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THE PROBLEM OF MID-CAREER CRISIS ON THE GLOBAL SCALE

It is well known that for the middle-rank executive in most countries of the world life is getting worse. Not necessary financially, but in terms of general psychological stress. That has been recognized by psychologists from Europe, USA and Russia as the phenomenon of the mid-career crisis, which exists not only in developing countries, such as Russia, but in the countries with healthy economy as well (USA, the countries of Northern Europe etc). This is the condition when depression sets in as part of the process of review and reorientation which most people go through in their late 30s and early 40s.

Sympathetic of this mid-career crisis are feelings of loneliness, increased consumption of alcohol and cigarettes and generally poor physical condition. It is accompanied also by a general dissatisfaction with one's life and career.

Various theories have been put forward to explain this crisis. By age 40 most people have an idea of where they are going in life and what can they expect from it. But facing up and coming to terms with this can be very traumatic.

Of course, the people who suffer most are the ones who have already reached the limits of success and see little chance for further development. They face to prospect or perhaps stuck 20 years in the same job. Being highly motivated towards achievement it is hard to them to accept that there are no fresh fields to conquer.

Also the economic climate has great effect on this. According to the economical researches made by several European and American organizations and agencies (USA TODAY, Wittendal agency, Monthly labor Review, BLS and EUROSTAT) the reason that this condition is becoming worse is the recession. Organizations are shrinking; opportunities are dwindling, so that average workers and middle-rank executives may be anxious about the possibility of redundancy. As the result contagious demoralization sets in.

According to a recent paper by professor John Hunt, the London Business School, the groups most vulnerable to severe mid-career crisis are the civil service, banking, finance and insurance. Wholesaling and retailing suffer less and those in heavy industry and the community services are prone least to this malady of middle age. The situation is about the same in Russia: the vast majority of urban citizens are subjected to mid-career depression much more than workers of the same level at the periphery (N.Malachov)

Psychiatrists and therapists see a very different kind of depression.

1) de*pres*sion \di-'presh-en\ n [1]: a state of feeling sad : DEJECTION [2]: a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked esp. by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies [3]: a reduction in activity, amount, quality, or force [4]: a lowering of vitality or functional activity. It does not go away just because our life gets 'better.' When this kind of depression is upon us, it often feels like it is going to totally crush our spirit, and extinguish our life. Feelings of utter worthlessness, thoughts of suicide, often attend it. It is what has often been called 'the dark night of the soul.'

2) "Suppression and oppression are the basic causes of depression. If you relieve those a person can lift his head, become well, become happy with life" [1].

3) According to Richard Bolles, author of "What Color Is Your Parachute" and Webmaster of JobHuntersBible.com from the USA, there are following ways to deal with the depression of the mid-career crisis [1]:

- Recognizing that mid-career reorientation is something that happens to everyone eventually;
- Avoiding spending a lot of time trying to "fix" what is "wrong" with you;
- Avoiding obsessing about bad news and problems you face with;
- Focusing on positive things around you (the family, positive impressions, things you like to do most of all) to stay calm and be satisfied with your life;

In comparison with this, in Russia people usually stick to getting support from family members and acquaintances in dealing with mid-career crisis rather than appealing to psychiatrists and therapists. This Russian peculiarity also reveals in resting immense amount of hoping and expectations on the governmental patronage and protection.

There is a governmental policy in the sphere of retirement aging. As in non full employment economies the underlying imbalance between the working and the non working population will not be changed by a revision in the financing of retirement, even after raising the normal retirement age. This is because, when the economy is not at full employment, this artificial increased in the age of the working population will mechanically induce a counterpart of unemployed people, of all ages. There will be a transfer of the burden of social contributions of working people from financing the cost of retirement to financing the cost of unemployment. That is why this problem has to be solved not only by employers, but on the governmental scale too.

For instance in the countries of northern Europe there are lengthening working life. After years of declining retirement age, northern Europe is increasing retirement flexibility to between 63 and 68 years. Although obstacles to using the skills of pensioners are being reviewed, the voice of vested interests in favor of their maintenance remains loud as working pensioners are seen as taking jobs away from the unemployed. Some national programs have been launched, like in Finland, to highlight good corporate practice in the productive use of older workers, such as more flexible working practices and reduced work intensity. However, even broad actions can only make marginal differences. Of much greater significance is the reform of pension systems, which, however, goes beyond any productivity remit. In addition, national governments are starting to tackle two major obstacles to increased corporate productivity. The first is costs, particularly the indirect labor costs levied by the state on companies to provide welfare. The second obstacle is bureaucracy. Over the past half century, Europe has heaped regulations upon regulations so that there are often no rapid and short-cut approaches to change. Latent enterprise is dulled as regulations and tax burdens do not encourage individuals to develop this initiative.

There is also a tendency for the workers of the retirement age to keep working, not only to support their income but also to stay "involved" as long as their health is good. Many older workers say they could survive without a job, but it wouldn't be much fun. "I could afford to stop, but my standard of living would be much lower," says Delores Marier, 75, a mental-health therapist in Medford, Ore [3].

In Russia there are special governmental programs. On the 6-th regional economical forum, which took place in 2001 year, were estimated the following directions and objectives in these sphere:

- Working out and holding special presidential program of social prosperity support and raising the rate of employment (especially for youth and people of middle age);
- Citizen's life improvement, medical services quality rise based on long-term credits from non-and governmental organizations;
- Guaranteeing increasing and steady growing wages to state paid workers (special pension plans, providing privileges and aids for people of little income category);

- Guaranteeing stable rate of employment and effective retirement policy in cooperation with employers (such as regulated and legal recruitment relations, proper working conditions, balanced migration policy etc.) [4].

So, it is generally accepted: to overcome the state of mid-career depression person should break away and start afresh, and then consider objectively his/her own achievements and life expectancy, strivings and plans for the future. Then to set short-term goals and tend to achieve them with all his/her abilities as it has always been in his life. It's also important to focus on the family relations and not to concern about your mid-career problems, blues etc.

The passive approach to this problem might lead to extremely ill effect consequences such as fast rising unemployment, and an impoverishment of the country. That is why national governments have to be aware of this issue and be ready to take actions. Labor market is not separate and spread locally any more, it has become global in the course of globalization process. Accordingly all the governments should cooperate in the employment policy as well as in another spheres to avoid existing obstacles.

LITERATURE:

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