

# Guide

## Everyday Stalinism

### *Living Standards, Norms and Values of Various Groups of Soviet People in the 1920s and 1930s*

*Russian State Archive of Economy (RGAE), Moscow*



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Guide to the microfiche collection

# Everyday Stalinism

Living Standards, Norms and Values of Various Groups  
of Soviet People in the 1920s and 1930s

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## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR  
**Title:** Everyday Stalinism  
**Dates:** 1925-1939  
**Abstract:** The archive contains materials providing information on the living standards, and cultural interest of various groups of soviet people in the 1920's and 1930's.  
**Quantity:** 1141 microfiches (original: 57 archival pieces on 27584 pages)  
**Order number:** ES-1

## About the Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR

The Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR (until 17 January 1923 known as the Central Administration for Statistics of the Russian Federation) was founded on 25 July 1918. On 19 March 1926 it was granted the status of *Narkomat Soiuza SSSR* (Ministerial powers).

Its main tasks were the following:

- Setting up, expanding and supervising over statistical work within the state organs and administrations
- Conducting national, industrial and agricultural censuses
- Publishing statistical information

In the late 20s / early 30s the focus of attention gradually shifted to various problems concerning the economy.

In 1930 the Central Administration for Statistics became subordinate to the *Gosplan* (Ministry of State Planning) and was renamed the *Ekonomiko-Statisticheskii Sektor* (Economic and Statistical Section of Gosplan). On 17 December 1931 it was again renamed to *TsUNKhU* - Центральное управление народно-хозяйственного учета (Central Administration of Economic Accounting) and again on 24 March 1941 to *TsSU* - Центральное статистическое управление (Central Administration for Statistics). From 10 March 1948 onwards it became directly subordinate to the Council of Ministers.

## Russian State Archives of Economy (RGAE)

*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki* (RGAE) is one of the largest archives within the Russian Federation. It used to be known till 1992 as the *Central State Archive of National Economy USSR* (*Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv narodnogo khoziastva TsGANKh SSSR*)- and is the principal repository for documents on political, economic and administrative matters, containing materials from 1917 onwards. The archive contains the *fonds* of the "narkomaty" (people's commissariat), ministries and state committees such as the State Committee on Statistics (*Goskomstat*), planning agencies such as *Gosplan*, and other central governmental agencies, which managed, planned and financed the national economy in the USSR.

Many of the formerly restricted *fonds* and parts of *fonds* have been declassified in recent years, including most of the records of *Gosplan*, the State Committee on Statistics (*Goskomstat*), and military industrial institutions. In many *fonds* of more recent origin, secret sections remain classified. RGAE contains 2021 *fonds*, with more than 4 million files. These documents provide a full picture of the Soviet State during its 70 year long history

## Scope and Content

This collection contains archival material that was declassified in 1993. The contents of the materials provide an insight into the socialist society of the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s. It provides answers to questions on the cultural and political interest and economic situation of the ordinary soviet citizen within that period. How much money did a Soviet engineer earn? Did every student read Marx and own a radio? Could an average family spend enough money on food? How active were soviet citizens in socialist political movements?

In 1936 and 1938 the TsUNKhU, in cooperation with the VLKSM (the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League – an organization responsible for the political education of young people in the USSR), set up a special survey into the cultural and political interest and way of life of young workers and students (1936) and *kolkhozniki* (1938). The questionnaires clearly reflect the Soviet ideology of the 1920s and 1930s. The forms contain questions concerning, among other things, participation in socialist political work, party membership, membership of the Stakhanov-movement (named after Alexey Stakhanov - a miner who delved twenty times a day's norm of coal in one day) and participation in the GTO program (Ready for Labor and Defense - a semi-military popular movement). The questionnaire, however, is diverse and also provides information regarding matters of education, attendance of cultural and public events, use of libraries, possession of books, knowledge of foreign languages, memberships of sport societies and recreational activities (did they have radios, skis, musical instruments, etc.) A special section deals with questions on popular and political literature including classical works of Marxism-Leninism as well as books by M. Gorky, A. Serafimovich, D. Furmanov, N. Ostrovsky, L. Tolstoy, H. de Balzac, I. Turgenev etc.

The documents produced by the Labor Statistics Department, a special department within the TsSU, form the core of the collection. The documents contain information on every aspect of labor of interest to the soviet government: efficiency, disciplinary fines, monthly salaries, the division of workers among the different branches of Soviet industry, women in different professions and membership of the "udarniki movement" (a doctrine stimulating workers to produce beyond their daily quotes). The documents also contain data on unemployment and the salary funds movements in capitalist countries in 1932. In addition to statistics on labor, the documents contain information on the living conditions of the soviet people, such as housing, clothing, food consumption, medical care, recreational habits, expenditure etc.

The documents of the collection provide insight into the development of the socialist society and the impact of the socialist economy on various social and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. Most of them were brought up and formed by the Soviet political system. The statistical and analytical data cover various cities and regions (Moscow, Leningrad, Ukraine, Ural, and Republic of Germans in the Volga region and many others). The surveys (questionnaires) were addressed to various professionals and ethnic groups – industrial workers, engineers, employers, *kolkhozniki* and students.

The collection includes the following types of documents:

- TsSU and the TsUNKhU bulletins containing the results of investigations into the income and expenditure of the soviet population (1926-1928, 1932, 1934-1939).
- Reports and secret memorandums of the TsUNKhU to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and government concerning the budgets and salaries of factory workers (1932-1935).
- Instructions on how to compose questionnaires for the surveys into the lifestyle and interests of students, young workers and *kolkhozniki* (1936,1938).
- Filled-in questionnaires (1936,1938).
- Registration forms completed by day-laborers containing information on salary etc. (March 1935).

## Organization

The collection has been subdivided into the following series:

- Inquiries into cultural and political interest, 1936-1938
- Statistics on labor, income and expenditure of soviet citizens, 1925-1939

These series have been chronologically arranged.

## **Subject Terms**

Soviet Union -- Economic conditions -- 1917-1945

Soviet Union -- Social conditions

Soviet Union -- Social life and customs

Soviet Union -- Statistics

## Index of Organizations and Geographic Names

All organizations and geographic names mentioned in the container list of this finding aid are listed below in alphabetic order.

### Organizations

- Государственный комитет по статистике – Госкомстат [Gosudarstvennyi komitet po statistike – Goskomstat]
- Народный комиссариат обороны [Narodnyi komissariat oborony] = People's Commissariat for Defense
- Совет народных комиссаров СССР – СНК СССР [Sovet narodnykh komissarov SSSR – SNK SSSR] = Soviet of People's Commissars of the USSR
- Центральное статистическое управление СССР – ЦСУ СССР [Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie SSSR – TsSU SSSR] = Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR
- Центральное управление народно-хозяйственного учета СССР – ЦУХУ СССР [Tsentral'noe upravlenie narodno-khoziaistvennogo ucheta SSSR – TsUNKhU SSSR] = Central Administration of Economic Accounting of the USSR
- Центральный комитет Всесоюзной коммунистической партии (большевиков) – ЦК ВКП(б) [Tsentral'nyi komitet Vserossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (bol'shevikov) – TsK VKP(b)] = Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party

### Geographic Names

- Автономная социалистическая советская республика немцев Поволжья [Avtonomnaia sotsialisticheskaiia sovetskaia respublika nemtsev Povolzh'ia]
- Гомельская область [Gomel'skaia oblast']
- Горький [Gor'kii]
- Днепропетровск [Dnepropetrovsk]
- Донецкая область [Donetskaia oblast']
- Иваново [Ivanovo]
- Курская область [Kurskaia oblast']
- Ленинград [Leningrad]
- Москва [Moskva]
- Московская область [Moskovskaia oblast']
- Омская область [Omskaia oblast']
- Орехово-Зуево [Orekhovo-Zuevo]
- Полтавская область [Poltavskaia oblast']
- Ростовская область [Rostovskaia oblast']
- Свердловская область [Sverdlovskaia oblast']
- Харьков [Khar'kov]
- Харьковская область [Khar'kovskaia oblast']

## Container list

### Inquiries into cultural and political interest, 1936-1938

|  | Microfiche nr. | Physical desc.<br>Страниц /<br>Страниц с оборотами |
|--|----------------|--|
| Инструментарии ЦУНХУ Госплана СССР вторичного обследования культуры и быта молодежи за 1936–1938 гг. 1936–1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847   | мф 255-261     | 133 (23 с об.)                                     |
| Бланки индивидуального обследования культуры и быта рабочей и студенческой молодежи в машиностроительной промышленности г. Горького за 1936 г. Том I. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 848 | мф 262-287     | 363 (с об.)  |
| То же, том II. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 849  | мф 288-307     | 277 (с об.)  |
| То же в текстильной промышленности г. Иваново, том I. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 850   | мф 308-342     | 538 (с об.)  |
| То же, том II. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 851  | мф 343-370     | 378 (с об.)  |
| То же в машиностроительной и текстильной промышленности г. Ленинграда 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 852   | мф 371-405     | 472 (с об.)  |
| То же, г. Москвы. Том I 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 853   | мф 406-441     | 500 (с об.)  |
| То же, том II. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 854  | мф 442-471     | 407 (с об.)  |
| То же в текстильной промышленности г. Орехово-Зуево. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 855  | мф 472-490     | 262 (с об.)  |
| Бланки индивидуального обследования культуры и быта рабочей и студенческой молодежи в черной металлургии г. Днепропетровска. за 1936 г. Том I 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 856         | мф 491-511     | 337 (с об.)  |

|  |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| То же, том II. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 857  | мф 512-534 | 260 (с об.) |
| То же в черной металлургии и каменно-угольной промышленности Донецкой области. за 1936 г. Том I 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 858             | мф 535-553 | 128 (с об.) |
| То же, том II. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 859  | мф 554-578 | 170 (с об.) |
| То же, том III. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 860   | мф 579-604 | 365 (с об.) |
| То же, том IV. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 861  | мф 605-630 | 180 (с об.) |
| То же, том V. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 862   | мф 631-660 | 416 (с об.) |
| То же, в машиностроительной промышленности г. Харькова за 1936 г. 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 863   | мф 661-692 | 438 (с об.) |
| Сводные таблицы ЦУНХУ при Госплане СССР по обследованию быта колхозной молодежи по СССР за 1938 г. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1014         | мф 693-702 | 181         |
| Бланки индивидуального обследования культуры и быта колхозной молодежи по Курской области за 1938 г. Том I 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1015 | мф 703-726 | 334 (с об.) |
| То же, по Курской области за 1938 г. Том II 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1016  | мф 727-748 | 301 (с об.) |
| То же, по Московской области за 1938 г. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1017  | мф 749-767 | 253 (с об.) |
| То же, по Омской области за 1938 г. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1018  | мф 768-799 | 446 (с об.) |
| То же, по районам автономной республики немцев Поволжья за 1938 г. Том I 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1019                                   | мф 800-823 | 333 (с об.) |

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|---|--------------|-------------|
| То же, том II. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1020  | мф 824-849   | 355 (с об.) |
| Бланки индивидуального обследования культуры и быта колхозной молодежи по Полтавской области за 1938 г. Том I 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1021 | мф 850-878   | 401 (с об.) |
| То же, том II. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1022  | мф 879-900   | 302 (с об.) |
| То же, том III. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1023   | мф 901-929   | 399 (с об.) |
| То же, том IV. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1024  | мф 930-958   | 401 (с об.) |
| То же, по Гомельской области за 1938 г. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1025   | мф 959-994   | 493 (с об.) |
| То же, по Ростовской области за 1938 г. Том I 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1026   | мф 995-1018  | 322 (с об.) |
| То же, том II. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1027  | мф 1019-1047 | 399 (с об.) |
| То же, том III. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1028   | мф 1048-1065 | 242 (с об.) |
| То же, по Свердловской области за 1938 г. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1029   | мф 1066-1098 | 448 (с об.) |
| То же, по Харьковской области за 1938 г. Том I 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1030  | мф 1099-1119 | 287 (с об.) |
| То же, том II. 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1031  | мф 1120-1141 | 299 (с об.) |

### Statistics on labor, income and expenditure of soviet citizens, 1925-1939

Microfiche nr.                      Physical desc.

|   |            | Страниц /<br>Страниц с оборотами |
|---|------------|----------------------------------|
| Бюллетень ЦСУ СССР «Бюджеты служащих СССР за 1926–1928 гг.» Выпуск V 1928.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 580   | мф 1-12    | 101 (с об.)                      |
| Бюллетень «Бюджеты рабочих и служащих по республикам, краям и областям СССР за 1932 г.» 1932.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 670  | мф 13-19   | 48                               |
| Бюллетень № 11 (21) ЦУНХУ СССР по учету труда за ноябрь 1932 г. ноябрь 1932.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 670а  | мф 20-27   | 106 (70 с об.)                   |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих за 1934 г.» 1934.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 773а   | мф 28-31   | 46                               |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих и ИТР за 1935 г.» 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 806а   | мф 32-44   | 169                              |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих за I, II кварталы 1935 г.» 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 806б  | мф 45-53   | 123                              |
| То же, за III квартал 1935 г. 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 806в   | мф 54-67   | 183                              |
| То же, за IV квартал 1935 г. 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 806г  | мф 68-84   | 222                              |
| Докладные записки ЦУНХУ СССР в ЦК ВКП(б) и СНК СССР и таблицы данных о бюджетах фабрично-заводских семейных рабочих по отраслям промышленности по СССР за 1932–1935 гг. 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 329; дело 62                      | мф 239-244 | 137 (1 с об.)                    |
| Таблицы (ф. рф. I) ЦУНХУ СССР данных о численности вольнонаемных работников и фондах их зарплаты по Наркомату обороны СССР по РСФСР и союзным республикам в разрезе областей за март 1935 г. 1935.<br>фонд 1562; опись 329; дело 79 | мф 245-254 | 257 (с об.)                      |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих и ИТР за I квартал 1936 г.» 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847а   | мф 85-96   | 161                              |

|   |            |     |
|---|------------|-----|
| То же, за апрель 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847б  | мф 97-99   | 32  |
| То же, за II квартал и I полугодие 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847в  | мф 100-117 | 237 |
| То же, за III квартал 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847г   | мф 118-130 | 173 |
| То же, за IV квартал 1936.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 847д  | мф 131-144 | 184 |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих и ИТР за I квартал 1937 г.» 1937.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 919а                         | мф 145-165 | 279 |
| То же, за II квартал 1937.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 919б  | мф 166-184 | 255 |
| То же, за III квартал.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 919в  | мф 185-202 | 251 |
| То же, за IV квартал 1937.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 919г  | мф 203-220 | 249 |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ СССР – «Бюджеты рабочих и ИТР за январь–апрель 1938 г.» 1938.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1031а                    | мф 221-232 | 164 |
| Бюллетень ЦУНХУ Госплана СССР «Бюджеты рабочих и служащих по СССР» за май–ноябрь 1939 г.<br>1939.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1076 | мф 233-235 | 73  |
| То же по республикам, краям и областям СССР за 1939 г. 1939.<br>фонд 1562; опись 15; дело 1077                                      | мф 236-238 | 66  |

## Everyday Stalinism: Historical Sources

### *Valuable Historical Information*

We are pleased to offer you a set of statistical data for social history studies of the USSR in the 1930s, held by the Russian State Archive of Economy - RGAE [Российский государственный архив экономики – РГЭ], henceforth RGAE. During a long period, the Soviet statistical information of this period was unavailable to scholars. The data on such aspects of Soviet way of life which were important for the evaluation of people's living standards in relation to those of foreign countries was the most difficult to obtainable. Some data, officially published, was intended primarily for ideological propaganda, which aimed to highlight the achievements of socialist transformations in the USSR and the increasing prosperity of its population. Meanwhile, for practical purposes and the "correction" of social policy, the Soviet government needed some genuine, and not fictional, figures, which could accurately reflect the living standards of the different social groups.

According to Soviet socialism, the evaluation of living standards was based on the cumulative quantity of material goods, spiritual values, and other living facilities considered to promote a harmonious development of society. This is why the Soviet understanding of "living standards" included a wide system of physical and cost variables: real income indices, indices of food and non-food consumption per capita, level of cultural, communal and medical services, labor conditions, demographic shifts, etc. The budget surveys were the principal sources of such information in the USSR.

### *Budget Surveys in Imperial Russia*

Until 1917, budget surveys in Russia were irregular and mostly aimed at the detailed examination of peasant households. Usually they were carried out by the local administrations – *Zemstvo*. These surveys were selective, and used multistage samples. On the micro level, monographic descriptions of isolated households, hundreds and thousands parameters representing the whole economy of peasant households were mainly examined. Special attention was paid to the representativity of the information. Other social groups (workers, civil servants, etc.) were mainly examined by enthusiastic scientists and public figures. Thanks to their activity, by 1917 the practice of carrying out such surveys had already reached a sophisticated level.

### *Methodology and Practice of Budget Surveys in the USSR in the 1920s*

After the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917, budget surveys became one of the most important forms of governmental statistical investigation. They borrowed a lot from past experience in the organization of work, programs, and methods of inquiry. In order to coordinate this kind of activity within the Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR [Центральное статистическое управление СССР – ЦСУ СССР], henceforth TsSU, a budgetary statistics department was created. Similar departments emerged in other administrative organs. Trade unions, scientific and public organizations, besides the state administration, participated in preparing these surveys.

Before total collectivization in the USSR, individual households were the main objects of selective budgetary examinations. When the collective sector acquired a dominant position in the rural economy, the collective farm families became the principal objects of the budget surveys.

However, the essential target of the budget surveys in the "state of the proletarian dictatorship" became workers, civil servants, and their families. Principal attention was paid to family budgets, but the surveys also included data on people without families. Even during the Civil War (which broke out after the Bolshevik revolution), in circumstances of anarchy and disaster, a program of budget surveys was proposed which covered about 40 thousand workers and civil servants. It was an absolute utopia at that time. Nevertheless, some sections of these surveys, which were not systematic, were published in different journals, magazines, statistical periodicals, and scientific inquiries. Much information of this kind can be found in the works of the outstanding Soviet economist *S. G. Strumilin*.

The actual program of budget surveys began in the 1920s. From 1921 to 1928, these surveys covered about 3 thousand workers' families and one thousand civil servants' families. In the beginning, budget examinations were made on a monthly basis (recording monthly receipts and expenditures of a family). Later on, annual records made by statisticians became the most widely used form of the survey. Sometimes they were complemented by inquiries concerning housing facilities and inventory descriptions, recording family possessions such as furniture, clothes, etc. This kind of data later became a part of the general clause of the budget surveys. The inquiries were led by the joint commission of Central Administration for Statistics of the USSR [Центральное статистическое управление СССР – ЦСУ СССР], the People's Commissariat of Labor [Народный комиссариат труда - НКТ], and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions [Всесоюзный центральный совет профессиональных союзов – ВЦСПС]. (For more detailed information on budget surveys in the USSR see: *Vyborochnoe nabludenie v statistike SSSR. [Выборочное наблюдение в статистике СССР. М., 1966]; Matiukha, I.Y. Statistika biudzheto-rov naseleniia. М., 1979 [Матюха И. Я. Статистика бюджетов населения. М., 1967]; Massovye istochniki po sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii sovetskogo obshchestva. [Массовые источники по социально-экономической истории советского общества. М., 1979].*

Central and local Russian archives, including RGAE, besides analytical studies, hold considerable amount of primary data as well as analytical tables based on them. Some samples of budgets surveys of the 1920s were published both in the central and regional press. The most complete publication of budget statistical data of the 1920s is included in the book *Biudzhety rabochikh i sluzhashchikh. Вып. 1. Бюджет рабочей семьи 1922-1927. М., 1929 [Бюджеты рабочих и служащих. Вып. 1. Бюджет рабочей семьи 1922-1927. М., 1929.]* The second volume has never appeared due to changes in the political situation of the country. One of the best examinations of this data can be found in the works of E.O Kabo, the most well known work being *Ocherki rabochego byta. Opyt monograficheskogo issledovaniia domashnego rabochego byta. М., 1928 [Очерки рабочего быта. Опыт монографического исследования домашнего рабочего быта. М., 1928].*

### *Methodology and Practice of Budget Surveys in the USSR in the 1930s*

The period 1929-33 was unfavorable for statistics. From the end of the 1920s and during the 1930s, budget surveys altered considerably. The total number of budget surveys across the whole country increased in 1938 to 35 thousand. They included up to

12 thousand workers' family budgets, up to 5 thousand civil servants' family budgets, and up to 1,5 thousand engineering personnel family budgets.

At the same time, the procedure for budget surveying improved. It included data concerning workers from the main branches of industry (coal, metallurgical, textile, etc.) and agricultural workers. After 1928, all the civil servants were classified as working in industry, government offices, trade, education, and medical service. From 1934, engineering personnel, working in different spheres of the national economy, was specially selected.

The selection of respondents according to social and territorial characteristics was proportional to their total quantity. The selection of observation units for budget surveying was based on the degree of proximity of the average earnings per worker or householder to the average monthly wages of all the people in this category. The surveys distinguished high- and low-qualified workers. The tariff rank was a criterion for such a division.

The selection of observation units was considered to be satisfactory if the deviation of the average earnings in the sample was not higher than approximately 3-5% of the average data of the examined category. Since a common governmental wage policy was pursued in the USSR, the admissible deviations in wages were not so great. For instance, in the 1934 budgets, the average wage of the workers examined around Moscow was 157,6 rubles, whereas as a whole around the city, it was 161,6 rubles.

Thanks to the high level of homogeneity of the objects under examination, the budget surveys provide the necessary representativeness of data. The records were carried out in the following way: respondents put the information about their financial standing, housing conditions, and registered their incomes and expenditures in special printed forms. Several times a year, statisticians visited respondents in their residences and interviewed members of families using documents such as pay sheets, housing receipts, and communal utilities payments.

The budget program was expanded in the 1930s. It included numerous variables concerning cultural facilities provided for workers and members of their families as so-called public consumption funds (education, medical services, cultural events, etc.). The total number of indices within a budget survey could reach 2000 or even more. The Central Administration of Economic Accounting of the USSR - TsUNKhU [Центральное управление народно-хозяйственного учета СССР - ЦУНХУ СССР, henceforth TsUNKhU, which replaced the TsSU within the State Planning Commission [Госплан] and its local civil servants were responsible for the budget surveys.

#### ***Restricted Access to Statistical Data in the 1930s.***

The 1930s were characterized by the gradual unification of statistical investigations, although during the period of socialist experiments many different inquiries were carried out, analogous to the budget surveys. Sometimes their results were published by the Soviet press, but access to the primary materials of investigations was restricted. At that time, a curtain of secrecy was drawn on all statistical data. The main reason for such restrictions was the divergence between the officially promised and declared progress and the real situation. Party and government leaders did not want citizens to objectively evaluate the real, non-fictional, achievements of the USSR. The more or less accurate statistics were mainly at the disposal of the competent authorities, of high-rank officials, who had a special permission to use them. Special summaries and bulletins were prepared for them. Some of these bulletins, held in RGAE, are now declassified and available to scholars. Primarily, these are bulletins of the TsSU (TsUNKhU) entitled "*Biudzhetny rabochikh i sluzhshchikh SSSR za period 1928-1939*"

[Бюджеты рабочих и служащих СССР за период 1928-1939 гг.]. The first bulletin is directly connected even with budget surveys of the 1920s. It fills the gap, which appeared because of the suspension of the publication of the budget data. There is some information concerning Soviet civil servants' lives in the period from 1926 to 1928. Other issues (19 in total) deal with the 1930s.

#### ***Valuable Historical Information***

The significance of this data for historical studies is great given the complexity and variety of processes in the USSR during the Stalinist period. The 1930s are marked by radical changes in public life in the USSR. It was the time of "roaring" industrialization, when many plants and factories were constructed. These processes were accompanied by the total collectivization of the Russian village. Masses of peasants fled from *kolkhoz*'s to the cities, where their influx provoked chaotic and disorganized urbanization, the formation of a new Soviet way of life, as Soviet people became incorporated into city culture. The village experienced the formation of the *kolkhoz* regime. The nature of the transformations in this period is still a matter for disputation; whether it was really true that, as Stalin said, "life has become better, become more cheerful". The separate observations made by contemporary historians do not provide a complete image of this epoch. Only the budgetary data allows us to judge it in a correct statistical way. (For more detailed information on budget surveys in the USSR see: *Vyborochnoe nabliudenie v statistike SSSR* [Выборочное наблюдение в статистике СССР. М., 1966]; *Matiukha, I.Y. Statistika biudzhetov naseleniia*. М., 1979 [Матюха И. Я. Статистика бюджетов населения. М., 1967]; *Massovye istochniki po sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii sovetskogo obshchestva*. [Массовые источники по социально-экономической истории советского общества. М., 1979]. In the 1930s, the drafting of budget surveys had been worked out separately for workers' families, unmarried workers, civil servants, engineering personnel, and collective farmers. The period 1929-33 was unfavorable for statistics. These years were characterized by consolidating measures, a rationing system, and food cards. The budgets were stored, some information from them was gathered in archives, but not in a systematic way. For this period, it is better to look at data concerning the centralized supply of food and other articles of consumption. (See: *Osokina E.A. Za fasadom "stalinskogo izobilii". Raspredelenie i rynek v snabzhenii naseleniia v gody industrializatsii. 1927-1941. М., 1999* [Осокина, Е. А. За фасадом "сталинского изобилия". Распределение и рынок в снабжении населения в годы индустриализации. 1927-1941. М., 1999].

Later on, the consolidated data of the budget surveys became more acceptable. The bulletins for 1934-39 included tables of summary variables (parameters) of the dynamics of expenditures, price movement, and volume of purchased food and goods. For workers who had families, the specific weight of the market in purchasing goods was indicated. This data was represented in relation to the previous year. The list of indices in the bulletins was permanent. This allows us to trace the dynamics of their movement for the whole period.

### *Secret Memoranda*

These bulletins are thematically closely related to the memoranda of the TsUNKhU to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bol'sheviks [Центральный комитет Всесоюзной коммунистической партии – ЦК ВКП (б)] and the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR [Совет народных комиссаров – СНК СССР], declassified in 1993, as well as to the data charts about factory workers' budgets in the different branches of industry for 1932-35. This material once served as a base for reforming the wage system, for preparing the abolishment of the rationing system, and for determining uniform prices for consumption goods. These secret memoranda, declassified, are also connected with information about quantity (in the republics and regions) of the civil servants within the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR [Народный комиссариат обороны] and their wage funds for March-April of 1935. This is a typical example of a one-off inquiry, pursued in connection with the increasing interest of the Soviet government in defensive potentialities. Such data sheds light on the early history of the creation of the Soviet military-industrial complex.

### *Surveys on Youth Culture and Everyday Life*

Another part of the collection consists of the one-off surveys on youth culture and everyday life in 1936 and 1938. These surveys are unique. In the second half of the 1930s, as opposed to the first half, many programs of mass surveys, which were carried out in addition to the official statistics, were stopped. However in 1936, some *Komsomol* members of the State Planning Commission of the USSR, which were supported by the Central Committee of the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League [ЦК ВЛКСМ], introduced the questionnaire survey for working and student youth in order to study new elements in culture and everyday life. It is puzzling to us now why Soviet leaders permitted such a survey, probably because the youth in the USSR was considered to be the most dynamic and successful sector of society. It was advantageous, using this example, to show the successes of the development of the socialism in the USSR. There is no doubt that this survey was organized only for propaganda purposes. The creators of this survey promised to use the data in *Komsomol* activities, and to start a large campaign in the press. This support determined the program of data collection.

Large enterprises and high schools in cities like Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Gor'kii, Dnepropetrovsk, and others were selected for such a survey. It dealt with workers from four principal branches: machine-building, textile, metallurgical, and coal, as well as with students of *Komsomol* age (not older than 25 years) from industrial, educational, and medical high schools. The sampling was taken mechanically; every twentieth or every tenth young worker of the enterprise or student was selected to be surveyed. Key enterprises were chosen which presented the technical and industrial "face" of the branch, such as the plant "Dinamo" [Динамо] and the cotton-mill "Trekhgornaiia manufaktura" [Трехгорная мануфактура] in Moscow, Kirov's factory [Кировский завод] and "Elektrosila" [Электросила] in Leningrad, "Krasnoe Sormovo" [Красное Сормово] in Gor'kii, and others. It was recommended to include workers representing the chief professions at the largest workshops in the surveys, and to exclude non-skilled workers and auxiliary personnel. So the surveyed working youth really represented the most advanced sector of the young Soviets.

The program of surveying included 44 questions, divided into groups: general data about the respondent (sex, age, etc.), information concerning his/her educational level, public activity, material and housing conditions, cultural level, sporting activities, career. The questions were at times very precise and detailed. For example, how often the respondent changes clothes and bed linen, can he/she play chess, and other questions of that kind. Lists of art and literary works were used to evaluate the cultural level of the youth (in particular, their knowledge of the works of Marx and Lenin).

The information was mainly obtained through personal contact. Only wage data was derived from account bills. In general, more than nine thousand young workers and students were interviewed.

This information was partly published in the collection of documents entitled "*Molodezh' SSSR. M., 1936* [Молодежь СССР. М., 1936]. The published materials are presented in a way that sheds the most favorable light on the Soviet authorities. In fact, the primary data of the questionnaire, which were collected in RGAE and proposed to the scholars, present a less optimistic picture of the society. They serve to reflect many trends of youth life in the USSR, which are often missing from the analytical tables.

### *Surveys on Kolkhoz Youth Culture and Everyday Life*

Another social group, rural youth (*kolkhoz*) was examined in 1938. This survey was carried out in the territory of Gorn'ye, Kursk, Moscow, Omsk, Poltava, Sverdlovsk, Khar'kov regions, as well as in the territory of the Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic of the Germans of the Volga area. In total, more than five thousand young collective farmers were interviewed. The program of survey essentially repeated the workers and students survey of 1936. But the questions concerning public activities were emphasized. Also, the number of questions concerning the natural income of *kolkhoz* youth was increased. But most of the questions concerning biographies of the young collective farmers were eliminated, probably because of the uniformity of their lives. The questionnaire contained 34 questions in total.

The information from this questionnaire was partly published in the collection of documents "*Sotsialisticheskoe sel'skoe khoziastvo Soiuzo SSR. M., 1939* [Социалистическое сельское хозяйство Союза ССР. М., 1939], which was openly propagandist. Meanwhile, real life in the rural regions – life as it was lived, without exaggeration – can be reconstructed from the primary documents of the survey in spite of all the tricks of its creators. We can now clearly imagine, how the young people lived, what they ate, what clothes they wore, what they read, which films they watched, how they entertained themselves.

The complex of documents concerning both surveys, collected in RGAE, consists of 35 files. Two of them deal with interview techniques, their programs and the method of data analysis. The others contain questionnaires grouped according to territory. The surveys concerning youth culture and everyday life in the 1930s have already been studied by scholars. In 1969, Soviet historians and sociologists organized an inquiry into *kolkhoz* youth, following the program and methods elaborated in 1938. The goal was to fix the changes which had occurred over the last 30 years. Unfortunately, this study had an ideological character, proper to Soviet social sciences. The results were exposed in the book "*Sotsial'nyi oblik kolkhozhnoi molodezhi. M., 1976* [Социальный облик колхозной молодежи. М., 1976]. A little later, the similar investigation was made with regard to worker youth. In preparing this work, the authors used some materials from the initial data of the 1936 survey. (See: *Sotsial'nyi oblik*

*rabochei molodezhi. M., 1980 [Социальный облик рабочей молодежи. М., 1980]. However, the great wealth of information collected in the surveys of 1936 and 1938 has still not been used to its full potential.*

The presented data complexes are just part of the variety of statistical and other materials held in RGAE which can be used as sources for social history. For instance, the *kolkhoz* youth survey of 1938 can be supplemented by letters sent to “*Krest’ianskaia Gaset*a” in 1938, stored in RGAE (See for example: *1930 gody: obshchestvo i vlast’. Povestvovanie v dokumentakh. M., 1998 [1930-е годы: общество и власть. Повествование в документах. М., 1998]*; a chapter entitled “The Bolshevik Order in Kolkhoz”, mainly based on such letters; the English version of this book: *Stalinism as a Way of Life / Ed. by Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov. Yale University Press, 2000. Chapter. 5*). However, if the presented materials are almost ready to be used by the scholars, the other materials require great preparatory work before they can be used in research.

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