

THE SOVIET STYLE OF SOCIAL SECURITY

By JILL MARTIN

FEAR of what the future may bring, a feeling of financial insecurity, are familiar spectres in the lives of wage-earners. In the Soviet Union, however, these spectres have disappeared.

This year, eight billion rubles are to be spent on Soviet social insurance, representing an increase of more than 19 per cent as compared with 1935. To get the true picture of the growth of social security in the Soviet Union however, this eight billion budget must be compared with those of earlier years. Ten years ago only 923 million rubles were spent on social insurance. Even at the beginning of the first Five Year Plan, the figure was only a little over one billion rubles or not quite a seventh of what it will be this year. The USSR is growing continually more prosperous, and as its wealth increases so do the funds which secure the well-being of the workers who are making this prosperity possible.

The basic principles of social insurance as it should be in a workers' State were laid down by Lenin in 1912, and as soon as the Bolsheviks came to power, one of the first decrees they passed incorporated these basic principles into the law of the land. At first the laws could be but little carried out. Soviet Russia was torn by civil war, blockaded by its enemies, foreign troops were invading the country, famine and disease were prevalent and industry was at a standstill. In 1912, however, began the period of rebuilding, and from that time on the progress of the country has been steady. That this progress should include continued strengthening of the security of the workers was inevitable, as the country is a Socialist State, the sole aim of which is the well-being of the masses making up its population.

Since 1933, the management of the social insurance system has been in charge of the trade unions. Even before that time when the Commissariat of Labor was in charge, the Trade Unions had always shared in the management. In 1933, however, the Commissariat was abolished and its province of work was given over to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. The most direct representatives of the workers—the trade unions—collect the social insurance funds, administer the spending of them, direct and carry out the elaborate system by which the Soviet worker is safeguarded against all hazards.

Eight billion rubles. Where do these funds come from? They come from all employers of labor, whether such employer be a private individual or the State. Every person, every factory, every institution which employs labor, must pay dues to the trade union of its respective workers. In other words the wage-earner, the person who is being insured, makes no contribution to the social insurance fund. The contribution is made entirely by the employer. The employer's salary list is used as the basis for computing how large his insurance dues must be and the percentage used for the computation varies according to the type of work being performed. It is naturally higher for work that entails more chance of accident or injury to health than for work where there is less risk. In 1934 this percentage was nearly 13 per cent for the Union as a whole.

Every person who works for wages is entitled to the benefits of social insurance, whether or not a member of the trade union. This includes industrial, professional and domestic workers as well as those agricultural workers who receive a wage. Workers on state farms or in the tractors stations thus come under the provisions of the insurance laws, but the members of collective farms do not. Members of such farms, where there is of course neither employer nor employee, are taken care of by means of mutual aid societies organized by themselves, on a model established by the government. The fundamental idea of social insurance is that those persons who are dependent for their well-being on the wages they receive for their work, must be insured against all possibilities by which they may be rendered unable to work and thus be deprived of their wage.

For all such possibilities Soviet social insurance makes provision—except for unemployment. Unemployment insurance was discontinued in 1930 as it was no longer needed. Since that time, indeed, the problem in the Soviet Union has been to find enough workers for the necessary jobs rather than to find enough work for its population.

Social insurance in the USSR also gives help in meeting the expense of events which make heavy inroads into a wage-earner's budget, such as birth, illness and death. It, moreover, spends a large proportion of its funds on measures calculated to improve the well-

being and consequently the health of the workers. These measures may be called preventative ones, decreasing as they do the chances of persons becoming incapacitated.

What is the form of all these provisions?

All wage-earners and members of their families receive free medical care, either through the doctors attached to their place of work or through clinics and ambulatoria outside. In 1935, the amount of money delegated to his medical care from the social insurance funds was one and a half billion, more than one-sixth of the whole budget.

If a person is unable to go to work, either through illness, accident, quarantine, or through being obliged to nurse some member of his family, that person is classified as temporarily disabled and receives aid from the first day of his absence until such time as he can return to work or is classified as an invalid entitled to a pension. This aid is paid out at the place of employment. Up to 1931, the size of the aid was the same for everyone, namely 100 per cent of the wages received. In that year, however, this was changed and the proportion now paid out varies according to the type of work performed, both generally and at a given enterprise; whether the person is a member of a trade union, is an *udarnik*, or a young worker not yet working full time. People who are not members of trade unions generally receive only 50 per cent of their wages for the first month of absence from work and two-thirds for the remaining time. On the other hand, *udarniki* who have worked not less than one year, no matter whether in one enterprise or not, receive 100 per cent of their wages from the very first day. In other words, social insurance is used as an incentive for the performance of work that will be most productive. The best workers, those who stick by their jobs and do not contribute to labor-turnover, those who are members of trade unions, those who do the kind of work most necessary for the building of socialism, are given preferential treatment.

In cases of pregnancy, all women employees not only receive aid for temporary absence from work, but are in fact expected to absent themselves for a given period before and after the birth of their child. The total period varies from twelve to sixteen weeks depending on the physical strain of the work that the woman is performing. Most important of all, the job is guaranteed to the woman on her return to work. All women workers and all wives of wage-earners are also given a supplementary benefit on the birth of the child to help pay for the layette and payments are made after

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into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule, because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie; in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage labor. Wage labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their involuntary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

II. Proletarians and Communists

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by

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has been done and on the length of time the person has worked. Preference is given to those who have been incapacitated as a result of occupational accident or disease. Such persons if they are completely incapacitated receive 100 per cent of their former wage, no matter how short or how long a time they have been working. Should the degree of a person's disability change, he is transferred to a different invalid group and the pension is adjusted accordingly.

Old age pensions as such only began to be paid in 1928. Before that time, people who were incapacitated by old age were taken care of under the laws for general invalidism. In 1928, however, the payment of pension upon reaching a definite age was established for certain groups of wage-earners, and since then it has been extended until it covers all the main groups of workers. Those who work underground or in other hazardous kinds of work are eligible for pension at the age of fifty if they have worked for a period of twenty years. In other branches of labor, men are eligible at sixty after having worked twenty-five years, and women at fifty-five after twenty years of work. The size of pension varies from 50 to 65 per cent of the average wage for the last twelve months of employment, depending on the type of work that has been performed.

Dependents of insured persons who have died or whose whereabouts is unknown also receive a pension.

It must be noted that in the Soviet Union rent varies with the wages received, so that a person receiving a pension smaller than his previous wage would pay less rent. Also when the cost of bread went up in 1935 at the time of discarding ration cards, pensions were likewise raised. Moreover persons receiving pensions are encouraged to work in addition to their pension, unless the sum of the two exceed the former wage. In that case the pension is decreased.

All these pensions and aids are vitally important, for it is by them that Soviet social insurance protects the worker. Nagging fear of the future is removed.

this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

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very efficiently, according to Raizer, who explained that while the largest furnaces of the Makeyevka Plant, each with a volume of 930 cu. m., are smelting one ton of pig iron per 0.80 cu. m. of useful volume of furnace (on the best days achieving a coefficient of 0.77), the new blast furnaces should produce a ton of metal per 0.75 and even 0.70 cu. m.

Though the best technical achievements of other Soviet and foreign blast furnaces will be employed in the new ones, and though their control will be entirely automatic, nevertheless, they will not cost more to build than the Magnitogorsk furnaces.

According to plan, each of the new blast furnaces should produce 1,300 tons of pig iron a day. With the application of Stakhanov methods, however, production from 20 to 30 per cent above plan is anticipated.

The workers are able to face life without dread as to what will happen to themselves or to their family if they fall ill or are injured. They do not have the constant spectre of doctor's bills nor of funeral costs. A woman does not need to be anxious, lest having a baby will cause her to lose her job. A man can work without constant worry as to what will happen to his family if he dies. All this means security. It is an essential part of human happiness, of that joy in life which is becoming so evident in the Soviet Union.

Soviet social insurance does not confine itself, however, merely to taking care of eventualities. It tries to prevent them. It contributes large sums to promoting good health among the workers. Money is set aside for the building and support of rest homes and sanitariums. Large sums are spent on children's camps, nurseries and kindergartens, on providing extra food for school children or milk for babies. There is a special fund for improving housing conditions. All these contributions, as is the money spent by social insurance on medical care, are of course additional to what comes from the government budget for such purposes. It is most noteworthy that the proportion of the social insurance budget that goes to this indirect aid is increasing.

The object of the Soviet State is that the workers therein should be healthy and happy, free of anxiety about the future and so free to develop their manifold creative abilities both in their work and in outside cultural and social activities. Soviet social insurance is one of the paths toward this goal.

Professionals Should Strive For Economic Security

By PEDRO ABAD SANTOS
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The most vital problem confronting the professionals today is that of their economic security. It is an obvious fact that thousands of professionals are unable to secure a decent living in their respective professions, not because their services are not necessary or they lack ability in their chosen careers, for I have seen topnotchers in bar examinations working in law offices at a salary of 50 pesos a month or even less, and while thousands of men and women and children are dying for want of medical assistance, scores of doctors do not earn enough money to pay for their licenses. Also when millions of children are deprived of even primary education, a legion of teachers are unemployed because of lack of government funds.

The same problem confronts the dentist, the pharmacist, the engineer, the writer, the journalist and other professionals.

As the professional workers attending the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance recently held in Washington said:

"The professional worker's relatively privileged status is gone. He now knows unemployment, insecurity, hunger, want. More than half the architects, engineers, chemists, research and laboratory workers in this country have no work. Teachers, nurses, and government employees in general have been let out in increasing numbers. Musicians, artists, dentists, and physicians have suffered a steep decline in income because the great mass of people lack money to buy their services. . . . The numbers of all these groups are being constantly augmented by college graduates for whom there is no future under our present system." And they stated the line of ac-

tion they intended to follow for their security saying:

"The professional worker. . . has been turning increasingly to the promotion of bread. . . groups whose orientation is frankly economic and which seek security for their members through collective action on specific issues and joint action with other workers' groups on common issues."

There is the remedy. We must unite with other workers to improve our common economic condition. So long as wealth is concentrated in the few of the privileged classes, while the great masses of the people, that is, the workers, farm-laborers and all wage-earners, become more and more impoverished, the professional workers cannot have economic security and many will not secure even a decent standard of living. For how can the masses of the people pay for our professional services if they do not earn even enough for their miserable daily food?

If the professionals want to improve their economic condition, they must forsake that old wrong notion that they belong with the privileged classes. On the contrary, we must be convinced that our interests and economic fate are bound up with those of the working class. By workers, I mean all who function in any part of the productive system, and the cultural, professional, technical and scientific services of society. We should not be condemned to a wretched life, while the parasites, who exploit the workers live luxuriously from the profits of their capital.

But we cannot secure these purposes by currying favor with the governing clique, "upholding and

defending the Constitution" and "conducting a campaign of civic information among the masses through public meeting and other means on what the government has done and is doing for the good of the country," as some would have us do. So, we must attain economic security by uniting with other workers in demanding social insurance, better wages and higher living standard for the working class.

There is no other way. As it is now, we the workers are shouldering all the burden of the economic depression and our living standard is going from bad to worse, while the proprietors, hacenderos and capitalists enjoy themselves in luxury. The poor get poorer and the rich richer.

Let us men and women of the so-called liberal professions shake off our middle class prejudices and take our place on the side of the workers in the class struggle. Let us organize or, as they say now, let us have our own racket, but it must be a racket to fight and end the biggest of all rackets, the capitalist racket.

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the birth to provide for supplementary feeding.

In the case of funerals either of an insured person or of a dependent member of the insured's family, aid is given either in the form of money or by the trade union itself undertaking the funeral and charging the cost to the social insurance fund.

Pensions are paid to persons who are permanently disabled either as the result of professional accident, occupational disease or of causes unrelated to his occupation, and the payment of pensions begins as soon as invalidism is established. There is no lapse of time between the stoppage of aid for temporary disability and the beginning of pension payments. The invalids are divided into three groups depending on the extent to which they are disabled. The pension is a percentage of the average salary for the last twelve months of employment. The percentage is determined according to the group of invalids to which the person belongs; by the cause of invalidism; and in some cases by the type of work which

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