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**LEGISLATIVE REGULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROCESSES
IN THE UKRAINIAN SSR (1990 – 1991): GENERAL TENDENCIES,
PRACTICAL RESULTS**

Abstract. *The article focuses on the analysis of socio-economic processes in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic through the prism of the activities of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR at the final stage of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics existence (USSR). The purpose of the article is to analyze the legislative regulation of processes in the economic sphere in the Ukrainian SSR against the background of a large-scale socio-economic crisis that covered all branches of industry and agriculture. The methodology of research of a complex of problems related to the legislative activity of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR during the period under analysis is determined by general scientific (comparative, dialectical, structural and functional, etc.) and special historical (historical and genetic, historical and comparative, historical and typological, historical and systemic, etc.) methods. Doing research seems impossible without using the principles of historicism, consistency, scientific pluralism, objectivity, systematicity, and comprehensiveness. The scientific novelty of the article*

consists in the formulation issue that has not been the subject of a special scientific study: in historical retrospect, the measures of the central authorities have been considered, primarily, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, aimed at combating “negative phenomena” in the socio-economic sphere of the Ukrainian SSR; there have been analyzed the basic legislative acts aimed at overcoming the crisis in the basic sectors of the economy, and their effectiveness / ineffectiveness has been singled out.

The Conclusion. At the final stage of the glasnost policy, democratization, and perebudova in the Ukrainian SSR, a large-scale socio-economic crisis continued in the country, caused, first of all, by an imperfect command-administrative system of managing economy. Under the conditions of political pluralism and multipartyism, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), which in 1990 – 1991 formed the majority in the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, unsuccessfully tried to improve the situation in the agro-industrial sector of the country, to raise the standard of living of the population by introducing elements of market economy, which, however, did not achieve the expected results and caused a flurry of criticism by the population, radicalized public sentiment.

Keywords: Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, legislative acts, economy, socio-economic crisis, reforms.

ЗАКОНОДАВЧЕ РЕГУЛЮВАННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНИХ ПРОЦЕСІВ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ РСР (1990 – 1991): ЗАГАЛЬНІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ, ПРАКТИЧНІ РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ

Анотація. Стаття присвячена аналізу соціально-економічних процесів в Українській Радянській Соціалістичній Республіці крізь призму діяльності Верховної Ради Української РСР на заключному етапі існування Союзу Радянських Соціалістичних Республік (СРСР). **Мета статті** – проаналізувати законодавче регулювання процесів в економічній сфері в Українській РСР на тлі масштабної соціально-економічної кризи, яка охопила всі галузі промисловості та сільського господарства. **Методологія дослідження** комплексу проблем, пов'язаних із законодавчою діяльністю Верховної Ради Української РСР упродовж досліджуваного періоду детермінована загальнонауковими (компаративний, діалектичний, структурно-функціональний та ін.) та спеціально-історичними ((історико-генетичний, історико-порівняльний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний та ін.) методами. Підготовка розвідки видається неможливою без використання принципів історизму, послідовності, наукового плюралізму, об'єктивності, системності та всебічності. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у постановці проблеми, яка раніше не була предметом спеціального наукового дослідження: в історичній ретроспективі розглянуто заходи центральних органів влади, насамперед Верховної Ради Української РСР, спрямовані на боротьбу із “негативними явищами” в соціально-економічній сфері Української РСР; проаналізовано базові законодавчі акти, покликані подолати кризу в базових галузях економіки, та показано їх ефективність / неефективність. **Висновки.** На завершальному етапі політики гласності, демократизації, перебудови в Українській РСР, у країні продовжувалася масштабна соціально-економічна криза, викликана насамперед недосконалою командно-адміністративною системою управління економікою. В умовах політичного плюралізму та багатопартійності Компартія України (КПУ), яка у 1990 – 1991 рр. сформувала більшість у Верховній Раді Української РСР, безуспішно намагалася поліпшити ситуацію в агропромисловому секторі країни, підвищити життєвий рівень населення шляхом запровадження елементів ринкової економіки, що, однак, не принесло очікуваних результатів і натомість викликало шквал критики у населення, радикалізувало суспільні настрої.

Ключові слова: Верховна Рада Української РСР, законодавчі акти, економіка, соціально-економічна криза, реформи.

The Problem Statement. M. Gorbachov's coming to power, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, was received with considerable enthusiasm by the Soviet society, expecting primarily positive changes in the socio-economic sphere from a new head of the country, which in the second half of the 1980s went through a crisis. In this context, the Ukrainian SSR was not an exception – at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s,

the Republic was characterized by such phenomena as: impoverishment of the population; shortage of essential goods; numerous abuses by the party officials, directors of enterprises; social insecurity of the population; gradual increase in prices, etc. The elections of 1990 to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR and local authorities, which were held for the first time in the history of the USSR with participation of political parties opposed to the Communist Party of Ukraine, had to change the situation for the better. The newly formed legislative body of the country tried to reform the agro-industrial sector on the basis of the idea of economic sovereignty of the Republic, and it also adopted a number of resolutions that affected socio-economic processes in the Republic.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Research. The complex of issues on the legislative activity of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR in the economic sphere is an understudied issue of modern Ukrainian historiography. Some of its aspects are considered in complex scientific works (O. Boiko (Bojko, 2002), S. Kulchytskyi (Kulchytskyi, 2001), V. Lytvyn (Lytvyn, 1994)), scientific studies dedicated to the history of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the activities of parliamentary factions and groups in the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR (M. Karabanov (Karabanov, 1993), O. Muravskiy (Muravskiy, 2012), I. Pidkova, O. Sukhyi (Pidkova & Sukhyi, 2019), V. Chura, Ye. Kopeltsiv-Levytska (Chura & Kopeltsiv-Levytska, 2021), V. Banakh, A. Nagirnyak (Nagirnyak & Banakh, 2021), P. Datskiv, O. Sukhyi (Sukhyi & Datskiv, 2021), O. Maliarchuk, O. Kohut (Maliarchuk & Kohut, 2021)).

The main goal of the research is a comprehensive analysis of the legislative activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the socio-economic plane in the context of socio-political and socio-economic processes in the Ukrainian SSR at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century. The source base is the materials of the Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine, transcripts of meetings of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, materials of the periodical press.

The chronological framework of the article covers the period from March of 1990 (elections to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR and local authorities) and ends with the restoration of the Ukrainian statehood (August of 1991).

The Results of the Research. According to Programme “Main Directions of Economic and Social Development of the USSR for the Years of 1986 – 1990 and for the Period up to 2000” declared by M. Ryzhkov, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to increase by 19 – 22% during the perebudova period, output of industry – by 21 – 24%, means of production – by 20 – 23%, consumer goods – by 22 – 25%, etc. (Osnovnye napravleniya, 1986, p. 7). However, at the end of the 1980s an unrealistic nature of such plans became obvious for the state-party authorities of the USSR and Ukrainian SSR.

A new stage of the agro-industrial sector reforming was associated with the elections to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR and local authorities by the society (March of 1990). “A characteristic feature of current elections was that they were held on the basis of new democratic laws, with wide publicity, under people’s control. For the first time, the highest body of the state power was formed not by unanimous voting for the proposed candidate, which, in fact, was often a manifestation of the political apathy of voters, but under the conditions of alternative, intense pre-election struggle, without any regulation of quality composition of candidates for deputies”, – noted V. Boiko, the Chairman of the Central Election Commission (CEC) for the elections of People’s Deputies of the Ukrainian SSR (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns’koho RSR. Meeting 1, 15.05.1990).

Actually, on March 4, 1990, elections to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR and local authorities were held in 450 territorial electoral districts of the Republic (2,672 candidates for people's deputies) (CSAPOU, f. 1, d. 28, c. 109, p. 54), the vast majority of whom – more than 80% were candidates / members of the CPSU (CSAPOU, f. 1, d. 32, c. 2751, p. 37). However, innovations in the electoral legislation allowed political parties in opposition to the Communist Party of Ukraine, which formed the People's Council, to enter Parliament (CSAPOU, f. 1, d. 32, c. 2746, p. 67). First of all, with the activities of opposition deputies, the society hoped for radical reforms, and therefore, for an increase in the standard of living of all sections of the population. In the economic sphere legislative innovations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine are conditionally divided into several periods.

The First Session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st Convocation (May – July of 1990)

During this period, the main directions of the economy reform of the Ukrainian SSR were laid, the central authorities, which took care of socio-economic issues, underwent transformation and personnel renewal, profile commissions of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (on issues of economic reform and management of the national economy (a chairman V. Pylypchuk), on issues of planning, budget, finance and prices (a chairman D. Zakharuk) and the others were created. The position of the Communist Party of Ukraine regarding the situation in the agro-industrial sector of the Republic was announced by V. Ivashko, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, at the first meeting of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on May 15, 1990 (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4490, p. 105). “As you know, in the Republic and the country social tension has increased in recent days. Discussion of issues related to proposals of the USSR Government to increase retail prices for consumer goods, and above all the food group, caused a heightened, I would say, painful reaction of millions of people”, – he stated (Verkhovna Rada Ukrajinsjkoji RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990).

“We are deeply convinced that the transition to a regulated market economy is definitely necessary. Under current conditions, this is the only way out of the crisis and there is no alternative. But, unfortunately, in the report of the Government of the USSR, this transition, for reasons that are not clear, is suggested beginning with an increase, from the rigidly established, as before, state retail prices,” – V. Ivashko summed up (Verkhovna Rada Ukrajinsjkoji RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990).

V. Ivashko suggested that the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR should adopt a resolution in which there should be stated: 1. The Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR considers it inadmissible to take any decisions on raising state retail prices, including for bread and bread products, without a comprehensive discussion with all the Union Republics and a national referendum. 2. To instruct the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR to make suggestions regarding the concept of price reform in the country (Verkhovna Rada Ukrajinsjkoji RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990).

At the same time, V. Masol, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, considered it necessary to supplement the above mentioned resolution with one more point. “First of all, I believe that laws must first be developed that will stimulate the transition of our economy to market relations, and today we want to adopt the Law on the transition to market relations, without having any normative and legislative acts,” the party functionary noted (Verkhovna Rada Ukrajinsjkoji RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990).

The initiatives of the leaders of the Communist Party of Ukraine caused ironic comments from the representatives of the parliamentary opposition. Thus, V. Chornovil (Chairman

of Lviv Regional Council (Shevchenkivskiy Electoral District, Lviv Region)) noted that “Deputy Ivashko’s suggestion reeks of populism” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990). The People’s Deputy stated: “Of course, such decisions are not made by any referendum. The only thing we can accept today is to adopt laws and on political sovereignty, and especially on economic independence, and the creation of prerequisites, namely: breaking the vertical structure in the economy, forming prerequisites for a market economy, horizontal structures, development of a normal pricing system, until then the market, the so-called controlled market, is like a bottomless kettle. Until then, there cannot be any increased prices” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 19, 28.05.1990). The co-founder of the NRU concluded his speech: “Today we really only need to make a decision on a moratorium on price increases. Was this suggestion until the end of the year? Why was it until the end of the year? Because time is needed for the development of prerequisites by the Ukrainian Parliament for the transition to a market economy. Otherwise, it would be a big adventure...” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR, Meeting 19, 28.05.1990).

Discussions about initial economic reforms continued during the election of Parliament speaker. Candidates’ vision of the way out of the economic crisis correlated with political beliefs and field of professional interests. For example, V. Yavorivskiy (Secretary of Writers’ Union of Ukraine (Svitlovodsk electoral district, Kirovohrad Region)), a candidate for the post of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine noted that in economic reforms issue “he would hardly be able to add anything” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 28, 01.06.1990). However, he immediately stated: “Today it is clear for all of us, and we supported it – this is denationalization. We must somehow stretch this gigantic monster that works for itself, that has completely forgotten about a human being, about his or her interests, about his or her needs today. I’m against it...” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 28, 01.06.1990).

Having impartially analyzed the economic programmes of candidates for the position of Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, we note that one of the most important (albeit unrealistic) is the programme of V. Chornovil, in which it was suggested ensuring “economic independence of Ukraine” by:

- declaration of lands, soil and natural resources of Ukraine as sovereign national wealth;
- equality of all forms of individual and collective property, including private property;
- liquidation of the system of vertical connections in the economy – ministries, departments, etc.;
- giving enterprises complete freedom in choosing partners, forms and methods of activity;
- termination of uncontrolled money emission;
- national currency;
- reorganization of the wholesale price system based on the international price index;
- strict measures to protect the national consumer market;
- radical agrarian reform with the transfer of land to peasants, with a course to transform collective farms into agricultural cooperatives and a gradual separation of farms, etc. (Vystup narodnoho deputata URSS V. Chornovola, 1990, p. 12).

According to V. Chornovil, the outlined measures were supposed to prepare the Ukrainian economy for “the economy of further structural changes and entry into the European economic system”. As for the social sphere, the people’s deputy suggested “declaring a war on psychology of maintenance”, which he suggested conducting under the slogan “Long live master!” or, “Long live kurkul!” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 28, 01.06.1990).

As for the representatives of the Communist Party of Ukraine, who applied for the position of Parliament speaker, the economic programme of V. Ivashko received the greatest criticism of the members of the People's Council. Thus, M. Shvaika (a senior researcher of Lviv branch of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR (Zolochiv electoral district, Lviv region) stated that "the candidate for the post of Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR V. A. Ivashko did not draw up a programme for Ukraine's exit from the state of crisis and ensuring the Republic's sovereignty. What kind of political sovereignty of Ukraine can we talk about under the conditions when V. A. Ivashko will govern Ukraine with the help of instructions received from Moscow? The applicant did not offer anything constructive to rebuild the economy of Ukraine, which is a colonial appendage of the Centre! Will the suggested by comrade V. A. Ivashko make us masters at our local places, on our land, free us from the tribute we pay to the Centre, which takes 2/3 of the national product without any equivalent?" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 23, 30.05.1990).

In July of 1990 the situation in the economic sphere of the Ukrainian SSR was aptly described by V. Pylypchuk (Associate Professor of the Ukrainian Institute of Water Management Engineers (Zhovtnevyi electoral district, Rivne region), who, making speech in Parliament, noted: "We have turned our economy into a big distributor, when Moscow distributes everything among the republics, depending on who and how treats the Centre. The Republic distributes everything among regions. Regions distribute everything among districts and everything is based on personal connections. There is no economic basis for the functioning of our society. We have no economy" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 56, 05.07.1990).

The block of economic issues was lively debated by people's deputies during the adoption of Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4490, p. 105). On behalf of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, the Commission on State Sovereignty, Inter-Republican and International Relations considered the suggested drafts of Declaration, which were submitted by the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada, People's Deputies Hnatkevych, Holovaty, Kosiv, Semenchuk, Yakheyeva and Khmara. A head of the Commission, M. Shulha (a head of the national relations department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Lutuhynsky electoral district, Luhansk region)) admitted that "the economic section turned out to be... the largest", and "attempts to make it more compact did not yield results" (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4490, p. 109).

According to the Chairman of the Commission, this situation arose because "it is in the field of economics that the independence issue is felt the most acutely... Therefore, despite the fact that the document... has a declarative nature, in this section there is a tendency to specify it" (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4490, p. 109). Moreover, representatives of the People's Council considered the economic block of Declaration the most important and insisted on enshrining the provision on the sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR economic status (Deklaracija pro derzhavnyj suverenitet Ukraïny, 2010, p. 403). As a result, Chapter VI of Declaration provided for the independence of the Ukrainian SSR in the economic sphere, the equality of all forms of ownership (state, private), and authorized the formation of its own financial, banking, tax systems and monetary unit (Deklaracija pro derzhavnyj suverenitet Ukraïny, 1990, p. 4).

On July 16, 1990, V. Masol, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the UkrSSR, was forced to admit in Parliament that "the adoption of Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine by the Verkhovna Rada of the Republic is, certainly, a significant historical event in the life

of our people, which confirms the fact of the national statehood restoration of Ukraine. The adoption of Declaration means that our people finally get the exclusive right to be owners, to use their national wealth...” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990).

Demagogically V. Masol noted that “the economic independence of the Republic is guaranteed by the supremacy of republican laws and regulations over the Union ones operating on the territory of the Republic” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990), and Ukraine “from now on, in person of its authorities, management and self-government, will manage the economy of the Republic independently, taking care of the full-fledged political, social and cultural development of the peoples of Ukraine” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990). Moreover, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the UkrSSR convinced the deputies of his readiness “to ensure the economic independence of the Republic in practice, to do everything that its natural wealth, a powerful economic potential contribute to improvement of the living standard of our people, their spiritual revival” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990).

V. Masol suggested implementing the plan by introducing elements of the market economy. “I would like to explain my position to you: I see the transition to market relations as the only way out of the Republic’s economy crisis. This transition must be well-thought and verified at every step. It is necessary, without any delay, to develop not only a legal, but also economic mechanism for a painless entry of the national economy into this period and its normal functioning under market conditions,” stated the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990).

The party functionary also suggested transforming the function of ministries and departments from “directive management bodies, which they are today”, into economic centres with fundamentally new functions, focused primarily on satisfying human needs, determining directions of scientific and technical progress, analyzing the market situation, activating foreign economic relations, solving cross-industry tasks, optimal placement of productive forces, coordination of enterprises efforts to improve environment (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 67, 16.07.1990).

Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine summed up the first stage of legislative innovations in the economic sphere by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the new convocation. The result of the activity of the Ukrainian parliamentarians did not receive public approval due to the lack of practical results.

The Second Session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st Convocation (October – December of 1990)

Real attempts (although de facto fruitless) to improve the economic situation in the Republic were made by the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR during the second session, which was reflected, in particular, in the preparation of a number of legislative acts (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4497, p. 98). Even during “parliamentary” holidays, three meetings of the Presidium took place, where draft laws on the implementation of Law “On Economic Independence of the Ukrainian SSR” were considered and elaborated. The main attention of the deputies was focused on the concept and programme elaboration of transition to market economy, preparation of draft legislative acts that would ensure economic independence of the Republic (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 1, 01.10.1990).

L. Kravchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, was forced to admit: “the session is starting under conditions of a threatening economic imbalance, political instability, and serious public tension. The situation is simply dangerous... The actions of the

authorities, or rather their inaction, cause concern among sober-minded people... Economic ties established over the years are chaotically being torn apart, natural exchange is increasing, metastases of the shadow economy are developing... ” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 1, 01.10.1990).

Under difficult social and political conditions, the central authorities tried to find the answer to the question: “Who is to blame?” V. Rudenko (a deputy chairman of the executive committee of Hoshchansky district Council of People’s Deputies (Hoshchansky electoral district, Rivne region) noted, that “the Council of Ministers wants to transfer the responsibility for the extremely difficult economic situation to Parliament of the Republic”, and this, according to the deputy, “is nothing more than a disdainful attitude of the Government towards the people’s elected officials” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 5, 05.10.1990).

According to B. Markov (a head of Subcommittee of the Verkhovna Rada Commission of the Ukrainian SSR on economic reform and management of the national economy (Suvorov constituency, Kherson region)), the problem was that the government considered the problem of stabilization and the problem of transition to the market separately. “We can stabilize the market only by market relations. Anyone who thinks that we can achieve anything by screwing up the nuts and bolts, making extensive use of the tools we’ve used for so long, is wrong. Both our experience and international experience show that this is a dead end. Let’s look at what is happening in South and North Korea today. And we can draw the most far-sighted conclusions from this,” he noted (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 5, 05.10.1990).

On October 2, 1990, Parliament adopted Programme for transition of the Ukrainian SSR to regulate market economy (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4497, p. 102). In the future, the Verkhovna Rada focused its attention on the issue measures to stabilize the economic situation in the Republic (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 47, 04.12.1990). Thus, on October 10 of the same year, the deputies continued to consider the issue “On a complex of urgent measures to stabilize the economic situation of the Republic during the transition period” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 11, 10.10.1990).

In V. Masol’s report, which was devoted to the outlined issue, it was noted that stabilization of the economy is today “the key issue of our life” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 11, 10.10.1990). The speaker noted that “the question is: will we be able to overcome a deep economic crisis and ensure an organized, without social upheavals, transition to a human-oriented market economy, or will the Republic face a collapse with the most severe consequences for society? I believe that this is precisely what determines a completely understandable interest of people’s deputies, their activity and acuteness when discussing issues” (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 11, 10.10.1990).

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR asked the People’s Deputies to adopt a number of legislative acts, which were related to: preservation by the Republican enterprises of established / mutually beneficial ties and establishment of new economic ties until the end of 1991; introduction of a single state order for the manufacturing of goods, performance of work and services on the territory of Ukraine; management of state property of Ukraine. “We [Government – the author] believe, that these decisions of the Verkhovna Rada will be another important step towards practical implementation of Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine and Law on Economic Independence. They will also provide the Government with certain legal guarantees for carrying out the already started work on stabilizing the economic situation on a larger scale and more comprehensively,” noted V. Masol (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 11, 10.10.1990).

The lateness of the Government's measures often caused surprise among people's deputies. "I cannot understand, dear Vitaly Andriyovych, why our Government, both past and present, and it is not so new, by the way, has not done anything today to stabilize the economy?" V. Bilyi asked rhetorically (Chairman of Dubno Town Council of People's Deputies, Second Secretary of Dubno Town Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Dubno Electoral District, Rivne region). – Wasn't it obvious that the economic and reactionary mechanism of production management, cross-industry and territorial proportions are broken?" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 11, 10.10.1990).

V. Durdynets, the First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, also expressed concern about the economy state, who noted that "recently, the economic, socio-political and criminal situation in the Republic has become threatening and has a tendency to be complicated further" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 17, 17.10.1990). In his opinion, such situation is characteristic of Kyiv, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, the Crimea and other regions. "The situation that has developed is consequence of the economy imbalance, a massive violation of labour discipline... All these factors disorganize the work of state institutions, transport, cause tension in cities and other populated areas" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 17, 17.10.1990).

In this context, from October 29 to November 2, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR continued to consider a set of issues related to the "market transition programme" (CSASBPU, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 4497, p. 104). V. Fokin, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, Chairman of the State Economic Committee of the Ukrainian SSR, presented the programme to Parliament (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 22, 29.1.1990). He noted that "a real alternative to improving the economic situation of the Republic is the full economic and political independence of Ukraine and transition to market economy with profound constitutional changes that will constitute a new structure of socioeconomic relations and production" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 22, 29.1.1990).

V. Fokin noted that the Government was forced to choose fundamentally different ways of the Republic renaissance, which would meet the requirements of Declaration on State Sovereignty and Law on Economic Independence of Ukraine. "As achievement I consider the fact that Programme suggested for your consideration does not have significant fundamental disagreements with the ideological platforms of various political groups," he summarized (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 22, 29.1.1990). It should be noted that V. Pylypchuk, Chairman of the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR on economic reform and management of the national economy, called Programme "the first attempt of the Government to do something" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 26, 31.10.1990). In his opinion, the deputies "must free the hands of the Government for it to work and correct the errors simultaneously" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainjskoho RSR. Meeting 26, 31.10.1990).

For the Government the situation was complicated by a tense political moment: in November of 1990 the arrest of S. Khmara, the People's Deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, intensified the confrontation between the Communist Party and democratic forces significantly. On November 20, the People's Council made a statement in Parliament in which it placed the responsibility for the difficult state of economy on the Communist Party of Ukraine. In the Statement, in particular, it was mentioned: "Recent events in Ukraine testify that the administrative and command system strengthens opposition to progressive changes. An example of this is the statement of the parliamentary majority against the

fundamental provisions of economic reform suggested by the representatives of the People's Council... This is the primary cause of parliamentary crisis... Such actions testify to the desire of extreme reactionary forces to achieve absolute power and preserve economic foundations of old regime" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 37, 20.11.1990).

It was during this period that debates continued within the walls of Parliament on the foundations of financial and budgetary system of the Ukrainian SSR, the draft Laws "On State Tax Service in the Ukrainian SSR", "On Property", Land Code of the Ukrainian SSR, etc. (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 48, 04.12.1990). The importance of the issues raised was dictated by the requirements of the time. As O. Yemets (Chairman of the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR on Human Rights "Central Election District, Kyiv") observed rightly, the problem had Hamlet's rhetoric: to be or not to be? (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 48, 04.12.1990). "To be or not to be a radical restructuring of our society? Shall we create or not create the conditions under which a healthy economy could live and develop? – he remarked. – To live and develop, not to exist, because the economy is a kind of a living organism. An open, self-regulating and self-reproducing system, as once we read in the textbook on Biology at school. What we had before it had been artificially created by a mechanical system that acted only under the pressure of an external force..." (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 48, 04.12.1990).

Deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR devoted the last weeks of December to the issues of approving the budget of the Ukrainian SSR for 1991, consideration of the draft Law "On Enterprises in the Ukrainian SSR" (the first reading), approval of the "Main Directions of Economic and Social Development of the Ukrainian SSR for 1991" (the first reading) (CSASBPU, f. 1, d. 16, c. 4497, p. 107). On the border between economics and politics, there was the problem of introducing changes and additions to the Constitution, as well as the issue of dividing rights and powers between the Union and Republican authorities (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 55, 17.12.1990).

The second session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 1st convocation, which ended its work at the end of December of 1990, did not live up to the expectations of the government and society. The economic situation in the Republic remained, according to the people's deputies, "explosive". In the Ukrainian SSR socio-political and socio-economic processes were beyond the control of the Communist Party.

The Third and Fourth Sessions of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st Convocation (February – August of 1991)

Socio-economic processes in the Ukrainian SSR are one of the leading topics of discussion in the session hall of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the third and fourth convocations (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 4, 06.02.1991). At the beginning of the session (on February 8, 1991), the deputies listened to the speech of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR V. Fokin "On Social and Economic Situation in the Republic and Social Protection of Population during Transition to Market Relations" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 8, 08.02.1991). The speaker admitted that there are only "potential opportunities for a more complete stabilization of the socio-economic situation in the Republic", instead "recently the state of affairs in the economy has not changed for the better" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 8, 08.02.1991). According to V. Fokin, "there was no reason to hope for something else, if every day the majority of branches of the national economy of Ukraine work worse and worse..." (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïns'koho RSR. Meeting 8, 08.02.1991).

The miners' strike in the spring and summer of 1991, which led to significant negative economic consequences, made the situation even more complicated. Reflecting on this protest action, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR L. Kravchuk criticized the miners' initiative. "I want to say that working conditions and social protection conditions of miners are extremely difficult, and we can say with responsibility that they are insufficient today. Everyone is well aware of this, he stated. – The miners also know about this, but for some reason they want to strike now, when our Government started to act, when measures are being taken to implement the resolutions and agreements concluded with them. Active work on aggravating social and economic tension in Donbas has begun again" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 19, 28.02.1991).

Taking into account the fact that on March 1, 1991, the day when the strike began, the absolute majority of miners' collectives went to work, L. Kravchuk, on behalf of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, sincerely thanked the miners, trade unions, management of the collectives, who "understood the situation, took into account the difficult economic situation and are working for the economy of Ukraine to get out of the crisis it got into..." (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 21, 01.03.1991).

However, the issue of miners' strikes did not disappear from the agenda of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Thus, on March 22, 1991, a representative of a group of miners (S. Beseha) spoke at Parliament session, who declared the demands of strikers. The speaker stated that "against the background of the general economic crisis of the Soviet society, the standard of living of ordinary people, caused by the anti-people policy of the leadership of the Union, is catastrophically declining and sooner or later will lead to a social explosion. The wheel of strikes has turned, and every day more and more miners' collectives are joining the strikers..." (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 28, 22.03.1991).

According to the miners, they understand that "the economic demands set by Resolution No. 608 will not be able to be solved by the Government, which took a bold step – took the basic branches of the national economy under the control of the Republic, crippled by an unwise centralized administration" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 28, 22.03.1991). In their opinion, "political instability and paralysis of the economy of the Republic is death for Ukraine, and it is beneficial only for the Communist Party majority and the centre, in order to prove by example the inability of independent management of the national economy" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 28, 22.03.1991). The miners stated that they are not only making demands to the capital to resolve the issue of ending the strike, but also making suggestions for resolving the conflict. "We declare with full responsibility that from the moment of receiving guarantees of solving our problems, the strike at the enterprises will stop," – noted S. Beseha (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 28, 22.03.1991).

However, even after a month, the miners' economic and political demands remained unheard by the central state and party authorities. On this occasion, at a meeting of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, I. Skoryk (Associate Professor of the Department of Architecture of Kyiv State Art Institute (Artemivskyi electoral district, Kyiv) remarked, that strikes continue in Donetsk region, they are not abating in Lviv-Volyn coal basin, and it is not known when they will be stopped" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 29, 23.04.1991). According to the deputy, the main problem was the political demands of the strikers. "The strikers are taking their stand and asked to convey that they insist that the Verkhovna Rada consider and decide on the political demands urgently..." he summarized (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 29, 23.04.1991).

Against the background of a mass strike movement and economic devastation, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR continued to produce legislative acts of economic content. Among the most important are the Laws “On Protection of Consumer Rights”, “On Limitation of Monopolistic Activities and Development of Competition”, as well as Laws: on the taxation system; on taxes from enterprises, associations and organizations; on income tax on citizens of the Ukrainian SSR, foreign citizens and stateless people, etc. (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 47, 12.05.1991).

In general, we note a rather high pace of work of the highest legislative body of the country: as of June 3, 1991, the agenda of the third session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR included 62 main issues and 34 issues that could be considered after their preparation at the request of the Presidium (in total, 96 questions). 61 plenary sessions were held in 4 months. 143 issues were considered, including 22 were fully resolved. The Verkhovna Rada did not start discussing 28 of the main issues. 10 draft laws were adopted in the first reading and 4 were submitted for revision. Many draft laws were specifically related to the socio-economic sphere, although the basic ones were not adopted until the time of the collapse of the USSR (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 62, 03.06.1991).

In particular, the Law “On Taxes” was not adopted even in the first reading. Also, at the third session, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR did not consider the issues of denationalization of property, indexation of the population’s monetary income, pension provision, communal property, etc. “These are the main laws demanded by voters today, demanded by parliamentarians, and heads of enterprises. I suggest moving away from our agenda and start a discussion of economic issues that are very important for Ukraine today,” Y. Zbitnev was indignant in June of 1991 (Deputy Chairman of the Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR on Youth Affairs (Haharinsky electoral district, Kyiv) (Verkhovna Rada Ukraïnsjkoji RSR. Meeting 17, 19.06.1991).

Not the last attempt by the government to influence the state of affairs in the economic sphere of the Ukrainian SSR was made on June 28, 1991, when the Prime Minister of the Ukrainian SSR V. Fokin submitted to the Parliament “Programme of Emergency Measures to Stabilize Economy of Ukraine and Get it out of Crisis” (term of its validity: 1.5 – 2 years) (Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR. Meeting 21, 25.06.1991). “You and I, dear deputies, made our choice in favour of the market,” said V. Fokin. – If this is so, then it is necessary to uproot the mossy postulate of the political economy of socialism that the plan is the law. In fact, this is the antithesis of market relations (and this must be recognized consciously), with the help of which we are going to get out of the crisis. That is why, our programme is not a constant. Depending on how the economic situation will change in the Republic and beyond, we will be obliged to make appropriate adjustments and changes to it...” (Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR. Meeting 21, 25.06.1991).

The Prime Minister of the Ukrainian SSR admitted that “the programme conflicts with certain laws of the Union of the SSR, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR, and in some cases – with the provisions of our republican laws.” (Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR. Meeting 21, 25.06.1991). For these reasons, the speaker noted, the Government will insist on the suspension of some legislative acts for the period of implementation of the Programme. “Without this, it is doomed to become stillborn,” concluded V. Fokin (Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR. Meeting 21, 25.06.1991). Actually, the restoration of Ukrainian statehood on August 24, 1991 fundamentally transformed the principles and approaches of the government to solving socio-economic problems, although the population of Ukraine felt the consequences of the Soviet mismanagement even during the 1990s.

The Conclusion. At the end of the 1980s, the USSR was unprepared to overcome the consequences of a protracted economic crisis. The state-party leadership was limited to cosmetic reforms of the country's agro-industrial complex, without fundamental transformations of the entire sector of the economy. Being completely under the dictates of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Communist Party of Ukraine was limited in its ability to raise the standard of living of the population and revive the basic branches of the agro-industrial complex.

The 1990 elections to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR and local authorities gave rise to certain hopes for positive changes in the economic segment of the Republic, given the appearance of opposition forces in Parliament of the Republic. The efforts of the national democrats already in May – July of 1990 (the first session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st convocation) actualized the problem of exiting the economic crisis, and the Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine lays down of the sovereignty thesis of the economy and elimination of the need to harmonize the republican legislation with the laws of the USSR, the resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR.

During the second session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st convocation, the intention to solve a complex of problematic issues in the economic sector of the Republic was declared by (a) deepening the economic sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR in accordance with the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine and (b) due to the introduction of elements of the market economy. However, despite the adoption of numerous legislative acts, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine failed to stabilize the economic situation and achieve a real improvement in the standard of living of the population. The third session of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1st convocation approved the government's "Programme of Emergency Measures to Stabilize Economy of Ukraine and Get it Out of Crisis State", which, however, was no longer of practical importance considering the collapse of the USSR.

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