

Crisis of Higher Education in Russia

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of the causes of the higher education crisis in Russia in the post-Soviet period. The authors proceed from the point of view that the basis of modern civilization is industry and therefore the fundamental function of higher education is to train specialists for industry and the socio-economic sphere of society. Thus, there is a steady correlation between the type of economy and the type of higher education. The universities of the West (the Humboldt model) with their academic freedoms are ideally suited to a market-type economy, Soviet universities with their authoritarianism in the learning process - to the Soviet, socialist, planned economy. The problems of the post-Soviet higher education are related to the fact that universities, adapted to the planned economy, are now forced to function in a society that has shifted to a certain extent to the market model.

Index Terms: Higher school, western model of higher school, Soviet model of higher school, market economy, planned economy, post-Soviet Russia education reforms

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our research is to study the causes of the crisis state of modern Russian higher education.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks are considered:

- 1) Consideration of the main aspects of the crisis;
- 2) Consideration of the model of Western higher education, on the model of which educational reforms were carried out in post-Soviet Russia;
- 3) Consideration of the model of the Soviet higher education, which is essentially subject to transformation and reform in the post-Soviet period;
- 4) Consideration of the economic context of Western and Soviet higher education;
- 5) Identification of relations of the post-Soviet higher education and its socio-economic environment.

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II. METHODS

The study used general scientific, logical methods such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, modeling. In addition, the comparative method was used (comparing Western and Soviet higher education) and the method of sociocultural determination of education (determining the impact of the socioeconomic environment on the higher education model) [1-3].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presence of a higher education crisis in Russia is beyond doubt [4-6]. The quality of education is falling, the share of overt and hidden unemployed among graduates is high: some cannot get a job, others do not work in their specialty. There is a huge bias in the direction of graduation of lawyers and economists, but the country lacks engineers, doctors, teachers. The teaching staff is aging, the material and technical base of universities is becoming outdated [7-8].

It is often said that it is necessary to change the state policy towards higher education. The question is: how to change? Some believe that our system of higher education, which was created largely during the Soviet years, is in itself quite effective. Reforming it as such is not necessary, but you just need to better finance it. Others argue: you need to learn from the countries of the West, because it is the universities of the West and above all the United States that are in the lead in the modern world occupying the top lines of international ratings. To do this, we need to introduce academic freedoms and academic mobility in our universities, both in Europe and in the USA. The problem is that both the authorities and the other have tried and failed. They carried out the Bologna reform, introduced, as far as possible, freedom and mobility, rewrote the program, but, alas, no tangible, significant changes took place. On the other hand, more and more money is allocated by the state to support higher education, but funding is still sorely lacking.

It seems that our reformers of higher education, as always, did not take into account the peculiarities of our country. The Russian system of universities, as already mentioned, was built mainly in Soviet times (before the revolution, there were only 63 universities in Russia). It was built on the basis of completely different principles than the Western high school and performed other social functions. This is the main reason for its crisis today.

Higher education institutions throughout the world are designed to train specialists

(even if they are not called specialists, but bachelors or masters) for industry, agriculture, and the social sphere (education, health, culture, etc.) [9-12]. Since the basis of modern civilization is industry (all other infrastructures — from secondary schools to theaters and cinema are somehow adapted to support industrial civilization, such as its phenomena as national culture), universities play a key role in higher education, training specialists for industry. Thus, in the USSR, out of 881 universities that existed in the country at the dawn of the Soviet era, more than 30% were universities preparing for engineering and technical specialties, about 22% were pedagogical universities, about 13% were agricultural, more than 9% were medical. Economic and legal universities accounted for only about 5% of the total number [2]. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give appropriate statistics on American universities, as the engineer's training there is divided into two stages, the first of which is obtaining a bachelor of science degree from a university. But according to polls of sociologists, the engineering profession in the USA is one of the most sought-after and a significant number of applicants are going to study engineering.

However, in the West and in the USSR industry was included in the economic system of opposite types: in the West it was a market capitalist economy, in the USSR it was a socialist, planned one. It is clear that the training of specialists for production built into a market economy should be radically different from the corresponding preparation for a planned economy, if only because of the differences between these economies.

To begin with, the market economy is self-regulating, so one can never say how many specialists and what profile is needed in 5-10 years. It may well turn out that by the end of his studies, an applicant who wants to enter a specialty of a certain profile will find that the relevant production has already disappeared, having been ousted by a more advanced and high-tech one and no one needs such specialists.

The main feature of a market economy: it depends on consumer demand. Therefore, the manufacturer is interested here in finding new and new markets, which forces him to create new products that will interest buyers, and therefore new technologies. This feature of Western industry requires a flexible system of training specialists for it. The way it is. First, Western higher education is divided into two stages: undergraduate and graduate. The bachelor degree gives the general higher education with a minimum of specialization, the magistracy gives already specialized education. The two-tier system allows you to quickly restructure in view of the changes that have occurred in the industry and the world of technology, and may even abandon its original intention altogether.

Secondly, in Western universities there is freedom of study. This means that there is a minimum of compulsory disciplines, the main part - special courses that the student himself can choose, and, in any department [5]. This provides even greater flexibility in training specialists. Already in the process of study, a student can adjust his curriculum to reflect changes in the area where he is going to work.

By the way, in the field of education, as in the economy, the principle of competition leads to a large labor-intensiveness and resource-intensiveness of the system. The Western economy consumes up to 70% of the planet's resources and needs hundreds of millions of workers, because in the sphere where there was one production in the USSR, there are five of them in the West - so that there is a choice for the buyer. It is the same with universities - so that students can choose between different courses, it is necessary that there should be three or even four on the place of one teacher. Western, above all, American universities can afford it, because they seek scientists from around the world.

Of course, after graduation no one guarantees the graduate work: the choice may be wrong, in this area such specialists are not needed, then the graduate will join the army of the unemployed.

So, the Bologna system (in all its aspects, from two-level education to academic mobility) is adapted for the training of specialists precisely in a market economy. However, in Russia they tried to apply it to the system of higher education institutions, which was created in Soviet times and was adapted to a completely different - planned state economy.

Planned economy, unlike the market is not self-regulating. It is regulated rationally, by ascertaining the needs of society and meeting them through government orders distributed to enterprises and institutions. A key role was played by such an organization as the State Planning Committee of the USSR. The State Planning Committee has accumulated information from ministries and departments about what kind of specialists and in which areas of the national economy will be needed in the next 5 years. Then, on the basis of this information, a plan was drawn up in the State Planning Committee for admission for a particular university, which went down to the relevant ministry (most often, to the ministry of higher education). The ministry was finalizing the plan and dropping it to subordinate universities, and they were obliged to provide the necessary number of specialists in 5 years.

But in order for the Soviet university to fulfill the state task of graduating specialists on time, it is necessary that training in it be organized in a certain way. Western academic freedoms, suggesting that the student chooses his own courses, teachers, he himself determines which exams at which year of study he will take, with the flip side to have a significant increase in the length of study. One of the main problems of European higher education is the "eternal students" who, instead of the prescribed 3 or 4 years, study for 5, 6, or even 7 years. But until recently, in France and Germany, for example, higher education was free, that is, the study of "eternal students" was paid by taxpayers.

In the Soviet Union, the learning process was built in an authoritarian way. After the choice of the faculty, the student had already chosen very little (unless a foreign language and department, in which he began to specialize from the 3rd course). The dean's office set him a

schedule of classes, a list of subjects that he should listen to and pass, a list of teachers who would read these subjects. If a student did not pass several exams in time, then he was expelled from the university (while a western student could pass a difficult exam for the next year or move to another department, retaining the points scored).

The work of the Soviet higher education institution, as well as the entire national-economic complex, was subordinated to the plan: it was developed in the ministry, went down to the higher educational institutions and was refined in the teaching and methodical departments and entered the faculties. In this plan, which was called the curriculum, it was indicated what subjects and to what extent the student should listen and pass in order to get the knowledge and skills sufficient for the relevant specialist. On the basis of this curriculum, a schedule of classes (tests or examinations) for students and teachers, as well as cards of individual workload for teachers were developed. A student who could not cope with the curriculum was subject to expulsion from the university and vice versa, coping with the curriculum well — encouraged by a scholarship — regular or advanced. It should be noted that the academic scholarship is a Russian invention. In the West, there are only targeted scholarships, for example, for the disabled or the poor, because according to the logic of the western education system, paying a student for a good study is absurd, as the student learns for himself to continue his career. In a Soviet university, a student did not study for himself, but for the state and the state decided: where and how much he would work after graduation. From this point of view, it is natural and correct that service to the state through the forced labor of students requires payment in the form of an academic scholarship.

So, the main elements of the higher education system in the West are a bunch of “labor market - universities”, because the needs of the economy here are revealed through the market and specialists graduated by universities enter the market. The main elements of the system of higher education in the USSR were “The State Planning Committee of the USSR — universities — the mechanism for the distribution of specialists”. We have already said that a market economy is much more costly than planned. This is also seen in the comparison of two systems of higher education - capitalist and socialist. The market shows only the need for specialists, which are available now, and not in 4-5 years. It is likely that some of the applicants enrolled in one or another specialty will be out of work, because by the time they graduate, the need for such specialists will be different. Unemployment is already embedded in the Western system of “university-society” almost as an inevitable perspective. The capitalist system of higher education is very expendable in relation to any resources, including the “human material”. The Soviet system of higher education, in contrast, produced just as many specialists as had been planned for a specific period. Fluctuations were possible here, because progress does not stand still, economy and industry change, but in a socialist society these changes are manageable and therefore predictable. For this truth, one had to pay a little more cumbersome mechanisms for the modernization of production and the associated mechanisms for the modernization of the training of specialists. But here the

question of priorities is: what is more important - people's well-being or profit growth? Under socialism, the first priority, under capitalism - the second.

The Soviet higher education institution worked as a well-established mechanism: it had to release a strictly defined number of specialists of proper quality after a strictly defined period of time - and graduated. The authoritarianism of the Soviet higher education was not at all connected with the notorious “totalitarian spirit” of the Soviet society, but with the planned nature of the Soviet economy, which required planning for admission to universities and graduation from universities. The Soviet Union was a state with a developed industry and social sphere. Every year he needed to reproduce a huge number of teachers, teachers, doctors, police officers, military specialists, officers. Soviet universities, which were machines for the mass production of specialists, coped well with this task. Moreover, they and only they could cope with this task. If the best Western universities with their freedoms and mobility were magically transferred to the Soviet Union, such universities would simply collapse from incompatibility with the Soviet economy and life. Even in the best European universities, one-third of the number enrolled in the first year are educated to the last year. And this is normal for a university that trains specialists for the labor market. Its goal is not to produce a certain number of specialists. In the USSR, it was the opposite: if in the last year a third of the students would not have passed the state exam and would not defend their theses, then this would mean that the plan for the graduation of specialists would not be fulfilled.

Universities adapted to the society of capitalism cannot exist and function normally under socialism. Post-Soviet reality has shown that the opposite is true. In 1991, liberal reformers who came to power in Russia announced a transition to capitalism and the market. In this regard, the young reformers abolished state orders for admission, state distribution of specialists (left only in the higher education institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where the distribution took the contract), cut down funding for universities, although they retained state control over them in the form of subordination to the Ministry of Education, they left meager, but funding and gave the right to provide “commercial services”. As a result, a quite logical transformation took place with universities. Recall that the main elements of the “Soviet university - society” system were the State Planning Board and the planned state distribution of graduate specialists. The main purpose of socialist universities was to deliver on time for a planned economy a number of specialists of a certain profile ordered by the State Planning Committee and ministries. Now Gosplan has disappeared. The factory, school and hospital had nowhere to turn to leave a request that they needed a certain number of engineers, teachers and doctors.

The reception plan, which was still in place, turned into a consensus between the ministry and the university. The ministry monitors the need for specialists through surveys, as well as the capabilities of the university (area, number of teachers, the availability of

libraries, laboratories) and the graduate fate of graduates. Depending on this, it allocates funding, in fact determining how many budget places will be in this university. In fact, this number of places is in no way connected with the real need of the economy and the real possibilities of the university. First, polls give a very rough picture. Secondly, there is a subjective factor in the form of deliberate misrepresentation of ministerial commissions and the “rector’s lobby” in the ministry. Thirdly, besides the “budget” there is also a “commercial recruitment” and it is not exactly related to how many specialists of this or that profile are actually required (countless lawyers and economists, who have long overfilled the labor market, are preparing for basis). And finally, universities are not at all to blame for the fact that their graduates do not go to work in their specialty. This does not indicate a poor performance of the university. After the abolition of state distribution at the university and there was no leverage to force the graduate to work on the received specialty. However, for the ministry this circumstance is a reason to cut funding, and hence, budget places.

It turns out the following picture: the university will prepare 10 good engineers and engineers. Instead of taking their places at the factory, they begin to work not in their specialty. The ministry cuts financing, budget places are getting smaller and the university will pick up 10 more commercial lawyers and economists for the next year. As a result, the industry will receive even less needed specialists. The reason for this, of course - the abolition of state distribution of graduates. Western universities also have no state distribution mechanism. But universities in the West, as we said at the beginning, are linked to the needs of the labor market through academic freedoms. Students form their own curriculum themselves, following the changes in the labor market. A post-Soviet student continues to submit to a single unified curriculum, which is completely unrelated to the modern labor market and created even in those times when the country lived in a different economic structure. Throughout the 1990s in Russia there were not even attempts to introduce academic freedoms in universities (the freedoms introduced as part of the Bologna reform turned out to be almost universally fictitious). As a result, universities, as before, remained pipelines for mass production of specialists, graduating annually thousands and millions of people with diplomas of doctors, teachers, engineers, economists. However, unlike the Soviet situation, this “pipeline of specialists” was not related to the real needs of society either quantitatively or qualitatively. Quantitatively, because Gosplan abolished, plans for admission and state distribution of specialists and introduced commercial kits, qualitatively - because commercial training and “per capita” financing made it impractical to have a truly principled taking tests and exams, which means high-quality training of the student.

This predetermined the reform of higher education in the 2000s, in particular, the transition to the Bologna system, which, incidentally, did not finally solve all the problems of the Russian higher education. However, the Bologna reform

and the postbolon Russian university system is a separate large topic that requires special study.

IV. CONCLUSION

We must proceed to the conclusions of our work. It is necessary to recognize that the main cause of the crisis state of Russian higher education (finally not overcome even now, after the Bologna reform and a number of other reforms carried out in the second decade of the century that began) is the discrepancy between the principles of Russian higher education inherited from the USSR and the new market realities. Of course, this does not mean that the Russian high school should be “broken,” as was often done with other Soviet institutions in the course of radical “liberal reforms”. The consequences of such a “shock therapy” were unsatisfactory. However, the awareness of this inconsistency allows us to think about how to adapt the best achievements of Soviet higher education to the post-Soviet reality (which also does not need a “smart” conservative approach). This is certainly possible, since the public sector of the economy — the addressee of a Soviet-type higher school — continues to play a significant role in the post-Soviet Russian economy.

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