

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN PROVINCE DURING THE REFORMS PERIOD OF THE 1990S

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Abstract

The socio-economic and political changes that took place in the Russian Federation at the last decade of the twentieth century had changes the life of society. The provincial population was less involved in difficult political transformations than the cities population. However, social and economic transformations affected all strata of the population and added new elements to the daily life.

During four years, students of the Volga State Technological University conducted a survey to identify the attitude of the inhabitants of the Republic of Mari El and adjacent regions to the reforms that took place in the Russian Federation at the end of the XX centuries. Particular attention was paid to the impact of reforms on the daily life of respondents and their relation to the events that took place.

The poll was conducted among residents of provincial towns and villages of the Republic of Mari El and neighboring regions, whose life changed significantly as a result of the reforms of the 1990s. Most of the respondents are people with higher or secondary special education aged between 20 and 40 years who directly felt the results of "shock therapy" and were able to assert themselves in a market economy and a democratic society.

Among the survey participants there were population of towns and rural residents, there were more women than men (which reflects the gender structure of Russian society). The questions of the questionnaire concerned not only general political and macroeconomic problems, but also changes in everyday life, new elements in the life of the Russian province.

The everyday life of Russians at the end of the twentieth century included many new things that changed the structure of their everyday life: entrepreneurship, advertising, new types of products, etc. Much of this was positively received, something but could not stand the test of time. At the same time, reforms have also brought negative elements: crime, unemployment, etc. If the majority of respondents understood the need for reforms, but their everyday life side even after decades provoked many negative responses. The study of this aspect of the life in the Russian province of the late twentieth century allow us to better understand the human dimension of the transformations that have taken place.

Keywords: Russian province, history of daily life, reforms of the 1990s

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade of the twentieth century the Russian Federation has experienced a global transformation in the field of socio-economic relations. These transformations have made changes in all spheres of society. The provincial population has been left out of the turbulent political processes. However, the socio-economic transformation could not but change the lives of people, including everyday life.

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

In October 1991 at the V Congress of people's deputies, the President of the Russian Federation B. N. Yeltsin stated the need for a "major reform breakthrough" in the economy. This meant a transition to a free pricing to eliminate commodity shortages; Liberalization of trade as a way of creating market infrastructure. It was envisaged to privatize housing, state industrial, commercial and other enterprises to increase the number of market entities.

From 2 January 1992 the country launched market reforms in combination with the anti-crisis measures. The prices were released, and prices subject to regulation have increased. Thanks to this, many forgotten products and goods appeared on the shelves of stores. However, because of the extraordinary high cost, they were inaccessible to a large part of the population. As a result of the removal of restrictions on the import of finished products, the flow of goods of the most diverse assortment and quality flooded the country.

Liberalization of prices led to an increase in inflation, the monetary accumulation of the population was destroyed, there was a sharp reduction in retail turnover.

Despite the fact that in April 1992 at the 6th Congress of people's deputies of Russia the government's activity was deemed unsatisfactory [2], the president persuaded the congress of the need to continue reforms. Reforms did not produce the expected results: by the beginning of 1993, there was a clear discrepancy between the declared goals and the real consequences of the reforms. A. Lukin wrote: "The decline in industrial production lasted not six months, but seven years (until 1998). In 1992, consumer prices did not increase two to three times, as envisaged, but at twenty-five. By 1993, more than 20 million Russians (about 15% of the population) were unemployed ... The real ... income of the population in 1992 decreased more than twice as compared to the previous year, which significantly depreciated the main achievement of reforms - the abundance of goods on the market. The purchasing power of Russians for basic foodstuffs fell sharply in 1992"

As the main element of economic reforms, the government considered privatization. In the implementation of privatization in the first place was the problem of critical mass, ensuring the irreversibility of the process. In December 1991, the decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On Accelerating Privatization of State and Municipal Enterprises" and "Basic Provisions of the Privatization Program for State and Municipal Enterprises for 1992" were published, which established the basis for the privatization [4]. August 14, 1992 was published the presidential decree which determined the beginning and the contents of the first, "voucher" stage of privatization, which lasted 22 months, until July 1, 1994 [5]. State enterprises have been turned into joint stock companies with the subsequent transfer directly to citizens. For participation in the acquisition of shares was introduced privatization checks - vouchers. Citizens could exchange their vouchers for shares of enterprises or voucher privatization funds, which also had to invest vouchers in the shares of enterprises.

2.1. The Daily Life during the Reforms Period

These global transformations affected the lives of every Russian family, making changes in the everyday way of life. Each of the regions of the country during the Soviet period had a number of features of economic development. The Republic of Mari El, located on the territory of the middle Volga region, was an industrial and agrarian region with developed machine building and a comparatively high living standard for the province. The population of this republic and a number of neighboring regions became the main participant of polls conducted by students of the Volga State Technological University for four years.

The focus was on the impact of reforms on various aspects of the lives of Russians, as well as their attitude to change. Participants in the survey, who directly felt the results of "shock therapy", had the opportunity to try their hand at a market economy. Both urban residents and rural residents took part in the survey, women predominated over men, which corresponds to the gender structure of Russian society. Questions of the questionnaire also highlighted the changes that occurred in everyday life, new elements in the life of the Russian province.

By the beginning of economic reforms in 1992, almost all participants in the survey worked at state enterprises and institutions. With the beginning of the reforms, all the enterprises on which the respondents worked continued to work, with the exception of cooperatives, some of which ceased to exist. One-third of the respondents faced the problem of downtime, that is, part-time employment. For example, one of the respondents who worked at Avtodor LLC (Yoshkar-Ola), said that there was approximately a four-fold reduction in the volume of passenger transportation.

According to the survey, about one-third of enterprises have changed their form of ownership. For employees, these processes were not very noticeable, since the transformation of state enterprises into joint-stock companies was not accompanied by a change in leadership.

Most respondents sold their privatization vouchers, or exchanged them for shares of check privatization funds or their enterprises. However, no one felt like a shareholder. Income received on shares of enterprises or voucher privatization funds, was equal to the amount allowed buying a small number of products. Typical can be considered answers: "dividends on vouchers were kopecks, I do not remember how many, but it was funny ...", "the amount ... was small, for example, to buy food: bread, groats, sand." Only 15% of respondents said that the shares brought in income, which allowed buying an apartment or car. Many respondents did not take privatization checks very seriously: "vouchers –still retained, left to memory" (the respondent even indicated the number of the privatization check and the amount written on it - 10,000 rubles).

About a third of respondents believes that the share of state ownership was obtained by the party and Komsomol elite, about the same number believes that it also was received by the top bureaucracy, a little less - criminals. This also agrees with the results of the polls conducted by the All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center: "... the property was redistributed in favor of the ruling class: the director, part of the administrative and managerial staff, the corrupt part of the Komsomol and party-state bureaucracy associated with the shadow economy." [6. [59]. E.M. Avramova, deputy director of the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of Population, said: "In fact, the result of voucher privatization was only the formation of a layer of large owners, and the expected emergence and clearance of the middle class did not happen." [7. Pp. 6-7]. As the respondents noted, "many literally for a year became representatives not of the middle but the lower class."

Despite this, the survey participants saw positive results in the reforms. A quarter of respondents consider this to be the formation of a layer of entrepreneurs, about 20% - saturation of the consumer market, and 10% - the formation of the banking system. Overcoming the deficit, filling shelves with goods for many was the most striking evidence of changes: "in stores there were necessary goods for people in sufficient quantities," "opened borders, and in abundance there were imported cheap goods."

Only a small part of the respondents noted that they began to live better: 10% indicated that they gained access to previously unavailable products. The basis of the daily diet of the majority was products of the household farming. Less began to eat meat in the diet became more potatoes, cereals, pasta, bread.

The respondents ascertain that a large selection of products appeared in the stores, bitterly admitting that "many products due to high prices had to be excluded from the diet". Rarely does anyone in the questionnaire refer to fish, meat or fruit as the basis of the menu of that time, meat, eggs, butter used only occasionally. The food was "monotonous cheap, which was enough money," the delay in wages greatly undermined the family budget. Rarely the respondents as the basis for the menu at that time were called fish, meat or fruit, meat, eggs, oil were used only occasionally. The food was "monotonous cheap, which was enough money," the delay of wages greatly undermined the family budget.

In the process of the survey, we also had to face the fact that responses of some respondents, the time before the reforms and the reforms are merged in the mind. Hence such remarks: "the store was only seaweed in cans, in the early 1990s was not even sugar. By coupons it was possible to buy either sugar or sweets. The most festive dish - stewed potatoes with chicken, for tea - bread with gooseberry jam. "

The participants of the survey also remembered imported products that appeared at the time - "Bush's legs," "Rama" oil, and "Royal" alcohol. Reviews about new products differ: 12% of respondents, recalling new products included in the diet, remember the oil "Rama", but as a product of poor quality. For those whose diet did not change during the reform period, inaccessible products represented black and red caviar, sturgeon and other delicacies (13% of respondents). For many, meat, butter, fruit and sweets were inaccessible.

The advertising was remained a new phenomenon in the life of Russians in the 1990s. More than a third of

respondents remembered the advertisement of the MMM or, as it is often called, "advertising with the participation of Leni Golubkov": "... without this advertisement there was not a single day - some boot or fur Coat." A number of respondents noted the advertisement of "Khoher-Invest" with famous artists Lolita Milyavskaya and Alexander Tsekalo, Only one of the respondents recalled the advertisement of the bank "Imperial", in which historical histories were affected. Of the advertised products, there were chewing gum "Spirit", "Mambo", "Love is", "Boomer", chocolate "Snickers", "Bounty", "Kinder-surprise", "Piknik", "Mars" and various drinks - "Hershey kola", "Yappi", vodka "White Eagle", alcohol "Royal." Some even remembered the slogans that appeared at the time: "You have not tried any more vegetables from Bonduelle, "Cookies "Wagonwheels" - and you are the winner!".

In the future, most of these products are not included in the diet. Some respondents noted that their expectations justify home goods, chewing gum and "Snickers", which is "very popular among children." In the questionnaires there are a number of wonderful reviews: "The advertised products met expectations, they were of decent quality, some goods were expensive, but were imported, produced well." There are other answers: "rarely when I bought products, after advertising," "they did not look at advertising, they were busy with work." There are also categorical answers: "None of the advertised products met expectations."

Among the respondents who at that time liked the advertised products, there are the answers: "Yes, the diet included Bonduelle products, Nestle products," Some products remained in the children's diet ".Today someone continues buy to sometimes certain types of products that appeared during this period.

The decline in living standards led to the fact that most people bought clothes and shoes on the market (fair) (about 90%), some indicated that they buy clothes and shoes in the store (less than 20%), and only two respondents noted that they were abroad. Starting with the standard of living in the 1990s. sharply fell, the questionnaires also have answers: "we could not buy new things", "we often had no opportunity to buy new things", "sewed, knit". When buying clothes and shoes, the main criterion was price (80%), 40% of respondents - quality, 8% were guided by fashion trends, and 4% sought to acquire previously inaccessible things. Vivid memories left such things as sheepskin coats, leather jackets, down jackets, gloves, shoes, especially boots, that is all that was missing on the Soviet counters. The purchase of such goods in the early 1990s. There were certain difficulties, for example, the villagers exchanged some things for meat. A significant part of the items mentioned in the questionnaires was imported: "Italian boots, excellent quality, beautiful appearance, comfortable but expensive." Someone in the 1990s. The reason is now in nostalgia: "... the goods bought in the 1990s were very high quality and comfortable, including household appliances. Until now, we remember delicious ice cream in a white paper wrapper, soda in dark half-liter bottles: then everything was real, and now there are many preservatives, dyes and other various additives. "

In the 1990's. after commodity starvation, Russians got the opportunity to purchase household appliances, many noted the purchase of TV sets, mainly Korean or Japanese production, audio and video recorders, music centers. Almost all respondents were satisfied with the quality of imported equipment, in contrast to the domestic one, which sometimes caused blame. Nevertheless, many people who bought refrigerators, televisions and other devices of Russian manufacture, use it up to the present time: "... this was the first serious purchase, so there was a lot of joy, the image quality and sound impressed us!", "their quality is many times higher than modern household appliances ", " then everyone did it on their own conscience, it still works."

A number of survey participants could not afford serious purchases: "there was no way to acquire anything."

During the Soviet era, social differentiation was not conspicuous. With the beginning of reforms in everyday life there is entered new attribute "new Russians", to determine the most successful part of Russian society. However, the idea of who the new Russians are, what it means to be rich, the residents of the province often differed from the capital. For example, one of the respondents noted that the rich in the 1990's. were those who had their own farm, income that allowed them to travel abroad. Another sign of wealth was the presence of a car, the opportunity to go to the sea, to buy gold jewelry. Rich people were represented by officials, perhaps this is the influence of the new era of the 2000s. The stereotyped image of the "new Russian" in a crimson jacket and a golden chain around his neck was also reflected in the respondents' answers. The rich are described as impudent but neatly dressed people who owned real estate, who traveled on the "elegant foreign car". The rich were also considered those who could buy any food, expensive clothes, and have a rest abroad. They also note such qualities of rich people as enterprise, the ability to understand the impossibility of a return to the past and insolence. Rich called entrepreneurs, members of the government, directors of enterprises. According to ordinary citizens, they had a prestigious job, an apartment, a car, a prosperity.

The poverty indicator was the lack of an opportunity to purchase food. As a poor person described the man who worked at the plant. Respondents also classified the poor as collective farmers, employees, pensioners. The opinion was expressed that poor people had to adhere to austerity even in the food, while buying clothes or shoes was a serious problem for them, the poor faced the problem of unemployment, non-payment of wages, could not afford trips even around the country.

The respondents noted the decline in the living standards of their families, assessing them as prosperous on the eve of reforms and as poor - as a result of reforms. The majority of respondents questioned whether they managed to acquire the desired goods in the 1990s, and this could be a car, furniture, household appliances, answered "no."

The criminalization of society, characteristic of the 1990s, led to the fact that people did not feel protected "neither from criminals, no from law enforcement agencies, no from the state". Even those who did not directly face crime, indicated cases when their acquaintances were drawn into criminal groups. The feeling of people at that time can express the phrases: "Anything could happen" or "Everyone was for himself"; "We had no particular fear, because there was nothing to steal, but there was a fear for life and health, since maniacal crimes became frequent." The most common crimes of the time, respondents consider cheating, for example, the creation of MMM. Some respondents noted that in their settlements there were cases of robbery and even arson of shops, bakeries. All this aroused fear for children, for their own lives.

3. CONCLUSION

Reform of the 1990s, opened up opportunities for Russia to develop a market economy. However, global transformations across the country have not always had a positive effect on the lives of ordinary Russians, as the results of this study have shown. The consequences of the transformations that took place in this period are still difficult to assess. For our contemporaries, these changes have not yet become a full story, they are part of their daily lives, although they have been partly reflected.

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