Culturological aspects of environmental policy in coal mining region

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Abstract. The paper presents an analysis of the problem of environmental safety on the basis of the cultural vision of socio-ecological problems associated with the development of the coal industry in the Kuzbass region. It is emphasized that at the present time, there is a growing crisis in the relations between the man and nature, which is especially evident in such actively interacting with the natural environment regions as the Kuzbass. The article emphasize the statement that the coal industry of the Kuzbass plays such a significant role that its development appears to be socially and culturally important for the entire region. The culture of environmental safety in the coal mining industry affects life and health, in the literal sense of the word, every inhabitant of the region. Therefore, the formation of a high ecological culture should become a strategic priority of the regional policy covering all spheres of life and activity of the Kuzbass population. In this complicated situation, the choice of orientations and motivations in the formation of ecological consciousness, in ecological education acquires a huge role. However, in publications, only environmental education is most often emphasized, and sometimes norms of environmental ethics. The article proposes a broader approach based on the synthesis of rational impact, ethical and aesthetic motivation, as well as on involving young people in the practical volunteer movement in the sphere of ecology.

Keywords: culture, ecology, ecological crisis, globalization, coal industry, Kuzbass, environmental policy and education, people, nature.

1. Introduction

Currently, the environmental crisis is becoming global. The power of modern civilization is sometimes comparable with the power of natural processes. Increasing anthropogenic pressure on nature carries with it the danger of major catastrophic consequences. The problem of human interaction with nature is particularly relevant for such coal-mining regions as the Kuzbass, where the scale and intensity of anthropogenic impacts reaches critical values. And this must be put on the agenda the problem of environmental safety, affecting both the existence of nature and the person himself, and his basic components. The growing crisis in the relationship between man and nature is in direct connection with the transformation of culture into civilization, bearing the loss of moral guidelines, the reduction of humanistic values, supplanted by pragmatics and profit. Therefore, the task of finding a cultural paradigm in the relationship between man and nature seems to be the most relevant, where the
Kuzbass can be a convincing example. But despite the growing acuteness of environmental problems, a little has changed in the attitude of man to nature in fact, in his mind, in the system of those values that are needed to preserve nature itself. The growth of consumer priorities continues, the rate of environmental degradation is increasing, and the rate of movement towards a global crisis is increasing. Unfortunately, the Kuznetsk coal basin fits into this trend.

2. Materials and Methods

Recently, the society has gone through the periods of formation of non-classical (an “ecosystem” by A. Tensley) and post-non-classical ecology (a theory of human invasion of ecosystems). In studying the problem of the relationship between man and nature, the transition took place from the traditional opposition “organism-environment” (classical ecology) to the opposition “natural - artificial” (“Social ecology” of R. Park and E. Bergessa, studying the “second”, artificial human environment).

According to N. N. Moiseev, the entry into the epoch of the Noosphere should occur not in the form of a bifurcation jump (which can lead to unpredictable consequences), but in the form of co-evolution with the biosphere. As the dominant cultural paradigms, the concepts of a new humanism, such as A. Schweitzer’s “ethics of reverence for life,” should be chosen. In the study of the cultural aspects of ecological paradigms, their influence on the solution of ethological problems and the identification of the specifics of the specific changes of modern technologies, the following methods and approaches were used: the methods of systemic and comparative analysis; the structural-functional approach; the conceptual analysis, historical, and logical. From a methodological point of view, the application of a regional approach, linked to the specifics of the coal-mining region, and the extension of the principles of environmental education used are also important.

And this specificity, sufficiently developed in the studies of the Kuzbass scientists, indicates the pre-crisis state of the environment of the Kuzbass. Even in the capital city of Kemerovo, which has not been directly linked to coal mining for a long time, the content of harmful dust particles indicates a powerful anthropogenic stress on the atmosphere [1]. More broadly, these studies draw attention to the fact that in the annually increasing coal mining in the region, the share of the most dangerous open method is already 63.8%. And the outdated attitude of coal miners to the problems of environmental damage from their activities already causes in the world petitions to abandon the import of Kuzbass coal, which connects the problems of economic and environmental efficiency into a single node [2]. All this speaks of the urgent need to find new approaches to solving the long-standing environmental problems in the coal region [3].

3. Results and Discussion

A consumer attitude to nature cannot but be interrelated with a consumer attitude towards a man (as an important, special, but still part of nature). Hence, the consumer attitude towards nature turns into a consumer attitude of a man towards himself. When nature acts as a means, then, quite often, a person acts as a “means for a means.” The attitude of a man to nature is extrapolated to the attitude of man to man, man to God, to the future, to himself. “The death of God” and “the death of a man” cannot be interrelated with each other and with the “death of nature.” And the “death of nature” cannot but be in connection with the “death of the future.” Between the “dead man” of modern civilization and nature, life in general, the “dead” (deadening the living) relationships necessarily circulate.

To avoid crises, the systemic noospheric environmental thinking and the corresponding hierarchy of values-regulators of human activities need to be formed. These values set the level of ecological culture, which requires the formation of socio-cultural programs that ensure the harmonious development of the “nature-society” system on the way of their harmonious co-evolution [4] [5].

The contemporary researchers have expressed a number of important ideas on this topic. So, from the point of view of M. Heidegger, modern technologies have put at the service of people not only the whole nature, but also people themselves. According to K. Jaspers, a person becomes one of the types of raw materials to be processed and can no longer be freed from the power of the equipment created by him. As a result, both the nature and man are degraded, as they become simple functional elements
and the material of the soulless, self-producing Megamachines. From the point of view of F. Rapp, the mechanisms of culture and human values are behind the technique, so the problem of technology can be solved only by improving social institutions, control, and education mechanisms. J. Habermas believes that within the framework of “strategic action” (associated with the categories of power and wealth), people are guided solely by success, by the results of their actions, putting economic pressure on both the natural environment and other people.

Creating a new “noosphere technology” and environmentally friendly technologies that can ensure a harmonious and safe co-evolutionary development of nature and society is the most urgent [6]. Thus, the ecological imperative of the “co-evolution of man and nature” (N. N. Moiseev) unfolds in unity with the moral imperative. Thus, ecology turns into ecological ethics in the ecosophical concepts of “deep ecology” (A. Naess, W. Fox, B. Devall, G. Sessions), for example, requiring the awareness of the falsity of a number of needs and destructiveness of many desires generated by the consumer society. Not only a change in attitude towards outer nature, but also a change in the attitude of man towards himself (toward his inner nature) appears here as the most important goal. In the framework of the “paradigm of the controlled evolution of the biosphere” (A.V. Yablokov) [7], not only the man’s awareness of the catastrophic situation is associated with the environment, but also the development of specific measures and technologies to solve basic environmental contradictions is implied.

Under the conditions of an ecological crisis covering the entire planet, environmental policy moves into the category of strategic objectives. The cultural self-identification both in Russia as a whole and in each region in particular cannot but happen without their social and ecological self-identification. In this regard, the task of preserving natural systems, maintaining their integrity, improving the quality and standard of living of the population, ensuring environmental safety is a strategic task for the Kuzbass region [8; 9]. Otherwise, the increased anthropogenic and anthropogenic pressure on the environment can lead to its irreparable destruction, which would result in economic and social damage [10]. To prevent this from happening, a constant monitoring of technogenic pollution of natural resources and a number of systemic measures for their conservation and restoration (water purification, plantation, soil recultivation) are necessary [11].

The environmental sphere should become more susceptible to the achievements of scientific and technological progress; the environmental thinking (the formation of which must begin with preschool institutions, continue at school and university) should become “transparent,” permeating all spheres of state and regional governance [12]. The ecologization of the entire system of upbringing and education, a widespread promotion of ecological culture and ideas of sustainable development is necessary. Moreover, the rich nature of the Kuzbass gives all grounds for this. The regulators of economic market are very important to step up in order to encourage entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of environmental protection [13].

Problems and achievements, including breakthroughs, can be identified in the problem of the environmental security of the Kuzbass [14]. Playing a leading role in coal mining, the Kemerovo region belongs to a group of regions with high environmental instability. The Kuzbass landscape image is experiencing obvious technologic overloads, and the “ridges” of dumps throughout the region are the result of them. The fact indicates that the area of disturbed land is 10% of the entire Kuznetsk basin [15]. In this regard, first of all, we should talk about the quality of life of the population of the region, which directly depends on the state of the atmosphere, soil and water, flora and fauna, working conditions and the level of health. And here the picture is very disturbing: the Kuzbass region has one of the highest rates of cancer and tuberculosis in Russia; occupational morbidity indicators in the region significantly exceed the corresponding figures for Russia (1.47) [16, 84]: which can not affect the life expectancy. The active impact on the inhabitants of this region coming from the accumulated technogenic high-frequency radiation and chemicals leads to an increase in the number of people with pathological disabilities [17, 62].

At the same time, the Kuzbass has accumulated a great deal of experience in solving problems of environmental safety, including in the coal industry. So, the recultivation of the “coal ridges” is
actively carried out. Though, it is mainly at the expense of the enterprises engaged in coal mining. In 2016, the enterprises allocated 126 million rubles, and they planned to allocate about 400 million rubles in 2017 [18]. Diagnostics of hazardous situations is being actively developed, which makes it possible to react in a timely manner to their occurrence, significantly increasing the chances of preventing local man-made disasters. As Yu. G. Markov rightly notes, the “relations with nature are not reduced to the field of rational knowledge. Much more fundamental factors are ethical principles and laws, including aesthetic requirements. If a person remained deaf to moral concepts, he would be deaf to nature” [19, p. 191].

4. Conclusion

Thus, we have revealed that a systemic view of the development of society should proceed from the interrelation of two fundamental activities: the creation of livelihoods and the development of man himself. Increasingly, the formation and development of a human is becoming the dominant party, causing the functioning and development of all other activities. The humanity is not a means of production, not only it subject, but it is the goal of production. If so, then the problem of the level and quality of human life, its environmental safety should be of paramount importance. The role and importance of the problem of environmental safety for the Kuznetsk coal basin is emphasized. The formation of high ecological culture should be a strategic priority of the regional policy covering all spheres of life and activities of the Kuzbass people. The environmental education of the young generation can rely not only on rational and ethical arguments, but also it should positive aesthetic stimuli of love and admiration for the beauty and harmony of nature, for which the nature of the Kemerovo region still represents a fertile material. Thus, it is the rational, ethical, and aesthetic synthesis that represents the most promising area of environmental education. This synthesis can become more effective if it would be implemented in the practical activities of the younger generation. In particular, if it is implemented on the basis of the development of the volunteer movement.

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