

Influence of the internal demographic situation on the Russian Empire during the European Revolution of 1848

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Abstract

Population is the basis of global development and plays a key role both in the economic sphere and in social development, environmental impact and national policy. Therefore, studying the progress of population change is of great significance and research value for analyzing the history of certain periods and countries. The European Revolution of 1848 was an important period in the modern history of Europe, a period in which a series of events were based on demographic factors and which, at the same time, caused demographic changes, i. e. interacted with each other. Russia, as one of the main participants in the European revolution, with its vast territory and large population, is the best object for studying the demographic problems in this period. This paper will analyze the territorial development and factors of politics, economy, social environment and other areas in terms of demographic changes in Russia.

Keywords:

population problems, ethnic diversity, Russian Empire, peasants, demography

The population problem has always been a factor that cannot be ignored in national development. Whether in political, economic, social or cultural aspects, changes in the size, distribution and structure of the population will have far-reaching effects on the development of the country, and the European Revolution of 1848 coincided with the critical period of Europe's transition from feudal to capitalist society, and many revolutions and reforms took place during this period. Russia at that time was the guardian of the feudal fortress, its domestic serfdom was becoming increasingly corrupt and conflicts were surging, foreign countries were busy with all kinds of measures to suppress revolutions in other countries, as well as the Crimean War for control of religion and territories, the population problem was not decisive. In this section, the impact of population on the development of a country from the perspective of economic development, social stability, ideology and education is examined in depth.

Влияние внутренней демографической ситуации на Российскую империю в период европейской революции 1848 года

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Аннотация

Население является основой мирового развития и играет ключевую роль как в экономической сфере, так и в социальном развитии, воздействии на окружающую среду и национальную политику. Поэтому изучение процесса изменения численности населения имеет большое значение и исследовательскую ценность для анализа истории определенных периодов и стран. Европейская революция 1848 г. – важный период современной истории Европы, период, в котором ряд событий базировался на демографических факторах, вызывающих в то же время демографические изменения, т. е. взаимодействовали друг с другом. Россия как один из главных участников европейской революции с ее обширной территорией и большим населением является лучшим объектом для изучения демографических проблем в этот период. В статье проанализировано территориальное развитие и факторы политики, экономики, социальной среды и других областей с точки зрения демографических изменений в России.

Ключевые слова:

проблемы народонаселения, этническое разнообразие, Российская империя, крестьяне, демография

At the end of the 17th century, the total population of Russia (10 million) was only slightly higher than that of Spain (9.2 million) and much lower than that of France (25 million) and the Austrian Empire (14 million). It was not until the middle of the 18th century that Russia's population began to grow steadily, reaching 36 million by the end of the century. At that time, Russia's population exceeded that of any other country in Europe, but population density remained low. [2] At the same time, Russia's ethnic diversity grew steadily. At the end of the 16th century, Russians (i.e., Great Russians) made up about 90 percent of the country's population, but by the beginning of the 19th century, the proportion of Russians had dropped to less than 50 percent. [1, p.21]

This demographic characteristic had persisted since the founding of the Russian Empire by Peter the Great. From 1721 until the European Revolution of 1848, Russia's population growth was accompanied by the expansion of its territory,

with victories over the Swedish Empire, the access to the Baltic Sea, three partitions of Poland, and several Russo-Turkish wars which, among other things, led to access to the Black Sea. This series of territorial expansions also made Russia a more ethnically diverse and a multinational empire.

Thus, the diversity and multifaceted nature of the Russian population was an important factor in the development of state policy. In the mid-19th century, Russia was a vast and ethnically diverse country. Its borders stretched across Eurasia and encompassed many different ethnic groups, languages, and religions. This diversity required Russia to take into account the specific needs and demands of each ethnic group when developing state policy. Inspired by the 1848 Revolution, some ethnic groups and local forces began to demand more autonomy and political participation, which put some pressure on centralized rule in Russia.

These demographic changes prior to 1848 in some ways provided the Russian Empire with a large workforce and a large number of soldiers during the 1848 revolutions in Europe. At the time, Russia had the largest army of any European country, and the state maintained a relatively large and expensive military apparatus through heavy taxation and compulsory military service. Although this gave Russia many soldiers to suppress the Hungarian Revolution in 1848 and other wars, the growth in population had two complex sides. On the one hand, it increased military power, but on the other hand, heavy compulsory military service could be counter-productive, leading to increased dissatisfaction among the people and reduced social stability.

These pre-revolutionary population figures for 1848 reflect the fact that the serfdom system used to stabilize the political and social situation in Russia, was no longer applicable to Russia at that time. Instead, serfdom limited long-term population growth and resulted in a highly uneven distribution of the population between urban and rural areas, as well as an imbalance in population ratios and educational levels. [3, p.54]

Another significant imbalance is the fact that, according to the 1796 census, 34.7 million residents (96.4 percent of the total population) live in rural areas and only 1.3 million (3.6 percent of the total population) in urban areas.

The rural population is 34.7 million, or 96.4 percent of the total population, while the urban population is only 1.3 million, or 3.6 percent of the total population. Most of the rural population are farmers. Moreover, many urban dwellers maintain close ties with their hometowns, both legally and from their own perspective. Like their ancestors, they remain peasants. [4, p.119]

From the geographical point of view, revolutions obviously started in the capitals - the centers of political activity, but also in urban centers experiencing rapid economic changes and population growth.... Only later did it affect other towns and rural areas.

During the revolutions in Europe in 1848, especially in France, the distribution of urban and rural population was more balanced, with large urban populations, and although a certain amount of the population still lived in the countryside,

the proportion of urban population was much higher than in Russia. This extreme imbalance between the urban and rural population in Russia was also an important demographic reason for the country's ability to survive the revolutions that broke out in many European countries.

In the 54 years from 1742 to 1796, i.e. from the second to the fifth Russian census, the number of serfs grew by 62 percent overall, with an average annual growth rate of less than 8.8 percent. According to the estimates of the Central Statistical Committee, between 1800 and 1880 the average annual population growth rate in Russia was less than 14.8 percent. Between 1830 and 1860, the average annual growth rate was as low as 9.2 per cent. Between 1850 and 1860, the average annual growth rate was even lower, at 6.5 percent. [5, p.55]

Two things are obvious from these data: the continuing failure to resolve the problem of serfdom during the European revolutions, and the numerous foreign wars combined with many domestic uprisings, both large and small, which have led to a significant decline in the population growth rate during this period.

At the same time, the over-representation of the peasants not only increases the pressure on the state to take policy action, but also creates many drawbacks for the Russian economy, which lags far behind the European powers. The European peasantry was the "black box" of the 1848 revolution. We have already seen that there was a moral panic around the subject of urban poverty. Plagiarized from Eugène Sue, the 'suspense' books purported to explore the hidden world of inner-city alleys and suburban slums. But the real mystery lies in rural society. The countryside is where most people live. And the main contributor to this imbalance in proportions is the corrupt system of serfdom. [6, p.112]

It tied a large part of the population to the land, prevented the movement of free labor, and hindered the growth of towns and the development of industry and modern commerce. Class proportions in a country should be within reasonable limits, and in Russia the middle, aristocratic and upper classes accounted for far, far less of the country's population than the peasants. In 1840, the ratio of townspeople to villagers was about 1:2 in England, 1:5 in France, and more than 1:11 in Russia, and the proportion of the population that could be classified as factory workers was comparatively small, and the industries were usually of a cottage workshop type. The railway line between St.Petersburg and Moscow was not built until 1842. Such slow economic development may again be related to the lack of a cohesive middle class or bourgeoisie. [7, p.206]

Even by the late 19th century, the elements that made up the middle class in the West - the merchants and the bourgeoisie - had not yet been formed. The elements of the middle class - traders, bureaucrats, professionals, and intellectuals - tended to go their separate ways in Russia, pursuing different interests. This social gap had far-reaching consequences for political and economic development. It explains the relative weakness of moderate, liberal political opinion in 19th-century Russia. It may also explain the lack of sympathy for entrepreneurial activity among thinkers at both ends

of the political spectrum. The lack of practicality in many of their ideas - favoring the ideal over the concrete - and their disdain, even contempt, for prosperity. [7, p.407]

Secondly, population growth and its structural changes had a significant impact on Russia's economic development. In the 19th century, Russia's population grew rapidly, which meant that the demand for land and agricultural output also increased. Since peasants constituted a large part of Russian society, the need for change in agriculture became more urgent, and while the 1848 Revolution had spurred agricultural reforms in other parts of Europe, Russia was beginning to realize the backwardness of its own system of agricultural management. Therefore, although the 1848 Revolution did not directly affect the agrarian reform in Russia, it certainly contributed to the importance of reform in Russia and accelerated the process of serfdom reform in the following years.

Meanwhile, in 1848, disease spread throughout the country. Due to cholera, more people died in the Russian Empire in 1848 than were injured by bombing. This disease caused a massive decline in the population, and, along with the people killed in the war, made Russia even more socially unstable at this time, and an over-representation of peasants helped to incite rebellions. Such were the many and varied effects of population growth upon Russia, and at the end of 1848, economists in London looking back on the year of revolution, attributed the absence of disorder in the Russian Empire to the fact that its people were not yet sufficiently civilized to feel the European aspiration for freedom and self-government. [8, p.140]

Once again, the population mobility and its ideological impact cannot be ignored. During the Revolution of 1848, intellectual currents from the European continent, such as liberalism, nationalism and socialism, began to spread among the intelligentsia and gradually spread in Russia through population movements. These ideas challenged the traditional concepts of Russian society and had a subtle influence on future political changes. At the time, despite strict control over the dissemination of knowledge by Russian propaganda and security agencies, the infiltration of these ideas could not be completely prevented. Subsequently, the impact of such ideas triggered a wider discussion among Russian reformers and intellectuals, preparing the theoretical basis for future changes. [9, p.7]

It would be wrong to say that in the 19th-century Russia the peasantry was not represented in government, administration, politics, social life, education or culture in a manner commensurate with their numbers.

Such a statement is so euphemistic as to border on nonsense. On the contrary, it will be recognized that Russia, known as the empire, consisted of two separate worlds: the world of the educated and the world of the illiterate; the

world of government and 'society' and the world of the masses. The world of cities and towns and the countryside, the world of rich and poor, the world of exploiters and exploited, the world of the active and the passive. The division between elite and mass in Russia is not unlike similar divisions in other countries. The Russian division is not quite the same as divisions in other countries, or at least it represents one of the more extreme divisions of its kind. In this, as in many other cases, Russia's evolution appears to be a clearer and cruder version of what is happening to the West. [9, p.7]

Thus, although Russia was not directly involved in the wave of European revolutions of 1848, demographic factors, through their complexity, diversity, economic growth pressure, and flow of ideas, had a profound and complex impact on Russia's national development. These factors not only forced the Russian hierarchy to pay attention to and reflect on the existing socio-economic structure, but also laid some of the foundations for subsequent reforms and political awakening. Against the backdrop of the 19th century social change, the Russian experience provides us with an important perspective for understanding how the state adapted in the face of demographic pressures.

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