

Construction of the Moscow-Simferopol Highway through the Territory Of Ukraine as a Factor of Integration of the Crimea into the Economic Complex of the Ukrssr (1948-1949)

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Abstract: *The problem of the USSR government's socioeconomic and political motivation with respect to transferring the Crimea from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR became especially urgent in 1954. Moreover, that issue was urgent not only for political reasons but also from the viewpoint of development logic and work out and application of socioeconomic development methods. After the end of World War II, the USSR Five-Year Socioeconomic Development Plan (1946 to 1950) was adopted in 1946. Ensuring the agricultural development and solving the food problem in the country were key components of that plan. The next priority matter was the energy base development to be focused on the regions that had prospects for industrial development. In that context, the southern Ukrainian regions were highly promising. The southern Ukrainian areas and the Crimea had a very favorable climate for agricultural development; however, material risks in that region were due to low humidity and frequent droughts. Therefore, the first five-year plan after the war end included construction of the irrigation system in the southern Ukrainian areas and electrification of agriculture. However, economic development of those regions could not be rapid as planned because of low number and density of population. In addition, the problem of logistical development to provide conditions for intensified economic development of the southern Ukrainian areas and the Crimea became obvious. The problem of sparse population and logistical system development needs of the region were interrelated. In the period after the end of World War II, construction processes were mechanized poorly, and mainly low-cost and unskilled labor was used. Meanwhile, collective farms provided reliable concentration and possibilities for rapid mobilization of the workforce. Therefore, the combination of the programs of providing population growth conditions in the Ukraine's southern regions and the Crimea and buildup of the region's logistical system in the latter half of 1940s is an issue that is relevant for study. The Moscow-Simferopol motorway construction was carried out within the implementation of the program of logistical system development of the Southern Ukraine and the Crimea in 1948 and 1949. A section of that motorway, Kharkiv-Simferopol, was built owing to workforce and hardware mobilization on the Ukrainian territory. Actually, the workforce was provided by the UkrSSR Ministry of Internal Affairs by involving prison population (detainees and prisoners of war). Again, the basic unskilled work and resources were provided by collective farms who mobilized collective farm workers and vehicles for the motorway construction. Methods of supplying the construction project with maximum use of resources regionally were piloted in the course of that construction. Thereafter, such methods were actively applied for implementing the Kyiv-Odesa highway project and some other large-scale construction projects. Study of the experience of implementing such projects in the years of carrying out the first two USSR Five-Year Socioeconomic Development Plans after the end of World War II provides a better insight into the processes of establishing the regional infrastructure networks. This also offers scope for a deep analysis of the logic of the Crimea's socioeconomic integration with Ukraine.*

Keywords: Moscow-Simferopol highway, economic development, Crimean region, Kherson region, logistics system

1. Introduction

Numerous discussions around the Crimea and Ukraine, which are often held through the lens of journalism and propaganda, are now the norm. Meanwhile, the economic and demographic consequences of the World War II, which were particularly catastrophic for Ukraine and the Crimea, as well as the consequences of Stalin's deportation of indigenous peoples from the Crimean Peninsula, necessitated a radical change in approaches to the economic zoning of these territories. The development of logistics system marked the beginning of formation of a comprehensive economic complex based on the territorial zoning of the southern regions of Ukraine and the Crimea. A policy named "Stalin's plan for the nature transformation" was implemented during the execution of the Five-year plan for socio-economic development of the USSR (1946-1950). In fact, the plan envisaged laying down the preconditions for comprehensive economic development of the territories of the European part of the USSR. Within the implementation of this plan of particular importance was

the development of the southern regions of Ukraine and the Crimea. The strategic importance of this region was due to its geographical proximity to Turkey and Greece, which outlined their foreign policy course for rapprochement with the United States starting from 1947, as well as the need to have a base to extend the Soviet military and political influence to the region of Southern and Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Therefore, the study of the process of implementation of the construction project of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway in the territory of Ukraine and its outcomes makes it possible to establish the socio-economic and technical patterns of the formation of a comprehensive economic complex on the territorial basis of the southern regions of Ukraine and Crimea after the end of the World War II.

The problem of forming a system of transport infrastructure in the southern regions of Ukraine and the Crimea was analyzed in the Soviet period[1]. However, ideological settings determined the specifics of these scientific works. They contained numerous general data, but they do not

allow drawing analytical conclusions about logistics and zoning of the Ukrainian SSR and the Crimean region (the latter was part of the Russian SFSR during the first post-war five-year period) due to ideological limitations in the methodological approaches of the Soviet period. Foreign researchers were not able to thoroughly investigate this issue during the Soviet regime in Ukraine because of the lack of access to archival materials. In the aftermath of Ukraine's independence, researchers began to pay attention to the development of infrastructure in the southern regions of Ukraine and the Crimea in a general context only, analyzing social processes [2; 3]. Therefore, there are no dedicated works that would reveal the logic and socio-economic, political and technological importance of building a logistics system based on territorial zoning of the southern regions of Ukraine and Crimea.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the socio-economic, administrative and technical effects of the program implementation on construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway on the territory of Ukraine in 1948-1949 and its importance for the integration of Crimea to Ukraine.

Traditionally, agriculture remained one of the most difficult economic problems in the USSR, which had to solve the country's food issue. The Soviet Union envisaged the development of industry, which set out an increase in the population cities, new settlements construction, which were to be satellites of industrial enterprises etc. as the basis of its military and political power. First of all, the coal mine industry of Donbass had to grow during the first five-year period in order to provide the fuel resources to the electric power industry, metallurgy, transport, mechanical engineering and other industries. Active involvement of the rural population was also envisaged for the development of industry and transport development. In particular, the amount of rural population in the regions of the Ukrainian SSR and its parts that could be used in industry has been analyzed since 1947. In the course of the industry development, the involvement of rural population that participated in construction projects was actively increasing. Large-scale constructions, which were often given the status of "construction of the Communism" (aiming at ideological emphasizing of its political importance), required a large concentration of labor resources for such constructions and for enterprises engaged in the production of construction materials. Such enterprises were actively built on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR for the sake of providing construction materials, whereby their location was defined focusing logistically on these large-scale constructions. Therefore, during the implementation of the first Five-year plan, construction of numerous enterprises of the construction industry in the southern regions of the Ukrainian SSR took place. In particular, these enterprises aimed at providing with their products the village facilities construction, industrial facilities and working settlements in the region, as well as such constructions as the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Station, South Ukrainian and North Crimean canals and the irrigation system of southern regions of Ukraine and northern regions of Crimea. Also, construction materials manufacturing enterprises had to provide logistic networks in the region. Therefore, their capacity increased with the increase in construction volume.

The need to provide food for cities and construction sites has made acute the issue of agricultural development in all climate-friendly regions. The southern regions of Ukraine and Crimea were such regions due to the warm climate. However, farming was very risky in these regions due to the low amount of precipitations that caused frequent droughts. The famine of 1946-1947 has shown in particularly acute way that the high requirements of grain delivery in the high-risk region could not be met. The effects of the drought of that year and the famine have raised the critical need for the irrigation system construction in the southern regions of Ukraine, which could be the key to its full economic development. Therefore, the transformation of nature was intended to solve the problem of arid climate, which caused the risks for economic life in the southern regions of Ukraine. In turn, the Transformation of Nature Policy preconditioned the attraction of more and more new workforce and, respectively, the need for food provision for the large-scale construction, which arose in the framework of its implementation.

The economic development of southern Ukraine and the Crimea region required the development of transport infrastructure. First, the limited opportunities for attracting manpower in the region of high-risk agricultural production brought about the issue of capacity increase of already existing transport routes and more rational use of transport resources. There was an obvious need to develop new transport routes of regional importance in order to ensure the agricultural products transportation from farms. In order to develop promising agricultural sectors in the southern regions of Ukraine, it was planned to carry out the large-scale relocation of population from other regions of Ukraine (mostly from the western ones) to these regions [4, sheet 33]. During the implementation of the first post-war Five-year plan, the demographic problem in the Crimea emerged [5, p. 53]. The key reason for it was the consequences of deportation of the indigenous people, i.e. Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians and Greeks from the peninsula. Populating the promising regions for agricultural development also required the transport infrastructure development. At the same time, the problem of disproportion between the number of rural and urban population was particularly acute in the post-war years in Crimea. The rural population of the villages of Crimea was lower than that of the cities of the peninsula [6, sheet 50]. This necessitated the intensive development of agriculture on the peninsula.

The southern regions of Ukraine had quite significant prospects for the logistics system development. First, these favorable conditions were laid by the river system, the basis of which was the Dnieper, which channel was clearly oriented from north to south, while in the southern region there were rivers oriented east-west. Therefore, the railroad system in the region could be developed, taking into account the possibilities of river transportation [7, sheet 140]. However, this did not solve the issue of creating a logistic network that was supposed to enable connection with villages and their collective farms. In addition, the creation of preconditions for the development of the Crimea by solving the demographic problem and connecting the peninsula to the southern region of Ukraine, which was very promising in terms of its economic development,

necessitated the motorway construction. This motorway was to be constructed bearing the needs of the existing railroad system together with the logistical capabilities of the rivers of the region.

As part of the construction of the global logistics system in the European part of the USSR, construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway began in 1948. The peculiarity of this infrastructure project was its orientation from north to south. Based on this global project, the local projects on logistics construction were developed. In particular, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, M. Khrushchev, expressed his vision for the future motorway system construction in the Ukrainian SSR at the economic meeting dedicated to the construction of the Kyiv-Odesa motorway [8, sheet 21]. The opinions expressed by the participants of this meeting were based on the experience of preparing the Moscow-Simferopol motorway in the territory of Ukraine that was repeatedly stated during the meeting. It should be noted that plans to build a global logistics system in the European part of the USSR were far-reaching. In particular, plans on interconnection of the Black and Baltic seas via rivers began to be implemented by constructing canals and reservoirs system, which started from the construction of the South Ukrainian and North Crimean canals in 1951. Sea interconnection projects were more theoretical in nature, whereas the initiatives of M. Khrushchev in 1948 had more practical results. Thus, after the Moscow-Simferopol motorway construction was completed on the territory of Ukraine, the construction of the Kyiv-Odesa motorway began. Speaking about the initiative of a motorway system construction, M. Khrushchev pointed out the major expediency of a motorway construction in the southern direction, emphasizing the prospect of recreational facilities construction on the Black Sea coast. At the same time, M. Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, also pointed out the prospects of recreational complexes construction in the Crimea [8, sheet 21].

The motorway construction plans on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR and their implementation by M. Khrushchev showed that the leadership of Ukraine had considerable opportunities to show initiatives in the implementation of the large-scale infrastructure projects on the territory of the Republic during the period. The fact of manifesting such an initiative during the period apparently was due to personal reasons, namely, that Stalin readily accepted the initiatives from M. Khrushchev. During the implementation of the first Five-year programs, the party and government leaders of the Ukrainian SSR received a certain *carte blanche* from J. Stalin as officials delegated with extraordinary powers. This is evidenced by the work of L. Kahanovych and M. Khrushchev on strategic planning of the development of Ukraine, who were delegated to the Ukrainian SSR. For instance, L. Kahanovych organized the planning work on a large-scale irrigation system in the southern regions of Ukraine, as well as in the Crimea and Moldova, as reported in his report to J. Stalin [9, sheet 271]. It was in this briefing that the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine expressed his own initiative to construct an irrigation system based on

Ukraine's water resources with the possibility to go beyond the Ukrainian SSR, that is, to the Crimea. M. Khrushchev sent his vision of the development of the electric power system in Ukraine to J. Stalin [10, sheet 565]. At a meeting dedicated to the construction of the Kyiv-Odesa motorway M. Khrushchev said that J. Stalin praised the experience of organizing large-scale construction projects, which M. Khrushchev applied in the Ukrainian SSR, and accepted as worthy for use in such constructions [8, sheet 19]. All the infrastructure projects discussed at the meeting by Khrushchev were to be implemented only within the Ukrainian SSR and not going out to the territory of neighboring republics. Therefore, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers expressed the possibility of implementing such projects. However, it should be borne in mind that construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway in the territory of Ukraine was carried out at the expense of labor resources and materials mobilized within the republic. This was emphasized during all the economic meetings dedicated to the construction of roads, and the experience of building the Moscow-Simferopol highway was presented as indicative. Due to the positive experience of labor mobilization for the motorway construction and its implementation, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine and the Republican Government were granted the right of economic initiative. However, this initiative was limited to All-Union obligations (i.e. compliance to grain delivery quotas etc.) [9, sheet 16].

It should be noted that the local initiatives of the party and executive bodies has proved to be quite frequent in the context of a rigid command-and-control system of economic management and centralized governance. First, the economic initiative was a precondition for career advancement and second, it was possible to motivate the all-Union government to provide the regions and construction sites with resources that were distributed centrally through the implementation of the local development based large-scale programs. Therefore, M. Khrushchev tried to attract the attention of the Union leadership to the construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway. This experience of attracting resources, which were distributed centrally in the USSR, has already been tested previously, in particular in the Ukrainian SSR. For instance, L. Kahanovych, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, requested to produce the materials, which were necessary to complete agriculture electrification program in the Ukrainian SSR, at the All-Union subordination enterprises located in the territory of the republic [11, sheet 83]. In fact, in the conditions of centralized economic management of the USSR in the late Stalin period, the absolute majority of products, not only in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR, were produced at the All-Union subordination enterprises, the products of which were distributed centrally, in accordance with the directives of the Government of the USSR and the Union Ministries. The implementation of large-scale construction projects based on the initiative of local party and government leaders laid the foundation for the construction of local industrial enterprises, and their sphere also included the production of construction materials for local needs. Thus, the Republican leadership was able to expand its bureaucratic sphere and the

foundation for resource management. However, there is no talk about the economic independence of the republic. An important element in strengthening the management foundation of the Republican leadership was the ability to mobilize labor resources. The key role in this resource provision was played by party organizations, which were the only ones that had sufficient mobilization mechanism for the projects implementation that consisted of a network of party organizations and centers with the rigid discipline. However, the key role in the mobilization of labor resources in construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway was played not by party organizations, but by a governmental body such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR.

The Main Directorate of Motorways of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR had to carry out the work directly. It was the Ministry of Internal Affairs that administered the motorway construction in the regions and communicated with the party and executive bodies at the regional level. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was a vertically integrated governmental body, and therefore, participation of Ministry's officials in the implementation of large-scale construction projects was also a mean to expand their sphere of influence. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had considerable manpower, namely prisoners (crime suspects) and prisoners of war [12, sheet 208]. These labor resources were mostly used to construct the transport routes. In addition, as the experience of construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway showed, it was the Ministry of Internal Affairs that was the most effective agency that provided the quarry resources development in the territory of both the Ukrainian SSR and the Crimean region (at that time it was a part of the Russian SFSR) [13, sheet 152].

According to correspondence between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and local executive bodies in Kherson region, these quarries had to be developed along the motorway, minimizing the distance, to which the construction materials were delivered. However, this condition, which was laid down during the motorway construction planning, could not be maintained during the project. In addition to the mobilization capabilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the local party and executive leadership was involved in the construction of the motorway. The local executive bodies had an obligation to ensure the involvement of collective farmers in the area of 50 kilometers from the motorway. That is, all collective farms, which were located 50 km on both sides of the motorway, had an obligation to attract collective farmers free from the work on the farms, as well as all free vehicles of these collective farms [15, sheet 11]. At the stage of preparation of the motorway bed, the collective farmers had to do all the work with the use of simple tools of labor, i.e., manual labor dominated. Therefore, it should be noted that the initiative for the implementation of construction projects at the local level was quite real for the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR, as it was sufficient for its implementation to mobilize the labor resources of the collective farms with minimal involvement of complex mechanisms, which were distributed centrally. The demographic potential of collective farms was quite condensed and simple to mobilize for works that required large-scale unskilled labor. In fact,

this kind of manpower could be used for the motorway construction at most stages of construction.

The mobilization of collective farmers for the implementation of construction projects and for other works that required human and tractive resources was the norm for the Late Stalin period. Labor and transport conscription (Russian: *трудгужповинность* - *trudguzhpovinnost*) is mentioned periodically in the correspondence of party and economic bodies of that period [16, sheet 25]. According to data on the mobilization of labor and transport resources for the construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway as of October 1948, 52,400 people were mobilized to prepare the motorway bed, 11,500 of them had farm wagons (as stated in the reference document, it was planned to mobilize 45,000 people and 11,000 farm wagons according the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine) [17, sheet 30]. However, the collective farm population in the southern regions of the Ukrainian SSR was insufficient to ensure stable agricultural functioning and simultaneous manpower provision for large-scale projects. For example, collective farmers and transport of the collective farms were engaged to the construction zone of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway in the territory of the Kherson region, adjacent to the Crimea, during the harvest period of 1949 to ensure delivery of construction materials.

The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, M. Khrushchev, was briefed on the preparation of the motorway bed of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway on December 1, 1948. The information provided with the total length of the motorway across Ukrainethat had to pass Kharkiv region (145 km), Dnipropetrovsk region (109 km), Zaporizhia region (211 km) and Kherson region (64 km) [18, sheet 70]. From the territory of the Kherson region the route had to go to the territory of the Crimean region. In total 529 km of the motorway had to be on the territory of Ukraine, of which 121 km were already existed roads and 334 km had to be built. These data indicated the particular role of the Zaporizhia region, which was to become a basis for ensuring the development of the region of southern Ukraine due to its logistical and resource potential. South-Donetsk and Stalin railroads crossed in the territory of Zaporizhia region, and Stalin railroad covered the territory of Zaporizhia region, Kherson region of the Ukrainian SSR and the Crimean region (at that time it was a territory of the Russian SFSR). In addition, a powerful Dniproenergo power grid was formed based on the energy generating capacities of the Zaporizhia region (in particular, DniproHES, Dnieper Hydroelectric Station). Also, the largest volume of railroad transportation between Crimea and the mainland was carried out through the Zaporizhia region in the second half of the 1940s [19, sheet 351].

Materials delivery for motorway bed construction was carried out by railroad transport, which was facilitated by the formation of a coherent logistics system in the region based on motorway, railroad, and water transport. However, in the southern regions of Ukraine, in particular in the Kherson region, that was adjacent to Crimea, the materials delivery

for motorway bed construction was carried out by the mobilization of collective farms vehicles. In practice, it turned out that due to the weak resource base of collective farms in the region, the possibilities of attracting road and truck transport of collective farms appeared to be limited, which resulted in the materials clutter of railway stations warehouses [20, sheet 79]. The commander of the 4th road-building division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, referring to the First Secretary of the Kherson Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, noted that the preparation works of the motorway bed in 1948 was carried out quickly, however, the works had to be interrupted due to the onset of the cold season and the spring sowing campaign. According to a resolution to this appeal as of September 12, 1949, the provision of transport for the motorway construction was impossible at that time due to its involvement in the beets transportation from the region.

The chairman of the regional executive committee of the Kherson region refused to involve the collective farmers and transport during this period, saying that such mobilization could hinder the field works [21, sheet 66]. Thus, the program of resettlement to the southern regions of Ukraine had to address the issue of providing the region with labor resources; moreover, it was about moving the population to collective farms. Resettlement from Ukraine to the Crimea was also carried out [22, sheet 46]. Officially, these resettlements were intended to lay down the demographic prerequisites for cotton cultivation in the southern regions of Ukraine and northern Crimea; this program was started in 1949. However, this program could not radically change the demographic situation in the region. This was pointed out by A. Bochkin, the Head of the General Directorate of 'Ukrvodbud', the organization that was building the South Ukrainian and North Crimean canals, expressing his vision of the prospect of socio-economic development of the canal zone.

However, the construction of the Moscow-Simferopol motorway laid the foundation for improving of the supply of large-scale construction that unfolded in the southern regions of Ukraine and the northern regions of the Crimea. The logistical network, which was supposed to provide the preconditions for the socio-economic development of the region, according to its natural resources, was most effective in giving returns in the southern regions of the Ukrainian SSR and, in fact, it had to have laid the preconditions for the development of the Crimea by adopting economic development approaches in the southern, that is, the Crimean direction. In fact, the logistics motorway formation from the mainland to the Crimean Peninsula was a step towards expanding the technological network (in this case a logistic network) from the territory of the Ukrainian SSR to the territory of the Crimea. In addition, during this motorway construction the development of natural resources in the Crimea was carried out, in particular, deposits of construction materials. Moreover, the government and party institutions of the Ukrainian SSR carried out mobilization of labor resources and raw materials on the territory of the peninsula. Thus, the mechanisms for resources mobilization for the implementation of large-scale projects in the Crimean region (at that time the RSFSR) were worked out. This

experience was useful for the further construction of South Ukrainian and North Crimean canals. The application of these mobilization and administrative mechanisms of the Ukrainian SSR institutions in the Crimea proved to be more effective than the actions of the power bodies of the Russian SFSR in the peninsula.

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