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Valery Solomin, Viaczeslaw Suchorukov

Geography in Russia: education and public interest

In today's world, the basis of social development is the production of knowledge. The source of the power of knowledge is education. Education provides a "public use of reason of a person", by which the realization of the current reality surpasses instinctive impulsive person. Thus, education should be considered capital responsible investment of time, labour, human wisdom and experience. So the school is a tremendous force that determines the life and destiny of peoples and nations.

Education means, above all, the educational background, and the school – the only public institution by which the entire population is affected. Representation of geography in the Russian education system should not, under any circumstances, be subject to challenge. In geography as a subject, issues of many natural and human sciences are organically intertwined. Consequently, geographical knowledge and experience are of universal value. For Russia, it is particularly important. "Figuratively speaking, Russia is the very geography, and to examine Russia is to study its geography" (Гладкий Ю.Н., 2010, p. 617, 629).

Such a system of geographical education is vital to the contemporary Russian society in order to generate the culture, traditions, knowledge and experience, but also to ensure the implementation of the public interest and the achievement of national security.

The public interest is understood in a number of ways. The most common point of view is to provide a measure of the attention to a particular living space, with its inherent properties and characteristics. Therefore, the public interest is the priorities (the benefits) of living space in a certain relation to its balanced and sustainable development. Thus, the public interest embodies the full range of social, political and spatial organization of society¹.

Public interests of Russia have always been aimed at preserving and increasing the country's natural resources to ensure progressive development of the society.

Natural wealth should be regarded as the resources of nature and the society's ability to provide the means of survival for the next generations. Natural resources

¹ Category of public interest related to the previously developed concept of "territorial interest" (11).

embody the potential energy of the living space, determine its condition, as well as the nature and duration of existence.

The natural wealth of Russia can be divided into two related, but largely independent of each other, parts: 1) the natural content and properties of space, which is at the disposal of the country, and 2) the living forces of the people to master this geographical area.

The size of the territory of Russia puts the country in the category of trans-continental countries. For this reason, the “factor of geography” was fatal to the life of Russia, actively invading not only physical but also emotional, moral, social and political spheres of the Russian society. Geographical conditions favoured the development of the Russian people latitude world created by the richness of the Russian language and to determine the physical appearance of people. In Russia, geography has formed a special type of people looking over the horizon, who conquered Siberia and reached out to the Pacific. However, the immensity of the Russian space, by definition of the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, is also capable of enslaving man by crushing him with its size, building on cultural preservation. Therefore, the problem of overcoming space is one of the tasks of a modern Russian (Бердяев, 2007).

Fixed boundaries and the territorial configuration play an important role in the formation of the structural unity of the country. The main territory of Russia stretches from 41°48'N, up to 81°51'N. And almost whole country is situated north of the 50th parallel, and extends east-west direction for about 9000 miles. Russia, as you know, is the northernmost country in the world, and therefore in all periods of Russian history, its people required huge labour costs and energy to develop and improve the area.

Many properties of Russia and the Russian regions are explained by the features of their geographic location. Geographical position, as a significant sign of the territory, adds to its visible and external properties, which at a deeper level reveal the specifics of the area under consideration. At this point, the attributes showing the potential of the country, influencing the different types of territorial relations, are particularly clear. Meanwhile, the most striking aspect of the geographical position of Russia performs its massive integrating role, synthesizing all the components of this resource type. Russia has always been positioned between different worlds and civilizations, which proved convenient. To the north and west of Russia there were “managers” who instilled “innovation”; from the south, the alphabet and choice of religion was sent; the East penetrated historically and through tradition. Currently, Russia is also on the borders of the world’s leading pole of the cultural, socio-economic and technological development, trying to “fertilize” their territory with positive global experience.

Special approach requires evaluation of natural conditions in Russia. It must be based on the perception of nature not as a separate entity, but as an external physical environment, creating joint lives. “External nature, seen as the nature of the country, home to the well-known human society, and is observed as a force, as it affects the way of life and spiritual sort of people” (Klyuchevsky, 1987, p. 39). Address book contains numerous Russian nature page. One of the interesting demarcation the geographical centre of the country. His movement started from Moscow to Siberia, and in the 19th century it settled in the area of Lake Issyk-Kul. The geographical centre of the present-day Russia is located in the Krasnoyarsk Territory in the Stony Tunguska

River basin. This is the evidence of the influence of the severe restrictions imposed on the development of the country by the nature of the north of Russia. The indicators of climatic specifics of Russia are the winter air temperatures. The January isotherm, which seemingly strangles the territory of Russia, protects it from the cold from the Western Europe and Japan. For this reason, Russia has to spend enormous resources (energy, construction and building materials, fabrics for clothes, shoes, etc.) to protect against the cold.

It is a component associated with climatic and other adverse geographical factors. No other place in the world has such a wide distribution of permafrost, as it in Russia. According to the most conservative estimates, it takes about 9 million km², which is more than 50% of the country. Permafrost, called the "Scourge of God" of the Russian state, requires huge resources for its "neutralization"². It is also necessary to adapt to the occurrence and duration of a powerful snow cover, which varies from 1– 2 to 9 months, depending on the coordinates of the area.

According to some experts, about ¾ of the territory in contemporary Russia is unfavourable for humans. Only a small area (in the context of the size of Russia) is suitable for people and is an economically-active territory. However, despite those "favourable" conditions (not only here, but on other continents as well) there is an almost complete lack of a permanent population and major cities.

The natural resource potential of Russia plays a dominant compensatory role. Above all, the mineral-resources sector is of immense importance to all aspects of life of the state. It is known that mineral resources in the country are varied and large³.

However, the natural abundance and properties of space are natural wealth as the power of nature and its resources can be used by humans. It should be borne in mind that all of the wealth created by nature over the millions of years becomes real only as a result of man's hard work. The transformation of nature into wealth requires enormous intellectual and volitional human effort, so all people must understand and assimilate the knowledge of natural and human characteristics of the living space. "We must, above all, have knowledge of our wealth, understand their value, to know how they should be and how they can be translated into forms available for human life" (Вернадский).

Therefore, the main natural wealth of the country is the living force of its population. Living power of the people is determined by the level of culture, the ability to work, mental and moral character, experience, and talent. People of these areas can achieve great things, even if the natural resources of the country are limited.

Natural resources, connected with the conscious, strong-willed and moral character of the people, form the natural productive forces of the society. They, in turn, are the main mechanisms of the state policy on mastering the forces of nature for the re-settlement of the country.

² It should be noted that the average Russian does not know much about it. He often reads "romantic" messages found in the permafrost of mammoths and rhinos, but not that a huge portion of the national wealth of Russia is firmly chained by permafrost.

³ Investment capacity of the interior of Russia is estimated at 147-170 billion dollars, of which more than 60% fall in oil and natural gas. State Fund of the country has about 20,000 core deposits of minerals, of which only one third is being developed now (5, p. 6).

In 1915, during the First World War, Commission for the Study of the natural productive forces of the country (CNPFF) was established in Russia. This was an outstanding national project, the driving force of which from the very beginning was V. Vernadsky. Russia at that time was not yet completely and accurately aware of its own wealth. Therefore the commission was to bring together scientists, politicians and business executives in the economic and cultural development. In 1916 alone, the CNPF organized 14 special expeditions to various parts of Russia. By 1930, the CNPF already consisted of bodies such as: the Institute of Physical and Chemical Analysis; the Institute for the Study of Platinum and other precious metals divisions: aggregates, stone building materials, geographical (with the Forest Museum), energy, gas, bibliographies, the dissemination of scientific publications, and sapropel Committee; Bureau of Genetics; Spectroscopic offices; and research library. Ultimately, multifaceted activities of the Commission laid the solid foundation of science and the economy for many years (Максаковский В.П., 2011, 10, p. 38).

Ultimately, natural forces of production generate social wealth. Social wealth is measured by material wealth created by the labour of all generations, but also encompasses the immaterial values that determine the educational, cultural, scientific, moral, ethical, and physical potential of the people. Therefore, the only reliable and social wealth actually possessed by a country is its population.

Demographic sphere in modern Russia is one of the alarming ones. For two decades, the country has been in a state of depopulation, which is natural wastage. During this time, the total natural loss amounted to 5 million people. As a result, the population of the world Russia moved from the 6th place (in the 1990') to the 9th now. Basic demographic indicators in the country remain stably low. For example, taking into consideration life expectancy (68.7 years), Russia lags behind not only all the economically developed countries, but many developing countries, as it is positioned 104th in the world. And the gap in life expectancy between men and women (12 years) does not exist in any other country in the world (Суберро, 2010, p. 4–5).

The social sphere is not free of such contrasts either. The income of 10% of the richest men in Russia is 40 times the income of the 10% of the poorest citizens, and in Moscow the difference is even more dramatic - 70 times. Social contrasts vividly illustrate another fact: in Russia, in 2011, there were 153 thousand millionaires (placing Russia 12th in the world), but on the other extreme almost 20 million people were living below the poverty line (additionally, the minimum wage and pension in Russia remain very low); (Суберро, 2010, p. 14–15).

The decreasing value of the educational system is added to the list of unfortunate factors. The level of general education we are now in fifth ten countries, while the Soviet Union was in the top three. Taking into consideration higher education, Russia has only two world-class universities, but in the global rankings they are far from the first place.

Thus, Russia's wealth in the true sense is not so much the result of accumulated material, as it is society's ability to maintain existing and gain new. It is necessary to take care about the immaterial component of wealth in the first place. Otherwise wealth will lose its social usefulness, and the partial success will only exacerbate the problems of society.

Consequently, the public domain has a very concise content and is subject to certain positive significance with the aims and aspirations of the people. Wealth is

seen not only in the physical form, but also has social and spiritual expression. The multilayered nature of wealth emphasizes the character of human needs, which have a natural causality, but to an even greater extent the public morals and other humanitarian attributes. Therefore, the wealth of the country must correspond with numerous indicators. The mindless consumerist orientation to the unpredictable physical and sensual pleasures without action, grinds the human and other resources, and leads to irreversible damage to the environment of the people.

It is not enough to have great economic potential, formidable weaponry, a large army and intelligence services. One should know how to use those opportunities for the benefit of society, because, while maintaining spiritual negativity, coupled with humiliating social practice emergency, degradation of social wealth of the country is inevitable.

Accumulation of value by any means, with the execution of the laws to justify those methods is unnatural. "Thus in the art of acquiring riches there are no limits, for the object of that is money and possessions; all those who get riches add to their money without end; (...and) think that for this purpose money should be saved and hoarded up without end" (Аристотель, 1983, p. 392–393).

In the implementation of the public interest it is always important to consider the relation between the nature of human existence and a geographical area in which it is carried out. When this relationship is fixed to the fore the imperative of national security and survival of the state. The indicator here is the set of critical parameters, the breach of which gives rise to emerging threats and serious dangers. Therefore, one of the main tasks of modern Russia is to organize national geographic information services in order to eliminate threats and emergencies. This structure will eventually ensure national security of the country, to preserve and increase its power.

Finally, we point out the most important factor in the strengthening of the social wealth of Russia. In the long run, it is the country which bases its development on the ability of the whole society, not narrow clans, that wins. Expanding human resource base of the country to the borders of society leads to higher quality of organization and management of the multidimensional living space. That is why it is beneficial to train people up to any skill level. Failure to comply with this fundamental sense undermines social wealth of the nation.

A crucial role in strengthening and augmenting the capacity of the country is played by one particular group of citizens, namely teachers. In Russia there was a unique system of a teacher's education, which has become a social norm, stemming from the nature and character of the national mentality. In our belief, a teacher's education must respond to the major challenges brought on by the present life. It is now generally required that teachers are able to see a person as a phenomenal integrity and to develop it on the basis of the laws of science, technology, culture and the arts, social practices, and labour. Consequently, the development and improvement of the teaching corps is the current national problem. Modern Russia was never interested in ensuring that there were many intelligent and patient spiritual solidarity mentors for our young people, who tomorrow will provide the spiritual world of the nation and the economic prosperity of the society (Бордовский, 2007).

This implies the inevitable imperative savings Russian living space and popular talents in the logic of national education, science, politics, economics, culture and

ecology. Russian people need faith in their country and homeland revival strategy based on new ideas and principles. The idea of Russia as one of the leading world powers, based on the principles of social wisdom, morality and justice is so versatile, that can very well combine state, collective and individual interests of its citizens, to become a national symbol, and promote sustainable development of the world community.

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Abstract

In the article, the terms of the public interest in Russia are discussed, among which are the natural resources and the humanitarian component, including the geographic entity, the state plays an important role.

Russian State Pedagogical University A.I. Herzen
Sankt Petersburg
rector@herzen.spb.ru
Department of Geography
Russian State Pedagogical University A.I. Herzen
Sankt Petersburg
suhor @ herzen.spb.ru