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LENIGRAD COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES: IMPARTIAL REALITY AND ITS
REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR OF PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS*

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*The views expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Secretariat of UNIDO. This document has not been edited.

Cooperative movement & all with it connected attracts public attention today. However, at the meetings and shop smoking rooms, in press and broadcasting, at the family tables a polemic had been held is on emotional level.

It is difficult to find out publications had been written in order to study contemporary condition of cooperative movement, tendencies of its development both all over the country & its regions.

It's more less investigations of a public opinion on the points of cooperative movement.

The authors of that researching tried to answer three questions: what is the cooperative sector in the city's economy today; what's the reaction of Leningradians on that point & at last what's the connection between people's reaction & their personal economical consciousness.

So, let's look at the Leningrad cooperatives today in the background of a Republic & the whole country.

There are the results of our researchings: cooperative movement in Leningrad is more broadly than in Russia & even in The USSR.

So, in the Leningrad cooperatives 2,12 % of all inhabitants are busied, just as in Russia 0,48 % & in the USSR 0,49%.

And 1,04 % in Leningrad; 0,25 in Russia & 0,26 % in the USSR are busied today in cooperatives only without another job.

Further we shall compare indexes only between Leningrad & the USSR because of likeness of all indexes in Russia & the USSR.

There are bigger cooperatives in our city. An average index for Leningrad cooperatives is 32 workers & for the country it is 18 workers.

The annual volume of services is 333 thousand roubles against 78 in the country, & 977 roubles a month to each worker against 362 accordingly in Leningrad & in the USSR.

Then, earnings in the Leningrad cooperatives are more higher / 349 roubles against 129 all over the country/ moreover, it is known that a lot of a pay salary funds in the value of realized production is some higher in our cooperatives / 39,8% against 35,6 % /.

However, only a quarter of all volume of services realized, so, only 0,62 roubles of each one rouble

of the earnings discharged by the production, that had been sold to the people directly.

All these peculiarities are typical for all kinds of cooperative activities.

As to the structure of cooperative movement, our city is different from cooperatives along the country essentially. So, there are cooperatives of public catering least of all / 3,1 per cent against 9,8 through the country/. There are only 1,4 per cent of all cooperative workers in Leningrad busied in cooperatives of public catering against 4,5 per cent in the USSR.

Specific weight of such cooperatives in the whole volume of services is 1,1 per cent in Leningrad and 5,8 per cent in the country.

There are least of all cooperatives of living facilities in Leningrad / by the volume of services it is 15 per cent in our city and 22,7 per cent through the USSR/, as well as for the production of consumer goods / 18,8 and 25,5 per cent accordingly/.

Meanwhile, there are much more specialized cooperatives in Leningrad, such as medical, scientific and technical, building cooperatives, etc./. Possibly, such differences in their structure are connected with more provisions, consumer goods and living facilities that our citizens being provided with. Besides there are more skilled specialists in Leningrad.

However, we have not necessary information for comparison with the whole country, when it concerning commercial and commercially-purchasing cooperatives which forms 3,5 per cent number of busied and 11 per cent of the whole volume of services in the cooperative sector of Leningrad.

Let's consider in details the statistics of cooperative movement in one of the central districts of our city, which characteristics are approximately similar all-city's.

Value of realized production by the district cooperatives less value of raw material had been used up is in average 938 roubles a month for one worker / including some who hold more than one office/, just as an average level of the pay salary had been 352 roubles a month / it is 37,5 per cent of previous index, which may be interpret as approximate index of labour productivity/. For example: an average level of labour productivity for workers, employees and collective farmers during 1988 ye. was 557 roubles a month for person through the country, now the median month pay salary was 217 roubles or 39 per cent of the labour productivity index. So, the cooperatives' activities had been considerably more effective than state enterprises and it naturally led to the higher level of a

pay salary. But, in spite of a widespread opinion, the part of a pay salary in the volume of realization is not larger for the cooperatives than for the state enterprises.

It's become clear during our researching, that commercial and commercially-purchasing cooperatives /which personifies cooperative sector of economics in fact in the critic's opinion/ concentrates only a quarter of volume of realization by cooperatives in whole.

Besides, these two kinds of cooperatives are differ from each other by the specific weight of realization of services to the people directly; for the commercial cooperatives those index is 90.5 per cent against 24 per cent for the commercially-purchasing cooperatives.

In the dependence of the kind of cooperative, the level of a pay salary fluctuated strongly. So it is only 200 roubles a month for a person in the cooperatives of public catering against 538 roubles in the cooperatives produced consumer goods.

Cooperatives of various types differ from each other by the dimension. Cooperatives, produced the consumer goods busied about 42 workers and cooperatives of living facilities busied about 41 workers, are the largest. Commercially-purchasing cooperatives busied about 12,5 workers, commercial cooperatives - about 13,2 and public catering cooperatives - 14,5 workers, are the smallest.

According to the adduced statistics, the role of cooperatives in the city's economics and in the satisfaction of the requirements of citizens is rather modest.

According to the results of sociological interrogatories only about 3 per cent of Leningradians used the cooperative services regularly, 64 - 75 per cent had a single contact and 25 - 36 per cent had not applied to cooperatives at all.

However, cooperatives attracts public attention today as an object of political struggle.

Because of the scantiness of impartial information a stereotype estimation that "people are against cooperatives" had been turn out. In fact /according to the interrogatories/ most of people thinking positive of cooperatives and consider the cooperative movement be not harmful. But in spite of reality exactly supporters and well-disposers felt themselves in minority.

Asking the question what the surrounding people think of the cooperative movement, 54,5 per cent of respondents noted:

"most of all are against cooperative movement" and only 13 per cent noted: "most of all supported this movement".

Such interrogatories had been held by the programme of Sociological Institute of Academy of Sciences of the USSR in ten cities. Corresponding figures are: 50,1 and 15,5 per cent by superiority in number of supporters of cooperative movement over its opponents.

Another interrogatory was held in Leningrad at the same time /in the summer of 1989/ according to the programme of the state Committee of Statistics of the USSR. It revealed that most of people declined to the many-sided estimation in this sphere. Such a position had been conditioned by the real contradiction between predomination of positive general purpose for the cooperatives and negative general estimation of the results of their work. Apparently, such many-sided estimation may be explained by understanding the variousity of cooperative movement itself in less degree.

So, no more than one of every six respondents noted at the same time as "desire to earn according to their work, to improve their financial situation" /positive reason/, so as "aspiration to incomes and enrichment" /negative position/ among the main motives as regards cooperatives and individual labour.

At the same time 40-45 per cent of respondents noted only one reason without another.

The general directions to the cooperative movement had been displayed in the prognosis of its development in the near future. By the results of both interrogatories more than a third of Leningradians are waiting for its increase. Moreover, most of them are waiting for not prompt and not easy increase.

Only 13 - 15 per cent considered cooperatives would be abolished.

Among the estimations of various measures which the powers undertook according to the present condition of cooperation, the intensification of the control had been marked mostly /67,5 per cent against 7,5 per cent, who spoke out relaxation of control / as so as supporting of the state enterprises /66 per cent/. 39 per cent of respondents expressed an opinion, that "we must not to prevent people in their work".

Combination of these two measures characterize the paternalistic direction inherited to 1/3 - 2/3 of respondents.

The questionnaire of sociological institute suggested to speak on the subject and to give a definition to cooperators and cooperative movement. These definitions had been classified according to the purposes which were brighten up in the following way:

- 1/ positiv attitude
- 2/ negativ attitude
- 3/ differential attitude
- 4/ abstractely positiv - concretely negativ / the plan is well, but.../
- 5/ emotionally neutral attitude / when the business aspect had been mostly emphasize /.

Analises showed that 21 per cent of respondents were positiv to cooperators, 20,5 per cent were emotionally neutral, 16 per cent were differentially, 13,5 per cent - negatively and 7 per cent were abstractely positiv but concretly negativ.

Attitude to the cooperative movement is more polar: 28,5 per cent have a positiv attitude, 20 per cent - negativ, 13 per cent are abstractly positiv but concretly negativ, 9,5 per cent - emotionally neutral and 4,5 per cent - differentially.

We must pay attention to some prevalence of positiv positions over negativ and relatively the little number of characteristics, free from emotions /that is free from praising or total hostility/.

In the answers to the questions in a form information had been cept not only about the object of judgement but also about respondents themselves.

Attitude to those object may become the basis for individual typology. The importance of such typology of course would be depend on pithiness of attitude putting into basis.

Authors tried to typologized public consciousness of Leningradians/worked up/by the special methodics / the answers of more over 1 thousand 500 respondents to one of the questions of the form.

That question concerned such problem as "which kind of work and by whom it must be done".

There are various kinds of answers had been offered:

- 1/ only by cooperatores and individual workers
- 2/ by cooperatives /individual workers/ and by the state enterprises
- 3/ by the state enterprises only.

The list included 22 kinds of job: from manufacturing and repairing of clothers and boots and shoes to carrying out the passenger and cargo transports including individual medical, educationary, information, cultural and amusement, etc.

In each form the parts of such kinds of job which respondent attributed only to cooperative /individual/ sector /it is the index of privity of the economical consciousness/, than only to the state sector /the index of totalitary consciousness/ and at last both spheres at the same time / it is the index of pluralistical consciousness/ had been calculated.

Distribution of respondents according to the meanings of these indexes are in the list :

Meaning %	Indexes, %		
	Private consciousness	Totalitary consciousness	Pluralistic consciousness
0	52,5	18,6	16,1
0 - 0,25	34,6	27,8	11,3
0,25-0,50	9,4	27,0	18,0
0,50-0,75	2,8	14,5	31,0
0,75-0,95	0,3	6,8	17,2
0,95-1,0	0,4	5,4	6,4
Average	0,103	0,337	0,48

We see that private consciousness is not typical for Leningradians / only 3,5 % have corresponding index more than 0,5/.

At the same time 26,7% of respondents have index of the totalitary consciousness more than 0,5. But the pluralistic consciousness is the most widespreading /54,6 % of respondents have index more than 0,5/.

Analysis showed that among the factors been fixed during the interrogatory the foundation & the dimension of profit for each family member /a considerable positiv correlation/ & the age /a considerable negativ correlation/ influenced visirable on pluralistic consciousness.

A degree of totalitariness of consciousness also is much depends on the age & education / but with the opposite sign of bond/.

Besides that is has been connected with the level of satisfaction by work & with a pay salary dimention, which would be enough for a normal life / correlation is negative in both cases/.

As for the index of private consciousness it has been connected with respondent's orientation to be busy in cooperatives /correlation is positiv/.

The facts offered here are not settled contents of material had been received & would be elaborate futher.

However, it is necessary to notice today that government must reveal what working people are thinking about those question in fact, not by the words of some zealous "reflectors of working people interests" & then it will be possible to decide some serious problems.