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## **‘More Civilized and Regular’: An Outside View of Labor Conditions in the Kingdom of Poland in the Late 19th Century**

**Annotation:** Both in life and in history, the view from outside is important, because it promises to notice the imperceptible, distill the essential, and evaluate with thoroughness and detachment. The economic progress of the Kingdom of Poland in the later part of the 19th century stimulated a lively interest in the ‘Polish question’ and the emergence of an extensive body of sources that provide such an ‘outside view’ of the Polish developments. Professors and officials, journalists and public figures came to Poland to study the success of Polish industry. Most of them noted the working conditions of the proletariat, which were tellingly characterized as ‘more civilized and regular’. The description of labor conditions in these sources is informative, representative, and reliable, because it was based on first-hand, personal observation. Each of these visitors from the imperial center (researchers, officials, and inspectors) started out with a preconceived critical attitude, which makes their unanimous conclusion that worker culture stood at a much higher level in the Kingdom of Poland than in the core provinces of the Russian Empire all the more valuable.

**Keywords:** labor conditions, labor, Kingdom of Poland, Professor Ivan Yanzhul.

### **„Bardziej cywilizowane i uporządkowane”: spojrzenie z zewnątrz na warunki pracy w Królestwie Polskim pod koniec XIX wieku**

**Streszczenie:** W naukach historycznych ważne jest spojrzenie z zewnątrz, ponieważ dostrzega to, co niedostrzegalne, wyróżnia to, co najważniejsze, ocenia z wnikliwością i dystansem. Pomyślny rozwój gospodarczy Królestwa Polskiego pod koniec XIX wieku spowodowało żywe zainteresowanie „kwestią polską” i pojawienie się szeregu źródeł (ekonomicznych, statystycznych i historycznych), które dostarczają tego „zewnątrznego spojrzenia” na procesy polskie. Profesorowie i urzędnicy, dziennikarze i osoby publiczne – wszyscy podjęli badania nad tajemnicą sukcesu polskiego przemysłu. Większość z nich

przykuła uwagę warunkami pracy robotników, którym nadano przysłowiową definicję „bardziej cywilizowanych i normalnych”. Opis warunków pracy w tych źródłach ma dużą wartość informacyjną, reprezentatywność i rzetelność, gdyż sporządzono go na podstawie osobistych obserwacji autorów podczas podróży służbowych do Królestwa Polskiego. Każdy z metropolitalnych badaczy (obserwatorzy, urzędnicy, inspektorzy) z wyprzedzeniem krytycznie odnosił się do spraw Polski, a ich jednomyślny wniosek o znacznie wyższym poziomie kultury robotniczej w przedsiębiorstwach przemysłowych Królestwa Polskiego niż w obszarze metropolitalnym jest tym cenniejsze.

**Słowa kluczowe:** warunki pracy, praca, Królestwo Polskie, prof. Iwan Janżul.

### Introduction

In the governmental and even academic circles of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century, the dominant view was that all of ‘their provinces’ owed their economic development to the wise policies of the imperial center, which was the sole agent of change that brought these territories out of the darkness of economic backwardness and onto the path of progress. This general view fully applied to the Kingdom of Poland. As one example, the well-known economist, professor of Moscow University Ivan Yanzhul in his studies made numerous eloquent statements about the ‘beneficial influence’ of Russia on the development of the empire’s Polish lands. Thus, “the industry of the Kingdom of Poland is a *child of the government’s tutelage and of the Russian state’s continued care, watered and fed to a large extent on Russian bread and at the expense of Russian consumers* [italics by Yanzhul]”<sup>1</sup>. In another, no less impressive pronouncement, the professor spoke of “Poland’s multimillion debt to the Russian Empire for the creation and century-long support of its industry”<sup>2</sup>. According to Yanzhul, all the ‘benefits’ enjoyed by Polish industry arose exclusively “thanks to the union with Russia”, and “noble Russia imposed on itself a huge burden fifteen times greater than on the annexed country”<sup>3</sup>.

In unison with his Moscow colleague, the Warsaw University professor Grigory Simonenko stressed the great progress of Polish industry in the second half of the 19th century (because, in his words, “the truth of this fact is before everyone’s eyes”<sup>4</sup>), but argued that the main reason for Poland’s dynamic industrial development was sound imperial policy. His statistical studies concluded that the foundations of Poland’s well-being, “which will ensure the success of civilization in this country for a long time”, had been laid by the Russian government<sup>5</sup>. Here, science was put at the service of the contemporary political debate on the question which part of Poland, Russian or Austrian, was developing more effectively. Simonenko’s entire book was structured as a counterargument to the conclusions of the Polish academic Witold Załęski<sup>6</sup> and was

<sup>1</sup> Воспоминания И. И. Янжула о пережитом и виденном в 1864–1909 гг., вып. 2, Санкт-Петербург 1911, с. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., с. 110, 111.

<sup>4</sup> Г. Симоненко, Сравнительная статистика Царства Польского и других европейских стран, Варшава 1879, с. 329.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., с. 308.

<sup>6</sup> W. Załęski, Statystyka porównawcza Królestwa Polskiego. Ludność i stosunki ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1876.

intended to portray the Russian government as a better manager and reformer of Polish lands than the government of Austria-Hungary.

Administrators both in Russia and in the Kingdom of Poland promoted the official imperial stance regarding “the moving-closer or merging of non-Russians with the ‘titular’ nation”<sup>7</sup>. The formula for such a convergence on an economic basis was voiced by the Warsaw chief of police M. M. Buturlin (1880): “The power of the Russian ruble lies in the sphere of shared commercial and industrial relations; the pursuit of material interest can establish strong grounds for reconciling age-old contentions”<sup>8</sup>.

The elimination of customs between Russia and the Kingdom of Poland (1851), abolition of serfdom (1864), active railway construction in the 1860s to 1880s, and customs protectionism of the 1870s to 1890s – these were the fundamental changes that, in the view of the supporters of imperial policy, laid the groundwork for the development of Polish industry. For some reason, the talents of the imperial managers waned and virtually melted away completely when it came to the economic development of the territories of central Russia. *The Index of Factories and Works* gave the first place in the entire empire in terms of output to Karol Scheibler’s textile factory in Łódź, Poland, with annual production worth more than 15 million rubles (data for 1884)<sup>9</sup>. This ‘imperial periphery’ was ahead of the core lands not only in industrial output, but also in wages and labor conditions. But it is unlikely that the latter metric unduly troubled the rulers of the Russian Empire, who never assigned much value to human life and comfort.

Despite all the imperial bravado, during the 1870s and 1880s the economic success of the Kingdom of Poland captivated the attention of the Russian elite. Industrialists in the imperial capitals fretted about the ‘harmful competition of Polish goods’, and government circles were seriously worried about the growth of foreign land ownership in the borderlands. The phrase ‘the Polish question’ acquired more and more economic significance in the writings of well-known Russian professors and amateur researchers, and was the subject of lively discussions at meetings of scientific societies and in newspaper columns. These discussions also featured the image of ‘the Polish worker’, who in terms of education, qualification, and self-organization was miles ahead of his Russian counterpart.

In 1879, two fundamental statistical works on the production capacities of the Kingdom of Poland were published nearly simultaneously – one by Józef Poznanski, a member of the Russian Geographical Society and the Free Economic Society, and another by Grigory Simonenko of Warsaw University<sup>10</sup>. Both books presented data

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<sup>7</sup> Е. Кэмпбелл, «Единая и неделимая Россия» и «иностранческий вопрос» в имперской идеологии самодержавия, [в:] *Пространство власти: исторический опыт России и вызовы современности* / под ред. Б. В. Ананьича, С. И. Барзилова, Москва 2001, с. 214.

<sup>8</sup> В. Крихунов, *Таможенная политика России и ее экономическая эффективность*, Москва 1999; Н. Воробьева, *К вопросу о правительственной политике в Царстве Польском в 80–90-х гг. XIX в.: «Стрелять, патронов не жалеть?»*, «Архіви України: науково-практичний журнал» 2012, вип. 5 (281): вересень–жовтень, с. 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Указатель фабрик и заводов Европейской России и Царства Польского* / сост. П. А. Орлов, Санкт-Петербург 1887, с. 8.

<sup>10</sup> И. Познанский, *Производительные силы Царства Польского: сравнительная статистика промышленного, торгового и финансового положения Польши за 1874, 1875 и 1876 гг.*, Санкт-Петербург 1879; Г. Симоненко, *Сравнительная статистика Царства Польского и других европейских стран*, Варшава 1879.

on, among other subjects, the size of the workforce, its national makeup, and welfare measures at industrial enterprises. Dry statistical information could do little to calm the tensions, and Moscow manufacturers sent the well-known pundit Sergei Sharapov on a paid research trip to the Kingdom of Poland. Sharapov brought back and published sensational evidence exposing unfair industrial competition and artificial inducements to the development of Polish industry<sup>11</sup>. Among the advantages enjoyed by Polish industrialists, this hack job pamphlet named the “more qualified and permanent cadre of workers”<sup>12</sup>.

In 1886, the Ministry of Finance also sent to the Kingdom of Poland a special ‘commission for the study of borderland factories’ headed by the factory inspector for the Moscow district, professor of Moscow University Ivan Yanzhul. The commission’s reports were published in several parts<sup>13</sup>. Some materials were collected on the labor question among others, and Yanzhul, on the basis of this data, bluntly advised the Moscow manufacturers to worry less about the “artificial growth of Polish industry” and more about the “mental and moral development of your working class”<sup>14</sup>.

The last decades of the 19th century witnessed several such ‘special commissions’ and forums tackling the issue of the ‘unheard-of development of Polish industry’ and competition from Polish goods<sup>15</sup>. Professor Yanzhul, for his part, published a number of works based on the materials gathered during his visit to the Kingdom of Poland and wrote a special comparative article on labor conditions in central Russia and the Kingdom of Poland, which appeared in “*Vestnik Evropy*” (Herald of Europe) in 1888<sup>16</sup>. At the turn of the century, Grigory Tigranov, an official at the Department of Mining, published a thorough study of *Workers’ Mutual Aid Funds at Private Mining Enterprises in the Kingdom of Poland* (1900), also based on information collected during a visit to Poland. He summarized the history of this form of social security in Poland, analyzed the factors shaping its development, and discussed in detail case studies of the work of mutual aid funds at various Polish enterprises<sup>17</sup>.

All these published sources offered a wealth of data, but each side of the economic debate saw in them what it wanted to see. As one example, Minister of Finance Vyshnegradski deemed the works of Yanzhul ‘too socialist’ precisely for their attention

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<sup>11</sup> С. Шарапов, *Доклад Московскому отделению Общества для содействия русской промышленности и торговли секретаря Отделения С. Ф. Шарапова о поездке по поручению Отделения в губернии Царства Польского*: [manuscript], Москва 1885.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Отчеты членов комиссии по исследованию фабрично-заводской промышленности в Царстве Польском*, ч. I. Отчет проф. И. И. Янжула, ч. II. Отчет Н. П. Ильина и Н. П. Лангового, Санкт-Петербург 1888.

<sup>14</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний и переписки фабричного инспектора первого призыва. Материалы для истории русского рабочего вопроса и фабричного законодательства*, Санкт-Петербург 1907, с. 161.

<sup>15</sup> K. Kowalski, *Wojna Moskwy z Łodzią, «Ludzie i pieniądze: 1794–1914»*, № 4, Warszawa 2020, s. 77–80.

<sup>16</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий в средней России и Царстве Польском: по личным наблюдениям и исследованиям*, «Вестник Европы» 1888, т. 1. [кн. 1/2, январь/февраль], с. 785–811.

<sup>17</sup> Г. Тигранов, *Кассы взаимопомощи рабочих частных горных заводов и промыслов в Царстве Польском: очерк организации и деятельности этих касс с их основания до настоящего времени: (из отчета по командировке)*, Санкт-Петербург 1900.

to the labor question; they were not used in subsequent government deliberations<sup>18</sup>. Still, this body of 'Russian-viewpoint' sources by Russian professors, Russian officials, and Russian journalists enables us to look at labor conditions in the industries of the Kingdom of Poland as if 'from outside' and highlights the much higher level of social security and industrial culture in Poland compared to the imperial core.

### Social and Economic Situation in the Kingdom of Poland

Incorporation into the Russian Empire did not greatly change the face of Poland; according to modern researchers, it "was not an integral part of Russia with its serfdom and the absence of even a hint of restrictions on autocracy"<sup>19</sup>. Geographical situation, the distinctive historical trajectory of Polish statehood, and the resulting cultural, legal, and other peculiarities all left their mark on the entire industrial constitution of the Polish lands in the 19th century, significantly different from that of central Russia. According to the St. Petersburg researcher Ekaterina Pravilova, the shape of the fiscal and legal system and social relations in the Kingdom of Poland retained its uniqueness until the beginning of the 20th century<sup>20</sup>.

Many factories in inner Russia were older than those in the Polish lands and were powered by wood. This determined their location: they were established not in cities with available labor, but in places with cheap fuel (firewood or peat). Accordingly, most enterprises were located far from railways and settlements, and workers were sought far and wide across the country; housing had to be built for them, which often occupied no less space than the production floors. Such housing was of extremely low quality, mostly of the barracks type (in workers' jargon, it was known as *svalni*, from the verb 'to dump')<sup>21</sup>. Of course, there was no question of family life, and the moral and ethical standard of living was low. Such living conditions were considered by the workers as temporary, and industrial labor was ever-shifting and seasonal.

Polish industry developed in a completely different way. Already in the first half of the 19th century, scholars note significant changes in the economic life of the Kingdom of Poland. The researcher L. Arutiunian of the Russian University of Economics makes the following comparison: "Industry in the Kingdom of Poland flourished; urbanization, consolidation of the financial system, and road construction proceeded at a brisk pace. Meanwhile, the Smolensk Governorate, among others, lay in ruins until the end of the reign of Alexander I, while Moscow was finally rebuilt only in the 1830s"<sup>22</sup>. The industry of the Kingdom of Poland was based mainly on hard coal, and the active phase of its development fell on the period of the railway boom of the 1860s to 1880s<sup>23</sup>. Hence, most

<sup>18</sup> *Воспоминания И. И. Янжула...*, с. 118.

<sup>19</sup> Ю. Трибицов, *Прогресс техники и науки в Царстве Польском (1815-1831)*, «История науки и техники в системе современных знаний: материалы научной конференции, посвященной 10-летию кафедры истории науки и техники УГТУ-УПИ», Екатеринбург 2009, с. 238.

<sup>20</sup> Е. Правилова, *Финансы империи: Деньги и власть в политике России на национальных окраинах, 1801-1917*, Москва 2006, с. 177.

<sup>21</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии: отчет за 1882-1883 г. фабричного инспектора над занятиями малолетних рабочих Московского округа*, Санкт-Петербург 1884, с. 117-122.

<sup>22</sup> Л. Арутюнян, *Александр I и Польша: неудачи реформирования в первой трети XIX века*, «Культура народов Причерноморья» 2013, № 260 (104), с. 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> М. Тымовский, Я. Кеневич, Е. Хольцер, *История Польши*, Москва 2004, с. 358.

Polish enterprises were located near railways for the convenience of coal delivery or in towns, which had railway connections and could provide large numbers of permanent workers, reducing or completely eliminating the need to build factory housing. The Polish workers' much higher wages enabled them to manage their living situation on their own, and renting accommodation in busy towns was not a problem. Oftentimes, Polish workers had homes of their own but no land, which contributed to the ready availability of labor for hire.

The difference between the core Russian lands and the Kingdom of Poland was also evident in the sphere of law and regulation. In the observation of S. Sharapov, taxes and industrial levies in Poland were significantly lower than in central Russia, which, together with a lower cost of fuel and construction materials and foreign loans at favorable interest rates, created significant advantages for Polish industry<sup>24</sup>.

The normative provisions that regulated employment differed significantly between the Kingdom of Poland and the core provinces of the empire. Hiring practices in the Russian lands were characterized by precariousness; contracts were made for a variety of terms, as a rule 'for the duration of the valid passport'<sup>25</sup>. A worker could be fired at any time regardless of the term of contract for violation of labor discipline or non-fulfillment of duties<sup>26</sup>. According to the norms of the Statute on Industry (Article 95), workers were to be given two weeks' notice<sup>27</sup>, but no one followed this provision in practice.

The frequency of wage payments at Russian enterprises was not regulated by law at all. Theoretically, it was to be determined by the agreement of the parties, but in practice wages were paid at the discretion of the proprietor (often only once or several times a year)<sup>28</sup>. It was only on 3 June 1886 that a special law established clear terms for the hiring of laborers and frequency of payments in the Russian Empire (monthly under a fixed-term contract and biweekly under an indefinite contract). Unfortunately, these norms were rarely, if ever, observed. In his overview *Factory Life in the Moscow Governorate*, Professor Yanzhul, as a factory inspector for the Moscow district, describes a kind of workers' 'wage holiday calendar': if an enterprise paid wages once a year, it was done on Easter; if twice a year – on Easter and Christmas; if three times a year – on St. Peter's Day, Christmas, and Holy Week; if four – on the feast days of Our Lady of Kazan and the Intercession of the Theotokos, Christmas, and Easter<sup>29</sup>.

Industrial relations were organized very differently in the Kingdom of Poland. Workers were usually employed without an end term, and each party was required to give two weeks' notice, which was a normal practice. This helped protect the interests of both parties to the contract. The payment of wages in the Vistula lands of the empire

<sup>24</sup> С. Шарапов, *Доклад Московскому отделению...*, с. 4–6.

<sup>25</sup> *Воспоминания И. И. Янжула...*, с. 114.

<sup>26</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии...*, с. 76–77.

<sup>27</sup> *Устав промышленности (фабричной, заводской и ремесленной и устав пробирный)* (Т. 11, ч. 2, изд. 1893 г.): с узаконениями, обнародованными по 1 июля 1899 г., законодательными мотивами, решениями Правительствующего Сената и циркулярами Минист. внутренних дел и финансов / сост. М. Шрамченко, Санкт-Петербург 1899, с. 19.

<sup>28</sup> *Воспоминания И. И. Янжула...*, с. 114–115.

<sup>29</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии...*, с. 91.

was also traditionally regular – weekly or biweekly<sup>30</sup>. Cases when laborers went without pay for months or even a year at a time, which often happened in central Russia, were completely unheard of in Poland.

### Pay and labor conditions at industrial enterprises

The wages of Polish workers had to be higher due to the generally more expensive living conditions in Poland and lack of employee housing at most enterprises. A male worker earned a third more in Poland than in central Russia. The wages of women and minors also differed substantially – they were on average 73.9 and 60 percent higher in the Polish lands than in similar industries in Russia<sup>31</sup>. The wages of women and minors in Poland were determined primarily by the type of work performed, which in its turn depended on sex and age, while in central Russia they were directly tied to the wages of adult men – a woman or minor earned a quarter to half of a man’s salary<sup>32</sup>. Overall, the remuneration of the Polish workers was much higher, because the difference in earnings more than covered the difference in food and housing costs.

Labor conditions were also better in Poland, the work itself was “less intense and less harmful to health”, and “the attitude towards the proprietor was more regular and better” than at Russian enterprises<sup>33</sup>. This sharply contrasted with the often inhumane working conditions in Russian factories – stifling air, uncomfortable temperatures (either very high or, during the cold season, very low), endemic drafts, harmful fumes and dust, poor lighting and unsanitary conditions, lack of labor safety, and more<sup>34</sup>. In central Russia, industrial work was more exhausting also due to the habitual practice of night shifts. Meanwhile, in the Kingdom of Poland night work was more or less non-existent<sup>35</sup>, with the exception of the industries where the technological cycle required it (paper and glass production, metal-working).

The workday in Polish factories during the 1880s was 10 to 12 hours, while in Moscow it was 12 to 14 hours. Overall, a Polish laborer worked 292 days a year, while Russian – 285 days; however, the former still worked fewer hours per year<sup>36</sup>.

The system of fines in Russian factories was a work of art – fines were extremely frequent and imposed even for the slightest infractions, and they made up a significant share of the manufacturers’ profits. At many industrial establishments, the punishable offences and fine amounts were not specified in advance at all. The factory inspector for the Vladimir district P. Peskov stated that “it is difficult to even imagine a weaver who would be able to fulfill all the requirements and not be fined” (1883)<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний...*, с. 157.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 156.

<sup>32</sup> Л. Либерман, *В стране черного золота*, Москва; Ленинград 1927, с. 40; Н. Хрущев, *Воспоминания. Время. Люди. Власть. (Воспоминания)*, в 4 кн., кн. 1, Москва 1999.

<sup>33</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 807–808.

<sup>34</sup> П. Рыс, *Углекоты*, «Вестник фабричного законодательства и профессиональной гигиены», Санкт-Петербург 1905, № 3 (март), с. 141–142.

<sup>35</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 797.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 796.

<sup>37</sup> П. Песков, *Фабричный быт Владимирской губернии. Отчет за 1882–1883 г. фабричного инспектора над занятиями малолетних рабочих Владимирского округа П. А. Пескова*, Санкт-Петербург 1884, с. 68–69.

Fines in the Kingdom of Poland were moderate and went not to the proprietor's pocket, but towards the social needs of the workers (sick funds, pension funds, and the like)<sup>38</sup>. Such responsible use of fine revenues created an atmosphere of mutual trust between proprietors and employees and a perception that monetary penalties were reasonable and just.

Polish workers were better educated and qualified than Russian ones. This was due, first, to the large number of German workers in Poland and, second, to the higher general literacy rates there. In Russia, even in the best factories, no more than 31 percent of workers were literate, while in Poland the average figure reached 45 percent, and in Sosnowiec and Warsaw – 55 to 56 percent<sup>39</sup>. Yanzhul was greatly surprised when, at a needle factory in Częstochowa, he met “four workers – simple metal workers, who nevertheless have completed the course of a classical gymnasium”. The professor's conclusion was that “the factory class there is generally more literate and more advanced than with us”<sup>40</sup>. Yanzhul was no less surprised by the fact that among the proprietors and clerks in Polish factories, the share of persons with higher education was 8 to 10 percent, and with secondary education – 42 percent, while for central Russia these figures were 1 and 10 percent respectively<sup>41</sup>.

Historically, many laborers of German origin worked in Poland. Most managers at Polish enterprises were also German, and they introduced a similar well-regulated industrial culture in the Polish lands. In the words of Yanzhul, “German beneficial influence has left its stamp marked on the entire Polish industry and factory life”<sup>42</sup>, while modern researchers describe this phenomenon as “orientation towards the experience and people from the West”<sup>43</sup>. Sergei Sharapov, in his turn, also stressed that foreign, mainly German, industry was for Poland “a powerful driving force, which Russian industry is completely devoid of”<sup>44</sup>. In the minds of German industrialists, if labor conditions in Poland were to be compared with anything at all, it was not with those in Russia, but with the situation in Silesia, Westphalia, or Bohemia, where the level of industrial culture was much higher.

While in the factories of central Russia foreigners were represented only among the proprietors and clerks, and sometimes among the foremen, in Poland the total share of foreign workers across the land was 8.5 percent, and among the proprietors and clerks – more than 50 percent<sup>45</sup>. During the 1820s, the government of the Kingdom of Poland encouraged the immigration of skilled German weavers to give a boost to this industry<sup>46</sup>. Over time, these immigrants formed the basis of a hereditary cadre of workers.

<sup>38</sup> Г. Тигранов, *Кассы взаимопомощи...*, с. 9.

<sup>39</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний...*, с. 157.

<sup>40</sup> *Воспоминания И. И. Янжула...*, с. 116.

<sup>41</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 794–795.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 799.

<sup>43</sup> Ю. Трибицов, *Прогресс техники и науки в Царстве Польском (1815–1831)*, «История науки и техники в системе современных знаний: материалы научной конференции, посвященной 10-летию кафедры истории науки и техники УГТУ–УПИ», Екатеринбург 2009, с. 241.

<sup>44</sup> С. Шарапов, *Доклад Московскому отделению...*, с. 7.

<sup>45</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 794.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 792.



In order to reduce all these different aspects of labor conditions in the Kingdom of Poland and central Russia to a single common denominator, an attempt was made to calculate a kind of labor intensity quotient based on the cost of workers' wages per *pozd* of finished fabric. In the Polish lands, the resulting figure was 0.66 to 1.2 rubles, and in Russian – 0.8 to 1.5 rubles; that is, labor intensity was higher in Poland<sup>47</sup>. It is indicative that in Russian factories the wage outlays were higher, but the real wage of a worker was lower than in Poland. Thus, the level of labor intensity and organization of production in central Russia was lower than in 'peripheral' Poland. Poland had a more stable and better educated and trained workforce with access to adequate housing and nutrition, giving Polish industry an advantage over its counterpart in the core provinces of Russia, which had to rely on the chaos of seasonal labor.

The fact of the rapid development of Polish industry in the second half of the 19th century remained indisputable. Over the period from 1879 to 1883, industrial production across the empire as a whole grew, depending on the branch, between 92 and 239 percent, while in the Kingdom of Poland – between 100 and 1,000 percent and more<sup>48</sup>. According to the calculations of Witold Załęski, while in 1857 the volume of industrial production in the Kingdom of Poland could be estimated at about 53 million rubles, in 1873 it was already more than 106 million rubles<sup>49</sup>. In the words of a modern Russian researcher, "the result was the transformation of Poland into one of the most industrially developed regions of the Russian Empire; in 1914, the value of all industrial production in Poland reached 1,200 million rubles"<sup>50</sup>.

### Workers' social security

Since the first decades of the 19th century, legislative norms in the lands of the Kingdom of Poland provided for a wider responsibility of proprietors before employees in cases of disability or death from accidents at work, and an injured worker or his family could sue for compensation in a court of law<sup>51</sup>. Consequently, local industrialists often took the initiative in implementing social security measures at their enterprises in order to reduce the number of lawsuits and worker dissatisfaction.

Another reason for the comparatively substantial social package available to the Polish laboring classes was the large number of foreigners there – both among the owners of enterprises and among the workers. Foreign entrepreneurs brought with them social institutions traditional for their countries, which, moreover, were well known to their foreign workers. Thus, the owners of the Bankowa works in the Dąbrowa Basin established an aid fund following a French model; the owners of the Katarzyna

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<sup>47</sup> Воспоминания И. И. Янжула..., с. 115–116.

<sup>48</sup> Д. Тимирязев, *Статистический атлас главнейших отраслей фабрично-заводской промышленности Европейской России с поименным списком фабрик и заводов [Карты]*, Вып. 1: Промышленность обрабатывающая волокнистые вещества, Санкт-Петербург 1869, с. 37–44.

<sup>49</sup> W. Załęski, *Statystyka porównawcza Królestwa Polskiego. Ludność i stosunki ekonomiczne*, Warszawa 1876, с. 143.

<sup>50</sup> В. Золотарева, *Индустриальное развитие российских регионов во второй половине XIX – начале XX в.*, «Федерализм» 2016, № 4, с. 175–184.

<sup>51</sup> А. Штоф, *Сравнительный очерк горного законодательства в России и Западной Европе. Главные основания горного и соляного законодательств*, ч. 1, Санкт-Петербург 1882, с. 175; И. Познанский, *Производительные силы Царства Польского...*, с. 49.

ironworks in the Piotrków Governorate patterned their social security provisions on a statute approved by the Prussian government for Silesian factories<sup>52</sup>.

It is thus no surprise that, for instance, factory medical care in the Kingdom of Poland differed significantly from the Russian system. Unlike in most areas of the empire, there were no factory clinics here at all, and medical costs were borne by the workers themselves. The issue of health care was dealt with via the so-called *Krankenkassen* – sick funds modeled after the German *Knappschaftskassen*, Austrian *Bruderladen*, and French *caisses de secours*, which in their turn had their roots in the practices of the medieval guilds<sup>53</sup>. Such funds were financed with contributions from the workers and the proprietor (1 to 3 percent of wages and profits); they not only covered medical costs, but also provided sick pay. Persons injured at work, or their families in the event of the breadwinner's death, could also receive pensions<sup>54</sup>. In this way, the factory worker in Poland had, through local self-organization, access to better medical care and, in a way, to disability and death insurance.

Russian factory clinics, on the other hand, according to a contemporary observation, “actually existed to circumvent the law and did not provide any real medical care to the factory population”<sup>55</sup>; according to modern researchers, “most enterprises did not have so much as a shadow of a medical establishment; it was entirely fictitious”<sup>56</sup>. The description of the appearance of an average ‘clinic’ is shocking: a dilapidated shack in the backyard of a factory with one or two beds, often without mattresses, with several glass bottles in a cupboard bearing the proud name of ‘pharmacy’. At best, a sick or crippled worker could only rest there, after which he was sent either to the nearest hospital for treatment or home, fired from his job for a good measure. Factory inspectors encountered cases when a ‘clinic’ did not even have a bed. The surprised officials received a very simple explanation – “it [the bed] is brought in when it is needed”<sup>57</sup>.

Sick funds were only one type of workers’ initiative and employers’ philanthropy widespread in Polish factories and very rare in Russian ones. At most Polish enterprises, consumer societies were organized, which supplied the workers with provisions. According to Yanzhul, in 1888 there were only three such societies in the Moscow Governorate<sup>58</sup>. In the absence of any alternatives, Russian workers in provincial towns or workers’ settlements were forced to ‘buy’ (often on credit) foodstuffs of dubious quality from factory shops at a steep markup. In the words of one contemporary, “the proprietors made too much use of the natural in this case commercial monopoly”<sup>59</sup>. In Poland, factory shops were rare. Since most Polish enterprises were located in cities, the options for grocery shopping were plentiful and this was a personal matter for each

<sup>52</sup> Г. Тигранов, *Кассы взаимопомощи...*, с. 2.

<sup>53</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний...*, с. 158.

<sup>54</sup> Г. Тигранов, *Кассы взаимопомощи...*, с. 4.

<sup>55</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии...*, с. 135.

<sup>56</sup> Е. Смирнова, *Фабричная медицина России в XIX – начале XX века*, «Исторические, философские, политические и юридические науки, культурология и искусствоведение: вопросы теории и практики», Тамбов: Грамота, 2016, № 4 (66): в 2-х ч, ч. 1, с. 166.

<sup>57</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии...*, с. 136.

<sup>58</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 803.

<sup>59</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный быт Московской губернии...*, с. 102.

worker that did not concern the employer in any way<sup>60</sup>. Here is a comparison we find in Yanzhul's work: "For most Russian industrialists, the profit from the factory shop is a component of the total profit from the enterprise, which they hold on to very firmly... Proprietors in Poland do not use profits from the workers' nourishment, and thus do not mix their profits from industrial enterprise with shop profits from their own workers"<sup>61</sup>.

Other institutions for the protection of workers' interests in Poland included savings funds of various types – every fourth factory had one<sup>62</sup>. Mutual aid societies in the Kingdom of Poland arose on the basis of the guild tradition<sup>63</sup>. Some Polish enterprises even had pension funds that supported workers in old age or in cases of disability. Significantly, social security measures of this kind were often initiated by proprietors, who clearly understood the direct connection between the welfare of each worker and success of the entire enterprise. Such funds were financed with contributions from the proprietor and fine deductions from the employees' wages, but the most common practice was the annual deduction of a share of the profits (2 to 5 percent)<sup>64</sup>.

Another social security provision for Polish workers not found in central Russia in the 1880s was insurance against accidents at work. In the Polish lands, this type of insurance was borrowed from the practice of German industry and implemented mainly at enterprises with German shareholders or managers. An employee that suffered a work-related injury received, depending on the severity of the case, from 500 to 1,000 days' earnings<sup>65</sup>. Russian legislation in this area evolved much more slowly than in developed countries, and its implementation lagged behind even more. Significant changes in labor insurance would occur only at the beginning of the 20th century<sup>66</sup>.

Overall, the labor question was dealt with more effectively in the Kingdom of Poland than in the core provinces of the empire. According to the members of the 1886 government commission, relations between workers and proprietors in Poland were 'more regular'<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, a permanent cadre of workers had already emerged in Poland by the last decades of the 19th century, which could not be said for the Moscow and St. Petersburg economic districts, still relying on seasonal labor.

We should stress that labor conditions in the Kingdom of Poland were 'more optimal' and 'more regular' specifically in comparison with those in the economic districts of the two Russian capitals, which goes against the stereotype of the relationship between the 'center' and 'provinces'. The condition of the Polish working class left much to be desired; not all the interests and needs of the workers were addressed. This was confirmed by a series of strikes during the 1860s to 1880s in Polish industrial centers and the rise of worker discontent at the beginning of the 20th century, described in detail in

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<sup>60</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний...*, с. 158.

<sup>61</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 804.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, с. 806.

<sup>63</sup> Р. Мустафин, *Деятельность касс взаимопомощи рабочих и Закон 1903 года о вознаграждении потерпевших от несчастных случаев в Российской империи*, «Гражданское общество в России и за рубежом», Москва 2011, № 4, с. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Г. Тигранов, *Кассы взаимопомощи...*, с. 11, 25, 43.

<sup>65</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 806.

<sup>66</sup> Д. Ермаков, *Социальное страхование в Российской империи*, «Правовая политика и правовая жизнь», 2011, № 2, с. 76–84.

<sup>67</sup> *Отчеты членов комиссии...*, с. 218.

historiography<sup>68</sup>. The recognition in the sources of the second half of the 19th century that Polish workers were better off than their comrades in and around the imperial capitals is important as an attempt by the authors of these documents to overcome their biases and as a confirmation that the Kingdom of Poland was following a path of economic development of its own, rooted in European experience.

### Conclusions

The view from outside is always interesting, claiming as it does balance and objectivity. And if this view comes from persons whose social status and public position encouraged a critical attitude towards Poland, then positive conclusions should hardly be expected. Nevertheless, in our sources we find numerous favorable appraisals of the industrial development of the Kingdom of Poland in the second half of the 19th century, coming even from individuals that should have been prejudiced against the region. Among the various aspects of the success of Polish industry during that era, many Russian officials and researchers were particularly interested in the condition of the workforce, which was often described using such generalizing adjectives as 'mutually advantageous', 'civilized', 'productive', or 'regular'.

The 'outside view' highlighted such advantages enjoyed by the Polish working class as higher pay, higher literacy, social security provisions, healthy initiative in creating institutions of mutual aid, less hours worked per year, and better general working conditions. Professor Yanzhul concluded his comparative reflections with these words:

Overall, we must admit that the composition of the workforce in the Kingdom of Poland is on the whole much better, in terms of education and development, than in central Russia, which cannot, of course, fail to have an effect on the quality of the goods produced there, as well as on the general development of industry<sup>69</sup>.

The thesis that "Moscow industry should *strive above all for the intellectual and moral uplift of its working class* [italics ours – I. Sh.], for better selection of service and labor personnel"<sup>70</sup> dissonated somewhat with the 19th century's headlong pursuit of profit. Ignoring this recommendation would have tragic consequences for the Russian Empire in the subsequent revolutionary events of the first decades of the 20th century and would play a role in the interruption of progressive industrial development and fundamental transformation of the entire socio-economic system.

<sup>68</sup> М. Тымовский, Я. Кеневич, Е. Хольцер, *История Польши*, Москва 2004, с. 359; Н. Воробьева, *К вопросу о правительственной политике в Царстве Польском в 80–90-х гг. XIX в.: «Стрелять, патронов не жалеть?»*, «Архіви України: науково-практичний журнал» 2012, вип. 5 (281): вересень-жовтень, с. 72.

<sup>69</sup> И. Янжул, *Фабричный рабочий...*, с. 795.

<sup>70</sup> И. Янжул, *Из воспоминаний...*, с. 161.

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