

Influence of the "Prohibition" on the welfare during the First World War

Rozinskaya Natalia A.

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of Economics, Leninskie Gory, 1-46, 3rd training building, Moscow, 119991, Russia

Abstract. In this paper the effect of the "Prohibition" on the welfare during the First World War is investigated. The findings of this study allowed not only to clarify some issues related to the historical situation in Russia during 1914-1917 y., but also to give a deeper understanding of the processes taking place in Russia in the early of 20th century. The study noted that after the February revolution in 1917, the Provisional Government had left the "Prohibition" in force. Came to power in October 1917, the Bolsheviks also did not abolish the law. The ban remained in the effect until the 26 of August 1923, when the restrictions were lifted on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages.

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Introduction

Before the adoption of the "Prohibition" in the 22^d of August 1914 in the Russian Empire was a law of 16 June 1894. According to it the state wine monopoly was a pre-emptive right of the state to the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, which was based on the following principles. Distilling remained for individuals under the Charter of the drinking gatherings. Sale of alcohol, wine and beverages was the exclusive right of the treasury and carried by treasury owned institutions which were shared into two categories: warehouses and liquor stores. Individuals could have: beer, honey and Russian wine warehouses; Pubs; cellars for sale Russian wines; temporary exhibitions for the sale of beer, honey and Russian wine; tavern trade. Trade in wine, spirits and vodka products was allowed only in the last two categories of institutions. Sale of alcoholic beverages by the glass was strictly prohibited. You could drink wine only in institutions of tavern type, besides the seller had to apply wax sealed bottle.

Despite the fact that the budget received from the liquor monopoly more than 25% of the income from the 1907-08 y. there was an active campaign against the state liquor monopoly and for conducting various measures that reduce consumption of alcoholic beverages by people. Most radical in this question public figures argued for the introduction of the Prohibition.

Active members of the public speeches against the liquor monopoly, were largely due to the fact that, with the Russian-Japanese war and revolution the dominant role in the reform of drinking took fiscal interests, whereas the national goal of reducing drunkenness, which was actively

implemented in the initial stages of the introduction of the liquor monopoly, went on wayside. The annual budget of the Trust Committee decreased from 4 million rubles to 2.5 million rubles. Because of the political reasons, many libraries and tearooms, arranged by the Trust Committee, were abolished. Moreover, in some areas were abolished and trustee committees themselves. Shinkarstvo began actively proliferate. Excise department has not struggled with this phenomenon, shifting all the problems on the police department, and hardly did the fiscal part. All this contributed to an increase in drinking and negative attitudes to the liquor monopoly.

Speeches of the State Duma deputies, articles in the press, a number of decisions of the local governments demanded reforms themselves and suggest specific measures to combat the "extreme alcohol consumption." Nicolay II with the increasing of the public pressure, and as a result of the seen on the Volga rural poverty, while traveling during the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty is more inclined to abolish the liquor monopoly and making measures to reduce drinking.

The main opponent of the abolition of the state liquor monopoly was V. N. Kokovtsov Minister of Finance, who believed that the main cause of alcoholism is not a government sale of vodka, but its illicit trafficking.

However, despite the negative attitude of the Minister of Finance on the issue under the public and the State Duma of August 10, 1913 GDNFBSA (General Directorate non-taxed fees and breach sale alcohol) issued an order to the managers of the excise taxes, demanding to meet all the sentences of rural societies to close all the pubs on their territory.

After the resignation of Minister of Finance Kokovtsov January 30, 1914, Nicolay II ordered the new Minister of Finance P. L. Barku to consider liquor monopoly issue and conduct measures to improve the economic situation of the people, without fear of financial loss.

During February-July 1914 the government was approved 800 requests from rural communities to ban the sale of alcohol on their territory.

To combat drunkenness in the Army in April 1914 GDNFBSA adopted a number of measures, mandatory for the whole country: reducing the time trade of strong drinks up to 18 hours; in cities ban the sale of alcohol to take away; in rural territories ban trade on public holidays, etc. July 17, 1914 the disposal of a total ban on the sale of alcohol at the time of mobilization was followed. Originally, this measure was seen as a temporary measure. Terms permission of alcohol sales were scheduled for September.

Thus, even before the war there were a number of restrictions on the sale of alcohol, apply both to individual regions and the whole country. When the war began selling hard liquor was banned across the whole country. August 22, 1914 a new edict of the Emperor was released: "The current prohibition of the sale of alcohol, wine and beverages for local consumption in the empire to extend until the end of the war."

From this point alcohol was officially used only in technical, medical and scientific purposes and only with the permission of the police, military and excise departments. Sale of alcoholic beverages was permitted only in restaurants of the 1st discharge, clubs and pharmacies and only within a certain radius from recruiting stations and railways. By the May 1916 96% of pubs all over the country were closed which were at the beginning of 1914.

In the literature, there are several points of view on the results of the introduction of the "Prohibition". Contemporaries perceived its introduction with the exceptional enthusiasm. Journalists and scientists analyzing the consequences of the introduction of the law, pointed to positive developments in all regions and in almost all sectors of the society.

First of all, it was noted how easily the law was passed without causing any disturbances and social unrests. This is largely attributed to the fact that in a society a request for reduction of drinking was formed by the time. Also we pay attention to the fact that the adoption of this law in countries with much higher alcohol consumption per capita, such as France, England or Denmark, the likelihood of the strong opposition to the introduction of the law from the population was much higher. In Russia, however,

this has not happened largely due to the fact that alcohol consumption per capita was relatively small [1; 44]. According to surveys, people could quickly learn to force sobering: "... forced abstinence tolerated easy or very easy in 61.5% of cases; difficult at first, and then used to abstinence 22.6%; very hard - 12.6%. From the last, not accustomed to 2.8%. Consequences of forced abstinence were: 80% of the beneficent, heavy - 20%. Called for the termination of the sale of all vodka 84% (all strong drinks - 79%); indifferent - 1% against the prohibition forever - 15% "[2; 32].

One of the immediate consequences of a prohibition on the sale of alcoholic beverages was the disappearance of street drinking, reduced the number of beggars in police reports a sharp reduction in bullying was noted. "Along with the decrease of hooliganism it was stated a sharp decrease in crimes against the person, property and order, and with it was a marked weakening of such evils as prostitution, professional begging, vagrancy, etc. In Petrograd in August crime decreased by 20%, in Moscow by 47%, in Tambov by 43%, in Odessa by 50%, in Ufa by 64%, in Tula by 75%, in Orel and Rostov by 80%, in Kostroma even by 95%, in the province of Simferopol at a half, in Simbirsk province by 95%, etc. "[2; 15]. However, researchers note that the reduction of crime to a certain extent was due to the fact that some anti-social groups were mobilized to the front, but still the main role in improving the situation assigned to the "Prohibition".

Also, there was a decrease in the receipt of new patients to insane hospitals, reducing suicides. In some medical schools, used the body of suicide to the research, even appeared "cadaverous hunger" due to the reduction of suicide.

One of the major consequences of the ban on alcohol was the increase of labor productivity. Labor productivity growth was observed in all industries and was variously estimated from 30 to 60%. In addition, the number of accidents and injuries in the workplace significantly reduced.

The main consequence of the "Prohibition" was marked by a number of public figures, journalists and scientists improving the material conditions of the population, both urban and rural. "Despite the decline in production in Moscow at 35%, with sometimes only 3-4 workdays a week and reducing the number of workers, despite the general rise in the price of life, the absence of the acute needs and other satellites of the unemployment was stated. Consumer shops sell was very good and markedly delineated a demand for such products that workers did not previously purchase. In Petrograd and consumer and cooperative shops there is an increase in meat consumption by workers by 15% "[2; 21]. In rural

areas, the demand for white bread, meat, tea and other products increased.

The most important indicators of the wealth growth were, on the one hand, reducing the number and the value of loans in pawnshops, on the other hand, the growth of deposits in savings banks. Mendelsohn in his work gives the following data:

"The work of the Petrograd City pawnshop for small loans reduced: loan amount (1 to 5 rubles) in second (sober) half-year of 1914 reached only 113,306, units while in the same half-year of 1913 such loans were issued 177,585 units (see Table. 1). As we heard from the director of the pawnshop, most of these small loans issued to the working people under the mortgage of the clothe and household items and money was quickly guzzled; after the new salary pledged things were bought back, but after a few days were laid again, etc.

If you take a large group of loans, ranging in size from 1 to 25 rubles, and here the difference between the period of sobriety and the previous time is very high. For example, in the first three months of sober 1915 such loans were issued 85036 units, for the same three months of 1914 their number reached 123,026 units. "[1; 30].

On public savings banks in Petrograd declaration of war in July 1914 reflected as a strong tide of deposits (decline in July by 5.7 mln. rubl.), but since the August, monthly increase of national savings was observed, significantly higher than that of the same increase in the previous year (Figure 1).

The total sum of all cash deposits in the state savings banks to July 1, 1915 exceeded 2 billion rubles. (2134.7 mln.), whereas until now the total amount of these contributions never reached in previous years and 1 billion rubles. [1; 32-34].

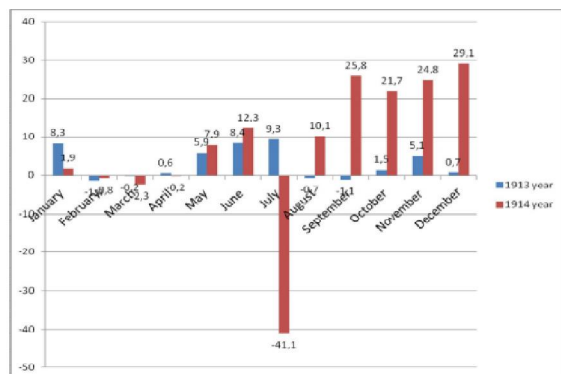


Figure 1. Growth and decline of cash deposits in the state savings banks of the Russian Empire by months in 1913 and 1914. (in million rubles).

These figures are enough to understand what the economic recovery should occur in Russia, and if at the end of the war the sale of alcoholic beverages will not resume.

Especially it is worth mentioning that along with the increasing demand for material goods, after the introduction of the "Prohibition" and spiritual needs of the people grew: "According to the chairman of the school's commission for the City Duma in Moscow it is seen an increased demand in urban reading rooms on the books. Bookhouses are overcrowded even in holidays, when at the same time they were empty. Administration of national theaters Sergievski, Sukharevsky and Sodovnicheski notes the fact of the increasing of the number of opera and drama performances visitors by more than 30% compared with the same time in the previous seasons "[3; 22].

As opposed to the researchers who wrote during the "Prohibition", the position of the most contemporary authors is not so clear. Some of them, analyzing the positive and negative effects of its introduction, tell about the impossibility of an unambiguous conclusion on the results of a ban on alcohol and, in particular, on the impact of the "Prohibition" on the public welfare. Other researchers even prove that the law was one of the major causes of the Russian Revolution. As the negative effects the following are named.

First, there is a serious budget loss. Before canceling the liquor monopoly profits from this activity accounted for approximately 25% of the state budget. According to estimates of the financial expert of the Kadet party A. I. Shingareva due to the introduction of the law the revenues in the budget by summer 1917 decreased by 2.5 billion rubles, which is about 10% of the total cost of the war at that time [4; 80-93].

In addition to the loss of state the reduction in income of individuals involved in the activity with the production of alcoholic beverages was noted. Vvedenskii wrote in 1915 "... the victims in this area are very significant [In 1912, in 60 provinces we counted 2852 distillery plants with 30,000 workers, with a turnover of 150 million rubles: half is the income of farmers. Alcohol cleaner plants were 500 with 10,000 workers, brewing - about 1000 with tens of thousands of workers and 250 million rubles of the invested funds. The wine monopoly employed about 200,000 people, 23 of which were inmates of wine shops. 100 thousand were restaurant, taverns, Rhine cellars keepers and had several hundred thousand of employees. Owners of homes and lands received a rent from the field of manufacturing and alcohol sale; glass plant owners supplied dishes, plug plants - plugs. Vineyard area reaches 250,000 tithes and

funds from them reaches hundreds of millions rubles in the Caucasus, Don, in the Crimea, Bessarabia, Turkestan. By some counting sobering inflicts one or the other damage to millions of families in Russia. LS Minor. New forms of denatured alcohol and alcohol-drinking liquids ... "[3].

Also, some authors pay attention to the negative implications of the "Prohibition" as a black market appearance, the spread of home brewing, the use of various substitutes, mass poisoning, increased of drug abuse. Due to the fact that surrogates and denatured alcohol poisoning were quite common, the Duma asked the Emperor to allow light grape wine trade, and May 31, 1916, Nicolay II permitted wine trade with the strength up to 16% in areas where there were no military actions [4, 5 and 6].

In addition to these problems, some authors see the main consequence of the "Prohibition" in the destruction of the very foundations of the existing economic mechanism. American researcher A. McKee writes that the peoples' income has increased due to the abolition of the liquor monopoly, contributed to the growth in demand and the increase in inflation, respectively. Expensive industrial goods lost the attractiveness to the peasants and their wishes, accordingly, to sell surplus of the grain reduced. Thus, according to McKee, just the introduction of the "Prohibition" has led to a shortage of bread in the cities and further destabilized the situation that was so heavy because of the war [7; 147-159].

Similar version has O. A. Chagadaeva. From her point of view, the financial losses associated with the cancellation of the liquor monopoly, led to a huge budget deficit, which partial funding produces through tax increases and partly due to the emission, which inevitably led to an increase in inflation. Thus, an increase in the tax burden, rising inflation was led to discontent of the people by the policy of the authorities. If at the beginning of the war there was a powerful patriotic enthusiasm that helped to reduce drinking with the all attendant positive consequences, then, as the worsening of the situation on the front, of the worsening of the socio-economic situation population was less and less ready to put up with the absence of alcohol. Illegal forms of production of alcoholic beverages begin to develop; the "black" market is developing and, consequently, drunkenness is increasing. And so the differences in the access to alcohol for different social groups contribute to a stronger sense of social injustice. In addition, "...the "Prohibition" led to the congestion on state and private wine stores enormous amounts of alcohol. Huge stocks of unsold alcohol in the revolutionary months have a particular concern of the authorities, as they have been regularly attacked and embezzled,

revolutionary actions were often accompanied by drunken riots. Since the beginning of strife ... alcohol cellar became "powder magazine" of the empire. That is the "Prohibition" was one of the catalysts for the development of a revolutionary situation and a destabilizing factor "[8].

In our view, this issue requires further, more thorough study covering different populations and regions. The findings of this study would allow not only to clarify some issues related to the historical situation in Russia during 1914-1917, but also to give a deeper understanding of the processes taking place in Russia in the early 20th century. If the thesis of the increased of the peasants' wealth is correct, it could be argued that the farm in the beginning of the First World War was not such as it was described by Fet and Chaianov. It can be said that the demand of the peasants in the period has already ceased to be static, they began to have some needs that were new in comparison with the economy, which is described by Chaianov where the need of the every thing has been tested by generations, and there was no need to change anything in the existing way. If the peasants, earned additional income, saving on alcohol in the medium term do not reduce their labor costs, but try to improve their economy or their way of life, it could serve as an indirect confirmation of the success of Stolypin reforms whose aim was to change the mentality of the peasants, development of the new stimuli to the work, not peculiar to the most farmers, community members [9, 10 and 11].

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth noting that after the February 1917 revolution, the Provisional Government had left the "Prohibition" in force. Came to power in October 1917, the Bolsheviks also did not abolish the law. The ban remained in effect until August 26, 1923, when the restrictions on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages were lifted.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Rozinskaya Natalia A.
Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of
Economics, Leninskie Gory, 1-46, 3rd training
building, Moscow, 119991, Russia

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