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## СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ АСПЕКТ У ТВОРЧОСТІ ВАСИЛЯ СТЕФАНИКА

**Анотація.** У статті подано аналіз новелістичної творчості Василя Стефаника з позиції соціально-економічного аспекту, розкрито вплив соціальних та економічних чинників на психологічний стан селян у другій половині XIX – на початку XX століття, проведено порівняльний аналіз соціально-економічного становища українців на сучасному етапі та в період творчості письменника.

Сьогодні, як і в новелах Василя Стефаника, ми переживаємо соціально-економічні наслідки війни, вимушеної еміграції, стрімке зубожіння населення та ведемо не завжди вдалі спроби боротьби за подолання соціальної несправедливості.

В Україні немає чітких концепцій та стратегій щодо розв'язання негативних тенденцій у національній економіці, які існують в європейських країнах.

Україна потребує системних змін у політичній, економічній, соціальній та інших сферах національної безпеки. Зневіра до влади з боку громадян, прагнення відповідати європейським стандартам, невдоволення рівнем корупції, погіршення якості життя, зростання соціальної нерівності тощо. Системна криза охопила всі сфери життя. Настав час застосування інноваційних підходів до здійснення соціальної політики держави. Першочерговим завданням є формування стратегії розвитку країни. Серед головних стратегічних пріоритетів варто визначити територіальну цілісність країни, боротьбу з корупцією та бідністю тощо.

Запровадження децентралізації управління та надання можливості регіонам самостійно розв'язувати проблеми соціального та економічного розвитку є важливим кором до розв'язання соціальних та економічних проблем регіонів. При цьому важливим чинником, що забезпечить успішну децентралізацію на державному рівні, є наданням регіонам не лише відповідних повноважень, а й фінансових ресурсів.

Розв'язання соціальних та економічних проблем лежить у площині реформ не лише економіки, а й в освіті, культури та національної свідомості. Вивчення творів Василя Стефаника – це дієвий спосіб осмислити історичне минуле та змінити сучасне.

**Ключові слова:** новела, Василь Стефаник, соціально-економічні чинники, соціальна напруга, еміграція.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF VASYL STEFANYK

**Abstract.** The analysis of Vasyl Stefanyk's novelistic creative work from the standpoint of social and economic aspect has been presented. The influence of social and economic factors on the psychological state of peasants in the second half of



the 19th – early 20th century has been revealed, the comparative analysis of social and economic situation of Ukrainians at the present stage and during creative work of the writer has been conducted.

Today, as in Vasyl Stefanyk's short stories, we are experiencing the social and economic consequences of the war, forced emigration, rapid impoverishment of the population and we do not always conduct successful attempts for overcoming social injustice.

In Ukraine, there are no clear concepts and strategies for overcoming the negative trends in the national economy that exist in European countries.

The solution of social and economic problems lies in the plane of reforms not only in the economy, but also in education, culture and national consciousness. Studying the works of Vasyl Stefanyk is an efficient way to comprehend the historical past and change the present.

The introduction of decentralization of governance and rendering possibilities for regions to solve social and economic development problems on their own is an important step towards solving social and economic problems of the regions. At the same time, an important factor that will ensure successful decentralization at the state level is the provision of not only corresponding powers to the regions, but also financial resources.

The solution of social and economic problems lies in the plane of reforms not only in the economy, but also in education, culture and national consciousness. Studying the works of Vasyl Stefanyk is an efficient way to comprehend the historical past and change the present.

**Keywords:** novel, Vasyl Stefanyk, socio-economical factors, social voltage, emigration.

## INTRODUCTION

**The problem formulation.** At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Ukrainian literary arena is represented by talented writers who combined the progressiveness of ideological positions with the innovation of the form in their creative work. Ivan Franko wrote about them as follows: "Mostly peasants' sons from their birth, socialists by conviction, young writers began to paint the life they knew best – the rural life".

These experts, basing themselves on the work of Ivan Franko, strived to describe and facilitate the fate of poor Ukrainians. The problems of social and economic content touched upon most of their works. They were almost the only ones who strived to outline the acuity of the negative social and economic phenomena of that period.

The realism of Mykhailo Kotsyubynsky, Olha Kobyljanska, Fasyk Stefanyk, Marko Cheremshyna and other progressive writers started a new stage in the development of critical realism.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Much has been written about Vasyl Stefanyk's novelistic skills. An important place among them is occupied by the literary-critical works of Ivan Franko, which were published during the life of the writer and the article by Lesya Ukrainka (Lesya Ukrainka, 1970). However, the social and economic aspect in the novelistic inheritance of Vasyl Stefanyk needs to be thoroughly studied.

The novelist's creative work was studied by T. Bilenko (T. Bilenko, 2001), M. Zubrytska (M. Zubrytska, 2005), O. Bilyavska (O. Bilyavska, 1968), S. Kryzhanivsky (S. Kryzhanivsky, 1959), I. Protsenko (I. Protsenko, 1979).

In the works of V. Kostashchuk "The lord of the peasants' dumas" the writer is depicted primarily as a man – a patriot and a citizen (V. Kostashchuk, 1950). In V. Lesyn's publications the creative heritage is researched and the place in the Ukrainian literature of the end of the 19th century – the beginning 20th century is defined (V. Lesyn, 1965, V. Lesyn, 1970). T. Bilenko focuses her attention on the realism of his works (T. Bilenko, 2001). The article by M. Zubrytska reveals the social side of Vasyl Stefanyk's work (M. Zubrytska, 2005). S. Kryzhanivsky in his work "Life and work of Vasyl Stefanyk" researches creativity from the standpoint of laconicism and dramatic effect (S. Kryzhanivsky, 1959).

**THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH.** To comprehend the social and economic aspects in the work of Vasyl Stefanyk and to reveal their relevance in today's conditions.

## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Vasyl Stefanyk was called as a national pessimist and a peasant writer, but first his works were read and analyzed by the intelligentsia. The writer fascinated his contemporaries with his observation and excellent knowledge of life in the Ukrainian countryside, the vernacular, as well as extreme conciseness, social and psychological content of images.

Tragic moments took place in the private life of the novelist. The death of his mother, war, poverty, and the death of his wife had a profound effect on the young writer, who, due to a depressed state, moved away from literary work for fifteen years. Perhaps, that is why Vasyl Stefanyk's creative work is pierced with a sense of social and economic injustice and psychological tension.

Thematically, the works of the writer can be divided as follows:

1. short stories about recruitment ("Has been executed", "Taken out of the village");
2. about emigration and rapid impoverishment of the masses (Dream", "Fireplace cross", "Walking from the city", "Mother's son", "Autumn" and others);
3. about family tragedies based on social and economic factors ("Skin", "The most alone", "Maple leaves", "Katrusya", "News", etc.);
4. about the class struggle in the countryside in the new social and economic conditions ("Incendiary", "Commissioner of eldership and the landlord", "Blue book", "Letter" and "Court").

The subject of recruitment, with which Vasyl Stefanyk began his work, was not new in Ukrainian literature. Vasyl Stefanyk's innovation lies primarily in the method of revealing them.

In "Taken out of the village" short story the writer extremely accurately finds expressions that convey the mental suffering of parents who accompany their son to the army. In another short story "Has been executed" the psychological



state of an old father who lost his only son is deeply revealed. These works are wound around in sadness of parents who lose the most precious thing in their lives.

Today, Ukraine mourns the death of patriots and resists the aggressor in the face of the Russian Federation. The enemy uses a new format of warfare that assists avoiding responsibility for thousands of lives lost, destroyed homes, and the industry of the country. Again the best sons of the Ukrainian nation are dying. All the pain and despair described in the short stories, as if revived, touched Ukrainian hearts again.

The enemy uses the power of the word: he applies information and psychological influence on society and namely:

- misinforms society and the international community;
- influences public opinion through communication;
- conducts diversification of public opinion – dispersion of attention to artificially created problems and thus distracts from solving urgent problems in the social and political and economic development of the state;
- conducts a psychological impact on people through threats, intimidation, blackmail with the purport of encouraging a certain model of behavior;
- conducts activities concerning widening of false information among the population (Y. Malyk, 2015).

The main task of information warfare is realization of a destructive influence on the power of the state by weakening its potential for ensuring national security, prevention in conducting active foreign and formation of international relations, weakening of the political image of the country and the ruling elite, as well as established social and political regime by it (Y. Malyk, 2015).

Today we are losing the information war at the international level. We need “people's speaking trumpet” of the Ukrainian word to consolidate society, to declare the social and economic consequences of hostilities for the world community. A war based on the blood of a Ukrainian patriot and the tears of a mother is a national grief.

Ukraine should direct the whole complex of financial, logistical, economic, informational and military measures for overcoming the enemy.

At the end of the 19th century peasants in Western Ukraine who, as well as today, in search of work sought a better fate abroad. Many families traveled to the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Brazil. Emigration influenced the social, economic and demographic processes in the country. It was caused by a number of economic reasons:

- slowed pace of economic development;
- agrarian overpopulation;
- steep impoverishment of the Ukrainian people;
- low social and economic level;
- high level of mortality rate.

“Dream”, “Fireplace cross”, “Walking from the city”, “Mother’s son”, “Autumn” and other works are the odes to hard peasant labor and mass emigration of the population, where there is no place for sentimentality, but there is only the needy and true life of Ukrainians, not adorned, not decorated. The whole depth of the feelings of a peasant-emigrant is conveyed by the short story “Fireplace Cross”, which the author himself called his favorite work. The image of Ivan Didukh is the image of the Ukrainian people, who with their own work strive to improve family well-being and flourish the land with harvest.

Today, “fireplace crosses” lie as a heavy burden on the hearts of Ukrainian families. Vasyl Stefanyk’s short stories were reflected in “new colors”.

The consequences of labor migration are gaining catastrophic scales. It will be almost impossible to stop irreversible processes in Ukraine’s economy. According to sociologists, over the last 5 years, between 5 and 7 million citizens have left Ukraine (O. Radchuk, 2019)..

The national economy needs to attract an additional 5 million workers and up to about 3 million small entrepreneurs to grow GDP by 5-7 per cent (O. Radchuk, 2019). Taking into account the current tendencies of the outflow of Ukrainians outside the country, it will be difficult to ensure positive dynamics of economic growth. Besides, taking into account demographic factors, in 2025 we can expect the collapse of functioning of the social security system, because there will be three pensioners per a working Ukrainian (O. Radchuk, 2019).

The issue of social protection of an already exhausted society will become even more acute before us.

The writer dedicates the short stories “Leaving the city”, “Dream”, “Letter”, “Signature”, etc. to the theme of impoverishment of the peasant masses.

A special place in the novelist’s works is occupied by children. The birth of a child is a holiday for a Ukrainian family. However, when there is nothing to eat and poverty, which wrapped around the family like a web, the baby is no longer a joy for parents. The terrible situation of children in the families of the poor caused great pain to Vasyl Stefanyk. The fate of the child is skillfully reflected in the works “Maple leaves”, “News”, “Grain field”, “Funeral”, “Katrusya”.

The short story “News” is based on a real fact that happened in 1898 in the village of Triytsia. The poor man, the widower Mykhailo, suffering with his children, decides to drown them: he drowned the younger one, and the older one begged him. In Vasyl Stefanyk’s short story, the inner conflict of the father is striking – a tragic bifurcation of the soul: to allow children to die slowly in starvation or to relieve them of this torment.

The “News” is a social and psychological work, which sharply reflects the social insecurity of a man and economic hopelessness, which cause degradation of the society and they become the cause of psychological disorders. Not everyone can perceive the difficult situation of the life as spiritual growth, not all people are able to reach those spiritual heights. Some spoil their lives and the closest people to them.



Vasyl Stefanyk never tried to prepare a reader for a psychologically difficult event. The events in his works do not expand in a temporal-causal sequence, and from the very first lines the author exposes the social and economic evil. The impoverishment of the rural population grew with geometrical progression and turned peasants from small owners into needy people. Stefanyk was not silent.

As of today, there is no clear vision for positive changes in the Ukrainian economy in the near future. Most forecasts and expert researches indicate negative trends in the system of social and economic provision. The pandemia, labor migration, military actions in eastern Ukraine, and corruption in all echelons of power negatively affected the national economy. According to IMF forecasts, Ukraine's GDP is expected to fall by 8.2 per cent. According to the results of 2020, 45 per cent of the population of Ukraine will fall into the category of the poor (G.Vozniak, I. Zherybylo, 2020).

The well-being of the population was affected by forced unoccupation, loss of household income, rise of unemployment, curtailing of economic activity of enterprises, job cuts, inobservance of income, lack of resources for investment, falling of demand for domestic products, destruction of supply chains etc. These dynamic changes require appropriate strategic and tactical decisions.

One of the causes of poverty is the unequal distribution of income among the population. Besides, the problem of poverty among workers already exists at the present stage.

Social and economic injustice is the basis for the growth of social tension in the society, which is reflected in the works of the novelist. The attempts of struggle of peasants against social and economic injustice are reflected in the short stories "Incendiary", "Letter", "Commissioner of eldership and the landlord", and "Court". In them, Vasyl Stefanyk demonstrated how to awaken in readers the spirit of resistance in the realism of earthly life.

In the basis of writing "Incendiary" short story lies a real fact. The work does not contain the author's assessments concerning the actions of the main hero. The old aggrieved Fedir, thrown out into the street, committed a crime. With his action, Fedir restores justice. To burn or not to burn Kurochka's property is the result of daily thoughts and social and economic consequences. Vasyl Stefanyk portrayed evil as a social phenomenon that can grow in the souls of just people, incapable of aggression. There will be no positive result from trying to fight evil with his own black methods.

Modern media do not stop reporting on crimes based on political, social and economic factors. However, if you look at each of them, it becomes clear that the prerequisite is usually social and economic tension, which is constantly growing.

Ukraine needs systemic changes in political, economic, social and other areas of national security. Discouragement in authorities by citizens, the desire to meet European standards, dissatisfaction with the level of corruption, worsening of quality of life, growing social inequality, etc. The systemic crisis has included all spheres of life. The time came to apply innovative approaches to the implementation of social policy of the state. The priority task is to form a development strategy for the country. Among the main strategic priorities, the territorial integrity of the country, the fight against corruption and poverty should be identified.

To the main measures of social policy that should be implemented in the near future belong:

- development of strategies of anti-crisis directions, which are based on strategic goals of the development of human potential;
- systematic monitoring for tracking social risks and dangers to human life and health;
- overcoming social inequality in the society;
- regulation of migration processes;
- promoting adaptation of the population to adverse external conditions, providing assistance in maintaining health, efficiency, self-realization and self-development;
- strengthening the responsibility of public authorities for the losses of population due to military conflicts and inability to conduct military actions;
- conducting measures for regulating the outflow of human and intellectual capital outside the country;
- consolidation of the society on the basis of the national system of values;
- increasing the responsibility of the media for unreliable and untrue information that increases psychological stress of the population;
- strengthening public confidence in government and the state;
- introduction of motivational mechanisms for increasing social, entrepreneurial and innovative activity of the population aimed at solving social problems;
- strengthening of public control over the activities of state and regional authorities concerning social and human development.

The introduction of decentralization of governance and rendering possibilities for regions to solve social and economic development problems on their own is an important step towards solving social and economic problems of the regions. At the same time, an important factor that will ensure successful decentralization at the state level is the provision of not only corresponding powers to the regions, but also financial resources.

In the process of implementing social policy it is necessary to ensure a balance of the state and regional social policy. The following measures should be implemented at the state level:

- to conduct monitoring during which it is necessary to identify the regions that have a threat to social security;
- to improve the legislation of Ukraine on the definition of powers and responsibilities of social policy subjects at the state and regional levels;
- to create effective mechanisms for introducing a system of state social standards and social guarantees;



- to regulate the current system of social guarantees;
- to stimulate the attraction of domestic investments in order to solve social problems;
- to introduce a systematic sociological monitoring of the regions of the country;
- to create an effective mechanisms for combining the interests of the state and the regions in the field of education;
- to abolish the dependence of social and economic development of the regions from the political situation.

At the regional level it is necessary to:

- involve the public in solving social problems;
- use the potential of trade unions for determining the strategic priorities for the development of the region within their competence concerning the development of labor and social sphere in conditions of decentralized governance;
- strengthen the interest of local governments in finding new sources of income for the development of the region.

The development of civil society is a priority direction of social policy and it requires new approaches to the formation of social relations. The events, which are taking place during recent years, have identified new problems and initiated the role of civil society in solving them. Civic activity and readiness for a long struggle in the legal field will become the key to success.

### CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Social policy is the basis of economic development of the state, so the problem of overcoming poverty in Ukraine is acute for the government. Unlike a number of European countries, clear concepts and strategies for overcoming poverty do not exist in Ukraine.

The role of social policy lies in purposeful education of a sense of mother country in consciousness of a human, its own responsibility for its state and prosperity, in the knowledge of cultural heritage and cultivation of love for the country.

The modern Ukrainian society needs to solve a number of pressing social and economic problems that should be solved as reformation of the economy as well as education, culture and national consciousness. Studying the works of Vasyl Stefanyk is an effective way to look into the historical past and change the present.

Vasyl Stefanyk's creative work is a people's pain, a cry over the fate of Ukraine, which does not subside today. Dmytro Pavlychko called the writer's works "monologues with signs of lamentations." Through the psychological state of the heroes, it reveals the social situation of people and it attracts the attention of the society. Vasyl Stefanyk's works are written with the heart and great talent, they became the decoration of Ukrainian and world literature. The writer wanted to see our land free and happy, and with his work he tries to bring this time closer.

Striving for European integration, it should be understood that building a democratic society with the implementation of the principles of social justice can be achieved by reforming social and economic relations, creation of effective state institutions and significant changes in national consciousness.

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