

Employment in the Soviet Aircraft Industry, 1918 to 1940: Work Culture, Organization, and Incentives*

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Abstract

This paper is about employment in a priority branch of the Soviet economy from the Revolution to World War II. It identifies four historical phases: the Civil War, the New Economic Policy, Stalin's first two five-year plans, and accelerated rearmament just before the war. The paper describes trends in recruitment and turnover, the composition of the workforce, the working culture, and the impact of policy. The latter combined rapidly growing demands for output with a varying mix of repression, regimentation, and rewards. Despite the context of a command system and intense monitoring from above, it was not possible to improve the quality of effort or working practices by negative stimuli alone.

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