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**“To Each According to His Work?” or “Red Directors” as
Economic Elite of the Socialist Society**

У статті розглядаються особливості споживання в середовищі української економічної еліти 1920-1930-х років, «червоних директорів». Характерними рисами їх споживчих практик було володіння матеріальними цінностями, що стали символами розкоші та достатку цієї доби. У статті розглядаються різні джерела отримання товарів та послуг, якими користувалися директори підприємств. Прагнення нової економічної еліти 1920-1930-х років оволодіти статусними матеріальними цінностями та послугами привело до формування їх як привілейованої соціальної групи радянського суспільства.

Ключові слова: економічна еліта, «червоний директор», споживання, радянське суспільство.

The establishment of the Bolshevik regime influenced the social perception of wealth in society. In the first Soviet Constitution (1936) was written the basic ideological principle of Soviet society about the equal and commensurable distribution of commodities: “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work”. Since the early 1930s, the state planned system was oriented on the central distribution of all resources, including goods and services. From the perspective of consumption history, this paper is going to discuss the place of material goods in the creation of the Soviet economic elite in the second half of the 1920s – early 1930s. The actors of this research are “red directors”, the managers of state rapidly growing industrial enterprises. As a result of the market collapse in the late 1920s and the establishment of a planned economy, the key levels of industry management passed from the hands of private entrepreneurs to plant’s managers, who also had the access to the distribution of scarce economic resources.

While in the 1920s the private entrepreneurs, were constantly been accusing in “bourgeoisie” style of life, the emerging Soviet economic elite was receiving social and economic resources and was becoming the privileged social strata. It was the period when shortage, «forced assortment», «commodity hunger» and closed distribution of goods transformed everyday things into luxury items available only to the higher circles. They successfully discovered the alternative ways of satisfaction everyday needs.

The purpose of this research is to highlight the material world of the “red directors”, which belonged to the Ukrainian economic elites in 1920s-1930s. Thus, this paper is focused on the material objects as constructors of the privileged status of Ukrainian economic elite in the early Soviet society. The knowledge about them will help to understand the particular features of social stratification and the place of materiality in its process. What sources of getting goods were available for the “red directors”? What was the “formula” of an elite lifestyle among the Soviet industrial managers? What everyday objects created the material world of the economic elite? How their social status influenced their access to consumer goods?

The industrialization of the economy, which began in the mid-1920s, arose the emergence in the Soviet society of a new social group “red directors”, the new social group consisted from the managers of industrial enterprises and giant plants, whose number increased sharply after so-called “forced industrialization” in 1929. It was an economic elite that built a new socialist reality and first gained privileges from its achievements, including the visual symbols of the newly acquired status in the form of material goods and services [1, p. 13]. Most of them in the recent past were workers or employees at various state institutions. Therefore, when pointing out their social status, they further identified themselves with the proletarian identity, focusing on their belonging to workers or employees’ strata [2, p. 3].

In the theory of consumption, wealth issues, as well as luxury services and experiences, are at the focus of interest. Arjun Appadurai proposes to consider the role of luxury goods as social markers, while “their fundamental use is rhetorical and social” [3, p. 38]. It is also possible to assume that luxury goods bring owners prestige, rather than are functionally useful [4, p. 9]. Thus, the possession of luxury goods could be seen as symbolic consumption, a way of demonstrating wealth or status [3; 5; 6].

While studying the *Soviet*, it has to be taken into consideration that the nature of material culture and everyday life was political, especially when it comes to the identity issues and evolution of social groups [7, p. 4]. The term “commodity fetishism” was introduced by Karl Marx in his analyses of the political economy of capitalism. The “microanatomy” of the bourgeois system and its key feature, according to him, was connected with the idea about a product, which has a special power on a consumer, some magic abilities which influenced his decision-making and demands. Some researchers, on the contrary, suggest paying attention to the immateriality as a key feature of the Soviet project as a whole. In Soviet society, the social status of a person is growing as a result of things’ possession [8, c. 233], which also had special power over the consumers. Due to such conditions of Soviet reality as goods shortages, queues, the access to expensive or inaccessible goods was perceived as indicators of belonging to higher social strata.

The Bolshevik "transformations" during 1918-1921, accompanied by the nationalization, and, in the language of that time, "expropriation of property" showed the critical attitude of Soviet authorities towards wealthy strata of the population. In the new communist reality, wealth, luxury, as the characteristic features of the elite material world, should also lose its relevance. Since the early 1930s, domestic asceticism and proletarian culture which were previously propagated by the authorities have been radically transformed into industrial fetishism [9, p. 11], as a result of which a new hierarchy of hedonistic and individualistic lifestyle emerged [1, p. 9]. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the contradiction between the problems of consumption and the realities of the life of Ukrainian society during this period, connected with the Holodomor and other Soviet famines. The Ukrainian case was one of the many exceptions in the Soviet ideological canon of abundance and luxury that Bolshevik authorities created by the means of propaganda.

In fact, the personal and social identity of the economic elites in the 1920s-1930s was shaped by the possession of a certain set of goods. That is why the consumption of prosperous consumer groups of Soviet society could be an interesting and controversial field of research able to provide a key for understanding Socialist equality in practice.

In Soviet society, the ownership of a wide variety of goods became the feature of the belonging to the privileged social group. The consumer basket of big managers included not only things of everyday consumption, but also such durable items as property and other "symbols" of luxury and wealth. These material objects were constructing the social image of the economic elites. The spread of the symbols of wealth and luxury among the Soviet economic elite coincided with the aggravation of the socio-political situation, purges, and repressions. Thus, the luxury consumption acquired the latent forms hidden from the average citizen. It is also the reason, that explains why in the most official historical sources and Soviet periodicals the consumption of the Soviet managers was neglected. Only personal documents and memoirs can provide information about the hidden world of the privileged social strata.

Sources of access to material wealth for privileged social groups were connected with the special institutions, closed distributors of goods for engineering and technical staff, which were usually closed to an ordinary consumer. Their necessity was explained by “the high consumer demands” of their social group: “The availability of products and goods of the ordinary choice cannot meet the increased demands of this consumer” [10, p. 78].

Among the goods of such Ukrainian closed cooperatives were various fish products, canned goods, cheeses, high-quality tobacco, ready-made clothes, and bed linen [10, p. 78]. In USSR there were about 700 institutions of elite supply for directors and engineers [11, c. 71]. Usually, the prices in such networks were lower than in average stores. This supply hierarchy was a typical example of the social status and the stratification of Soviet society. Finnish communist Arvo Tuominen noticed that only in Russia, the division of society into classes was demonstrating obviously [12, p. 205].

Except receiving the goods in closed distributors, it was also possible to “attach” directors to the supply chain of foreign workers – *Insnab*. There could be purchased butter, meat, eggs, milk, bread, canned food, confectionery, clothing [13]. It was the real representation of the existing social contract between state and economic elites, due to which "red directors" received additional social benefits for their work, strategically important in the course of industrialization.

The economic elites also had access to special housing resources. There were two most widespread possibilities to get housing property: 1) special housing programs for the managers of Soviet industry; 2) “inheritance” from foreign specialists. In his memoirs, the American worker, John Scott, provide an example of a special residential area "Berezki" near Magnitostroy with cottages and well-equipped area [13].

The other additional source of the material privileges was the access to the production or distribution of food and consumer goods, which could be used by the director of a plant. For instance, the director of the Kremenets Clothing Factory was accused of so-called “self-supply” [14, p. 8-9], unauthorized distribution of commodities

fund. The director's rights gave the opportunity to access and use resources which were received from central supply.

The alternative supply source was institutional opportunities and social networks. The leaders of big industrial enterprises belonged to the clubs of red directors, which were created in the late 1920s. It was possible to exploit its network in order to improve the financial situation of its members. In the Kharkiv Club's statute was indicated that it was intended "to assist red directors in difficult situations of their practical activity" [15, p. 5-7].

Since the beginning of industrialization and appearance of the new technological innovations in everyday life, electric razors, radio, the economic elites became one of the first consumers of new goods [16, p. 249]. Researchers argue that the development of innovation is a hallmark of prestigious consumption.

The extraordinary luxury and ability to access the scarce and exotic goods, the economic elite occasionally represented for a narrow circle of close friends. Their material world was closed for an ordinary citizen. Only with the help of some memoirs, it is possible to find some references about the life of the Soviet economic elite. For instance, the American worker of Magnitostroy remembered the director of a coking plant, who organized a banquet, which was supplied with champagne and fruits specially delivered from the south [13]. It can be assumed that such consumer behavior was typical among other managers of enterprises and became a part of the everyday life of the Ukrainian "red directors". During the repressions, the destructive love to luxury and the bohemian lifestyle often became one of the reasons for convictions. In 1937, Director of the Dnipropetrovsk Coking Plant G.P.Savenko was blamed for the waste of the Directorate Fund, including the organization of banquets [17].

The characteristic feature of the Soviet economic elite's consumption was access to the practices of status consumption. While the shortage and the closed distribution of goods was the well-known element of everyday life for an ordinary worker, this privileged social group had access to the "world of goods". Among the everyday items in their consumer basket were such durable material things as real estate, exotic commodities, and innovative goods.

To summarize, the material values, symbols of luxury and wealth, were extremely important for the economic elites of the 1920s-1930s. It was one of the reasons that differed them from the other strata of Soviet society. Their consumption had statutory and demonstrative features. It was the period when shortage and closed distribution of goods transformed usual everyday things into luxury items that were only available to the higher circles. In fact, the priority of wealth as the characteristic features of the elite led to the formation of the privileged group of Soviet society, based on the ownership of property and goods.

The equality of all workers and other groups of population in the access to the means of production, suggested by Karl Marx, was not achieved during the years of the new economic policy, neither in the 1930s nor in the subsequent decades of Soviet history. On the contrary to the state ideological politics towards well-to-do strata of the population, the Soviet economic elite was able to maintain the high level of the material world and the living standards. In order to support their social status, they used goods and services which can provide them with additional benefits in addition to the satisfaction of their utilitarian needs.

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Діяльність закладів елементарної освіти у Великій Британії останньої третини ХІХ ст.

Постановка проблеми. Узагальнення вітчизняних і зарубіжних науково-педагогічних джерел доводить, що у Великій Британії накопичено значний досвід організації елементарної освіти. Тож за сучасних умов важливим є вивчення набутоків цієї країни, яка, використовуючи потенціал соціально-економічного