



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

OCCASION

This publication has been made available to the public on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

DISCLAIMER

This document has been produced without formal United Nations editing. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, or its economic system or degree of development. Designations such as “developed”, “industrialized” and “developing” are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. Mention of firm names or commercial products does not constitute an endorsement by UNIDO.

FAIR USE POLICY

Any part of this publication may be quoted and referenced for educational and research purposes without additional permission from UNIDO. However, those who make use of quoting and referencing this publication are requested to follow the Fair Use Policy of giving due credit to UNIDO.

CONTACT

Please contact publications@unido.org for further information concerning UNIDO publications.

For more information about UNIDO, please visit us at www.unido.org



18357

Distr.
LIMITED

ID/WG.498/26(SPEC.)
21 May 1990

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Interregional Symposium on the Role
of the Industrial Co-operative Movement in
Economic and Industrial Development

7p.

Moscow, USSR, 11-15 June 1990

COOPERATORS IN THE CONTEXT OF OPINIONS
ON SOCIAL JUSTICE*

Prepared by

I. M. Popova
and
B. B. Moin

5/

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

1. Views on social justice (SJ) are an essential component of mass consciousness, an important criterion in estimation of social phenomena and social groups. In public opinion, and mass information appraisal of cooperation movement is presented in the main from the stand point of (SJ). These ideas function in mass consciousness. As a rule, "effaced" form, not always differentiated from the concepts of "good-bad", "normal-abnormal", they intereseect with the ideas of good, conscience, and other moral criteria. Nevertheless, it is precisely the fact that (SJ) concepts, as some researchers think, represent the core of values upon which rests the public opinion.

2. Considering co-operators in the context of opinions on (SJ), we will dwell on two questions: (1) how does public opinion estimate cooperators in accordance with (SJ) criterion; (2) what is the specific character of (SJ) concepts of cooperators themselves, in what respect their ideas and connected with them appraisals of social phenomena differ from the views and evaluations held by the workers engaged in government sector. The first question is analysed on the basis of material derived from press interrogation, carried out in Odessa region in December 1988 (N=600), the second - on the data obtained in selective questionnaire among Odessa population (1989), N=800). To reveal specific character of cooperators views on (SJ), a comparative analysis of their opinion was carried out (n=50), and that of the workers engaged in government sector (n=750). Indisputably the data obtained are not representational and cannot be used to characterize the opinions of the whole

population, or of all cooperators in our country. At the same time, this allowed in our view, to reveal a number of important features concerning the concepts of cooperators (C) on (SJ) in comparison with the views held by government workers (GW).

3. The opinions of the population about (C) were brought to light in the context of estimations given by other groups. For this purpose were used two overt questions: "Representatives of which population groups violate social justice more often?" and "Which groups of population, in your opinion, receive from the society more than they give?" In the first and the second case the object of criticism were, first of all, other groups, but not the cooperators. According to those who had been questioned, (SJ) is more often violated by "superiors", "directors" (37%), workers of Party bodies (33%), workers of soviet bodies (26%), trade workers (24%) and only 2% named "cooperators" and "private traders". Get from the society "considerably more than they give" - workers of Party bodies (34%), "superiors" (25%), trade workers (19%), soviet bodies (16%), workers of communal services (12%) cooperators, private traders (9%). This shows that by appraising various groups from the stand point of social justice, public opinion gives the cooperators, by far, not the worst rating. And yet, means of mass information are trying persistently to prove that it is the cooperators who evoke the greatest dissatisfaction and irritation of the population, and their activity is assessed as direct violation of (SSSJ) principles.

4. In order to show specific features of concepts on (SJ) of cooperative members, a comparison was made of the opinions of (C) and (GW). (a) (SJ) violations among their own workers and measures in fighting against these violations; (b) (SJ)

violations in society and reasons for their occurrence, and ways to strengthen (SJ);
(c) "models" (patterns) of a fair society.

5. On the whole, both (C) and (GW) admitted that there are violations of (SSJ) by the workers of their collectives. At the same time (C) gave a relatively higher estimation of the situation among their workers. Particularly there are considerable differences in adhering to the principles of (SJ) in the process of raising the category, promotions (indexes of standards from -1 to +1 are accordingly equal for (GW)= -.25, (C)= -.027, payments for labour (GW= -.44, (C)= -.19). Those that were questioned consider their pay for work unfair - (GW) 65% and (C) 45%.

6. Estimations of people's attitude to violations on (SJ) as presented by (C) and (GW) also differ. (GW) think that the people are more active (32% of GW think that the workers protest against manifestations of injustice, while such opinion is shared only by 18% of C); (GW) to a greater extent are certain that in the case of controversy with the administration they will be supported by their co-workers (GW= .26; C= .67); their dependence on administrations is smaller; when asked whether they would be worried if the answers contained in questionnaire could become known to the administration, affirmatively replied 28% GW and 41% C. This data shows that at the present stage the cooperatives have developed a stronger form of personal dependence of workers on the directors, on one hand, and there exists a weaker spirit of collectivism, of mutual support among the workers, a strong sense of estrangement from one another.

7. Cooperators more critically than the GW estimate the level of (SJ), both in the society (GW= .30; C= .75) and in the city (GW= .64; C= .81). Their judgement for

the reasons leading to unfairness in society is characteristically radical: majority of (C) (67%) think that the basic responsibility for violations of (SJ) lies upon the "social system itself", while among (GW) this point of view is shared only by 28%. According to (C) (SJ) is more often violated by the workers of party and soviet bodies administration. Such is the opinion of 90% of (C) and 45% of (GW). The basic form in fighting to strengthen (SJ) the (C) think are necessary - fundamental economic reform (33%), and creation of new social organisations, informal unions, development of mass social movements (31%). Out of the number of (GW) questioned in this regard, this stand is shared by 42% and 4% respectively.

8. Special emphasis should be made on comparison of "models" for a fair society shared by (C) and (GW). They were offered seven "models" of a fair society: (I) "equalizing" - a fair society where essential differences in the standard of living and well-being are absent. This "model" was approved by: (GW)= 44%, (C) = 45%; (II) "Proportional" - differences in standards of living, well-being may be considerable, but in a fair society they depend only on a labour contribution (GW= 68%; C= 98%); (III) "guaranteed minimum" - a fair society should provide all people the possibility to satisfy their essential needs (in housing, food, etc) regardless of the magnitude of their labour contribution, (GW= 54%; C=45%); (IV) "equal possibilities" - a fair society is such where everybody has equal chances for realisation of their abilities, the same possibilities to succeed in life - (GW= 80%; C=98%); (V) "ethical" - a fair society which conforms with all moral norms morally - (GW= 77%; C= 100%); (VI) "legitimistic" - fair is everthing that does not contradict established laws - (GW= 44%; C= 30%); (VII) 'democratic" - a fair

society where everyone can participate in discussions, elaboration and adoption of decisions in the most important issues - (GW=82%; C= 85%).

The system of conceptions on (SJ) of (C) and GW), as has been shown, is considerably contradictory and vague. In their ideas on (SJ) they have a lot in common, and at the same time are evident considerable differences. The differences are also revealed in general hierarchy of a fair society "models" (C allotted the first place to "ethical model", GW to 'democratic'). And in significance rating C assigns great importance to the following models: "proportional distribution" (Δ variational scope = 30%), "ethical" ($\Delta = 23\%$), "equal possibilities" ($\Delta = 18\%$), "legitimistic" ($\Delta = 14\%$), and the "model" of "guaranteed minimum" ($\Delta = 9\%$).

9. Some interest presents the opinion of C about their own personal experiences in fighting against social injustice, their attitude which found its expression in estimation of assurance in tomorrow, and satisfaction in general. C more often than GW come to face with injustice dealt to them by the officials and organisations. At the same time the actions of C in their struggle against injustice, as a rule, have been ineffective. The majority of C (68%) in one way or another are not satisfied with the conditions of their living, and to a much greater extent than GW feel the uncertainty of the future (respectively 83% and 52%).

10. And so, as evidenced by the data obtained, conceptions on (SJ) of cooperators to a considerable degree differ from those of GW. C to a greater extent favour the "ethical" model of a fair society, principles of distribution in proportion to labour contribution, and equal opportunities for each member of society. Majority of them

think that following adopted laws, by far not always ensures the observance of (SJ). Cooperators are more critical in estimating the state of affairs in our society (96% consider that (SJ) is not observed; 92% consider that in the nearest coming years it is hardly feasible to achieve substantial consolidation in (SJ). Cooperators tend to characteristic political radicalism; responsible for violation of (SJ) they consider, first of all, social system itself (67%), workers of the party, soviets, komsomol and trade-union bodies administration (90%); for consolidation of (SJ), they think is necessary not only fundamental economic reform, but establishment of new social organisations, informal unions, development of mass social movements.

Estimates of (SJ) observance within the cooperatives are far from being satisfactory, but at the same time they are considerably higher than those of GW (especially in labour payments). And although this fact in itself is positive, in appraising the activity of C from the stand point of (SJ), we should not overlook the other side. Members of cooperatives, according to the data obtained, find themselves, as a rule, in great personal dependence on administration, they are greatly troubled by their opinion concerning cooperators' activity, less often venture to come out into the open opposition against violations of (SJ) within their collectives, to a lesser degree rely on support of their co-workers in cases of conflicts with the administration.

11. How can be defined the revealed peculiarity of cooperators conceptions on (SJ)? Socially-demographic characteristics of questioned cooperatives in present case do not play a definite role. After elimination of the influence of education level and age, this peculiarity remained. At the same time, taking into consideration the

"youth" of cooperation movement, it would have hardly been proper to explain the specific character of C views on (SJ) only under the influence of the organisational form itself, i.e. the cooperative basis. It may be supposed that essential effect in given case is rendered by personal qualities of cooperators. In present conditions is taking place, so to speak, selection of participants in cooperative movement based on their personal qualities. In our specific conditions cooperative activity involves, first of all, people with definite orientations and purposes, evoked by views on grown values, life experience and higher exigencies.