

RUSSIAN PROVINCE OF THE 1990S: AS A MIRROR OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

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Abstract

The present study is based on interview results, which was conducted four years, by the students Volga State University of Technology to determine the attitudes of inhabitants of the Republic of Mari El and neighboring regions to the economic reforms carried out in our country at the turn of XX-XXI centuries. The focus was the question of the personal attitude of the people to the experienced events, about the impact of reform on their daily lives. The respondents were residents of provincial cities, towns and villages of the Republic of Mari El and neighboring areas that have experienced "shock therapy", a member of the voucher privatization, and other events of the 1990s.

Keywords: Russian province, economic reforms, social reforms

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of modern Russia from the end of December 1991 is a result of profound socio-economic and political crisis which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new government was forced to stop the destructive processes that are covered many areas, to restore control in the country and reform the entire system of social relations.

The economic situation in the country by the end of 1991 can be described as catastrophic. In 1991, the national income fell by more than 11%, GDP - by 13%, industrial production - by 2.8%, agriculture - by 4.5%, exports - by 35%, and imports - by 46%. There was reduction in revenue in the market for goods, filling of the economy with money continuous and even intensified. The profits of enterprises increased by 1.9 times,

income of the population - 2, and the issue of money in circulation - by 4.4 times (History of Russia, 2007. P. 863).

The situation in the industrial, monetary and financial cooperation has led to the collapse of the consumer market. People faced with a shortage of almost all food and non-food products, which has led to the widespread introduction of the card system, which was not provided with resources. As a result, cards were not merchandised, which heightened social tensions.

The looming food crisis could be overcome only by a mass food purchases abroad, which was impossible without foreign loans. Getting the IMF loan necessitated the implementation of market reforms.

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

In October 1991, from the rostrum of the V Congress of People's Deputies of Russia, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said the need for "major reformist breakthrough" in the economy. Was supposed introduction of free prices, trade liberalization, privatization of housing, state-owned industrial, commercial and other enterprises in order to create market participants (Congress of People's Deputies, 1991. T. 2. S. 11).

Market reforms in conjunction with the anti-crisis measures began to be implemented from January 2, 1992, when it came into force presidential decree on dismissal of the prices of the vast majority of goods (Decrees of the President of the RSFSR of 12.03.1991). The stores received many «forgotten» products and goods which, however were not readily available most of the population because of their extraordinary dearness.

One of the most important components of the economic transformation of the Russian society was privatization. July 3, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR passed the Law on Privatization (Decision of the Supreme Council of 3.07.1991g. №1533-1). The government was headed by Yegor Gaidar. Anatoly Chubais directed the privatization process: he headed the relevant committee in November 1991. In the implementation of the privatization in the first place there was the problem not of economic efficiency but its coverage of the broad masses. The privatization process should become irreversible.

In the first half of 1992 has begun "small privatization", which touched the trading enterprises, the service industry and housing sector. August 14, 1992 was issued a presidential decree that defined the beginning and the content of the first stage of privatization - "voucher privatization" (Presidential Decree of 14.08.1992g № 914.). To the population could participate in the acquisition of shares of privatized state enterprises were introduced vouchers - vouchers.

In December 1992, the VII Congress of People's Deputies of Russia recognized the unsatisfactory work of the government for the implementation of economic reforms, noting that the ongoing transformation and methods of their implementation did not meet the interests of the majority of citizens.

Already in the process of reform began to take shape historiography of the issue. Most of the authors relied on the results of opinion polls in the late 1990s which showed that the social base of the reforms narrowed. According to opinion polls, as noted in her article, T.V. Naumova, in 1993 for the continuation of the reforms advocated 66%, in 1995 - 48% against 34% and 52%, respectively (Naumova 1998, p 56). She noted that economic reforms were not supported by a large part of the Russians for whom the ruling elite offered a new system of values (Naumova, 1998, 58).

V.V. Sogrin considered reforms of the late twentieth century as part of the modernization theory as a permanent process. In "The political history of modern Russia. 1985-2001: from Gorbachev to Putin" (Sogrin 2001) the period of 1991-2000 is presented as the third phase of the radical-liberal economic reforms which resulted in the country established bureaucratic-oligarchic model of a market economy. He noted that positive evaluation expressed "mainly the authors of reforms themselves ..." (Sogrin 2001, pp 10-11).

Frustrated hopes for the privatization of the population as an important result of the reforms of the 1990s noted E.M. Abraham (Abraham 2005, p 6). Because of this, a significant portion of the citizens began to consider the state as another unfair player in the financial field ... "(Abraham 2005, pp 6-7).

By early 2000 -x years, most researchers consider 1998 as a landmark year in the implementation of reforms, although consensus on the chronological framework of the "shock therapy" did not happen.

The transformations experienced by the Russian society at the turn of XX-XXI centuries perceived ambiguously. If virtually all researchers recognize the need for change, the methods of reform are estimated ambiguously.

2.1. Mari El Republic and the Russian regions in the 1990s (by historical and social research)

Teachers of the department of history of the Volga State Technological University in 2010- 2013 years conducted a study in which 514 residents of the Mari El Republic and the Russian regions were interviewed. Of these, 143 men and 371 women, 63% men and women belonged to the age group 30-50 years, the majority of respondents had a higher or specialized secondary education.

At the time of the reforms in the 1990s, 62% of respondents lived in urban areas. With the beginning of economic reforms for about a quarter of cooperatives were closed, according to survey respondents. Employees of state-owned enterprises had to face the problem of downtimes. One of the respondents who worked in the company "Highways" (Yoshkar-Ola), explained that "the economic crisis of the 1990s led to a dramatic reduction in traffic - about a four-fold reduction in the volume of passenger traffic."

According to the survey, approximately one third of the enterprises changed ownership, but for many workers the transformation of state enterprises into joint stock companies not associated with a change in management structure and it passed unnoticed.

Reforms undertaken by the government of Yegor Gaidar became known as "shock therapy." Analysis of the questionnaires showed just some of the respondents understood the urgent need for "shock therapy" as a way of overcoming the crisis. Respondents gave the following answers: "the goal were privatization and development of entrepreneurship, the transition to a market economy," "it was necessary to go out of the economic crisis and the collapse of the country", "... the desire to lead the country out of crisis. While there were many loss-making enterprises, so authorities had to disband state-owned enterprises."

Many respondents evaluated reforms carefully, believing that the policy of the new leadership differed sharply from the usual economic relations which have developed in the Soviet period, "Society and economy were deeply conservative and not willing to change, which radically changed the life of society."

There were expectations on the part of society that the "shock therapy" had to give quickly a positive economic effect: "For example, if the reform begins in January, then all sorts of economic improvement should be in July of the same year. But practice has shown that the socio-economic improvements have to wait for decades ... "

Nevertheless, many of the respondents had an understanding of the essence of transformation, "the transition from the old economic system to a market economy through" jump.

"Some respondents without revealing the essence of the policy pursued by name, demonstrated awareness of the processes occurring in the country, "after the collapse of the Soviet Union the country did not know which way to go on. There were the program "500 days" Yavlinsky and program Gaidar's, dubbed "shock therapy". State-owned enterprises passed to private hands. The poor grew poorer and the rich even richer. The country was ruled by gangsters. It leads people to fear. Because of what the term 'shock therapy. "

In many questionnaires emphasized the radical transformation: "It all happened very rapidly people lived a quiet and dimensional life then abruptly defaulted occurred, inflation and the money that lay on many people's accounts simply disappeared and as a result people are left with nothing for all this was "shock therapy." People were not ready for such rapid change. "

In the name of reforms was reflected public reaction to the reforms in the country: "... the prices in shops and government policy plunged the majority of people in shock. The population," horrified, going to the store ", "The methods by which the reform was carried out, really shocked. "A number of respondents believed that the name of the "shock therapy" arose as a reaction to people who have been shocked by dramatic changes and a sharp drop in living standards: "shock it was because people were at a loss what will be as a result of Gaidar's reforms."

For the majority of population these reforms have actually been a shock, the respondents' answers clearly indicate it: "At one point, prices have increased by 100 times, and wages were small."

It should be noted that respondents often confused situation on the eve of the reforms and the reforms. Two economic events - the lack of money and goods reflecting the situation before and during the reforms within the understanding of the respondents have merged: "... the name has arisen because of the entry coupon system. ... We nearly died of hunger. All around was a coupon system. Children had nothing to eat."

Transition from one socio-economic system to another could not be painless, and many understood this: "Is it conceivable, living in a socialist society, and the next day wake up in the capitalist society, which is crude,

wild, brutal, when you were told that we went to a market economy, when there was the liberalization of prices, that is, the money went to "free floating".

It was particularly painful decline in living standards, so this aspect is emphasized in many questionnaires. Respondents write about delays of wages, plant closures, layoffs, rising unemployment and inflation, the lack of money.

Some of the respondents have tried to evaluate the changes in the country from the perspective of the state's interests, "all that was created decades - has been destroyed."

However, some answers of responses indicate a not understanding the principles of functioning of the Soviet economy, "cash payment were replaced by vouchers," - and the clarity out about the nature of reforms.

The majority of respondents, according to a survey, or sold their vouchers or exchange them for shares of voucher privatization funds, minor part - the shares of their enterprises.

Income that received on shares of companies or voucher privatization funds was equal to the sum to buy a small number of products: "... there was a small amount.

For example, to buy only food: bread, cereals, sugar, "many did not receive any income at all," they put into the fund, without receiving any money.

Only 15% of respondents said that the action brought income to buy an apartment or a car, and 33% - up to buy home appliances (TV, refrigerator, etc.).

Almost everyone who sold the privatization voucher, received the amount at the equivalent cost of a small number of products.

Only in one case, the amount corresponds to one third of the cost of the auto.

Many respondents was not very serious about privatization checks "left in memory" (the respondent even indicated number of privatization checks and the amount prescribe on it - 10 000 rub.).

The question of who actually received a share in state ownership, over a third of respondents said – komunist party and Komsomol elite, about the same number believes that the higher bureaucracy, a little less - criminals: "... those citizens who held senior posts were closer to information sources and distribution flows, "" officials, who developed the reforms and implement them. "

To the question "How do you think the new owners have disposed of his new property?" Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that the new owners sold the purchased equipment and facilities.

Less than 20% believe that in this way the company owners received turned into a profitable and about 10% - have kept production at the same level.

The majority of respondents believes that the reform did not affect their social status.

Only about 10% reported said that their social status has grown as a result of the fact that they have become owners of industrial and commercial enterprises, farms.

About down of the social status said 20% of respondents who have lost during the reform work or compelled to move to less prestigious.

Basically that said who participated in the survey, men and women aged 30-50 years, which decreased revenues.

Most of the respondents assessed the reforms negatively, including those who declared an improvement of their financial situation.

Among the epithets with which respondents " named" the reform can be called "not thinking", "anti-national".

There are more stringent answers: "economic reform E.T. Gaidar was against the people.

One respondent summed up: "Claims to Gaidar and his government more than the words of recognition."

A quarter of respondents said the positive result of the reforms in the formation of a layer of entrepreneurs, about 20% - the saturation of the consumer market, 10% - the formation of the banking system.

Someone thinks positive result of the change in the social system: "The reforms meant the exit from socialism. This is the only positive for the country ", " the opening of the Iron Curtain in the economic relations

with foreign countries, making Russia gained access to the benefits of civilization, and store shelves filled with goods from abroad. "

The negative assessment of "shock therapy reforms" were prevalent: 30% of respondents said unemployment and inflation, 20% - the depreciation of deposits, 10% - criminalization, 10% - a sharp social stratification.

Shock therapy has led to a sharp rise in prices, the depreciation of wages, a sharp drop in living standards.

"The people were robbed ... 90% of the population of the poor turned into beggars," "property passed from the hands of the people to the hands of the oligarchs," "people were without work, without a deposit."

Undoubtedly, the 1990 reform's for many Russians have become an essential psychological problem: "People had lost faith in the good life", "there was no stability", "no faith in the future."

There was a strengthening of social tension in the country.

The impoverishment of the population was accompanied by a lack of confidence to the future, the formation of oligarchical circles as "at one of the level the impoverishment and excessive enrichment, on the other -" crimson jackets (criminal) ".

The vast majority of respondents believe that the government has not do everything possible to carry out privatization of state property as possible legally, taking into account the interests of the majority of the population.

Analyzing the impact of economic reforms 1992, we come to the conclusion that the situation with a large part of the respondents has worsened, privatization voucher face value of 10,000 rubles will not become the basis of material prosperity.

After the subsequent reforms period of E.T. Gaidar the Russian government headed by V.S. Chernomyrdin (1992-1998), the participants of the survey were related the following associations: the delay of payment of wages, pensions and benefits - more than half of the respondents; inflation - 25%, shuttles - more than 40%.

There were some memories: " in the family had nothing to eat In addition to the bread. Bought a banana once a week for the child, and after the 1998 crisis was no longer enough money on it. "

For many the era of the 1990s was associated with the concept of barter, that in everyday life often mean salaries in kind products of the company or its subcontractors, which have to be sold or exchanged for necessary goods and products.

Nearly half of respondents said that faced with such a problem, as the payment of wages in kind.

This could be products: flour, pasta, condensed milk, cereals, canned food, sugar, cakes, etc., in some cases - clothes.

Often, the price of food and other products were higher than in stores, but how respondents recall: "In my mother's family were given salary household goods, as well as on account of salaries offered bread baked in the factory, which in principle have been impossible.

But people were eating, because the money on something else they did not have. "

Goods tried to implement for those who have cash or exchanged. According to the memoirs of one of the respondents, "the TV and food processor sold for a little money", etc.

1990s. Russia entered the history as a time of financial pyramids, but the provincial population in which almost did not participate.

Only four of the respondents noted the fact of participation in pyramid schemes. One pointed out that he could multiply the money invested, others lost their deposits.

In contrast to the economic reforms of the early 1990s. economic crisis of 1998 has affected to a lesser extent the province's population.

About a third of respondents said they had lost bank deposits, 12% as a result of the crisis indicated that they had lost their jobs, only one indicated that he was forced to liquidate their own business.

In one of the profiles is explained, "because we had not big savings, there were no savings, so the default was not affected by the family."

The transition to a market economy has changed the daily lives of people.

Period on the eve of the reforms has been difficult for the population: the card system applies to all new types of products, there were difficulties with virtually all consumer goods. Therefore one of the objectives of the reform was declared content market, which was achieved through the not always high-quality imported products.

The majority of respondents noted that the basis of their diet were products of subsistence farming.

Many of the products because of the high price had to be excluded from the diet.

Respondents stated that the stores appeared a large selection of products, but they "sometimes allowed to purchase certain products."

Popular answers, "began to get cheaper food", "many products due to high price had to be excluded from the diet," "often it was not possible even to buy pastries, cereals, in the shops to bought only the most necessary, for example, sugar, flour, salt. " In many families the hope pinned on vegetable harvesting from your own backyard, someone baked their own bread.

A new phenomenon in the life of the Russians in the 1990-s. was advertisement. More than a third of respondents remembered the advertising pyramid scheme MMM or how often it was called "advertising featuring Lenny Golubkov": "Golubkov - without this advertising did not pass a single day - the boots, the fur coat." A number of respondents remembered the, "Hopper-Invest" advertisement with renowned artists Lolita and Alexander Cekalo. Only one of the respondents noted that memorized advertising "Imperial" bank, turned to historical subjects. Of the advertised products in memory were chewing gum, "Spirit", "Mambo», «Love is», «Boomer» Chocolate "Snickers", "Bounty", "Kinder Surprise", "Picnic", "the Mars" as well as a variety of drinks "Hershey Cola", "Yippie" vodka "White eagle" alcohol "Royal".

In the future, most of these products will no longer included in the diet of most Russians. However, someone sometimes buys some products that have emerged during this period.

As the standard of living in the 1990s. It fell sharply in the questionnaire and have the answers "were not able to buy new things," "often do not have the opportunity to buy new things," "sewing, knitting."

The main criterion for buying clothes and shoes was the price 80% to 40% - quality, 8% were guided by fashion trends, and 4% have sought to acquire previously inaccessible things. Vivid memories left of the acquired items' quality sheepskin ", leather jackets, down jackets, gloves, footwear, especially boots - all that was missing in the Soviet shelves.

In 1990-s. after commodity hunger Russians have the opportunity to purchase household appliances. Many have noted the purchase of TVs, mainly Korean and Japanese production, audio and video recorders, musical centers. Some respondents pointed out that "all the work and the purchase of equipment at this time. Yes, we were satisfied with the quality. "

3. CONCLUSION

In Soviet times, there was no appreciable social differentiation. Since the beginning of reforms in the everyday life includes such thing as a "new Russian" for the provincials signs of wealth at the time were having a car, the opportunity to go to the sea, to buy gold jewelry. Rich also thought of those who could buy any food, expensive clothes, a vacation abroad.

Among the respondents attributed the poor villagers, employees, retirees. Poor people had to stick to austerity even in the diet, while clothing and footwear purchases are for them a serious problem.

Participating in the survey, students of the Volga State Technological University essay so appreciated the results of the reforms in his essay:

K. Kostromina (in 2011 the first year student PSTU): "On the whole, the impression that the memories of the time of reforms E.T. Gaidar unpleasant to the respondents, the answers were negative note: as a result there were many reforms products and goods, but no money to buy them. "

A. Semenov (in 2011 the first year student PSTU): "... I had the impression that the company was too naive, it was not ready for the market economy."

One respondent said: "The situation changes only when the people were making an effort. We need to work and work hard. "

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