New Otkhodnichestvo and Shift Labor Organization in the Depopulation and Settlement of Territories

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Abstract—Modern Russia is characterized by a frequent discrepancy between the places of employment and residence of the able-bodied population. Combined with new opportunities for its spatial mobility, this has led to the development of intra-Russian and intraregional labor migrations. Among them, a significant place is occupied by commuting (daily departure to the place of work in another locality) and shift labor organization (departure to a place of work for a long time due to the irrationality of daily return to the place of permanent residence). The phenomenon of shift work historically grew out of prerevolutionary otkhodnichestvo, which does not fully coincide with the concept of seasonal work. Our contemporaries are increasingly using the concept of otkhodnichestvo, finding direct parallels with shift work. Such work is becoming one of the most dominant type of labor migration and an active factor of spatially mediated depopulation, which was analyzed in the previous issue of this journal. Unfortunately, statistics do not give objective information about this phenomenon; therefore, estimates by different researchers vary significantly. Legally, shift work in Russia is regulated only from the viewpoint of the employer–employee relationship. However, this article shows that it governs not only the special organization of labor, but also the special order of organizing the lives of millions of Russian citizens and spatial organization of economic and social activity in Russian regions and municipalities. Concentration of shift work vacancies is noted in Moscow and several other large cities, whereas in poorly populated areas of Russia, such vacancies are localized in stationary shift settlements. It is proposed they be considered as a kind of components of the settlement system with legal establishment of relations with local government bodies.

Keywords: migration, spatially mediated depopulation, otkhodnichestvo, shift labor organization, shift settlement, fly-in/fly-out and drive-in/drive-out migration

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INTRODUCTION AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

In the structure of factors of spatially mediated depopulation and desertification of Russian territories, the intra-Russian and intraregional labor migrations are becoming more and more significant. In their scale and territorial distribution, they significantly exceed external labor migration. This was a natural result of the uneven distribution of relatively well-paid jobs and their frequent territorial discrepancy with citizens’ places of residence. In addition to commuting (daily departure to the place of work in another locality), spurred both by mass motorization and intra- and interregional passenger transportation, the shift work has received new incentives and has become a stable phenomenon.

For a long time, the concept of shift work (watch) was exclusively associated with a special order and time interval of watchkeeping on ships, and in Soviet times, with short bursts of organized labor enthusiasm (“they took up a labor shift”). Now, a shift work (beyond service in the navy) is a special procedure for organizing peacetime labor away from home, when it is impossible or economically inexpedient to return to one’s permanent place of residence every day (weekly; in some cases, even monthly). Precisely in this sense, the wide distribution and specifics of shift work demanded its separate legal consolidation in Labor Code of the Russian Federation. The features of regulation of shift work are independently consolidated in Chapter 47, the five clauses of which (297–302) consistently regulate the essence of this work, restrictions on its use, duration, accounting of working hours, and modes of work and rest, and guarantees and compensation to persons performing shift work. These aspects of labor relations are reflected in hundreds of scientific articles, as well as several dissertations characterizing...
various aspects of shift work as a special form of labor organization, used, as a rule, in the North.\footnote{For illustration, here was several theses successfully defended in Russia in recent years for candidate and doctoral degrees in sociology, economics, medicine, and psychology. “Shift Work as a Special Form of Organization of the Labor Process,” “Institutionalization of Social and Labor Relations with Organized Shift Work in Russia’s Far North,” “Social Mechanisms of Management of Shift-Work-Based Enterprises in the North,” “Characteristics of Adaptive Reactions of the Bodies of Shift Workers in the Arctic,” “Social Problems of the Expeditionary—Rotational System of Activity of Enterprises of the Fuel and Energy Complex of the North,” “Hygienic Principles of Health Organs for Oil Complex Shift Workers in the Far North,” “Physiological Reactions of the Bodies of Oil Complex Workers during the Expeditionary Mode of Labor in the Arctic,” “Psychological Analysis of the Professional Activity of Specialists in the Oil Production Complex: Case Study of Shift Work in the Far North.”}

Yes, shift work is a special type of labor organization, but the author believes that shift work is no less significant a special procedure for organizing the lives of millions of Russian citizens and the spatial organization of economic and social activity in Russian regions and municipalities. Shift work has long become an essential factor in the spatially mediated depopulation and transformation of the settlement system, the human resource potential of the regional economy, and social life.

The quantitative parameters of shift work as a way of life and a component of the settlement system are not directly tracked statistically, but in some recent documents, it is possible to find approximate information, isolated it from the general array of data on interregional labor migration. So far, one can only hope that as a result of a radical revision of statistical work combined with specially organized sociological monitoring, residents of each populated area, regardless of its size, as well as politicians and public figures, will have objective knowledge on the essence, parameters, and prospects of this vital phenomenon. Today, nothing prevents one from obtaining the following information at least annually:

— the number of able-bodied population and its share in the total population of a city, village, etc.;
— the number of able-bodied citizens engaged in permanent work at their place of residence;
— the number of residents who commute daily (the destination, modes of transportation, and type of such work);
— the number of people engaged in shift work, its duration, and destination;
— the number of able-bodied citizens, from where they move to a specific populated area for permanent residence and work at the place of residence, and for commuting or shift work;
— the number of citizens left populated area, and new place of their permanent residence.

To reiterate, we are dealing with every (large and small) populated area in Russia, and the lack of such information does not justify the fact that there is insufficient information on many other aspects of life in Russia.

Shift work in Russia has a long history, which began at a time when this phenomenon was called *otkhodnichestvo*. It has been comprehensively studied by scientists and brilliantly described by essays and writers of the 19th—early 20th centuries. The author cites here “physiological essays” well known not only to sociologists and ethnographers: “Russians, Copied from Nature by Russians” by F.Ya. Bashutsky; “Sketches of Moscow Life” by P. Mistengof; the well-known almanac “Physiology of St. Petersburg” edited by N.A. Nekrasov; “Yesterday and Today” by V.A. Sollogub, reprinted in 1959, “Essays and Stories” by I.T. Kokorev; and among the wonderful fiction about the Russian *otkhodnik*, of course, “Ennui” by A.P. Chekhov. There were also many publications about the parameters and socioeconomic aspects of *otkhodnichestvo* at the level of not only governorates (*gubernias*), but also (predominantly) counties and cities, which gave a real picture of this versatile phenomenon in a significant part of the country.

In Soviet times, the problems of prerevolutionary *otkhodnichestvo* were studied mainly in the context of the relationship between city and village—the main supplier of migrant workers; the causes and consequences of agrarian overpopulation relevant to our days were considered in particular and successful attempts were made to quantitatively assess these phenomena (Burkin, 1978; Tikhonov, 1978). *Otkhodnichestvo* became of particular interest to Soviet researchers with respect to its historical role in the formation of new industrial centers and class of workers. Prominent Soviet historian P.G. Ryndziunsky wrote: “...Agrarian overpopulation (insufficient productivity of allotment farming to meet the needs of the available rural population—V.L.) ...stimulated peasants to leave the countryside. ...In industrial areas, the average duration of departure to work was long. For example, in the Sudo- godsky district of Vladimir oblast, it was eight to nine months a year among men. ...The family of the *otkhodnik*, which remained in the village while he was away for a long time or regularly left the village, was a family that had largely lost its peasant appearance ...its opportunities for farming were reduced, primarily because the main labor force was gone” (Ryndziunsky, 1983, p. 135).

Today, interest in mass *otkhodnichestvo* in prerevolutionary Russia has been governed by the similarity of its causes and consequences to what is happening at present, but without emphasis on issues of *otkhodniki* moving to large cities. From the most complex socioeconomic phenomenon of modern *otkhodnichestvo* and shift work organization, this article only highlights two aspects directly related to the problem of spatially...
mediated depopulation and desertification of Russian territories: the scale and consequences of this phenomenon and modern shift settlements as potential components of the settlement system in sparsely populated areas with legal establishment of the status of these settlements and ordering of their relations with local governments.

NEW OTKHODNICHESTVO: SCALE AND IMPACT ESTIMATES

As already noted, official statistical indicators are insufficient to assess the scale and impact of the new otkhodnichestvo, but nevertheless attempts have been made. For example, in 2019, based on the results of a monthly labor force survey (population survey on employment issues), the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) prepared extensive analytical material on interregional labor migration.2 Naturally, not all its indicators characterize shift work (this applies, e.g., to interregional labor migration by residents of Moscow and Leningrad oblasts) and intraregional migration phenomena are not considered; however, some indicators are very significant for characterizing the impact of shift work on spatially mediated depopulation. Based on these data, among the employed population working outside their federal subjects, the share of young people is higher and the share of people over 45 years old lower than among the employed population working within the federal subjects. In the structure of the employed population leaving for work outside their territories, 86% work in organizations (legal persons). One of the main territories employing citizens from other regions, is Tyumen oblast with its autonomous okrugs, where the share of outside workers is 18.6% of the region’s employed population.3 Among the number of intra-Russian labor migrants leaving their federal subjects, 21.1% are employed in construction, 11.8% in trade, 13.7% in transportation and storage, 8.8% in mining, and 8.3% in manufacturing.

One of the first fundamental studies of the new otkhodnichestvo was the book Otkhodniki (Plyusnin et al., 2013) by specialists from the HSE University, which consistently examines the essence of this phenomenon and the degree of its study, estimates the number of migrant workers, and analyzes the specialization of regions by types of seasonal occupation. The problems of socialization of otkhodniki in a new environment and the peculiarities of their life at their place of permanent residence are investigated, as well as the relationship of otkhodniki and authorities of different levels. This book is primarily a sociological study, a rich interview with both migrant workers themselves and heads of local government; the appendix contains the most interesting reports on the situation with migrant workers in many cities and villages of Russia.

At the beginning of the description of the results of this study, its authors ask the question: “Can it be said that the current forms of migration are similar to the old otkhodnichestvo, or only barely similar to it?” Their answer is: “From our viewpoint, which agrees with that of a number of other sociologists and economists, otkhodnichestvo is close or even analogous to the old otkhodnichestvo” (Plyusnin et al., 2013, p. 16). Using a huge amount of factual material, the authors show that otkhodniki are overwhelmingly residents of small towns and villages, since a significant number of such cities in Russia are actually rural settlements with the corresponding organization of life and economy. “…These people, as a rule, in their places of permanent residence have an income insufficient to decently (sometimes normally) support their families: they do not have high-paid positions in the public sector, earnings in the private sector, either in production and the service sector, and quite frequently, they are unable to find a job in their hometown with the specialty they once mastered. A considerable number of families live in so-called vacant villages, where not only there are no jobs, there is no one to whom they can offer the products of their labor” (Plyusnin et al., 2013, p. 17). In conclusion, the authors also give quantitative estimates, which, taking into account inevitable subjectivity (the absence of statistical account for otkhodnichestvo here has already been mentioned), paint a picture of the scale of the phenomenon: “…The number of Russian migrant workers, estimated by various methods, is at least 10–15 mln, perhaps even 20 mln. That is, according to a rough estimate, from one-fourth to one-third of Russian households are families of otkhodniki” (Plyusnin et al., 2013, p. 273). Rosstat estimates are significantly more modest, but also impressive: within 20 years (1998–2018), the number of shift workers had tripled to about 1.5 mln people in 2017.4 However, this is only what the state statistics observe based on official data.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta presented a summary assessment of the situation in 2019–2020 with links to the authoritative international website Avito, and in combination with the information analyzed over the same period,3 the following conclusions were drawn. The number of job offers for shift work in 2019 increased by almost 20% with an average salary (offered by the employer and demanded by shift workers) of RUB 60 000/month. The maximum demand for shift workers was not in the Arctic, but in Moscow (16% of all vacancies), and more often the same Muscovites, as well as residents of St. Petersburg and Krasnodar (2% each) leave for a long-distance shift (filling 14% of

2 On interregional labor migration in 2018. https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/trud/migrac/mtm_2018.htm.
3 On average in Russia, the share of labor migrants in the total employed population is 4.1%; according to the same survey.
4 Rosstat has found 1.5 mln shift workers. https://pravdaurfo.ru/news/171552-rostat-nashel-15-milliona-vahtovikov. Accessed August 24, 2021.
shift vacancies), despite the fact that 66% of applicants live in small towns and villages in almost all regions.

It should be noted that Russian scientists have done much for the systematic formation of ideas about the new otkhodnichestvo (Nefedova, 2015; Shabanova, 1992; Zhidkevich, 2014; Zhidkevich et al., 2015). An example is the P.P. Velikii’s article (2010) with the characteristic term neo-otkhodnichestvo, based on an analysis of labor migrations by rural residents of Volgograd, Samara, and Saratov oblasts, where he writes: “...When asked whether traveling had a positive impact on family life, only 11% of men answered negatively. Their wives, mothers and sisters had even fewer negative assessments, 7%. On the other hand, almost 40% of all respondents said that materially the family began to live much better, and 14% of men pointed to such a positive aspect as the acquisition of business experience and that now it is easier for them to find a job. Many bought cars, household appliances, and clothes” (Velikii, 2010, p. 46).

And yet, what do the scale and systemic impact of shift work and the shift lifestyle mean from the standpoint of spatially mediated depopulation, and how is this phenomenon localized at the places of permanent residence and workplaces of shift workers?

It would seem that widespread shift work does not lead either to “extinction of villages” previously described in (Leksin, 2021) or to “desertification of the country’s territories” because shift workers usually do not leave their former place of residence and very rarely settle in new places of work. However, Velikii also notes that long-term shift work poses a threat to health: 22% of men (according to their wives, 24%) believe that their health has deteriorated due to the very high work load. In addition, 11% of men and 17% of their wives noted that family relations had worsened, and 5.6% of men generally indicated disintegration of the family (Velikii, 2010, p. 47). This ultimately weakens the reproductive potential of the population: in almost all settlements and regions with mass proliferations of migrant workers, indicators of natural population decrease are consistently growing. Naturally, personal income taxes remain at the place of employment for shift workers, and this weakens the budgetary potential of their places of residence. However, this is least of all the fault of the shift workers—people who are willing and able to work.

To the assessments of the problems of shift work presented by domestic scientists, we should add the testimonies of shift workers themselves, scattered across the pages of local publications and the Internet. The author looked through about a hundred such materials for 2012–2020 (according to the author’s estimates, this is less than a tenth of the available materials). Such reports, as a rule, were written by people who, for one reason or another, left shift work, and therefore, 90% of these reports, although with a rigorous presentation of facts, are emotionally critical in nature. In generalized form, many complaints begin with an indication that the promised wages are significantly lower, and the work regime (up to 11 h per shift, seven days a week) is excessively difficult.

Small shift settlements (including those left over from the Soviet era) are often not well-equipped; workers have to live in common rooms accommodating six to ten people. There are no normative living conditions; there are no regulations on the availability of dryers (clothes often have to be dried in living quarters), showers, baths, laundries, or even more comfortable toilets. Until now, slightly modified shipping containers serve as housing in a number of shift settlements. But for all this, such shift settlements continue to function (the only reason for their closure is completion of an employer’s economically profitable activity). The number of those wishing to commute for shift work does not decrease, even under the described conditions. Shift settlements devoid of facilities are scattered across many Northern and Far Eastern regions; unlike extirpating villages, they have a stable economic base, and it would be absurd not to take this into account in assessing the desertification of remote areas.

SHIFT SETTLEMENTS OF THE LARGEST CORPORATIONS

Shift settlements created by the largest Russian corporations can rightfully be considered sustainable settlements with permanent residency of periodically changing shift workers. Such settlements are becoming real elements of a sparse settlement system. Today shift settlements are only located in specific municipalities, but they have neither institutional features of local government, nor such familiar social facilities as preschools and schools, and there are no children, adolescents, or pensioners among the people permanently residing there. These settlements are designed for the simultaneous residency of tens of thousands of people, which is quite comparable to most large rural and many urban-type settlements in Russia.

Against the general background of predominantly small, poorly equipped shift settlements, some modern shift settlements have all the attributes of urban life and are designed for long-term operation. In (Leksin, 2018), the state of a number of well-known shift settlements of this type was analyzed, including the village
of Sabetta, created by OJSC Yamal LNG. The settlement is located in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug in the area of the South Tambeyshsky licensed area, where the newly built seaport, a liquefied natural gas (LNG-1) plant, and an airport are also located today. This modern shift settlement is designed for almost 30000 jobs, there is a special procedure for access and residence (in particular, a very strict “dry law”), and there is a corporative-organized system of food and medical care for employees. In fact, one of the first precedents of organizing a production—territorial complex was created in Russia, the functioning of economic, infrastructural, and social facilities of which is completely governed by the interests of the private company that created it.

The living conditions of shift workers employed in the village at the Maiskoe gold deposit (in underground mines, in an open pit mine, at an ore-dressing plant) in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug are no less impressive. At the Kupol gold ore complex, an almost 1-km-long warm “Arctic corridor” has been built, making it possible in any weather to connect the comfortable premises of the shift settlement with the control center and production facilities, while the airport at the Kupol mine is considered the most popular in Chukotka: planes and helicopters land and take off here several times each day. Shift workers in such settlements often live in hotel-like conditions. This is, of course, not so much the altruistic policy of companies as a sober calculation, concern for the image of the business associated with its social attractiveness, and the desire to stimulate and retain personnel.

Other examples are: The Bovanenkovo shift settlement at the gas field of the same name (estimated service life, about 100 years) and gas processing plants on the Yamal Peninsula. The shift workers live in several hotel-like hostels and comfortable trailers; there is a hospital unit (of course, it does not take into account the special requirements of the pandemic), a sports complex with a swimming pool, a community center, etc. The village not only has its own airfield (Gazprom-avia) capable of accommodating Tu-154, Boeing-737, and other heavy aircraft (with flights to Moscow, Nadym, Omsk, Tyumen, Ufa, and Ukhta), but also a railway station.

The Novozapolyarny shift settlement (Gazprom Dobycha Yamburg LLC), designed for 2000 shift workers, more like a modern city for permanent residence. There are three streets here: the hotel-like hostels feature comfortable miniapartments with all conveniences; buildings are connected by warm passages with special modules housing canteens, winter gardens, and gyms (several hundred people frequent them daily, more 70000 people per year). In western Yakutia, the shift settlement at the Samburgneftegas Talakan oil and gas condensate field consists of 30 residential complexes and is designed for more than 3500 people, each of which upon arrival at Talakan Airport (up to 100 000/year passengers per year) is examined at a health center. In the 12 canteens, about 70% of the cost of food is covered by the employer; there is a shop in the village and mobile communications, Internet, and satellite TV are available. Every other employee is from the relatively close (by Siberian standards) city of Surgut and the Lensky, Mirinsky, Suntarsky, Nyurbinsky, and other districts of Yakutia, where initial vocational training of school graduates takes place. A contract (a rare case) between the government of the Yakutia and management of the company was concluded on the socioeconomic development of the territory (construction of social and transport infrastructure in neighboring areas).

The Ebelyakh—Gusiny shift settlement complex of the Almazy Anabara company, which has been operating in the Anabarsky district of Yakutia 24/7 year-round for more than 20 years is fitted like a city. Diamonds are mined in an open pit, about 700 people work in the mines in winter, and up to 1200–1300 people in summer (during the flushing season). The shift settlement at the mine is the most comfortable: it is called the Pentagonal for its shape (in fact, the structure is hexagonal), which houses are residential blocks for 500–600 people, a canteen, a cultural center, an office, a gym, and a bathhouse. Another well-equipped shift settlement of a new type may appear more than 100 km from the village of Dikson, in the community/geo_club/post192099026/comments. Accessed August 24, 2021.

11 Meet Talakan and Vitim. https://www.liveinternet.ru/community/geo_club/post192099026/comments. Accessed August 24, 2021.

12 Almazy Anabara and the people who mine: How the shift village lives in northern Yakutia. https://tass.ru/arbitka-segodnya/6656394. Accessed August 24, 2021.
interfluve of the Yenisey, Pyasina, and Syradasay rivers, in relation to development of the Syradasay coal deposit, the richest in particularly valuable grades (with an annual production of marketable coal of 12 mlr t, with possible reserves of almost 500 years). For the construction of a coal mine, an ore-dressing plant, a 60 km railway line, the Yenisey seaport (28 ice-class ships are supposed to be ordered for the transportation of coal), the Taimyr airport, a mini-thermal power plant, coal and industrial warehouses, treatment facilities and other infrastructure facilities will require more than 3000 construction workers, then about 1000 workers to operate the facilities.

Naturally, shift settlements have been and are being created primarily to provide labor force for industrial facilities, and the village social infrastructure is mainly oriented towards this. This is why in the first half of 2020, workers in such settlements (including in quite comfortable ones, for example, in Sabetta) had the well-founded concern about aggravation of the pandemic and the inability of village health facilities to take necessary preventive and therapeutic actions. Therefore, the Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation dated April 28, 2020, no. 601 On the Approval of Temporary Rules for Shift Work has recommended “heads of the executive authorities of federal subjects of Russian Federation to provide assistance to organizations using shift workers in organizing medical care, communication services, transport, food, household, and other necessary support to employees in shift work areas and gathering areas for arrival and departure to and from work.” It was established that “if an employer does not have areas for the necessary temporary isolation (observation) of workers arriving for shift work, then this is to be done in observation facilities closest to the place of shift work.”

Regional authorities were forced to take their own measures. In May 2020, employers were prohibited from creating observation facilities for shift workers in the Komi Republic. The interim head of the republic, in a video message to residents, said that this measure was taken because two-thirds of all those infected in the republic were shift workers, and in some cities, were no longer enough places in observation facilities. If the shift work does not take place in the republic itself, then a transit stop for shift workers observation is prohibited. If the shift work takes place within the republic, it is necessary to assist the employer in ensuring that the shift workers undergo observation outside the republic, and arrive into the shift settlement directly with a confirmed negative test result. This is not the only example of an independent and responsible solution to many issues of organizing shift activity in specific territories. Thus, the authorities of Yakutia are planning to employ residents of the republic at the Chayandinskoe oil and gas condensate field, where, according to the press services of the head of the republic and the government of Yakutia, “out of 10 600 people... only 240 are residents of the republic; the rest are from 78 Russian regions... New workers will be employed under the Local Personnel for Industry program based on the experience of Almazy Anabar, all of whose employees are local residents.”

At the end of 2020, Chairman of the State Assembly (II Tumen) of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) P. Gogolev wrote about the need for regulatory streamlining of shift activity and shift settlements, which fell out of the legal field. Noting the business profitability of creating temporary settlements for organizing shift work, he drew attention to the fact that “the standards of medical care, sanitation, nutrition for workers and, in general, the organization of shift settlements have not been established... their place in the administrative-territorial structure of the region is not indicated in any way, [people] live behind barriers in a closed manner, barely participating in the life of the districts in which they are located, and for the time being not requiring anything from municipalities and regional authorities.” And the head of the republican authorities posed “the main question arising from the very prevalence of the shift—expeditionary method of organizing labor: what should be done

13 In Komi, it was forbidden to create observation facilities for shift workers. https://rg.ru/2020/05/26/reg-szfo/v-komi-zapretili- sozdavat-observatory-dlia-vahtovyh-rabochih.html. Accessed August 24, 2021.
14 In Komi, it was forbidden to create observation facilities for shift workers. https://rg.ru/2020/05/26/reg-szfo/v-komi-zapretili- sozdavat-observatory-dlia-vahtovyh-rabochih.html. Accessed August 24, 2021.
15 Chayandinsky shift workers may be replaced by residents of Yakutia, Vesti Yakutia, May 22, 2020. https://www.v14.ru/ 2020/05/22/chayandinskih-vahтовиков-mogut-zamenit-zhiteli-yakutii/. Accessed August 24, 2021.
16 Gogolev P., Shift work itself will not stand, Rossiskaya Gazeta. Economy of the Far East, 2020, no. 250 (8304). https:// rg.ru/2020/11/06/reg-dfo/status-vahтовых-poselkov-nado- zakrepliat-zakonodatelno.html. Accessed August 24, 2021.
17 P. Gogolev gave an example of force majeure, namely, the outbreak of COVID-19 in a shift settlement at the Chayandinskoe oil and gas condensate field: “...Many contractors are involved in development of the field; the shift settlement, in fact, consists of 34 temporary settlements, where at that time more than 10 000 workers lived. Dozens of heads of industrial enterprises were unable to organize combat against the infection. The initiator of the operational measures was the head of Yakutia, Aisen Nikolaev. He introduced a quarantine at the field, ordered a team of doctors from Yakutsk to Chayanda, and together with the Emergency Situations Ministry and other federal authorities, organized treatment of the sick and evacuation of the healthy. At the same time, a large load fell on the administration of the Lensky district, and the district hospital mainly treated shift workers for two months. This case showed that the autonomy of shift settlements from local authorities is quite unsustainable.”
with the existing northern settlements, with their population with limited mobility, which is unattractive for shift organizers? After a certain number of years, we may find ourselves with depopulated territories and corresponding geopolitical risks. P. Gogolev writes: “The State Assembly of Yakutia considers it necessary, first, to determine the status of shift settlements at the federal level. Second, it is necessary to combine shift and traditional methods of organizing labor activity according to the “base city—shift” system, with the corresponding development of social services in the base settlement in the interests of the shift settlement. Moreover, the representatives of municipalities should work in the shift settlements. Third, it is important to give priority to intraregional shift work. We believe that these principles should be formalized in federal legislation.”

CONCLUSIONS

The new otkhodnichestvo and organization of shift work and life for millions of Russian citizens is a socio-economic phenomenon that has no counterparts in other countries in scale and genesis. Shift workers are, in fact, guest workers in their homeland, differing from such workers from near abroad states only by slightly greater legal protection, no need to obtain special permits, and the absence of language barriers. The new otkhodnichestvo plays such a significant role in the self-organization and adaptation of the country’s population to the changes after Perestroika at the end of the 1980s that the author would like to draw attention to three key aspects of this phenomenon, which have been considered but not sufficiently emphasized in the text of the article. They are as follows: (1) the forced, but mutually beneficial for employer and shift worker, nature of seasonal work, (2) its long-term aspect, and (3) new otkhodnichestvo as a subject requiring additional systemic research.

The new otkhodnichestvo is mutually compelling and beneficial. Employers do not have a local labor force to organize their highly profitable enterprises, and shift workers do not have permanent or relatively well-paid jobs at their place of residence. Both the first and second represent the objective reality of the new Russia, in which the centers of the greatest productive activity (oil, gas, diamonds, nonferrous and precious metals mining centers) are largely concentrated where there are no free labor resources, and the absence of a normally paid job has become common in most Russian cities and towns. The latter circumstance urges their residents to engage in shift work in large cities, occupying niches of the labor market unattractive to the resident populations (construction, security, etc.). In social terms, otkhodnichestvo is clearly negative. Otkhodnichestvo harms the health of shift workers and fosters abnormal family relations, but economically, otkhodnichestvo in many cases for shift workers’ families becomes the only way to solve pressing everyday problems.

When assessing the long-term organization of work and lives of millions of Russian citizens, one should take into account how long the market prosperity of enterprises in need of shift workers will last and how long stagnation of the economy and social life will continue in hundreds of populated areas—the suppliers of shift work. Demand for shift workers by enterprises extracting natural resources in areas with extreme natural and climatic conditions and construction enterprises will not change dramatically in the next 10–15 years. Scientific and technological progress at such enterprises is not oriented towards a significant reduction in the need for labor in connection with the specifics of the work; forecasts and strategies for the development of the corresponding industries more likely indicate expansion of the area of their activity than the possibilities of its intensification (robotization, etc.). In the coming years, a significant change in the situation at the places of permanent residence of shift workers, which are unlikely to become centers of mass economic activity, is also improbable. Meanwhile, the costs of recruitment, wages, and organization of the lives of shift workers are increasing. Therefore, employers, together with local and regional administrations, are trying to recruit and incentivize people from relatively nearby municipalities to work at their enterprises. There are examples of resettlement for permanent residence for those who can professionally replace the remote labor force (e.g., in 2021, the Kolmar company resettled about 2000 families of miners from Donbass to town of Neryungri in Yakutia).

Unfortunately, the causes and impact of organizing shift work and lives in specific regions of the country and populated areas have not yet become the subject of regular systemic studies. Today, they are being done by representatives of geographical science (the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Moscow State University) without stable funding for such work. Specially conducted sociological studies (e.g., at the HSE University) are one-off and do not monitor the situation continuously. The same applies to studying the problems of shift employment by lawyers, demographers, and economists. Life in shift settlements is occasionally covered only by the media, and scientific studies of the economy and social life in the populated areas of permanent residence for shift workers are extremely rare, despite the almost complete lack of statistics on these issues. Hopes were pinned on the all-Russian population census in fall 2021. Indeed, the questionnaire contained the question “Is your main job in the same populated area where you permanently reside?” with the clarifications “Where is your main job (federal subject, urban-type settlement, municipality/district, urban district, foreign state?).” However, it is not clear what the main job is, nor the nature of main job (per-
The low priority of research and solution to the problems of organizing the work and lives of shift workers and their families is reflected by the fact that these problems have not become the subject of either national projects or numerous programs resulting from them. This article does not pretend to answer all the questions posed in it, but the author hopes that it can at least to some extent activate and actualize the need for a systemic understanding of the shift work component of Russia’s modern economy and social life, which is extremely important for regions and municipalities.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares no conflict of interest.

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