

Dynamics and quantitative features of formation of consumer cooperatives USSR in the second half of the 1940s - 1980's

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Abstract: The article analyzes the dynamics and peculiarities of the formation of the number of members of the Soviet Ukrainian consumer cooperation in the second half of the 1940s - 1980s. In particular, basing on documentary sources undemocratic mechanisms of replenishing the number of members of consumer societies are covered. The purpose of the state was the inclusion of the rural population in the consumer co-operatives. Accordingly, the number of members of consumer cooperatives in the USSR depended on the demographic processes in Ukrainian village.

Keywords: *consumer cooperation, the number of members, peculiarities of the formation.*

Problems of economic development of modern Ukraine have many causes. One of them, in our opinion, is a weak tradition of self-organization and self-reliance of most citizens. Paternalistic relationship of people with the authorities was purposefully trained within seventy years of Ukrainian stay under the Soviet governance. The experience of the cooperative movement in those years was distorted and consumer cooperatives developed entirely in line with government policy. Therefore, the study of the dynamics and peculiarities of the formation of number of members of consumer cooperation will allow us to better understand the mechanisms of a totalitarian system in cooperation.

In the modern era the history of consumer cooperatives studied M.Aliman, S.Heley, T.Onipko and others [1], [2]. However, in their writings peculiarities of the formation and dynamics of the number of members of consumer cooperatives were not the subject of a separate study.

The basis of the whole structure of consumer cooperatives were members-shareholders. Work on renewal of the personnel of rural consumer societies started in the first months after the end of World War II. According to the existing legislation at the time membership in rural consumer societies was voluntary; consumer societies formed of the citizens wishing to create them own initiative and free will.

They were created based on recruiting and regulatory procedure, ie their organization did not need the permission of state authorities or court [3, p. 36]. Also, the law did not oblige the companies to unite on a territorial basis in district and regional unions (regional and district consumer unions), or to join the existing unions.

However, despite the principle of voluntariness local and party authorities took the direction of the involvement of the adult rural population into the co-operation. So, in fact, the district consumer unions and consumer companies conducted active work on continuous cooperation in rural areas almost immediately after the liberation of Ukraine. According to the special resolution of the Government the task was to have been executed by the end of 1946. For its implementation the Komsomol was suggested to be involved [4, pp. 26]. Also the homestead detours of the farmers carried out as well as collation of lists of shareholders with lists of village councils [5, pp. 94]. Then, starting from 1 January 1962, the collectors of shares were set a fee of 2% of the collected funds and 3% of the money collected over the plan [6, p. 32]. In addition,

the collectors were encouraged by awards, diplomas and gratitude.

Further plans for co-operation and in accordance accumulating of shares became indispensable element of functioning of consumer associations and unions. These plans in forms of directive were driven through the hierarchical vertical to the structure of grassroots (rural consumer society). And it happened with periodic refinement, not only in terms of the calendar year, but also - quarters and months [7, pp. 324], [8, pp. 3] And the result was not slow, annually the number of members shareholders of consumer cooperation in the USSR was growing. Already in 1963 the number of members of USSR consumer cooperatives were 13 million 398 thousand people [9, pp. 132], representing 81.3% of the total rural adult population of the Ukrainian SSR. In some regions, the figure was even higher. Thus, the highest percentage of co-operation was achieved in the Vinnytsia region (93.6%), the Cherkasy region(92.4), the Khmelnytsky region(90.7%) and the Chernihiv region(90%) [10, p. 29].

Quite often the practice of share collecting received signs of public events involving primarily the party and the Komsomol asset. Thus, in 1964 the Komsomols of the Shchors farm from the Tarashcha district of Kyiv region at their meeting adopted an appeal to all scouts and young people to become shareholders of the district consumer cooperatives and to support consumer associations in cooperating the population and gathering shares. In February of the same year the secondary school teachers of Mliy of Korsun-Shevchenko district of Cherkassy region appealed to all teachers of the region with a call to join the cooperation and to inform the population systematically about the role of consumer cooperatives. In May 1963, the Bureau of Agriculture Zhytomyr Regional Committee of the Communist Party and Executive Committee discussed and approved the appeal of the members of "Bolshevik" to all farmers to join the consumer cooperatives and to pay membership fees in advance. Similar actions took place in this period throughout Ukraine [10, p. 31].

The share fund of the consumer cooperation in Ukraine also increased according to the number of shareholders. Thus, this index increased from 88.7 in 1959 to 142.8 million rubles in 1966 as a result of numerical growth of cooperators in the republic caused, primarily, by increasing activity in the direction of local party and Soviet authorities which applying various forms of administrative pressure helped the cooperative functionaries to involve

the rural population to the cooperation. As a result, in mid 1960s in a number of villages, including Zalistsyah and Bryk of the Kremets district, Plotychi of the Berezhany district of Ternopil region formally the total adult population were cooperated, and in the republic, the figure was 91% [1, p. 319].

However, it is not necessary to fully trust the official statistics. The growing number of cooperatives was partly caused by manipulations of grassroots link - the consumer society, from which the unconditional performance of the targets was required. Rural cooperatives quite often implemented the brands of share contribution to all the buyers of cooperative stores. The consolidation of consumer societies also did not contribute to the growth of interest of the ordinary members in activity of their cooperatives [1, p. 299].

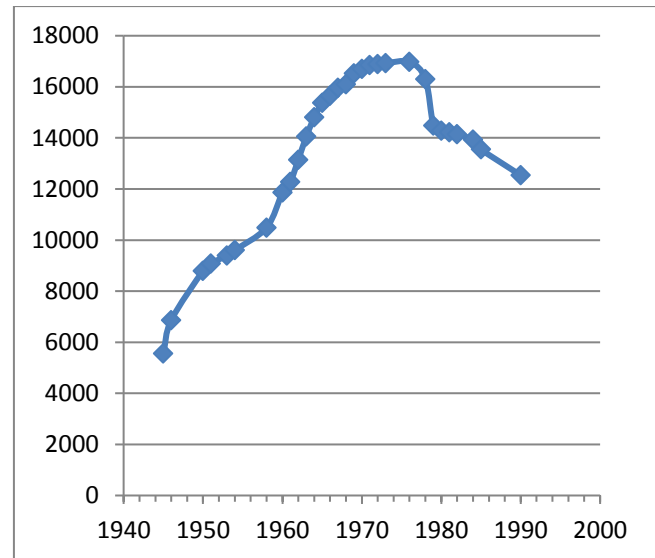
The number of shareholders members of consumer cooperatives in the studied period had been actually growing steadily until the end of the 1970s. By the end of the ninth Five-Year Plan the USSR consumer cooperatives had been serving 24.5 million people, including 19.2 million of rural population and 5.3 million people of urban population. During this period Ukoopspilka numbered about 17 million of shareholders [2, p. 749].

Thereafter, the process of depopulation of villages caused primarily by young people leaving to cities and industrial centers led to an annual reduction of the shareholders of Ukoopspilka. Thus, in 1976 the number of shareholders in the system was 16 million. 974 thousand people, and in 1990 their number decreased to 12 mln. 236 thousand [11, pp. 1], [1, p. 350]. The cooperative system served 22 million. Of urban and rural residents that year, that made up 42, 5% of the population of the Ukrainian SSR [1, p. 350].

These trends are generalized in the following schedule.

Dynamics of the number of members shareholders of the USSR consumer cooperatives (1945-1990 years)

[12, pp. 2; 13, pp. 3; 14, pp. 15; 15, pp. 29; 16, pp. 45; 17, pp. 3; 18, pp. 1; 19, pp. 1.; 20, pp. 33; 21, pp. 3; 22, pp. 18; 23, pp. 2; 24, pp. 13; 28, pp. 1829, pp. 14; 30, pp. 16; 31, pp. 15; 32, pp. 1; 33, pp. 121; 34, pp. 2; 35, pp. 2; 36, pp. 134; 37, pp. 126; 38, pp. 134; 39, pp. 1; 1, p. 350]



Thus, the methods which formed the number of members of consumer cooperatives were undemocratic and far removed from the principles of voluntarism and self-organization, which are the basis of the cooperative movement. The state in this period took a course on continuous cooperation of the adult rural population. Therefore, the total number of members of consumer associations directly depended upon the number of villagers. So all demographic processes in the Ukrainian village influenced the dynamics of the number of members of consumer cooperatives.

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Динамика и особенности формирования количественного состава потребительской кооперации УССР во второй половине 1940-1980-ых годах

О. С. Сидорович

Аннотация: В статье анализируется динамика и особенности формирования количественного состава потребительской кооперации советской Украины во второй половине 1940-ых – 1980-ых годах. В частности, на основе документальных источников показано недемократические механизмы пополнения количественного состава потребительских обществ. Целью государства было включение в потребительскую кооперацию всего сельского населения. Соответственно количество членов потребительской кооперации в УССР зависело от демографических процессов в украинском селе.

Ключевые слова: потребительская кооперация, количественный состав, особенности формирования.