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Light Industry in the Urals in the Days of the New Economic Policy in the Context of Early Industrial Modernization of the Late 19th – the First Half of the 20th Century

Abstract

The article examines the development of the light industry sectors of the Urals in the 1920s drawing on materials from state archives of the Russian Federation. The study is to identify the signs of the process of early industrial modernization in the light industry of the Urals in the days of the New Economic Policy and to analyze them. To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set: to analyze the network of light industry enterprises in the Urals; to study the state of material and technical base of industrial enterprises in the region; to reveal the dynamics of gross output. Early industrial modernization in Russia began in the late 19th century. However, for a number of reasons, including the events of the First World War, revolutionary upheavals, and the Civil War, it remained uncompleted after the first two decades of the 20th century. The period of the New Economic Policy is considered by V.V. Alekseev and I.V. Poberezhnikov as a continuation of the early industrial modernization. The chronological framework of the study covers the period of the New Economic Policy, from 1921 to 1927. The territorial framework is the Ural Economic Region. Geographic, economic, and ethnic factors permit to address the Urals as an integral territorial entity. In the 1920s, it included the Ural region (now the Sverdlovsk, Perm, Chelyabinsk, and Kurgan regions), the Orenburg gubernia (now the Orenburg region), the Votyak Autonomous Oblast (now the Udmurt Republic), and the Bashkir ASSR (now the Republic of Bashkortostan). The article highlights the issues of trustification in the light industry of the region, the emergence of new plants and factories. The network of industrial enterprises was transformed during the period under review. As a result of consolidation and liquidation of unprofitable enterprises, the number of factories and plants decreased in comparison with the indicators of 1913 by 12 units. The largest number of industrial enterprises was concentrated on the territory of the Ural Region. The process of the light industry sectors recovery of the 1920s was accompanied by the solution of a number of problems associated with shortage of raw materials and need to upgrade the equipment. During the period under review, enterprises experienced difficulties in raw materials supply. Most dynamically developing industries were textiles, footwear, and clothing. By the end of the New Economic Policy, the volume of production of light industry goods in the region exceeded pre-war indicators. However, the revealed data indicate that the process of early industrial modernization in the light industry of the Urals was incomplete by the end of the 1920s.

Keywords

Archival sources, archival documents, light industry, the Ural, production, network of enterprises, Russian early industrial modernization.

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