

SCIENTIFIC REVIEWS. OPINIONS

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Review of the Monograph:

While Analyzing the Past, to Think about the Future /
under the scientific supervision of Doctor of Economics, Professor V.A. Ilyin. —
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The publication is dedicated to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of RAS (ISED T RAS). Starting as a Department of the Institute of Economic Problems of Kola Scientific Centre of RAS studying the problems of socio-economic development of the Vologda Oblast, the Institute has gone a long way of creative development and become widely known in Russia and abroad due to superior (and in some cases unique) studies of regional development on the example of the Vologda Oblast.

The book summarizes ISED T RAS progress in scientific, organizational, technical and administrative development of the Institute. Twenty-five years is a long term in the life of academic institutions, especially

since its story originates in the time period difficult for Russia. ISED T RAS (and it is well described in this publication) shows how through the chaos of destruction the features of the new begin to form — partly self-invented, partly borrowed abroad, and partly based on the recent experience of academic science development. The regional development is the main idea penetrated in the activity of the new young team.

Awareness of the history is an important stage in the development of any research team. Historical analysis takes on special relevance, when we can understand how the promising vision of reality includes the past and the present of a scientific community, how its future is determined. The twenty-fifth anniversary of ISED T RAS is a good cause to

make conclusions and work out new plans. The very title of the monograph – *While Analyzing the Past, to Think about the Future* – is very symbolic in this sense.

The book reveals the Institute's history, prerequisites of its creation, critical stages in the development and key events. The publication also discloses the institution structure and the main directions of its activities.

The monograph pays great attention to the activities of ISED T RAS heads, enormous assistance in the formation and development of the Institute provided by the Department of Social Sciences of RAS, scientific and political contribution of the academic community, federal and regional authorities to the activities of the team; discusses key analytical and academic research areas, ISED T RAS contribution to social and political life of the region.

The publication presents information about the main partners and international relations of the Institute, photographs reflecting the twenty-five year life of ISED T RAS; the appendices contain extensive factual material covering the history of the Institute and its personnel.

It is worth noting that since the very beginning the Institute has set ambitious goals of the research in socio-economic development of the Vologda Oblast and common issues of territorial development and proposed constructive solutions to practical problems of the economic and social sphere. This work is a response to those who have recently doubted the

usefulness of academic research organizations and demonstration of understanding of duty to the country, constructive relationship to power and social responsibility.

ISED T RAS has always pursued not so much quantitative growth, as strengthening public impact of the organization. This is achieved by careful selection of research topics and well-thought tasks, its activities are focused on. Maintaining high academic standards is an essential and not an abstract challenge for the team.

In this sense there is an indicative example – the fifteen year survey of health and development of children, conducted by ISED T RAS due to the methodological support of the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population of RAS. The research is aimed at studying changes in the health of child population of the region during a long time period. The special monitoring study of health dynamics and its factorial dependency in real-time is unique not only for the Vologda Oblast, but for Russia as well. It allows us to observe the transformation of these changes depending on the factors making a direct and indirect impact on them. The research helps answer a wide range of crucial questions concerning child health: what quality of health is at birth; what causes of children's illness are; what dynamics of health quality is after birth (in the direction of improving or deteriorating); if health changes, what factors influence it, etc. According to the project supervisor Doctor of Economics A.A. Shabunova, "during the

conduct of the monitoring its results become more and more significant and require a deeper interpretation. Looking back, we can say that the potential that was initially laid down in the child health monitoring, was fully fulfilled 15 years. Today it is clear that the data identified in the research are timely, relevant and innovative. They open broad prospects for the preservation and strengthening of human potential”.

There is another example of the ISEDT RAS large-scale long-term research – study of the regional social structure dynamics and the related issues of social inequality. The research helps solve tasks, such as assessment of the extent of socio-economic inequality of the population of the Vologda Oblast (on the basis of data of official statistics and specially organized public opinion polls); identification of normal and excess components of inequality

and its features; it proposes directions for reforming social policy at the federal and regional levels.

In general, the majority of the Institute’s developments are focused on solving practical problems related to the substantiation of socio-demographic policy, forecasts of population development and living standards.

Summarizing the stated above, we can state that the monograph “While Analyzing the Past, to Think about the Future” makes a successful attempt to review the history of formation, current and future work of the talented and productive research team. The book, undoubtedly, will cause interest among social scientists of RAS, economists, sociologists, government officials, post-graduates and students, as well as all persons interested in the problems of studying regional economics and the social sphere.

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