, however, these conditions are laid down, in state as well as in private undertakings, by agreements between the two parties concerned. And the existence of an agreement naturally presupposes the possibility of a disagreement or dispute.¹

During the 11th Congress of the Communist Party, when an appeal for moderation in the use of the strike weapon was being made, it was argued that "neither the Communist Party, nor the Soviet Government, nor the trade unions can forget and conceal from the workers... that strike action in a State with a proletarian government can be explained and justified exclusively by bureaucratic deformations of that state and by remnants of capitalism."

During the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, held in 1922, a representative of the People's Commissariat of Labour stated that in no case should trade unions be refused the right to strike. Tomsky,

the head of the trade union movement at that time, pointed out in this connection that the trade unions would resort to the strike weapon only in extreme cases. As mentioned above, when the Labour Code was enacted only the unions were entitled to apply for compulsory arbitration, which could also be imposed by the Government in certain cases. In 1925 the managements of undertakings were also granted this right. During this period the number of disputes was fairly high, and they were usually settled by arbitration. Strikes that developed at that time in both nationalised and private sectors were in most cases called without consultation with the trade unions, and sometimes against their will.

In 1928 the period of integral economic planning and complete centralisation of economic affairs began and private industry disappeared completely. With the First Five-Year Plan the U.S.S.R. launched a programme of rapid industrialisation requiring maximum output from the labour force. The State hence began to take a more active part in the regulation of wages and output standards. Trade unions at the same time co-operated with the State in opposing resort to the strike weapon. As a result of the policy of increased mobilisation of labour and industry, unemployment was gradually eliminated.

In this situation certain groups of workers, especially those from the countryside whose sense of labour discipline was inadequately developed, tended to take advantage of the position and migrate from one undertaking to another where wages were higher. This trend resulted in a wastefully high labour turnover. The Government accordingly took measures to put an end to this situation by the offer of special advantages to those who remained at their jobs in the form of higher social insurance payments, better facilities for treatment in sanatoria, etc. At the same time more drastic measures were taken against those who left their employment; among these were the eviction from state or enterprise-owned housing of workers who were persistently absent. In December 1938 a Decree of the Council of People's Commissars was also published whereby, "with a view to regular supervision of workers and salaried employees in undertakings and institutions" ¹ work books were issued to workers and employees. These books contained employment information concerning the worker and were kept by the management and handed to a worker on leaving. ² On 26 June 1940 the termination of a contract of employment and changes of jobs without the consent of the management were specifically prohibited. Any breach of this

² On the present use of work books see footnote 5, p. 109.
regulation rendered the offender liable to imprisonment, as did unjustified absences from and late arrival at work.¹

On 25 April 1956 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a Decree abrogating these regulations. It annuls the penal liability of workers who leave their employment arbitrarily or who absent themselves repeatedly or for prolonged periods without good cause. A worker who wishes to terminate his contract of employment must give two weeks' notice. A worker who leaves his employment after giving notice loses the benefit of the uninterrupted work period and does not again become entitled to assistance in the event of temporary incapacity until he has been working in a new post for six months.

If a worker absents himself from his work without "good cause" the management may take certain measures, namely the imposition of a disciplinary sanction², the withholding or reduction of the workers' seniority bonus, or his dismissal and the recording of it and the reason for it in his work book. None of these provisions contain any specific reference to strikes or to collective stoppages of work and the legal situation is therefore not clear.

On 25 December 1958 an Act was adopted concerning criminal responsibility in offences against the State. Article 6 of this Act states—

An act of commission or omission aimed at undermining industry, transport, agriculture, the monetary system, trade or some other branch of the national economy or the activity of a state agency or public organisation for the purpose of weakening the Soviet State, if such act is committed by utilising a state or public institution, enterprise or organisation or by hindering its normal work, is punished by deprivation of freedom for a period of eight to fifteen years and confiscation of property.

The Mission inquired whether it would be possible for this provision to be interpreted as covering certain types of strikes, which might be intended to undermine the structure of industry, etc., "for the purpose of weakening the Soviet State". In other words, could strikes be treated as an offence under this provision? The Mission was told that this Act was intended to apply to criminal offences and that it would not be used in the case of strikes.

A great deal depends on the interpretation given to these regulations in individual cases. However, the Mission did not hear of any specific instances of collective stoppages of work to defend the interests of the workers and to obtain better working conditions. The persons with

¹ Absence without good cause (other than repeated and prolonged absences) gave rise only to disciplinary measures after promulgation of the Decree of 14 July 1951.
² In certain branches of activity such as transport there are special disciplinary rules covering such cases. See also Ch. V.
whom the Mission discussed this matter simply stated that strikes were not prohibited by law in the Soviet Union, and that in any case the workers did not have to resort to strike action and there was nobody for them to strike against, since the means of production belonged to them.

It may be asked whether militant collective action—even stoppages of work, not authorised by a trade union, in protest against measures affecting the workers in a single factory—is never resorted to in the Soviet Union. The persons interviewed by the Mission explained that disputes could be prevented and differences settled by various means owing to the existence of a number of bodies on which the workers were represented (for instance, trade union shop and factory committees, production conferences, etc.). Through these bodies the unions could exert their "social pressure" directly on management. As already explained, this pressure can also be brought to bear on higher economic organs when the former means are unsuccessful. For these reasons it was felt that the need for strike action was non-existent. In view of the facilities available a strike would probably be considered as a sign that appropriate steps had not been taken in time to prevent the development of discontent.

As regards disputes during the negotiation of a collective agreement, it should be noted that if the management and the trade union committee fail to reach a settlement, the dispute would be ultimately settled by the regional economic and trade union councils. In this latter case it is an inter-union body (the regional trade union council) that settles the issue. It should be emphasised in this respect that trade unions work under the guidance of the Party and that the Party groups in all social organisations and state organs and undertakings play an important role in maintaining industrial peace.
CHAPTER IV

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

The structure and organisation of trade unions in the Soviet Union have been profoundly influenced both by the absence of a recognised and lawful trade union movement in Czarist Russia and by the fact that after the October Revolution the role assigned to trade unions was one for which there were no precedents in the history of any country. While Lenin and his collaborators had a theory and a plan in which trade unions had a specific part to play, much time was spent in argument and many experiments had to be made before a suitable structure could be designed that was appropriate to the needs and demands of the new revolutionary society.

On the assumption that the nationalisation of the means of production and their utilisation in the interests of the workers had removed once and for all the grounds of economic conflicts, the task before trade unions became one of building up a new society through increased and more efficient production. The structure that was most appropriate for this purpose was therefore one that would contribute most successfully towards achieving greater output. A variety of theories and proposals were accordingly put forward with this end in view and at an early stage of the Revolution the question of craft versus industrial unions had been settled, as already mentioned, in favour of the latter since it was felt that craft unions were devised to promote sectional interests rather than those of all workers. Arising out of this exchange of ideas and in response to the various economic and political pressures to which the new State was subjected, the structure of the trade union organisation underwent a number of changes at different times. Its role, however, remained throughout substantially the same as that attributed to it by Lenin, namely a non-Party, non-political, mass organisation distinct and separate from State and Party but pursuing the same ends.

The structure and organisation that exist today are therefore the result of a variety of experiments, sometimes made in times of great stress such as the Second World War, but from which trade unions have emerged stronger and better organised than they have ever been in the recent past. Experiments of this kind apparently still continue
and the Mission could not escape the impression that trade union organisation, far from having developed a fixed and set pattern, is still growing and constantly adapting itself to changing circumstances.

EXISTING UNIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

There are at present 22 trade union organisations in the U.S.S.R., with a total membership of nearly 53 million—the largest single mass organisation in the country. These unions are organised vertically for the whole of the Soviet Union on the two basic principles (a) that all persons employed in any one factory, state farm or other institution belong to the same union, and (b) that each union comprises the employees of one segment of the national economy. The application of these two principles and the resultant centralisation of the movement have given it a degree of unity and uniformity which is remarkable for so vast a country whose population includes peoples of such diverse historical and cultural backgrounds.

In addition to the vertical structure which remains the dominant feature, trade union activity is also co-ordinated horizontally at republican, territorial, regional and sometimes city levels, through the corresponding inter-union organisations.

Although the number of unions has fluctuated at different times since the Revolution, various publications indicate that the membership figures have increased rapidly, as shown below (in thousands):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1917</td>
<td>1,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1918</td>
<td>2,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1919</td>
<td>3,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1920</td>
<td>4,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1922</td>
<td>6,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>6,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>8,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>10,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1933</td>
<td>17,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>40,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1959</td>
<td>52,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be noted that there has been a phenomenal growth in membership since the last war, and that it has more than doubled since 1940. Although this increase is perhaps partly attributable to better union organisation, it is nevertheless primarily the result of rapid economic, and especially industrial, expansion in the country. It has been estimated, for example, that the number of industrial and office workers increased from 31.5 million in 1940 to 52.5 million in 1957.1

The number of unions, however, has for a variety of reasons kept changing throughout this period, as will be seen from the figures opposite.

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While the reasons for such fluctuations have not always been clear, the main influence seems to have been—at least in recent years—the desire to adapt the trade union structure to changes that had previously been made in the machinery of the corresponding economic administrations.

While the reasons for such fluctuations have not always been clear, the main influence seems to have been—at least in recent years—the desire to adapt the trade union structure to changes that had previously been made in the machinery of the corresponding economic administrations.

Though purely internal administrative reasons were mentioned as being partly responsible for the last reduction in the number of trade unions from 43 to 22, the main reason was an important and large-scale reorganisation in the system of management of industry and construction that took place in 1957.¹

Under this changed system, the management of some 200,000 state-owned enterprises and 100,000 construction sites was decentralised and transferred from the control of All-Union ministries and certain Union republican ministries to the jurisdiction of 104 newly created economic councils (sovnarkhozy) that were set up throughout the country. In this process ten Moscow-based industrial ministries such as the Motor Car Industry Ministry, the Ministry of Construction of Oil Industry Enterprises and the Heavy Machine Building Ministry were abolished, and 15 ministries whose responsibilities had earlier been transferred to the capitals of some of the republics were disbanded, and their functions delegated to the regional economic councils. The few industrial ministries which are left are concerned only with planning and supervision of technical production in their respective branches of industry.

With the economic administration decentralised and its pattern altered there were strong motives for a corresponding decentralisation and change in the trade union apparatus because questions of planning, production, wages, and so forth have to be closely co-ordinated between these two organisations. As a result a number of unions centralised in Moscow had no corresponding ministries with which to deal, and some of them therefore became superfluous. The Mission was advised that the whole situation was carefully discussed by the A.U.C.C.T.U. at the instance of the individual unions and that decisions to abolish certain unions and to merge others were freely taken by the organisations

THE TRADE UNION SITUATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

If it is remembered that trade unions have a vital role to play in production and that, according to a resolution of the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions, in March 1959, the paramount duty of the trade union organisations is to concentrate the Soviet people's labour effort on the fulfilment and overfulfilment of the 1959 economic plan in the first year of the Seven-Year Plan, it must be assumed that these decisions were not unduly difficult to take. As long ago as 1926 the Seventh Trade Union Congress adopted the rule "one economic organ—one union". Admittedly in carrying out this principle some trade unions have had to forgo their identity and autonomy. Moreover a union whose structure and designation are periodically altered cannot develop wholly effective traditions and methods of action. As against this the fact remains that whatever changes individual unions may undergo all trade unions continue to form part of the same framework headed by the A.U.C.C.T.U., and it is argued that the fact that there are fewer unions helps to strengthen the workers' movement. It can also be claimed that this system avoids the dangers of inter-union rivalry and jurisdictional disputes which have bedevilled trade union activities in certain other countries.

The following list shows the economic sectors covered by the 22 existing trade unions, which have a total membership of 52,780,000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft and Defence Industry</th>
<th>Metallurgical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>Sea and River Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and Road Transport</td>
<td>Health Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Scientific Institutions</td>
<td>Local Industry and Municipal Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geological Prospecting</td>
<td>Oil and Chemical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative and State Trade</td>
<td>Food and Food Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employees</td>
<td>Agricultural and State Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>Construction and Building Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Workers</td>
<td>Textile and Light Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber, Paper and Woodworking</td>
<td>Coal Mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Power and Electrical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VERTICAL SYSTEM OF ORGANISATION**

As stated earlier, the scope of each trade union covers a whole branch or segment of economic activity. Such a division is in fact much larger than a single industry or specialised field of activity and the dividing line is not so much a matter of industrial or technological organisation as one of economic and administrative convenience.

The Cultural Workers' Union, for example, includes all persons engaged in a wide variety of professions ranging from those occupied in the film industry, the theatre, libraries, museums, broadcasting, the printing industry, newspapers, and so on, to officials of the trade union and
Party organisations. The Mission visited a coke and gas plant producing fuel gas for Moscow city in addition to a by-product of coke for the steel industry, in which the workers belonged to the Union of Metallurgical Workers instead of to the Oil and Chemical Workers' Union. This system prevails throughout the length and breadth of the Soviet Union and the Mission noted that workers on the hydro-electric scheme at Bratsk in Siberia belonged to the same union of Power and Electrical Workers as workers in the Stalin Metallurgical Factory in Leningrad, where turbines are manufactured.

The corollary of this "production" principle is that all workers in one plant belong to one union, regardless of the kind of work they perform. This means that an electrical engineer in a shoe factory, for instance, will belong to the Textile and Light Industries Union, while an electrical engineer with the same qualifications and doing the same kind of work in a food processing plant will belong to the Food Industry Workers' Union.

In the opinion of many trade union officials who were consulted by the Mission, this system was rational, adequate and suited to the needs of the workers' movement in the U.S.S.R. They felt that it was a system which contributed to the strength and solidarity of the unions and had been tested by experience.

The only exception to the rule of "one plant, one union" is apparently for doctors and medical staff who, regardless of the institution for which they work, are all members of the Health Workers' Union. The explanation given for this departure from the normal pattern was that doctors and medical staff do not take part in the actual production work of a factory or plant and are hence in a category by themselves. Moreover, all of them are apparently employees of the Ministry of Health and are therefore not strictly regarded as being on the strength of a particular undertaking.

**Characteristics of Union Membership**

A special feature of union membership in the Soviet Union is the high percentage of students who belong to trade unions. Of the total union membership, about 3.8 million are students of higher and vocational schools. One reason for this is that a large number of students—the number will increase as the new educational plan gets under way—will have spent at least one year in industry or agriculture before completing their studies.

According to the figures given to the Mission in nearly all the plants that were visited, the proportion of workers who were members of the
union was usually well over 90 per cent. It has been estimated that the average union membership for all industries is 93 per cent.

The reasons for this high level of membership are not difficult to find. First, it has become a socially accepted tradition that all workers in a factory join the union, and the unions make a point of ensuring that all workers are advised of the advantages of union membership. In every union there are "activists" whose responsibilities include that of seeing that new workers are enrolled into membership. Membership brings with it a number of privileges which act as a powerful incentive. For example, union members are eligible for some preferential treatment regarding social insurance benefits and in particular as regards priority of accommodation in rest homes and sanatoria. There are also a number of trade union prerogatives such as the allotment of new apartments (the housing shortage is still a serious economic problem), allocation of places in rest homes and sanatoria, and grants in case of emergency; even though non-members are not excluded from consideration in these matters it is doubtful whether they would receive identical treatment.

Facilities operated by unions such as "palaces of culture" and summer camps are also available to members of a worker's family, and a non-union member must have some hesitation in making use of these facilities if he has previously declined to join the union which controls them. Trade union contributions are relatively low and the welfare and other facilities controlled or provided by the unions are so extensive that few workers see any advantage in refusing to join.

However, as stated in the Rules of the Trade Unions, membership in a trade union is not compulsory. The Mission was also informed that membership is not a condition for obtaining employment. The Mission was told that the 7 per cent. or approximately 4 million workers in offices, factories and state farms who have not yet joined unions would fall into one or other of the following groups. First there are the new workers who have not yet made up their minds regarding membership, or whose applications for membership have not yet been considered. Then there are the seasonal workers from the collective farms who work for short periods in factories but who see no special advantage in joining a union. Some agricultural workers, including those engaged in forestry, live in remote and scattered places, and this makes it difficult to organise them in unions. There are also a certain number of older people who are due to retire shortly and are therefore not particularly interested in joining a union. Finally there are the students attending vocational and other schools who are potential members but may have little time for union activities.
Union membership being high among all sections of factory and office workers, the greatest concentrations of organised labour are to be found mainly in the major urban and industrialised areas of central Russia, the Ukraine, the Urals and the Caucasus, and in such newly developed and developing areas as those of Karaganda, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk and, further to the east, the upper Amur. Nevertheless, persons engaged in agriculture (excepting workers in maintenance and repair stations, former workers of the machine and tractor stations and those employed on state farms, or sovkhozy) are outside the trade union movement. The great majority of these persons are collective farmers and their families, who, together with artisans and craftsmen, comprise nearly 40 per cent. of the total population of the Soviet Union. Collective farmers and artisans, since they possess forms of association specially designed to meet their needs, namely the collective farms (kolkhozy) and the artisans' co-operatives (artels) do not at present seem to be eligible to join trade unions. Since, however, it is now the policy of the Government to increase the number of state farms while reducing that of the collective farms, a gradual increase in the number of unionised agricultural workers may be expected. In 1956, there were approximately 2,039,000 on state farms, and the Agricultural and State Purchasing Workers' Union is now estimated to have a membership of over 6 million.

Since trade union membership is so high among all sections of the industrial population as compared with certain other countries there are no clearly defined categories of employment where the trade union organisation is weak. In other countries office and "white collar" workers often seem to be indifferent to the value of trade union membership, but this is apparently not the case in the U.S.S.R. In fact, the Mission was informed that the proportion of members among persons working in educational establishments is higher than the average and is about 97 per cent. Another reason for the relatively high membership among all sectors of the working population may be that the choice of union presents no problem since craft unions or unions with different political or jurisdictional affiliations do not exist; a transfer of membership from one union to another when a worker changes his employment is so simple that it becomes a mere formality.

Management itself in no way opposes the formation and expansion of unions. On the contrary, because of the Socialist concept of production, the management regards the union as an ally, the more so in that

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1 See p. 91.
2 See Ch. III, pp. 42 ff.
3 The Soviet Union in Facts and Figures, op. cit., p. 64.
certain functions which in other countries are regarded as a management responsibility, such as labour discipline, are here largely within the scope of trade union activity.

This concept of the relationship of labour and management leads to another feature of union membership in the U.S.S.R., where industrial managers and directors of the plant, or, in other words, all persons usually associated with management in industry, are also members of the trade union to which the rest of the workers in the undertaking belong. At first sight this might appear to be an anomalous situation since it is the director who usually represents the management and it is with him that the local branch of the union negotiates its collective agreement. The Mission found that this situation is once again due to the comparatively different role played by trade unions in the U.S.S.R. as compared to those in countries where private enterprise predominates. In the Soviet Union trade unions have and are expected to have as much interest in the organisation of production as the management. Both have a common aim and such conflicts as arise between them are regarded as non-antagonistic. In practice, of course, this situation can be expected to give rise to problems in the conduct of union affairs, but it would seem that the director of a plant does not usually take an active part in union activity.

Administrative Structure and Trends

The supreme body of the trade union movement in the U.S.S.R. is the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions. According to its rules, this body should meet not less than once every four years, and although there have been serious delays in the holding of periodic meetings, Congresses have been held more or less regularly again since 1949. The 11th Congress took place in June 1954, followed by the 12th Congress, in March 1959, which had been postponed from 1958. The 12th Congress was attended by 1,300 delegates, 400 of whom were elected by the various industrial congresses and the remainder by the inter-union regional conferences.

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1 See Ch. V, section on labour discipline and Socialist emulation.
2 An observer who visited the Soviet Union in 1959, however, noted that in two plants the director was a member of the factory committee and that in two others the chief engineer was included (Emily Clark Brown: "The Local Union in Soviet Industry: Its Relations with Members, Party and Management", in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University), Vol. 13, No. 2, Jan. 1960, pp. 192-215).
3 See Ch. II, p. 30.
4 The postponement was made in order to await the outcome of the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
The U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions elects the central body of the trade union organisation, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.), and the Auditing Commission, both of which have their headquarters in Moscow. In 1959, 197 members and 67 alternate members were elected to the Council. The permanent organ of the Council is a Presidium of elected members. At the last Congress 21 persons were elected to the Presidium and the Mission was informed that though no special conditions were attached to election those chosen tend to be representative of the different republics and of the more important industries of the Soviet Union.

The All-Union Council meets at least twice a year and the Presidium of the Council at least twice a month. The secretariat of the Council is headed by the Chairman of the Council and six secretaries. A large number of officials are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Council.

The highest body of each of the 22 trade unions is the congress, which is held once every two years. Congress delegates are elected by the union membership at meetings and conferences on a basis which has been determined previously by the central committee of the union. The congress elects the members of the central committee of the trade union, the auditing commission and the delegates to the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions. In the period between congresses all activities of the union are directed by the central committee, whose headquarters are also in Moscow. The offices of some of the central committees are located in the same group of buildings as that occupied by the A.U.C.C.T.U. The central committee meets in plenary session at least twice a year and its day-to-day work is carried out by an elected presidium of between nine and eleven members; the principal officers are the president and the secretary. Each central committee also has its own secretariat.

Each of the 22 unions is organised vertically for the whole of the U.S.S.R. According to its strength in a particular region—which depends on the prevalence of the industry concerned in that area—each union has such committees as may be required for the various republics and territories, as well as at the regional, district and, if necessary, city levels. Where the industry represented by a union is not well developed there may not be a committee for the republic concerned but only one for a district or city. In Georgia, for example, the Mission noted that only 19 unions were represented at the republic level, and ten in Uzbekistan.

In addition to the vertical structure, the union movement is also organised horizontally on an inter-union basis in trade union councils at the republic, territorial, regional and, if necessary, city levels—the different unions corresponding as far as possible to the administrative
divisions of the country. The pattern followed is very similar to that for setting up the A.U.C.C.T.U., and elections to these trade union councils are held at appropriate inter-union conferences or congresses that take place every two years.

Each of the 15 republican trade union councils has its own presidium and secretariat modelled on the lines of those of the A.U.C.C.T.U.—the extent and efficacy of their organisation and activities depending on the strength of the trade union movement in the republic or region concerned. It appeared to the Mission that the republican trade union council in Georgia was, for example, more highly organised than that in the relatively less developed Republic of Uzbekistan. Though the same pattern existed in both republics the higher degree of industrialisation in the former seems to have ensured larger resources and a more developed organisation.

Although inter-union bodies have existed since the beginning of the trade union movement in the U.S.S.R., recent government changes in the administration of industry¹ have been followed by a comparable decentralisation in union management, and the republic and inter-union bodies now have greater responsibilities than they have had for many years past. This change of emphasis was referred to at the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions as follows:

As is known, in the past trade union councils could not settle many questions of production, labour and living conditions. They had only the functions of carrying out inter-union measures and co-ordinating the work of trade union committees, while operational guidance of local trade union agencies and primary organisations was exercised by the central trade union committees.

Now after the reorganisation of trade union work, the trade union councils have become agencies with broad powers guiding the work of the trade union agencies of their respective republics, territories and provinces. They have been granted broad powers and possibilities for settling questions of labour and production organisation, Socialist competition, labour protection and industrial safety, social insurance and cultural and everyday services of the working people. The trade union budget and the state social insurance budget, technical inspection and insurance doctors have been placed under the jurisdiction of the trade union councils. The councils are responsible for mass organisational work in trade union organisations, for the selection, placement and training of personnel and for supervision and check-up of execution of decisions.²

In addition trade union councils were given the right to participate in the work of economic councils and planning agencies, and to represent unions in the corresponding Soviet and economic agencies on questions of production, labour and living conditions of workers and employees.

¹ See pp. 69-70.
² Trud, 28 Mar. 1959.
Appropriate amendments giving effect to these changes were made in the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. at the 12th Congress (1959).

In spite of the transfer of a number of powers to lower levels of the trade union organisation, a step which was regarded as long overdue, the central committees of the unions still retain responsibility for questions of "national" importance. Among these are consultations with the central economic agency on problems of planning, participation in dealing with wage systems and incentive payments, and co-ordinating wages and qualification schedules with output norms. Although the reorganisation ensures a more balanced distribution of work and responsibilities, the central committees nevertheless retain considerable powers.

At the republic and lower levels also there are parallel committees of all unions in the area, which operate side by side with the trade union councils and which report direct to the central committees of their respective unions. In practice there does not seem to be any conflict of authority or overlapping because the members of the various republican and other trade union committees are often also members of the presidium of the corresponding trade union councils.

The trade union council of each republic is directly responsible to the A.U.C.C.T.U., as also are the central committees of the unions, to which the individual trade union committees are responsible. The main result of the reorganisation seems therefore to be the delegation of wider powers to the regional and local bodies while maintaining the integrated character of the trade union organisation as a whole and the unification of authority and direction in the A.U.C.C.T.U.

Such organisation makes it possible to combine properly centralised solutions of specific industrial problems in trade union work with the development of the initiative and activity of the local trade union bodies while giving the fullest possible consideration to the peculiarities of the living and working conditions of the workers and employees of various occupations.¹

Trade union structure at the lower levels follows a carefully graded pattern similar to that prevailing in the higher echelons.

The smallest unit in the trade union structure is the trade union group, which usually consists of a team of workers in a particular section of a plant, office or undertaking. Such a group is generally represented by a group organiser, who is elected for one year and who is expected to take an active part in union activities on behalf of the group.

A primary trade union organisation must, however, consist of 25 or more persons in order to be entitled to elect a factory trade union committee and an auditing commission. In a large plant or enterprise where there are many workshops it is usual for separate shop committees

¹ V. V. Grishin, loc. cit.
to be elected, and each shop committee is normally responsible for most union activities within the shop. A decision to set up separate shop committees is taken by the factory committee. Both shop and factory committees are elected for a term of one year. A former provision that elections of such bodies and of the group organiser should be by open vote (a show of hands) has been omitted from the 1959 Rules of the Trade Unions.

The highest body in the primary trade union organisation is the general meeting of union members. This body determines the number of persons to be elected to the factory trade union committee. In large plants or in establishments which are dispersed and where it is impracticable to arrange for a single meeting of all members, delegates are chosen to represent the membership.

Before elections are held in a factory or plant ten days' notice has to be given, and a quorum of two-thirds of the members is necessary for the elections to take place. Nominations are put forward at the general meeting (or meeting of delegates), and the Mission was advised that it was usual when candidates were proposed for election for their merits or demerits to be discussed in open debate. In such a discussion it was normal for a candidate's record as a trade union member or official to be reviewed, and it was not exceptional even to refer to his private life. Candidates are proposed in their individual capacity and regardless of their Party membership.

Once the nomination procedure is completed ballot papers are distributed listing the names of all candidates proposed for election. Members are then called on to vote for the individuals of their choice until the number of committee members previously decided upon has been elected. The vote is secret and the results are checked and announced by tellers who have previously been elected by the general meeting (or meeting of delegates). To qualify for election candidates must receive more than 50 per cent. of the votes cast. Auditing commissions who check the trade union accounts are elected in the same way. Members who have been elected to serve on the committee meet subsequently and elect the committee's officers including the chairman. The first meeting of a factory committee is usually attended by a representative of a higher trade union body.

**ROLE OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE**

The factory trade union committee (zavkom) is the most important trade union body in a plant. This committee, which in large undertakings may have as many as 25 members, has the responsibility for concluding
collective agreements, directing the work of production conferences, supervising the observance of the labour laws, and generally for directing all union activities. As a standing body responsible for trade union affairs the factory committee is the principal operative organ of the trade union movement and a vital link in its structure.

Recent reorganisation in the trade union movement referred to above has also affected the factory trade union committee and the body of workers in the plant. Two legislative steps were taken in this connection in 1958, as a result of decisions taken by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. at its plenary meeting in December 1957. On this occasion a resolution adopted by the Committee considered that it would be appropriate—

to extend the powers of the factory and local trade union committees, recognising their right to take part in financial and production planning and the solution of problems regarding the determination of output standards and systems of remuneration, to control the application of labour legislation and collective agreements, to give their opinion on candidates for managerial posts and to prevent the dismissal of workers without the consent of the factory or local committee.¹

The result of these measures has of course been to give factory committees more authority than they have exercised in the recent past and to enable the membership to play a more important role in the management of industry.² These measures have been devised because, according to a resolution of the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions, in March 1959, "the new stage of the extensive building of communism requires maximum activity and initiative by the broad masses, and their wider participation in administering the State." It is too early to judge the results of these measures since old habits take time to change, but this is a new trend which opens up great possibilities.

The factory trade union committee is entrusted with a variety of functions³ the majority of which are performed by special so-called "commissions" composed of members of the factory committee together with others who are co-opted from the ranks of trade unionists. In certain large undertakings the chairman and sometimes the vice-chairman of the factory committee are full-time paid officials whose salaries are paid out of union funds. It is also usual for the factory committee to have a number of paid officials such as managers of palaces of culture, music teachers, athletic coaches and others who cater for the educational and welfare needs of workers.

² See also Ch. V, section on participation in management, p. 107.
³ See Ch. V, p. 98.
Trade union funds are derived primarily from the dues paid by members. Such dues are collected under a system which is common to all unions and are calculated on the basis of the following monthly wage rates (in roubles):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage Range</th>
<th>Monthly Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each 100 up to 500</td>
<td>50 kopecks a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501 to 600</td>
<td>4 roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 to 700</td>
<td>5 roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 and over</td>
<td>1 per cent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The membership dues for non-working pensioners and for students receiving no grants are 50 kopeks per month. On joining a union a new member has to pay an admission fee equivalent to 1 per cent. of his monthly remuneration.

It was explained to the Mission that dues are paid on a voluntary basis to a collector who is elected by the workers and that deductions from wages for payment of union dues are prohibited by law. Dues are collected by the sale of stamps, which are supplied to the treasurer of the factory committee on an imprest system by the National Bank. The treasurer distributes these stamps among the collectors, who sell them to the members and pass the money to the treasurer, who in turn forwards these sums to the National Bank against a further supply of stamps. Stamps purchased by members are pasted on their membership cards and serve both as a receipt and as proof of payment.

In addition to dues, a small part of union funds is derived from the proceeds of the sale of tickets and collections made by cultural, educational and sports institutions under the control of trade unions. Since 1959 an additional payment equivalent to 0.15 per cent. of the factory wage fund has been paid by undertakings as a contribution to union funds. This contribution is not drawn from the factory wage fund itself, but from other sources, and is devoted only to cultural and sport activities.

The Mission was advised that the total budget of the Soviet trade unions in 1958 was 7,800 million roubles and that over 70 per cent. of this sum (as compared to 52 per cent. in 1954) was spent on the activities of the primary organisations, namely the factory trade union organisations and their committees. Funds received through the sale of tickets, sports activities, and so forth are reserved for the sole use of the local organisations and if these sources of revenue are also taken into account the percentage spent by the primary organisations is even higher.

The financial resources of the A.U.C.C.T.U. come from the dues collected from members by the central committees of the trade unions; these funds are also spent on maintaining the republican, territorial and regional trade union councils. All expenditure in this respect is on the
basis of estimates drawn up by higher trade union bodies, and the Mission was advised that administrative expenses, including the payment of salaries, organisation of congresses, travel costs, etc., amounted to 15.9 per cent. of the 1958 budget. It was expected that expenditure for administration in 1959 would be even less.

The greater part of union funds appears to be spent on an item described as cultural activities, and in 1958 this expenditure amounted to nearly 62 per cent. of the budget. In addition to the administrative costs referred to above, about 12 per cent. of the 1958 budget was spent on athletics and sports activities, and approximately 11 per cent. on mutual assistance and welfare activities. The Mission noted that trade union budgets did not have to provide funds for assistance to strikers or for supporting political causes.

As a result of the transfer of a number of responsibilities of trade union bodies from the central to the regional organisations, supervision of financial work was also decentralised at the beginning of 1958. Decisions on certain financial questions are now the responsibility of the trade union councils and the factory and local trade union committees. Budgetary expenditure, the Mission was advised, is now discussed and planned at all levels, and at the plant level the draft budget is prepared by the factory trade union committee and submitted to the general meeting of members for approval. As far as expenditure is concerned, a higher trade union body may limit the amount to be spent on administrative costs but apparently has no right to restrict the amount that may be spent on cultural activities.

Over-all expenditure is verified and controlled by auditing commissions who are elected in the undertakings at the same time as the factory trade union committee. These commissions exercise continuous control over income and expenditure, and their recommendations are binding on the factory committee unless they are contrary to the decisions of a higher trade union body. Auditing commissions are generally elected from members of the finance department of an undertaking, who are naturally more familiar with financial matters. The financial work of trade unions is supervised by the Auditing Commission of the A.U.C.C.T.U., which submits a report to the U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Relations between different levels of the trade union structure are governed by the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. and the

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1 See Ch. V, section on culture and recreation, p. 122.
2 Trud, 25 March 1959.
principle of "democratic centralism", which also applies to the Party and other organisations. The essential features of this principle were adopted at the time of the Revolution to ensure unity of command:

(a) all trade union bodies from the bottom up are elected by the membership and are accountable to them;
(b) trade union organisations decide all matters of union activity in conformity with the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. and the decisions of higher union bodies;
(c) trade union organisations pass their decisions by a majority vote of the membership;
(d) lower trade union bodies are subordinate to higher ones.¹

On several occasions members of the Mission discussed with trade union representatives and other persons the meaning and operation of the principle of "democratic centralism" and it was explained to them that the situation in different parts of the Soviet Union is that trade union bodies are elected democratically and are answerable only to the persons who elected them. Since lower bodies, namely factory trade union committees at the base of the structural pyramid and other intermediate bodies, are subordinate to the higher ones (of which the A.U.C.C.T.U. is the apex), all decisions taken by the higher bodies are binding on those lower down the scale.

As the higher bodies are also elected, it can be assumed that they have the confidence of those who elected them and that they act in accordance with the wishes of the majority. Nevertheless, decisions taken by the higher bodies must be accepted by the lower bodies whether or not the latter agree with them. The leadership is in any event answerable to these lower bodies and has to report to them, particularly when the next election is due. This principle is applied throughout the trade union structure down to the factory and shop committees, which are expected to submit reports to the union members before each election.

The question arises whether the principle of "democratic centralism" operates in the same way as in any democratic institution where there is a delegation of power from larger bodies to smaller ones. In the Soviet Union trade union representatives are apparently elected mainly on the basis of past performance and for their individual qualifications rather than on the basis of the particular issues or policies that they advocate. It seems that an election is conducted to choose individuals who can be trusted to represent the interests of workers rather than to ascertain the courses of action which the candidates propose and then to make a choice among them. Thus once a trade union representative has been elected he is not tied down in advance to any particular course of action and he may possibly adopt an independent line, although he is bound

¹ Article 13 of the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R.
by committee decisions on particular issues and must submit periodical reports on his activities. Since power in the trade union structure is delegated through a number of successive bodies the possibility of acting independently increases the higher one ascends the trade union hierarchy. Furthermore, because elections at the lowest level (factory and shop committees) take place annually whereas those at the republican and central committee level take place once every two years and those for the A.U.C.C.T.U. once every four years, if such a trend develops it can last for some time.

A situation of this kind does in fact seem to have arisen, and Mr. V. V. Grishin, Chairman of the A.U.C.C.T.U., stated at the Sixth Plenary Session of the A.U.C.C.T.U. that this was one of the reasons for the reorganisation of the trade union structure.

The present system of guiding the trade union organisations through central committees has led to excessive centralisation, to petty supervision and regulation of their practical work from above. This impedes the development of initiative and participation of local trade union agencies and primary organisations.¹

Apart from the above-mentioned consequences, another feature of "democratic centralism" as applied in the closely integrated and self-contained union structure of the Soviet Union is that there is a general uniformity of policy and action between the individual unions and within them. An average union comprises over 2 million members and is organised on a country-wide basis. Since different unions exist and the interests of all the workers in these unions are not identical, it might be that some of the 22 unions might occasionally wish to pursue lines of action different from the others, but without damaging the interests of all. In actual practice, however, no union appears to have done so in recent years.

The present situation seems to be the result of a historical development beginning in the early days of the Revolution, when unity of action was essential if the new State was not to founder on the rocks of economic chaos. There may be different opinions on whether a similar need exists at the present time. However, the manner in which "democratic centralism" has been applied in practice seems to demonstrate that the principle is based on centralised direction by the higher, albeit elected, bodies, particularly the A.U.C.C.T.U.

"Democratic centralism" doubtless provides for regular and periodical consultation from the lower echelons upwards and for decisions to be taken by a majority vote. It also provides that leadership that is no

¹ Pravda, 12 June 1957.
longer popular can be replaced by new elections, although this is made complicated by the multi-level structure of trade union organisation and the fact that individuals are not identified with policies.

Consequently, there is sometimes the danger that the higher bodies might become immune to criticism and unresponsive to the thoughts and wishes of the rank and file. The criticisms of bureaucracy made from below a few years back imply that "democratic centralism" has sometimes operated in this way.

The defects in the work of the trade unions can be explained to a considerable extent by the fact that the Presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the trade union central committees have not yet abandoned their bureaucratic methods of supervising trade union organisations. The principle of collective leadership is violated in some trade union organisations; plenary sessions are not regularly convened, the role of the presidiums is slighted and questions that require collective discussions are settled by individuals. The Congress emphasised the necessity of not relaxing the struggle against survivals of the cult of the individual and of proceeding in all work from the fact that the true creators of a new life are the masses of the people led by the Communist Party.¹

The Mission was not in a position during its stay in the Soviet Union to make a detailed study of the way in which the principle of "democratic centralism" operated at that time. From its visits to factories and other institutions it was able to observe that large numbers of union bodies existed and that the officials of these bodies were generally persons of ability and influence. The recent decentralisation of trade union organisation has also brought the leadership much closer to union bodies at the plant level than it has been previously, and from the Mission's contact with union officials at the republican, territorial and regional levels it had the impression that they were fully conscious and responsive to the problems affecting union members.

It should of course be noted that the charges of bureaucracy and irregular practices that were made in connection with union organisation are not regarded as inferring defects in the principle of "democratic centralism", but rather as abuses in its application. Although such abuses are condemned the principle remains unchanged and vindicated. Hence a resolution of the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions (held after the reorganisation) again declares that "the trade unions are called upon to facilitate the implementation of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism which combines the State management of the economy with the broadest initiative in the localities...".

The activities of trade union bodies in the plant are influenced not only by higher trade union organisations but also by their relations with the Communist Party. In the course of its visits to many factories and state farms, the Mission was able to see that the Party organisation existed in all these institutions and took an active interest in the work of the unions and of the management. In some of the bigger plants there were also full-time Party officials with their own offices, who evidently held positions of authority. Some of these officials took part in the discussions with the Mission, especially concerning relations between trade unions and the Party.

According to all trade union officials whom the Mission met, the guiding role of the Party, as explained earlier, was fully and voluntarily accepted by the trade unions, and no criticism was offered at any time regarding the Party's activities. The Mission was informed that the Party did not interfere in the work of the unions in the plants, and that it was not a condition of election to the factory trade union committee that a person should be a Party member. To be elected to trade union office, a Party member had to succeed on his own merits, and hence could not merely be a nominee of the Party. From the Mission's observations it appeared that as a general rule some Party members were always to be found on the factory or shop committee but they were not necessarily in the majority. It seemed that the chairman of the committee was often also a Party member. In the larger plants visited by the Mission it was learned that about 10 per cent. of the workers belonged to the Party organisation. Additionally a slightly higher percentage of the young workers in a plant could be expected to belong to the Young Communist League (Komsomol), which works under the leadership of the Party.

To be a Party member involves taking on important duties and responsibilities which could not be performed by everyone. A Party member elected to union office receives Party support for the purpose and is regarded as a Party representative in the union. Hence if Party guidance has to be given to a union or its committee it is given through the Party members in these bodies and does not come as an instruction from an outside source. A Party member's first loyalty is of course to his Party, though as a trade union committee member he endeavours at the same time to see that trade union interests are furthered. In this dual role Party members have a responsible task, and the Party ensures that

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1 The Mission was informed that of the members of factory trade union committees 71.4 per cent. were not Party members, and that in the case of the chairmen of these committees the percentage was 51.4 per cent.
they live up to it. From the Mission’s contact with Party members, it
gained the impression that they constituted a dedicated minority with a
sense of purpose.

It is this rather special position of the Party that has given it such
enormous influence. Party members bound by Party discipline constitute
an élite, inspired by a rather broader view of social purpose than the
average worker, and hence regard themselves as the leaven of the mass.
Their task in the factory is to guide the workers in the fulfilment of state
plans, since in the words of Lenin quoted in the resolution adopted by
the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on
17 December 1957 concerning the work of trade unions, the “main and
most fundamental interest of the proletariat after its conquest of state
power lies in increasing the quality of production, in enormously increas­
ing the productive forces of society”.

In pursuance of this aim it has been the Party’s endeavour since it
attained power to try to convert a largely agricultural and peasant
population in the relatively short space of 40 years to take on the habits,
outlook and methods of work of an industrial population. This has been
no easy task and is why the Party regards itself as the driving wheel and
the trade unions as transmission belts between the Party and the mass
of the people. In this situation the role of the trade unions, as described
by Lenin and as stressed again by Mr. Krushchev in his thesis on the
reorganisation of industry, is to be—

... the nearest and direct assistants of the state power, which is directed in
the whole of its political and economic work by the class-conscious vanguard
of the working class, the Communist Party. While being a school of commun­
ism in general, the trade unions must be in particular a school of management
of socialist industry (and then gradually also of agriculture) for the whole mass
of the workers and then for all the working people.1

Assumption of this role involves the following implications for the
relations between unions and the Party at the level of the plant. The
Communist Party is unquestionably the guiding and directing force of
trade unions in so far as it sees that production plans are met. This
guidance is given by the Party members in the trade union meetings, and
it may be based on a decision of one of the organs of the Party or of the
Government or of the unions themselves, or of a combination of these.
The method of exerting influence from within is possible because the
leadership of the union usually includes Party members. This leadership
has, however, risen from the working class, and is therefore in close touch
with the problems of the workers. It accordingly endeavours to protect
their interests as well, but only within the larger concept of the state
national-economic plan.

1 Pravda, 30 Mar. 1957.
In the day-to-day work of the trade union, Party members, while bearing the over-all policy of the Party in mind, encourage the trade union to plan and develop its activities as a body whose interests are those of its members. These activities cover a wide range of functions such as social insurance, welfare, and industrial safety, as described in a subsequent chapter of this report.\(^1\) The Party organisation at the plant level sees to it that the unions play their part in ensuring that the production targets of the plant are reached and that the economic plans of the State are fulfilled. This is in fact the most important responsibility of this body, for which it is answerable to the higher Party bodies.

In order to achieve these ends the influence of Party members in the unions may be used, for instance, to explain to workers that under socialism the growth of their material well-being is directly dependent on production successes and on raising the labour productivity of each worker and that to ensure further expansion of production and a higher general standard of living it is also necessary "to ensure that labour productivity continues to grow faster than wages".\(^2\) In the same way, if the Party or the Government were to decide that productivity and rationalisation would greatly benefit by a campaign in favour of "Socialist emulation", the Party at the plant level would throw its full weight in favour of the project when the matter was raised in the trade unions. Likewise if a trade union suffers from incapable leadership the Party is expected to use its influence to ensure that more capable persons are put in charge. The Party resolution on the work of trade unions adopted on 17 December 1957 reads\(^3\):

The Party Central Committee plenary session instructs the central committees of the Union republic Communist Parties, the territory, province, city and district Party committees and the primary Party organisations to improve guidance of trade union organisations, to concern themselves above all with the advancement and training of trade union personnel, to recommend for responsible posts in trade union bodies the best, most highly trained workers, those who have organisational capacities and enjoy prestige both among Communists and non-Party people.

Changes in the central organisation of the trade unions have also no doubt been influenced by decisions of the Party Central Committee, as is evidenced by the discussions at the Sixth Plenary Session of the A.U.C.C.T.U., held in June 1957.\(^4\) Moreover, since the early days of the Revolution, the Party has always been well represented in the leadership

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\(^1\) See Ch. V.

\(^2\) Resolution of the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party concerning technical progress in industry and construction, adopted 29 June 1959 (Pravda and Izvestia, 30 June 1959).

\(^3\) Pravda and Izvestia, 19 Dec. 1957.

\(^4\) Pravda, 12 June 1957.
of the trade union movement and the Chairman of the A.U.C.C.T.U. and a number of top Council members have usually been Party members of some standing.

With regard to their relations with trade unions Party members were, however, warned by a resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party that—

In the guidance of trade unions by Party agencies it is necessary always to bear in mind that trade unions are non-Party organisations of workers and employees, that their entire work is based on broad democracy, on methods of persuasion, and that the use of administrative fiat and petty tutelage of them are all the more inadmissible.¹

While guidance of trade unions is an important Party function, the Party also has responsibilities for administrative control in industry. New organisational forms of Party control have recently been introduced to ensure that enterprises and officials of economic councils achieve the fulfilment of production plans and the delivery of goods on time.

To strengthen supervision over the activities of administrations, the Party Central Committee has deemed it expedient to form commissions of Party members and candidate members within the primary Party organisations of enterprises in industry, transportation... for exercise by the Party organisations of their right to supervise administrative activities. These commissions are assigned the task of ensuring regular supervision over the carrying out by enterprises of production assignments, state orders and deliveries... They must look after the observance of state discipline by all officials of the undertaking... The commissions do not represent some sort of special control agency existing parallel to Party organisations. They are one of the organisational forms whereby the primary Party organisations supervise the activities of management.²

As a consequence of this decision there are, for example, more than 10,000 shop Party organisations and 12,500 Party groups in Moscow enterprises and construction projects.³ In addition, promotions and appointments to important posts are largely within the sphere of Party influence. It may happen that the chairman of a factory trade union committee is appointed as the director of an undertaking or that a director is appointed to a post in an economic council or vice versa. Such an exchange of responsibilities may also be encountered elsewhere, as in the case of a trade union council representative whom the Mission met, who was a qualified engineer and had previously been the director of a plant.

The role of the Party vis-à-vis the trade unions and the economic administrations can perhaps be better understood if it is realised that an important Party member often has a dual (and sometimes a triple) role

¹ Pravda, 19 Dec. 1957.
² Ibid., 13 July 1959.
³ Ibid., 21 Nov. 1959.
to play. In addition to being a member of the Party he might be the president of a republican trade union council, a member of the A.U.C.C.T.U. and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. Alternatively he might be a chairman of an economic council and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. These different activities are co-ordinated by the Party, which is thus at one and the same time able to guide the trade unions as well as the economic administration of the country as part of a planned economy and in what the Party deems to be the common interest.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

The procedure for becoming a member of a trade union in the U.S.S.R. is simple. Application must be made in person to the trade union group in the particular shop or unit where the worker is employed. Such application is normally granted without difficulty, and admission is usually endorsed by the shop committee of the union. If there should be any problem concerning admission the Mission was advised that the worker had the right to approach the factory committee and ask for its intervention. Conditions of membership are not restrictive—anyone working in the factory or office is eligible and encouraged to join—and no "closed shop" practices exist.

On appointment a worker receives a membership card which also enables him to transfer to another union if he moves to a plant whose union branch is part of another trade union. Such a transfer is effected without payment of an entrance fee, and his previous record of membership is also credited after transfer. The time spent by a union member in the armed forces is treated as service in the union. As already mentioned in a previous chapter a person convicted of a penal offence involving imprisonment does not retain his membership, which must be applied for again after he is released. A member who retires on grounds of ill health or age is entitled to retain his membership in the union.

According to the preamble to the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. membership is open to workers and other employees of all occupations irrespective of race, nationality (i.e., republic of origin), sex or religious belief. Following a recent amendment to the rules membership is now also open to non-citizens. In Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, where the population of the city was in the ratio of approximately 65 Uzbeks to 35 Russians and other persons from the European part of the Soviet Union, the Mission noted that despite differences in culture and habits of living there was no race discrimination for membership. Russians and Uzbeks were both represented on the republican

1 See Ch. III, p. 42,
trade union council, and in one big plant visited by the Mission the
director was an Uzbek, while the majority of workers were of Russian
origin. In another large enterprise with a mixed group of workers where
Russians, Uzbeks, Tartars and others were working in one shop under the
supervision of a Korean, the chairman of the factory trade union com-
mittee was an Uzbek.

There is hardly any discrimination on the basis of sex and the prin-
ciple of equal pay for equal work is well established in the Soviet Union.
Women make up an estimated 45 per cent. of the industrial labour force;
many of them hold positions of responsibility and are employed on
engineering and technical jobs which in other countries are held mostly
by men. At the same time certain types of work involving fairly heavy
manual labour, such as road work, bricklaying or the preparation of
moulds for metal-casting, are sometimes performed by women. In 1955
the Soviet Union had about 334,000 doctors, of whom 76 per cent. were
women, and likewise a very high percentage of the teachers were women.
In nearly all the plants visited by the Mission in which women formed
part of the working force, at least one woman was on the factory trade
union committee. Women workers predominated in some plants, and in
these cases the chairman of the committee and most of the members
were women. At the Frunze Textile Factory in Moscow both the director
and the chairman of the factory trade union committee were women.
Women are also to be found in the upper echelons of the trade union
movement, although they are not apparently as well represented as at
lower levels.

Two groups of persons, namely serving members of the armed forces
and priests, are expressly excluded from membership in the trade unions.
The Mission was informed that these restrictions did not, however, extend
to civilian personnel and laymen employed by the services or the church.

The position of one large group of the population, comprising mainly
collective farmers organised in kolkhozes and artisans who are members
of artels, has already been mentioned. As the Mission was informed,
collective farmers are members of a co-operative; they are thus part
"owners" of a farm, and are not hired workers. Every such person on
the farm holds a share in the co-operative and receives payment in cash
and in kind in proportion to his contribution in "work-day units"
which has previously been fixed by the whole body of the kolkhoz. It was
said that since such persons are partners in the farm or self-employed
workers in an artel, they have no special interest in forming or joining
a trade union.

It is perhaps not unlikely that Lenin's principle of limiting member-
ship in agricultural unions to "everyone who is exclusively, mainly or
even partly engaged as a hired worker in any agricultural enterprise” still retains its validity, but as part of the present productivity drive in agriculture and owing to the need to retain labour against the competing attractions of industrial employment, there is now a trend towards replacing the traditional methods of payment in kind by payment in money on a fixed and periodic footing. As a result “a great many of the collective farms which have changed over to this labour payment procedure have been paying the collective farmer the full wage on a monthly basis”. From this it would appear that the number of persons who would fall into the category referred to in Lenin’s phrase is increasing. The concept of a “guaranteed monetary labour payment” which is being introduced on collective farms is based on a system of norms and job pay rates and is regarded as “the logical culmination of all the progressive changes that have occurred in recent years in the distribution of collective farm income.” Remuneration on this basis is in fact expected to lead to a situation where “essentially speaking, it will directly express the farmer’s share in the social product, thereby abolishing the distinction between the working class and the peasantry in the forms of distribution according to labour and in the dimensions of labour’s reward”.

In addition the question of union membership for persons working on collective farms has also been affected by the fact that following recent reorganisation in the field of agriculture, the staff and resources of machine and tractor stations have been taken over by the collective farms. Machine and tractor stations (M.T.S.) were centrally directed state enterprises possessing a pool of agricultural machinery which was hired out to groups of collective farms. The agricultural activities of these farms were at the same time co-ordinated by the M.T.S. As a result of the new policy of decentralisation most of the M.T.S. have been dissolved and their machinery sold to the collectives. While certain residual functions such as the repair of complicated machinery and the provision of specialised agronomic services have been left to a small and diminishing number of maintenance and repair stations most of the workers who were in the M.T.S. (estimated at nearly 1.5 million), have been assigned to various collective farms. These persons, as mentioned earlier, have succeeded in retaining their membership in the Agricultural and State Purchasing Union, and this fact seems to have affected the situation in the collective farms. While the position of these former M.T.S.

1 See the article on guaranteed cash payment of labour on collective farms, in Voprosy Ekonomiki (Moscow), No. 2, Feb. 1959, p. 116.
2 Ibid., p. 115.
3 Ibid., the article on strengthening the principle of material incentive in collective farm production, on p. 88.
4 See Ch. III, p. 43.
workers as union members is not now in question, it does not seem to be the same as that of union members in industry in that union groups in collective farms do not at present seem to have the right to negotiate agreements. At the same time farms taking over former M.T.S. workers have been obliged to pay them the same comparatively high wages they enjoyed previously, and this, coupled with the fact that as union members they are eligible for sickness insurance, paid holidays, pensions and the protection of the industrial health and safety laws, seems not to have passed unnoticed by the collective farmers.

There is evidence to suggest that some collective farmers would if given the opportunity like to have the same status as trade union members. In an M.T.S. meeting where the recent reorganisation was discussed and the importance of taking their trade union organisation into the collective farms was stressed one of the speakers said:

Each time work begins in the fields, the trailer hands come to me and to the trade union organiser and say: "Let us join your trade union". I say to them: "You are members of a kolkhoz and you have no trade union organisation". And they answer: "We and your tractor drivers work on the same unit, we do the same job, we eat out of the same pot and in the ordinary affairs of the brigade we want to have the same rights as the machine-tractor staff".

In view of the economic and other developments referred to above it would therefore appear that the pattern of labour relations in the agricultural sector is undergoing a gradual change which must have important consequences for the extension of trade union activity to the collective farms.

**RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

Certain rights pertaining to union membership and which are significant for a study of freedom of association are specifically listed in the Rules of the Trade Unions, which apply to all trade unions. They include the right to take part in discussions, to criticise union activities, to elect representatives and to be elected to union bodies. These rights are important and essential for the functioning of an active and vigorous trade union movement. For these guarantees to be effective, however, it is not enough for them to be prescribed in the Rules; they must be constantly exercised, their use must not be inhibited and they must also be experienced in practice if their value is to be appreciated.

The Mission's study of these aspects of trade union freedom was limited to what it was able to learn by discussion and observation during a broad survey of freedom of association. According to some observers,

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much of what is now current practice has developed only within the recent past. On the basis of the Mission's experience it seemed that a substantial number of trade union members are now taking an active part in union affairs. In addition to the members of the factory committee each trade union body in the plant has its group of "activists", i.e. active members engaged in the carrying out of the various trade union functions. In nearly every plant that was visited the Mission noticed that the union possessed a large and well-equipped office and that in addition excellent facilities existed either in the plant or in the neighbouring "palace of culture" for meetings, discussions and other activities to be held. Since the functions of unions are very diverse, and touch on a number of aspects of a worker's life, including educational, cultural and welfare work, it was evident that members were able to profit from a wide variety of union activities—even though many of these might be regarded in some countries as outside the scope of trade union work.

As regards the right to elect representatives and be elected to union bodies, these rights too, as far as the Mission could judge, were being exercised and elections were being held regularly. The Mission was advised that no specific conditions such as age, length of membership or prior experience of trade union work had to be fulfilled by a candidate proposed for election. At present the active membership of the unions includes 3.5 million members of factory, local and shop committees, plus 1,380,000\(^1\) trade union group organisers, all of whom are periodically elected. In addition there are over 7 million members of various commissions of factory and local trade union committees who are co-opted for such work. This represents a vast army of voluntary and (with a few exceptions) unpaid trade unionists who have to account periodically to the membership for their activities.

As regards the right of members to criticise the activities of trade unions and Soviet economic bodies, it is expressly stated in the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. that each member has the right "to criticise at trade union meetings, conferences, congresses and in the press the activities of trade union, economic or Soviet bodies, or their personnel". To be significant, this right must include not only the right to point out faults and make suggestions at the local level but also the right to criticise the leadership and the policy it has been or is pursuing. Though trade union policy may not be a subject of acute controversy a variety of different points of view might be expected. Nevertheless, where criticisms of union activity are voiced, they are made in the main by the Party\(^2\) or by the leadership of trade unions, and often relate to the work

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1 V. V. Grishin, op. cit. p. 40.
2 See Ch. III, p. 59.
of lower echelons of the movement, such as trade union councils. Thus, it may be noted that at the 12th U.S.S.R. Congress of Trade Unions, which was being held a little more than four years after the previous one, there was little comment on such questions as the abolition and merger of certain unions and their reduction from 43 to 22, the reorganisation of the movement following the decentralisation of the management of industry or the Seven-Year Plan, in which the unions have a vital part to play.

Naturally, while the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. guarantee a certain number of rights to the trade union member they also impose on him a number of obligations, some of which correspond to those that are commonly found in trade union rule books, while others may be described as obligations towards society. These state that a member is in duty bound—

\[(a)\] to work unremittingly for a further advance of the national economy, science and culture of the Soviet State, for the fulfilment by every enterprise, shop and team of their production plans and targets, and for a steady rise in labour productivity; to take an active part in the Socialist emulation movement;

\[(b)\] to safeguard and strengthen public Socialist property [as] the sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet system, the source of the wealth and might of the country, the source of a prosperous and cultured life for all the working people;

\[(c)\] scrupulously to observe state and labour discipline, to fight every manifestation of loose discipline, bearing in mind that any violation of labour discipline is detrimental to the interests of the country and the people;

\[(d)\] to raise the level of his general education and technical knowledge, trade and professional skill; to master his own job and advanced methods of work; to strive to maintain a high standard of public morals;

\[(e)\] to expose shortcomings in production and work for their elimination;

\[(f)\] to attend all trade union meetings and fulfil social assignments given him by trade union bodies;

\[(g)\] to observe the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. and pay membership dues punctually.

In some countries certain of these duties would be considered as being outside the field of trade union activity and as coming solely under the responsibility of management. On the other hand, it is evident that trade unions in the Soviet Union are expected to co-operate actively with management in promoting economic development and ensuring the participation of the workers in this effort because, once again, the means of production are owned by the State and benefits are shared by the whole community.

The emphasis on the importance of production and on the completion and overfulfilment of economic plans is found all over the Soviet Union; it was encountered by the Mission in all the factories and state farms it visited and is a subject to which the greatest attention is given
by the press. Slogans, posters and charts exhorting workers to greater efforts and to higher productivity were seen in every plant and workplace.

A member of a trade union may be penalised by trade union bodies if he fails to pay his membership dues for more than three months, lacks discipline, or indulges in "undignified general behaviour". The nature of such indiscipline or misbehaviour is not specified and is presumably a matter for appraisal by the trade union group or shop meeting. The penalty may take the form of a public caution, reprimand, censure or even exposure and as an extreme step the member may be expelled from the union. According to Article 12 of the Rules—

The decision of the trade union group or shop meeting to expel a member comes into effect after it is approved by the factory or office committee of the union. The decision of the primary trade union organisation to expel or to penalise a member must be passed in the presence of the member concerned.

There does not appear to be any specific provision for an appeal against any of the above-mentioned penalties, provided they are endorsed by the factory trade union committee, although the Mission was informed that any trade union member might lodge such an appeal.

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Some of the distinctive characteristics of the organisation and administration of trade unions as well as of the rights and duties of individual members have their origin in the political, economic and social structure of the Soviet Union. While these basic features have remained the same since the Revolution, a high rate of economic and particularly industrial development has resulted in a rapid increase of union membership, first among factory workers and then among office and white-collar workers. There has also been a parallel extension of union activity among agricultural workers. The degree of influence which the workers as a whole have exercised on the policies of their unions has varied at different times. It is, however, clear that the increasingly complex technical and financial structure of modern industry has increased the need and widened the scope for union action. These needs and activities will expand as the economy develops further, and to enable them to face this expansion there will doubtless be appropriate and continuing changes in the machinery and functions of trade unions.
CHAPTER V

FUNCTIONS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

When considering the question of freedom of association in any country, it is necessary to have regard not only to the legal provisions and the way in which they are applied but also to the extent to which the trade unions have been admitted into the country’s economic and social organisations. A study of the functions of the trade unions is one way of appreciating this aspect of the situation.

The traditional concept of trade union functions which evolved in the Western countries at the time of the unions’ early struggles for existence was that the main purpose of trade unions was to defend the workers’ rights and interests against both the employers and the State. Since that time the situation has substantially altered in a number of countries, and the unions have taken on wider functions and acquired new responsibilities. In those Western countries which have now reached an advanced stage of industrialisation and have thus been able to ensure relatively high standards of living for their rising population, the trade unions have become firmly established; in most of them the unions have in fact finally been accepted as part of the social structure. Recognised as spokesmen for large groups of the population, they play an active part in the general social, political and economic life of the community. In some of the countries in which branches of industry have been nationalised, the unions have been sharing the responsibility for the running of these industries.

The concept of trade union functions has undergone a further change in countries in which an industrial revolution has resulted from the abolition of private capitalism and the full or partial socialisation of the means of production. In those countries, in addition to defending the workers’ rights and their share in the benefits obtained by the community, the workers’ organisations have been expected to assume the responsibility of co-operating directly in the promotion of the economic progress of the country. Such a concept of trade union tasks stems from the premise that in a classless society, where all the people are engaged in a common venture of increasing the welfare of the whole community, the various groups are no longer opposed in defending their separate econ-
omic interests. With the disappearance of this fundamental contradiction, the differences arising between labour and management are held to be of a non-antagonistic nature and the position of both workers and managers is considered solely in the light of their respective functions.

The Mission could not fail to notice that the Soviet workers were not so much concerned with the problem of against whom they should use their combined strength as how they should use it in order to improve their position. In principle, the education of workers is still considered to be the main task of the trade unions but, in accordance with historical circumstances and the stage of development reached by society, it is also agreed that the unions must take on other functions. The fact that there has been an industrial and political revolution in a society composed of many peoples and cultures and that a shepherd or a peasant has had to be turned into a city dweller and a modern industrial worker within one generation has put a great onus on the Soviet trade unions. They had to play the role of an educator, an animator, and to be a buffer and a transmission belt, and they went through many trials and difficulties. Now, with the Soviet Union emerging as a powerful industrial State which the trade unions have helped to shape, they are able to appraise more clearly both their position and their functions.

The new spirit was already reflected in the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., taken at its plenary meeting in December 1957, when it was stated that at whatever level—central, regional, or at that of an undertaking—the trade unions should be closely associated with decisions on labour and wage matters. A similar spirit may be felt in the revised Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., which were adopted in March 1959 and in which emphasis is laid on the increasingly important part played by the trade union movement in the social and economic life of the country.

It has been urged in this connection that the unions should display greater initiative and efficiency in contributing to the solution of economic problems and should participate more vigorously in the work of State and economic bodies. The latter have not escaped criticism because it has been pointed out that the bodies responsible for planning and the economic councils do not always sufficiently appreciate the role of the trade unions and the fact that they should be consulted during any review of labour and production problems. ¹

The functions of the trade unions range from legislative initiative and participation in national economic planning to negotiation of collective agreements and administration of cultural and recreation facilities.

¹ V. V. GRISHIN, op. cit., p. 20.
These activities are carried out in various ways through a wide network of trade union bodies set up at the different organisational levels.

The trade unions take an active part in the drafting and issuing of labour legislation, including laws concerning social insurance, living conditions and cultural amenities. In fact, no such law can be introduced or amended without the consent of the unions. Furthermore, the unions have a discretionary right to propose legislative measures directly to the highest government authorities. Proposals affecting labour conditions throughout the country are within the competence of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions which, with respect to questions concerning particular branches of the national economy, consults the central committees of the relevant unions. The Soviet trade unions also participate in the planning of the national economy. Although at the top level this is the task of the A.U.C.C.T.U., the other trade union bodies down the organisational ladder also appear to be actively concerned with the preparation of economic plans. The Mission was informed that the Seven-Year Plan had been widely discussed throughout the country, not only in the press but particularly in all kinds of undertakings, whether industrial or agricultural, and that subsequently the original version had been substantially amended. It was also explained to the Mission that when economic plans were drafted three main factors were taken into account, namely the production targets, the number of workers required, and the wage fund; the trade unions took part in the discussion of all labour and wage aspects and the final version of the plan was drawn up after the unions’ agreement had been secured.

A very substantial part of trade union functions consists of the daily tasks of the primary trade union organisations. To carry them out, the factory trade union committee sets up several commissions which include those dealing with mass production, wages, labour protection and safety, housing and welfare, social insurance and cultural activities. Wherever a considerable number of women are employed a child welfare commission is set up; or, if the workers have small plots of land attached to their houses, a kitchen garden commission may be established. The facilities necessary for the committee’s work and the conduct of workers’ meetings are, as mentioned earlier, supplied by the management free of charge.\(^1\)

**Wage Determination**

Traditionally one of the prime functions of trade unions has been to maintain and improve wage rates through collective bargaining, the

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1 See Ch. III, p. 45.
promotion of minimum wage legislation and the establishment of wage-fixing machinery, and by other means. The general situation in the U.S.S.R. is thus that wages are determined in three distinct stages, namely planning the national wage fund, fixing rates of pay and bonuses, and establishing output standards.

The wage fund for the whole country and for all branches of the economy is determined at the national level in close co-operation between the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), the State Labour and Wages Committee, the Ministry of Finance, the economic Ministries concerned and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. To enable this to be done the State Planning Committee usually calculates and proposes the amount of the fund. When no agreement on this proposal is reached between the A.U.C.C.T.U. and a government department, the matter is referred to the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and ultimately to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., with which the final decision lies.

It is within this global wage fund that allocations are made for particular economic sectors. At the same time the fund is based on the amounts required by the different branches of the national economy and, within these branches, by the various undertakings. The Mission was urged to regard the wage fund not as a rigid budgetary item imposed from above but as a credit that would be needed for the payment of wages in accordance with the production plans.

The basic wage rates are fixed nationally for each economic sector throughout the whole territory of the U.S.S.R. After preliminary discussions between the A.U.C.C.T.U., the central committees of the relevant trade unions, the State Labour and Wages Committee and other government departments concerned, the State Labour and Wages Committee prepares draft wage proposals on which the views of the regional economic and trade union bodies as well as some representative factory or local trade union committees are sought. On the completion of this pooling of opinions, the matter is discussed anew by the trade union bodies prior to final consideration by the State Labour and Wages Committee and the A.U.C.C.T.U. Their jointly agreed proposal is then put before the Council of Ministers and, if approved, embodied in a governmental ordinance.

Most production workers are on piece rates. Special rates are determined for jobs of a hazardous nature, or for those performed in high temperatures and under specially arduous conditions. Each wage scale comprises several job categories which are divided into wage classes. The Mission was told that the number of wage classes did not exceed eight and that the maximum span within a job category was about one to 2.8. However, a tendency to compress wage differentials had become
apparent by the end of 1958 when it was advocated that, within a scale reduced to six or seven classes, the highest rate should generally be no more than twice the lowest rate.¹

To illustrate this point a wage scale included in a 1959 collective agreement is set out opposite.

The wage rates vary with the nature of the industry, with coal, mineral mining and iron and steel topping the list and light and food industries closing it. Wage rates of agricultural workers continue to be lower than those paid in industry, although the Mission learnt that, following extensive mechanisation of agriculture and a substantial increase in productivity, agricultural wages had risen considerably. This seems to be in keeping with the tendency to increase the minimum wage, which at the time of the Mission’s visit was from about 270 to 350 roubles a month but was to be raised to from 400 to 450, with further increases envisaged before the end of the Seven-Year Plan.²

Wages are also affected by zone differentials, which are fixed to take account of variations in geographic and climatic conditions. They serve as incentives to attract people to remote and solitary parts of the country such as the heart of the Siberian taiga, where new industrial centres are under construction.

Finally, the wage system is complemented by bonuses, paid out of the regular wage fund and determined for particular economic sectors by a joint decision of the State Labour and Wages Committee and the A.U.C.C.T.U., as borne out by an example concerning the machine-building and metal-working industries.³ The bonuses, established in percentages, appear not to exceed 40 per cent. of the monthly wage. On the recommendation of the supervisor, they are paid for the fulfilment and overfulfilment of production plans provided that the quality requirements have also been met.

Ad hoc bonuses paid, for instance, to rationalisers, inventors or, at the end of the year, to the whole of the personnel are provided out of the undertaking’s fund (director’s fund), composed of a percentage

¹ See article by A. P. VOLKOV, Chairman of the State Labour and Wages Committee of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., on raising working people’s standards of living and on wage problems, in Pravda, 2 Nov. 1958. Further steps taken in this direction were reported in January 1960. See Le Monde (Paris), 5 Jan. 1960.


³ Decisions and elucidations of the State Labour and Wages Committee of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions concerning the conditions of payment to workers in the machine-building and metal-working industries, dated 29 April 1959.
## WAGE SCALE FOR MANUAL PRODUCTION WORKERS IN THE MACHINE-BUILDING AND METAL-WORKING INDUSTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage classes</th>
<th>Wage scale coefficient</th>
<th>Piece-workers employed in unheated places and time-workers employed in high temperatures, on heavy jobs and on jobs in arduous conditions</th>
<th>Piece-workers employed in high temperatures, on heavy jobs and in arduous conditions, and time-workers employed in particularly arduous conditions</th>
<th>Piece-workers employed on jobs in particularly heavy and particularly arduous conditions</th>
<th>Time-workers employed in unheated places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wages in roubles</td>
<td>Wages in roubles</td>
<td>Wages in roubles</td>
<td>Wages in roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>532.53</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>602.37</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>26.80</td>
<td>686.18</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>30.76</td>
<td>787.45</td>
<td>5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>35.81</td>
<td>916.65</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>41.60</td>
<td>1065.06</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 1959 collective agreement of the Tashkent textile machinery works. These wages are for 256 days, i.e. 174.6 hours worked in the course of one month. The plant employs 4,350 people.
of planned profits and a share in any additional profits resulting from the overfulfilment of the plan. The percentages are fixed by a governmental ordinance for each economic sector. About 60 per cent. of this fund may be used by the director for awards to anyone in the undertaking—except himself, the chief engineer and the chief accountant—and the remaining 40 per cent. are spent on staff welfare projects.

Within this framework the primary trade union organisation yields considerable power because, on the basis of the model regulations currently in force, the implementation of the wage system depends on the joint action of the management and the factory trade union committee. Moreover, collective agreements provide that this committee should check that the wage system is accurately applied and that workers are given job assignments and wages corresponding to their trades and skills. This includes systematic supervision of the accuracy of wage calculations and of punctuality of payment.

The factory trade union committee also takes part in the fixing of output standards. Before 1957, output standards had been revised annually, but on the initiative of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions it was decided that no such revision was to be undertaken unless it was justified by technological changes and the introduction of new methods of production, and that it had to be carried out by the management of the undertaking in agreement with the factory trade union committee. A similar clause is usually contained in collective agreements, which provide, in addition, that workers should be notified in advance of any change in output standards; such notice is often given a fortnight before the new standards are put into operation. In fixing the standards local conditions are taken into account wherever necessary.

The part played by trade unions in setting output standards is particularly important, while the mechanisation and automation drive is gathering momentum. The decisions of the 21st Party Congress, in 1959, called for faster technological progress through comprehensive mechanisation and automation. This matter was further emphasised at the 12th Congress of Soviet Trade Unions, in March 1959, and at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party held in June 1959. The reduction of hours of work, with a simultaneous adjustment of wages, is just one aspect of these organisational and technological

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1 Legislative decisions establishing categories of jobs and wage rates.
2 Throughout the text, reference is made solely to collective agreements concluded for 1959, unless otherwise stated.
3 1959 collective agreement of the Minsk tractor works.
changes. This reduction, it will be recalled, was decided upon jointly by the Central Committee of the Party, the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. The importance of this measure was brought to the notice of the Mission when it visited plants in which the seven-hour working day already applied, as well as those where the matter had just been discussed by the factory trade union committee and the management, who were to determine jointly the timing of the transfer.

**Labour Discipline and Socialist Emulation**

The maintenance of labour discipline is a matter of common interest for both union and management and is intimately linked with the drive for the fulfilment of economic plans. Not only does the Resolution of the 12th Trade Union Congress call for the completion of the tasks set out in the Seven-Year Plan and the "elimination of idle time and other losses of working time" but also every collective agreement contains mutual obligations to carry out the yearly plan. In a Moscow building undertaking, for instance, a pledge had been given to complete, before the end of 1959, 104,140 square metres of living space, raise productivity by 4 per cent. and reduce production costs by 11.54 per cent. The yearly production target of a Leningrad shoe factory was to be exceeded by 500,000 pairs of shoes, whilst productivity was to increase by 1.5 per cent. And in a state farm of the Moscow region, which supplies the capital with fruit and vegetables, the production of potato and vegetable crops per hectare was to be raised to 160 and 232 metric quintals respectively. In practically all agreements emphasis is laid not only on the quantity but also on the quality of production.

Just as both union and management are responsible for reaching the planned production targets, they also co-operate in the maintenance of labour discipline. But it would be wrong to assume that the concept of labour discipline is solely punitive, because in fact it is a mixed principle whereby merits are rewarded and infractions stigmatised. In addition to

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1 By the end of 1960 all wage and salary earners will work seven hours a day (41 hours a week because six hours are worked on Saturdays), whilst workers in the leading categories of underground jobs will work six hours a day (36 hours a week). The introduction of a five-day week of 35 to 30 hours is planned for the years 1964-68 (*Pravda* and *Izvestia*, 20 Sep. 1959, and *Industry and Labour*, loc. cit.).

2 As mentioned earlier, the factory trade union committee takes part in the drawing up of both the draft production and investment plans of the undertaking and has the right to hear reports from the management regarding implementation of these plans (Arts. 2 and 4, Decree of 15 July 1958).

3 "Living space" only refers to rooms but excludes kitchen, bathroom, corridors, etc.
general legislation on the subject, the matter is dealt with in more detail in collective agreements and works rules.

Collective agreements usually provide for the management and the factory trade union committee to be jointly responsible for the supervision of production discipline. The committee also educates the workers in making an efficient use of the working day and in adopting a conscientious attitude towards their work.

More detailed provisions of a similar nature are contained in works rules\(^1\), which are drawn up in association with the trade unions and set out management obligations as well as workers' responsibilities. Sanctions for the infringement of labour discipline range from admonishment to dismissal\(^2\) and are imposed by management. These prerogatives of management are mitigated by the union right concerning dismissals, because under the law\(^3\) dismissal by order of the management can only take place with the prior consent of the trade union factory committee. The importance of this trade union right was insisted upon in nearly all the interviews held by the Mission. It was also observed that the management usually consulted the factory trade union committee whenever it had to carry out a reduction of staff as a result of an administrative order and owing, for example, to technological changes.\(^4\)

Managerial rights are also affected by the operation of comrades' courts, which are not courts of law. Instead of imposing a disciplinary sanction, the management may refer the case to the "community organisation", which includes comrades' courts. These courts have no formal regulations, although they follow certain rules drafted by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. They exist in every undertaking, meet whenever required, and are composed of members elected

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\(^{1}\) Decree of 12 January 1957; cf. \textit{Shornik zakonodatelnykh aktov o trude} (Moscow, Gosizdat), 1958, p. 341. The model works rules are approved by the State Labour and Wages Committee in conjunction with the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. They may be adapted, by the regional economic and trade union councils jointly, to conditions of work in the different economic sectors. Additions to the model works rules may be made, if necessary, by the director of the undertaking and the trade union factory committee jointly, to take account of the particular conditions of the undertakings. Certain sectors of economic activity such as railways, marine, etc., are excepted from the scope of the above decree because they are regulated by special statutes.

\(^{2}\) Admonishment, reprimand, severe reprimand, transfer to a lower-paid job for three months, loss up to a period of three months of the right to bonus payments for seniority, and dismissal. The last two sanctions are applied in the case of unjustifiable absence, i.e. unjustifiable absence for a whole day or arrival at work in a state of drunkenness. (Ibid., p. 345.)

\(^{3}\) Art. 10, decree of 15 July 1958.

\(^{4}\) In such an event the management has to select workers to be dismissed having regard to both operational needs and certain criteria (war disabled, ex-servicemen, women living alone with young dependent children, or workers with two or more dependants whose families have no other wage earner).
FUNCTIONS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

by the workers themselves. It was pointed out to the Mission that, although no worker was compelled to accept its jurisdiction, such a court in fact enjoyed great prestige and its decisions were normally applied by the management. Concerned with the promotion and maintenance of labour discipline, the comrades’ courts attain their objectives more by moral pressure than by punishment. The collective agreement for a gas and coke plant of the Moscow region provides, for example, that cases of wilful damage, neglect and wastefulness of equipment and material, infringement of labour discipline and violation of public order outside the plant should be referred to the judgment of the community at shop, shift and team meetings, or at the meetings of trade union shop and factory committees, and that for this purpose comrades’ courts, the press and the local radio should be widely used.

Some additional pressure is applied by the use of notice boards put up at places of work. In a number of instances the Mission saw caricatures of individual workers on the notice boards and, according to the explanations supplied, the drawings concerned those who gave little satisfaction in their job or behaved badly towards their fellow workers. In some cases notices placed on the machines indicated that a group was the least efficient in the shop. Exposure of this kind, which is considered as a severe censure, is decided upon by the factory trade union committee after discussions within the trade union group have failed to make the offender mend his ways. It is based on the premise that a person who works badly harms the cause of the workers and should be corrected.

Seen in this light, Socialist emulation, with its objective of increasing productivity and exceeding production target figures, appears to be a corollary of labour discipline. According to both law and collective agreements, labour and management undertake jointly to further Socialist emulation, improve its organisation, give assistance to the participants, assess its results, deal with the award of diplomas and prizes, and disseminate information on the best methods obtained. Such emulation is organised not only between workers in a shop and between shops in a plant but also between the different establishments of a particular economic branch. It is based on both material and moral incentives. Broadly speaking, the material incentives consist first of bonuses and awards paid to individual workers, and secondly of improvements in welfare services. The expenditure of funds earmarked for welfare projects is planned jointly by the management and the factory trade union committee.

Socialist emulation is closely linked with the promotion of a better organisation of work and a reduction in production costs. Collective
agreements usually provide that management and the factory trade union committee should encourage both manual and non-manual workers to participate as much as possible in the effort to rationalise and to invent, and should give practical assistance to inventors, rationalisers and to those directly engaged in finding new methods of production. The interest of the workers is stimulated by the fact that, when a worker in a team wins a bonus by proposing a new method of rationalisation, other members of his team are also rewarded. In the case of inventions the award is made by a central committee on inventions in Moscow and goes to the inventor alone. The management provides funds for the furtherance of the movement and the payment of bonuses and gratuities to rationalisers and innovators, whilst the factory trade union committee spreads the gospel of rationalisation and supervises its implementation. In a Sverdlovsk machine-building factory, for instance, the results of Socialist emulation are discussed monthly by the shop committees.

The importance of this movement has been stressed by Mr. Grishin, Chairman of the A.U.C.C.T.U., who recalled that the All-Union Society of Inventors and Rationalisers, set up in 1958 on trade union initiative, had by March 1959 more than a million members. Although every year only half, or at the most two-thirds, of the suggestions had been made use of, those applied in the course of the previous five years had led to the saving of 35,000 million roubles.1

Moral incentives include both individual and collective awards. Individual winners may be given certificates of merit; their photographs may be posted up for a period on the board of honour of the shop or plant, or their names inscribed on the roll of honour. The award of medals and orders and of the title of Hero of Socialist Labour is outside the scope of the factory trade union committee and depends on the higher trade union and state bodies. Between 1954 and 1958 some 540,000 people were awarded medals and orders, whereas 1,910 persons were given the title of Hero of Socialist Labour.2 The Mission met some of these Heroes of Socialist Labour, one of whom was an elderly cowman still at work on a stock-raising state farm of the Kiev region.

During its stay the Mission also witnessed an example of the kind of publicity given to outstanding workers. At that time the Soviet press was giving particular attention to the story of Valentina Gaganova, a textile worker from the Moscow region and leader of a skilled team which was earning good wages. At the risk of her earnings’ dropping

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1 V. V. GRISHIN, op. cit., p. 19.
2 Ibid., p. 11.
considerably, as in fact they did, she left her group in order to pull up the productivity of another team which had been lagging behind seriously. The press praised the selfless devotion of Gaganova and held her up as an outstanding example to be followed by others. Thus, through the press, radio and union meetings the names of workers who have distinguished themselves in their respective walks of life are brought to the attention of the Soviet public.

Collective awards include the presentation of the Challenge Red Banner to a particular shop and the attribution of the title of Communist Labour Team. In some undertakings the Mission was introduced to Communist Labour Teams, which were invariably composed of young people. The objective of this emulation movement, launched by the Young Communist League, is "not only to work in the best Communist style but also to acquire knowledge, persistently and actively struggle against survivals of the past... lead exemplary lives and inculcate in themselves the moral qualities of people of the new society". This is an exacting task, and as it is not limited to production alone it may have far-reaching social effects in raising the cultural and moral standards of the community.

**Participation in Management**

As may be seen from the preceding remarks, the Soviet trade unions exercise considerable influence on the administration of the undertakings. Their participation in management has its roots in the traditions of the revolutionary and early post-revolutionary years, when some factories were taken over and run by the workers themselves. In recent years this participation has been extended. The legal instrument that enables the unions to take an active and continual interest in the operation of an undertaking was put in their hands in 1958, when legislation on the factory, works and local trade union committees and the standing production conferences was passed. The latter—as emphasised by the Central Committee of the Party, at its plenary meeting held in December 1957—would "make it possible to combine observance of the principle that management must remain in the hands of a single chief with effective supervision of management by the personnel".

Bearing in mind that the enterprise is operated in the planned economy of a Socialist State, the responsibility and authority of the Soviet manager are very wide and his freedom to run the plant is a basis of the whole

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1 V. V. GRISHIN, op. cit., p. 10.
concept of Soviet management. Since the decentralisation of the national economy, the director of an undertaking is appointed by the regional economic council to which he reports, or by some equivalent body. This is the case of the director of the port of Odessa, who was met by the Mission and who is appointed by the Minister of River and Sea Transport on the recommendation of the Black Sea Steamship Company, to which he is responsible.

On the director's proposal the regional economic council also appoints the chief engineer—in a tea-packing factory in Tbilisi he was appointed by the Tea Trust of Georgia—and the chief accountant. The latter, though acting on the director's orders, is none the less held responsible for the correctness of the undertaking's finance policy; should any irregularities occur in this field he has to report the matter to the council, which in any event is competent to settle differences that may arise between members of the management. All the other supervisors, whatever their rank, are appointed by the director and are not members of management itself although they carry responsibility for the running of their departments and have complete authority within their respective spheres.

It may be added that the meetings of a regional economic council are periodically attended by the directors of the various undertakings. Moreover, the directors from a particular branch of the national economy may meet at intervals to discuss questions affecting their economic sector, including administration and labour problems. Similar meetings are held by the chief engineers from the same branch in order that they may discuss common technical problems.

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1 The following quotation illustrates this point:

"Below the regional economic council, management organisation in a Soviet steel mill is not unlike that in United States mills.

"The plant director—who is appointed by the regional economic council—corresponds to the general superintendent. The chief engineer, similarly nominated, corresponds to the assistant general superintendent. The director has deputies of his own selection who are responsible for such things as housing, labour relations, finance and so forth. Operating departments are headed by superintendents who, like their United States counterparts, have complete line authority.

"In general, plant directors met by the American delegation were sound, capable men with many years of experience and full technical backgrounds in steelmaking. Delegation members were told that the Soviet Union's aim is to have technically trained men in all management positions and that they hope to require even foremen to have a university degree, within the next few years." (Steel in the Soviet Union, op. cit., p. 21.)

2 Water transport is organised according to sea and river systems and not according to territorial regions. There are shipowning state enterprises responsible for sea transport in their areas, such as the Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea and the area on the Pacific Ocean. The Black Sea Steamship Company is responsible for sea transport in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Its ships also carry cargo to foreign ports.
The exercise of the wide powers of the Soviet manager is somewhat mitigated by the tenet that he is a worker placed in the position of a trustee for the State and that thus, while his principal duty is to organise production and ensure the progress of his plant, he also has to take care of and bear responsibility for the welfare of his fellow workers. A conflict that arose between the director and the workers might, if carried to the extreme, result in the director's dismissal. The rights of the factory trade union committee with respect to dismissals of wage and salary earners have already been mentioned, but wherever necessary the committee can "approach the competent organisations with a view to the removal or punishment of managerial staff who fail to carry out obligations under the collective agreement, display a bureaucratic attitude, permit red tape or infringe the labour laws". It was indicated to the Mission that such cases had in fact occurred.

The union also has a say in the promotion of workers to managerial positions in the undertaking, because when such appointments are made the views of the trade union factory committee must be taken into account, but the union takes little if any part in the hiring of personnel, which appears to be within the competence of the management. In general the unions take no part in providing employment opportunities, though they may help in some recruiting campaigns when workers are needed for new development schemes, such as that of reclaiming virgin land in Kazakhstan or in the remote regions of the Urals and Siberia, where the population is scattered and the labour force inadequate. In particular, they may assist individual workers in meeting travel and removal expenses. But the main burden of these campaigns is usually borne by the State, which ensures transport, housing and other amenities to workers and their families.

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1 See p. 104, in the section on labour discipline and Socialist emulation.
2 Art. 14, decree of 15 July 1958, op. cit. See also Ch. III, p. 59.
3 Ibid.
4 On the admission to employment of young workers between 15 and 16 years the agreement of the factory trade union committee has to be secured (Article 9 of above-mentioned decree), but this is a matter pertaining to labour protection.
5 Employment offices have been set up by the municipal and other regional civic bodies, and any worker seeking employment may turn to them. In addition, the undertakings themselves advertise job vacancies, using for that purpose either the press or special boards posted in the streets. Not only is full employment a feature of the Soviet economy but the U.S.S.R. suffers at present from a labour shortage and in particular from a shortage of skilled labour. A worker who loses his job has therefore no special difficulty in finding a new one. On engagement he submits his work book—a record of work, trade, skill, pension rights, etc., including mention of any special honours which he may have been awarded—from which the jobs that he has previously held may be checked. The work book is the property of the worker and the management has no right to retain it. It is issued by government authorities and but for the language used and a few minor details of local importance is identical throughout the U.S.S.R. See also Ch. III, p. 64.
A new development has been brought about by the setting up of standing production conferences, which act under the direction of the factory trade union committees during their terms of office and are designed to associate the workers with the responsibilities of management. Composed of members elected by the general meeting of the personnel and those appointed by the factory trade union committee and the management, as well as by the Party, the Young Communist League, and the primary organisations of the scientific and technical societies, the conferences are held in every undertaking where not less than 100 people are employed. In smaller enterprises the powers of the conference are exercised by a general meeting of the personnel. The conference meets as required but at least once in every three months (a workshop conference meets once a month). For the conduct of its current business it elects a presidium of from five to 15 members, including a chairman and a secretary. At least once in every six months the conference has to report on its work to the general meeting of the personnel or of their delegates.

The conference is intended to help towards ensuring satisfactory operation of the undertaking and execution of production plans, increasing productivity and encouraging improvements in both organisation of work and welfare standards. The management is required to assist the conference and report to it on the action taken and is responsible for carrying out its decisions.

When it asked for examples of matters which had actually been on the agenda of a standing production conference, the Mission found that, for example, the conference of the Irkutsk hydro-electric plant, employing 220 people, had discussed the best ways of merging the various shops and of extending assistance to teams trying to win the distinction of Communist Labour Teams. On the big construction site of the Angara River dam, attention had been devoted to housing and conditions of work. At one of the meetings, means of protection against taiga flies and insects was raised, and subsequently a special type of veil was introduced. Safety was also considered in a Minsk automatic lines and machine-tools factory. In a Leningrad metallurgical plant the introduction of a seven-hour day was discussed. The same topic was included in the agenda of the conference of the Tashkent textile machinery works, where also housing and welfare, including preparations for the winter, were discussed.¹

The only item discussed at a meeting held to receive a report of the standing production conference in a Minsk radio factory was also the winter preparation of both factory premises and workers' housing.

¹ Winter cold in Tashkent appears to be keen, especially in December and January when temperatures may drop to as much as 17° centigrade below zero.
This meeting, which was attended by the Mission and was composed of delegates (the factory employs 3,500 people), heard the report on action taken, submitted by the conference secretary, followed by the director of the factory, who explained at length the steps taken to improve working conditions, welfare facilities and workers' housing. The director's report was challenged by nearly all the speakers who took the floor in the discussion. While agreeing that some work had already been done, they emphasised that the heating and ventilation system as well as the state of repair in some shops left much to be desired and should be attended to within the shortest possible time. In summing up the discussion, the chairman of the factory trade union committee emphasised that there had been some plain speaking at the meeting, while the factory director, in his final reply, thought that the criticism had been very severe. He undertook to take the requests put forward into consideration but proposed different deadlines for their execution. The decisions of the meeting, embodied in a resolution that was amended from the floor, were carried unanimously. The resolution laid down a programme of work and fixed dates for particular operations.

The Mission also attended a meeting of delegates at a Leningrad shoe factory which employs 11,500 people. Here only one item was discussed, namely the report of the director on automation and mechanisation of industrial processes to be carried out during the Seven-Year Plan. Most speakers who took part in the discussion agreed that the factory should keep abreast of technological progress but claimed that the management should pay more attention to measures of rationalisation suggested by the workers themselves. One of the women speakers, who was a Hero of Socialist Labour, reminded the audience that at the standing production conference the management had already been criticised for not having paid sufficient attention to the full utilisation of the existing labour and material reserves. Another speaker, an inventor himself and author of several rationalisation projects, emphasised that the measures proposed by the director could be effective only if the workers as a whole took an active part in carrying them out. In his reply the director gave an undertaking that all reasonable proposals for rationalisation would be considered and that a number of improvements in premises and equipment would be carried out within certain specified time limits. The meeting adopted a resolution which spoke of the fulfilment of the Seven-Year Plan, an increase in mechanisation, and improvements in production methods and conditions of work. It also emphasised that workers should be kept informed of the progress made. The resolution was adopted unanimously with the proviso that questions raised during the discussion should be taken into account.
It appears from these various examples that in practice it would be difficult to draw a clear line between the activities of a standing production conference and of other meetings of workers’ representatives. It would also be difficult and perhaps presumptuous to pronounce any definite views on the effectiveness of this new instrument for increasing workers’ participation in management. At the time of the Mission’s visit the system had been in operation for less than 18 months; the standing production conferences were organised on a trial basis in the first few months of 1958, or about six months before the law was passed.

Whatever their shortcomings, there is little doubt that both the standing production conferences and the meetings of the personnel or their delegates provide a check on management and a means of pressure which can be neither neglected nor by-passed. Moreover, the true effectiveness of provisions and arrangements depends not so much on the machinery as on the people who use it. The Mission recalls very clearly the impression of the authority wielded by individual heads in some undertakings, whilst in others the influence exercised by the local union was apparent.

LABOUR PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INSURANCE

Since the winding up of the People’s Commissariat of Labour of the U.S.S.R., a great many functions concerning labour protection have been taken over by the trade unions. As already mentioned, the trade unions take an active part in the drawing up of labour legislation, and special safety provisions for particular branches of the national economy are worked out in close co-operation with the central committees of the relevant unions. The application of labour legislation is to a considerable extent supervised by the trade unions, although the state organs, including the State Labour and Wages Committee, have recently widened their responsibilities in this field. It is the task of the state organs to enforce the regulations and ensure that management has taken adequate measures to protect the life and health of the workers.

The supervisory functions of the unions are carried out by technical and labour inspectors. Technical inspectors, who are said to number about 3,000 and have usually graduated from technical colleges, are in the employ of regional and district trade union councils and are paid from social insurance funds administered by the unions. The Leningrad Trade

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1 Labour legislation and its application.
2 In addition to the state inspectorate for the mining industry and public health and sanitation inspectors, appointed by the Ministry of Health, the State Committee on Labour and Wages has set up inspectorates to check labour conditions in the different economic branches. Public authorities of the different Republics have also appointed a number of labour inspectors.
Union Council, for example, has on its payroll 67 technical inspectors and 29 doctors. These inspectors have wide powers, since no undertaking may be opened, commissioned or moved to new premises without their consent. They have free access to all enterprises within their area and may stop any operation which they consider dangerous or harmful to the workers. Moreover, they may fine the management for infractions of industrial safety and hygiene requirements and, wherever necessary, refer the matter to public prosecutors.

The public labour inspectors are volunteers elected by the workers and attached to the undertaking in which they work. In a Kiev electrical precision instruments factory, for example, where 3,500 persons are employed, five to seven labour inspectors have been appointed in each shop and 80 in the whole plant. The primary duty of these inspectors, usually carried out after working hours, is to check the conditions of safety and hygiene in their unit and report any failings to the factory trade union committee, as well as to the management’s safety department. If the proposals subsequently made by the committee are not complied with by the management, the matter is referred to the regional trade union council and its technical inspectors for further action. The bulk of the collective agreements contain substantial safety and hygiene provisions and in most undertakings special funds have been earmarked for the improvement in working conditions, which are not always satisfactory as regards safety measures and the state of sanitary installations.

Admittedly, there seems to be some overlapping between the various state and trade union labour protection services which run parallel to each other, although it should be added that public health and sanitation inspectors, who also cover collective farms, are mainly concerned with national standards.

The above description should be completed by a brief reference to scientific research institutes on labour protection. Six such institutes, each specialising in certain branches of industry, have been established and are financed by the unions from social insurance funds. Their directors are appointed by the Presidium of the A.U.C.C.T.U. One of them, namely, the Leningrad Research Institute on Labour Protection, founded in 1927, which was visited by the Mission, deals with radio and electro-technics, power stations and shipbuilding. Of the remaining five, the Moscow Institute deals with machine building and chemistry; Sverdlovsk with ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy; Tbilisi with ore mining; Ivanovo with light and textile industries, and Kazan with leather and footwear and also with building materials. Two further institutes, set up by economic authorities and located in the Donbass area and in Baku, deal with coal and petroleum respectively, whilst 14 scientific
research institutes run by the Ministry of Health are concerned with occupational safety and health in general. All these institutes have complementary functions. They also co-operate with each other and maintain close contact with other scientific bodies. The Mission saw a permanent safety exhibition, maintained by the A.U.C.C.T.U. in Moscow, which is devoted to most aspects of industrial safety and hygiene. It is open to the public and is regularly visited by students undergoing vocational training prior to taking up a career in industry.

Another function which the trade unions exercise is the administration, through the factory and local trade union committees, of a large part of the social insurance scheme which is financed by the State. The committee draws up the social insurance budget for the production unit which it represents, and before expenditure is incurred it obtains the approval of the higher trade union bodies. The committee fixes the amount of temporary insurance payment but not of pensions and other long-term benefits, although it takes part through its representatives in the determination of pensions by social security authorities. Another duty of the committee is to check whether social insurance contributions are paid by the undertaking, and if necessary to exact their payment in accordance with the established procedure. If the committee finds that a case of accident or occupational disease is due to failure by the management to observe safety or health regulations, it may require the undertaking to refund the cost of benefit for any resulting temporary disability.¹ It is reckoned that over 2 million persons are engaged in social insurance activities through the voluntary membership of specialised commissions set up by the factory trade union committees.

The Mission learnt that a network of about 2,000 sanatoria and 1,000 rest homes was available to the working population and that about 7 million people were estimated to have made use of these facilities in the course of 1959. It should, however, be made clear that the bulk of the sanatoria and rest homes are run and maintained by the public health authorities,² although some are built by undertakings especially for their own personnel. Most of the places are allocated by the unions (namely the factory or local trade union committees), which out of the social insurance funds in their administration meet 70 or 100 per cent. of the cost of the accommodation, food and treatment. Travel expenses are met by the person concerned, although in some deserving cases the expenditure is covered out of the above funds.

¹ Art. 11, decree of 15 July, 1958, op. cit.
² It has since been reported that sanatoria, with the exception of those for tuberculosis, and rest homes were retransferred into the administration of the trade unions (Pravda, 30 Mar. 1960).
This situation was illustrated during the Mission’s visit to two Yalta sanatoria where 80 per cent. of those in residence were maintained by the unions. Of the remainder, some were admitted free of charge and the cost of their keep and treatment was borne directly by the Ministry of Social Security. Out of the total of 25,000 places available in the Crimea sanatoria, about 10 per cent. appeared to have been allocated without payment.

Mr. V. V. Grishin, when addressing the 12th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions in March 1959, stressed the importance of social insurance and its major contribution to the people’s welfare. He also pointed to the need for the extension of health resorts and sanatoria and for the improvements in the organisation of this service:

An insufficient number of sanatoriums and holiday homes are being built in the Urals, the Soviet Far East, Siberia, Central Asia and Kazakhstan. For that reason many factory and office workers are compelled to waste a lot of time and money in order to go to a sanatorium situated thousands of kilometres away. Yet in these areas there are mineral springs whose medicinal properties are in no way inferior to those of the mineral waters in the southern spas. The system of distributing accommodation passes leaves much to be desired. These passes are frequently handed out to people who do not need them.

The resolution which was adopted by the Congress called for greater trade union influence on the organisation of public health services and increased public control over the work of medical institutions and social insurance bodies, as well as for a radical improvement in the health resort system.

Although homes for aged and retired persons are usually provided and operated by the social security authorities, some local trade union organisations take an interest in the matter. This is, for example, the case of the union in a textile plant in Leningrad, which has arranged to take over and manage such a home for the plant’s retired workers. Trade unions also take an active interest in looking after invalids and placing them in suitable employment. For instance, miners affected by silicosis are given light work above ground; although the invalids are paid for the work, they continue to draw their invalidity pensions. In addition, the unions are closely associated with welfare measures for deaf-mutes, for whom special factories have been set up.

Housing and Welfare

The housing problem is acute in the U.S.S.R., and the provision of housing is placed high on the list of priorities in the current economic

\[1\] V. V. Grishin, op. cit., pp. 26 and 27.
plans as well as in the Seven-Year Plan as a whole. In all the cities on the Mission's itinerary, big housing estates, provided either by municipal authorities or by particular undertakings, were under construction and people were talking hopefully about the prospects of having a flat which would not be shared with strangers. In addition, building co-operatives of future flat owners are also organised, and individual one-family houses are built privately, often with financial assistance. Factory workers\(^1\) and state farm workers who undertake to build their own houses are frequently assisted by the management in regard to the supply and transport of some building materials. When visiting a state farm in the Tashkent region, for example, the Mission learnt that about 85 per cent. of its 1,016 workers lived in their own houses, built on plots of land amounting to 0.15 hectares each, which had been given by the farm free of charge. Both the house and the land become the private property of the worker and, in the event of his death, go to the heirs.

Housing accommodation, however, remains inadequate, although the situation is improving rapidly. In Moscow and some other big cities 9 square metres of living space are allocated per person. The allocation of a Tashkent textile worker averages 5.2 square metres, but it is intended to increase this to 9 square metres as soon as possible. The area of an individual house cannot exceed 60 square metres of living space. The Mission was shown two workers' flats in a small apartment block put up in the workers' settlement of a gas and coke plant in the Moscow region. Each flat consisted of three small rooms, a kitchen and a hall.\(^2\)

The rent charged is low. It is paid per square metre of living space and appears to be calculated on a monthly basis according to the actual area of the rooms occupied. No charges are made for kitchen, bathroom, corridors and other amenities. It varies according to both place and wage, but in the cities visited by the Mission it seems to be somewhere between 49 kopecks, paid by Tashkent textile workers with wages below 700 roubles per month, and 1 rouble 32 kopecks. It therefore appears that general housing expenditure, including rent and services (hot water, heating, lighting and telephone), is below 10 per cent. of the monthly wage of a worker in a lower income bracket, the rent alone representing about 5 per cent.

The trade unions are closely associated with housing plans, which are discussed first in the undertaking, then at the regional and republic

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\(^1\) As illustrated by a provision of the 1960 collective agreement of the Ural Electrical Equipment Factory, Sverdlovsk.

\(^2\) The Mission also visited houses on a collective farm in the Crimea. The farmers had individual houses and individual ancillary buildings to keep their own cattle and poultry. The houses visited each had three or four small rooms and a kitchen. Every house had its own plot of half a hectare of land.
levels, and finally within the A.U.C.C.T.U., which co-ordinates the
demands coming from below and gives its considered advice to the public
authorities. When they are not satisfied, however, the local unions can
appeal directly to the A.U.C.C.T.U. and plead for their particular case.
The new house can be occupied only after tests and inspections with
which trade union representatives are associated. The trade unions
also take part in the allocation of housing, either through participation
in special municipal bodies which in some big cities co-ordinate the
construction programme and the distribution of apartments already
available, or through decisions taken jointly with management to allocate
housing accommodation that is available to the undertaking. The needs
of the applicants are checked by union representatives, who try to apply
objective criteria when choosing the tenants. In general, housing is not
connected with a specific employment, so that when a worker moves from
one job to another he can still remain in the apartment previously allo-
cated to him.

The trade unions also attach a great deal of attention to welfare
facilities both within and outside an undertaking. The facilities within the
undertaking are installed, operated and financed or subsidised by the
management but supervised by the factory trade union committee. They
usually include a canteen where, in most instances, hot meals are served to
each shift. Smaller undertakings have only one canteen, whereas in
bigger plants there are several. For example, in a Moscow machine-tool
plant, the Mission saw a canteen located in a separate building on the
factory premises, which has three dining rooms and provides over 1,800
midday meals. The main canteen of a Leningrad electric machine works
has, as the Mission noted, 600 seats and also self-service installations.
According to the information given to the Mission 132,000 canteens,
providing accommodation for 4.2 million people, have been installed
within undertakings all over the country. Another 64,000 establishments
of this kind, with a capacity for 3.1 million people, will be completed by
the end of the Seven-Year Plan. Moreover, undertakings which are
spread out over a wide area, such as construction sites or state farms,
have often organised mobile canteens. The prices of food are reasonable
as compared with workers' wages and, whether in Moscow, Leningrad,
Kiev or Odessa, the average three-course meal costs from 3 to 6 roubles.
The unions believe that these prices may be reduced still further.

During its visits to the various undertakings the Mission was also
shown nurseries and kindergartens which appeared to be well equipped,
clean, bright and efficiently run by a trained staff which sometimes

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1 Art. 12, decree of 15 July 1958.
includes fully qualified doctors. Nurseries are usually for children from two months to three years old, and kindergartens for older children up to school age. Several of these establishments are open only during the day, whilst at others children can be left until the weekend. The importance of these welfare services is obvious, particularly in undertakings which employ large numbers of women. Although a metallurgical plant employs, on the average, 25 to 30 per cent. of women, in a textile factory women represent about 80 per cent. of the labour force. In a Moscow textile factory, which employs 3,400 people, the Mission saw a nursery for 300 children and a kindergarten for 150, while at the Tashkent textile combinat it was told that there were 15 nurseries and kindergartens which can look after 2,500 children and 500 babies.

The trade unions also provide for children of school age, particularly by encouraging the organisation of holiday camps for youngsters from 10 to 15 years of age. There are now about 6,500 such camps belonging to trade unions or public authorities or to industrial and agricultural undertakings. This figure includes the Artek camp which the Mission saw in the southern Crimea. The camp is right on the sea front, has been in existence since 1925 and was the first to be formed in the U.S.S.R. This camp has thus had a long experience, and the results of experiments made here are passed on to other camps. It is maintained by the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry and the trade unions between them meet 90 per cent. of the cost of the children's board and lodging. Children's fares are also paid by the trade unions.

The Artek camp is open all the year round, whereas most others are open only in summer, and is located in a large park which goes down to a private beach. The camp ensures good conditions and provides many sports facilities for the 300 children of both sexes aged from 12 to 15 years who are sent from many different and distant parts of the Soviet Union. The camp is under the special care of the Young Communist League, which provides most of the tutors. It also organises courses and seminars for camp leaders, free of charge.

Of course only a minority of the summer camps can be set up in the Crimea or places with such a good climate; there are 40 trade union camps in the Crimea, but in 1958 the Ukrainian Trade Union Council alone claims to have disbursed about 100 million roubles on sending more than 550,000 children to 830 summer camps. Most of the camps are set up in the region in which the relevant undertaking is operating. A state farm located in the Moscow region had, for example, organised a children's camp at some distance from the village, and out of 285 camps set up in the Leningrad area some are on the Baltic coast or in the lake region.
Medical services are also prominent among the social amenities. The premises and installations are provided and maintained by the undertaking, but the services are run by the public health authorities and the medical staff is on their payroll. All medical treatment for the workers is free, and families are usually treated in their respective district medical centres. The role of the factory trade union committee is to keep a check on the extent to which these services are provided and to ensure that they meet the needs of the staff satisfactorily.

The extent of the medical services clearly varies with the size of the undertaking. For example, the medical centre of a big Moscow automobile works which the Mission saw is equipped for 750,000 medical visits a year. The installations include X-ray rooms, electro-cardiographic equipment, a rehabilitation room (physical exercise on doctor’s orders), specialists’ consulting rooms, a dentist’s surgery and a hospital with 100 beds. The staff of the centre consists of 500 persons, including 140 fully qualified doctors, and university professors are invited for consultation if necessary. In a Kiev confectionery factory, which employs about 2,000 people, the Mission was shown a medical centre on the factory premises with gynaecological, dental, X-ray and physiotherapy departments in addition to a small surgery. The staff in this case includes four fully qualified doctors, and outside specialists have their consulting hours. Similarly, a state farm in the Tashkent region has a fully qualified doctor on each of its four farms, and a dispensary with beds is provided near the administrative centre.

A number of the undertakings visited by the Mission were surrounded by trees and shrubs. Some of them were located in big gardens, while others made a considerable effort to preserve a green belt round their walls.

In addition to the above welfare activities, which do not seem to differ greatly in substance from those carried out by trade unions in other countries (although they are more extensive), the Soviet unions have also assumed responsibility for supervising amenities for the community as a whole, including establishments such as shops, restaurants, public baths and laundries. The unions carry out these functions through public controllers who are said to number 560,000 in the country as a whole and are for the most part appointed from among the union members, although housewives and old-age pensioners are also sometimes enlisted. The purpose of this control is to ensure that the users of the various welfare facilities are well treated and served. The idea behind this activity is that the community is composed of working people and that it is the duty of the trade unions to make sure that the people’s needs and requirements are met in the best possible manner. The factory or local
trade union committees are the organs directly responsible for carrying out these duties. Moreover, decisions as to increases in the price of meals and food products and the hours of business of canteens, buffets, shops and kiosks are taken in consultation with the committees.¹

The public controllers are not remunerated, and they fulfil their tasks after their normal working day unless they are old-age pensioners who have no other duties. Usually a team of seven controllers—one for each day of the week—is attached to an establishment. They inspect conditions of storage, the products sold, the manner of attending to customers and similar matters. The management of the establishment is under an obligation to give effect to the recommendations of the controllers and to report on the measures taken in a special register which is always readily accessible.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In Soviet society great emphasis is placed on education. Pride in the achievements of Soviet science, rapid improvement in industrial standards and worship of technical progress have all contributed to the conviction that the will of an educated man may move career barriers as well as mountains. The Mission was often reminded that, though it may take a labourer a good few years to rise to the top of the industrial ladder, he could do it if he put his mind to it. Education is free and the accepted principle is that everybody has an opportunity to improve his educational level and technical skill. On several occasions the Mission was told that the director of the particular undertaking or another person from among its top people had risen from the ranks.

In this atmosphere it is only natural that the unions take an active interest in encouraging workers to take up studies and that they watch the training systems and facilities introduced in the undertakings. Moreover, improvement in skill is closely linked with promotion, which is also designed as an incentive because the important factors taken into account are not so much length of service or seniority as the worker’s ability and his educational standard. This explains why so many workers attend the training courses. At the time of the Mission’s visit to a Leningrad metallurgical plant, out of 10,500 employed 1,400 were studying in the various educational institutions set up in the plant. In the port of Odessa, of the 900 stevedores 368 were attending courses of further education, and out of 2,000 employed at an Odessa radial-drilling-machines plant 400 were following courses at a special institute set up on the initiative

¹ Art. 13, decree of 15 July 1958.
of the local union to improve the skill of the workers by keeping them abreast of technical developments and the best methods of work.

Each plant, and in bigger undertakings each shop, has a joint qualifications committee which is concerned with the improvement in workers' education and skill. The committee urges workers to study and take refresher courses. It issues certificates on the basis of which workers are promoted to higher wage classes. In the Moscow automobile works the Mission was told that the union also co-operated in placing in the various shops the successful students from the plant's vocational school.

There are, broadly speaking, two main groups of vocational schools, namely the manpower reserve schools, set up and financed by the State (although the undertaking to which a school is attached provides systematic material assistance), and those operated by the undertaking. It is said that about 3,200 manpower reserve schools train every year up to 1 million skilled workers; 800 vocational schools of the second group, chiefly in the light and food industries, prepare an annual average of 100,000 skilled workers for their respective undertakings. 1 The recent school reform 2 is intended to strengthen the ties between educational institutions and production. The 1959 decision of the Council of Ministers regarding higher educational institutions provides, among other things, that the best trained and most capable leaders in production, with a record of not less than two years' practical work, should be sent to higher educational institutions and technicums (technical colleges of an intermediate level) at the undertaking's expense. 3 Before the final selection of candidates is made by the directors of undertakings and of collective farms, the applications have to be discussed in standing production conferences, in meetings of the workers or at meetings of collective farmers. The question of adapting the educational institutions to the above-mentioned school reform was discussed by the Mission during its visit to the Byelorussian Polytechnical Institute in Minsk. Founded in 1933, the Institute started with 1,500 students and four Faculties. Now it has 8,500 students, of whom 34 per cent. are women, and nine Faculties; it trains technicians for 23 trades.


3 The cost of scholarships of successful candidates, 15 per cent. higher than the usual state scholarships, is to be borne by the undertakings or collective farms on the condition that the graduates will return to work in the establishment concerned unless the latter agrees to release them from this obligation.
The educational tasks of the unions are clearly not confined to cooperating in the vocational training of the workers. The unions also have to educate their members in trade union activities and organisation. In addition to two colleges set up in Moscow and Leningrad for the training of trade union leaders, courses for principal officers of primary trade union organisations are provided by republican or regional trade union councils. The trade union councils of the Byelorussian and Georgian Republics organise, for example, training courses for the chairmen of the factory and local trade union committees, especially those who have been newly elected. Every year the councils also organise a one-month seminar attended by both chairmen and members of such committees. During the period of training the participants draw their usual wages from the undertaking in which they work. The number of trainees from each undertaking is fixed by the council according to the membership of the primary trade union organisation.

Training for union activists in the undertaking is organised by the factory trade union committee. In addition to lectures and discussions of a more general nature which usually take place once a week after working hours, it includes training in activities for which the union is responsible. In the Tashkent textile combinat, for instance, 1,500 activists were trained in 1958. Eighteen of these persons received full-time training, whilst the rest attended courses after working hours. With the exception of the union officials, the full-time trainees were paid by the combinat. The training took place in a special trade union school.

CULTURE AND RECREATION

The word "culture" has a wide meaning in Russian. The urgent necessity to civilise the way of life of the poverty-ridden and illiterate millions, to cultivate manners and to raise standards of hygiene has made the question of culture particularly important. A conscious effort is made by both public authorities and social organisations to promote cultural standards, bring the many peoples of the Soviet Union to a common minimum standard of education and culture, to whatever national group they may belong, and gradually to bridge the gulf between the village and the city—a problem which is neither specific to the U.S.S.R. nor new in the history of industrial civilisation. In this continuous intensive activity the trade unions—the most widespread mass organisation—cannot lag behind. And so in fact they have become, if not the chief driving force, at least the chief distributor of cultural material.
The trade unions have impressive cultural equipment which, the Mission was told, comprises about 14,000 palaces and houses of culture, in addition to clubs set up in smaller undertakings or in newly developing sites. In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic alone 2,260 palaces and houses of culture and clubs have been set up, while in the Leningrad area such establishments number 256, including ten big inter-union palaces of culture. A palace or house of culture or, on a smaller scale, a club, provides for all sorts of cultural and recreational activities. It usually has a cinema, or at least a meeting hall which can be used as a cinema or theatre, a library and several rooms where smaller groups may meet. All these buildings are equipped with radio and television sets.

The Mission had the opportunity of visiting a few establishments of this kind, including one of the Leningrad inter-union palaces of culture—a large building constructed in 1933 by the Leningrad Trade Union Council. Like other big palaces or houses of culture, it is open to anyone regardless of union membership, and is said to be used by an average of 7,000 persons a day. Its theatre and cinema have a seating capacity of 1,300 and 650 respectively. Its library and reading room are used by over 10,000 readers. Symphony concerts, lectures and amateur productions are periodically given in the building, which also provides facilities for the activities of a large number of art and hobby groups and of sports societies. Such facilities are also provided in the Minsk inter-union palace of culture. In both places the Mission had to pick its way through big dance halls crowded with young people.

Similar arrangements have been made in palaces or houses of culture built by the various undertakings and placed at the disposal of the local unions, such as the palace of culture of the Moscow automobile works, said to occupy 25,000 square metres and contain 300 halls and rooms; of the Leningrad electric machine works, with its 1,000-seat main hall; of the Kiev electrical precision instruments factory, with its gymnasium and lecture hall; of the Rustavi steel combinat, built in Georgian style and located across the river from the plant in the area in which the workers' apartment houses have been built; or of the Tashkent textile combinat, where the Mission was shown a film on the development of the Uzbek Republic.

The clubs are usually run on similar lines, but being much smaller than palaces or houses of culture they are, in the main, limited to workers from the particular undertaking and members of their families. In Bratsk, for instance, where people live in a sprawling settlement on both banks of the Angara River, there are 11 clubs of varying sizes situated in the various parts of the settlement.
Cultural amenities are not restricted to towns alone. The Mission visited clubs on state farms of the Moscow and Kiev regions and near Tashkent in central Asia where, in addition to the main club which serves as a centre for the most important activities of the sovkhoz as a whole, each of the four farms comprising the sovkhoz has a small club of its own.

Libraries, reading rooms and books feature prominently in these cultural activities. The unions have set up 26,000 libraries and 72,000 mobile libraries, which together contain 155 million books and are patronised by 17 million readers. Although big undertakings obviously have more books and more readers (the Moscow automobile works has a large library of 100,000 books and 24 smaller libraries scattered in different shops; the library of the Leningrad electric machine works has 80,000 volumes and 6,000 readers) the smaller enterprises are not far behind, as shown by the example of the Kiev confectionery factory, where the club library has 20,000 volumes and 1,000 registered readers, and the Odessa radial-drilling-machines plant, the club of which has a main library of about 32,000 books and six small mobile libraries containing from 200 to 250 books each. The shelves of this library in Odessa contain translations of a number of foreign classics such as Romain Rolland, Dickens, Thackeray and Shakespeare, and judging by their appearance these volumes must be widely read. The factory trade union committee encourages the sale of books by occasionally allowing the local bookshops to organise mobile stands on the club premises. It also promotes discussions among readers on both technical books and various literary works.

The unions also have their own publishing facilities. The Trade Union Publishing House (Profizdat) is the main publicity organ of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. It prints and publishes ten trade union magazines and a large number of books and pamphlets, in addition to printing documentation for the A.U.C.C.T.U. The institution is self-supporting in that it is maintained by the profits made through its publications. Although the books and magazines are sold very cheaply, the number of copies printed is so large that costs are more than met by earnings. The main union daily paper is Trud, which is organised as a separate undertaking. A number of trade unions also possess their own newspapers.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) The functions and responsibilities of the press and public information services in the life of the country were among the chief items of discussion at the All-Union Congress of Soviet Journalists held in Moscow in November 1959. It was confirmed at this meeting that not only are the press and other public information media in the Soviet Union expected to convey news but they are also regarded as an educational factor which has a positive role to play in the life of the people.
Education in fine arts is an important part of union activity. In the whole country there are 250,000 circles of amateur artists which comprise 4 million people. The Mission well remembers some examples of drawing, paintings and sculpture done by these amateur artists, including delightfully humorous wood carvings executed by an elderly Leningrad worker. A further 50,000 circles with more than 1 million members are devoted to theatre alone. Ballet and opera also have ardent followers. The Mission was greatly impressed by an amateur show put on in the house of culture of the railway workers at Tbilisi, the capital of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. The show, cleverly staged, included songs and jazz music in addition to excellent national dancing.

The various cultural establishments often exchange their amateur shows and are also in touch with professional artists who are sometimes paid a fee for their performance. The Mission attended such a professional show at the Kiev inter-union palace of culture—a brand-new white building located at the top of a hill off the main street of Kiev—where a performance of folklore dances was given by a first-class Ukrainian ensemble. In 1958 the 750,000 shows and concerts organised by the unions were attended by 169 million persons, lectures on art by 4 million, and films screened in 14,000 union cinema halls by 800 million spectators. The unions also make other provisions for workers' education, and have introduced about 800 schemes for lectures on various subjects of current interest which cover 400,000 manual and non-manual workers.

In addition to the various facilities described above, cultural activities of the unions are also diffused through the medium of "red corners" of which, the Mission understands, there are 120,000 throughout the country. The "red corners" are rest rooms provided in the undertakings, and they combine both welfare and cultural activities. There the workers may drink tea, read the newspapers, hold small meetings and organise their own art exhibitions. Among the "red corners" visited by the Mission there was one for the crew on board the passenger ship "Rossiya", which cruises between Odessa, Yalta and Sochi.

The description of these various activities would not be complete without mentioning the interest that the unions take in sports and physical culture. During visits to stadiums, either already built or still under construction, the Mission was often struck by the particular importance attached to and the special pride taken by the unions in the provision of adequate sports facilities.

It should also be emphasised that in most, if not all, houses of culture and clubs, special children's sections have been created. These contain libraries for children of different ages, equipment for young technicians keen on model building, birds and small animals in cages for young
naturalists, photographic rooms, music, ballet and theatre classes, special shows of documentary films, and so forth. Children often go to the house of culture or to the club straight from school and stay there until the evening. The children’s section is designed so as to promote various hobbies. In one or two places, for instance, the Mission saw an exhibition of children’s paintings; in other places children took part in theatrical performances.

Cultural and recreational activities are also carried out in the state farms and other villages, although distances from centres of population and the reduced availability of materials limit their extent. In this respect the unions from industrial centres try to assist the sovkhozes, and often send their theatre, ballet or similar groups to perform for the farm-workers. Sometimes such groups also perform on the collective farms, although the cultural activities in the kolkhozes are generally organised with the help of the public authorities.

For seamen and sea and river transport workers, the Sea and River Transport Workers’ Union has organised special facilities. In seaports clubs known as “cultural bases” have been provided to supply the crews with films, books and newspapers, look after their personal mail and perform a number of personal services. These clubs also look after the welfare of foreign seamen. On ocean-going vessels various amenities such as libraries, film projectors and musical instruments are provided. On the rivers, many of which are very long, mobile clubs and shops serve the boats.

The staff of these cultural establishments often includes graduates of art schools. For example, in the club of a Moscow machine-tool plant, which has a full-time staff of 25, the manager is a graduate of the Moscow Musical School, and before being appointed to this post he was in charge of the club’s musical section. The houses of culture and clubs are open the whole day, but with the exception of the children’s section, which usually starts operating in the afternoon, their main activities are centred in the evening. They become alive from 6 or 7 p.m. onwards until 11.30 p.m. or midnight, which is their usual closing time. Their restaurants or cafeterias serve meals and refreshments at moderate prices, and in larger establishments they are open to anyone living in the area. No alcoholic drinks are permitted except on some special occasions such as the New Year celebration, when wine and beer may be served.

The costs of administering and operating these cultural and recreational facilities are borne by the trade unions, except that particular undertakings are responsible for keeping in good repair buildings which they themselves have provided.

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The activities of the unions, therefore, may affect the position of a worker within an undertaking, or influence his welfare as a dweller on a housing estate, a customer of a shop, a patient in a sanatorium or a member of an amateur dramatics society. The omnipresence of Soviet trade unions cannot fail to strike any visitor who has had an opportunity to go a little off the beaten track and to get briefly into touch with industrial and agricultural enterprises.

It is only fair to say, however, that the many-sided duties and tasks of trade unions could not be carried out were it not for the swelling ranks of union activists. The full-time staff of the unions is not very large as compared to the volume of work and the size of the country, but the volunteers run into several millions. It is unlikely that without these hard-working millions who, with the exception of a relatively small group, are not released from their ordinary work when carrying out trade union duties, the functions of the trade unions would or could be performed in a country as vast and as varied as the U.S.S.R.
CHAPTER VI

THE GENERAL SITUATION

At this point reference may again be made to the various questions which have been asked concerning the nature of the Soviet trade unions, their relation to the Government and to the Communist Party, and their position in the Soviet State. As far as freedom of association is concerned, the questions come back to the points mentioned at the beginning of Chapter I.

It may be well to recall, also, the debates on these questions at sessions of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body of the I.L.O. During these debates representatives of the Soviet Government and of the Soviet trade unions have stated that membership of the trade unions in the Soviet Union is voluntary, that there is nothing in the law to prevent the formation of trade unions or of trade union federations, and that no permission is required before a trade union can be set up. It has also been stated that trade unions in the Soviet Union do not have to be registered with any government authority. In this connection reference may also be made to the following passage from a speech made by the Workers’ delegate from the U.S.S.R. at the 43rd Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 1959):

We can fairly ask what capitalist country has trade unions with rights so broad as those of the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries. In what other country, for instance, do the trade unions participate in drawing up economic plans or help in the work of economic and governmental bodies? Where else do they supervise [occupational safety and] the implementation of labour legislation? Where else do they manage enormous sums for social security purposes? Where else is the management prohibited from dismissing a worker without the trade union’s consent? In what capitalist country can the trade unions propose the [demotion] or punishment of managers who neglect their duties or violate the provisions of labour legislation? Where in the world of capitalism are managers forced to take account of the opinions of trade union organisations?

These and other rights of the trade unions in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are a clear indication of their great freedom and of the enormous possibilities open to them.  

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1 See Introduction, pp. 1-4.
It may be hoped that some of the above questions have been clarified by the first-hand information which has been given in the preceding chapters of this report. The individual problems must, however, be seen as parts of the general picture. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to show briefly how the general situation appears in the light of the Mission's observations on the spot.

First of all, account must be taken of the reality of the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. The Mission received visible evidence of the extent of their organisation from its visits to the extensive buildings in Moscow occupied by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the individual unions which are affiliated to the Central Council and from what it saw of the trade union offices, meeting rooms, palaces of culture and other establishments in cities and factories in widely distant parts of the Soviet Union. Other evidence was furnished by the trade union daily newspapers, periodicals and other publications and by the trade union activities which the Mission was able to witness in the fields of health, welfare, housing, education and so on, as well as in the factories.

Soviet trade unions were not a creation of the post-Revolutionary period. They came into existence before the First World War in Russia as in other countries of Europe, and for similar reasons. They grew rapidly after the Revolution of 1905, and afterwards they went through a period of repression. It was during the years before 1917 that they developed their relations with the political parties, linked their industrial action with political action and took on their revolutionary character. After 1917, having participated in the Revolution and having assisted in the overthrow of Tsarism and capitalism, they became essential to the defence and subsequent development of the Soviet régime. But they were not set up by the Soviet State; they existed already.

One objection has been that, although there are organisations in the Soviet Union which are called trade unions, they are not trade unions in the generally accepted sense of the term, and in fact that they are not trade unions at all. In support of this view it has been stated that Soviet trade unions do not carry out the main trade union function of defending the workers' interests, that they do not seek improvements for the workers—whose problems are the same in the Soviet Union as in any other country—but that on the contrary they merely serve the interests of the Government, transmitting its orders to the workers and driving them to make increased exertions with the object of raising production in the interests of the State. Here it may be noted that the test of a trade union must relate both to what the organisation is and to what it does. On these points the reader is referred to the information given in the chapters on trade union organisation and on trade union functions.
As has been pointed out in earlier chapters, the Soviet trade unions perform a wide range of functions—some independently, some in cooperation with state bodies and some which would be regarded in other countries as functions of the Government itself. It is here that one of the difficulties arises for those who wish to understand the true nature of the Soviet trade unions and their place in the State. It will be remembered that the industrial functions of the Soviet trade unions (which comprise the basic trade union functions) include the conclusion of collective agreements. These, while covering some of the subjects which are to be found in collective agreements in other countries, extend to certain other subjects as well and are strikingly different in form. Some of the matters covered by collective agreements in a number of other countries are dealt with in the Soviet Union by legislation or in other ways because of the nature of the Soviet economic system and the relations between the workers and the State.

Again, the Soviet trade unions, while giving considerable attention, as in other countries, to all questions concerning the welfare of the workers on and off the job, assume much more responsibility than in capitalist countries for the solution of problems of production. But, although it is true that the unions strive to bring about increased production, it was often pointed out to the Mission that the principal means of achieving this was by greater mechanisation and better organisation of work rather than by harder physical effort. The Mission saw evidence of this in factories which were planning to introduce shorter working hours during 1960. Here, too, it is relevant to recall that the functions of the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. include labour protection and that the unions have a prime responsibility for labour inspection in safety matters.

Turning to other functions exercised in association with state authorities, it will have been noted that, while the situation is not the same as in many other countries, the difference is not absolute, in some of the other countries too the unions are associated in various ways with the administration of insurance funds, pensions schemes, and so on, and are taking on a widening range of public responsibilities.

This, in brief, is the general situation with regard to trade union functions in the U.S.S.R. The question is whether these functions in fact include all the true functions of trade unions, or whether this work detracts in any way from their real purpose. At all events, when the circumstances of the Soviet State are borne in mind it becomes evident that the place of the trade unions and the work they perform cannot always be the same as in countries in which the traditional forms and methods of trade unionism were developed.
There is no need to examine in detail at this point the problem of the relationship in which the trade unions stand to the Communist Party and to the Government, since this has already been dealt with in the preceding chapters. It is, however, impossible to overlook this relationship in any summary of the general situation, in view of its fundamental importance for the problem of freedom of association. One of the questions which the Mission always kept in mind, indeed, was whether this relationship affected the freedom of the unions to pursue their objectives without interference from an outside body or from the Government.

The facts of the situation are clear enough; it is their interpretation which leads to differences of opinion. As far as the Communist Party is concerned, the role of the Party in the trade unions is specifically dealt with in the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., which have already been quoted. Other references to this subject have also been given in earlier chapters. It may be added that on a number of occasions the Mission met representatives of the Party in the plants which were visited, and discussed with them and others their functions in the plant. These matters were also discussed by the Mission with representatives of the trade unions and the Government at higher levels. There can be no doubt that in accordance with their Rules the trade unions, like all other bodies in the Soviet Union, have to follow the leadership of the Party in their policies and activities.

As far as relations with the Government are concerned, it is evident that the Government has its own sphere of responsibility and the trade unions have theirs. The trade unions do not exercise any of the traditional functions of government, but they do carry out certain functions which governments are now concerned with in some other countries. It has now become customary for governments to concern themselves with the promotion of the people's welfare and the administration of a wide range of social services, while sharing these responsibilities with private organisations, including trade unions. In the circumstances of the Soviet Union it can be said that while the trade unions are distinct from the Government they nevertheless play a prominent part in helping to run the country—especially in the sphere of industrial organisation and the social services.

Consultation and co-ordination of policy are facilitated by the interlocking memberships which exist in the organs of the Government, the Party and the trade unions. There are former trade union leaders who occupy positions in the Council of Ministers or in the State Committees of this Council—which correspond to government departments. Some of the prominent positions in the trade union movement are held by leading members of the Communist Party. Some leading members
of the trade unions are also members of the Supreme Soviet, and so on. Whatever positions these leaders occupy they will always be concerned in establishing and promoting policies which will be carried out by the Government, the Party and the trade unions for the same common ends.

In most countries in which trade unions have a long history the unions have had to carry on a struggle for recognition, which has meant both securing a legal status and establishing the conditions in which the unions could carry on effective work. This, of course, has involved recognition by both governments and employers.

As far as the Soviet trade unions are concerned the problem of recognition by the Government has not existed since the Revolution of 1917. In Tsarist days the Russian trade unions, like the trade unions in other countries, had to carry on a struggle for legal status. After the Revolution there were some great debates about the exact place of the trade unions in the Soviet State, but their right to exist was never in question. Today this right is guaranteed by the Constitution and the laws of the Soviet Union. In reply to questions the Mission was repeatedly told that trade unions existed in every branch of the economy and in every part of the Soviet Union. It was explained that whenever a new factory was built or a new industrial area opened up a primary trade union organisation was immediately constituted. Usually this was done on the initiative of workers who had already been active in the trade unions in other areas or plants.

Similarly, there is no problem of recognition by the employers. In the U.S.S.R. either people are employed by the State or they are members of collective farms and co-operative organisations. There is one minor exception to this, namely what is described in Article 9 of the Constitution as "the small private economy of individual peasants and handicraftsmen based on their own labour and precluding the exploitation of the labour of others". Accordingly there is no employment by private firms and individuals. The managers of factories and other undertakings are considered to be pursuing the same interests as the workers whom they engage. In all undertakings the management is expected to deal with the trade union through the factory or local trade union committee, to provide premises and other facilities for trade union work and to conclude collective agreements in which the management and the unions accept reciprocal obligations. Management must also seek the agreement of the union before taking certain decisions and must report regularly to the union. In these circumstances the problem of trade union recognition by employers does not arise.

Further, whereas in many other countries the unions have had to struggle to gain public acceptance as well as recognition from govern-
ments and employers, in the U.S.S.R. public acceptance is unquestioned. Since practically the whole population works, and since well over 90 per cent. of the industrial workers are trade union members, there cannot be any strong body of opinion which doubts the right of trade unions to exist.

It has been pointed out in Chapter I that the U.S.S.R. is passing through a period of rapid development. Changes have occurred in recent years in the trade union sphere as in others. In various ways the relationship between the trade unions and the organs of government has been altered or, in other words, the situation of the trade unions has been evolving. It will have been noted that certain modifications have been made in the structure of the trade unions and that in 1959 a number of amendments were made to their Rules. At the time of the Mission’s visit, as will be remembered, a new draft Bill was under consideration which contained provisions relating to the situation and work of the trade unions.

Of particular significance is the fact that in the last few years the powers and duties of the trade unions have expanded. The unions are now associated, for example, with planning activities in the individual plants, at the republic level and through the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) in Moscow. It may also be recalled that the regulations for factory and office trade union committees and the provisions for standing production conferences, both of which were approved in 1958, increased the powers and influence of the trade unions in the undertakings. The Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. approving the Regulations for Factory and Office Trade Union Committees was in the following terms:

In view of the greater role being played by the trade unions in state and economic affairs and for the purpose of widening the powers of factory and office trade union committees in the management of industry and stepping up their functions for the betterment of the working and living conditions of the employees, the Presidium approves the Regulations for Factory and Office Trade Union Committees submitted by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions.

It would appear that the trade unions are now consulted on matters affecting production and labour protection and are being given greater responsibility for the provision and administration of the services necessary for the workers’ welfare.

Within the trade unions increasing use is being made of the practices of consultation, discussion and election. The amendments made in the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. in 1959 were generally intended to increase membership participation. A great deal was said to the Mission in explanation of the procedures at trade union meetings,
conferences and elections, and it would appear that these are now a regular feature of trade union activity.

The position of the individual worker as a member of a trade union is difficult to depict. Does the high proportion of trade union membership amongst the workers imply that more pressure is brought upon them to join the unions than is the case in most other countries? This is a question of comparison on which the Mission is not in a position to express an opinion. In any case the influence of education and of the social environment upon the workers must be borne in mind. It was explained to the Mission that membership of trade unions is not compulsory. It was also stated that if a worker cannot be persuaded by argument to join a union he will not be coerced into membership. Clearly workers are encouraged to join trade unions, there is great moral influence upon them to do so and there are very appreciable inducements for them to join. Perhaps these factors are sufficient to account for the fact that the proportion of trade union membership is so high.

In regard to membership participation in trade union activities there is evidence that members are encouraged to play an active part in the work of the unions in the plants. If they show ability in this sphere they may be elected to represent the union at higher levels. It was obvious to the Mission that a large part of the work of the unions in the factories was carried out by voluntary effort. Membership of factory and shop trade union committees is an unpaid service except in the case of the handful of full-time officials employed by the unions in the plants. The various commissions which are set up under the auspices of the factory trade union committees consist in the main of members co-opted from amongst the workers. The membership of some of these commissions, especially in big plants, is quite large. Trade union members also give a great deal of voluntary service in the houses of rest and culture, the children's camps and so on.

During the discussions which have taken place in the I.L.O. attention has been drawn to the question whether workers in the Soviet Union are free to establish any unions they please. It must be remembered that when primary trade union organisations are created, as mentioned in a previous paragraph, they form part of the existing trade union for the branch of industry concerned. It is hardly likely that organisations could be set up outside the established framework, because of the principles enunciated in Article 14 of the Rules of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. that "all persons employed in the same factory or office belong to the same union".

Nor is any stress placed in the U.S.S.R. on the right of workers to strike. As already pointed out in Chapter III, the legislation of the
Soviet Union does not prohibit recourse to strikes. On the other hand, it does not appear to give them any express protection. However, as will be seen below, there are very few circumstances in which strikes can occur.

One form of strike is political—for instance, a strike involving the government. In all countries strikes of this kind are frowned upon. In view of the way in which the Soviet system is organised and of the interlocking relationships between the trade unions, the Party and the Government, it is improbable that a situation would arise in which a trade union, much less the A.U.C.C.T.U., would call upon the workers to strike against the Government.

Another form of strike is that which is directed against the management. Here again it is unlikely that a set of circumstances in which it would be necessary for a union to call a strike would be allowed to arise in the U.S.S.R. because of the place which the unions occupy in the economic organisation of the Soviet State. Provision is made for the unions to be associated with management in the running of the plants, in solving the problems of production and in ensuring that due attention is paid to the welfare of the workers. Provision is also made for the unions and the managements to be continually in touch with each other, to have every opportunity of discussing points of disagreement and to appeal, if necessary, to higher authorities.

Strikes against the management may also, of course, be spontaneous outbreaks with which the union may or may not be in sympathy. It may be assumed that stoppages of work of this kind sometimes take place. Various means exist for the workers to obtain consideration of their grievances through their union or through the management; if strikes of this kind do take place it must be expected that the necessary machinery for dealing with the problem is immediately set in motion.

As has been explained in Chapter IV, trade union members have, in addition to their rights and privileges, certain precise and positive duties in regard to the promotion of production, the observance of labour discipline, the development of the country’s economy and the safeguarding of the people’s property. The work of the trade unions appears to have been developing with increasing membership participation and, with the raising of the educational level, there seems to be a growing tendency to regard the individual member as a person whose co-operation is necessary.

It was pointed out in Chapter II that the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. have been called upon to exercise not only the traditional trade union

\(^1\) See p. 63.
functions but also functions which in other countries are discharged by the State. This dual position must find its place in any description of the general situation. It accounts for the considerable power and influence which the Soviet trade unions enjoy. While continuing to be organisations which represent and speak for the workers the unions are participating to an even greater extent in running and strengthening the Soviet State. In their defence of the workers' interests and welfare the unions continue to urge the workers to make the greatest possible contribution towards strengthening the economy and raising the general standards of living.

Much has been said in this report about the extent of trade union power in the U.S.S.R. It is interesting to consider how far this power is a measure of trade union freedom. Many people feel that the Soviet trade unions, instead of becoming more independent, are being more closely integrated with the system of government. They doubt whether the unions can continue to develop on the lines followed in recent years and still remain trade unions. These are problems on which the reader must form his own judgment. It has been said that the Soviet trade unions, with other social organisations, will eventually replace the State. Be this as it may, while carrying out their functions in regard to the planning and organising of production, and while continuing their efforts for the protection and welfare of the workers, the unions remain one of the pillars of the Soviet system.

The functions of the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. must be considered in connection with the nature of the country's economic and political organisation. They are firmly established as a part of the system but, as has been seen, their situation has been evolving. This has to a certain extent made it more difficult for the Mission to analyse and describe the factual position. What has been said in this report, therefore, cannot pretend to be definitive. The situation has been changing and may change still further.