VIEW OF THE NEP AS A KEY PREREQUISITE FOR THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE UKRAINIAN VILLAGE DURING THE «SECOND COMMUNIST ASSAULT»

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For Ukraine, the problem of the essence and mechanisms of the Soviet state structure that has existed on its territory since the 1920s. The NEP period is one of the stages of a single process, which, on the one hand, has common deep socio-ethical and socio-psychological foundations, and on the other, partially different mechanisms of ruling. Therefore, it should be analyzed sequentially, in chronological order. Since the main object of this article will nevertheless be the Ukrainian village of the NEP times, that is, the pre-collective farm Soviet period.

Therefore, let us discuss the fate of the social stratum, which constituted the absolute majority in the Ukrainian SSR – the peasantry. We will not touch upon the defeat of the landowners’ estates and the “Black Redistribution” in 1917, the terror of the surplus appropriation system and the mass peasant uprising organized in response to it. Let’s start in 1921, when the production of agricultural goods practically ceased due to the complete loss of incentives for its producers. The Ukrainian village actually forced the Soviet government to retreat from the policy of war communism, this became one of the decisive factors in the adoption of the famous decision of the XII Congress of the CPSU (b) on the transition to the NEP, in particular the tax in kind [5, 268].

The new rules of economic behavior in the Ukrainian village of the NEP period, within the permitted limits, supported enterprise, industriousness, and contributed to an increase in the personal living standard of its inhabitants. Due to this, the new leadership of the country at first even seemed better than the previous one in some ways: it eliminated some of the injustices of past times [9, 624] and, moreover, impressed the peasantry with its social closeness and understandable phraseology [1, 153]. In truth, the state leadership in the form of compulsory food supplies and a cash tax took away a considerable share of peasant labor, but the latter was no stranger to this: during the period of “war communism”, the state leadership was much stricter towards the Ukrainian peasantry, creating much greater tax burdens for it [7, 136].

The main thing is that such a “semi-free” life did not interfere with the natural processes of social differentiation in the countryside, in which more capable and hardworking peasants gradually achieved greater prosperity. All this quickly affected the commodity market, which contributed to the end of hunger, devastation, a gradual rise in the general standard of living after its catastrophic decline during the period of “war
Accordingly, the state began to receive at its disposal much larger and more stable receipts of food and cash payments. That is, with the help of the more or less normal economic development of the Ukrainian village during the NEP period, something happened that the armed commissars tried in vain to achieve during the “first communist assault”.

But this idyll did not last long. The new government (as, by the way, for the most part, and the former) could not get along even with a social stratum that was relatively independent of it. Management by means of indirect regulation mechanisms did not correspond to the nature and spirit of the political regime, which began to form in Ukraine in the second half of the 1920s.

This was not what the Bolsheviks fought for, to release the life of most of the Ukrainian society from under their control, allowing it to fall under the rule of the “petty bourgeois element”. Indeed, at the same time, the regime would have to, to a certain extent, abandon the use of those tools and methods of government that constituted the main source of its power (strict direct regulation with the help of administrative, military and ideological levers), and the rural population would have gained relative independence from the government.

Any self-restraint, from the point of view of autocracy, weakens the power and is therefore unacceptable. The socioeconomic situation in the city (the inability of the Soviet government to take effective measures to restore the organization of production destroyed during the national liberation struggle of 1917 – 1921, the lack of industrial goods necessary for the population, providing people with work) also pushed the Soviet regime towards emergency measures.

The truce between the Soviet government and the peasantry did not last long. Beginning in 1928, the authorities more and more unceremoniously interfered in the economic life of the Ukrainian village and sharply increased tax pressure.

Moreover, the dominant share of the material burden was laid on the shoulders of the backbone of the Ukrainian village – effectively working, and therefore relatively well-to-do peasants.

In addition, during the NEP period, the Soviet government was openly flirting with the “nakedness” and the “rural proletariat”. That is, with those who, even in conditions of significant government support, were unable to successfully manage and get out of the poverty stricken. But this was only a prelude to the further transformation of the Ukrainian village in the direction of implanting totalitarian collectivity in it.

The economic background of the events is as follows: since the authorities could not offer the Ukrainian peasantry in exchange for their grain a sufficient amount of industrial goods, it was necessary either to urgently ensure their production, or to take grain. After an internal party discussion, during which the supporters of a moderate course based on normal economic preconditions were “crushed” by the Stalinists, in 1929 an unambiguous decision was made. Instead of developing partnerships with the peasantry, the leadership of the party and the state chose a strategy of governmentizing the Ukrainian village, which was accompanied by its plunder and enslavement.

So, relying on the theoretical and practical parts of the activities of the Soviet government in the Ukrainian village of the NEP period, the author came to the conclusion that, despite the gradual curtailment of the terrorist measures of the Soviet government against the peasantry of the period of the “first communist assault”, the NEP period should be considered not as a retreat, but as a prerequisite for the nationalization of the Ukrainian village during the period of the “second communist assault”.

References: