



Volume 8. Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961

Order Regarding Measures to Increase Labor Productivity and to Further Improve the Material Situation of the Workers and Salaried Employees in Industry and the Transportation Sector (1947)

In view of the considerable economic problems in the Eastern zone, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) demanded greater labor productivity and improved work discipline. This was to be achieved through material incentives such as more consumer goods and additional hot meals in the workplace. The SMAD also issued a reminder that, as stipulated, women and men should be paid equal wages for equal work.

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**Order No. 234 of SMAD**  
of October 9, 1947

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The further reconstruction and development of industry and the transportation system demand above all an increase in labor productivity and a strengthening of work discipline. In many enterprises and factories, mines and railways, work discipline and labor productivity are still at a low level.

This situation is not only related to the grave consequences of the aggressive Hitler war. It is also the result of inadequate attention by some administrative organs, enterprise directors, and democratic organizations when it comes to the complete utilization of every possibility to improve the situation of workers, who constitute the main force behind democratization and the economic upswing in the Soviet Occupation Zone and behind the development of the economy.

[ . . . ]

The increase in labor productivity and the development of the conscious, personal initiative of the workers on behalf of the economic upswing in the Soviet Occupation Zone currently constitute the main connecting link in the system of national economy and the key to solving all other economic problems.

I order:

1. That all *Länder* governments and German administrative organs, directors of enterprises and factories, directors of mines, the railway, and other enterprises base their activity on measures

that will improve the work of the manufacturing enterprises and the transportation system, increase labor productivity and combat slackers, and improve the living situation of workers and salaried employees in industry and the transportation system, for which purpose all local resources and possibilities should be identified and utilized.

I call upon all anti-Fascist parties, unions, and works councils, as well as all other public organizations and the democratic press, to support the administrative organs and enterprise leaderships in carrying out these exceedingly important tasks, so that a general labor upswing in the Soviet Occupation Zone may be achieved in order to develop the peace economy and raise the living standard of the population.

[ . . . ]

4. The application of piece and rate wages to raise labor productivity and boost workers' wages must be expanded, especially in ore mining, in the coal and metals industry, in machine building, in the electrotechnical industry, and in the railway transportation sector. The calculation of piece rate wages is to be based on the minimum wages guaranteed in the collective labor contracts.

5. The wage rates in the textile and clothing industry must be reviewed, and lower rates for women's work should be abolished in accordance with the principle laid down in the Soviet Occupation Zone: "Equal pay for equal work,"

[ . . . ]

9. To improve the diet of workers and salaried employees in the enterprises of the leading industrial sectors and the transportation sector, one warm meal a day should be introduced beginning November 1, 1947, over and above the rations procured via the main ration cards; for highly qualified workers of the leading enterprises, for workers in labor that is physically demanding and harmful to health, as well as for engineers and technicians, according to the norms for warm meals of the first group; for the other workers and salaried employees of these enterprises, according to the norms for warm meals of the second group.

[ . . . ]

Provisions should be made so that enterprises that, through their own fault, systematically fail to fulfill their production plan and do not endeavor to improve their work can be temporarily excluded from additional warm food provisions at the suggestion of the *Länder* governments and following confirmation by the relevant organs of the SMA.

10. The workers and salaried employees of the leading enterprises of the Soviet Occupation Zone shall be preferentially supplied with industrial goods, whereby the qualitative performance of these enterprises is to be taken into consideration.

Beginning in the fourth quarter of 1947, the state governments must free up – from the funds for state needs – cloths, clothing, shoes, and coal to be sold on ration coupons that are issued in enterprises. The works councils and the union organizations, in agreement with the enterprise leaders, will issue the ration coupons for industrial goods primarily for good production performance.

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Source: *Dokumente aus den Jahren 1945-1949. Um ein antifaschistisch-demokratisches Deutschland* [Documents from the Years 1945-1949. For an Anti-Faschist, Democratic Germany]. East Berlin, 1968, p. 504ff; reprinted in Christoph Kleßmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1955* [The Founding of Two German States: German History, 1945-1955]. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986, pp. 509-10.

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