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**ACTIVITY OF METALLURGICAL ENTERPRISES OF THE EAST
AND SOUTH OF UKRAINE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR
(AUGUST 1914 – FEBRUARY 1917)**

- Abstract -

The metallurgical enterprises of the East and South of Ukraine during the First World War, within the limits of the general militarization of the economy, sharply increased the execution of orders oriented to the needs of the front. These enterprises had a rather high technological level, which was conditioned by the peculiarities of the formation of the metal market on the eve of hostilities. Restrictions on export and import operations in the wake of the war have negatively affected on the supply of metal and rolled products on the all-Russian market. Since the beginning of the war due to the cessation of imports and the interruptions in the work of rail transport, the supply of metal on the market immediately fell by 10%, which led to rising prices.

A number of measures were taken to provide metallurgical enterprises with the necessary metal products and raw materials. The Minister of Commerce and Industry was given the authority and the means to purchase the relevant goods abroad. In order to save raw materials for metallurgical enterprises since September 1914 it was forbidden to export it from the European part of the territory of the Russian Empire.

The work of metallurgical enterprises was influenced by the reduction of the number of skilled workers due to their recruitment to the Armed Forces. This led to the fact that in the mines of Kryviy Rih, after the first mobilizations, there was an urgent need for labor. Mining of ore has decreased, as a result it was not enough even to meet the needs of local South-Ukrainian metallurgical plants.

In order to increase production, new employees were involved, including a growing proportion of women and, to a certain extent, of children. It was decided to return qualified specialists from the military service to the enterprises, to suspend the recruitment of certain categories of workers,

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technicians and employees, and to increase the number of prisoners of war who had to work at metallurgical enterprises.

The growth in the demand for products of the steel industry in the wake of the war accompanied by inflationary processes has led to an increase in prices for them. The decision was passed on the criminal liability of traders and industrialists for increasing or decreasing prices for food items or necessities, according to which the dumping or increase of prices by entrepreneurs in the previous agreement in order to generate additional profits or redistribution of profits among economic operators provided for punishment.

In 1916 the work of enterprises of the metallurgical industry of the East and South of Ukraine was affected by the spread of the strike movement. Riots and strikes arose as a result of agitation, during which economic motives were used and the treasury of sewage plants was required. Speaking for the sequestration of enterprises, employees expected from the state administration to provide more wages and reduce the workload.

Among the factors that significantly influenced the metallurgical industry during 1914–1917, one can distinguish a sharp increase in demand for metallurgical products, a relatively low level of development of the transport infrastructure of the Russian Empire, a deterioration in the personnel supply of industrial enterprises, mainly through large-scale mobilization and migration of a part of highly skilled specialists, the failure of the system of state management industry in the context of a protracted global military conflict along with the ideas about its course, which did not correspond to the realities of time, as well as the dependence on the supply of certain types of raw materials and equipment from outside the country.

Keywords: First World War, enterprises, employees, government regulation of the economy, the steel industry, military industry, finance.

The First World War was more prolonged than it was expected before its beginning, and demonstrated the extraordinary importance of production capacity to meet the growing needs of the front. During the First World War, metallurgy was of particular importance. The war demanded the uninterrupted supply of the army with all necessary weapons, the production of which could only be provided by the highly developed metallurgical and machine building industry.

The growth of demand for industrial products stimulated the rapid development of the metallurgical industry before the war. If the smelting of pig iron in the whole of the empire in 1913 increased by 60% compared with 1900, then on

the territory of Ukraine – more than 100%¹. In 1913, there were 18 metallurgical plants in the Donbass and Dnieper, employing about 95 thousand workers².

These enterprises had a fairly high technological level. In addition, the activity of a significant number of metallurgical enterprises was controlled by joint-stock companies, which tended to concentrate in their hands the sources of fuel, manganese and coke production. The wide presence of foreign capital formed a polyethnic administrative apparatus, which in the vast majority of cases contributed to the development of the creative spirit of entrepreneurship. Thus, the post of Director of the Dnipro Metallurgical Plant was held by pole I. Yasyukovich, which was one of the reasons for manning the personnel at the expense of persons of Polish origin. The engineering staff of the “Russian Providence” plant were mainly from Belgium, and Donetsk-Yurievsky – from Germany. This type of organization management of enterprises contributed to the expansion of industrial ties, including through the conclusion of relevant agreements with firms located outside the Russian Empire. Mostly such agreements were concluded with European production associations.

Metallurgical plants of the East and South of Ukraine, depending on the sources of raw material use, were divided into three groups. The first belonged to Oleksandrovsky, Dniprovsky and Verkhnedniprovsky, which were located next to deposits of iron ore, but relatively far from the deposits of coal. Thus, the distance from Verkhnedniprovsk plant to coal mines was about 400 miles. The second group belonged to factories, whose location was determined by deposits of coal. The main group of these plants was located in the Donbass. These included Novorossiysk, Sulinsky, Druzhkovsky, Petrovsky, Donetsk-Yurievsky, Olkhovsky, Kramatorsky, Almazniy, Makeyevsky, and Bilyansky. These factories were forced to import iron ore. Thus, Petrovsky plant imported raw materials from a distance of about 525 miles. The third group included plants that used the Kerch ore. These included Kerch, Nikopol-Mariupol, “Russian Providans”. This differentiation gave rise to disputes around the interests of individual regions, which were manifested in pre-war times in the struggle for the definition of rail tariffs³.

In the years of the First World War, the metallurgical enterprises of the East and South of Ukraine, within the limits of the general militarization of the economy,

¹ Лукашевич Л. М., *Украина: Историко-экономическое обозрение*, Санкт-Петербург, 1995, pp.138–139.

² Реєнт О., Сердюк О., *Перша світова війна і Україна*, “Генеза”, Київ, 2004, p. 37.

³ Фомин П. И., *Железорудная и марганцевая промышленность СССР*, В 2 вып, Вып. 1, Краткий исторический очерк и современное состояние, Изд. Южно-рудного треста, Харьков, 1930, pp.15–16.

sharply increased the execution of orders oriented to the needs of the front. These enterprises had a rather high technological level, which was conditioned by the peculiarities of the formation of the metal market on the eve of hostilities. However, only 30% of the coke ovens in the Donbass were suitable for the disposal of by-products, that is, 1,000 27 furnaces at 10 plants. This was mainly recycling tar and ammonia water, and only one plant produced benzol, desperately needed to manufacture explosives⁴.

Restrictions on export-import operations in the conditions of the First World War negatively affected on the supply of metal and rolled products on the all-Russian market. Since the beginning of the war due to the cessation of imports and the interruptions in the work of rail transport, the supply of metal on the market immediately fell by 10%, which led to rising prices. In particular, the stocks of semi-finished product and finished product in metallurgy did not exceed at that time 19 million pounds, or 5,7% of annual production⁵.

As a result, a number of measures were taken to provide metallurgical enterprises with the necessary metal products and raw materials. In August 1914, the Minister of Commerce and Industry made a commitment to provide for the needs of factories that were carrying out military orders with aluminum, nickel, zinc, lead and other metals in an appropriate quantity. To this end, the Minister asked to allocate him 20 million rubles to buy the relevant goods abroad. However, the Council of Ministers decided that the Minister of Commerce and Industry should at all times, when purchasing the necessary metals, allocate funds to co-ordinate with the Ministry of Finance⁶. In order to save raw materials for metallurgical enterprises, starting from September 3, 1914, in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Finance, it was forbidden to export manganese ore from the European part of the Russian Empire⁷.

⁴ Лазар И. В., “Химико-технологические аспекты “снарядного голода” русской армии в годы Первой мировой войны”, *Известия Российского государственного педагогического университета им. А. И. Герцена*, № 74, 2008, p.276.

⁵ Реснт О., Сердюк О., *Перша світова війна і Україна*, “Гене́за”, Київ, 2004, p.42.

⁶ “По представлению Министерства Торговли и Промышленности от 19 августа 1914 года, за № 70/727 (по Отд[елу] Пром[ышленности]), о снабжении некоторых казенных и частных предприятий необходимыми им металлами (По журналу дел, разрешаемых собственной властью Совета Министров), 21 августа 1914 года”, *Особые журналы Совета министров Российской империи. 1914 год*, РОССПЭН, Москва, 2006, pp.307–308.

⁷ “О воспрещении вывоза из Европейской России марганцевой руды. Распоряжение, объявленное Правительствующему Сенату Министром финансов”, Авербах О. И., *Законодательные акты, вызванные войною 1914 года с Германиею, Австро-Венгриєю*

After the defeat of the Russian Empire in Galicia during the formation of special meetings, the metallurgical and metal-working industry was in the sphere of the jurisdiction of the Special Defense Meeting. At this meeting, special regulatory bodies for the steel industry were set up, namely on September 1, 1915, on the initiative of the Central Military Industrial Committee, a Committee for the Supply of Foreign Metal and the Metal Distribution Bureau was established on August 12, 1915. Both of these bodies performed only the functions of intermediaries, excluding the principle of coercion in work, that in a situation of agiotage in the market of metal and a semi-hidden opposition from certain state institutions could not last a long time. As a result of the subsequent reorganizations on December 17, 1915, the provision of a need for a variety of quality metal and a variety of defense workers was assigned to a metalworker appointed by the Chairman of the Special Defense Meeting. Along with the Commissioner worked the committee ("Rasmeko") with the participation of representatives of departments, public and commercial and industrial organizations. The functions of these bodies did not provide for the widespread use of state coercion. Only after the foundation in April 6, 1916, post of the Chief Commissioner for the supply of metals, to this person was given extensive powers in the distribution of metals. Chief Commissioner of metals supply combined work of the then existing institutions that have specific powers to regulate the work of metallurgical enterprises. However, the lack of apparatus and the refusal to cooperate with syndicates (despite Germany's example) were not allowed to establish effective control over the metal market. This contributed to the development of illegal trade in this type of products. Act of September 15, 1916 on the right of the Minister of Trade and Industry to set maximum prices for metals and products from them practically did not act⁸.

We believe that the work of metallurgical enterprises was influenced by the reduction of the number of skilled workers due to their call to the Armed Forces. This led to the fact that in the mines of Kryviy Rih, after the first mobilizations, there was an urgent need for labor. Mining of ore has decreased, as a result it was not enough even to meet the needs of local South-Ukrainian metallurgical plants. In early December 1914 in the region stopped 13 furnaces. In mid-March 1915, some

и Турциєю. Законы, Манифесты, Рескрипты, Указы Правительствующему Сенату, Распоряжения и Постановления Министров и др. Тип. А. Г. Сыркина, Вильна, 1915, pp.216–217.

⁸ Фомин П. И., *Металлопромышленность Украины*, Изд. Госплана УССР, Харьков, 1926, p.34.

plants completely or partially suspended their activities⁹. The Council of Ministers has pointed out that there is a fierce competition between public and private enterprises in attracting qualified workers. Quite often, private companies have been lured to them by establishing an increased wage. Such practices often created obstacles to the execution of military orders by state-owned factories. In this situation, the Council of Ministers opposed the introduction of emergency measures aimed at limiting the transfer of workers from one enterprise to another. A means of retaining skilled workers at state-owned enterprises was raising the level of remuneration, which would correspond to prices at private enterprises. At the same time, the Council of Ministers called for the release of the most skilled workers from the state-owned enterprises, considering this measure as a means of retaining skilled labor at these enterprises¹⁰.

In order to increase production, new employees were involved, including a growing proportion of women and, to a certain extent, of children. It is important to point out that the use of labor of these categories of workers increased at the end of 1914, but in 1915 the increase in the number of women and children who were employed in employment was slowed down by the rapid involvement of prisoners of war. However, the share of women involved in production has gradually increased. If in the beginning of 1915 women accounted for 19,2% of workers, then in early 1916 their number increased to 25%¹¹. However, in spite of the measures taken, already in 1915 there was a drop in the volume of production of pig iron compared with 1914 by 11,7%, semi-finished products – by 10,1%¹².

The positive moment that contributed to the growth of productivity in metallurgy was the replacement of coal by coke in blast furnace production, which provided a sharp increase in the production of pig iron. And this in turn led to the need to increase the production of rolling mills and aggregates for steel smelting. As you know, coke industry supplies fuel for the metallurgical industry, and raw

⁹ Турченко Г. Ф., “Соціально-економічні процеси в південноукраїнському регіоні”, *Велика війна 1914–1918 рр. і Україна*, У 2 кн. Кн. 1, Історичні нариси, “ТОВ Видавництво “КЛІО”, Київ, 2014, р.411.

¹⁰ “По вопросу об обеспечении правильной деятельности казенных заводов, изготовляющих предметы, необходимые для государственной обороны, 27 февраля 1915 года”, *Особые журналы Совета министров Российской империи. 1915 год*, РОССПЭН, Москва, 2008, pp.97–98.

¹¹ Гессен В. Ю., *Труд детей и подростков в фабрично-заводской промышленности России от XVII века до Октябрьской революции*, Ленинград: Государственное издательство, Москва, 1927. Т. I. pp.106–109.

¹² Ж. С. Деятельность южных металлургических заводов за июль 1915 г. и за год войны, *Горно-заводское дело*, № 36, 1915, p.11775.

materials – for chemical industry. Although until 1914, the burning of coke in large mines and metallurgical plants from year to year grew, the by-products of this process were almost not used¹³.

In the Donetsk basin was concentrated 99,96% of total coke production of the Russian Empire. They provided not only local metallurgical plants, but also factories of the center of Russia (the Ural metallurgical plants carried out the smelting of pig iron, mostly for charcoal). In 1914 there were 5,812 coke ovens in the Donetsk basin, of which 4,028 were built on coalmining mines, and another 1,784 at metallurgical plants. Technically possible performance of all furnaces provided the continuous action was about 372 million pounds a year. Since part of the furnaces had to undergo repairs, the coke burning could reach no more than 330 million pounds. But practically the largest volume of coke received in the Donbass in 1914 amounted to 278 million pounds. To support the smelting of pig iron at the level of 1913 (189 million 700 thousand pounds), it was necessary about 247 million pounds of coke. Thus, taking into account the needs of only metallurgical plants, the amount of coke received in 1914 provided the work of enterprises at the level of 1913. But in 1915, in connection with the growth of production capacities for metallurgical plants of the East and South of Ukraine, it was needed already 287 million 300 thousand tons of coke. However, production of coke in 1915 was only about 255 million pounds (according to other data, even 250 million pounds). Thus, already in 1915, the needs of metallurgical plants in coke were not satisfied¹⁴.

In the war years, the coke industry provided the product with industrial enterprises that worked for military purposes, compensating to a certain extent losses from the coke import. But to meet the needs of all consumers failed. As a result of interruptions to transport, lack of coal, and the mobilization of a large number of workers, the production of coke was gradually decreasing: in 1915 it was 90,3%, and in 1917 – 83% of the level of 1913. The situation was complicated by the fact that due to the transport crisis, coke plants accumulated relatively large stocks of non-exhausted coke. Reduction of production of coke has created problems with the production of benzol needed for the manufacture of explosives¹⁵. Thus, at

¹³ Михненко А. М. Розвиток економіки Донецького регіону на початку ХХ ст, *Наукові праці історичного факультету Запорізького державного університету*, Вип. XVII, 2004, р.160.

¹⁴ Гарновский К. Н., *Формирование государственно-монополистического капитализма в России в годы первой мировой войны (на примере металлургической промышленности)*, Издательство Московского университета, Москва, 1958, pp.33–34.

¹⁵ Центральний державний історичний архів України, м. Київ (ЦДІАК України), ф. 2161, оп. 1, спр. 13, арк. 82–84.

the end of 1915 the weakness of the raw material base of the metallurgical industry was revealed. Mining industries supplying raw materials for smelting pig iron – iron, coke and flux – were unable to fully meet the needs of metallurgical enterprises in raw materials and fuels as a result of traffic interruptions and lack of workers.

The Government has taken a series of measures aimed at improving the production of chemical products that were necessary for the needs of the war. In 1915 the first association of the industry arose – the Russian joint-stock company of the coke industry and benzol production (“Kokosobenzol”). The Company has largely monopolized the construction of coke plants, as well as the production and sale of coke and coking products in Ukraine. The number of capture plants for chemical coking products has increased from 10 in 1913 to 15 in 1916, and the production of benzol has increased from 2 thousand to 131 thousand pounds. The above data shows that the concentration of production and preferential lending provided by the government allowed to increase production volumes. Monopolization of the industry helped not only organize production, but also redistribute its results. But in general, the production of coking products was not enough, which inhibited the development of many industries, including metallurgy¹⁶.

In 1916 in the Donetsk basin was commissioned five new coke recovery of byproducts such as benzol, toluene, xylene, naphthalene, ammonia. At the same time their construction was significantly complicated and in some cases completely suspended due to the lack of refractory materials and iron. At the same time, with full loading of all furnaces, it was expected to receive about 100 thousand pounds of crude coal benzol¹⁷. At the end of 1916 there were already in the Donbass 17 coke plants, which means recovery coke oven gases extracted toluene and benzol. The annual production capacity of sulfuric acid plants was doubled to 25 million pounds¹⁸.

At the beginning of January 1916, the commissioner of the Special Defense Meeting in Ekaterinoslavsky District pointed to the critical state of the work of the metallurgical plants due to the constant delays in the supply of raw materials and

¹⁶ Плакида Е. М., *Развитие коксохимической промышленности Украины в дореволюционный период*, автореферат диссертации кандидата экономических наук, Киев, 1980.

¹⁷ “Из Всеподданнейшего доклада по Военному министерству о мероприятиях и состоянии всех частей военного управления за 1916 год”, *Военная промышленность России в начале XX века (1900–1917): документы и материалы*, “Новый хронограф”, Москва, 2004, Т. I. p.628.

fuel, which threatened to stop the execution of military orders¹⁹. At the same time, in circulars of the Council of the Congress of Mining Industry South of Russia in July 1916, it was pointed out significant delays in the execution of orders for mining enterprises by steel mills for the supply of metal products. It was stressed that the practice of conducting orders through production meetings did not justify itself, because they did not have “sufficient authority” to achieve the fulfillment by the metallurgical plants of their own orders. In addition, metallurgists primarily performed orders not production meetings, but authoritative organizations such as the Congress of Mining Industry South of Russia²⁰. Incidentally, this fact has become one of the reasons for the mining industry in southern Russia for the creation of a single governing body, which would concentrate in its hands all the affairs in the mining and metallurgical industry in order to prevent the economic decline of these industries²¹.

In April-May 1916 special meetings were convened in Kharkiv and Ekaterinoslav in order to increase the production capacity of metallurgical plants. Taking into account the significant reduction of stocks of raw materials of these enterprises, which was observed during 1915, as well as the lack of their provision with certain materials, the conclusions of the meeting concluded that the need for the urgent provision of metallurgical enterprises by the necessary specialists (workers, technicians and professional servants) was made, and also about restriction of requisites of vehicles servicing the metallurgical industry. Equally important was the provision of workers in the metallurgical industry with food, due to the lack of which “*the preconditions for successful enemy agitation*” were created among the workers. To counter this, it was proposed to oblige the Ministry of Agriculture to provide workers with products on the terms under which it supplied food to the army. It was also pointed out the necessity of using metallurgical enterprises (as energy sources) of anthracite and coal of the Lisichansk region. It was emphasized on the need to meet the needs of the fleet in metal products to accelerate the commissioning and ongoing repair of ships. For the needs of metallurgical plants, it was planned to allocate a fleet of cars in the amount of 42 thousand units and 1,000 freight trains. In this regard, it was noted that the reduction of rolling stock to 32

¹⁸ Погребинский А. Мобилизация промышленности царской России в первую мировую войну 1914–1917 годов, *Вопросы истории*, 1948, № 8, август, р.63.

¹⁹ Турченко Г. Ф., Соціально-економічні процеси в південноукраїнському регіоні, *Велика війна 1914–1918 рр. і Україна*, у 2 кн. Кн. 1, Історичні нариси, “ТОВ Видавництво “КЛЮ””, Київ, 2014, р.425.

²⁰ ЦДІАК України, ф. 2161, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 6.

²¹ ЦДІАК України, ф. 2161, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 11–13 зв.

thousand cars will not ensure the shipment of fuel from the Donetsk coal basin for the needs of metallurgical enterprises²².

Proposals of special meetings of Kharkiv and Ekaterinoslav to improve the work of metallurgical plants were made on June 10, 1916, for discussion by the Council of Ministers. The result of the discussion was the decision to return qualified specialists from the military service to enterprises, to terminate the recruitment of certain categories of workers, technicians and employees, and an increase in the number of prisoners of war who had to work at metallurgical enterprises. In addition, urgent measures were taken to remove from the fields of all stocks of extracted ore, which should be used to ensure the smooth operation of metallurgists.

In 1916, the owners of metallurgical enterprises violated the issue of the execution of contractual orders to the government, the agreements on which were signed before the beginning of hostilities. The problem was due to the fact that, in wartime, the activities of almost all the plants were regulated by the government in order to secure military needs. Therefore, the execution of preliminary orders either significantly slowed down or was completely suspended. Thus, on June 12, 1916, this problem was discussed at a meeting of the Committee on Metallurgical Industries, which resulted in the submission to the Special Defense Meeting of a proposal that all private orders made by industry prior to the beginning of the war were recognized as such that lost their validity if their execution was not possible due to the requisition. The special meeting on defense proposed to pass the decision of this issue to the discussion of the Interagency meeting at the Ministry of Trade and Industry²³.

The growth in the demand for products of the steel industry in the wake of the war accompanied by inflationary processes has led to an increase in prices for them. In this regard, on August 3, 1916, the Special Defense Meeting drew the attention of the Minister of Finance to the need to establish “*legislative norms aimed at obtaining excessive profit by entrepreneurs and commissioners for orders for state defense*”. And on August 9, 1916, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution “*On the criminal liability of traders and industrialists for increasing or decreasing*

²² “По вопросу об увеличении производительности металлургических заводов Юга России, (Письмо Министра Путей Сообщения от 18 июня 1916 г., за № 7348) (По журналу дел, разрешаемых собственной властью Совета Министров), 24 июня 1916 г.”, *Особые журналы Совета министров Российской империи. 1916 год*, РОССПЭН, 2008, Москва, pp.302–307.

²³ Российский государственный архив экономики (РГАЭ), ф. 2305, оп. 1, д. 10, л. 94–95.

prices for foodstuffs or basic necessities”, according to which the dumping or increase of prices by entrepreneurs in the previous collusion in order to obtain additional profits or redistribution of profits between the participants of economic activity provided for imprisonment for a term of eight months to one year and four months. And in the case that such actions caused the violation of “public rest”, imprisonment could also be accompanied by a fine of up to 10 thousand rubles²⁴.

In 1916 the work of enterprises of the metallurgical industry of the East and South of Ukraine was affected by the spread of the strike movement. April 27, 1916, chairman of the Council of Congresses of Mining Industry South of Russia M. von Dietmar, invited to the meeting of the Special Defense Meeting, reported on a strike at the largest in the Yekaterynoslavsky district of the Dneprovsky Metallurgical Plant. Riots and strikes arose as a result of agitation that used economic motives and offered to demand treasury sequestration of the plant. And on April 28, 1916, a special defense conference was sent to the Ministry of the Interior to alert the distribution of agitation for strikes to ensure the sequestration of enterprises. Military Minister Assistant M. Garin (former Director of the Police Department) wrote in a letter to Comrade Interior Minister O. Stepanov that, in favor of the sequestration of enterprises, the workers expected from the state administration to provide higher wages and reduce the workload. Such a phenomenon was seen as an extraordinary threat to the strengthening of “state defense”²⁵. It is important to point out that at the Dneprovsky plant, such strike lasted for three weeks because of the workers' conviction that a strike of such duration could be guaranteed to ensure sequestration of the enterprise. At the same time, employees of the Metallurgical Plant of the Nikopol-Mariupol Society were of the opinion that enough ten days of the strike – and the plant “*will be seized, and all the profits will be received by the treasury, not shareholders and administrators, who in 1915 received large dividends and awards, and only the situation the workers remained almost unchanged*”²⁶.

Regarding the causes movement of workers steel industry by the imposition of sequestration on their enterprise Russian officials were determined by two factors. First, the important role in shaping the workers' attitudes was to have newspapers,

²⁴ “Об уголовной ответственности торговцев и промышленников за возвышение или понижение цен на предметы продовольствия или необходимой потребности, 9 августа 1916 г.”, *Особые журналы Совета министров Российской империи. 1916 год*, РОССПЭН, Москва, 2008, pp.377–379.

²⁵ Поликарпов В. В., *От Цусимы к Февралю. Царизм и военная промышленность в начале XX века*, “ИНДРИК”, Москва, 2008, pp.478–479.

²⁶ Кирьянов Ю. И., *Рабочие Юга России. 1914 – февраль 1917 г.*, Наука, Москва, 1971, p.257.

which “unilaterally highlighted” the receipt of profits by industrialists. The “unilateral” coverage was that journalists were silencing the fact that large profits created an appropriate “basis for taxation”, which contributed to the formation of financial support for the continuation of the war. Another cause of revival in the working environment was the creation of industrial enterprises, where wages of workers grew relatively quickly. At the same time, among the government officials, the idea was that if the government can not resist speculation, then it will not be possible to calm the workers of the enterprises. But officials were somewhat reassured by the fact that the workers treated with high confidence in the representatives of military institutions involved in the elimination of strikes. Thus, factory meetings were used with confidence, which employees often applied in the case of conflicts with employers. Often such appeals took place in a collective form in the form of a business trip of representatives of workers' groups. In many cases, the workers themselves sought to resolve disputes with the owners of enterprises with the participation of representatives of military departments in order to avoid strikes. Sometimes the mediators were representatives of the Special Meetings.

In November-December 1916 at the XLI Congress of Mining Industry South of Russia pointed to the need to purchase abroad at least 7 million pounds of black metal per month. The deficiency of metal was 50% of national production²⁷. Such situation was associated with a significant increase in the cost of production of metallurgical enterprises in the East and South of Ukraine. Thus, at the end of 1916, the managers of the Dneprovsky metallurgical plant indicated that the cost of cast iron had almost doubled, the rails – three times, iron ore – almost three times²⁸. In fact, already at the end of 1916 – early 1917, the purchase of imported metal seemed more expedient than the cost of its production.

Thus, among the factors that significantly influenced the metallurgical industry during 1914–1917, one can distinguish a sharp increase in demand for metallurgical products, a relatively low level of development of the transport infrastructure of the Russian Empire, a deterioration in the personnel supply of industrial enterprises, largely due to the large-scale mobilization and migration of the part highly skilled specialists, inefficiency of the system of state management of industry in the conditions of a protracted global military conflict along with vlenyamy its course, which did not meet the realities of time, and depending on the

²⁷ Турченко Г. Ф., Соціально-економічні процеси в південноукраїнському регіоні, *Велика війна 1914–1918 рр. і Україна*, у 2 кн. Кн. 1, Історичні нариси, “ТОВ Видавництво “КЛЮ””, Київ, 2014, р.425.

²⁸ ЦДІАК України, ф. 2161, оп. 1, спр. 42, арк. 24 зв.

supply of certain raw materials and equipment from outside the country. Increasing the level of etazation during the war did not guaranteed the industry from reducing production volumes.

Supply disruptions of raw materials and insufficient amount of fuel and lubricants caused the stop of the vast majority of metallurgical enterprises in Ukraine. Some of them stopped working already in 1914–1915. An even greater decline in production was observed at the end of 1916 – early 1917, when the instability of the political and economic situation had a very negative effect on the development of metallurgical enterprises in the East and South of Ukraine. In fact, during the entire First World War, a “metal famine” was observed on the territory of the Russian Empire, which was the result of unbalanced economic policy in the development of the metallurgical industry in the country.