

FOOD POLICY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN UKRAINE THROUGHOUT 1917-1923 (BASED ON MATERIALS FROM CHERNIHIV REGION)

^aOKSANA KRUPENKO, ^bSERHII KYRYLENKO, ^cOLEKSII LEIBEROV, ^dYEVGEN LUNIAK, ^eVOLODYMYR MARTYSENKO, ^fYEVHENIIA STRASHKO

^{a,f}Nizhyn Gogol State University, 2, Hrafska Str., 16600, Nizhyn, Ukraine

email: ^adaniden2007@gmail.com, ^bserkirile@gmail.com,

^clejberov@ukr.net, ^dlunyak@ua.fm, ^emartylenko1209@ukr.net,

^fevgeniya.strashko.m@gmail.com

Abstract: The article examines the problem of the food policy of the Soviet government, which was carried out in Chernihiv region in 1917-1923. Based on the use of a wide range of archival sources and periodical literature of those times, the author considers the main goals of this policy, the methods of its application and analyzed results. Special attention was paid to the state authorities responsible for the implementation of this policy in practice. The author considered their structure, equipment, changes that occurred in the structure of the apparatus during its reformation. The period 1917-1920 was characterized by considerable anarchy in the conduct of food policy, which was an objective result of the time, because a civil war was raging in Ukraine. The campaign of 1921-1922 was still ongoing under military communism, but with the transition to the New Economic Policy. It was characterized by the active use of various non-economic measures by the Bolshevik authorities, aimed at draining food resources from the peasants. The campaign of 1922-1923, when the surplus appropriation was replaced by a food tax, which was collected in money and only partially in kind, gave the Bolshevik government more positive results. At the same time, the author states that due to a number of objective and subjective reasons, the new government did not manage to fully form a strong apparatus of food policy bodies, which inevitably affected the results of the policy as a whole. The author came to the conclusion that the entire food policy of the Bolshevik government was oriented to the needs of maintaining the Red Army and the administrative apparatus of the province, while the needs of ordinary peasants were considered secondary.

Keywords: Food policy, Food distribution, Food tax, Bolsheviks, Soviet government, Chernihiv province.

1 Introduction

At the current stage of the development of independent Ukraine, in the conditions of economic and political reform of the state, the interest of researchers in studying the history of the Ukrainian village of the national liberation revolution era and the establishment of Bolshevik power in the country has revived. The history of the Ukrainian peasantry of the beginning of the 20th century, for a number of reasons, has always attracted the attention of researchers. First, the peasantry made up the bulk of the population of the Ukrainian lands at that time. Secondly, the Bolsheviks, who seized power in Ukraine, immediately began to implement a harsh repressive policy related to the eradication of private property in the countryside, the pumping out of food, the suppression of religion and the radical restructuring of traditional peasant culture and lifestyle. Attempts to build socialism in the Ukrainian countryside at a rapid pace met with rejection and active opposition from the peasantry. That is why, during a small period of time, the Soviet government was forced to radically change its policy several times. The transition from the uncontrolled actions of the era of the civil war was changed to the policy of "military communism", which after some time was replaced by new economic policy (NEP). These changes affected the goals and methods of implementing food policy and the activities of the Bolshevik food authorities operating in Ukraine.

2 Method

The methodological basis of the study is the dialectical method of cognition, which involves the consideration of a historical phenomenon in development and interconnection with other phenomena. From among the general scientific methods, cognition, analysis, synthesis, comparison, and others were used, from among the specific ones - comparative historical, concrete historical (considering certain measures of the Soviet food policy), problem chronological (identifying the reasons for the transformation of food policy, the development of its forms in time), statistical (determining the results of food policy, the impact on agricultural production, and so on). In carrying out this study, reliance was placed on the basic principles of historical knowledge - historicism, scientific character,

objectivity. Such an approach to the analysis of phenomena and events, to a certain extent, makes it possible to understand the real situation in those conditions, the positions of various political forces, to understand the policy of the Bolsheviks, their own assessments of the food situation and to explain what guided the Soviet government in making decisions to overcome the food crisis.

3 Results and Discussion

Chernihiv province, as one of the regions that was quickly captured by the Bolshevik armies and where Soviet power was established, is of great interest with regard to the problematic under consideration. The study of the food policy of the Bolsheviks in Chernihiv region (*oblast*) during the specified period enables researchers not only to establish and trace the common features of the Bolshevik course on providing the new government with agricultural products, which were common to all Ukrainian provinces, but also to isolate and analyze its regional features, to identify changes that occurred in food politics and determine their causes, analyze the forms, methods of its implementation and results, find out the complex of problems faced by the Soviet food bodies and characterize the measures aimed at overcoming them.

The historiography of this issue includes a significant number of monographic studies and scientific articles in periodicals. Already in the 20s of the 20th century, the first articles covering the first steps of the Soviet government in agricultural policy in Ukraine began to appear [1, 4, 8, 15]. The works of Soviet historians of the mid-1950s and mid-1980s, despite the introduction of a significant array of archival sources and new statistical data into scientific circulation, were marked by the influence of ideological dogmas in the coverage of historical events and the bias of conclusions [2, 3, 7, 10, 12]. A new wave of research interest in this topic was brought by Ukrainian historians after the declaration of Ukraine's independence. The works of V.F. Verstyuk, O.I. Hanzha, G. Heorhizov allowed looking at this problem in a different way [5, 6, 17]. The conclusions reached by domestic Ukrainian historians were completely opposite to those announced in Soviet times. From praising the policy of the Soviet government, they moved to sharp criticism and condemnation of the activities of the Bolsheviks in the Ukrainian countryside. Today, this problem requires more detailed study and analysis, along with unbiased conclusions. At the same time, the history of the pro-Bolshevik politics and the activities of their food bodies in Chernihiv region was not the object of a separate study by researchers and does not have its own historiography.

Immediately after the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, the RSFSR government turned its attention to Ukraine's food reserves and raw material potential. The capture of the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic by Soviet troops at the beginning of 1918 allowed representatives of the new government to launch activities to extract resources from Ukrainian territories. However, this policy was short-lived, because the advance of the armies of the Quadruple Alliance forced the Bolsheviks to quickly retreat. During the next Ukrainian-Bolshevik war, units of the Red Army managed to return the territories of Ukraine under the control of the Soviet authorities. The Soviet food policy and special bodies responsible for its implementation began to be formed immediately after the transition of the Chernihiv province to the power of the Bolsheviks. Speaking in March 1919 before the delegates of the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine in Kharkiv, the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine Ya.M. Sverdlov stated: "The rescue of the entire revolution, not only the Russian one, but also the international one, is in the hands of Ukraine. You must realize that the Russian Revolution is now going through a very critical period because of the breakdown of

transport on the one hand and the breakdown of food on the other. Food and fuel are here in Ukraine, and both can be obtained from Ukraine only if strong state institutions are created. And they will be created when strong party organizations are created" [20, sheet 8]. However, on the ground, representatives of the Soviet authorities began to act much earlier. At the end of January 1919, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraine issued and publicized the decree "On the organization of food affairs in Ukraine", according to which a state monopoly on the procurement of food products was introduced and fixed prices were established for the purchase and distribution of food products. As one of the contemporaries of the events wrote, "The revolutionary proletariat started a new war for the possession of bread, against the landowners, village kulaks, and other servants of capital" [11, p. 4].

Before the First World War, there were no food organizations as special institutions in the Russian Empire. Supply issues were introduced and governed by the laws of the free market. But during the war, when complications began to appear in providing the armies and the population with foodstuffs, the tsarist government tried to regulate the food issue by partially restricting private initiative in the field of using grain surpluses. However, the tsarist government did not manage to solve the food problem until the end. The food crisis was constantly deepening, which eventually became one of the reasons for the overthrow of the autocracy.

Four main periods can be clearly distinguished in the work of the food bodies that operated in the territory of the province in 1917-1923.

The first period lasted from the beginning of 1917 to the February Revolution. At that time, the food affairs were in the hands of the Commissioner for Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture for the purchase of bread for the army.

The second period lasted from the February Revolution to the occupation of Chernihiv region by German and Austro-Hungarian troops. During this period, the law of March 25, 1917 on the establishment of a grain monopoly was adopted.

The third period started from the time of the capture of Ukraine by German troops at the beginning of 1918. The Food Boards were liquidated, and the State Bread Bureau was organized in their place. In this way, the food affairs was centralized, which was necessary for Hetman P. Skoropadsky, but primarily for his German allies, to collect and export food from Ukraine.

After the seizure of power by the UNR Directorate, the previous Food Administrations were restored. However, it is not possible to touch on history in detail and evaluate the work of the Commissioner for Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Bread Bureau, due to the fact that practically all documents were destroyed in the period of 1919 during the evacuation of the food authorities of the province to the city of Bryansk, which is also confirmed by the Bolsheviks themselves [13, p. 2]. As for Food Administrations (ProdUprav), they were monopoly state bodies for the procurement of products to provide for the army, state industry and the city population, and their branches - city food committees - provided for the city population exclusively through the card system.

Only from the beginning of 1919, as the Soviet power began to be restored in Chernihiv Oblast, 'food cells' began to be formed in individual settlements, whose primary task was to provide food for the units of the Red Army, which continued its offensive against the armies of the Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The importance of the Chernihiv province in the matter of food supply was noted in the report by the provincial representative of the Ukrainian People's Committee of Ukraine Chaikovsky. On January 22, 1919, he reported: "Chernihiv Oblast is a significant part of our territory freed from bourgeois power, 11 counties were completely recaptured by our troops from the Petlyurites. Strongly developed industry - cloth, hemp and spinning, sugar, forest, paper, leather, matchmaking,

bread-rich southern districts - all this, with the presence of significant reserves of raw materials and finished products, makes it possible to obtain from this province a significant amount of goods for exchange with Russia and Belarus, providing the Red Army with bread and other products, and finally - to meet the needs of other provinces of our Republic" [17, sheet 55].

The provincial food commissariat was organized back in January 1919 in the city of Klintsy. It was subordinate to the local revolutionary commissariat (*Revkom*), and in February it moved to Chernihiv. As Chernihiv region was captured by Bolshevik forces, district food agencies began to be organized in the form of district food commissariats.

The winter-autumn period of 1919 was one of the most difficult in the implementation of food policy and the work of provincial food authorities. The new government immediately faced a number of problems that it could not solve. Firstly, there was not enough food. Thus, in the minutes of the Krolevetsky County Congress of representatives of the county VRCs, it was reported: "Klyshov Volost - all food was pumped out of the Volost through frequent requisitions. The population demands the introduction of free trade; Altynivska volost - the food issue is acute; Ponomysia Volost - Soviet money is poorly accepted" [20, sheet 51]. At that time, it was reported from Glukhiv County: "There is no food in the county. Red Army soldiers do not receive food, uniforms, and salaries. Disturbances on this ground among the Red Army resulted in uprisings and arbitrary 'requisitions'. We are in a hopeless situation. Get the troops out of here immediately or give them food immediately. We are waiting for your help" [18, sheet 135]. Food prices can serve as a characteristic indicator of the situation on the food market at this time. Thus, the newspaper "Nezhinsky Vedomosti", which was published during the Denikin regime, reported: "In the last days of the Bolshevik regime, in the city, the following was extremely expensive: a pound of bread - 120 kr., a pound of meat - 75-100 kr., a pound of lard - 500 karbovans (krb.), butter - 500 krb., a glass of milk - 15-20 krb. With the entry into the city of Dobramia, the prices decreased: a pound of bread - 25 krb., meat - 30-40 krb., butter - 200 krb., lard - 140 krb., salt - 20 krb. The food issue in the county is very acute. The retreating Bolsheviks took all the food from the peasants, leaving nothing even for sowing. All the fodder was also taken away" [16, p. 3]. After the retreat of the White Guards and the occupation of Chernihiv Oblast by Bolshevik troops, the newspaper "Znamya Sovetov", which was the printed organ of the Chernihiv Provincial Revolutionary Committee and the Provincial Committee of the RCP /b/, reported on December 14, 1919: "Life in Nizhyn has returned to normal. The food crisis is completely over. All products are available in large quantities and are relatively cheap. A pound of bread - 20 krb., white - 35 krb., lard - 75 krb., a pound of meat - 20 krb., herring - 20 kr., a full lunch - 50 krb. ... Life in Borzhno is very cheap. Bread costs 30 krb. per pound. In the Horodnyanskiy district, a pound of bread costs 75 krb. at the market. According to local wage rates, this is too high price for workers" [14, p. 3].

Secondly, the Bolsheviks did not manage to quickly build a strong apparatus not only in the localities, but also in the center. Thus, in the report on the inspection of the commission of the Provincial Committee of the Provincial Committee, it was emphasized: "The commission is a completely sad sight... Hopeless discord, two warring camps, lack of stewardship, irresponsibility, drunken appearance at meetings, hostile attitude towards new people... the staff does not meet its purpose and is parasitic" [17, sheet. 62].

An attempt to solve the food issue by organizing agricultural communes also did not yield a positive result. By mid-May 1919, 46 communes had been organized in Chernihiv region, although M. Skrypnyk calls the number 55 collective farms (in terms of the number of registered communes, Chernihiv Oblast was ahead of the rest of the provinces of Soviet Ukraine). The communes, which had extensive state support (land, equipment, money), could not compete with agricultural artels and

cooperatives. Characterizing the situation in the province at the end of the summer of 1919, the local Bolsheviks were forced to state that “A poor man or an outsider goes to the commune, and a middle peasant willingly goes to the artel, it is they who need to be “neutralized” politically and economically” [9, p. 65]. Therefore, after the expulsion of Denikin, the Bolsheviks abandoned the practice of the ill-conceived and forced organization of communes, which discredits “the Soviet government and repels the peasant masses from the very idea of communism”. By mid-August 1920, only 34 collective farms remained in Chernihiv region [9, p.67].

Local Bolsheviks saw the way to solve the problem and fulfill the norms set by the center in the implementation of a number of measures. The leadership of the province made the following proposal: “The first step in solving the food issue should be a request to the Rev. Council of the 12th Army (its spare parts were quartered on the territory of the province - O.L.) for the immediate release of the poviats from any orders, since the further pumping of bread is unthinkable, there can be no question of excess products, pumping out products will lead to the most negative complications. However, removing of orders alone is not enough. It is necessary to demand permission from the All-Ukrainian production bodies for workers and public organizations to purchase products in the agricultural regions of the provinces of Ukraine, deviating as a last resort from the policy of fixed prices. The latter circumstance contradicts the basic principles of our party's food policy, although it should be noted that in Ukraine, some distortions have been allowed in the food policy of the Central Committee” [19, sheet. 62]. After that, the central government did everything not so much to ease the food situation in the province but rather to stop such frank criticism from the seats. Available documents show that in the following years, representatives of local state and party institutions no longer allowed themselves to express seditious opinions and criticize the central government.

The Chernihiv Provincial Food Commissariat (Gubprodkommisariat) worked until October 1919, and after the occupation of the territory of the province by Denikin troops, it was evacuated to the city of Bryansk. But already in November, after the expulsion of the Denikinists, the Provincial Committee for Food and Agriculture was reorganized by the Food and Agriculture Committee of the XII Army in the form of the Special Military and Food Commission (*Oprdkomgub*). Its structure was as follows: the Regional Development Committee was headed by a commission headed by the chairman, which was subordinated to seven departments (statistical and economic, legal, department of reception and procurement points, information and publishing). The latter published the weekly newspaper “Food Bulletin”. For comparison, in 1920-1921, the Odesa District Commissariat published the newspapers “Plow and Hammer” (“*Pluh y moloť*”), “Food Questions” (*Voprosy prodovolstviya*), “Food Month” (*Prodovolstvennyi mesiats*) and two magazines – “New Food Policy” (“*Novaia prodovolstvennaia polityka*”) and “Bulletin of the Regional Commissariat” (“*Biulleten Oprodkomhuba*”) [23, p. 57].

However, the conditions under which the Chernihiv District Commissar worked were extremely difficult. There was a great deal of confusion in the relations between the People's Committee and the higher authorities. The Regional Commissariat was subordinated simultaneously to the XII People's Committee of People's Commissariat, the People's Commissariat of the South-Western Front, the People's Commissariat of the USSR and the People's Commissariat of the RSFSR. Of course, this led to contradictory orders, which complicated the work of the Committee and its local bodies. This was confirmed in the report by the above-mentioned provincial commissioner Chaikovsky: “...attempts to interfere on the part of the People's Commodity Committee of the RSFSR, the so-called Central Procurement, all kinds of Head Offices (*Glavks*) and Centers bring disorganization into the work of provincial and district institutions, against which the most decisive measures have to be taken” [17, sheet 55].

On the other hand, the political situation in the province was not favorable for the establishment of productive food work (peasant uprisings covered entire counties, gang activity, lack of local forces to fight them, constant misunderstandings with local administrative authorities). City and county executive committees considered food bodies their departments, interfered in their work, removed and appointed commissioners at their discretion. This is vividly illustrated by one of the episodes that took place in Nizhyn. After the liberation of the city from Denikinists, the city council was formed in the city, and departments began to operate under it, including the city Food Committee. I.M. Chepela was appointed its head of it. The only criterion for his appointment to this position was that he was a communist. In addition, the city Food Committee demanded significant personnel reinforcement. The Municipal Revolution Committee (*Miskrevkom*) reported that 10 more communists are needed for its normal functioning [22, sheet 6]. However, a member of the Province Revolution Committee (*Gubrev Committee*) Podolskyi, who was on an inspection trip to the city to settle the food issue, as well as to take army food orders from the territory of the province, by his order “removed the appointed head of the Region Food Committee (*Oprodkom*) T. Chepelo (correctly Chepela - O.L.), who does not know at all of the food affairs, and appointed Mr. Fradko. Revolution Committee (*Revkom*) did not agree with this and stood up for Chepela”. Later, in his report at the joint meeting of the *Gubrevkom* and the *Oprodkom* on December 24, 1919, Podolsky raised the question of the need to settle issues between the Province Revolution Committee and the *Oprodkom*. The meeting made a decision to prevent the intervention of the regional committees in the technical work of the food bodies, establishing strict control over them by the provincial authorities [22, sheet 8].

At that time, the basis of the food policy of the Bolsheviks remained food distribution, which was carried out by forcibly seizing bread and other products from the peasants at the established rate of products and state prices. One of the leaders of the local Bolsheviks, E. Mazanko, proclaimed at the time: “Soviet power has moved from the sentimental monopoly of Kerensky's time to the state structure and declared a merciless war of speculation on food stocks and seized grain surpluses” [11, p. 4]. As a basis for the breakdown of the agricultural population, the Regional Development Committee set the tithe rate of taxation for all farms that had at least 3 decais of arable land, while the tithe rate of taxation gradually increased in accordance with the total amount of land in the farm. At the end of 1919, the above-mentioned Podolskyi noted in his report: “As for the views for food, in the near future we should expect up to 10,000 poods of sugar, up to 1,000 poods of soap, and up to 300 poods of shag. From bread products for January-April 1920, a distribution was made: wheat - 100,000 poods, buckwheat and millet - 65,000 poods, beans and peas - 80,000 poods, oats and barley - 100,000 poods” [22, sheet 8].

In May 1920, in connection with the offensive of Polish troops and the army of the Directorate of the UNR, Special provincial food commission (*Oprodkomgub*) was evacuated to the city of Novgorod-Siversky, from where it soon returned. At the same time, a procurement department was organized under it to establish systematic work and eliminate “distortions” on the ground. However, without clear tasks and instructions from the center, the food bodies were provided with income from various food expeditions and surplus appropriation carried out by the food agencies and food detachments on the ground.

Since the transfer of all sub-departments of the Procurement Department to independent institutions, they have been given the task of systematic and planned receipt of products at the disposal of the provincial food body. The first orders were insignificant, so the order for livestock was issued for only 215 heads within the entire province [13, p. 2]. Meager revenues forced the Regional Food Committee to enter into contractual relations with cooperative organizations for the procurement of poultry, canned meat, salting of vegetables, and the supply of onions. The strengthening of the power of the Bolsheviks in Chernihiv

Oblast, after the retreat of the Denikinets, gave the provincial food authorities the task of intensifying their work. The detachment of the departments from each other did not contribute to this, so the Congress of Provincial Commissars of Production in August 1920 decided to reorganize the procurement apparatus of the province and unify it. Decision-making on the reorganization of the apparatus coincided with the receipt from the center of surplus appropriation layouts for all products, which were several times larger than the ones that the Regional Food Committee outlined in its program and for the implementation of which all the preparatory work was carried out in the center and on the ground. The main reason for these changes was the attack of Soviet troops on Warsaw and the increased need for food and fodder to support the Red Army. The combination of operational and organizational work immediately had a negative impact on the procurement campaign's results. The Special Provincial Food Committee was informed that during current food year, Chernihiv Oblast will have to feed itself exclusively on its own bread. The outfits sent from the center exceeded the "most daring expectations" of the People's Commissariat of Province. The order for potatoes in the amount of 1,000,000 poods exceeded one third of the entire total Ukrainian distribution, for vegetables - in the amount of 3,000,000 poods - it was not at all possible [13, p. 2]. If to add to this the conditions in which the procurement campaign was conducted (complete absence of specialists and experienced temporary workers, managers, even people with initiative, as well as lack of management instructions of the center, inertia, and at the same time a "peculiar" understanding of the tasks set, insufficient help from party committees and of the provincial trade union councils (the mobilization of party and trade union forces during the 'food month' gave only 11 people), the lack of clarity in relations with cooperative institutions, which were reinforced by a wide wave of banditry, terrorizing the population and the physical destruction of food workers, looting of warehouses, depots and transport), then it becomes clear why it was not performed [15, p. 2]

Table 1: Implementation of the food distribution for February 1, 1921

Products	Planned (poods)	Harvested (poods)	% of completion
Grain-bread	1362200	566103	41
Oat	590100	267065	45
Bird	10650	3999	38
Horned cattle	262644	170694	65
Pigs (live weight)	239550	26234	11
Sheep (live weight)	931559	52558	16
Potato	10000000	872994	9
Hay	5000000	946340	19
Oilseeds	1000000	391138	4

From April 1921, the *Oprodkomgub* began to organize the apparatus and at the same time started to prepare for a new campaign. The 1921/1922 campaign took place under more favorable conditions. At that time, the structure of the Food Committee of Province was as follows: 5 departments, and the district food apparatus consisted of Poviets Food Committees (*Povitprodkoms*) and District Food Committees (*Rayprodkoms*). *Povitprodkoms* also had departments, as well as *Oprodkomgub*; in addition, all reception points located on their territory were under the leadership of *povitprodkoms*. The apparatus that carried out work in the provinces consisted of former sales agents and persons seconded by the party and trade union bodies, and partly of persons recruited from outside. The administrative apparatus participated in the campaign in the form of village and province tax commissions. But at the end of 1922, sales tax revenues were drastically reduced. In compliance with the order of the People's Commissariat of the Republic of Ukraine, *Oprodkomgub* was forced to resort to extreme measures in order to "raise the embankments". A food month was declared in the province, but it gave insignificant results,

increasing indicators only for pulses and oilseeds. The results of the activities of the provincial food authorities are clearly demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation of the food tax for the end of 1921 - beginning of 1922

Products	October 1921	November 1921	December 1921	January 1922
Grain-bread	705506	108857	53048	39903
Grain-forage	488952	54269	18393	17686
Beans	197554	32405	1607	10687
Oilseeds	67682	9028	2535	4095
Forage	1056606	691499	406163	256507
Potato	1328238	841911	9979	7120

That is why the Bolsheviks were resorting to tried-and-tested tactics of repression. Already in December, the Food Revolutionary Tribunal (*Prodevtribunal*) and people's courts have been actively operating. As a result, sentences for non-payers increase from 194 (November) to 1473 (December) [13, p.2]. Forced measures were taken to combat the concealment of products. In January, 25,997 tithes of untaxed land were discovered, on which the peasants did not pay the tax, and for the entire campaign before that, this figure was only 29,019 tithes. A total of 283,212 tithes of untaxed land were found in the province [13, p. 3]. In February-March, the "February-March pressure" was carried out in Ukraine, which brought additional results - 33,088 tithes of tax-free land. In March, in order to force the peasants to abandon the concealment of untaxed land, a collective settlement was introduced. "Pressure" continued until April and brought the following results: bread grain - 2460819 poods (100%), feed grain - 1140150 poods (85%), grain - 606691 poods (80%), legumes - 533772 poods (218%), oilseeds - 150,243 poods (94%), potatoes - 3,500,948 poods (56%), hay - 1,754,432 poods (50%), straw - 1,145,267 poods (149%). The food tax was expressed in rye units: 6,672,402 poods were planned, 6,064,910 poods (91%) were 'executed' [15, p. 3]. As the local Bolsheviks themselves pointed out, although the end of the campaign gave the authorities almost 100% results, it caused significant damage in terms of morale, causing dissatisfaction among the peasants with the food tax and food workers, and the slogan "connecting the city and the countryside" was not fully implemented. Here is the assessment of the campaign of 1921/1922 given by the local Bolshevik E. Mazanko, who was a direct participant in those events: "The tax of 1921-1922, although it did not cause significant comments, but the variety of products collected under the tax, when the peasant was forced to look for parsley that is missing from his farms on the side or to get horns to contribute the raw material part of the tax, made up the most negative part of the tax. Later, it was eliminated, but many other taxes were added to the food tax" [11, p. 4].

The negative results of 1920-1922 forced the Bolsheviks to resort to another reform of their industrial policy in Ukraine and the system of food bodies operating there.

The new campaign of 1922/1923 was already underway after the issuance of the decree on the single tax in kind, which could not but affect the tasks and methods of its implementation. It, like the following ones, was held under the slogan of rebuilding peasant farms and easing the tax burden for the peasantry. The military and food apparatus of the Province Food Committee was demobilized and renamed to *Gubprodkom*. Numerous cadres of food army men, food militia, barricade posts, food revolutionary tribunals were disbanded and members of trade unions from the food front were demobilized. The reform of the food apparatus separated tax and fiscal functions from economic ones. District tax bureaus were formed instead of the District Product Committees that existed in 1921/1922. Volost food committees were given exclusive tax functions. The economic apparatus of the province, organized into procurement offices, was directly subordinated to the Provincial Committee of Food (*Gubprodkom*). The former procurement department of the *Gubprodkom* was divided into two separate, completely

independent departments - tax and economic and procurement, whose work was coordinated by the deputy of the Gubprodkom and the planning commission. Tax inspectorates, village councils, and political executive committees became the primary tax authorities, to which the functions of village and volost tax commissions were transferred. This was done to achieve two goals - the distribution of tax and economic functions and the transfer of the main burden of work to village councils and Volost executive committees. While the first goal was achieved relatively quickly, the second, throughout the entire campaign, was not fully achieved. The fact is that, unlike the campaign of 1921/1922, which took place under the banner of maximum attention to the sales tax on the part of party and trade union bodies, the campaign of 1922/1923 began in the conditions of liquidation mood, which covered all levels of power. In addition, the representatives of the food apparatus tried to carry out the work on their own and, therefore, did not turn to the Gubpromkom for help in time. At the same time, for village councils and volost executive committees, this work turned out to be new, imposed by the center, and, therefore, they were not prepared for it. Only at the moment of the direct collection of sales tax, when a real threat of disruption of the campaign became apparent, due to the weak participation of the administrative and party apparatus, the issue of active "involvement" of village councils and volost executive committees was brought under the control of the central provincial authorities. Thanks to a number of organizational measures (organization of provincial and volost food triads, mobilization of about 200 party workers), as well as measures of administrative coercion, the volost apparatus gradually began to be involved in work [13, p. 3].

The campaign of 1922/1923 took place in the conditions of insufficient campaigning training of the population, weak participation of village councils, and throughout the campaign the tax was collected by means of "incessant pressure" on the payers, village councils and volost executive committees. But compared to 1921/1922, in the campaign of 1922/1923, the Bolsheviks had a clear tax law, a stronger grassroots apparatus, the repressive measures applied against non-payers were exclusively legal in nature, and were not the result of the arbitrariness of the workers. Strict administrative measures were applied to non-payers, which brought greater legality to the punitive policy of food bodies. Of course, there were local excesses and exceptions (in the Nizhynsky povit, Ichna and Nosivka), but they were isolated ones, and their organizers and executors were severely punished. The system of tax payers' complaints was streamlined, a system of benefits was introduced for poor farms, as well as for farms specializing in the cultivation of special technical crops. Despite the fact that the government did not manage to eliminate all the troubles, the results of the campaign turned out to be positive for it. On January 1, 1923, the tax in Chernihiv Oblast was paid in full, while it was not collected even in March from the campaign in 1921/1922. The 6th Province Council of Volost Food Commissars and Chief Tax Officers, which took place on February 2-4, 1923 in Chernihiv, confirmed 100% implementation of the food tax.

Table 3: Execution of food tax in Chernihiv province in 1922/1923

Products	Planned (poods)	Harvested (poods)	% of completion
Grain-bread	5191290	4827900	93
Grain-forage	1587083	1351900	85
Cereals	858828	112060	131
Beans	281870	24920	88
Total bread	6496722	7558600	177
Oilseeds	117611	51800	52
Feed volume	921587	580600	63
Potato	7285500	64580	88
Horned cattle	119000	232357	194
Sheep	20300	7076	94
pigs	21000	4444	21
Salo	57710	8358	14

At that time, an attestation commission was organized to control the food bodies themselves, and measures were taken to strengthen the fight against bribery. The result of these measures was the dismissal of 30% (!) employees of the food bodies of the province [13, p. 3].

During the period of the tax company, the Gubprodkom had at its disposal granaries with a total volume of 235,148 poods with a total tax amount of 1,2126,561 poods. This was completely enough for the provincial authorities, because only 40% of the tax was collected in kind, while the rest - in money. Statistical data for the province in the campaign of 1922/1923 are as follows: 348670 households, 1781514 eaters, taxed land - 182098532 tithes, and livestock - 680634 heads. Compared to the previous campaign, the results were greater by 4,199 farms, 7,549 eaters, and 87,566 acres of land. As a result of the fight against land tax evasion, 2,108,070 acres, 129 farms, 466 eaters, and 1,864 heads of livestock were discovered in the province [13, p. 3].

In the campaign of 1922/1923, the authorities set a clear deadline for paying the tax. Thus, the tax was paid in kind until November 1 (60%) and January 1 (40%). Cash tax was also paid in installments - on January 1 (35%), March 1 (35%), April 1 (15%), and May 1 (15%). The money tax was calculated by the Chief Tax Office of District Product Committees and the control commission. The main obstacle in calculating the tax was the low payment of peasants' labor (1 krb. 50 kopecks in Soviet money ("radznaks") from the farm) and the lack of qualified personnel. These two circumstances made it impossible to complete the work on time [13, p. 4].

The Department of Bread Inspection was created under the Provincial Committee of Food, and the territory of the province was divided into tax districts. But despite the clear schedule for the start of tax collection for September, only 33.5% was collected (819,028 poods, 570,167 krb. 92 kopecks, and bread loan bonds - 284,127 poods). For October - 295,382 poods, bonds - 378,820, money - 2,681,822 krb., or a total of 68%. In November: in kind - 400,243 poods, in bonds - 605,023, and in money - 2,871,252 krb. or 37% of the provincial tax [13, p. 4]. At the same time, the financial cash registers that collected the tax were not sufficiently staffed by staff, which led to the fact that payers waited in lines for several days (!). This led not only to inconvenience for people trying to pay tax, but also to their financial losses. Inflation daily "ate" the financial savings of the peasants. Taxes were paid in Soviet marks in terms of the gold red coin (*chervonetz*) put into circulation in 1922. Thus, on November 1, 1923, the exchange rate of the red coin was equal to 7,000 krb. by "radznaks", on November 2 - already 7,100 krb., on November 3 - 7,250 krb., on November 4-5 - 7,500 krb., and on the 6th of that month the rate rose to the mark of 7,650 krb. [13, p. 3].

Another question that acutely arose during the food tax campaign and to which the Bolsheviks themselves were unable to answer was the cost of the campaigns themselves for the new government. The cost of the campaign of 1920/1921 cannot even be approximated, because only the number of personnel workers participating in it was several thousand. If to add to this the cost of preparatory work and other expenses, in the absence of any control and reporting, the sums spent become sky-high. Gubprodkom acted in this campaign as a "generous cashier who distributed money and bread at the first request" [13, p.4]. Thus, the campaign did not pay for itself. The organization and conduct of the 1922/1923 campaign, according to "rough calculations", cost 17.3% of the collected tax. As early as 1922, the highness of the cost of the apparatus and overhead costs became clear to the Provincial Committee. Therefore, in September 1923, the temporary staff of food bodies was dissolved, the staff of the Gubprodkom was reduced by half, as well as the staff of procurement offices, 7 of which were turned into bulk stations.

Summing up, it should be emphasized that the food policy of the Bolsheviks, which was carried out in 1917-1923 in Chernihiv region (Oblast), was primarily aimed at ensuring the political,

military, and economic needs of the new government, while the interests of the local population always remained in the background. In the period 1918-1920, Chernihiv province turned into a raw material and food base that provided the needs of the active Red Army and its substitute divisions. Any resistance of the population was brutally suppressed, and attempts of local Bolsheviks to revise the regulations of the layout remained unanswered. Only with the transition to the New Economic Policy, the situation in the province began to gradually change for the better.

To carry out food policy on the ground, the Soviet regime created a cumbersome and, as it turned out, ineffective apparatus of new authorities. The bodies that were supposed to implement the food policy, as a rule, used non-economic and repressive measures in their work. This was caused primarily by the content of the food policy of the Soviet government, in which commodity-money relations were given a secondary place, and private ownership of land should be eliminated in general. That is why, not finding understanding in the peasant environment, the representatives of the new government, at the initial stage of their activities, actively used in their work food troops, food militia, food tribunals, all kinds of "food months" and "food raids". The lack of quick and positive results forced the Bolshevik leadership to resort to reforming the food apparatus and its work methods. At the same time, repressive methods in work were not completely abandoned, but only partially softened. The tax company of 1922-1923, which took place under the conditions of the NEP, was better organized and positively perceived by the peasantry, that immediately reflected on its results. The Bolshevik leadership stated that the food tax was perceived by the main mass of the population much better than the food surplus appropriation, the distribution of the tax by individual districts and groups of payers corresponded to the capabilities of peasant households, was controlled and redistributed by local authorities according to benefits ('social facilities'). The "purge" of local food authorities, which was carried out in 1922-1923 and constant control from the center, led to a decrease in abuses in the field, but did not completely eradicate them. Among the problems that required an immediate solution, the local authorities raised the question of the ratio of the in-kind and monetary part of the food tax. Local food bodies did not have time to quickly rebuild and demanded from the center that the tax be collected in kind, as it was during the civil war. The central authorities demanded a quick transfer of the tax into a monetary equivalent, and the local apparatus of the financial institutions turned out to be unprepared (there were not enough specialists).

4 Conclusion

Evaluating the food policy of the Bolsheviks as a whole, it should be noted that despite significant miscalculations in the methods of its implementation, it brought the new government significant profits, which were later used during the implementation of Stalin's industrialization policy. At the same time, it is worth noting that these profits were received from the pockets of ordinary peasants, which in no way contributed to their enrichment. Thus, the food policy of the Bolsheviks in 1917-1923 once again proved that totalitarian regimes put the interests of the state above the needs of ordinary citizens.

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Primary Paper Section: A

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