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SOUTHERN BESSARABIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL ECONOMY IN UKRAINE (1991-1999)

The socio-economic situation of Southern Bessarabia in the first decade of Ukrainian statehood was revealed, the characteristics of the region industry and agriculture in the conditions of economic crisis 1991-1999 was defined. It is emphasized that the decline of the economic situation was influenced not only by national but also local factors, namely insufficient identification of the numerous region ethnic groups, imperfect structure of the industrial production, lack of the energy resources, poor integration of the regional production into the Ukrainian economy. The author concludes that the protracted socio-economic crisis and changes in the social structure of the population did not contribute toward the national idea development in many segments of the people, who got nostalgic for the Soviet past and maintained their Soviet identity.

Key words: Southern Bessarabia, Ukrainian independence, national economic, economic crisis, living standards.

The declaration of independence of Ukraine required the further formation and development of the national economy. In terms of industrial, scientific and technical potential, Ukraine was the second after Russia in the USSR and, according to proponents of independence, should quickly take a worthy position among the developed European

countries. The main directions of the formation of new economic relations should be: the implementation of economic reform and privatization in order to establish a market economy and equal conditions for the development of state, private and collective property; elimination of costly production through resource saving, the introduction of new technologies; reorientation of the economy to meet social needs; creation of a new system of economic relations both in Ukraine and with the countries of near and far abroad. However, the desired economic growth never happened.

As noted by A.A. Oleshko, the period from 1991 to 1993 was the first period of the transformational crisis of the 90s in Ukraine. First of all, it affected the progressive decline in GDP (by 45.6%), hyperinflation (in 1993 – 10,256%), the depreciation of financial investments in Sberbank (by 610 times) and the decline in real incomes of the population (by 4.6 times) (*Oleshko, 2012*). The economic crisis of 1991-1993 was also characterized by a sharp decline in production, a crisis of solvency, social stratification of the population and the emergence of new layers of the population, increased crime, etc. The second period (1994-1999) was characterized by a slowdown in the decline in GDP, a gradual transition to its positive dynamics and the formation of anti-crisis potential.

The rapid economic recession in Ukraine, which began during the years of «stagnation», was caused by a number of factors: a huge military-industrial complex, dependence on energy supplies, the technical base of industrial production became obsolete, low agricultural productivity, lack of managerial personnel in a market economy, and a gap in economic and «ties, as well as the population, accustomed to state guardianship. But the main cause of the economic crisis was a sharp and ill-conceived transition from a planned economy to a market second concentrates so-called «shock therapy».

Mass curtailment of production in the early 90's XX century covered the territory of Southern Bessarabia. Some enterprises and workshops stopped due to a shortage of raw materials and supplies, economic ties were broken, contractual discipline was broken, group and regional economic egoism grew.

In 1991, Izmail enterprises underperformed products worth 15.2 million rubles. Compared to the previous year, the pulp and cardboard mill, to which wood came from Kotlos and Arkhangelsk, produced less than 2909 tons of pulp, 1003 tons of cardboard, and 3510 m2 of cardboard packaging. In general, this plant undersold production at 8170 thousand rubles. The cannery underproduced products worth 7 million rubles (*Mazur, 1994: 1*). In fact, the Etalon plant ceased to operate, which instead of electronic equipment began to produce ironing boards and holders for agricultural implements.

The volume of construction in the city of Izmail decreased by 23%. The production of foodstuffs decreased, by almost 42.8%, in particular, meat – by 30%, sausages – by 24%, dairy products – by 12%, soft drinks – by 38%. For 10 months of 1991, enterprises produced consumer goods 14,100,000 rubles less than the previous year. This year, the majority of enterprises in the Artsyz region did not fulfill their contractual obligations, and the volume of industrial production compared with 1990 decreased by 15.1%. The enterprises of the Bolgrad district reduced the production of foodstuffs by 2600000 rubles in comparison with 1990. The volume of production decreased the winery, meat processing plant, cheese factory, foodstuffs factory, garment factory, bakery (*Lebedenko, 2008: 67*).

Thanks to favorable climatic conditions, in 1991 the farms of Southern Bessarabia gathered a good grain crop, which stabilized the economic situation in a certain world. In the Bolgrad district, a record for that time was registered -154.1 thousand tons and the crop grew by 8.5centners per hectare. In turn, the indicators of livestock farming were worse: in seven months of 1991, the number of livestock decreased by 2 thousand animals, and the

production of meat and milk decreased significantly. In 1992, in conditions of drought, only 59.4 thousand tons of grain was harvested. The production of milk and meat also decreased compared to 1991. The sharp decline in indicators in agriculture was due not only to drought, but also to a shortage of fuel. Farms in the region received less than 1,500 tons of gasoline, 1,200 tons of diesel fuel and 540 tons of oil (*Muratova, 1993: 2*). It was better in those areas where enterprises worked on local raw materials. During 9 months of 1991, in the Sarata region, the cost of products, work and services decreased by only 5%, and consumer goods – by 3.5%.

The Ukrainian government tried to get the country out of the crisis as quickly as possible. However, neither the concept of transition to a market economy, nor the code of laws on land, nor the law on tax inspection and the budget system, adopted by the Supreme Council of the republic in 1990, acted.

In order to stabilize the consumer market, the Odessa Regional Council and district councils decided to ban the export of grain and other agricultural products outside the region without the presence of state quarantine inspection certificates. There were controls at railway stations and parcel and luggage contact points for lots of groceries.

In order to protect and stabilize the consumer market, the Government of the USSR introduced in November 1990 the sale of food and non-food items to citizens, as well as industrial and consumer goods for consumer cards and coupons. This event has only partially contributed to the improvement of the consumer market. Only coupons with a price of up to 50 kopecks could be bought without coupons: bread, dairy products, salt, matches and more. Saling of cultural goods (furniture, motorcycles, caravans, musical instruments, etc.) costing more than 1,500 rubles carried out with checks of Sberbank and only to residents of the Ukrainian SSR. The need for coupons was due to a mismatch between the cash incomes of the population and the available mass of goods. For each ruble of the output of the population there are few banknotes 3-4 times more. Coupons were supposed to be used only 4-6 months, but in fact they functioned for 4 years. The first issued banknotes coupons with denominations of 1, 3, 5, 10, 25, 50 and 100 rubles. The circulation of karbovanets on the territory of Ukraine was stopped on November 12, 1992 at 23:00. At the exchange rate, 1 karbovanets corresponded to 1.45 coupon karbovanets and 1 dollar to 403 karbovanets. In 1993, the rate of karbovanets has fallen 42 times due to inflation. Coupons of 2 and 5 thousand denominations appeared. Since mid-1994, notes of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 thousand and even 1 million coins were put into circulation (Gavrish, 2006: 299). The population of Southern Bessarabia, all over Ukraine, has become «millionaires.»

Since mid-1991, in the regions of Southern Bessarabia, separate measures have been taken to implement the Decree of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR of December 18, 1990 «On Land Reform». In the spring of this year, village councils completed an inventory of land and found that their share (about 4.7%) was used inefficiently. Land was allocated by village councils to expand the subsidiary farm, for hayfields and collective gardening. In the Bolgrad district, first of all, 3705 hectares of land were allocated for personal subsidiary ground of citizens, 100 hectares for city residents. The first 9 farms were created, which were allocated 76 hectares of land (*Odessa region, 2001: 33*). At the same time, certain inconsistencies arose: a misunderstanding between the councils and boards of collective farms, the negative attitude of the latter towards the organization of farms, the unresolved issues regarding the provision of private farms with seeds, equipment, fertilizers, plant protection products, the provision of loans, the suppressed entrepreneurial feeling among peasants and so on.

The intensification of market relations did not have a significant positive impact on Ukraine's economy: the wealth went into the hands of the former party-Soviet nomenclature, and the masses were below the poverty line. In Southern Bessarabia, the situation with food products was somewhat better than in other regions of Ukraine, which less encouraged residents of the region to implement reforms. Effectively implement economic programs without instructions «from above» the authorities and management were unable. In January 1992, the Russian government removed state control over the prices of all goods without exception. This caused a rise in prices in Ukraine. In 1992 they grew by 100 times for gas and 300 times for oil. State enterprises of Southern Bessarabia were overgrown with small commercial structures that used finance, territory, and energy of the main enterprises for free. Tourist-businessmen devastated the already poor domestic market of the region.

In 1992-1993, there was an increase in crisis phenomena in all parts of Southern Bessarabia. For example, in the Artsyz district the volume of industrial production decreased by 13.8%. During 1993, production of enterprises in the Saratov region decreased by 27.1%, production of consumer goods – by 13.1%, and arrears of wages amounted to UAH 594.9 thousand. (*Muratova, 1993: 3*).

V. Fokin's government has failed to control the economic situation. The new Cabinet of Ministers, headed by L. Kuchma (October 1992), set out to restore proper control over the use of state property while extending the boundaries of economic freedom. In essence, it was an attempt to restore the branch centralized management, to introduce state orders for products at the national and regional levels. One of the reasons for the government's unsuccessful fight against the crisis was the blocking of its decisions by the Verkhovna Rada. The reform plan, developed in 1992 by Vice Prime Minister Viktor Pinzenyk, aimed at limiting preferential loans, reducing subsidies, launching privatization, reducing material consumption and energy consumption, overlapping the main sources of illicit enrichment, and parliament failed. In its turn, the government was unable to cope with the inflation catastrophe. The miscalculations in the center and on the ground have led to the fact that in 1991-1994 industrial production decreased by 53% in Ukraine compared to 1990 (Kasyanov, 2008: 131). Unable to reform the economy was the elite of Ukrainian society, which at that time actually split into several groups: the former party-Soviet elite, the «new Ukrainians» - those who came to power in the early 90's, and representatives of ethnic groups.

The crisis in South Bessarabia's farms has also deepened. In Belgorod-Dnistrovskyi district, the industrial production index fell from 99.5% in 1990 to 86.8% in 1995, the growth rate of consumer goods production – from 94.8% to 81.3%, non-food goods – from 104.3% to 46.4% (*Radilov, 1995: 1*). Even lower rates were in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, other cities and districts of the region.

Prices for industrial products were 3-4 times higher than prices for agricultural products. Higher authorities have repeatedly made decisions about new financial infusions into agriculture, but these funds did not reach the ordinary collective and farm workers, settling on the accounts of banks The issue of rural (farm) farms in November 1993 was considered at the sessions of most district councils of people's deputies, who universally supported the peasants' statements about the allocation of land for farms. At the same time, attention was paid to the expedient, highly efficient use of the allocated lands, bringing the allocated plots to the optimal sizes and intermediaries.

The region also sought ways out of the crisis. The referendum held in Izmail in January 1992 confirmed the demands of the population to create free business zones,

introduce preferential conditions for entrepreneurs, and conduct privatization. Issues of population protection were increasingly discussed at sessions of city and district councils. Budget expenditures were reduced, utility benefits were revised, subsidies were given to children's institutions and schools, and businesses were opening their own stores. In October 1994, the Constituent Conference of the Bessarabian Branch of the Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs took place in Artsyz. Its participants focused on the «geographical isolation of Bessarabia». The region has become a burdensome region for the Ukrainian economy. The decisions of the conference referred to the creation of state, cooperative, joint-stock, private enterprises and organizations, the protection of interests of the region in the bodies of the legislative and executive power.

In 1994, Southern Bessarabia's enterprises started in the face of record inflation, a landslide in industrial and agricultural production, deep negative financial strains, and a catastrophic fall in household income. This was largely due to the suspension of reforms and the increased resuscitation of administrative management practices. However, the reform course has become an alternative. The hope was that monetary, financial, tax, customs, banking and other systems were created in Ukraine. There was a turning point in the reform of property relations, and the first stage of land reform was completed. At the end of 1994, a new phase of Ukraine's anti-crisis policy began. The program «The Fundamental Principles and Directions for the Formation of the Ukrainian Economy in the Crisis Period» was adopted, which provided for the realization of strategic priorities for economic growth (*Oleshko, 2012*).

The President announced the new course of market reforms on October 11, 1994, in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Decisive measures were envisaged to stabilize the financial and monetary system, liberalize taxes, overcome the payment crisis, form the banking system, and so on. Emphasis was placed on thorough reformation of property relations, rapid implementation of privatization, restructuring of administrative structures, dismantling of the sectoral management system and transfer of management functions to regions and individual enterprises. Priority was given to priority industries, especially agriculture. The President's program was approved by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In November 1994, the President issued a decree «On urgent measures to accelerate land reform in the field of agricultural production». The peasants received a certificate – a document that testified to the right of each worker or pensioner to the average land plot in the farm without the allocation of land in kind. In nature, the land was cut only by those who wanted to create a separate farm (Decree..., 1994). The decree guaranteed the right of private ownership of the land share. Urban residents could obtain land from a state reserve (reserve fund) for gardens and gardens. The decree referred to the replacement of state farms and collective farms by cooperatives with private property.

Three factors hindered the normal course of reforms: the lack of working capital on the accounts of enterprises, the lack of money for the development of construction, and unsuccessful competition with foreign goods. The development of economic relations was negatively influenced by the presence of hybrid, mixed forms of ownership, the difference between interstate and private sectors was not felt. The imbalance in prices for industrial and agricultural products constantly worsened the situation of peasants.

The lowest inflation rate (July 1994) was returned only in May 1996. In Sarata district, for example, in 1996 the production of consumer goods decreased by 37.6%, compared to the previous year by 32%. %. In the Belgorod-Dnestrovsky region, meat production decreased by 21% in 1994 and the supply of bread and fish products decreased.

In almost all parts of southern Bessarabia, industrial production was halved in 1997 compared to 1990. For example, in the Belgorod-Dniester region, indicators of industrial production development decreased by half, the growth rate of consumer goods by almost half, non-food products – by 17%, commissioning of housing decreased by more than two times, except for rural areas (Odessa region, 2001: 34)

Agriculture continued to decline. Expenditures from the state budget for its financing increased, but the desired results were not available. Livestock was in a particularly difficult situation. The number of cattle has fallen sharply.

Table 1

	1990 p.	1995 p.
Artsyz district	40,4	26,5
Belgorod-Dnestrovsky district	50,6	35,1
Belgrade district	36,0	21,9
Izmail district	45,1	23,7
Kiliya district	37,5	24,2
Reni district	18,1	11.7
Sarata district	35,9	29,0
Tarutynj district	41,7	26,2
Tatarbunary district	43,3	21,1
Total	348,6	219,4

The number of cattle in all categories of farms (thousand heads)

Economy of Ukraine in 1990-1994 suffered more losses than during World War II. It is only necessary to remind that 1998 gross domestic product (GDP) of Ukraine compared to 1990 made 41%, industrial production - 49%, agricultural - 52%, production of consumer goods - 32%, investments in fixed capital - 22%, real wages salary - 24% (*Alekseyev, 2000: 87*). Most researchers explain the protracted crisis with the collapse of the «single national economic complex of the USSR», the rupture of previous economic ties and the rise in energy prices. South Bessarabia was also characterized by a number of local factors: insufficient identification of numerous ethnic groups of the region, imperfect structure of industrial production, lack of energy carriers, poor integration of regional production into the economy of Ukraine, etc. In 1991 - 1998, many different socio-economic development programs were adopted in the region, but no one was responsible for their implementation.

In 1997, the inflation rate was reduced to 10% per year, but economic growth in the country did not occur. Only in 1999 the economic downturn stopped, industrial production increased by 4%, and consumer goods production – by 7.2% (*Odesa, 2000: 3*). The first signs of stabilization have emerged. Similar trends were common in most parts of southern Bessarabia.

			Table 2
	1990 p.	1995 p.	2000 p.
Odessa region	98,6	105,1	90,3
Belgorod-Dnestrovsky town	113,1	67,6	122,0
Izmail town	97,9	68,6	137,0
Artsyz district	103,3	63,7	115,4
Belgorod-Dnestrovsky district	99,5	86,8	127,5
Belgrade district	105,0	89,1	102,7

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Izmail district	98,3	82,2	82,2
Kiliya district	94,7	85,7	127,7
Reni district	110,9	85,2	95,0
Sarata district	96,5	95,2	112,1
Tarutynj district	85,2	68,7	169,0
Tatarbunary district	96,6	71,2	135,5

The figures presented in the table show that signs of stabilization appeared in southern Bessarabia about in 2000. In 1995, the rate of development of industrial production of the region was lower than the average in the region. In 2000, there were positive developments in the economy, education, health and culture. The number of agricultural raw materials processing enterprises has increased, the food industry has been restored, the enterprises where construction materials have been put into operation, the Danube Shipping Company, the Izmail port, the capacity of ship repair factories have increased.

The economic troubles of the 1990s affected the social structure of the population and its standard of living. In 1991, mortality exceeded birth rates and life expectancy in Ukraine was 6-7 years shorter than in developed countries. Unemployment spread to the countryside: in the Bolgrad district alone, the unemployed population in 1991 amounted to 2.5 thousand people, and in 1993 – 2.9 thousand people. (*Lebedenko, 2008: 73*). Overall, the standard of living of South Bessarabia has declined by half.

The prices of consumer goods during 1991 rose 10 times. The newspaper Sovetsky Izmail wrote that in early 1992, for 200 coupons, you could buy 10 grams of sausage, 10 grams of butter, 1 egg, half a loaf or 100 grams of sour cream (*Eremin, 1992: 1*). Since June 1, 1992, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine «released prices» for food. At the same time, he tried to influence prices by introducing a 25% level of profitability in determining the trade margin. However, prices for bread, pasta, cereals, sugar, cooked sausages, and fats rose sharply. In April 1993, a loaf of bread cost 110 karbovanets in Kiliya, 86 karbovanets in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, 96 karbovanets in Tatarbunary, 88 karbovanets in Artsiz, 82 karbovanets in Bolgrad, and 96 karbovanets in Reni. , in Saratov – 96 karbovanets, in Tarutin – 115 karbovanets. At the same time, the cost of services increased. The phone fee increased from 2.4 karbovanets up to 12 karbovanets monthly, for postal and telephone services – 4,5 times, transportation costs – 7 times (*Marchuk, 1997: 68*).

In May 1992, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a resolution on raising salaries for certain categories of workers from January 1 of the same year. The rate of a teacher of the highest category with experience of work from 13 to 18 years was 3540 karbov.. The engineer received 3400 rubles. per month, district doctor – 2391 karbov., chief doctor – 2300 karbov., director of the plant of reinforced concrete structures – 4500 karbov., director of the plant «Istr» – 6700 karbov. the head of the port – 7500 karbov., the head of the shipping department – 7470 karbov. Worker of the plant RTO – 846 karbov. Director of the house of culture - 1790 karbov. (*Mazur, 1994: 1*). It is clear that such a wage gap has not contributed to economic growth.

In 1995 The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the laws «On Remuneration» and «On Employment». Tariff rates and official salaries of workers increased, the rights to independently determine the wage fund were returned to enterprises, material assistance was not subject to taxation within 12 non-taxable minimums per year. However, there were no significant changes in the situation of workers and peasants. In 1994 – 1995 most enterprises in Southern Bessarabia did not pay salaries for 3-5 months and sent their workers on forced leave from 2 to 5 months.

The real disaster for the economy of the early 1990s was the system of government orders (40-50% of all production) and the subsidized policy of «saving» production - one of the sources of superprofits for Ukrainian renters. The economic shock has led to unprecedented social tensions. In 1991, the average wage in Ukraine doubled compared to the previous year. Prices have doubled this year. In 1993, the price boom was a record - 4835%. Reduced caloric intake. People abandoned by the state were looking for their own means of survival: trips of shuttles abroad for goods, household plots, and speculation.

Against the background of the crisis increased lawlessness, arbitrariness, disorder, crime. In 1992, in Bolgrad, crime increased 40 times in comparison with the previous year. Vinogradivka - 19 times, with. Dmitrovka – 13 times, with. Red Army – 8 times. In 1994, 481 crimes were registered in the Saratov region, which is 33.2% more than in the same period in 1993. Young people aged 20-38 (30.7%) were predominant offenders (*Lebedenko*, 2008: 79).

Thus, the economic crisis of 1991-1999 became a real challenge for the population of Southern Bessarabia. The depreciation of the currency, the sharp fall in industry and agriculture, and the loss of jobs had a negative impact on the living standards of the townspeople and peasants. Attempts to overcome the crisis at both national and regional levels did not produce the expected results. It is worth noting that the protracted socioeconomic crisis and changes in the social structure of the population did not contribute to the development of the national idea among many sections of the population, who were nostalgic for the Soviet past and retained Soviet identity.

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