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Vlada SOKYRSKA

PhD hab. (History), Professor of the department of World History and Methods of Teaching, Vice-Rector of Research and International Cooperation at Paulo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, 2 Sadova Street, Uman, Cherkassy region, Ukraine, postal code 20300 (vlada.sokirskaya@ukr.net)

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9983-3234>

ResearcherID: B-4448-2019 (<http://www.researcherid.com/rid/B-4448-2019>)

Anatoliy KARASEVYCH

PhD (Philosophy), Professor of the chair of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Dean of the Historical Department at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, 2 Sadova Street, Uman, Cherkassy region, Ukraine, postal code 20300 (karasevych@ukr.net)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4261-6386>

ResearcherID: B-5198-2019 (<http://www.researcherid.com/rid/B-5198-2019>)

Влада СОКИРСЬКА

доктор історичних наук, професор кафедри всесвітньої історії та методик навчання, проректор з наукової роботи та міжнародного співробітництва Уманського державного педагогічного університету імені Павла Тичини, вул. Садова, 2, м. Умань, Черкаської області, Україна, 20300 (vlada.sokirskaya@ukr.net)

Анатолій КАРАСЕВИЧ

кандидат філософських наук, професор кафедри філософії та суспільних дисциплін, декан історичного факультету Уманського державного педагогічного університету імені Павла Тичини, вул. Садова, 2, м. Умань, Черкаської області, Україна, 20300 (karasevych@ukr.net)

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**ACTIVITY OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET PROCUREMENT AGENCIES
IN UKRAINE IN THE 1920-ies**

Summary. *The purpose of the article is to study the forms, the methods and the means of implementing the food dictatorship by the Soviet authorities and to characterize the activities of Russian food-requisition detachments in Ukraine in the 1920-ies. The research methodology is based on the general scientific and historical approaches and principles, which made it possible to study various documents, to systematize the empirical material, to analyze the statistical data, to carry out a content analysis of documents. The scientific novelty of the study is as follows: for the first time in the domestic historiography the peculiarities of the implementation of the Soviet food dictatorship in the 1920-ies in Ukraine were determined, the activity of Russian Soviet food-requisition detachments was described.*

the factors that caused the food crisis were analyzed, its permanent character in the USSR during the above-mentioned period was proved, using a wide range of archival and published documents. **Conclusions.** Using the difficult situation in Ukraine in 1919 – 1920, the Bolsheviks decided to turn it into its food colony and to preserve their revolutionary conquests. The desire to secure the Soviet regime with the material benefits, the fulfillment of the international treaties obligations and the destruction of the political activity of the Ukrainian peasantry prompted the Soviet leadership to pursue an active grain procurement policy in Ukraine. The food apportionment in Ukraine was implemented violently. The Soviet food policy in Ukraine in the 1920-ies caused the famine of 1921 – 1923.

Key words: RSFSR, USSR, Soviet power, food crisis, grain procurement policy.

ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ РОСІЙСЬКИХ РАДЯНСЬКИХ ЗАГОТІВЕЛЬНИХ ОРГАНІВ В УКРАЇНІ У 1920-х рр.

Анотація. Мета дослідження – з'ясувати форми, методи та засоби здійснення радянською владою продовольчої диктатури і охарактеризувати діяльність російських продовольчих загонів в Україні у 1920-х рр. **Методологія дослідження** спирається на загальнонаукові й історичні підходи та принципи, що дало можливість вивчити різні документи, систематизувати емпіричний матеріал, проаналізувати статистичні дані, здійснити змістовий аналіз документів. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше у вітчизняній історіографії, з використанням широкого спектру архівних та опублікованих документів з'ясовано особливості здійснення радянською владою продовольчої диктатури 1920-х рр. в Україні, охарактеризовано діяльність російських радянських продовольчих загонів, проаналізовано чинники, які спричинили продовольчу кризу, доведено її перманентний характер в УСРР окресленого періоду. **Висновки.** Тоталітаризм радянської влади проявлявся і у здійсненні більшовиками продовольчої політики. Користуючись важким становищем в Україні (1919 – 1920), більшовики вирішили її повернути як продовольчу колонію та зберегти свої революційні завоювання. Прагнення забезпечити існування радянської влади матеріальними ресурсами, виконання зобов'язань за міжнародними договорами, знищення політичної активності українського селянства спонукали радянське керівництво здійснювати в Україні активну політику хлібозаготівель. Продовольчу розверстку на її території запроваджували силовими методами. Продовольча політика радянської влади в Україні 1920-х рр. спричинила голодомор 1921 – 1923 рр.

Ключові слова: РСФРР, УСРР, радянська влада, продовольча криза, політика хлібозаготівель, голодомор 1921 – 1923 рр.

Problem statement. Totalitarianism of the Soviet power was also manifested in the implementation of food policy by the Bolsheviks. Destroyed, already fallen behind for centuries, agriculture in Russia could not feed the newly formed state. Having lost bread areas, Russia could not provide itself with food. Taking advantage of the difficult situation in Ukraine, the Bolsheviks decided to return it as a food colony and to preserve its revolutionary gains.

More than 80% of the population of Ukraine after the First World War lived in the countryside. The agricultural output of Ukraine was about 52% of its national wealth (Solovej, 1959, p. 7). Therefore, the agrarian question in the policy of the Bolsheviks in general, and in their struggle for the subordination of Ukraine to Russia, acquired a special significance.

Analysis of the research. The study of the issue of the activities of Russian Soviet procurement agencies in Ukraine in the 1920-ies was not properly reflected in the historical works. The first studies of the issue are the works of the party and public officials of the 1920-ies: M. Vladymyrov (Vladimirov, 1920), V. Kachynskiy (Kachinskij, 1929), L. Trotskyi (Trockij, 1932), O. Schlichter (Shlihter, 1920). They were directly involved in the development of social, political and economic development programmes of the Russian SFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, determined the nature of their behavior and the level of cooperation, influenced the ideologue formation in historiography. The works of the Soviet historians (M. Davydov (Davydov,

1971), Yu. Kondufor (Kondufor, 1953) and the others) have the drawbacks of the schematic presentation of the material, the limitations in the use of the reference base, the preconceived conclusions. The revival of Ukraine's state independence and the democratization of its development have created qualitatively new conditions and opportunities for a thorough scientific understanding of the Russian Soviet food policy in Ukraine. The research of the problem by modern Ukrainian historians is represented by the works of S. Kulchytskyi (Kulchickij, 1993), Ya. Malyk (Malyk, 2013), S. Kornovenko (Kornovenko, 2018).

The works of foreign identifies unbiased scientific opinion, but there is a lack of source base and they are characterized by controversial approaches to the assessment of the Russian Soviet economic policy of Ukrainian SSR in the 1920s. Foreign historiography is presented by works of researchers of different periods, who were oriented on the examinations of the merits of the USSR, relations between its parties, the level of economic and national development (Kolarz, 1952; Mening, 1953). Foreign scientists were studying national policy, economic and cultural development of Ukrainian SSR in a system of the Soviet State and emphasized the colonial status of its economy (Mace, 1983; Karr, 1990; Besançon, 2000; Applebaum, 2017).

The purpose of the article is to find out the forms, methods and means of implementing the Soviet food dictatorship and the characteristics of the Russian food-requisition detachments activities in Ukraine in the 1920-ies.

Presentation of the main material. With the advent of power, the Bolsheviks immediately proceeded to solve the food problem. In order to struggle with «explicit and masked saboteurs», People's commissariat for Food of the Russian SFSR was created in November 1917 «as a fighting organ» of the dictatorship of the proletariat on the food front» (Shlihter, 1928, p. 96).

The desire of the Soviet Russia to conquer Ukraine by any means was explained by the words of L. Trotskyi in his so-called «Instructions to the Communist propagandists in Ukraine»: «We need to return Ukraine to Russia. There is no Russia without Ukraine. Russia cannot exist without Ukrainian coal, iron, ore, grain, salt, the Black Sea, it will suffocate as well as the Soviet government and all of us» (Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine – CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 20, c. 397, p. 113). The grain problem was particularly acute. «For God's sake, take the most vigorous and revolutionary measures to send bread, bread, bread! Otherwise, Petersburg can come to an end ... Announce every day. For God's sake», called V. Lenin in his telegram to Kharkiv of January 15, 1918 (Ekonomicheskie otnosheniya, 1996, p. 149).

The basic principles of the Soviet food system – the monopoly of harvesting and distribution of the most important food supplies, the nationalization of trade and organizational forms of food apparatuses as bodies of the Soviet government – were formed at the First All-Russian Food Congress, held in Moscow in 1918. The Soviet government, the People's Secretariat, was formed in Ukraine in 1917, and Food Secretariat headed by E. Luhanovskiy was formed in it (Chernov, 1926, p. 22). Duplicating the policy of the Russian authorities in its activities, the Central Food Committee of Ukraine was created in Kharkiv by the People's Food Secretariat, which was later transferred to Kyiv.

After the proclamation of the Soviet power in Kharkiv, the Bolsheviks began to send trains with grain to Russia. By March 1, 1918, 140 freight cars went to the Russian SFSR every day; from March 1 – 300, and from April 1 – 400 freight cars every day. However, this was not enough, because a little later the Bolshevik leader is already directly calling his

subjects to the seizure of Ukraine: «It would be foolish to starve, die in Peterburg, when it is possible to take over bread and coal» (Ekonomicheskie otnosheniya, 1996, p. 156). V. Lenin obviously did not feel any discomfort because of the fact that Ukraine was a formally independent state at that time. In the Russian capital, they were satisfied with this state of affairs, believing that due to the stock of grain in Ukraine, the prospects of food rest were opened. The change in political and military situation in Ukraine compromised the revolutionary conquest of the Bolsheviks already in March 1918. «The fate of the revolution depended on our ability to ensure the actual supply of bread to the army and the proletariat», wrote O. Schlichter in 1919, while being a People's Commissar of Food of the Ukrainian SSR (Shlihter, 1928, p. 96).

The attempts of the Bolsheviks to keep the grain monopoly broke off, on the one hand, by attempts to create various Soviet departments and organizations of their own procurement bodies to provide food for their personnel. These bodies bought bread from peasants at free prices, and this upset the People's Commissar's efforts to carry out bundling at stable prices. On the other hand, the procurement of the People's Commissar broke down and the activity of small speculators who bought grain from peasants at any prices, reselling it in cities, especially in Russia at unreasonable high prices. Bread monopoly of the Bolsheviks was threatened by inevitable collapse. This would be particularly negatively reflected in the food supply of the army. Hungry military men are unlikely to fight for the new imperial interests of the Bolsheviks.

In an attempt to save the situation, in May 1918, a special decree of the All-Russian CEC declared a food dictatorship. The peasants were obliged to hand over the grain stocks only to the state. The market trading of bread was regarded as speculative. The attempts of the Bolsheviks to establish a state organization of distribution of products instead of trade quickly recruited forms of the most basic requisition of the agricultural products from peasants.

Before overcoming of the food crisis, which was so rapidly approaching, a personal initiative of the proletarian masses was involved. The organization of food business in Ukraine was regarded by the Soviet government as an urgent task. The need to provide food primarily to the hungry capitals – Moscow and Petrograd, where the main driving force – the proletariat – was concentrated, which led the Bolsheviks to power in the autumn of 1917, demanded that their leadership at all costs be entrenched in Ukraine. The newly formed the Council of the People's Commissariat of the Ukrainian SSR issued a decree «On Food for the RSFSR» (Dekret Rady, 1919, p. 76–78). According to the document, the People's Commissariat for Food of the Ukrainian SSR undertook to organize the supply of the North with food products in the form of the procurements on a state scale.

The position on the food issue, taken by the head of the Soviet government in Ukraine Kh. Rakhovskiy, allowed to actually carrying out the food and raw material plunder of the republic. The spread of Russian legislation on the territory of Ukraine also affected food policy. In Ukraine, all the laws of RSFSR, which were adopted during the period of «war communism», were in force. On February 5, 1919, the Ukrainian Council of the People's Committee adopted a decree «On withdrawal of residues of grain and the establishment of stable prices for them». It implied to transfer to the disposal of the republic all available balances of the grain stocks, leaving the necessary number for their own needs at separate farms. The withdrawal of these residues was entrusted to the People's Commissariat for Food and its bodies at the local level (Dekret RNK, 1919, p. 97).

The main tasks of the Soviet food policy were to replace the capitalist commodity exchange with a socialist product exchange. The closest practical measures on the way to fulfilling this task, checked by the rich experience of the Soviet Russia, was a state monopoly on procuring provisions at stable prices, the struggle with the wealthy Ukrainian peasantry. For this, food units and Committee of Poor Peasants were used. Resolution of the III Congress of the CP (b) U of March 5, 1919, the People's Commissariat for Food obliged to allocate most of the food products harvested on a national scale, primarily to send to the starving of the Soviet Russia (Kononenko, 1965, p. 100).

The sizes of the surplus appropriation system for Ukraine were determined by V. Lenin in the amount of 500 million poods. However, for surplus appropriation system, he suggested to take only a fifth or a tenth of its part (Lenin, 1977, p. 384). Proceeding from these instructions, the Central Committee of the RCP (b) adopted a decree on food policy in Ukraine, which obliged the People's Commissariat for Food of the USSR to supply 50 million poods of grain to the north of Ukraine in the first half of 1919. Having calculated the remnants of the harvest in 1918 at almost 279 million poods, the People's Commissariat for Food of the Ukrainian SSR, guided by the direction of V. Lenin, decided to give half of this amount to the allotment – 139.5 million poods (Davydov, 1971, p. 148). In this size, the Decree of the RNK of the Ukrainian SSR of April 12, 1919, approved the surplus appropriation system for Ukraine, and All-Ukrainian Central Executive Board adopted a decree on food dictatorship, under which the People's Commissariat for Food of the Ukrainian SSR was granted extraordinary powers in the procurement and distribution of food and consumer goods among the population. The Decrees on food allotment and food dictatorship have completed the introduction of the emergency food policy in Ukraine.

The food allotment in Ukraine was implemented by the force methods. In provinces and counties, the food departments were created, in which, in the vast majority, the personnel of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and the People's Commissariat of Food of the RSFRR were involved. In mid-1919 2700 people of «the special forces units» were sent to Ukraine from Moscow and Petrograd for «the collection of grain». From the beginning of July, 48 «the food units» from the cities of the RSFSR were operating in Ukraine. According to the Russian Soviet leadership, from February 5 and until the end of April 1919, 2,621,622 poods of «harvested» food products were exported from Ukraine to Russia, and in June of that year additional 8 million poods of grain were «harvested» (Pasternak, 1979, p. 71).

Food army was also created for procuring provisions in 1919. It represented a state formation of a military model for the forcible extraction of grain from Ukraine. By the summer of 1919, this militarized formation numbered about 5 thousand soldiers, organized in squads under the command of commanders and commissars (Kondufor, 1953, p. 46). The campaigners who left for work in Ukraine in December 1919, were instructed by the head of the Revolutionary Military Staff of the RSFSR L. Trotsky: «It is your duty to explain to Ukrainian peasants that the grain will be taken only from the kulaks and not for Russia but for poor Ukrainian peasants, for workers and the Red Army, who drove Denikin out of Ukraine». Later, explaining the need for their stay in Ukraine, L. Trotsky continued: «... We need to return Ukraine to Russia one way or another. There is no Russia without Ukraine. Russia cannot exist without Ukrainian coal, iron, ore, grain, salt, the Black Sea, it will suffocate as well as the Soviet government and all of us ... All means are good to achieve this goal. Remember at all times that Ukraine should be ours, and it will be ours only when it will be Soviet» (Trockij, 1932, p. 150).

The Councils, Committees of Poor Peasants, the food squads, protecting squads and food army robbed Ukrainian peasantry. All food and feedstuffs, ranging from grain and straw to honey, butter, eggs, and the like, were to be laid out. Only in February 1919 175 carriages of grain, 8 carriages of dried vegetables, 5 carriages of sauerkraut, 1 carriage of semolina for children, 2 carriages of spaghetti, 5 carriages of sweets and confectionery, 2 carriages of jam, 5 carriages of various foodstuff were transported to the North (Central State Archive of the Supreme Government Authorities and Administration of Ukraine – CSASGAAU, f. 1, d. 2, c. 271, p. 42). There were carriages at the railway stations which continued to carry food, sweets, necessities for sending them to Moscow and Petrograd. «We must receive grain and meat from Ukraine as soon as possible and in the largest quantity» (Solovej, 1959, p. 20). In the future, the number of products exported from Ukraine to the RSFRR only increased. By the end of May 1919, 4,900 freight cars were taken out (Solovej, 1959, p. 136). City market places were almost empty, and those food products that were sold there were too expensive. The prices have grown by almost 60 times (CSASGAAU, f. 2, d. 1, c. 409, p. 9).

The peasants resisted the confiscation of grain and other agricultural products. Surplus appropriation system soon spread almost to everything that was produced in the peasant courtyard. Therefore, the authorities had to use the military force during procuring. The People's Commissars of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR had even cavalry units to suppress the resistance of the peasants, to protect food cargoes, and to organize blocking units that fought with bullying in roads (Kulchickij, 1993, p. 4).

The RCP(b), having established the Soviet power in Ukraine, subordinated all bodies of the state administration of the republic to Moscow center. According to the decision of the IXth Congress of the RCP (b), the USSR government began to use actively non-economic compulsion to the population. In January 1920, the party leadership decided to switch the part of the troops to a peaceful construction and create Labor Army in Ukraine from the military units of the Southwest Front. By the decision of the RSKRR RNC of January 20, 1920, with its confirmation by All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee, the Council of the Labor Party was established under the chairmanship of J. Stalin. The ratio of Ukraine's agriculture which accounted to 30% of all federation, and of its industry – about 22% encouraged the Bolsheviks to hold on to Ukraine. The ratio of the population of Ukraine was as follows: urban population was 24.9%, rural – 18%, the average figure was 19%. In addition, Ukraine was undoubtedly one of the most prosperous parts of the federation, which provided about 39% of grain harvesting in the federation (Davyd, 1922, p. 12).

The third occupation of Ukraine by the Bolsheviks continued the previous food policy. By adopting the law on grain allotment in early 1920, the Bolsheviks determined that the grain harvest had to be about 600 million poods, of which a quarter was subjected to allotment (Verstyuk, 1991, p. 19).

Food bodies at a local level often overestimated the size of surplus grain. The peasants could not fulfill it. The year of 1919 showed that it was only through the use of force methods for peasants to carry out a plan for surplus appropriation system (Vladimirov, 1920, p. 13). Therefore, the food units were again in the right place. On January 11, 1920, All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee and Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern front issued an order to organize the food business on occupied Soviet troops in the territory of Ukraine. A joint food committee of the Southern Front was created in Ukraine to implement the general management of food and production units in Ukraine. According to the order, provincial revolutionary committees, provincial military committees and other local bodies of the Soviet power were

obliged to contribute in every way to the work of food units. The guilty of opposing this order were attracted «to court for all the severity of the laws of war» (Radyanske budivnictvo, 1957, p. 45–46). The Bolsheviks decided to carry out requisition of food from peasants by the hands of hungry workers. The enterprises, the workers' organizations and the trade unions had to allocate a certain percentage of workers for their participation in the implementation of food policy. «If this proletarian mass flows into a village with a wide flow, then the work on supplying food will acquire the nature of the voluntary conscious labor of the labor peasantry, and thus it will be extremely relieved» (Radyanske budivnictvo, 1957, p. 63).

From March 29 to April 5, 1920, the IX Congress of the RCP(b), which focused its attention on the economic construction, took place. The congress adopted decisions on the use of the army on the labor front. After the end of the Civil War, more than three million Red Army soldiers remained under the gun. They did not want to dismiss them to go home in the Kremlin. Without the proper transport it would be extremely difficult to gather them if necessary. In addition, the country faced the shocking task of collecting grain and delivering it to the industrial areas. To carry out this task quickly, masses of unskilled labor were needed. Therefore, the only way out in those circumstances the Bolshevik leadership saw, was the use of liberated army on the labor front (Mesheryakov, 1934, p. 316).

At the IV All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, which took place in May 1920, the course for the «co-operation» of food units was approved. In the resolution of the congress, it was supposed to send thousands of advanced workers to the food work. In pursuance of this decision, All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee called on Ukrainian workers «to take action post in the countryside» on June 10, 1920 (Radyanske budivnictvo, 1957, p. 101).

In June 1920, the chairman of the Labor and Defense Council of the RSFSR, V. Lenin, proposed to use the army to carry out a surplus in Ukraine. It was tasked «every district (of about 1900 districts of Ukraine) was entered twice, after a certain period of time, first cavalry, and then foot». The task was to create a double (in comparison with surplus) food stock in each village under the protection of local peasants and under their responsibility, for non-execution – shooting, and in especially «stubborn» districts or villages military units had to organize the third visit for punishment (But, 2000, p. 24).

The compulsory labor department was established since August 1920 under People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the republic, which had 2 concentration camps. By the end of October, 9 units of compulsory labor and 7 concentration camps already worked in Ukraine. By January 1921, more than 30 thousand people were already in the ranks of Ukrainian labor army. Its main activity was concentrated on Donbass, where in May 1920 the laborers completed almost 40% of all cargo operations. However, the efficiency of labor was low; the mood of the proletariat of Ukraine was anti-Bolshevik.

In December 1920 at VIII All-Russian Congress of the Soviets the State Plan of Electrification of Russia (GOELRO) was approved. Peasant funds derived from the sale of forcibly withdrawn agricultural products in its natural form were to become the main domestic source of funding for the implementation of the plan of electrification. «We cannot develop foreign trade without grain», – V. Lenin said at the meeting of the assets of Moscow organization RCP (b) (Lenin, 1974, p. 69).

The post-war economic devastation, the drought in 1921, destructive for the agriculture economic policy of the Bolsheviks, became the main preconditions for the famine of 1921 – 1923. It covered the main agricultural regions of the former Russian Empire – the Volga region, the North Caucasus and the southern provinces of Ukraine. The catastrophic aggrava-

tion of the food crisis in the USSR was conditioned by the subordination of a formally independent republic to the Moscow Center. The main goal of preserving the distribution was the provision of Russian «red capitals». Already in March 1921, «food week» was announced, and thousands of communists and non-party workers were mobilized to grain procurement units sent to the village (Kulchickij, 1993, p. 6).

The one-third of the «Help for famine» collected by local organizations from Ukrainian peasants was exported to Russia. At the same time, even those regions that were categorized as starving were not released from the requisition of grain. As noted in the report of the Central Committee of Assistance to the hungry: «... The Government of Ukraine has pledged to take 25 thousand children from Volga region for shelter. This commitment was met by more than 150%. Only in an organized way, that is, by sanitary trains through permit of the Center's 35 thousand starving children arrived in Ukraine. ... We can say with certainty that Ukraine adopted up to 80 thousand children. ... When trains with children from Volga region began to come and the cities' orphan homes could not accommodate all the children, and workers' organizations did not have means for their feeding, a considerable part of the children was transferred to the maintenance of peasants» (Rik borotby, 1922, p. 35–37). Responsibility for this task was relied upon the commission at All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (Pavlyuk, 1972, p. 213).

The technique of understatement of famine was worked out. On August 4, 1921, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KP(b)U adopted a resolution stating «Instruct the provincial committees that during the campaign it is necessary to distinguish between the call to fight the famine in Russia and the fight against crop failure in Ukraine, where assistance to areas affected by crop failure, can be entirely provided by their provincial or district means» (Kulchickij, 1993, p. 26). Disclosure of the information about the scale of famine in Ukraine was tabooed. Only on January 14, 1922, Ukrainian Sovnarkom adopted resolutions on the recognition of the starving poor areas of Ukraine. On January 16, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U called off information blockade on the famine in Ukraine and commissioned the agitation-and-propaganda department at All-Ukrainian Center of Executive Committee to take measures to ensure that the press provided information on the state of the food supply of the population of Ukraine (Mesheryakov, 1934, p. 8).

At the same time, the central government was in no hurry with the abolition of the payment in poorly populated areas of Ukraine and announcement of their starving. In February, 680 carriages were already sent to Russia, including seed – 476 carriages. To Caucasus – 33 carriages, to the Crimea – 26 carriages. In total, 739 carriages were handed over in February. Thus, since the beginning of the economic year, the cargo of the mass of 20,701,383 pounds was transferred to RSFRR. The total procuring of grain as of March 28 amounted to 71,107,900 pounds from the entire territory of the Ukrainian SSR (CSASGAAU, f. 3, d. 1, c. 100, p. 37).

The Bolshevik leadership took into account political consequences of the famine. Then they successfully used them in the struggle against Ukrainian peasantry of 1932 – 1933. According to K. Kononenko, the main political consequence of the artificial Ukrainian famines was the end of Ukrainian struggle against Moscow and against the Bolshevik system. «More than three years of struggle of Ukrainian people for a national and social liberation, in the form of armed resistance to all occupiers, was stopped by famine, leaving a victory in the hands of the last invader – the Bolshevik Russia», he wrote (Kononenko, 1965, p. 110).

In the Central Committee, the work on the withdrawal of bread from the population was assigned to O. Tsiurupa, who was the People's Commissar for Food of RSFSR since 1918

and one of the founders of food units and politics of robbery of the village. In 1918 – 1922 he was responsible for the supply of the Red Army. It was O. Tsiurupa who was the creator and director of the Food and Requisition Army of the People's Commissar of the RSFSR (Prodarmiia), which dealt solely with forcing peasants to hand over bread, suppressed the local food riots, and executed shootings. The creation of bloody raids was the initiative of O. Tsiurupa. The total number of the army until September 1920 was already over 75 thousand people. In work on the withdrawal of bread, as in other areas of his activity, O. Tsiurupa showed the initiative and achieved significant results. On February 1, 1922, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party(b)U adopted the decision to export 8 million poods of bread from starving Ukraine to Russia. By the end of 1922 19 million poods of grain were exported. A powerful resistance to the export of grain abroad in this complex and hungry time for the country was done by the Mensheviks and other non-Bolshevik elements who said that «... our bread is bloody» (Dvenadcatyj s'ezd, 1968, p. 24).

On November 5, 1922 «Agreement for the extension to the Union of Soviet Socialist republics of the agreement, signed on April 16, 1922 in Rapallo between RSFSR and Germany in Berlin» (Dyornberg, 1971, p. 563). The Bolshevik leadership did its best to fulfill its obligations to Germany. Meanwhile, Berlin was sending messages saying, «... barley and rye are of good quality and buyers admire them» (Dyornberg, 1971, p. 565).

The Central Committee of the RCP(b) set a high value to this agreement. In accordance with its terms, the Bolshevik regime was supposed to sell Germany one third of the export of grain. As of March 1923, 20 million poods of grain were exported from Ukraine, mainly to Germany, Finland, Scandinavia and England (Dvenadcatyj s'ezd, 1968, p. 24). These are small figures, compared with the data of the pre-war export of grain from Ukraine, when on average more than 400 million poods of grain were exported. However, under the conditions prevailing in Ukraine in the early 1920s, the figure of 20 million poods was superfluous for hungry Ukrainians and criminal for the Soviet power. In 1923, during food campaign, 429 million poods of grain were harvested in the USSR, of which 117 million poods in Ukraine, and 320 million poods were in the budget. In fact, the state treasury received funds for only 283 million poods (Materialy, 1985, p. 28).

The strong drought struck Ukraine in the summer of 1924. As a result of a survey of the Special Commission on combating the effects of low birth rates at the Council of People's Commissars of Ukrainian SSR, 145 districts were identified in Ukraine, in which the net per capita consumption of 8 main grain did not exceed 12 poods. At the same time, in 57 districts, net per capita was less than 6 poods. Of the last 32 districts, there were Kharkiv, Kupiansk and Melitopil districts (CSASGAAU, f. 2, d. 4, c. 328, p. 126). In order to preserve agriculture in Ukraine and to implement measures to combat low-crop yields, a Special Commission on combating the effects of low-priced RNC USSR («Osobkom of Ukraine») was created. This Commission recognized only these three districts as the poor crop districts in Ukraine with all the consequences of this (tax remissions, seed area, etc.) (CSASGAAU, f. 2, d. 4, c. 328, p. 135). In spite of everything, the federal bodies set the task of continuing the grain procurement in Ukraine. By August 10, 1924, 2.5 million poods of seed material was harvested and exported to the harvestless areas of RSFRR on the territory of the republic. This hasty harvest of seed grain adversely affected the state of Ukrainian grain market, which led to a rapid rise in grain prices.

The crop failure of 1921 – 1923, and then in 1924, covered 145 districts of Ukraine. In 1925, Tulchyn and Mohyliv districts, parts of Odesa and some districts of the steppe zone

became harvestless for Transdnister and Moldovian Republic (CSASGAU, f. 1, d. 20, c. 981, p. 14). The only source of ensuring the implementation of the grain procurement plan, which has constantly grown even in harvestless years, could only be the reduction of consumption of grain by the population. According to V. Kachynskyi, the share of Ukraine in the gross grain yield in the USSR was measured at 25 – 28% (Kachynskyj, 1929, p. 34). The proportion of its population of those years was 26.3% of the total Soviet. It would be logical that the same percentage was meant for Ukraine in terms of grain procurement throughout the USSR. Meanwhile, the grain procurement results as of 1928 for Ukraine made up 40% of all all-Soviet grain procurements, and along with the Kuban region, mostly populated by the Ukrainians, it was 57% (Kononenko, 1965, p. 188).

The Ukrainian industry was also interested in reducing quantities of grain exported by official orders of Moscow from Ukraine. The withdrawal of a large amount of grain at low conventional prices reduced the purchasing power of the population and narrowed the state of the domestic market. All this affected the situation of the Ukrainian industry negatively. In addition, the market supply of grain declined, which led to the rise in prices in a private sale, at the expense of which Ukrainian population also met their needs for material resources. In fact, Ukrainian population paid for cheap grain in Moscow by reducing their own consumption of both food and industrial goods.

Frequent crop failures and growing of grain procurement plans in Ukraine created a situation of a permanent shortage of the food and hunger threat. Against this background, there were periodic contradictions between Moscow and Kharkiv, which manifested themselves as a «crisis of grain» in 1927. Not having enough arguments for their intentions to take grain from the Ukrainian peasantry, Moscow resorted to the already tried method – to take it by force (Kononenko, 1965, p. 189). It was decided to apply to wealthy peasants, in case of the evasion from withdrawal of grain to the state, there was clause 107 of the Criminal Code of RSFSR. It provided about one year of imprisonment with the confiscation of all (or part of) property for speculation. The practice of the rural poor bribing, probed in the period of «military communism», through the way of receiving 25% of confiscated grain was introduced. The confiscation, the prohibition of the market trade of grain, etc. were becoming common again.

Conclusions. Thus, the characteristic feature of the economic life in the early years of the Soviet power was the curtailment of production, the shortage of food, fuel, unemployment. This situation was largely due to the policy of the Bolsheviks who, in implementing their programme, sought for an immediate establishment of a socialist system, transforming the peoples of the former tsarist Russia, including the Ukrainians, into an object of an unprecedented magnitude and cruelty of the experiment.

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