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## THE ROLE OF LAND-LEASE IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR: THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS

*Annotation. Data is provided to disprove the viewpoint that the Lend-Lease assistance from the allies did not play any role in the victory of the Soviet Union over the Nazi Germany. The character of Lend-Lease and its impact on the economy of the USSR has been analyzed. The economic importance of the Lend-Lease supply for the victory over the fascism has been considered.*

*Анотація. Наведено дані, які спростовують думку про те, що допомога союзників у формі ленд-лізу не відіграла значної ролі у перемозі Радянського Союзу над нацистською Німеччиною. Проаналізовано характер ленд-лізу і з'ясовано його вплив на економіку СРСР. Розглянуто економічну доцільність поставок ленд-лізу щодо перемоги над фашизмом.*

*Аннотация. Приведены данные, опровергающие мнение о том, что помощь союзников в виде ленд-лиза не сыграла важной роли в победе Советского Союза над нацистской Германией. Проанализирован характер ленд-лиза и выяснено его влияние на экономику СССР. Рассмотрена экономическая целесообразность поставок ленд-лиза для победы над нацизмом.*

*Keywords: Lend-Lease, the Great Patriotic War, the military economy of the USSR.*

"... We have never thought that our help by Lend-Lease was a major factor in the Soviet victory over Hitler on the eastern front. It was achieved only by Russian soldiers heroism and blood ..."  
H. Hopkins (Advisor to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt)

The problem of Lend-Lease from the USA to the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War is topical because it is still a debatable question: there is no certain point of view how much it increased the economy of the Soviet Union and if it was really so important for the USSR's Red army.

The object and the subject of the research is Lend-Lease and the ways in which it influenced the Soviet economy.

The goal of this article is to analyze the history of Lend-Lease from the USA to the USSR by getting an insight into the economic benefits it brought to both countries.

The objectives of the research were to learn the history of Lend-Lease, its stages, the ways in which deliveries were transported to the Soviet Union, and briefly overview the percent of the most important deliveries in comparison with that produced in the USSR at that time. For the survey books about American foreign policy and American history as well as books and articles by Soviet leaders and researchers were used.

"Suppose my neighbor's house is burning, and I have a long hose. If my neighbor takes a hose, pulls it into a fire hydrant and quenches the flame – so he breaks the fire with my help. How should I then behave? Should I tell him, "Hey, neighbor, you know, I paid for the hose, for example, \$15, so may you pay me for using it?" No, I don't need the money, I just want my neighbor to turn the hose back when the fire has been blown out", – with these words President Roosevelt began his speech to reporters at a press conference on December 17, 1940 [1].

The idea to give aid, transfer a loan of military equipment and supplies in exchange for political and economic concessions to countries, which were opposite to the Nazi Germany, was originated at the U.S. Treasury Ministry in the fall of 1940. It was based on the law of 1892, according to which "the U.S. military minister, when it is in the public interest, may be leased for a term not exceeding 5 years the ownership of the army, if the country does not require it." Roosevelt signed the bill after its approval in the House of Representatives and it became law in the Senate. The essence of his document was that it gave rights the President to transmit the loans or rent objects of national defense to the country, security of which was vital for the security of the United States [2].

The fact that America is primarily focused on the development of its own economy should be also taken into consideration. At the beginning of World War II it received the order of Britain and France for building military equipment and in such a way the USA raised its own economy. The fight against fascism in the United States was carried out in two ways: firstly, the USA was preparing its own army and equipment, in case if they felt under attack, and the second way was to help allies to put out the fire of fascism in their own territories.



As for the Soviet Union, the promise to provide it with the necessary materials for the war was given immediately after Germany attacked the Soviet Union, in June 22, 1941.

The deliveries to the Soviet Union were divided into 5 phases:

- The "Pre Lend-Lease" – from 22 June 1941 till 30 September 1941. It was made by the principle "cash and carry" when the goods were paid for in gold and other minerals (the sum was about 6.613 million dollars) and the Soviet Union had to take the goods from the territory of the USA by itself. In total, the Soviet Union has purchased goods for 41 million dollars in the U.S. in 1941.

- The First protocol period – from 1 October 1941 till 30 June 1942.

- The Second protocol period – from 1 July 1942 till 30 June 1943.

- The Third protocol period – from 1 July 1943 till 30 June 1944.

- The Fourth protocol period – from 1 July 1944. Formally, it was ended on 12 May 1945, but deliveries continued during of the war with Japan (which the Soviet Union entered into on 8 August 1945) under the "Milepost" agreement until 2 September 1945, when Japan capitulated. On 20 September 1945, all the Lend-Lease supplies to the Soviet Union were terminated [3, p. 882, 883].

Unexpected attack of the experienced German army really hurt the Soviet Union. The Soviets had a huge army, but they could not properly be fed, clothed, transported or armed because of a lack of time for preparing to the war operations.

The Soviet weapons losses in 1941 (the first six months of the war) were as follows:

- 34 % of all the combat aircraft;
- 56 % of all the small-arms and machine guns;
- 69 % of all the anti-tank guns;
- 72 % of all the tanks;
- 59 % of all the field guns and mortars.

As one can see, the Americans' aid was overwhelmingly important to the Soviet Army. Lend-Lease was vital for the Soviet Union in communication equipment, transportation, food, clothing, ammunition, and, to a lesser extent, tanks and planes.

But in the Soviet historiography the role of the deliveries was very underestimated. The government even made the people who were involved in such transitions beside the law. It was made because of the ideology. The USSR did not want their people to know that the capitalist America provided help to their strong and all-sufficient country.

The range of supplies for land-lease was determined by the Soviet government and was intended to cover "bottlenecks" in the supply of Soviet industry and military.

The Lend-Lease program brought benefits for both the Soviet Union and for the United States. In particular, the United States won the time required to mobilize its own military-industrial complex. Soviet "Katyushas" were set on the lend-lease Studebaker US6. At that time, the United States gave 20 thousand cars for the Soviet "Katyusha"; in the Soviet Union only 600 trucks were released. Almost all "Katyushas", assembled on the basis of Soviet cars, were destroyed during the war. Only four authentic rocket launchers "Katyusha", which were assembled on the basis of Soviet cars ZIS-6 survived till our days [4]. So doesn't it mean the real influence of deliveries on the war if even the "Katyusha", the symbol of the strong and brave Soviet army depended on USA materials: it was made of the American steel, placed on the American machine, and used the American fuel to ride.

The USSR received from Lend-Lease 622.1 thousand tons of rails (which was 56.5 % of domestic production); 1,900 locomotives (it was 2.4 times more than all those released during the war in the Soviet Union); 11,075 carriages (10.2 times more than all those produced in the USSR during the war); 3 million 606 thousand tire covers (43.1 %); 610 thousand tons of sugar (41.8 %); 664.6 thousand tons of canned meat (108 %). The USSR received 427,000 cars and 32 thousand military motorcycles, while the Soviet Union from the beginning of the war till the end of 1945 released only 265.6 thousand of cars and 27,816 motorcycles. The U.S.

set 2 million 13 thousand tons of aircrafts (along with allies it made 2 million 586 thousand tons) which was almost two thirds of the fuel used by the Soviet Air Force during the war. It must be emphasized that these data are far from being completed. The supplied nomenclature was much wider. It included, for example, leather coats (2,520 units as for the Second Protocol). Under the heading "Ferrous metals" in 1944 – 1945 half a million tons of rail fasteners, rails, tires, axles and wheels of the locomotives were imported to the USSR. These transfers could continue almost indefinitely. In the documents a large part of supplies was not shared by supplying countries. For example, it is stated that during the war years the USSR imported 44.6 thousand machine tools and 103,000 tons of natural rubber from the UK and the U.S. [5].

But it was just the economic side of the problem. Tanks and planes should be ruled by people, weapon was something useless until it got into people's hands, and canned meat was just a source of energy to feed hungry soldiers before the battle. Experienced people were the main power that helped the Soviet Union to win the Great Patriotic War, burn out the fire of the Nazi Germany, and did not let it destroy the world. That was the victory achieved not only by new models of weapon but by brave hearts of soldiers.

Five routes supplied the aid. The Pacific, trans-Iranian and Arctic convoys were the most important: they provided 93.5 % of the total shipments. None of these routes was completely secure. The fastest (and most dangerous) route was the Arctic convoys. In July and December 1941, 40 % of all the shipments went by this route, and about 15 % of the shipped goods were missed on the ocean floor. The marine way from the east coast of the United States to Murmansk took about 2 weeks.

The Pacific route, which provided about half the supplies for the Lend-Lease was relatively (though not completely) safe. Since the beginning of December 7, 1941, only Soviet sailors could provide the Pacific War traffic here, and trade-ships went just under the Soviet flag. Japan controlled all the marine ways, inspected all

the Soviet ships, and sometimes destroyed them. The marine way from the west coast of the USA to the Far Eastern ports of the USSR took 18 – 20 days.

The trans-Iranian route allowed transporting 10,000 tons per month in August 1941. To increase the amount of supplies Britain and the Soviet Union occupied Iran. By October 1942 the volume of deliveries managed to rise to 30,000, and in May 1943 it grew to 100,000 tons per month. The marine part of the way from the east coast of the United States to Iran took about 75 days.

It should be noted that during the war there were two air routes for supplying the Lend-Lease. On the one hand, planes flew from the United States to the Soviet Union across the South Atlantic, Africa and the Persian Gulf, on the other hand they crossed Alaska, Chukotka and Siberia. 7,925 aircrafts were transferred by the route "Alsib" ("Alaska – Siberia").

The enemies put out lots of American planes and ships. That fact states that the help by Lend-Lease was not just money and goods offered from the USA but also the comfortable ways of their delivery to the destination. It was a really risky way for lots of American sailors and flyers [6].

The Soviet historiography usually argues that the amount of aid by Lend-Lease to the USSR was quite small – only about 4 % of the funds the country spent on the war. The Soviet leaders said that only older models of tanks and aircraft were supplied. At that time abroad, it was proclaimed that the western weapons and the Lend-Lease were the key factors, without which the Soviet Union would not have taken the victory over Germany, or it would have won but it would have required much more time to do it. By now, the former Soviet Union attitude to the aid from allies has somehow changed. The attention is also drawn to the fact that a number of delivery items were of great importance, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the supplied equipment, and in terms of access to new models of weapons and industrial equipment.

Historical documents show that overall shipments to the USSR under the Lend-Lease were 11 billion 344 thousand dollars, including \$ 9.8 billion from the United States. Food made a quarter of all the goods [3, p. 885].

Although the total volume of shipments was approximately 4 % of the gross industrial output in the USSR of 1941 – 1945, it was a very significant percentage of the Lend-Lease equipment for certain types of weapons. In particular, vehicles accounted for about 70 %, tanks made 12 %, aircraft amounted to 10 % including 29 % of naval aviation.

In November 1941, in a letter to the U.S. President Roosevelt, Stalin wrote: "Mr. President, your decision to give the Soviet Union an interest-free loan of \$1 billion to ensure a secure supply of military equipment and raw materials to the Soviet Union was taken by the Soviet Government with heartfelt gratitude, as urgent aid to the Soviet Union in its huge and hard struggle against the common enemy – the bloody Hitlerism" [7].

The Gosplan Chairman Nikolai Voznesenskiy gave first official historical assessment of the role of the Lend-Lease in his book "Military Economy of the USSR during World War II", published in 1948: "... if you compare the size of the allies supply of industrial goods in the USSR with the dimensions of industrial production at socialist enterprises of the USSR over the same period, it appears that the proportion of these supplies in relation to domestic production during the war economy will be only about 4 %" [8].

"...Without American trucks we had nothing to support our artillery" (From the report of the chairman of the KGB Vladimir Semichastniy to Khrushchev; classified as "top secret") [9].

In conclusion it can be said that support from the USA in the form of the Lend-Lease made the Great Patriotic War easier to Soviet soldiers. Americans supplied a great variety of products – from tanks and planes to canned meat and buttons. Almost all the fuel that Soviet soldiers used during the Great Patriotic War was American fuel or diluted American fuel, and many other examples of the importance of that help can be found. At the time when the Nazi Germany occupied the USSR it was not prepared for the war. A large amount of time was needed for militarization of the Soviet economy. So the aid by Lend-Lease supported it and made it possible to fight against enemies almost under equal conditions. Another important thing was that the USA did not require to get back all the "leased" equipment. The American government just wanted to take back the machinery survived and a payment for products (by the way this debt has not been paid up yet). So the consequences of the Lend-Lease were really comfortable for the Soviets. We don't know how the war would have ended without these deliveries but we can suggest that more time and resources might have been taken. And it cannot be stated that the USA made it just for help to the USSR. Obviously, it was made to help itself, because it is easier to pay money to someone to win the enemies than use one's own money plus soldiers to burn out the army that captured almost all the world. Americans chose a rational way and it became beneficial for both the USA and the USSR.

No doubt that the most important aspect of this problem was not to put money in the first place, but count the win by measuring it in people's lives and using no ideology to overview such economic things.

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