

medicine, education, and science; above them, rank those who are active in agriculture. Our farmers earn, in real terms, about 1,000 rubles a month, that is, \$30 to \$35.

To give you an example: I receive as a monthly salary 1,100 rubles in cash; in my village, the farmers receive, maybe, 100 rubles in cash, but about 900 rubles in the form of agricultural products like potatoes, grain, corn, milk, bread, etc. And since these products in a city like Moscow cost much more than in a village in the Russian countryside, in *real* terms, the farmers “earn” more than scientists, artists, doctors, and teachers in our cities.

**EIR:** How do they survive?

**Koryagina:** By working many jobs, of all sorts. Driving a taxi is one way; digging graves, like one of my friends—a nuclear physicist—does, is another. His wife, also a qualified scientist, works as a cleaning woman. I survive, because I have a little dacha in a village outside Moscow, where I grow potatoes and vegetables. Of course, it is crazy that we scientists drive taxis, grow potatoes, and even are forced to dig graves, rather than doing research and writing scientific pa-

pers, but that is the ugly consequence of the “shock therapy” imposed on us by our liberals.

**EIR:** President Putin has been in power now a good year. How much time does he still have, in the eyes of the Russian population, to improve this desperate situation?

**Koryagina:** I think, about one year. Our people are still waiting; they do believe by now, that Putin *wants* to change the situation for the better. But if he can’t make *big* changes, then our people will soon become disappointed. The Russian people regard Putin as the last hope after Yeltsin. Although Yeltsin presented Putin as “his man,” the Russian people, after some months of watching Putin with some suspicion, realized—especially after Putin successfully solved the problem with the war in Chechnya—that he actually was different than Yeltsin. And now, our population wants Putin to also accomplish an “economic Chechnya,” to radically improve the economic situation; and that for the *whole population*, for the *whole state*.

I hope Putin will be a national leader. He is clever, calm, and doesn’t speak like Gorbachov, who talked about *every-*

## Russians See ‘Systemic’ World Financial Crisis

The ongoing worldwide financial crisis has amplified the discussion in Russia, about the consequences of a collapse of the U.S. dollar. Economist Sergei Glazyev, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and chairman of the State Duma’s (lower house of Parliament) Committee on Economic Policy and Business, released a statement on March 16 dealing with the latest financial events. These, he said, were no mere “market fluctuations”; rather, “this is a systemic crisis, which will have very grave consequences for the entire world financial system. It is especially alarming, that the epicenter of the crisis is the United States, a nation whose national currency is effectively a world currency.”

Glazyev also noted that “the dollar is only 4% backed up by [U.S.] gold reserves. Yet, in order to satisfy the interests of financial speculators, an astronomical quantity of dollars has been put into circulation. As a result, the market has overheated, and the numerous financial pyramids, which were constructed during the past 20 years on a base of various securities and their derivatives, can no longer remain stable.”

Now that “panic among the speculators” is observed, Glazyev said, look for the crisis to spread from stock mar-

kets into other areas, including currencies. The process is not controllable: “Theory and practical experience both tell us, that if a major financial crisis begins, it is extremely difficult to halt its spontaneous development. Local crises may be neutralized in one way or another, but a crisis, spreading from the epicenter of the world financial system, is practically impossible to stop.”

Regarding the impact of the latest events on Russia, Glazyev said that the Russian market “has not yet been restored after the August [1998] crisis, so—to put it crudely—there’s nothing to shake.” But, he added, a collapse of the dollar, and a transition into “the depression stage,” will not fail to affect the heavily dollarized Russian economy. Companies and ordinary citizens, who keep their funds in dollars, will be hit. He suggested that Russia diversify its currency holdings into the euro and other currencies, “in order to reduce our dependence on the dollar,” and implement existing proposals to strengthen the role of the ruble within the Russian economy.

Also on March 16, the Russian government daily *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* advised investors to get out of the dollar. Author Alexander Velichenko documented the desolate situation of the U.S. financial markets, emphasizing the catastrophic accumulation of unpayable debt and the threat of a collapse of the U.S. banking system in the wake of the present stock market crash. Velichenko noted that some British and American experts have already called for an “inflationary solution” to the internal debt crisis.

—Rachel Douglas