

УДК 314.17+364.022

E.Mayse (3-rd year Lenoir-Rhyne Coll., USA),
I.D.Kuzmin, PhD, associate prof.

SOVIET AND RUSSIAN SYSTEMS OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Within the Soviet system of social welfare there were guaranteed social institutions. Everyone was offered guarantees as to the basic needs of housing, education, employment and health care. However in the current Russian system the state has been minimized to the point where it can only provide for the bare minimum: minimal pensions, primitive health care, greatly reduced educational opportunities.

In the Soviet system it was seen as a part of people's "duty" to the state to find a job (if you couldn't you'd be assigned to one), even if it were simply one of the many "make work" jobs. With salaries people received it was possible to secure the necessary basic goods that were not already paid for though the large amount of hidden taxes taken out of salaries. In modern times employment is not guaranteed and although "hidden taxes" have disappeared in part, so have quantity and quality of the services they funded.

Today's educational system with its rise in illiteracy and its severe underpayment of teachers is a vast change from the Soviet past which saw education as one of its most valuable tools. Secondary level education was compulsory and again it was seen as one's duty to ensure that one's children were educated. The Soviet system also targeted the education as the means to secure that children's bodies as well as minds were fit. Thus the state and education operated a world of sports organizations, which led to a healthier populace.

Healthcare in the Soviet system was well financed and as long as one didn't mind waiting for several weeks for complicated cases was fairly attainable. Nowadays most of the medical services with top-notch equipment have gone to private institutions, which offer their treatments at prices only few can afford.

Housing under the Soviets was an acute problem but however meager it remained within reach of the majority. Nowadays these opportunities are limited and too expensive for the majority to attain.

Although through this surface glance it would appear that the Soviet system better provided for its citizens by leaps and bounds, however this stability came at a high price. Today's state plays only a minimal role and leaves the rest up to private industry forcing many to do without. So unfortunately it seems as if it is a choice between the lesser of two evils.