

Aklim Khaziev, Fanil Serebryakov, Zulfiya Ibragimova, Elena Uboitseva

WORLDVIEW FOUNDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

The very occurrence of post-Soviet Russia necessarily dictates the need to study ideological foundations of its existence. What are they? How did they influence and continue to influence the social well-being of the country: do they corrupt or contribute to the unity of society; do they strengthen Russians in pondering over the historical path of the country's development, or, on the contrary, bring confusion into the souls of people and prophesy trouble? The purpose of the paper is to study the language of everyday life as a kind of mirror reflecting the social well-being of the post-Soviet Russian Federation.

The authors' conclusions determine the novelty and practical significance of their research: until we get to know ourselves, Russia is doomed to face trouble. Search for a national idea is still one of the main theoretical problems which needs to be solved by social scientists. Proposing certain reasoning in defending their position, the authors, however, are open to criticism.

Keywords: social well-being of post-Soviet Russia, worldview, social cohesion, cultural and civilizational identity, culture of cancellation as cancellation of culture

INTRODUCTION

Social well-being is the highest social value which is associated with the prosperity of both individuals and society as a whole, since the pursuit of it is a fundamental motivation for the activity of social actors. This problem has always been at the centre of socio-philosophical constructions, especially in the context of a possible achievement by the state of some ideal condition when it would be resistant to internal and external shocks. In the mechanism of implementing such plans, the ideological factor – ideologies, common and theoretical ideas about individual, society and their place in the world – was of great importance: it is enough to recall Plato's "Republic", "The City of God" by St.

Augustine, "The City of the Sun" by T. Campanella, and the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" by K. Marx and F. Engels.

The social well-being of post-Soviet Russia is mainly considered from the standpoint of empirical sciences, both in Russian and non-Russian specialized literature, within which quantitative and qualitative criteria for measuring degrees of social well-being are formulated, current results are reflected, and the need to achieve a proper level of social well-being is substantiated. However, at the same time, the significance of the ideological component of successes and failures in the movement towards social well-being is out of focus and therefore the obvious truth is consciously or unconsciously ignored: social well-being is formed according to personal "templates" and is a result of their goal-setting.

In the aspect of interest to us, the problem is analysed by philosophers; the relevant literature can be presented as follows. The first stage of the post-Soviet development of the Russian Federation (approximately until the end of the 90s) is characterized by studies in which:

a) first of all, the need for a radical worldview reorientation of Russians is substantiated; the essence of this approach is country's transition towards Western civilization and absolute rejection of the experience of Soviet construction as the recipient of the worst traditions of the thousand-year history of Russia, and

b) axiological conditionality of the country's social ill-being is demonstrated (Akhiezer, 1994);

At the second stage of the post-Soviet history of the Russian Federation, after realizing that the death of the USSR was the largest geopolitical catastrophe of the late 20th century and especially after the famous speech by V. Putin in Munich in 2007, other publications begin to gain strength and significance. According to them, Russia's preservation of cultural and civilizational identity is considered not only as a condition for its social well-being, but also as a factor in ensuring the sovereignty of the country and even as a factor of stability in the world (Stepanyants, 2012).

We proceed from the well-known thesis that everyday life forms the "flesh and blood" of a person, and it – the being of a person – as Martin Heidegger argued, is reflected in the language (Heidegger, 2023). This determines the purpose and objectives of our work: to study the influence of worldview attitudes on the social well-being of the post-Soviet Russian Federation through the prism of analysing the language of everyday life. This approach allows one to check the effectiveness of social projects and, therefore, subject them to a timely correction. There is a lack of works devoted to the study of the problem from the point of view of interest to us, with the exception of several papers by the authors of this study (Khaziev, 2011; Khazieva et al., 2019; Khazieva et al., 2017). Hence the current research has a certain theoretical and practical significance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The authors of the study have been actively trying to grasp the realities of post-Soviet Russian everyday life from the first days of its appearance. Since everydayness implies complete immersion in the life world as it forms the "flesh and blood" not only of an individual, but also of the whole society and, moreover, everyday life is situational by definition, the authors are primarily applying the method of hermeneutical analysis of the problem. In addition, the work uses the methods of historical, logical and system analyses; these allow us to see the problem in its concreteness and integrity and, thereby, to get away from scholastic and metaphysical reasoning about everything and nothing and beyond the connection of the special with the individual and the universal. The experimental base of the study was live oral Russian speech, starting from 1991 to the present day. The focus is on the *memes* of everyday post-Soviet Russian culture; being informationally and emotionally significant words and expressions, they can be used as markers that characterize the social well-being of the country.

FINDINGS

Post-Soviet Russia is a social project in which there have been and still are interested forces both inside and outside the country. Their interest is determined, among other things, by their worldview: ideological, common and theoretical ideas about individual, society and their place in the world. The essence of this project – as, however, is declared by the beneficiaries of any other project – is the implementation of what is due, since, as they say, the existing state does not ensure the social well-being of the country. Initially, the demand of the day was expressed in the meme "*You can't live like this!*" The language of everyday life reported how it was possible and necessary to live: in the early 90s of the past century, two expressions dominated there – "*sovok*", pl. "*sovki*" (derived from "*Soviet*" and homonymous to the word "*scoop*") and "*new Russian*". They divided the population of Russia into people of the obsolete and the emerging formations. The former still drew their well-being in life on the basis of the principle "think about your Motherland first, and then about yourself" and therefore a worthy reward was expected for honest work and service for the benefit of the country. The well-being of the latter ("new Russians") was rooted in the exact opposite principle – that of the devil teacher from the famous Soviet cartoon "Imp No. 13": love yourself, pay no attention to everyone else and success awaits you in life. By robbing and appropriating public property, they grew rich – this is how the first Russian oligarchs appeared. By the way, the privatization of state property was often called these days "*prihvatization*", from infml. "*prihvatit*" – to steal.

Another line of social division and confrontation in post-Soviet Russian society ran along interethnic relations. As a result of the "great" migration of peoples from the former Soviet republics after the expulsion of the so-called "non-

titular" nations from there, the concept of "*ponaehavshiye*" ("having come in large numbers") appeared in the language of everyday life. It demonstrated such a discrepancy between the mentality of the immigrants and that of the local population, which, in fact, confirmed that visitors were perceived as strangers, although, as a rule, they were returning to their historical homeland and were of the same nationality as the locals. The concept of "*the individual of the Caucasian nationality*" spoke of a further aggravation of interethnic relations, reflecting the trend towards the disintegration of this new, post-Soviet Russia. And such concepts as "*Wahhabism*", "*Islamic fundamentalism*", "*Islamic suicide bombers*", "*counter-terrorist operation*" not only reflected the split within the Russian Federation along confessional lines, but at the same time emphasized that the confrontation had reached its climax: others began to be perceived not just as strangers, but as enemies. Meanwhile, they were part of the Russian people. The psychology of a belligerent country was reinforced in Russians, but the war in its essence was becoming a civil one.

Thus, both the way the post-Soviet Russian Federation emerged, as a result of the collapse of the USSR, and the proclaimed development strategy, as a return to the "highway of human civilization" implying the dominance of the values of the Anglo-Saxon world in the culture of the country, which, in fact, meant the abolition of multinational Russian culture, have doomed its people to social ill-being at the initial stage. Russia split, and first of all:

a) into those who remained loyal to socialist values – the so-called "*sovki*" – and those who abandoned them in favour of Western / capitalist principles – the so-called "new Russians";

b) into permanent residents on the territory of the republic and forced immigrants from the countries of the post-Soviet space – the so-called "*ponaehavshiye*"; this line of confrontation was rather dynamically erased;

c) according to ethno-confessional and geographical features; their peculiar interweaving gave rise to Islamic fundamentalism in the North Caucasus with claims to secession from the Russian Federation to create a caliphate within the region resulting in two Chechen wars and, in addition, an absurd wave of "sovereignizations" that swept across the country – with its regions gaining a formal independence.

The next stage in the life of post-Soviet Russia begins with the realization of the need to preserve the cultural and civilizational identity of the country as an unconditional task. The movement along this path turned out to be very difficult and contradictory, as was clearly demonstrated by the announcement and conduct of the so-called SVO (special military operation in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic). Part of the citizens of the Russian Federation – representatives of both the older and younger generations – not only turned out to be unprepared to accept the decision of the President of the country, but, in fact, directly opposed him by declaring the operation itself an aggression against a sovereign country, and those who supported this operation

– "*rashki*" (derog. from Russian). In their language, "*rashki*" are servants, brainless and dumb slaves, or, in other words, the same "*sovki*" in the new conditions. At the same time, they positioned themselves as individuals capable of contemplating the deepest causes of existence and foreseeing the fundamental directions of human development. In fact, these were the same "new Russians" of the late twentieth century.

More precisely – almost the same. The fact is that in the everyday life of post-Soviet Russia, where individual acquires flesh and blood, there were systemic changes that, ultimately, led to a change in value orientations. First of all, a person turned into a consumer, mainly of material values and those spiritual values that constitute the worship of the "golden calf". Moreover, the quantity and quality of what was consumed had to convince the environment that the life of the consumer of material goods was not in vain. In post-Soviet Russia, a generation has grown up for which consumerism has become the goal and meaning of life, and the culture of glamor is perhaps the most disgusting embodiment of this phenomenon which in Russian has received the name "*potreblyatstvo*" (coined from "consumerism" and "promiscuity", a free translation of "allfluenza", or a disease of an uncontrolled consuming (de Graaf et al., 2003)).

Another facet of consumerism (as we think, more terrible in its results than the worship of material goods) is connected with the purposeful and methodical implantation of the standards of the Western way of life into the fabric of the everyday life of common Russians. In the economy and trade, this, of course, practically means the rejection of the ruble as a unit of currency in favour of the dollar and the euro. In the sphere of education, including primary, secondary, and higher – this is the transition to the so-called "client principle", when the teacher actually turns into a mere transmitter of an amount of knowledge, ceasing to be an "engineer of souls"; this has been happening in full agreement with the policy of de-ideologization of society that was proclaimed on the wave of its de-communization following the Western curators of the new shepherds of Russia. In art, baseness and outright vulgarity became clear favourites – after all, not a single project in this area would pay off otherwise. In political and legal life, the supremacy of the laws of Western European civilization has been outlined, and so on and so forth. Ultimately, for a considerable part of citizens, primarily for the so-called elite of society: politicians, officials, business leaders, athletes, cultural figures, Russia has become a place for ensuring their material and financial well-being and its subsequent investment in the economy of the West. All this gradually but inevitably led to the abolition of the culture of their country and its replacement with global (i.e. Western) values. Modern individual is now a Russian only by passport, but in spirit, values – she is anti-Russian; time will come and she will openly declare that she is ashamed to be Russian, i.e. a citizen of Russia and is willing to change citizenship to Armenian, Kazakh, Israeli, etc.

This is what a representative of the modern generation of "new Russians" looks like, in contrast to the older generation. And, consequently, social stratification (and confrontation) not only maintained, but also intensified during all these years, now along the "top – bottom" line. With the beginning of the SVO, an attempt if not to overcome, but at least to mitigate it through introducing the ideologemes "We are a single people", or the "Russian world", requires a methodical and filigree policy and, at best, can work in the long term. Today, these ideologemes are more likely to bring confusion into the minds and disorganize society, since they do not give a clear answer to the question "With whom are we united?" With those who have citizenship, but mentally frankly despise everything Russian? With people "without a homeland and a flag"? With Russian speakers who consider themselves Europeans and anti-Russians? It seems that in the conditions of confrontation with the so-called "collective West" (in fact, of a war with it), the motto "Arise, vast country, arise for a fight to the death" (the first lines of "The Sacred War", the most famous Soviet song of the Second World War by A. Alexandrov and V. Lebedev-Kumach) has a much greater potential to unite society, at least because it erases ethno-confessional, linguistic, geographical differences between the peoples of Russia and, thereby, already contributes to social cohesion, and, therefore, to social well-being.

DISCUSSION

The problem of the country's social well-being is multifaceted, which in itself causes arguments not only about the ways and means of achieving it, but also of the interpretation of the very concept of "social well-being". We believe that in modern conditions, social cohesion is the embodiment of the social well-being of the Russian Federation, firstly because this country is a multicultural entity, and secondly, because the entire so-called "collective West" has declared war on Russia to destroy it. Hence, it seems highly controversial to focus only on the relations of ethno-confessional tolerance without promoting the ideas and practices of internationalism and, moreover, to reduce social well-being to the human development index. However, ignoring the significance of the HDI would lead to ignoring the social stratification (and it is significant) of modern Russian society in terms of financial and material criteria (Degotkova, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The conclusions to be drawn are as follows. First, during the existence of post-Soviet Russia, ideological attitudes have been twice radically rethought: a) at the first stage of transformations, the values of the so-called "highway of human civilization" (in fact, a synonym for the Anglo-Saxon path of development), which, they say, will lead Russians to a brighter future, were elevated to the absolute; b) at the second stage, the opposite conclusion has been formulat-

ed, after realizing that not only implementing the previous strategy does not contribute to the social well-being of the country, but can also in practice lead to losing Russia's cultural and civilizational identity and even to its complete disappearance from the political map of the world.

Second, if orientation towards Western values divided the society into "old" and "new" Russians, then their rejection added to this a considerable dose of uncertainty about the idea that unites Russians. Worldview shying from one extreme to another not only negates social cohesion, but, on the contrary, increases the disunity of the society. From this point of view, modern Russia is split, and its social well-being is doubtful, as evidenced by the language of everyday life, which vividly reacts to the nature of social relations in society.

In the context of modern geopolitical realities, the study of the ideological foundations of the social well-being of post-Soviet Russia is certainly relevant, because it concerns directly not only its cultural and civilizational identity, but also the existence of the country in general. The language of everyday life is a kind of mirror reflecting the social cohesion of society as a barometer of its well-being. Its analysis demonstrates the social disunity of Russians according to various criteria. Perhaps the most disturbing is the presence of those who behave like cosmopolitans, people "without a homeland and a flag", among which there are top officials, representatives of big businesses, and people of art. Hundreds of thousands of young people of military age left the country, reluctant to defend it: their Motherland is not Russia, but Israel, England, Turkey. Being Russian is not profitable.

REFERENCES

- Akhiezer, A. S. 1994. "Values of Society and the Possibility of Reforms in Russia." *Social sciences and modernity* [In Russian], 1, 17-27.
- Degotkova, I. 2021. "Experts announced the growth of social tension due to income inequality". *RosBiznesKonsalting* [In Russian]; <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/22/10/2021/61717af09a7947d66f23f5ec>
- de Graaff, J., Vann, D., Naylor T. H. 2003. *Consumerism. A disease that Threatens the World*. Ultra-Culture, 2003.
- Heidegger, M. 2023. *Letter on "Humanism"* <https://wagner.edu/psychology/files/2013/01/Heidegger-Letter-On-Humanism-Translation-GROTH.pdf>
- Khaziev, A. Kh. 2011. "Vocabulary of Post-Soviet Russia: Some Features of Formation." In: *Situational studies. Situational picture of the world* [In Russian]. N. M. Solodukho (Ed.). Kazan: Kazan National Research Technical University named after A. N. Tupolev, 118-125.
- Khazieva, N., Khaziev, A., Klyushina, E., Stepanenko, G., Stepanenko, R. 2017. "'Friends' and 'Foes' in the Social Space of the Tatar Ethnic Group." *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 1237-1244.
- Khazieva, N. O., Khaziev A. K., Klyushina, E. V. 2019. "Russia in the Focus of the Existence and the Due." *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*, 7 (6), 107-110.

Stepanyants, M.T. 2012. "Culture as Security-Guarantor of Russia." *Voprosy filosofii* [In Russian], 1, 3-13.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS —

Aklım Khaziev — PhD in philosophical sciences, Assistant Professor, FGBOU VO Kazan Federal University, Author ID: 56414892800, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1681-022X.

Email: aklım.haziev@yandex.ru

Fanıl Serebryakov — PhD in philosophical sciences, Assistant Professor, FGBOU VO Kazan Federal University, ORCID ID 0000-0002-0788-8212

E-mail: fanserebr@yandex.ru

Zulfiya Ibragimova — PhD in philosophical sciences, Assistant Professor, FGBOU VO Kazan Federal University, Researcher.

E-mail: yuldyz@rambler.ru

Elena Uboitseva — PhD in social sciences, Assistant Professor, FGBOU VO Kazan State Power Engineering University.

E-mail: elv12006@mail.ru