

SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES AS A FACTOR OF STABILITY OF SINGLE-INDUSTRY TOWNS

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Abstract: In this article, the results of social research into the problem of interaction of the state, employers and employees concerning the regulation of social and labor relations and the conducted internal social policy of the enterprises are presented. The results of the survey and in-depth interviews show that at the industrial enterprises of the ore mining and smelting industry there are ambiguous relations between participants of social partnership. The inflow of foreign capital to the city-forming enterprises has put a half-nelson on the employees and social structure of single-industry towns. Social and economic development of single-industry towns directly depends on social responsibility of the city-forming enterprises. Today the state is a guarantor of respect for the rights of employees and it plays the leading role in regulation of the relations between the employer and the employees. The state is the force for the social policy and social responsibility carried out by industrial enterprises. In this article, only a part of the results of social research devoted to the analysis of social responsibility of the industrial enterprises of Karaganda region is provided.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, employees, industrial enterprises, employer, social policy, social responsibility, social research.

INTRODUCTION

In modern western literature, social partnership is interpreted as merging of organizations from various sectors of society for solving social problems, which is an important tool of solving a set of serious problems the society is facing. In the 1980th, according to Wettenhall, social partnership provided engagement of the private sector in development of local economy and town renovation (Wettenhall, 2003). It was then that social partnership began to cover more and more various sectors, thereby showing its global value. Today, social partnership is a crossing of the public, noncommercial and private sectors, it is used for solving problems of climate change and preservation of resources, health care, education, poverty, development at the local level, and even corruption and organized crime.

Within the last three decades, both society and scientific community have become more interested in social partnership and social responsibility, and in this connection the researchers Googins and Rochlin started talking about emergence of “partner society” (Googins and Rochlin, 2002), Glasbergen put it as the “partnership paradigm” (Glasbergen, 2007) or, according to Richter, even “a trend with no alternatives” (Richter, 2004). The system of social partnership and corporate social

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responsibility is aimed at satisfaction and respect for interests and needs of all participants of labor process. The Russian researcher Kharitonov N.V. also notes the need for increase in social responsibility as a necessary condition of sustainable development of society (Kharitonova et. al., 2011), beginning with coordination of paragraphs of the collective contract and settlement of labor disputes to formation of integral social policy. "Social partnership has created a complex and flexible network of bipartite and tripartite negotiating capabilities. These typically involve direct participation by civil servants as well as by unions, employers" (Hardiman, 2006). It is systematic social policy and social responsibility that will allow to solve social and labor problems at the industrial enterprises.

The 90s, characterized by economic decline, political disorganization caused shutdown of the enterprises, growth of unemployment, increase in fringes of society, growth of social tension in society. At that period of time, the adequate decision of the authorities was sale of the enterprises with their debts to foreign investors. It, in turn, allowed single-industry towns to survive and restore social and economic processes in the region. Payment of debts, restoration of working places, solving social problems of the city, development of infrastructure stabilized the situation in the area. The state concludes agreements with employers, which describe development of the city, maintenance of social objects, charity (sponsor) support to athletes, youth organizations, etc. However, the 2008 crisis bared social problems at the enterprises, which forced public authorities to sit down at the negotiating table with foreign investors. Moreover, throughout the entire period of independence, a high level of traumatism and fatal accidents has been observed at all industrial enterprises of the region, which also affects social well-being of the residents of the region.

In his turn, the employer demands making an effort from the state and employees to receive profit and cover the expenses. Characteristic feature of the metallurgical complex of the republic is almost full concentration and monopolization of productions and control blocks of shares in the hands of foreign investors. The result is as follows: the companies are ready to take out raw materials, but not to support projects on its processing in the territory of the country. In the metallurgical complex, there are practically no industrial productions of knowledge-intensive, hi-tech materials. According to Agafonova M. and Koryakin N., one of the tasks of the management of industrial enterprises is orientation to sustainable development which, on the one hand, will allow to increase its competitiveness and, on the other hand, will form the mechanisms of sustainable development and responsibility (Agafonova, and Koryakin, 2014).

National programs such as "Employment-2020", program speech of the Head of state N. A. Nazarbayev "Social modernization of Kazakhstan: 20 steps to society of universal labor" are aimed at creation of an image of the man of labor, the need for familiarizing with labor process. The image of the worker whose interests and

needs are satisfied with both the state and the employer is cultivated (Nazarbayev, 2012). But as the reality shows, the position of the hired worker is unenviable and any of his demands (participation in meetings, rallies, hunger strikes) is considered as violation of labor discipline.

METHODS

Due to the existing social and economic situation in the single-industry towns, in particular, at the “Arcelor Mittal Temirtau” and “Kazakhmys” corporation enterprises, we conducted social research for the purpose of clarification of specifics of interaction between employers and employees, defining the role of the state in regulation of social and labor relations between the parties. The research task was to study social health of employees, define the specifics of interaction of the state, employers and employees. Two largest enterprises of the ore mining and smelting and extracting industries, whose activity directly affects social and economic development of Karaganda region, particularly such cities as Temirtau, Zhezkazgan, acted as the object of research. The common traits in key characteristics allow us to consider these two enterprises as a uniform object.

As the main hypothesis there acted an assumption that the defining subject of labor relations at the industrial enterprises of Kazakhstan is the state. As additional the following hypotheses were made:

1. The attitude of staff of large industrial enterprises of Karaganda region towards intervention in the activity of the enterprises by representatives of public authorities and institutes is considered positive, as it forms the feeling of protection in employees.
2. Weakness of the trade-union organization, their formalistic approach to protection of the rights of employees of the enterprise causes the need of the staff of the enterprise for looking for protection in public institutions.
3. We assume that the level of protest moods in labor collectives at the large industrial enterprises of Karaganda region is rather high.
4. It is probable that the high level of traumatism and frequency of deaths at the large industrial enterprises of Karaganda region causes urgent need of change of the industrial equipment, which has become long-outdated.
5. The attitude to labor disputes and conflicts has obviously negative character since their settlement and solving happens by the principle of pressure of public authorities upon the management of the enterprises.
6. Influence of the trade-union organization on functioning of the enterprise is extremely insignificant, respectively, protection of labor laws is considered by the staff of the enterprise as “their personal problem”.
7. We assume that the majority of the staff of a large industrial enterprise are not satisfied with their professional duties and working conditions.

8. The consequence of the hypothesis #7 is a desire of staff of the enterprise to change the place of work, but it is corrected by the fact that the large industrial enterprises in Karaganda region define the situation in labor market, dictate policy for salary level, form single-industry towns around themselves, which are absolutely dependent on these enterprises both in economic and in social aspects.

For gathering and analysis of information, in-depth interviews with heads of trade-union organizations, mass survey of employees of the enterprises were used.

The sample is simple random nonrepeated. For achievement of statistically significant representation of the specified social and demographic characteristics, as well as for the purpose of compensation of possible losses (refusals of participation in the research, damage of tools – questionnaires, etc.), the number of respondents amounted to 500 people. At the same time, reduction of number of respondents as a result of non-return and damage of questionnaires, refusal of participation in the research amounted to 5 people, therefore 495 people really participated in the survey.

Social research was conducted with the use of the polling method from June to September, 2016, and the interview from February to April, 2016, at the industrial enterprises of Karaganda region “ArcelorMittal Temirtau” and “Kazakhmys” corporation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Within the social research, we tried to find out opinion of respondents concerning their assessment of activity of the state bodies in solving social questions and social policy at the enterprises. Distribution of answers to the question “What influence do the state bodies have on social policy (social protection of employees of the enterprise) of your enterprise?” made as follows. A big part of respondents (69%) consider that the state bodies have determining influence on the social policy pursued by the enterprise at which they work. Opinions of respondents are caused by the actual state of affairs in the Kazakhstan business when the state structures interfere with business implementation process, especially controlling social programs, whose financing often goes by the residual principle and causes discontent of staff of the enterprise.

It is also necessary to note that the positive attitude towards participation of the state in implementation of social programs at the enterprise is explained by the age of the interviewed, thus, the main part of respondents is aged 30 to 45 (38% of respondents), that is the generation which well remembers the influence of the Soviet state, which not just influenced but rigidly regulated realization of social policy by the enterprise.

Gender distribution of opinions also corresponds to the general paradigm that the influence of the state has a positive character (50% of men and 19% of women). The experience of work and level of income did not in any way affect the distribution of opinions of respondents (20% of all respondents are sure of big influence). However, the professional status had determining influence on opinion of respondents. So, only 11% of engineering and technical personnel (hereinafter referred to as ETP) recognize that the state has big influence on social policy of the enterprise, but among workers it is 58% that think so. It allows us to make an assumption that the interviewed have traditional paternalistic paradigm, the essence of which consists in preservation of belief in the state as an institute, standing up for protection of the working class. Thus the management of the enterprise (ETP) participates in running the enterprise, in process of decision-making and is more aware of the mechanisms of implementation of social policy of the enterprise, than the workers, who, as a rule, often receive already made decisions.

The distribution of answers of respondents regarding assessment of extent of control of the state bodies for the directions of social policy confirms our assumption about the desire of respondents to see representatives of the state in production activity of the enterprise as a participant, "the third party". It gives feeling of stability, existence of guarantees on protection of interests of workers.

Answering the question "To what extent are you satisfied with the work of the state bodies for protection of the rights of employees at your enterprise?", a big part of respondents (44,5%) specified that they are satisfied by work of the state bodies for protection and respect for their labor rights. (Figure 1)

32% of the interviewed men and 12% of women are completely satisfied with the work of the state bodies for protection of their labor rights. The age criterion did not affect the distribution of opinions in any way, so representatives of all age cohorts are completely satisfied with the work of state bodies.

If we consider differentiation of opinions, taking into account professional hierarchy, only 7% of representatives of ETP and 37% of workers are completely satisfied with the activity of state bodies.

It can be assumed that assessment of activity of the state bodies is carried out on a basis of conflict, disputable situations occurring in the branch in general, and not at that specific enterprise at which the respondents work. Intervention of public authorities always provides finding of a compromise, satisfaction of requirements of the dissatisfied, protesting staff of the enterprise (an example with a series of strikes at the "Kazakhmys" enterprises). State bodies officials always seek to solve a problem by peaceful means, finding a way to the dialogue, not causing harm to the economic condition of the enterprise, whereas the management of the enterprise in case of emergence of disputable, conflict situations adheres to a strictly rational approach connected with "profitable-not profitable" logic.

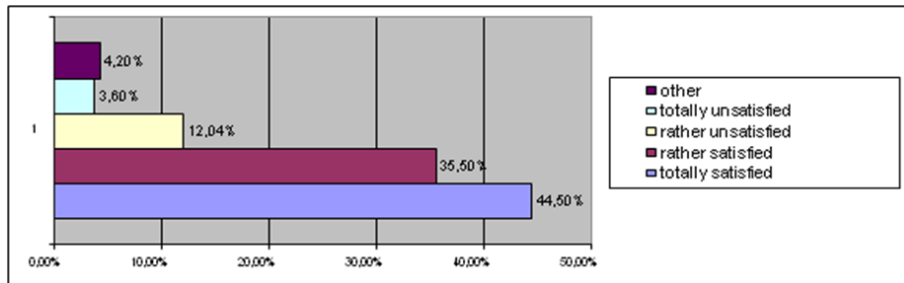


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question "To what extent are you satisfied with the work of state bodies for protection of the rights of employees at your enterprise?"

It follows therefrom that in modern Kazakhstan conditions, the role of the state as one of important subjects of social partnership is considerable. And the chosen policy of intervention of the state in economy is still reasonable. However, as the world practice shows, the state paternalism is pertinent to a certain extent. The president of the country N. Nazarbayev in his addresses pays special attention to this problem and urges businessmen to be independent and take responsibility for risks. For the worker, of course, it is convenient and comfortable when the state can interfere with affairs of the enterprise. This, in turn, is the proof that Kazakhstan business community is characterized by authoritativeness and infantility.

So, for clarification of degree of satisfaction with the work of the state bodies for questions of social protection of employees and social policy, we asked the respondents a number of questions "Are you satisfied with the work done by the state bodies in connection with your plea?" Thus, 53% of respondents remained dissatisfied with the part taken by the state bodies in solving the problem which respondents addressed. Among the dissatisfied respondents, men made 12% and women made 9%. Distribution of answers by age showed no correlation. But the professional status showed that the number of dissatisfied is bigger among representatives of workers – 10%, than among ETP – 4%.

For clarification of specifics of relations between the employees and the employer, the interview guide and the questionnaire contained the block of questions concerning satisfaction with work, labor relations. The question "In the last two years, in case of emergence of labor disputes (conflicts) how were the decisions made?" was directed at defining the ways of solving labor disputes and conflicts at the industrial enterprises. The main part of respondents specified that, in the event of emergence of labor disputes or conflicts, meetings of management with the workers will be organized most often (55,1%).

At the same time, men (14%) specified that the trade-union also participates in negotiations in a conflict situation, but only 2% of women support this opinion.

Neither the age, nor length of work, nor level of income influenced distribution of opinions of respondents. But the professional status affected the distribution of opinions. Thus, only 10% of representatives of ETP specified that, in the event of labor disputes, meetings with the management will be organized, whereas workers made 47%. Only 3% of ETP and 13% of workers specified that labor disputes at the enterprises did not arise and the outcome of such situation is unknown to them.

In spite of the fact that each of us had to face conflict situations as well as the fact that they can emerge in all spheres of relationship between people (in a family, group, collective, state, etc.), the conflict is still treated as an especially negative phenomenon. But development of the country, enterprise, production, requirements of modern labor market, global economy regularly set new tasks, aggravate the existing problems, raise the proneness to conflict, demand development of new patterns of behavior.

The analysis of experience of management of responsible executives shows that finding a way out from conflict situations is a complex challenge for them. At the same time, it should be noted that, by some estimates, the management spend about 20% of working hours on solving conflict questions (Gromova, 2003). An often found scheme of development of a disputable situation is as follows. Participants of the conflict begin to increase the existing distinctions, ignore existence of a common ground that leads to further deepening of crisis. The situation is also complicated by the fact that the parties in the conflict assess the same facts differently. The conflict becomes deeper due to the fact that there is a sharp reduction of contacts among employees of collective, which promotes the complication of the situation. The model of solving this problem recommended by experts consists in leading conflicting parties to a joint discussion of the problem. For this purpose, the senior officer has to act as a neutral organizer of a meeting, who will channel the discussion in the right direction of search of a solution and will promote building of a dialogue. The demonstration of "non-aggressiveness" of intentions looking as a goodwill gesture, but not weakness will allow to soften the negative perception of each other by the parties. In general, for the effective solution of this problem, the combination of various approaches, methods and actions is recommended. However, such easy ways of resolution of conflicts in practice cause big difficulties.

Unfortunately, meetings of the management of the enterprise with workers are a rather formalized, but habitual method of establishing communication between the management of the enterprise and workers, from which the participants often do not expect any effect. This method was borrowed from the Soviet past and is implemented today according to the same scenario when the management of the enterprise, as a reaction to a conflict situation, aggressively admonishes workers, urging them "to understand" and to accept a situation, while the audience silently takes the information into consideration.

Answering the question “What do you think: if there is a labor dispute (conflict) at your enterprise, will your requirements imposed on the employer be met?” the most part of respondents consider that in case of a labor dispute/conflict their requirements will be completely met (51.8%), a smaller part of respondents are sure that their requirements will be met partially (27.7%). Those who consider that their requirements will be ignored make 12.04%. 37% of men and 15% of women are also sure of satisfaction of the requirements in case of a dispute or conflict. Distribution of answers concerning age, professional status, length of work, income level also showed such confidence.

It is probable that such unanimous distribution of answers can be explained by belief in the protest potential of labor collective, power of trade-union, experience of participation in previous conflicts, or confidence that the management of the enterprise will not go for confrontation and will meet requirements of the conflicting party. The fact is that distribution of opinions of respondents can be explained with history of strike experience, in particular, the experience of strikes in 1989-1991 when the Government of the USSR made concessions and one way or another tried to meet requirements of the strikers. As the Russian researcher Shalenko V. M. notes: “Mass labor disputes took place throughout the Soviet period of our history. Despite cruel terror, arrests, dismissals, up to the beginning of the 1930s, strikes took place at the enterprises. Only the process of the forced industrialization which led to wind-down of democratic basis of production life put an end to open forms of fight of workers for their rights. Tough mass campaigns of workers were suppressed like, for example, in Novochoerkassk in 1962. Information on such events was classified, and they were regarded as cases of civil disobedience and were not subject to scientific research” (Shalenko, 1990). Strikes of miners in the summer of 1989 in which miners of almost all coal basins of the country took part, caused change of the attitude of government institutions to labor disputes and generated numerous scientific research directed to the comprehensive analysis of development of labor movement in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Further in our research we have considered a role of the employer who is one of the subjects of social partnership and on whose activity social and economic wellbeing of the city – and, at times, the whole region – depends. In connection with that, the instruments contained the block of questions directed to clarification of the role and policy of employer in the course of social and labor relations and the choice of management strategy.

Distribution of answers to the question “Who usually makes important decisions concerning further development of the enterprise?” showed that the important decisions concerning further development of the enterprise are made only by directors. Most of the interviewed respondents (63%) hold to such opinion.

Representatives of the middle age cohort (30 to 45 years old) are more sure (34%) that it is only the management that makes important decisions, than the

representatives of the younger (18 to 29 years old) - 12% and senior cohorts (46 years and older) – 18%.

Again the regularity is traced that ETP (10%) are less sure of domination of opinions of the management in decision-making, rather than representatives of working professions – 53%.

Distribution of answers by the level of income shows that the lower the income level, the more is the confidence in domination of the management in decision-making (those who earn up to 50 000 made 23%, earning up to 100 000 made 27% and earning more than 101 000 made 13%).

We can state that most of respondents think that important decisions are made by the management of the enterprise. It turns out that workers of the middle and lower ranking “are presented with a fait accompli”, i.e., they are excluded from management process, decision-making. It has an obviously discriminating character, which can cause discontent, dissatisfaction, professional apathy and disinterest in development of the enterprise from workers.

We also set a goal to define a role of the collective agreement in labor process, in connection with which we were interested in the opinion of workers concerning a role of this document in protection of the rights of employees. “Are there points in your collective agreement you would like to change?” (Figure 2)

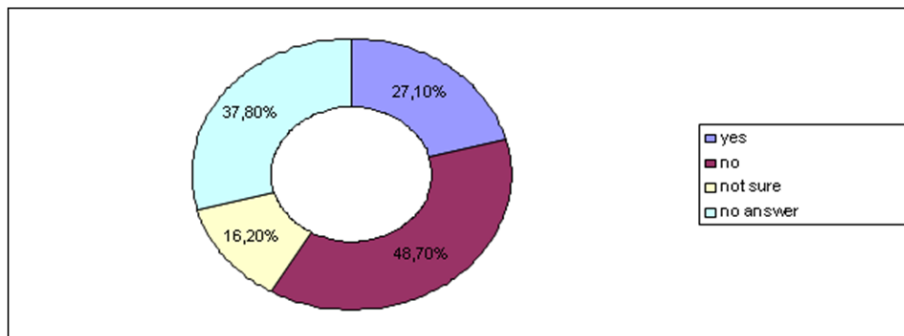


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question “Are there points in your collective agreement you would like to change?”

The analysis of distribution of the respondents' answers creates a dual impression: on the one hand, it can seem that the collective agreement is so fair that there is no desire to introduce any amendments to it, on the other hand, if we look at the number of the respondents who chose possible answer “I find it difficult to answer” (24.2%) and those who did not answer the question (37.8%) then it is possible to draw a conclusion that the respondents, most likely, are not familiar with the text of the collective agreement and/or are badly guided in its contents. Our assumption is also confirmed by the lack of answers to the following question,

#24: "Please, write 3 most important points of your collective agreement which you would like to change", which none of the respondents answered.

At the same time, men who do not want to change the contents of the collective agreement made 39%, while women made 9%, the middle age cohort of respondents (30 to 45 years old) also did not express a desire to make changes to the contents of the collective agreement (29%), 41% of workers feel comfortable with the contents of the collective agreement. Those who have length of work from one to 10 years (17%) are the most dissatisfied with the points of the collective agreement. And the level of income of respondents showed that the majority do not want to change contents of the collective agreement (48%).

It is possible to explain such distribution of opinions with understanding of the "background situation" in the industrial enterprises of Karaganda region. The thing is that legal mechanisms, the element of which is the collective employment contract are hardly ever used for coordination and regulation of labor relations. As a rule, all controversial, conflict issues are resolved outside the court room, by means of personal negotiations. And it is the existing judicial system in Kazakhstan (which is extremely bureaucratized), lack of legal consciousness in workers, backwardness of civil society and the trade-union movement that are "guilty" of it.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Perhaps, the formal, law-based approach to solving the problems arising in the process of work at the large enterprise does not cause in the interviewed feelings of justice in the relation of decisions made on results of trials. Moreover, the practice of resolving conflict situations at production sites in Kazakhstan shows that, in case of individual conflicts of the worker with the management of the enterprise, representatives of the state bodies either adhere to a neutral position, or take the management side. In case of mass protests, the possibilities of satisfaction of interests of protesters are found and compulsion of the management of the enterprise to satisfy requirements of protesters (an example with the conflicts at the enterprises "Kazakhmys", "Arcelor Mittal Temirtau"). Thus, during the empirical research, we confirmed the main research hypothesis of the defining role of the state in labor relations at the industrial enterprises of Kazakhstan.

Concerning participation of the enterprises in social development of the city, region, country, summarizing results of answers to this question, it is possible to make a conclusion that most of the respondents see a real contribution of the enterprise to development of the city (68%) (for example, financing of the subsidized organizations – sports schools, kindergartens, cultural centers), but do not understand value of their enterprise as a whole, for the region (31%) and the country (73%). Such perception of activity of the large industrial enterprise shows existence of "backward consciousness" (narrowness of views, conservatism of thinking, limited perception, otherness rejection) in the respondents.

CONCLUSION

Thus, relying on the results of the social research, it is possible to formulate the following recommendations:

Firstly, due to the fact that the institute of social partnership is undergoing the process of formation and is initiated by the state, it is the representatives of the state bodies that need to undertake obligations for an articulation of requirements to the employers. The main problem to which it is necessary to pay attention is carrying out systematic social policy both in the organization and beyond its limits. According to the official data, management of the enterprises undertakes social obligations, but the problem is that the sizes of social grants directly depend on profitability of the enterprise for the time being. As soon as financial hardship appears, the first thing to be included in the area for savings is social programs.

Concentration of the foreign capital in such strategically important sector of economy as the ore mining and smelting branch, which is the second most important and significantly filling up the budget of the state, forces to pay attention to questions of economic security. The ore mining and smelting industry is of great value for the state in respect of formation of state property. This sphere can form a basis to diversification of economy, and in this connection, development of the socially oriented enterprises is necessary. It is well-known that the enterprises of the branch are still technologically poorly equipped and work with the use of outdated and worn-out equipment. This situation is characteristic not only for mining and metallurgical complexes, but also for other industries. Therefore, the following conceptual approaches to development of the socially oriented enterprises offered by us can be extrapolated to other spheres of economy:

Firstly, as social partnership is at an institutionalization stage, the state bodies must take the functions of the moderator of social and labor relations. It is also necessary to reequip the complex and bring these enterprises and branch in general to a qualitatively new level, which will allow to bring the relations between the employer and the employees to the level of negotiations.

Secondly, to create information and advisory system of support of workers at the industrial enterprises.

Thirdly, as the world practice shows, the countries with developed market economy seek for standardization of the legislation concerning social partnership and work. Since Kazakhstan has become a member of the World Trade Organization, it is necessary to consider the possibility of integrating the labor law with the international labor law. In his address to the people of Kazakhstan, the President N. Nazarbayev focuses his attention on the fact that it is necessary to increase labor productivity. Universal introduction of elements of the Fourth industrial revolution has to become a major factor here. That is automation, robotization, artificial

intelligence, exchange of “big data” and others (Address of the President..., 2017). With introduction of new technologies in traditional branches, the labor force will be released. At the same time, creation and development of new industries has to become an additional source of employment and growth of the real income of citizens. It follows therefrom that the traditional branches of economy providing activity of single-industry towns will be subject to technological changes, and will have to modernize production.

It is important to note that development of social responsibility at the industrial enterprises considerably differs from other spheres of action. Arduous and harmful working conditions, work connected with risk for health and life of the worker determine the volume of social obligations of the employer. As practice shows, in front of the labor unions, workers there is always a problem of overcoming contradictions with the employer concerning compensation, its indexation taking into account inflation, expansion of social package, fulfillment of conditions of the collective agreement by the management of the enterprise, signing of memorandums providing development of the social infrastructure of single-industry towns. By means of intervention of the state in negotiation process, the parties come to a consensus, thereby confirming that social responsibility of businessmen remains at a low level. The refusal of employers to conduct system social policy and corporate social responsibility will affect not only position of the employees, but also the cities in general.

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