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The Contributions to the History of the Forest Fund' Institutionalization of Bessarabia during the 19-20 Centuries

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Abstract: During the 19th and 20th centuries, forest' management in historical Bessarabia was carried out through laws, regulations and specialized institutions, with the idea of planning the management of a multi-year forest fund. The administrative measures taken in this regard have undergone changes depending on the events, processes and phenomena that took place in the Russian Empire, in the Romanian space and in its environs.

Keywords: Forest Fund; Bessarabia; environment

1. Introduction

The forest fund of the Republic of Moldova is one of the few renewable natural resources, with a major impact on the ecological situation as a whole, the living environment of the population and the quality of other constitutive resources of the natural heritage. The condition of land with forest vegetation, which includes both forests and forest curtains for protection, according to experts in the fields of ecology, biology, geography, pedology, climatology, forestry, is unsatisfactory, given the consequences of their inadequate management in the last two or three centuries.

The basic objective of the forestry institutional structure is to create effictive conditions for interaction between forestry and other branches of the national

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economy, that would ensure the maintenance, conservation, development and sustainable use of the forest fund and forest vegetation as a whole.

The evolution of the institutional structure of the national forestry branch has been influenced over the years by the political changes and by the events, processes and phenomena, that took place in the Romanian space and in its vicinity. If we research the history of the Romanian space between the Prut and the Dniester rivers with the villages inhabited by Romanians on the left bank of the Dniester, we would find that the area of land, covered with forests, was much larger than today, being reduced by 30% from the early nineteenth century.

The quantitative and qualitative estimation of the forested areas or of the forest property in the territory between the Prut and the Dniester rivers began to be known only at the beginning of the 19th century, when the first topographic works were executed and which presented results closer to reality.

2. Methodology

The study of this topic was based on the research of theoretical materials, documents, articles, synthesis works and materials from the press of the time that served as support for the application of research methods in the initial research to know the history of institutionalization of the Bessarabian forest fund between 19-20 centuries.

The main methods used in the research were: historical analysis method, comparative-historical method, induction and deduction method, analysis and synthesis, critical analysis method, interdisciplinary approach method, retrospective method, which helped to ensure a consistent methodological support for the article.

For the research of this study were used different principles, as: scientific principle, the principle of objectivity, the principle of the systemic approach, etc.

3. Results

Over the previous centuries, we have some referencies in documents that speak of princely forests, monastery forests, “forest donations”, forests belonging to the great boyars, battles, that took place in the forests, work services “forests’ logging”, deforestation, whici appear in medieval documents with the term “cleaning” (deforestation and the creation of agricultural lands), princely hunting in the forests,

even a donation (tax) from acorns (fruits of oak trees), that were collected by the peasants on the crown fields for the princely pig farms. In the medieval period, there were donations for “jold” (acorn) and the joldunarii (those who collected this tax for the royal court).

For the nineteenth century, after the annexation of Bessarabia to the Russian Empire, when Tsarist Russia tried to get involved in the modernization processes in Europe, the surveying of forest areas, acquired special significance and was carried out by the military topometric commissions, established by the Great Major State of the Russian Empire. As a force that expanded its territory through conquest and annexations, the Russian administration aimed to analyze the new annexed territories in terms of demographic and economic point of view, in order to quantify the income that was received or could be received in the future from the new territories. Thus, the topographic works of the military topometric commissions, published in 1862, have become today a source of historical research. (Enciu, 2020, p. 192).

In 1873, the Forest Service was created in Tsarist Bessarabia. At the same time, the imperial administration (Chancellery of the Governor of Bessarabia) set up several committees that were supposed to somehow solve the problems of the landslides.

Another situation was felt in the interwar period, when Bessarabia, as part of the Romanian unitary state, entered into the modernization process of the whole of Romania. The agrarian reform, after the Great Union, was a general process of modernizations, that took place throughout Romania, including in forestry. Thus, in 1919-1921, an important took place: the expropriation at the expense of the state of all forests, belonging to monasteries and private individuals, with an area of 180.0 thousand hectares, except for the razor and peasant forests with an area of about 21.0 thousand hectares. After the implementation of this reform, in the entire forest sector, 91% passed into state ownership and only 9% remained in private possession (Filipescu, Giurgea, 1919, p. 119).

The first encouraging result of this applied measure is the fact that in the period 1922 - 1935, the forest area not only did not decrease, but, on the contrary, increased by 10%, which saved Bessarabian forests from expropriation, destruction and, in the future they must belong only to the state, which is the only one able to preserve them for future generations (Teodorescu, 1919, p. 37).

However, the restoration works of the degraded forests and the planting of the gaps in Bessarabia has gained momentum since 1925, and from this year the areas, planted

annually by the bodies of the House of Forests and the Forest Regime, have been constantly growing (Teodorescu, 1919, p. 37).

In 1935, the area of 4300 hectares was actually sown, and in the spring of the following year - about 3500 hectares (Boboc, 2009, p. 161).

Regarding the area that was annually cultivated in the forests of Bessarabia during the interwar period, we find that the average production per hectare of forests in Bessarabia is about 2 m^3 , that is about 0.5 m^3 less than the annual increase per hectare of forests in Romania, which shows that the annual growth of Bessarabian forests is not very active and are required remedial measures (Boboc, 2009, p. 162).

During the interwar period, the function of central forestry authority in this territory was fulfilled by the Chisinau Regional Forestry Directorate, subordinated to the Forest Management House, Romania. Under the direct subordination of the mentioned direction, which managed the state-owned forests (214 thousand hectares or 91%), there were 20 forestry units with the division into districts and cantons. The central apparatus of the Directorate consisted of three services (sections), the Control Inspectorate, the Financial Inspectorate, where were worked 14 engineers. During the 1944-1947 period, the central forestry body was the Household Directorate, that directly subordinated to the Main Directorate of the Forest Service of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). There were 28 forest enterprises in the region, divided into districts and forest cantons.

In 1947, the Ministry of Forestry was established (the same structure remained in the field), which operated until 1953. During the mentioned period (1944-1953), the central forestry authorities performed the function of managing the state forest fund, simultaneously exercising control over the forests management, subordinated to other owners. Between 1953 and 1961, the forestry branch was included in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. As subdivisions, there were 14 forestry enterprises (with the division into forestry units, districts, cantons, etc.) (Teodorescu, 1919, p. 37).

In 1961, forestry was separated from agriculture in a separate structure - the General Directorate of "Forests and Environmental Protection" – under the Soviet of Ministers. The forestry enterprises were restructured into mechanized forestry enterprises with the size of the areas under management, but, after the dissolution of the exploitation enterprises (1962), the exploitation functions were also assigned to them. In 1966, on the basis of the General Directorate "Forests", was established the State Forestry Committee within the Soviet of Ministers of the republic. Under its

subordination worked 13 mechanized forestry enterprises (divided into forestry units, districts, cantons), 4 forest amelioration stations (divided into production sectors, districts, cantons), 1 exploitation enterprise, station for labor research and standardization. In 1971, the first nature reservation “Codrii” was established within the Soviet Union (based on the Lozova forest district) (Boboc, Bejan, Angheluță, 2012, p. 11).

The central apparatus of the Committee consisted of: one directorate and 7 sections. The main functions of the central forestry authority consisted in the management of the state forest fund, the state control in this field on the entire state national forest fund, regardless of the departmental subordination.

In 1978, the State Forestry Committee was reorganized into the Ministry of the Forestry. Forestry production associations, 21 forestry enterprises, 2 forestry-hunting enterprises, a nature reserve, a forestry science and production association, the center of scientific work organization and production management, forest disease and pest control station were operated under the Ministry. The central apparatus of the Ministry was divided into 5 directions and 9 sections. The main functions were: development and application of the state policy in the forestry field, state control over the condition, use, guarding, protection and regeneration of forests, regardless of the departmental affiliation.

In 1988, the Ministry of Forestry was abolished, the central forestry authority being included in the State Forestry Committee and Environmental Protection (State Forestry Production Association “Moldles”, having the functions of forest fund management). The control functions have passed within the environmental protection structure. Under the subordination of the Association were set up 18 forest enterprises and 3 nature reservations (Draft of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, Regarding the amendment of the Government Decision no. 150/2010).

In 1990, the Association “Moldles” was reorganized into the Directorate “Forests and Nature Reserves” within the Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, subordinating 17 forestry enterprises and 4 nature reservations, keeping virtually the same functions. In 1993, based on the Directorate “Forests”, the State Association “Moldsilva” was rebuilt within the same Department, adding another nature reserve.

During the 1994-1999 period, the State Association for Forestry “Moldsilva” operated within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. In order to improve the administration of the state forestry and hunting fund, the assurance by the state

forestry bodies of the functions and obligations provided by the normative framework, the Government of the Republic of Moldova liquidates the State Forestry Association “Moldsilva” and establishes, starting on August 1, 1999, in addition to the Government, the State Forestry Service, empowered with the rights of central forestry authority, which took over, in this field, the attributions of the liquidated association, subordinating to it the enterprises and the structures of the former association. The structure of the central apparatus was composed of 7 directions and a staff of 72 units.

The State Agency for Forestry (SAF) “Moldsilva” was created based on the State Forestry Service by the Government Decision of the Republic of Moldova no. 557 from June 28, 2001 “on the reorganization of the State Forest Service” (regarding the amendment of Government Decision no. 150/2010). The structure of the central apparatus was composed on 5 directorates and a staff of 52 units. Within the Government Decision of the Republic of Moldova no. 357 from April 23, 2005 “on the reorganization measures of some ministries and central administrative authorities of the Republic of Moldova”, the “Moldsilva” Forestry Agency was created, and by the Decision no. 844 from August 15, 2005, were approved the Regulation and the nominal composition of College of the Agency for Forestry “Moldsilva”. The structure of the central apparatus was composed of 3 directions and a staff of 22 units (Boboc, 2008, p. 19).

4. Conclusions

According to the Government Decision of the Republic of Moldova no. 150 from March 2, 2010, for the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Agency “Moldsilva”, the structure and the limit staff of its central apparatus, the Agency “Moldsilva” was created, successor of rights of the “Moldsilva” Forestry Agency, which also operates in present.

During the 10-years period, the enunciated Government decision underwent several completions and modifications, including the modification of the structure and the limit staff, which currently constitutes 20 units (Filipescu & Giurgea, 1919, p. 119).

Forest resources are one of the most important natural resources of the Republic of Moldova, which is one of the basic elements of the state’s heritage assets, but, its rational use is a guarantee for sustainable development at all levels - national, regional and local.

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