

# The Productivity of Russian Labor

From the Russian Soviet Government's First Annual Report

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(Continued from last week.)

It seems, that in spite of the whole sum of extremely unfavorable objective economic conditions, the productivity of labor began to increase at the beginning of 1918 in a number of industries. And what is more, the increase of productivity is not a slightly noticeable process, but a very rapid, strikingly marked one. In the cast-steel industry the productivity went up in April, in comparison with January, 170%; in the cast-iron, 131%; in the hydraulic press industry 40%, and only in the car forging has it fallen 24%, and there on account of a number of causes of an external character, so to speak. January is the worst month. After it, there begins a rapid advance. These results have been the fruits of proletarian class self-reliance exclusively. Price-wages were firmly introduced by a special wage-fixing commission consisting of representatives of the professional unions and the technical personnel; "this commission very energetically," as the spokesman said, "undertook us task." The results can already be seen; though, as justly pointed out by the Kolomensky workers, its work only began.

Of the constant increase in the productivity of labor after the introduction of the scale, the representatives of the Kolubaksky factory also spoke, stating as characteristic of the mood of the workers in the factory, the following: "We recently had to make repairs which we thought would take two weeks, but the workers made them in six days, and that under the worst conditions."

Analogous are the data of other districts. In the Petrograd Westinghouse factory, after the transition to piece-wages and the establishment of a form of output according to scale, the results showed themselves remarkably soon. In the smelting industry the report shows the following figures for 1918:

In January there were produced.....3000 poods  
In February.....3400 poods  
In March.....3886 poods  
In April.....4000 poods

i. e., an increase in April as compared with January of 33%.

Even at the Baltic factory, where the wages are lower than in the factories of Moscow, Petrograd and a number of provincial cities, "in the month of April it was proven that the workers in the matter of productivity," as the spokesman, Comrade Khromoff, indicated at the conference, "have produced almost twice as much as in March, and we suppose that in the future, with a raise in wages up to the normal (the scale was not yet introduced in that factory, the productivity will rise even higher." Analogous information is given by the comrades from the evacuated factory "Phoenix" in Ribinek, which in December, 1917, had an output of 62 cars, in January of 40, in February of 18, and in March and April of 38 each respectively. The comrades note the great work done in this sphere by the factory committees. Similar information we have from the Hartmann factory in Lugansk, where the workers' committee has succeeded in turning out—instead of three locomotives as in the Fall—13 locomotives. The comrades, members of the committees of the much suffering Petrovsky Soviet factories and Makeefka (Mining and Metallurgical "Union"), draw the same pictures of their establishments. At the Petrovsky factory, after its nationalization and the

granting of the first sums for the payment of wages, the productivity of labor began to grow, and towards the end of April went up to 30-40%. In Makeefka, which was twice occupied by the Cossacks and Ukrainians, the daily output of coal from the mines went up, from March to the middle of April alone, from 60,000 poods to 92,000, or over 50%; and what is more, as the chairman of the workers' committee of the "Union," Engineer Bajanov wrote, "There is to be observed a tendency towards a further increase in the output of coal."

The same conclusions are also characteristic of the Ural district.

We have more detailed information regarding the Zlatoustovsky district. Here is the corresponding table of figures in poods:

	January	February	March
Pig-iron production:			
Remade pig-iron	343,962.32	173,885.	351,040.01
Casting pig-iron	37,854.	21,277.	41,354.
Crude iron	18,724.08	8,285.30	17,125.39
Martensovsky production:			
Martens bars		22,460.	147,134.
Pudding furnace production:			
Moulds	37,401.	19,180.	29,095.
Casting production:			
Pig-iron castings:			
High furnace production	541.	332.29	1,367.10
Cupola furnace production	25,099.05	11,740.16	26,147.13
Steel fending paste		332.33	1,726.29
Copper fending paste	803.01	85.25	331.38
Various alloyage paste	2,085.	960.	1,207.
Rolling production:			
Large sized production, Martens iron, pressed iron, Martens steel, Crucible steel	61,947.	35,916.82	48,192.79
Middle-sort production:			
Martens square iron, Martens steel, Crucible steel			
Tilted East steel production:			
Moulded, stamped	49,800.16	25,581.88	38,331.08
Projectile production:			
Production of various instruments in pieces:			
Also intrenching	147,028.	102,359.	149,264.
The production of ammunition:			
Swords, daggers, etc.	4,107.	2,889.	7,460.
Hand-made products:			
Machine construction industry	299.		218.11

In surveying the present table compiled on the basis of the Soviet's reports, at the outset the extreme decrease in output during February strikes one's eye. However, this is explained by the transition from the old Russian calendar to the new calendar, thanks to which the number of days in February shrunk to fifteen.\*

Taking this into consideration we note that in the Zlatoustovsky district the decrease in production ceased, and now there is to be observed a reverse process of its growth in a number of industries, in the production of machines, instruments, pig-iron; there is also an increase in the casting-house production, etc.

The figures of the production of labor at the Ural Katav—Ivanovsky factory speak of the same:

	The casting of pig-iron	Average daily output
January	125,872	4,723
February (15 days)	71,919	4,794
March	144,833	4,761
April	145,454	5,008

The total amount of casted pig-iron, and its average daily output has considerably increased. It is interesting to note the correct growth of figures each month. It is also interesting to compare the figures of the productivity of labor of a factory in the three preceding years with the figures of the three and a half months of 1918.

\*Translator's note—The Russian calendar differed from the one prevailing in the west in being thirteen days behind it.

## THE PRODUCTION OF A FACTORY

	Pig-iron	Bars	Fire-stone	Moulding of steel	Moulding of pig-iron
1915	1,938,682	182,000	167,434	21,475	21,475
1916	2,011,222	606,403	333,025	2,325	35,217
1917	1,868,041	570,272	352,173	8,347	40,580
4 months of 1918 (Feb. 15 days)	488,078	196,213	108,741	3,504	11,132

This proves that if the quantity of moulded pig-iron has decreased in comparison with the best year, 1916, still for the first three and a half months of 1918, about 1/4 of the pig-iron output for the whole year 1916 was moulded. As regards bars, founded pig-iron and the production of fire-stones, for the 3 1/2 months of 1918, the output was about 1/3 of the entire production of 1916. As regards founded steel, for the first 3 1/2 months of 1918, the total amount of mouldings in poods exceeded by 50% the amount of mouldings for the whole year 1916. Thus in the first quarter of 1918 there was clearly visible a process of gradual increase in the productivity of labor. Furthermore, in spite of the acute insufficiency of the food supply, the productivity of labor evidently continued to increase. For example, we shall submit the following data of the productivity of labor in a number of important Petrograd factories; the following table of figures was issued by the Obuchovskiy steel mills:

## THE OBUCHOVSKY STEEL CASTING FACTORY

	Mar. from the 15th	Apr.	May	June from the 15th	July from the 15th	Aug.
Cars	70	175	400	270	170	212
Locomotives		1	2	1		1
Pig-iron castings	1,107		627	304	8	48
Steel and iron	1,946	975	6,173	7,182	8,300	17,823

The Westinghouse factory output of brakes:

	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.
Brake devices in poods	1,008	1,014	1,239	2,040	2,796	2,378

The productivity of the Petrograd metal factories is characterized by the following figures: the productivity in a number of branches for July was 70,000 poods, for Aug. 13,000; at the Equal factory the productivity increased 100-150%, at the Spiegel factory it increased 150-200%, at the Lerner factory it increased from Aug. to Sept. 65%, at the Nevsky tobacco factory the average monthly output for the first half of 1918 was 2,448 for July 5,180 poods, at the Moscow Lubretzky factory the productivity of labor has reached almost the pre-war standard.

Speaking of the increase in the productivity of labor we none the less, cannot yet dream of a production equal to that of peace times. The lack of raw materials and fuel, the acute hunger, the deterioration of the machinery could not but delay the process of the rehabilitation of industry. And nevertheless, at this writing, several factories are either approaching or have already attained the peace-time norm. To the number of such factories belongs, for instance, the famous nationalized Simons-Schuckert factory. Let us examine in somewhat greater detail the work of this factory as a characteristic example of the rehabilitation of our whole industry.

The February revolution and Kerenskyism found it in a state of slow disintegration. Up to the time of the October revolution, its production fell to about one-third or one-fourth of what it was before, and the intensity of labor "decreased almost one-half" according to the information of the department of Electro-Technique.

[To be continued]