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THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN THE SOVIET UNION:
SOME OF THEIR SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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The following discussion of selected social problems of the industrial workers in the Soviet Union will avoid as much as possible both the Western and Soviet categories used to describe social stratification. The difficulties in using the Western terminology in analyzing a hierarchical society, other than perhaps 19th century Europe, were pointed out in the recent literature.¹ Thus, the term inequality will have to be substituted for the terms describing social stratification, such as class, stratum, etc., conventionally used in Western sociological analysis.

The problems of using the Soviet definitions are manifold; on the one hand the basic assumption underlying the definition of social structure is derived from and dynamically predetermined by the ultimate outcome--the "classless society," and on the other hand by the totally artificial, or arbitrary definition of "existing social classes" representing workers and collective farmers and a middle stratum of intelligentsia.²

The distinction of the two main "classes," workers and collective farmers appears to be based upon a trivial legalistic point. The workers are distinguishable by a labor-contract arrangement in which the total of their labor is exchanged for a monetary wage. The terms of the arrangement are determined by the monopolist employer, the state, in accordance with the worker's performance, skills, etc., and with the "employer's" utility function. The collective farmers are distinguished by a labor contract which provides them, in exchange for a specified minimum of labor effort, with a remuneration in money or in kind and with the private use of a household plot of land to absorb their labor effort over and above the stipulated minimum.

Thus the difference between state farm workers and collective farmers ultimately boils down to a difference of the number of obligatory work days, which are in an inverse relationship to the size of the household plot. The so called stratum of "intelligentsia," poorly defined, the historical image of which was derived from the concept of the "marginal" man, might ~~be~~ constitute ^{an} anachronism, since its real social functions and services are obviously deemed important for the functioning of the Soviet political and economic system.

The rejection of the existing definition of industrial workers in the Soviet Union as a "class" is also derived from the impression that while the term was functional for the legitimization of Soviet power by attributing to a social group, however loosely defined, an historic mission, and a claim of moral superiority, it is today an empty category. Even the myth of the "industrial working class" did not survive World War II; although it may still linger in the rhetorical pronouncements of party theoreticians, it has no psychological resonance in Soviet society of the 1970's. It is for the above mentioned reasons that the ideological umbrella of the "class" concept is not suitable for our analysis.

Thus, while either "industrial working class" a la Soviet or Western social stratification models might be of doubtful usefulness, this is not tantamount to the denial that there are industrial workers. In fact, they represent the largest employment group in Soviet society. The purpose of the following comments is to depict both the universe of commonality and to explore the differentiation by such indicators as sex, age, skill education, industry branch and location. To

the extent that the above distinctions affect the workers' incomes, their life-styles and aspirations, one could presume that they influence attitudes toward other members of society, towards social institutions and political authorities.

As with many problems pertaining to Soviet society, the answers are not readily available either in the secondary publications or in the compilations of primary sources. While the lack of data narrows one's scope of analysis, it does not constrain one's propensity to offer conjectures.

The most important consideration for the analysis of the contemporary industrial labor force in the Soviet Union is its slower than previous growth and the exhaustion of the labor reserves which could previously, with relatively low costs, be transferred to the industrial sector of the economy. In order to put the present state of the Soviet industrial labor force in a more familiar comparative framework, it might be appropriate to use the analogy with the U.S. industrial labor force during the 1920's.

In both cases the period of rapid numerical growth or high annual rates of accretion were a thing of the past. The respective sources of accretion, immigration from abroad for the U.S. and internal migration from the rural areas for the Soviet Union and U.S., tended to dry up. In both cases, the previous sources of industrial labor recruitment provided workers of rather low levels of general education and of low levels of employable industrial skills, thus providing a labor force component, which required additional, primarily on-the-job training. As in the U.S. during the 1920's and in the Soviet Union at the present, massive capital investments in the industrial sector of the economy are called for, in order to raise both output and labor productivity.

There is still another area in which the analogy between the present state of the Soviet industrial labor force and the U.S. industrial labor force of the 1920's holds, namely the level of education of the labor force. In both cases the average level of education was below that of a completed secondary education. And although the distribution of educational achievement of the industrial labor force for particular industry branches in the Soviet and U.S. case differed, the averages for the total industrial sector are similar.

The tightening of the labor supply for industry provided a challenge and forced a major adjustment. The previous assumption of an ample supply of labor to industry, one which prevailed for many decades and upon which some macro-economic as well as enterprise decisions were based, had to be re-examined and changed. In view of the changing factor composition in Soviet industry such time-honored practices as hoarding of labor by enterprises became too costly for the industrial firms as well as for the economy as a whole. Given the relatively high demand for industrial labor within the Soviet Union and a more restricted supply of labor, the price of labor (or the shadow price) was rising. This obviously affected the attitudes of the authorities and management toward the industrial workers. Much greater emphasis was put to the quality performance of the labor force and more attention is being paid to such phenomena as labor turnover, the high rates of which were costly both in terms of output and the training costs related to job changes.

A relatively useful mode of analysis is provided by the example of what economists describe as the human capital labor quality wage equation, in which the hourly wage rate of an individual worker is determined by a number of demographic characteristics of the individual, inclusive of geographic

differences in the cost of living and earning differences between the sexes, exclusive of other labor quality variables, and by the years of education and years of labor force experience. This method might be useful as an organizing device, without claiming that the underlying assumptions for the equation are valid for the Soviet labor market, and that the available Soviet data will yield the parameters of such an equation.

The overwhelming demographic characteristic, which nota bene distinguishes the Soviet industrial force from the industrial labor force in capitalist countries is the high percentage of women. Apart from the high concentration of women as clerical workers in the various industry branches and the relatively high percentage of women as technical specialists on an industry-wide scale, the participation of women in ordinary blue-collar jobs in industry is very significant. A number of industries can be described as "women-dominated" ones, in which women make up a large majority of the work force. A Soviet study based upon 1969 RSFSR family budgets and 1970 Population Census reports³ ranks for the RSFSR some industries by the percentage of female employment (Table I).

The significance of a high rate of participation in the industrial labor force goes beyond sheer numbers. It is related to the problems of the worker's family, to the wage levels of particular industries, to skill differentials between the sexes and even to the locations of particular industries depending upon the sex ratio of the urban population.

TABLE 1

1969 RANKING OF INDUSTRIES BY PERCENTAGE
WOMEN EMPLOYED

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Percent of Women in the labor force</u>
Glass	51.2
Chemical	51.5
Food	58.8
Porcelain	65.3
Textiles	71.6
Printing	71.7
Light (excl. textiles)	77.5
Clothing	87.3

SOURCE: A. E. Kotlar, S.IA. Turchaninova: *Zovintost' Zhenshim
v Proizvodstve* (Moscow, Statistika, 1975), p. 40.

Some of the available evidence might suggest forms of discrimination against women workers who possess comparable skills as male workers.⁴ The skill differentials between males and females exist in both female and male dominated industries when they are measured by the official skill classification (which includes six skill levels).

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE SKILL LEVELS OF MALES AND
FEMALES IN VARIOUS INDUSTRY BRANCHES

<u>Industry Branch</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Textiles	3.8	3.7
Meat and Dairy	4.0	3.1
Breadbaking	4.5	3.9
Machine-building	3.5	2.1

SOURCE: A. E. Kotlar, *op cit.*, p. 24.

For our purposes, however, it is more significant that in the Soviet context, with virtually two wage earners per industrial worker's family, the effective contribution of female wages to the family budget is much below that of male workers. The distribution of shares of wages in the family budgets of workers is instructive even when given in the following somewhat ambiguous terms. To the extent

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF SHARES OF WAGES IN THE
FAMILY BUDGETS
(in percent)

<u>Share</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Over half	61.9	20.5
Half	18.8	22.6
Less than half	19.3	56.9

SOURCE: A. E. Kotlar, *op cit.*, p. 139.

that the data are not adjusted for industry branches of employment or for the employment categories of the family members (blue-collar, white-collar or specialists), they provide more of a general impression than a firm data base. However, the above examples of the areas in which the differentiation by sex within the industrial labor force seem to be significant, suggest that not only the differences in income and status, but also in outlook on the part of the women workers, when combined with their share in the industrial labor force would necessarily color the set of social attitudes and provide additional dimensions to the social problems of the industrial workers in general.

The age structure of the industrial labor force is influenced by the general demographic trends of the past decades, primarily birth rates and by the increasing number of years of average schooling. The recent decline in the size of the incoming age cohorts, a result of the above mentioned phenomena, should make it easier for the industrial workers to absorb and socialize the new entrants.

Another difference between the present and the previous young entrants is that in the past the process of socialization was combined with on-the-job training carried out by the older and more experienced workers. This channel of skill acquisition was combined with a "natural" intergenerational transfer of skills, habits, etc.⁵ At the present much of the training is presumed to be conducted in the professional-technical schools, affecting this intergenerational transmission belt.

The increase in the age of entrance into the industrial labor force is tantamount to the diminution of the category of factory apprentices prior to military service for the male population, and the actual entrance in the post-military service age, when the problems of family formation begin. It is difficult to envisage at this point whether those age cohorts will attempt to postpone the age of marriage, but in any event, their attitudes toward spatial mobility, toward their jobs, professions and careers will certainly differ from the ones of the entrants into the labor force of an earlier period. If the age characteristics of the labor force taken separately might not be of major consequence to the quality of the workers in industry, age in combination with other variables might be significant. Apparently the Soviet planners expect positive results from the combination of age with education, particularly with technical-professional training in

schools. However, it is not entirely clear whether the increase in general education and technical training will not be offset to some extent by the lowering of work experience for the category of young workers.⁶ Until the present, young workers in the Soviet Union were considered the most mobile element of the population and except for forced or prison labor, numerous construction projects in scarcely populated areas or the manning of industrial enterprises in newly established towns were accomplished by the mobilization of contingents of young workers. Even if the experience was short-lived for many of them and later viewed as youthful adventure, there were new opportunities for rapid advancement. Whether with the "aging" of the labor force, the mobilization of young workers will be continued on the same scale is difficult to predict.

The location of the industrial enterprises in the Soviet Union and the place of residence are important determinants for the economic, social and cultural conditions of different groups within the industrial labor force. Many of the raw materials for industrial production were located on the fringes of the country, at considerable distance from both the large urban population centers and the concentrations of the rural population. Therefore, industrialization in the Soviet Union (or for that matter, in Russia), involved not only the creation of an extensive transportation network, but also of migration. In order to direct the migration flow (either to accelerate or to retard) in particular directions, desirable from the point of view of the state, a whole set of policies and regulations were devised by the authorities. In addition to regional price and wage differentials, some of the most effective means of control and stimulus were housing and consumer goods supply. The priorities of consumer goods supply were established in such a manner that they favored the

metropolitan areas, the large cities and some of the strategically important industrial settlements in the remote areas. Needless to say that the metropolitan areas were also the centers of cultural and political-administrative activity. Thus, the preference on the part of the workers for residence in the metropolitan areas was so strong, that they were often ready to put up with one of the major social and psychological irritants-- communal apartments.⁷

In contrast to the large cities, the supply of food and consumer goods to the small cities left much to be desired, from the point of view of the working population. Similarly, the most modern and largest industrial enterprises, the ones requiring a larger admixture of higher skills were located in the larger cities. These were the enterprises in which, as a rule, wages were higher, technology more advanced, and the capital/labor ratio higher than in the smaller cities and towns. Therefore, the smaller towns and the enterprises located there had a higher percentage of women in their population and labor force, which in turn resulted in lower wages and diminished purchasing power. While the cost of living in provincial and small towns is considered by the Soviet authorities lower than in the large cities and in the remote areas, the wages and living standards of the industrial workers, even when adjusted by the regional price index, were considerably lower in the smaller cities, both for male and for female workers. The industrial workers of the smaller cities not only earn less, but opportunities for advancement are much smaller than in the large enterprises of the metropolitan areas, and the cultural life in such cities is backward and primitive, in a state of underdevelopment and benign neglect. The level of services for the population of the smaller cities and town is still very low which in turn affects the level of comfort of the population.

The gulf that exists between the highly industrialized metropolitan areas and the provincial hinterland, results in significant differences of outlook and attitudes between the worker population of those two areas.

The differentiation of the industrial workers which is related to the demographic variable "nationality" is a poorly researched subject in spite of the voluminous literature on the nationality problems in the Soviet Union. Perhaps a few short comments will help to set the stage for a further discussion, by pointing to three areas of useful inquiry:

- 1) Can one discuss the problem of relative quality of the labor force within a nationality context?
- 2) What is the nature of competition for industrial jobs between the indigenous population of the various republics and immigrants?
- 3) What is the likely impact of the present scarcity of labor in particular areas of the country upon the attitudes of various nationality groups?

Both by the criteria of average wages in industry for the different republics and national regions of the Soviet Union and by the less tangible sense of living standards, life-style and level of skills, the Baltic republics come out on top of the labor quality pyramid. Whether it is due to a cultural heritage, superior education, industrial mix or other elements is less important than the fact that the Russians ceased to be the model for the other republics. Although official acknowledgment of the help of the older brothers in the industrialization process among different nationalities is a part of the rhetorical routine, the claim of the Russians is perceived with some reservations. It is true that in economically backward regions of the Soviet Union immigrants from the Russian provinces constituted in the past a valuable element because of the industrial skills that they embodied. However, in a number of republics competition for industrial

jobs between immigrants (mostly of Slavic descent) and the indigenous industrial workers is being met with strong support for the indigenous workers and specialists. Whether, in fact, quotas exist or conflicts are resolved on an individual basis, clearly competition is becoming more intense. The republics that are appealing in climate have attracted a net influx of industrial workers. One of the reasons why the central authorities in the Soviet Union do not support, as vigorously as one would expect, the interests of the immigrants against the preferences of the republics, is that this migration flow takes place in a direction opposite to the one preferred by the central authorities. The "southward" migration of workers toward the Caucasus and Central Asia is one from areas of high demand for industrial labor to areas of low demand for additional labor resources. However, whether it would be feasible to reverse the migration flow that would involve workers of nationalities who have in the past exhibited a clear disinclination to abandon their places of habitat in the search for opportunities elsewhere, is by no means clear.

Education is an important indicator which helps to differentiate various groups within the industrial labor force. As long as the migration from the rural areas constituted a significant share of the entrants into industrial work, the average years of schooling of the workers were increasing relatively slowly. This was due to a large extent to the policy of maintaining a differential between obligatory schooling in the urban and the rural areas. The current expansion of education in the rural areas and the decrease of the numbers of rural entrants ought to accelerate the process of raising the level of schooling of the industrial workers. This process is bound to accelerate also because the Soviet authorities have changed another feature of their earlier educational policy, the one that led to a bipolar distribution of

educational endowment in the industrial sector. The bipolar distribution resulted in low education among workers and a relatively high proportion of specialists with advanced education. The recent and present policy ought to remedy the previous situation of a scarcity of the middle stratum of finished secondary, general education, combined with secondary level technical training. The system of Professional-Technical Schools (PTU) which ought to combine the equivalent of high school with technical training is being rapidly expanded.

That one has to be careful in interpreting the official Soviet terminology can be illustrated by the following example:

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE OF SOVIET INDUSTRIAL SPECIALISTS LACKING
APPROPRIATE DEGREES IN 1970

<u>Lacking higher education</u>		<u>Lacking secondary education</u>	
Engineers -	47.7	Mechanics -	21.2
Constructors -	56.1	Technicians -	13.9

SOURCE: TsSU SSSR: Itogi Vsesoiuznoi Perepisi Naselenia. 1970g.
Moscow 1975. Vol. VI., pp. 641-642.

Therefore, a careful distinction between the categories of functions and the categories of educational achievement has to be made.⁸

The occupational titles often do not correspond to the formal training that is usually attributed to the titles. Therefore, a closer inspection of the available data would reveal that the educational attainment of the specialists in industry is substantially lower than is suggested by the various official definitions. As far as the workers are concerned, for the present an average of 8-9 years of schooling of differing quality can be assumed. One, in fact, wonders what would at the present be the optimal educational endowment of the industrial labor force. Raising the present

level of education without a massive introduction of new technology might be regarded as a consumption expenditure rather than an investment. In any event, the educational level of the industrial labor force in the foreseeable future will not constitute any serious constraint upon the growth of productivity.

Nevertheless the problem of education enters into the sets of responses and attitudes of the industrial workers with regard to themselves and to their offspring. It has to do with the accessibility of educational facilities for the different groups of workers.

There is no doubt that education as an avenue both for social advancement and for the development of one's potential is not free for everyone, and cannot be used above the obligatory minimum without entering into competition with other individuals. There is no prima facie evidence that all categories of industrial workers were doing equally well in obtaining more education for themselves or for their children.

Alongside education, the work experience of the industrial workers plays a decisive role in determining the production performance of the individual workers, his quality and by extension, his wage. The work experience of the Soviet industrial worker would usually begin with a period of apprenticeship within the factory under the guidance of skilled members of the work force. The acquisition of some skills and work habits would transform the apprentice into an independent operator, a member of a work team within a relatively narrow range of operations. The increasing ability to perform satisfactorily additional operations opened up for the young worker the possibility to advance to higher skill categories to which appropriate wage rates were tied. Thus, following this route, a worker

directly involved in the production of goods, would have his wage determined by the volume of his output, under a system of piece work with the wage rates of his skill category as a base. Needless to say, the individual worker's performance depended also upon the performance of his team-mates, of the relevant collective.

However, there exists a somewhat different route for an industrial worker, which would land him in a different category of the work force. Apart from the workers directly involved in the production of goods there exists a broad category of workers with high mechanical skills which are independent of the routine operations of the first category. Thus by investing heavily in a variety of mechanical skills one could advance into the category of those responsible for the maintenance and repair of the machinery, of those whose labor was necessary to keep the production workers employed. The relative size of this category of ancillary workers is staggering, especially since they represent a very large portion of highly skilled workers. Their existence is largely a result of the poor performance of the capital stock, sloppy performance of the production workers, lack of spare parts, etc. In other words, much of the effort of a highly skilled segment of the labor force is misdirected because of faulty performance and poor, inefficient organization of other industrial branches. Thus, when Soviet writers are boasting about the large share of skilled workers employed in industry, they are very often presenting a vice as a virtue. It is sufficient to glance at the number of locksmiths (slasari) in the textile industry to realize the absurdity of the situation in which locksmiths employed in textile plants are primarily reproducing textile machinery. Thus, while work experience is invaluable for the performance of industry, since it quickens the pace of

the performance of routine operation, there is much that the workers learn from his work experience that is not necessarily a boost to his morale. The general downgrading of quality output in favor of quantity, the frequent shirking, the neglect of the working place, often the lack of responsibility under the cover of a collective are traits of the "learning and work experience."

Empirical studies have established a long time ago, that the concern of the industrial worker about the conditions of his work are at least as important as the wage levels. We know that in the Soviet Union conditions of work are also becoming a major reason for labor turnover. However, Soviet industry is clearly backward in creating tolerable conditions of work. We know that the ninth five year plan (1971-75) included among its goals the establishment and reconstruction of 300,000 ventilation systems in the factories, 15 million m² of sanitary and toilet facilities, 60,000 rooms of personal hygiene for women, 10,000 first aid stations in the industrial establishments.⁹ We have no reports how many of the above were actually built.

Thus, the work experience of the Soviet industrial labor force includes both the experience that leads to increases of skills and production performance, as well as the confrontation with organization of work. How the Soviet worker sorts out his work experience, how it affects him and what kind of attitudes he develops, is an area of further exploration for labor specialists.

If many of the above mentioned aspects of the worker's reality, the various characteristic features of the Soviet industrial worker, help to determine and to differentiate the economic and social conditions of his existence, they ought to, according to economic reasoning, be reflected in inter-industry wage differentials.

The latest available data for inter-industry monthly wages and salaries go back to 1966, but they are still usable for our purposes. The following table presents the data for some selected industries.

TABLE 5
INTER-INDUSTRY MONTHLY SALARIES OF WORKERS AND ITR, 1966
(in rubles)

Industry Branch	Workers	ITR
Total Industry	104.4	150.1
Coal Mining	192.6	259.0
Fish	161.8	281.4
Ferrous Metallurgy	126.5	191.8
Chemical Industry	104.5	166.1
Metal and Machine building	103.8	140.1
Textile Industry	86.8	122.8
Footwear Industry	85.3	115.2
Meat Industry	85.0	119.2
Light Industry	81.6	115.6
Clothing Industry	76.1	107.5

SOURCE: TsSU SSSR: *Trud v SSSR*, Moscow 1968, pp. 140-144.

There is no doubt that the above presented wage differentials can be explained by the impact of the characteristics which were previously discussed. Whether the demographic characteristics of the labor force such as sex-ratios, location, etc., or skill requirements, or educational endowment explain much of the differentials. Unfortunately, the data are not adequate to carry out a factor analysis which would reveal the strength of each factor separately.

The data for industries that compare the wages of workers, employees and ITR from 1940, indicate a higher rate of growth of workers wages than of the salaries of the two other categories. This resulted in a significant decrease of the differential between wages of workers and ITR salaries. Some commentators, Soviet and Western alike, accepted this as proof of the

growing "closeness" of the workers and the technical specialists, brought about by a long run policy designed by the government. Without denying the possibility of a policy aiming at a modicum of egalitarianism, I am not totally persuaded by the argument as such. A growing scarcity of workers when contrasted with an ample supply of ITR (in my humble opinion exceeding optimal proportions), the changing composition of ITR including a higher percentage of women, permitted the enterprises to prevent the ITR salaries from rising. Last, but not least, the non-pecuniary benefits of the ITR are not included in the comparison, and it is difficult to determine whether their value decreased or increased over the time period in question.

Regardless of the long run trends in the salary differentials between workers and ITR and whether particular factors determine a higher or smaller inter-industry wage differential, the situation marked by workers in metallurgy or coal mining receiving a higher monthly remuneration than the ITR in any of the consumer goods industries, points to a closer analysis of the wage inequality within the industrial labor force which I suspect shaped the attitudes of different categories of workers toward themselves, their fellow workers, other employment groups and toward the authorities which control and administer the system.

The Soviet authorities have reacted to the threat of labor scarcity in industry with a number of significant measures. One was the increase in the employment of retired workers,¹⁰ the other was the active policy of promoting social pressure upon industrial workers to improve their productivity. The mobilization of social pressure in its various forms, is the preferred policy in view of the virtual impossibility of firing workers from their jobs, even in the case of serious work discipline violations. Under such circumstances,

only public pressure brought to bear upon an individual can perhaps have some effect. Needless to say that the organization and direction of collective opinion is consonant with the prevailing belief that the collective at the place of work is the most important environmental factor in shaping the attitudes and actions of the individual. Apart from belonging to the collective as represented by the factory-brigade or department, the formation of new voluntary collectives, with a variety of concerns about the factory and production work are recommended or required. The workers are expected to participate actively in such collectives, and the members of the collective are made to feel responsible for the behavior of one another. Such collectives, apart from the organizational units of the factories, have millions of members, conduct frequent meetings and their activities include such areas as the ones of technical inventions, innovations and rationalization of work, skill improvement, information dissemination, educational and social activities. They all are called upon to be attentive to their members and to increase their levels of active participation.

The current literature emphasizes different aspects of the worker's experience in which the collective ought to be involved. Consider the following statement: "There are in industry about 850,000 foremen (mastera). They are called upon to be constantly aware of the workers' mood, to communicate with them, and to ask their advice; to combine a strict, demanding with an attentive attitude toward their needs, to instill in them love for work and careful handling of national property."¹¹ This sounds somber, sensible, and perhaps even functionally useful. But one can also use the collective, the brigade, to combat the monotony of work, as witnessed by the following statement: "The joy shared with my comrades of the work-brigade on account of the success of

our Fatherland in conquering the cosmos decreased our weariness during work."¹² We might think the somewhat indiscriminate use of the collectives to influence the workers might lead to diminishing returns, but this is certainly not the belief of the Soviet decision makers. Boredom is a typical response of intellectuals; workers certainly prefer boredom to the stick. Culture, as we all know, is a major concern of Soviet policy. Lenin was bemoaning the lack of culture of the Russian workers, and the consumption as well as production of cultural values by the Soviet workers is a desired goal. After sixty years of Soviet power literature, music, art, etc. ought to be a part of the workers' "daily bread." This is not to deny the serious achievements in the area of popularization of culture. What is interesting, however, is the setting of standards, the direction of tastes, and the uniformity of participation which is expected from the workers.¹³ As in the case of work discipline, the key to the solution of the problem seems to be the collective, the groups which will somehow make the worker conform to the expectations of those who dictate "cultural policies." Thus, collective pressures became one of the means to fashion and mold the Soviet industrial worker. The Soviet industrial worker itself becomes a stereotype which might or might not resemble the actual worker in flesh and blood.

It may be convenient to begin the description of worker's collective attitudes and perceptions of themselves and the rest of society from the idealized collective portrait of the Soviet workers as we find it in the official pronouncements. It would also be fair to state that what was originally the idealized portrait of the Soviet worker was subsequently broadened to encompass the new Soviet man, the citizen of the future in statu nascendi, not necessarily specified as a worker.

Since the relationship of the work^{CP} and his job is the most important nexus for the Soviet policy makers¹⁴ the definition of this relationship is obviously crucial. He is very frequently referred to by an idiomatic expression as the Boss of the Enterprise (Khoziajn Proizvodstva). This definition reflects the sense of social responsibility for, or collective, social ownership of the enterprise. The worker is characterized by a high level of political consciousness and a high rate of social participation in the affairs of the enterprise or community. All the above prevent the Soviet worker from being alienated like his counterpart in capitalist industry. As one who has freed himself of the bourgeois morality, the Soviet worker responds more readily to moral stimuli rather than to direct material incentives.

It would be facetious to inquire whether the Soviet worker can recognize himself in this mirror, which is held up to him on numerous occasions. Instead, it is necessary to state categorically that the overwhelming collective trait of the present-day industrial worker is his realism. To be a realist means to know the rules of the game and to abide by them.

The Soviet workers seem to know their place in society, regardless of the various epithets which the official rhetoric bestows upon them. A Soviet worker knows that he is not the boss (Khoziajn) of any enterprises and he seems to know quite explicitly who the real bosses are. He views himself as a little cog in a huge machine with a very limited area of autonomy or independence. In his mind the concept of a worker (rabochii) has the clear connotation of subordination, he is primarily the executor of orders given by authorities (nachal'stvo). His residual of independence is based upon his skill and labor power, and so insignificant that he would not be demoted from his present status

or position, yet useful to the authorities for the sake of maintaining their own privileged positions.

The Soviet worker does not exclude the possibility that he as an individual might aspire to or even be selected by and mobilized into the nachal'stvo. But he also clearly perceives the extensive investment in social and political activities, perhaps in education, etc. which is entailed in being noticed by and transferred to the nachal'stvo. He is aware of the transformation which he would have to undergo by joining the bosses. He will cease to be a worker (a rabochii or a rabotnaga), he will become a Soviet official (rabotnik). It appears that the Soviet worker views the rabotnik, the official, as one who participates in authority or works directly for the authorities, a state of mind that robs a person of his inner autonomy and independence. A rabotnik in the view of the Soviet workers, has less independence and is even more subordinated as an individual than the workers. The term rabotnichek (diminutive of rabotnik) carries as much pity as contempt.

But while the Soviet worker sets himself apart from those in authority, he is not anti-authoritarian; he somehow reconciled himself to the idea, if he ever had any other, that society is organized hierarchically, that authorities are independent of the general public, that somebody has to give orders, which the rest have to execute.¹⁵ This does not mean that he attributes to the authorities supreme wisdom, efficiency, or superior moral qualities. On the contrary, this would be ruled out almost by the definition of nachal'stvo, given both the traditional stereotyped attitudes of the lower classes to bureaucratic authority and the real experience of observing and dealing with authorities at various levels. To put all the above perhaps in more succinct and relevant terms is to say that the Soviet worker is not of an egalitarian persuasion, neither

in his philosophy nor in his aspirations. There are simply very few occasions, if any, at which he could observe equality at work. His ideal appears to be some degree of fairness, perhaps a somewhat greater crack at existing opportunities, and some broadening of internal autonomy, in the form of less interference in his personal life or encroachment on his leisure time.

The Soviet worker as a realist, in counterdistinction to the doctrinaire theoreticians, is aware of the fact that opportunities for social advancement are much more rare, or upward mobility from the worker to manager or engineer in one generation, is an illusion for most. This might have happened to many in the Sturm und Drang of the early five-year plans, but is a myth under the present circumstances. He is, therefore, not aiming so high, and general notions of social structure are necessarily of minor concern to him. The concerns are much more mundane; they deal with increments, with gradual minor improvements rather than with sweeping changes in income, status and other social indicators of the worker's position.

Therefore it is of lesser interest to describe the general attitude of the Soviet workers toward the Soviet intelligentsia than to describe to the extent possible the attitude toward the engineers or to higher than average* educated technicians.

While in the past, and to a large extent even at the present there was a deeply ingrained anti-intellectualism among the workers, which did not differentiate between hereditary intelligentsia and those of workers and peasant descent, there always was an element of curiosity about the so-called technical intelligentsia. The general climate of emphasizing technology and technical progress intensified this attitude of curiosity. As workers often react, the curiosity is colored by some anxiety with regard to the effects of

technical progress upon one's job and profession. Together it adds up to a cautious, wait-and-see attitude, a mixture of admiration and concealed fear. It would be wrong to attribute to the workers an a priori negative attitude to the technical intelligentsia, but a reserved attitude, one of confronting new ideas, methods, gadgets with the reality of testing and applications is ever present, and understandable given the experience in Soviet industry.

It would also be fair to assume that, individual cases apart, the Soviet workers do not begrudge the technical intelligentsia their higher salaries or privileges, sensing the higher risk to which the others might be exposed and the criteria of success to which the specialists are subjected.

There are also elements of ambiguity involved in the attitude toward the collective farmers, although they are of a different nature than those toward the intelligentsia. The previous attitudes were characterized by a sense of superiority, based upon both income and status. The collective farmers were seen by the workers, especially by the workers of peasant descent, as the most backward, least energetic, largely boorish types. The workers considered themselves lucky that they somehow escaped some of the drudgery, or disutility of agricultural labor and the lowly status of the collective farmers. There was an element of consolation for the workers' hardship in the knowledge that there was an underdog, and a realization of the workers' relative freedom by comparison with the collective farmers, and perhaps even an outlet of pity for the less fortunate, without much sympathy. But when the incomes of the collective farmers were increased, without noticeable increase in the quantity, efficiency, or effectiveness of their labor, as seen by the workers, the attitude became much more negative. The collective farmers, as viewed by the workers, turned from an element which was previously supporting

the rest of the society into a group that appears to be making a living at the expense of the rest of the society.

The Soviet workers seem to be very attentive, discriminating and subtle with regard to the differentiation in their own milieu. Obviously, we don't have the necessary records or evidence, and my attempt to compare from the Soviet Census data of 1959 and 1970 the changes in the composition by professions, the wage structure, and weigh them by a social status index borrowed from the U.S. for 1950¹⁶ is still unfinished. But the general perceptiveness of the Soviet workers to the existing inequalities is without any doubt and observable in the trade-off between wages, other benefits and considerations of lifestyles. I would perhaps go even further, in suggesting that within the Soviet workers' social milieu there are appearing roots of differing sub-cultures. It was possible to point to a sub-culture as constituted by the Leningrad workers, one which emphasized skills and cultural superiority, real or imaginary, but still a sub-culture that could assimilate numerous newcomers. In this context, one can perhaps speak about the emergence of a metropolitan workers' sub-culture, which differentiates itself and is recognized by outsiders as distinct.

It would be difficult to imagine that workers from the metropolitan areas will migrate even to regions with higher wage scales, regardless of their age. One can therefore safely assume that most of the migrants among the urban industrial workers are recruited from the smaller cities. For them migration is still an important means to improve their earning capacity and to take advantage of existing opportunities elsewhere. Thus a gulf exists between the workers of the provincial cities and the metropolitan areas, each seeking improvement in their respective positions by using differing means, one relying

more upon his greater access to skill acquisition and training, while the other upon his mobility. However, within each separate area or locality the workers are distinguished by their occupations in the more "advanced" or the more "backward" industries. The degree of "advancement" or "modernity" of an industry branch is defined by the authorities roughly as the categories of capital goods and consumer goods industries respectively. As we have observed earlier, the wage differentials approximate this distinction and therefore turn the distinction also into one of status. But there is still another element which sets the two apart, namely identification with the product. The mass media of communication have created the visibility of particular types of products, whether space vehicles or specimen of military hardware, or giant turbines, to use a few extreme examples. It is possible for particular groups of workers to derive psychic income from their association with the creation or production of such goods and elevate their status vis a vis other workers who do not receive this type of exposure in a technologically oriented society.

Much is being written in the Soviet sociological literature about the differentiation by age, and there is no doubt that the age differentiation of workers cuts two ways: the younger generation is better educated, but creates economic and social problems such as a high rate of labor turnover. It appears that perhaps instead of the age differentiation, from the social point of view, the distinction between married and unmarried workers is the more significant one.

The family as a decision-making institution is growing in its prominence in the Soviet society, the family concerns become the over-riding ones, regardless whether ideologists like it or not. It is through the strengthening of the family that the Soviet industrial workers demonstrate their attachment to what we may

call middle-class values. The strength of the family helps to create stability in the labor market, and at present levels of income, a stronger response to material stimuli or incentives. The family requires somewhat greater autonomy for the private sphere of the individuals. The last two features might not appeal to policy makers, who would prefer the pressure of the controlled social environment and atomized individuals submitting themselves to the pressures. Who will win is impossible to predict.

To summarize some of the above conjectures about the social problems of the Soviet industrial workers, the following could be concluded. The Soviet industrial worker occupies a social position in between the agricultural and construction workers and technical specialists and government officials. The Soviet workers are themselves differentiated by a number of social criteria, including earnings, age, sex, nationality and location, educational achievement, skill levels and other qualities that differentiate status. For the purpose of a serious study of the attitudes of Soviet workers, the differentiation and resulting inequalities are more significant than their sense of commonality.

The Soviet worker is realistic about the hierarchical structure of the society, he tolerates the existing inequality of the system and is modest in his expectations of change. The worker views himself as an anti-hero, and aspires to become a middle-class person. He doesn't want to be a proletarian (the only proletarians are the working women), but he doesn't believe that he can become a member of an elite. His progress is slow, and he has a long way to go to reach the level of self-identification of the Western industrial worker.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Lloyd A. Fallers, Inequality. Chicago, 1973. Introduction. Pp. 3-29.
2. The definitional problem of industrial workers was in addition compounded by the assumption that the October Revolution was supposed to raise everybody in society to the level of "workers," thus destroying the intrinsic characteristics of the industrial workers as a social class.
3. A. E. Kotlar, S. IA. Turchaninova: Zaniatost' Zhenschchim v Proizvodstve. Moscow, Statistika, 1975.
4. Discriminatory practices appear to prevail in assigning skill categories rather than in wage payments for output produced. In the latter case, the low level of mechanization might result into male-female differentials which can be attributed to physical strength.
5. This is not to mention the special problems of acculturation to an urban environment and industrial setting which arose for migrants from the rural areas.
6. The Soviet economists following the methodology of human capital concepts assume often an identical contribution of a year of schooling and a year of work experience. If they exhibit a bias it is almost invariably in the exaggeration of the contribution of education. The recent U.S. data, on the other hand, emphasize the element of work experience as being more significant as a determinant of the quality of labor. Since the average levels of education differ, the two sets of conclusions might not be mutually exclusive.
7. The communal apartment was a price paid by the workers of the metropolitan areas for the privilege of a more ample supply of food, consumer goods and cultural activities. The saga of the communal apartments has still to be written. The recent policy of substitution of family apartments for communal ones was doubtless one of the most popular measure of the Soviet regime in the recent past.
8. Let us remember that 10 percent of physicians according to the last population census did not possess higher education.
9. Pravda, March 21, 1972.
10. The share of pensioners still employed beyond the age of retirement has grown from about ten percent a decade ago to almost a quarter of all pensioners during 1975. See Lantsev, Sotsial'noe Obespechenie v SSSR (Moscow, Ekonomvskia 1976), pp. 131, 137.
11. Akademia Obshchestvennykh Nauk pri TsK KPSS: Voprosy Raboty KPSS s Kadrami na Sovremennom Etape (Moscow, 1976), p. 299.

12. Answer by the worker K. Nedol'skii to a questionnaire by sociologists studying the problem of monotony of work. See O Chertakh Lichnosti Novogo Rabochego (Moscow, 1963), p. 174.
13. A noted sociologists was bemoaning the fact that not many workers came to listen to concerts of classical music (especially Beethoven) and instead went to the circus, or to soccer games.
14. "The main goal of the party at the present moment is to find the way to improve the structure, distribution and utilization of workers' cadres, in order to increase the effectiveness and quality of socialized production." Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniia I, 1977, p. 207.
15. In this respect the attitude of the Russian worker is politically very conservative and his general philosophy pessimistic. It is perhaps best expressed in extreme terms by Alexander Zinoviev:

Vse, chto bylo, budet!	Everything that was -- will happen,
Vse, chto budet, est!	Everything that will be, is already here!
Alexander Zinoviev: <u>Silafushchie Vysoty</u> (Lausanne, 1970), p. 221.	
16. The latter is based upon Albert J. Reiss, Occupations and Social Status (New York, The Free Press, 1961).

