

## ON THE ISSUE OF MATERIAL INCENTIVES IN THE SOVIET UNION

There is a serious controversy on the issue of material incentives and its meaning in a socialist state. The question is not, as some people try to distortedly present it, one of 'material incentives versus spiritual incentives', or whether there is place or not for material incentives in the process of socialist and communist construction. The real question is, why is it that special stress and emphasis on material incentives for work have become necessary during the phase of building communism after half a century of socialist construction, and whether it squares with the expected socialist and communist consciousness of the Soviet citizen.

It would be highly instructive to recall to our minds the penetrating observations of Lenin regarding the nature

of real communist manner of work. He exhorts, "First show that you are capable of working without remuneration in the interest of society, in the interest of all the working people"; characterises the communist spirit of work as one "constituting the labour of individuals on an extensive scale for the public good"; and says that "Communism begins when the *rank and file workers* display an enthusiastic concern" to "production of goods, which do not accrue to the workers personally, or their 'close' kith and kin, but to their 'distant' kith and kin, i.e., to the society as a whole, to tens of hundreds of millions of people united first in one socialist state, and then in a union of Soviet republics".

But the present drive by the present leaders of the Soviet state on the material incentives aspect, contrary to the one emphasised by Lenin, raises the legitimate question whether this would not lead to the moulding of working class consciousness on the bourgeois basis of personal profit, individual and selfish interests, etc. Theoretically speaking, either proletarian communist ideas and consciousness would grow stronger and stronger and defeat and eliminate bourgeois habits, ideas and consciousness, or in its absence, the latter would invade the former and stifle its growth and development. The resort to capitalist incentives and ideas of personal profit, in the final analysis, paves the way for the restoration of a new type of capitalism, and harms the cause of socialism and communism. This danger is all the more so when the concept of material incentives is unduly emphasised in a socialist society at a stage which they claim to be full-scale construction of communism.