

# Labour (Russian Empire)

By [Michael S. Melancon](#)

## Summary

This essay surveys the issue of Russian labor during the First World War. It summarizes existing historiography about the topic and suggests the parameters of statistics and definitions of the working class. It then focuses on the effects of wartime mobilization, the strategies used by the government to replace drafted workers, the issues of salaries and inflation, work hours, and the employment of women, children, prisoners of war, and refugees. It concludes with an overview of evolving wartime working class politics and outlines contrasts between Russia and her opponents.

## Table of contents

[1 The Fateful Issue](#)

[2 Counting Russia's laborers](#)

[3 Wartime Mobilization and Maintaining the Workforce](#)

[4 Conditions of Wartime Labor: Salaries, Inflation, and Hours](#)

[5 Use of Resources: Wartime Tsarism and the early Soviet Government](#)

[6 Conclusion: Labor and Politics](#)

[Notes](#)

[Selected Bibliography](#)

[Citation](#)

## The Fateful Issue

The concept of labor in [Russia](#) during the Great War raises fateful questions. All major conflicts of the modern era place enormous stress on labor. As workers are drafted into the armed forces, women, the young, or anyone else available are expected to contribute their labor to the patriotic cause without complaint, often in substandard conditions with frozen wages amid rapid inflation. Even so, the fate of a nation's war efforts hangs on the effectiveness of the nation's workers as much as on its army and political leadership. In Russia's case, the issue was vastly complicated by the [1905 revolution](#) and the two 1917 [revolutions](#) (in March and November) that occurred in major part because of the stresses placed upon wage-earners and their resulting active involvement in the ensuing political turmoil. These wage earners contributed to all the revolutions and, furthermore, in 1917 helped bring to power a party and a government ostensibly dedicated to rule in the proletariat's name. The question of whether the Soviet government fulfilled its original

intentions as regards workers (or workers' expectations) aside, the wartime Russian labor issue clearly assumes unusual significance.<sup>1</sup>

## Counting Russia's laborers

According to traditional counts, the Russian labor force, understood as manual wage-earners in all realms of the economy, equaled roughly 9 million persons, of which 2-3 million were factory workers and the balance agricultural workers (as opposed to communal or individual farmers). These figures heavily underestimate Russia's labor force, however defined. Missing are significant categories of hired manual labor, much of it industrial (see Table 1). The standard figures of 2-3 million industrial workers apply only to large-scale private enterprise. One author counts 4.5 million workers in privately-owned industrial enterprises in early 1914, a figure that still omits numerous small establishments not within the purview of the Factory Inspectorate - a government body responsible for large private enterprises (sixteen or more employees) that used power machinery.<sup>2</sup>

Mining	645,000
Construction	1,600,000
Small industries	3,706,000
Commerce	865,000
Household	3,000,000
Menial laborers	2,500,000
State-owned armaments, shipbuilding, etc.	1,500,000
Approximate total	15,000,000

Table 1: Hired Non-Agricultural Manual Labor, Usually Omitted Categories (early 1914)<sup>3</sup>

For ideological reasons, liberal and leftist commentators avert their gaze from Russia's vast internal [empire](#) of state-owned enterprises in armaments and shipbuilding plants, railroads, railroad repair shops, and mines, not to mention other categories of similar labor, creating large undercounts of industrial workers. Both sides concentrate on private enterprise, liberals because it signifies the growth of the free market and leftists because the free market signifies capitalist exploitation. Regardless, workers themselves made no such distinction:

they lived in the same quarters, intermarried, had the same specialties, utilized the same types of machines and tools, received similar pay, joined the same organizations (political, cultural, economic), and struck in unison and marched in the same demonstrations. According to the most inclusive (but not exhaustive) existing count, Russia's working class (all categories) as of the war's outbreak reached between 25 million and 26 million men, women, and children (see Table 2).<sup>4</sup> A more restrictive count that includes only workers in factories (state and privately-owned), small industrial enterprises, construction, mining, and railroads, in other words industrial workers of all types (as opposed to household, agricultural, commercial, and menial laborers) approached 15 million persons. Overall, in reality more than 26 million persons in Russia earned their living through manual wage labor.

Private and State-owned Industry	6,000,000
Railroads/other transport, communications	1,398,000
Mining	645,000
Construction	1,600,000
Small industries	3,706,000
Commerce	865,000
Household	3,000,000
Menial laborers	2,500,000
Agricultural laborers	6,500,000
Approximate Total	26,000,000

Table 2: All manual wage earners<sup>5</sup>

## Wartime Mobilization and Maintaining the Workforce

The outbreak of war sharply altered the contours of labor. Throughout the conflict, the state mobilized male workers of all categories into the armed forces and continued to do so for the war's duration (see Table 3). Mobilization commands attention because of its immediate effect on workers' lives and its potential effect on industrial and agricultural productivity. Of the over 15 million mobilized persons, roughly 10 million were peasants, which as of 1917 represented 37 percent of the country's 27 million working-aged male peasants.<sup>6</sup> Although

most mobilized peasants were communal or individual farmers, one may surmise that of 6.5 million peasant wage earners (those who primarily worked for wages on private estates or for other peasants), roughly the same ratio (over one-third) were mobilized, for a total of 2,405,000 mobilized peasant wage earners, 800,000 of whom prior to the war worked on large estates entirely dependent on such labor. Although statistics are lacking, by analogy with mobilized peasants, something over one-third of the 12 million industrial workers (all types) entered the armed forces between 1914 and 1917.<sup>7</sup> The actual total was probably less than the roughly 4 million suggested by this ratio because certain types of workers crucial for armaments production received deferments or, having been mobilized into the army, received assignments to vital industries. Regardless, well over 3 million mobilized industrial workers left their workplaces.

Late 1914	5,115,000 (15%)
1915	11,695,000 (25%)
1916	14,440,000 (36%)
Mid-1917	15,070,000 (37%)

Table 3: Military Mobilization (cumulative annual totals and as percentage of working-aged males)<sup>8</sup>

Mobilization of industrial workers was fraught with harmful potential. For instance, large privately-owned factories supervised by the Factory Inspectorate showed significant drops in their workforces throughout the conflict (see Table 4). The shortfalls were over 300,000 during the first war years and even by 1916 exceeded 200,000. Even so, in crucial metal-working plants (for armaments) and coal-mining concerns (vital for military transportation), the labor force actually increased steadily throughout the war: metal workers from 281,000 in 1913 to 452,000 by 1917 and coal-miners from 168,000 to 280,000. In South Russia, with 460,000 metallurgical, mining, construction, and railroad workers (roughly 10 percent of Russia’s total), during the first months of the war the number of workers fell precipitously: metallurgy 17 percent, coal mining 30 percent. In succeeding years, this trend, as elsewhere, entirely reversed itself: between 1913 and 1916, employment in twenty-one large metallurgical plants increased from 79,000 to 111,000, and in coal mining from 168,000 to 238,000.<sup>9</sup>

Pre-war	2,302,000
Late 1914	1,960,000
1915	1,922,000
1916	2,093,000

Table 4: Wartime workforces in large private plants<sup>10</sup>

The government actively intervened to maintain and even increase the size of the workforce in military-oriented production even as it mobilized massive numbers of working aged males into the armed forces. It employed the deferment and factory assignment options especially widely in state-owned plants, upon which, simultaneously, it imposed a virtually militarized status (military officers replaced civilian managers). The War Industries Committees (bodies established in mid-1915 by private entrepreneurs to aid military production) coordinated deferments for workers in privately owned plants directly with the military.<sup>11</sup> In lieu of firm numbers, indications suggest roughly 300,000-400,000 workers in these two statuses. Another labor source were the over 3.3 million [refugees](#) who had fled the front. Of these, 265,000 were considered employable men and 1,041,000 employable women. Much of this labor was assigned to agriculture or to work directly behind the fronts, whereas relatively few performed industrial labor. A larger source of industrial labor were the over 1.5 million [war prisoners](#), whose labor was equally divided among agriculture, maintenance work (digging trenches and building roads) behind the fronts, and in industrial labor of all kinds (by 1917, 167,000 in metal working, 92,000 in coal mining, and 90,000 in the lumber industry). The role of war prisoners was especially great in South Russia, where, despite government regulations limiting prisoners to 15 percent per concern, by early 1917 they comprised 26 percent of coal miners, 27 percent of metal workers, and 60 percent of iron ore miners. In contrast in 1916 the Moscow Industrial Region (eight provinces), with its concentration on light industry and textiles utilized only 1.6 percent war prisoners. In Siberia and the Volga region, a sizable but unspecified number of Chinese and Korean laborers also found agricultural and industrial employment. During 1917 in the Donets industrial region (not noted for large numbers of such workers), there were 547 workers from [China](#) and [Persia](#) and a year later the number had increased to almost 1,500; presumably much larger numbers found employment in the regions noted above. By early 1917 almost two-fifths of Don Basin workers came from elsewhere (prisoners of war, refugees, and East Asians).<sup>12</sup>

Women and male adolescents also increasingly contributed to the labor pool (see Table 5). Overall, industrial employment of children and adolescents aged twelve to seventeen

increased, reversing a long trend that had begun no later than the 1880s, when the government codified and enforced serious labor legislation. During the 1880s children aged twelve to fourteen had constituted 10 percent of industrial workers in Russia; in 1901 2 percent; in 1913 1.6 percent. The war reversed this trend (see Table 6). New wartime regulations opened previously forbidden categories of the metallurgical and mining industry to women, adolescents, and children, for instance, to be employed underground.<sup>13</sup> Military/industrial priorities unquestionably led to deepening labor exploitation of women and, notably, of the young. Regardless, given the cataclysms facing these women and children (not to mention male laborers) in the form of two 1917 revolutions, [civil war](#), total economic collapse, unemployment, urban depopulation, and famine, their wartime travails would soon seem, if not trivial, at least not the worst they would experience in their lives.

	Men	Women	Adolescents (15-17)	Children (12-14)
<b>Moscow Region (predominantly textiles and food processing)</b>				
1914	50%	39%	9%	1.6%
1917	37%	49%	11.6%	2.6%
<b>Petrograd (predominantly heavy industry)</b>				
1913	65.7%	25.3%	9%	None
1917	58.5%	33.3%	8.2%	None
	Men	Women/adolescents	War prisoners	
<b>South Russia (mining and metallurgy, plus widespread deployment of war prisoners)</b>				
Metallurgy				
1916	69%	15%	16%	
1917	59%	14%	27%	

Coalmining				
1915	86%	8 %	6%	
1917	63%	11%	26%	
Iron or mining				
1916	37%	9%	54%	
1917	34%	7%	59%.	

Table 5: Changes in gender and age make-up of wartime labor<sup>14</sup>

	Children/adolescents (12-17)	Children (12-14)
1913	13.9%	1.6%
1917	21% (242.866 persons)	2.4% (49.956 persons)

Table 6: Industrial employment of adolescents and children<sup>15</sup>

In agriculture, non-drafted males and females of all ages replaced much of the shortfall. In addition, many war refugees and prisoners went into agricultural work (see Table 7), largely replacing, for instance, the 800,000 mobilized peasant laborers on large estates. In addition, in Siberia and along the Volga, East Asians found agricultural employment. These categories of workers could easily be shifted as need arose; for instance, in October 1916, 115,000 prisoners of war were switched from agricultural work to fuel preparation.<sup>16</sup> In the end, the vast mobilization of young adult male peasants shifted the burden for agricultural work heavily onto women, the elderly, and children.

	Refugees	War prisoners	Total
1916	345,000	260,000	605,000
1917	n/a	436,000	436,000 + n/a

Table 7: Agricultural employment of war refugees and prisoners<sup>17</sup>

## Conditions of Wartime Labor: Salaries, Inflation, and Hours

Inflation and related questions of salaries and working hours became a major issue during the war. A perusal of memoirs, Soviet era studies, and contemporaneous revolutionary propaganda about the wartime workers' movement suggests that while prices for everyday necessities rose sharply, workers' salaries remained frozen. Although inflation certainly occurred, the picture is somewhat more complicated. Between 1913 and 1916, foodstuff prices rose an average of 114 percent (for specific items, see Table 8). Prices for other widely used products for house and business (hides, wool, flax, calico, kerosene, coal etc.) rose from 20 percent to 165 percent, with the average rise being 125 percent. For South Russia, the price of an average miner's monthly flour consumption (23.3 kilograms) increased from 2.3 rubles to 5.6 rubles; of meat (3.06 kilograms) 7.6 to 30 rubles, and so forth. Overall prices for foodstuffs in the south more than doubled, whereas the price of meat, an absolute essential for persons engaged in hard labor, quadrupled. Wartime inflation reflected a variety of factors, including increased transportation costs, higher prices for imported goods, the rampant printing of paper rubles, and, it bears emphasis, rises in salaries.<sup>18</sup> Changes in production linked to military exigencies signified that the roughly 300,000 decline in the general wartime industrial workforce occurred entirely in the realm of textiles, foodstuffs, paper and wood products, and so forth, signifying shortages and higher prices for everyday items needed by wage-earners who could ill afford them.<sup>19</sup>

Wheat	150%
Barley	54%
Sugar	47%
Meat	232%
Butter	124%
Salt	483%

Table 8: Price rises for basic foodstuffs between 1913 and 1916 in Russia<sup>20</sup>



In reality, wages also increased but lagged significantly behind inflation. As one example, average monthly salaries in South Russian metal-working plants increased from forty to forty-nine rubles in 1913 to seventy to eighty-three rubles in 1917 (after a successful strike one plant's salaries increased from forty-one to ninety-one rubles). In other words, inflation (114 percent) outran wage increases (roughly 60 percent). Other parts of the country experienced an even greater fall in real wages than South Russia. To compensate workers toiled longer hours. In privately owned plants regulated by the Factory Inspectorate, the work day in 1913 averaged 9.9 hours (overtime was common). During the war, overtime work in plants connected to military production became obligatory: failure to comply resulted in firing or, for those of military age, mobilization into the armed forces and, often, direct assignment to the front. Consequently, workers confronted intense pressure to increase work hours and days. In pre-war Don Basin mines, workers labored nine to ten hour days, with twenty to twenty-five shifts a month as the norm. By 1916, twenty-five to twenty-eight shifts a month were common and observers noted some cases of thirty-six shifts a month: in effect the twelve-hour day had returned.

Similar patterns occurred in the metal-working plants of South Russia.<sup>21</sup> When officers supplanted civilian managers in state-owned plants, workers found themselves under the direct threat of firing and mobilization to the front if they protested overtime work or requested higher pay. Militarization and military style discipline became the norm for hundreds of thousands of these workers throughout Russia. Workers in private concerns also faced entrepreneurial and state intransigence. For instance, despite private ownership coal and leather processing plants became virtual government monopolies in terms of wages, hours, and prices and the authorities construed all requests for shorter hours or higher pay as anti-patriotic.<sup>22</sup> Workers widely (and justifiably) complained that despite increased work hours their wages no longer covered everyday necessities. Inadequate pay for increasingly expensive goods, long hours, and a harsh atmosphere at the workplace formed the life experience of Russia's wartime workers, with service at the front as the looming alternative for draft-aged males.

## Use of Resources: Wartime Tsarism and the early Soviet Government

The Russian Empire disposed of vast resources in foodstuffs, minerals, geographical space, productive capacity, and, most significantly for our purposes, a large population quite accustomed to agricultural, industrial, and other forms of labor. Nonetheless, Russia deployed her human resources extravagantly — by 1917 mobilization had taken over 15 million persons, all able-bodied males, the very category needed for the heavy industrial/agricultural

tasks necessary for war, not to mention the maintenance of the civilian population and the state. Two sets of statistics — for wartime fatalities and for captured soldiers — illustrate labor resource problems. [Deaths at the front](#) (1.3 million) and among the wounded prisoners of war in enemy camps brought total mortality to roughly 2 million, a similar ratio in terms of population to British losses, but greater than French and German. In addition, 3.4 million Russian soldiers wound up in German and Austrian prisoner of war camps, far exceeding other warring nations excepting [Austro-Hungary](#). Aside from the inherent human tragedy, this also necessitated the vast wartime draft — equaling fully 37 percent of working aged males. Replacements indubitably operated with lower productivity than those mobilized, a factor that bred shortages, higher prices, and reduced military effectiveness. The overstretching of labor resources also contributed to worker unrest, not to mention the eventual revolutionizing of the fronts and the disaffection of numerous peasants and members of the intelligentsia.

Recent scholarship about this era (World War I through the [Russian Civil War](#)) emphasizes continuity among policies employed by the various [governments](#) (Tsarist, Provisional Government, and early Soviet) that ruled Russia during these years. This approach finds partial support from the developments in wartime labor. Like all governments involved in the Great War, the Tsarist regime exercised greater control of industrial production and labor than it had previously. The early Soviet government instituted policies that in some ways resembled these Tsarist policies, which may have served as initial templates for them. Still, upon closer examination, similarities pale beside differences. Inexplicably, the Tsarist government never achieved a coherent labor policy. Before and during the war, various segments of labor (private industry, state industry, mining, railroads, communications, and agriculture) fell under the auspices of different ministries and regulatory bodies; during the war, prisoners and refugees fell under overlapping auspices; and the worker' groups of the War Industry Committees operated, with very weak and suspicious government oversight, in association with private industry.<sup>23</sup> In sharp contrast, within a year of coming to power the Bolsheviks had nationalized and centralized the entire industrial, financial, and commercial economy, causing a profound economic collapse in all spheres of the national economy and setting off waves of unemployment and urban depopulation: one might call this unintentional labor demobilization. Simultaneously, the Soviet government subjected all industrial workers to a bureaucratized union network controlled from the top. Specific content, intentions, carrying out, and results of early Soviet policies set them apart from those of the Tsarist government. In this area, as in others, the Bolshevik Revolution constituted a caesura, ultimate explanations for which lie elsewhere than in late Tsarist policies.

## Conclusion: Labor and Politics

The question of labor in Russia, even more so than elsewhere, is inextricably connected to

politics. The out-break of the Great War in mid-summer 1914 found the Russian Empire's manufacturing cities in the midst of stubborn strikes sponsored by leftist political parties, not an ideal socio-economic background for waging war. With the war's outbreak, labor unions, worker-oriented newspapers, and socialist parties suffered extreme repression. For the first year and a half of the war, social protest of all kinds remained muted. Socialist commentators noted an atmosphere in which all social elements frowned upon any sort of anti-government propaganda: with the motherland in danger, patriotism prevailed, even among workers.<sup>24</sup> By mid-1915 bad news from the front and the worsening economic situation at home led to a revival of strikes, protest, and demonstrations, leading to the eventual overthrow of the regime in early 1917. Russian labor and Russia's labor organizations, broadly defined, played a distinct role in what occurred. Socialist organizations of every stripe revived in the underground, agitation in the factories and workers' quarter resumed, and a series of strikes and workers demonstration began in Petrograd, Moscow and all other major centers of industrial Russia. In the absence of unions, worker cooperatives, health insurance funds, and educational-cultural societies served as centers for revolutionary socialist propaganda and as focal points for the organization of strikes and demonstrations of anti-war, anti-tsarist, and anti-capitalist tendency.<sup>25</sup>

Two episodes in the history of Russia's wartime labor movement are illustrative. The first regards the War Industries Committees workers' groups. As noted, during mid-1915, Russian financiers and entrepreneurs created the War Industries Committees in order to promote war production and proposed creating workers' groups at factory and city level in association with the WICs in order to coordinate worker-entrepreneurial activities. Moderate socialists approved this idea, whereas radicals either opposed it outright or supported the idea in order to utilize the groups for anti-government purposes. After a tumultuous campaign, the WIC workers' groups came into existence throughout much of Russia and, because of their official status, enjoyed much greater freedom of expression than other worker venues. With their largely socialist (Menshevik, Bolshevik, and SR) leadership, in conjunction with their relatively freewheeling debate, the workers groups quickly became centers of anti-government activities, utterly at odds with the purpose of their creation. This outcome also placed workers on a collision course with entrepreneurs, who sided with the government on war-related issues. The second illustrative episode was the strike at the Naval Plant (Nikolaev), whose production was vital for support of the Black Sea fleet. The strike broke out in January 1916 over wages. When the government rejected pay increases, the strike continued with new anti-war and anti-tsarist overtones. In late February, officials fired the plant's 6,500 metalworkers (of over 14,000 workers), who were then mobilized into the army. Many were sent to the battlefields (where, along with other similarly drafted radicals, they played a role in the revolutionizing of the fronts).<sup>26</sup> Both episodes (and many others: roughly 25 percent of

Russia's workforce engaged in strikes during 1916) illustrate the chasm between workers and regime. Tsarist officials routinely sacrificed workers' needs to the war effort, while workers (spurred by the radical leaders they supported) utilized innumerable opportunities to defy the government. By 1916 labor and regime worked at total cross-purposes, setting the stage for two 1917 revolutions.

A final question arises about why other nations involved in the Great War, under similar stresses, avoided revolutionary turmoil among its laborers. The answer lies not primarily in the Tsarist regime's wartime policies, which in many respects resembled those of the other warring nations. Rather, the answer lies in the government's policies towards wage earners (not to mention peasants who made up so many of its foot soldiers and who constantly filled the ranks of the laboring class) during the decades prior to the war. Only the 1905-1907 Revolution brought the Russian government to grant an elected legislature (the State [Duma](#)) and legalize labor unions and strikes. Wages, work hours (except for women and children), and most work conditions remained unregulated. Socialist parties that undertook to represent labor (and peasants) operated in a semi-legal status that kept most of their leaders in jail, Siberian exile, or abroad. By 1907 new electoral arrangements for the State Duma (that also arose out of the 1905-1907 crisis) so manipulated representation that substantial citizens chose most delegates and vast peasant/worker populations only a handful. Simultaneously, the government curtailed union activities and strikes. The contrast between worker status in Russia and other major Great War participants is painful to behold. Social-Democratic, Labor, and Socialist parties enjoyed major representation in the parliaments of Russia's opponents and European allies. Unions, organized strikes, socialist newspapers, pensions, free schooling for everyone, health care in one or another combination characterized workers lives in those countries, whereas in Russia only a worker health insurance plan passed in 1912 stands out as a sort of beacon for what might and should have been. Needless to say, had the nation's laborers, famously patriotic as all Russians were, enjoyed the political, social, and economic benefits of those of her opponents, history would have turned out differently.

Michael S. Melancon, Auburn University

## Notes

1. Western historiography of Russian wartime labor prior to the February Revolution (1917) is quite limited, whereas Soviet authors were often tendentious. Quite useful are Kir'ianov, Iurii Iloich: *Rabochie iuga Rossii 1914 - fevral' 1917* [The Workers of Southern Russia 1914-February 1917], Moscow 1971, which pertains to South Russia, and his *Sotsial'no-politicheskii protest rabochikh Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (iiul' 1914 - fevral' 1917 gg.)* [Socio-political Protest of Russian Workers in the Years of the First

- World War: July 1914-February 1917], Moscow 2005. English-language studies, none of them exhaustive, are: Zagorsky, Seman Ospiovich: State Control of Industry in Russia during the War, New Haven 1928; Antsiferov, Alekseĭ Nikolaevich: Russian Agriculture During the War, New Haven 1930; Melancon, Michael: The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Russian Anti-War Movement, 1914-1917, Columbus 1990, and Gatrell, Peter: A Whole Empire Walking. Refugees in Russia during World War I, Bloomington 1999. ↑
2. For estimates (without state-owned plants), see Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 13; Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [The Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, p. 28; Gatrell, Empire Walking 1999, p. 3; Antsiferov, Agriculture 1930, pp. 116-17 and 121-23; Blackwell, William: The Industrialization of Russia, Arlington Heights 1982, pp. 59-60 and Kruze, Èl'za Èduardovna: Polozhenie rabocheho klassa Rossii v 1900-1914 gg.[The Situation of the Working Class in Russia from 1900 to 1914], Leningrad 1976, p. 42. ↑
  3. Kruze, Polozhenie [The Situation of the Working Class in Russia from 1900 to 1914] 1976, p. 42. ↑
  4. Kruze, Polozhenie [The Situation of the Working Class in Russia] 1976, p. 42. Given the variations in available statistics, a note of caution about totals is advisable. ↑
  5. Kruze, Polozhenie [The Situation of the Working Class in Russia] 1976, p. 42. ↑
  6. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 51. ↑
  7. A sharp distinction between non-agricultural workers and agricultural persons (peasants) is misleading since most workers in Russia were of peasant background and often maintained membership in their village communes. By the 20th century, most industrial workers had ceased their former practice of migrating back and forth between city and village with the agricultural seasons (seasonal migration was a widespread phenomenon throughout 19th-century industrializing Europe rather than a specifically Russian practice). ↑
  8. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 50 ↑
  9. Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [The Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, pp. 36-38; Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 53. ↑
  10. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 53 ↑
  11. Siegelbaum, Lewis H.: The Politics of Industrialization in Russia, 1914-1917. A Study of the War-Industries Committees, New York 1983, pp. 40-68, 153. ↑
  12. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 51-52; Antsiferov, Agriculture 1930, p. 121; Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [The Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, pp. 38, 43; Gatrell, Empire Walking 1999, pp. 131-132. ↑
  13. Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [The Workes of Southern Russia] 1971, p. 39. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 54-55; Gorshkov, Boris: Russia's Factory Children. State, Society, and Law, 1800-1917, Pittsburgh 2009, p. 158; Atsarkin, A.: Zhizn' i bor'ba rabochei molodezhi v Rossii 1900-1917 [Life and Struggle of Worker Youth in Russia:

- 1900-October 1917], Moscow 1976, p. 165. ↑
14. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 54-55; Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [The Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, p. 39 ↑
  15. Note: in this table, the first category (12-17) includes the second (12-14). Gorshkov, Boris: Russia's Factory Children. State, Society, and Law, 1800-1917, Pittsburgh 2009, pp. 158-159. ↑
  16. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 52; Antsiferov, Agriculture 1930, pp. 121-22; Gatrell, Empire Walking 1999, p. 132. ↑
  17. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, p. 52; Antsiferov, Russian Agriculture During the War 1930, pp. 121-22; Gatrell, Empire Walking 1999, p. 132 ↑
  18. Strumilin, Stanislav Gustavovich: Problemy ékonomiki truda [Problems of the Economics of Labor], Moscow 1957, pp. 488-490; Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, pp. 73-78; Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 60-61. ↑
  19. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 64-65. ↑
  20. Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 60-61 ↑
  21. Kir'ianov, Rabochie iuga Rossii [Workers of Southern Russia] 1971, pp. 66-68; Zagorsky, State Control 1928, pp. 56-56; Blackwell, Industrialization 1982, pp. 62-63; Maevskii, Ivan Vasil'evich: Ékonomika russkoj promyshlennosti v usloviakh Pervoi mirovoi voiny [The Economics of Russian Industry under Conditions of the First World War], Moscow 1957. ↑
  22. Blackwell, Industrialization 1982, p. 63. ↑
  23. Siegelbaum, Politics of Industrial Mobilization 1983, pp. 162-70. ↑
  24. For an overview, see Melancon, Socialist Revolutionaries 1990, pp. 57-100 and Kir'ianov, Iurii Iloich: Sotsial'no-politicheskii protest [Socio-political Protest of Russian Workers in the Years of the First World War: July 1914-February 1917] Moscow 2005, pp. 11-13. ↑
  25. Melancon, Socialist Revolutionaries 1990, pp. 101-112. ↑
  26. Melancon, Socialist Revolutionaries 1990, pp. 91-100, pp. 138-139; Siegelbaum, Politics of Industrial Mobilization 1983, pp. 168-170. ↑

## Selected Bibliography

- [Antsyferov, Aleksei Nikolaevich et al.: \*\*Russian agriculture during the war. Rural economy\*\*, New Haven, 1930: Yale University Press.](#)
- [Atsarkin, Aleksandr Nikolaevich: \*\*Zhizn' i bor'ba rabochei molodezhi v Rossii. 1900-oktiabr' 1917 g. \(Life and struggle of worker youth 1900-1917\)\*\*, Moscow, 1976:](#)



[Mysl'.](#)

- [Blackwell, William L.: \*\*The industrialization of Russia. An historical perspective\*\*, New York, 1970: Crowell.](#)
- [Gatrell, Peter: \*\*A whole empire walking. Refugees in Russia during World War I\*\*, Bloomington, 2011: Indiana University Press.](#)
- [Gorshkov, Boris B.: \*\*Russia's factory children. State, society, and law, 1800-1917\*\*, Pittsburgh, 2009: University of Pittsburgh Press.](#)
- [Kir'ianov, Iurii Iloich \(ed.\): \*\*Rabochie Iuga Rossii 1914-fevral' 1917 g. \(The Workers of Southern Russia, 1914-February 1917\)\*\*, Moscow, 1971: Nauka.](#)
- [Kir'ianov, Iurii Iloich / Tiutiukin, S. V.: \*\*Sotsial'no-politicheskii protest rabochikh Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny. Iiul' 1914 - fevral 1917 gg. \(Socio-political protest of Russian workers in the years of the First World War. July 1914-February 1917\)\*\*, Moscow, 2005: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN.](#)
- [Kruze, El'za Eduardovna: \*\*Polozhenie rabocheho klassa Rossii v 1900-1914 gg \(The Situation of the Working Class in Russia from 1900 to 1914\)\*\*, Leningrad, 1976: Nauka.](#)
- [Maevskii, Ivan Vasil'evich: \*\*Ekonomika russkoi promyshlennosti v usloviakh pervoi mirovoi voiny \(The Economics of Russian Industry under Conditions of the First World War\)\*\*, Moscow, 1957: Gos. izd-vo polit. Lit-ry.](#)
- [Melancon, Michael S.: \*\*The socialist revolutionaries and the Russian anti-war movement, 1914-1917\*\*, Columbus, 1990: Ohio State University Press.](#)
- [Siegelbaum, Lewis H.: \*\*The politics of industrial mobilization in Russia, 1914-17. A study of the war-industries committees\*\*, New York, 1983: St. Martin's Press.](#)
- [Strumilin, Stanislav Gustavovich: \*\*Problemy ékonomiki truda \(Problems of labour economics\)\*\*, Moscow, 1957: Gos. izd-vo polit. Lit-ry.](#)
- [Zagorsky, Seman Ospiovich: \*\*State control of industry in Russia during the war\*\*, New Haven, 1928: Yale University Press.](#)

## Citation

Michael S. Melancon: Labour (Russian Empire), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10031](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10031)

## External Links

- [“Dubinushka”, The Manual Laborer’s Work Song, Virginia Technical University, Digital History Reader \(Database\)](#)
- [Great Britain: Committee to Collect Information on Russia. Report \(Political and Economic\), London 1921 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [Kollontai, Alexandra: The Worker’s Opposition in Russia, Chicago 1921 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [Mavor, James: An Economic History of Russia, Vol. 2, London 1914 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [The Russian Soviet Government Bureau: The Code of Labor Laws of Soviet Russia, New York 1920 \(HathiTrust\) \(Article\)](#)
- [Thompson, Arthur Beeby: The oil fields of Russia and Russian petroleum industry, London 1904 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [William Henry Beable: “Ch. 17 Textiles and Textile Machinery”, in: idem: Commercial Russia, New York 1919, Internet Archive \(Article\)](#)
- [Workers’ Marseillaise, Virginia Technical University, Digital History Reader \(Article\)](#)

## Metadata

### Regional Section(s)

[Eastern Europe](#) > [Russian Empire](#)

### Thematic Section(s)



## [Home Front](#)

### **Subjects**

[Economy](#) > [Labour](#) > [Women's labour](#)

[Economy](#) > [War economy](#) > [Food and nutrition](#)

[Economy](#) > [War economy](#) > [War losses, economic](#)

[Economy](#) > [War finance](#) > [Inflation](#)

[Society](#) > [Social groups](#) > [Farmers, peasants](#)

[Society](#) > [Social groups](#) > [Refugees](#)

[Society](#) > [Social groups](#) > [Working classes](#)

[Warfare and the military](#) > [Command and control](#) > [Internment and POWs](#)

### **Author Keywords**

counts; prisoners; refugees; women; children

### **GND Subject Headings**

[Russland ; Weltkrieg \[1914-1918\] ; Arbeiter](#)

### **LC Subject Headings**

[World War, 1914-1918--Russia ; Social aspects](#)

### **Rameau Subject Headings**

[Guerre mondiale \(1914-1918\) -- Aspect social ; Guerre mondiale \(1914-1918\) -- Aspect économique ; Russie](#)

### **Key Person(s)**

### **Key Location(s)**

### **Title**

Labour (Russian Empire)

### **Author(s)**

[Michael S. Melancon](#)

### **Article Type**

Handbook Article

### **Classification Group**

Regional Thematic Article

### **Articles That Link Here**

[Science and Technology \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Labor](#); [Russian Empire](#); [Post-war Economies \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Women's Mobilization for War \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Introduction](#); [Organization of War Economies \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Labour Movements, Trade Unions and Strikes \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Between Acceptance and Refusal - Soldiers' Attitudes Towards War \(Russian Empire\)](#); [Between Acceptance and Refusal - Soldiers' Attitudes Towards War \(Russian Empire\)](#) and [Chinese Workers in Russia](#)