

Ivan TATARYNOV*

**THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AUTHORITIES DEPLOYED IN ORDER TO
MAINTAIN THE PUBLIC ORDER IN THE PROVINCE OF BESSARABIA
IN 1917**

- Abstract -

Based on archival materials and periodicals, the article analyzes the activities of public authorities in maintaining public order in the Bessarabian province in 1917. The author analyzed the political situation in the region. Particular attention was paid to legislative activities, food policies and anti-alcohol campaigns of the Provisional Government.

Keywords: First World War; Bessarabia; Provisional Government; “anti-alcohol” regulations; food issue.

Introduction

The First World War has greatly changed the traditional way of peaceful life. Under the new conditions, the society succumbed to regular pressure in the form of constant mobilizations and requisitions, a shortage of essential goods and food. Under such circumstances, a surge of national discontent was becoming quite a real danger. Therefore, the governments of the belligerent countries did their utmost to retain citizens under authorities, by means of the introduction of martial law, various decrees and directions. Particularly it was typical for the border areas, where the violation of public order could lead to the disastrous consequences for the front.

The Bessarabian province was one of the front-line territories of the Russian Empire during the First World War. This fact has set a number of tasks, which required an immediate solution to maintain public order, to the local authorities.

* Izmail State University of Humanities, Ukraine (tatarinoffivanevgen@gmail.com), ORCID: 0000-0002-6345-7409.

The Problem Statement

At the beginning of 1917, Russia found itself in very difficult conditions. On the fronts of the First World War, the Russian army could not gain a decisive advantage over the enemy. In the rear due to the difficult conditions of wartime, a food and social crisis was brewing. As a result of a number of factors, a change of power took place. The purpose of this article is to investigate how life has changed in the Bessarabian province after the February Revolution compared to 1914, as well as to identify how the new government maintained order.

Research Analyses

Modern Ukrainian historiography is actively conducting research on the history of the First World War. In this direction of historical science, the real luminaries are A. Reent, A. Serdyuk¹. However, it should be recognized that there are very few scientific works devoted specifically to the history of the Bessarabian province during the First World War. Most studies deal with this subject only fragmentarily². Only in recent years have appeared some publications of L. Tsyganenko³, V. Drozdov⁴, which cover certain aspects of the history of the region in this period. Particularly interesting are the works of the Russian historian M. Oskin⁵, who specializes in studying the Romanian front of the First World War and

¹Reient, O.P. & Serdiuk, O.V. (2004). *Persha svitova viina i Ukraina* [World War I and Ukraine]. K. : Heneza. 480 p.

²Caranov, V. K (ed.). (2002). *Istoriya Respubliki Moldova s drevnejshih vremen do nashih dnei* [History of the Republic of Moldova from the Ancient Times to the Present]. Kishinev: Elan Poligraf. 360 p.; Repida, L. (2008) *Suverennaya Moldova: istoriya i sovremennost'* [Sovereign Moldova: history and modernity]. Kishinev: Inst. Patrimonial. 384 p.

³Tsyhanenko, L. (2015). Dunaiska ekspedytsiia osoblyvoho pryznachennia na pochatkovomu etapi Pershoi svitovoi viiny [Danube Special Purpose Expedition at the First Stage of the First World War]. *Challenges and Prospects for the Development of Science at the Beginning of the Third Millennium in Europe and Asia*. Pereiaslav-Khmelnyskyi. P. 33-35.

⁴Drozdov, V. (2016). Defitsyt spozhyvchykh tovariv u mistakh Pivdennoi Bessarabii v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny [Consumer Goods Deficiency in Southern Bessarabia During the First World War]. *Izmail State Humanities University Scientific Bulletin*. (34). P. 60-65.

⁵Oskin, M. V. (2018). Raspad i demobilizaciya Rumynskogo fronta zimoj 1917-1918 g.: mezhdru krasnymi, belymi i interventami. *Rusin*. (53). P. 64-81. <https://doi.org/10.17223/18572685/53/5>; Oskin, M. V. (2019). Demobilizaciya Rumynskogo fronta zimoj 1917–1918 g. i sud'ba russkogo voennogo imushchestva v Moldavii i Bessarabii [Demobilization of the Romanian Front in the Winter of 1917–1918 and the Fate of Russian Military Property in Moldova and Bessarabia]. *RUDN Journal of Russian History*. (18). P. 31-49. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8674-2019-18-1-31-49>

the territories adjacent to it. The main source for writing this article was archival materials of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

Statement of the basic material

Before the First World War there were two branches of government in Russia: a well-defined vertical of state power and local self-government bodies. The governor and his staff was the main link between the central departments and the province. The governor was entrusted with the powers of the master of a province and was responsible for everything what happened in it.

The Chief Commander of Odessa Military District, Governor-General M. Ebelov played an equally important role in maintaining order in the Bessarabian province.

The First World War officially began on August 2, 1914 for the Russian Empire. Emperor Nicholas II appealed to his subjects with a manifesto, in which Germany declared a war on Russia. However, the mobilization processes in the empire and preparations for the war began a few days earlier. It also concerned the introduction of martial law in the border areas.

On July 28, 1914, the leadership of the Bessarabia province reported the district police chiefs with secret encrypted telegrams that they are obliged:

- to stop issuing passports and certificates for the right to cross the border by all persons liable for military service;
- to fulfill all the requirements of the military command for the protection and defense of the areas entrusted to them;
- to ensure the full protection of all institutions of the civil department;
- to strengthen supervision over the prevention of strikes and attempts on the integrity of factories that produce military equipment;
- to detain suspicious persons and to report about them to the governor and higher ranks of the military district in person.

On July 31, 1914, after the transfer of these orders, the governor M. Gilchen informed the population of Bessarabia about the introduction of martial law on the territory of the province.⁶

In the following months, various decrees and circulars were introduced in the Bessarabian province, the purpose of which was to create favorable conditions

⁶Tatarynov, I. (2014). Osoblyvosti viiskovoho stanu v Bessarabskii hubernii (1914-1915 rr.) [Features of martial law in Bessarabia province (1914-1915)]. *Black sea. Scientific journal of academic research*. Tbilisi. (10). P. 53.

for mobilization, requisition, fighting with enemy agents and most importantly for maintaining public order.

It should be noted that the Bessarabian province played an important military and strategic role. The Special Expedition was deployed in the Bessarabian town of Reni, which aim was to provide food and ammunition to the allied Serbian army, but the region itself was a frontline base.

The war threw serious challenges for the local authorities. First of all, the problems of the social sphere were aggravated: assistance to the population assistance to the war-affected, the fight against the shortages. In addition, the regional authorities had to take over the implementation of central and military power decisions of national importance. The solution of these tasks was possible only through joint efforts of the provincial administration and local self-government bodies.

Despite all efforts aimed at keeping the country and society in readiness, by 1917 the imperial power in Russia severely undermined its authority. As a result, the February Revolution took place, the monarchy was deposed, and the Provisional Government came into power.

The new government liquidated the institution of governors and created the relevant structures to implement its political program – provincial and district commissariats. The head of the provincial zemstvo K. Mimi became a provincial commissar of Bessarabia, his deputy was a large landowner V. Christie. Five of the eight district commissars were also large landowners. The old zemstvos and municipal dumas were preserved as local self-government bodies. The commissars of the Provisional Government relied on provincial, municipal and district executive committees and participation in elections of these authorities was determined by the existence of a property qualification.⁷

Fundamental changes have begun in the country. These changes affected the activities of local military and civilian authorities to maintain public order. Thus, on April 9, 1917, Governor – General M. Ebelov abolished a number of mandatory resolutions adopted in the previous years of the war. Thus, on April 9, 1917, Governor-General M. Ebelov abolished a number of mandatory resolutions adopted in the previous years of the war. For example, it was not forbidden to drive cars

⁷Caranov, V. K (ed.). (2002). *Istoriya Respubliki Moldova s drevnejshih vremen do nashih dnei* [History of the Republic of Moldova from the Ancient Times to the Present]. Kishinev: Elan Poligraf. P. 173.

during the dark hours of the day, all sorts of demonstrative marches and manifestations were allowed. Even the ban on “visiting houses” was lifted.⁸

There was a radical turn in the policy of the state regarding “Russian Germans”. In particular, the authorities' actions to evict the Germans were suspended after the February Revolution. In March 1917, the Minister of Agriculture of the Provisional Government A. Shingarev telegraphed that the requisition of the lands of the German colonists had been officially suspended. Moreover, it was urgently ordered to inform the population of the colonies with a fervent appeal to strain all efforts and begin the spring fieldwork. The minister expressed the hope that “he population of the colonies, devoted to the interests of the motherland, free Russia from now on, will respond to the appeal of the Provisional Government and will hasten to provide all the surplus of grain stocks required by the army”.⁹

To gain the further disposition of the German colonists, on April 11, 1917, the Akkerman District Constituent Council authorized the German rural community to restore the work of parish schools, closed by the Governor – General's decrees in 1914.¹⁰

The local population understood freedoms proclaimed by the Provisional Government in their own way. After the February Revolution, facts of unauthorized seizure by peasants of public and private land began to occur in Bessarabia. Accordingly, on April 27, 1917, a special telegram was transmitted from Governor - General M. Ebelov. It was reported that the peasant section of the Odessa Soviet of Workers' Deputies, the Union of Farmers, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the Council of Deputies of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, as well as representatives of the army and navy, decided: there should be no unauthorized seizure of the land. According to the decision of grain growers congress in Odessa, rural gatherings were given the right to approve a decision on plowing only empty, uninhabited land plots, with payment of rent to landlords after harvesting. The land for corn was forbidden to plough. The final issue about the fate of the land was to be decided by the Constituent Assembly.

The Provisional Government intended to continue the war “to the deep end”. Therefore, a full order should have been in the rear. In this regard, after the first declarations and appeals for new freedoms, measures began to be toughened against those who violated public order.

⁸National Archives of the Republic of Moldova, Fund 2, List 1, File 9435, P. 219.

⁹Municipal institution “Izmail archive” (further MIIA), Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P. 93.

¹⁰Ibid. P. 123.

In many places, peasants committed illegal actions against landowners, prevented harvesting, removed prisoners of war and workers, forced landowners and tenants to pay them more than the standard set by the government. They demanded from the owners to raise previously agreed prices for labor and seized forcibly bread, feedstuff, mowing and inventory. Such actions, according to the Minister of Food A. Peshekhonov, threatened to leave the whole country and army without bread.

On July 31, 1917, the Provisional Government approved a decree providing for measures to stop any unlawful actions on the part of the population that prevented farmers from sowing and harvesting fields. On July 31, 1917, the Provisional Government approved the decree providing for measures to stop any illegal actions on the part of the population, which prevented farmers from sowing and harvesting fields. Now representatives of local authorities were forbidden to take out decrees and resolutions that could give rise to criminal and illegal actions against landowners. The farmers had to make every effort to sow and harvest crops and hay. If they could not cope with this on their own, it was necessary to appeal to the Food Board. They were subjected to criminal liability for actions that prevented landowners from farming. All decisions on sowing and harvesting were to be taken solely by the food committees and boards, provided that all bread that was subjected to alienation would be placed at the disposal of the state. Other committees had no right to take upon themselves the solution of these issues, and their decisions were not obligatory for the population.¹¹

On August 13, 1917, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief L. Kornilov approved by his order drastic measures against those who prevented the procurement of food for the army. In his turn, the Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government, I. Tsereteli, took all the necessary steps to prevent the independent land distribution before the land reform. On September 23, 1917, the new Supreme Commander-in-Chief A. Kerensky also issued a decree on ending the unauthorized solution of the land question.¹²

The February revolution could not provide peasants with land and change the order of things that had developed over 3 years of fighting. Therefore, the new government had already verified through compulsory restrictions on free export and trade, as well as mass requisition.¹³

¹¹MIIA, Fund 4, List 1, File 551, P. 27.

¹²Ibid. P. 31, 33, 74.

¹³MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P. 179.

In August 1917, in Bessarabia, in order to save fish resources for the army, local fishermen were forbidden to fish from 8 pounds or more in the area where the troops were disposed (at that time it was the lower stream of the Danube and its adjacent lakes).¹⁴ Thus, the inhabitants of the Danube region remained without the possibility of conducting one of their main trades.

The strict policy of the Provisional Government had provoked active protests from local residents. In the summer of 1917, the newspaper "Bessarabian Life" in the article "Notes from the Province" reported: "The peasants are indignant that the requisition of bread and especially of livestock place a heavy burden only on their shoulders. Look, they say, – how many horses and cattle remained by the landlords? Why do not they take the cattle away from them? But they take the last cow away from us".¹⁵

In August 1917, the Interim Government raised grain procurement prices by 100%, which led to a sharp increase in prices for consumer goods. The food situation in Bessarabia has worsened.¹⁶

A pound of baked bread in Chisinau in October-December 1917 cost 22 kopecks against 2 kopecks in 1913, it means that it went up 11 times while the salary increased only doubled. In addition, this product was significantly worse quality. "Local bread traders, selling low-quality bread for retail, raise prices every day, what causes fair complaints from the population," the Free Bessarabia newspaper said.¹⁷ Another newspaper said: "Instead of flour, bakers send bran or flour with sawdust and it explains a lot of gastric diseases in the city, even doctors explain some deaths. The situation of the poor class is desperate".¹⁸

In 1917 the cities and villages of the province survived an acute shortage of food. In May 1917, the newspaper Svobodnaya Bessarabia reported that in Chisinau "bread tails are increasing day by day, children go to bed hungry".¹⁹

At the provincial congress of Bessarabia councils (September 1917), delegates depicted a difficult picture of the food situation in the province. A deputy of the Bendery Council said: "The high cost is desperate. The situation is critical." A representative from Bolgrad Kalinin noted: "The food issue is in a terrible state.

¹⁴MIIA, Fund 4, List 1, File 551, P. 65.

¹⁵Bessarabian Life, 1917, July 21, No. 177.

¹⁶Aftenyuk, S. (ed.) (1964) *Revolucionnoe dvizhenie v 1917 godu i ustanovlenie Sovetskoj vlasti v Moldavii* [The revolutionary movement in 1917 and the establishment of Soviet power in Moldova]. Kishinev. P. 77.

¹⁷Free Bessarabia, 1917, September 12, No. 123.

¹⁸Bessarabian Life, 1917, May 21, No. 127.

¹⁹Free Bessarabia, 1917, May 12, No. 29.

There is no bread on the market, but only speculators sell it".²⁰ Later, they reported from Khotin that "the county is surviving an acute flour crisis. In many places, people have to go hungry due to lack of flour".²¹

Public committees formed after the February Revolution tried to resist such predatory steps and interfered actively in the activities of cooperatives that were in charge of procuring food for the army and the urban population. In response to this, in June 1917 the Ministry of Internal Affairs sent an explanation to Bessarabia, in which it was stated:

- the activity of cooperatives for the procurement of food products for the army and the population were not subjected to control by local public committees;
- intervention of the latter hampered the work of cooperatives and caused discord in the food matters;
- control over the activity of cooperatives for the procurement of food belonged only to the Ministry of Food.

In the wake of events that took place after the February Revolution in Russia, "anti-alcohol" regulations in Bessarabia, introduced since 1914, began to be violated.²² For example, wine trade was noticed in Ackerman in March 1917.²³ According to the governor-general in the same period, "women in the villages are wearing metal hot-water bottles filled with alcohol under the dress, which they secretly sell".²⁴

To restore order, on March 31, 1917, Bessarabian provincial commissar K. Mimi forbade any sale of wine, both retail and wholesale, from cellars and wine shops, as well as in hospitals, hotels and restaurants.²⁵ The local government and the police, which replaced the royal gendarmes, had the duty to monitor the fact that

²⁰Bereznyakov, N.V. (ed.) (1957). *Bor'ba za vlast' sovetov v Moldavii (mart 1917 – mart 1918): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [The struggle for the power of the Soviets in Moldova (March 1917 - March 1918): Collection of documents and materials]. Kishinev. P. 96.

²¹Free Bessarabia, 1917, November 5, No. 157.

²²Tatarynov, I. (2014). Antyalkoholni zakhody v Bessarabskii hubernii u 1914-1915 rr. [Anti-alcohol measures in Bessarabia province in 1914-1915]. *Scientific notes of the Ternopil national pedagogical university named after Vladimir Gnatyuk. Series: History*. Ternopil. (1). P. 38.

²³MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P. 95.

²⁴MIIA, Fund 292, List 1, File 233, P. 8.

²⁵Ibid. P. 91.

there was no place for wine trade even during the holidays. However, there was no longer any complete control over the situation.²⁶

In the late summer of 1917, cases of people who appeared drunk on the streets became more frequent. The response to this phenomenon was the intensification of “anti-alcohol measures”. Henceforth “for the appearance in a public place in the state of an obvious alcoholic intoxication, the guilty persons were subjected to a monetary sanction of up to 300 rubles or imprisonment for a period from 2 months to 1 year and 6 months or to arrest for more than 3 years”.²⁷

In addition to the decree of March 31, 1917, the provincial commissar issued another one on September, 13 of the same year. To prevent and suppress any attempts to disrupt the order and peace due to the sale of alcohol and drunkenness, any sale of wine within Chisinau and the province was banned. In case of revealing infringements, the culprit was punished, and wine was destroyed on the spot.²⁸

The new revolutionary local government also took certain steps to fight with the alcohol trade. For example, on August 25, 1917, the Committee Board of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ of Bolgrad had raised the issue of prohibition of the production of wine. The chief of staff of the 6th Army L. Radus-Zenkovich ordered the creation of a special commission for this purpose, chaired by the chief of the stage and economic department of the army headquarters with the participation of 2-3 local residents.²⁹

On September 23, 1917 in Bolgrad, a joint meeting of the executive committee of public organizations and the municipal council was held, at which such decision was made: “All the wine in the city is to be registered, special commissions are to be created for this purpose. The latter have to inspect all the wine stores of winemakers in the town”. In early October 1917, such a commission under the leadership of Colonel B. Stankevich was established under the quartermaster of the 6th Army. It included town representatives as well as the military.³⁰

However, such moderate steps did not lead to the necessary changes. As a result, on October 29, 1917, unknown people defeated the wine storage in Bolgrad, and riots began. On the same day, local authorities resorted to more serious steps. The following order was issued: “To establish order in the town and prevent excesses that can violate the normal life of the town in the future, the Bolgrad Public

²⁶MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P.270.

²⁷MIIA, Fund 2, List 1, File 705, P.1.

²⁸Ibid. P. 2.

²⁹Ibid. P. 5.

³⁰MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P. 35, 41.

Security Committee states that those guilty of the vodka storage and its sale, as well as those convicted of instigating riots, will be tried, and local residents will also be expelled from the area where the troops are disposed”.³¹

The situation in neighboring Izmail was much more peaceful. Therefore local authorities tried to legalize the sale of alcohol. At that time, there were two clubs in the town – a casino and a public meeting. Military men from troops located in the vicinity visited them. These clubs were the only places for the rest and leisure for them after returning from positions. Using the order for the 6th Army from October 13, 1917, which allowed to release 1/8 of a bottle of wine per person per day, self-government of Izmail appealed to the Bessarabian provincial commissar with a request to allow the sale of wine in the clubs “exclusively serving it to the table with food”. According to the local administration, this request could solve two tasks: all the stocks of wine in the area of the city would be destroyed with the troops, and the members of the clubs would subsidize the local budget. However, on November 9 of the same year, the provincial commissar reported to Izmail about the impossibility to satisfy such a petition.³²

After the February Revolution, as well as throughout the country, new revolutionary bodies of power began to be created in Bessarabia – the Soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies. From March 21 to 26, the Soviets of Workers' Deputies were created in Bendery, Chisinau, and by May they acted in all district cities and in many cities of the region. In the military garrisons, the large number of which in the province was determined by closeness of the Romanian front, Soviets of soldier's deputies were created and in the county centers Soviets of peasant deputies were formed. In the summer of 1917, the united executive committees of the Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants' deputies were created in some counties. The programs of the Soviets included the struggle to establish an 8-hour working day, improve working conditions, raise wages, democratize the army, liquidate landowner tenure and land transfer to peasants.

The main role in the councils was played by the Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, the Jewish parties “The Bund” and “Poalei Zion”. Until the late autumn of 1917, the Bolsheviks did not have independent political entities in Bessarabia, but they were part of the united social democratic organizations. The Soviets, consisting of representatives of parties that entered the coalition of the Interim Government, pursued a policy of containing the masses, sought to return the revolution to the mainstream of reforms.

³¹ Ibid. P. 41.

³² MIIA, Fund 2, List 1, File 705, P. 11, 15.

Due to the struggle against the speech of General L. Kornilov, under the pressure of public opinion, the provincial and Bender district commissars were removed. Under the Chisinau Council, a Committee for the Protection of the Revolution was created and it was headed by the bolshevik A. Volkov. Many Soviets demanded the immediate arrest and trial of L. Kornilov with his henchmen. The II County Congress of Peasants, which was held in Chisinau on September 9-13 sentenced "Kornilovism" too. The congress was attended by the representatives of the county executive committee of peasant deputies, the Central Moldovan Military Executive Committee and Rumcheroda (the executive committee of the Soviets of the Romanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and Odessa region), which also included Bessarabia. The delegates spoke against the coalition of the Soviets with the Interim Government, for the transferring all power to the Soviets, for the immediate conclusion of a democratic peace. They decided to organize the Councils regulation of the distribution of basic necessities and to provide and organize cooperatives, bakeries and shops for this purpose.³³

In March 1917, a group of intelligentsia – V. Stroescu, V. Gore, V. Herz, P. Halippa – united around the Cuvântul Moldovenesc newspaper and announced the creation of a new Moldavian National Party (MNP). Members of the Moldavian party joined it. This Party also united the Moldovan military in Odessa, led by Captain E. Catelli. Under the influence of the national movement, the party formulated some principles of administrative-territorial autonomy between the Prut and the Dniester.

The program task proclaimed the creation of the Moldavian autonomy within the Russian Federation. In order to strengthen and increase the role of MNEs in society organizationally, the Central Moldovan Military Executive Committee (CMMEC) was formed in Chisinau in June 1917 from the representatives of soldiers' committees. Before the general election to the Constituent Assembly, the governing body (legislative and representative) Sfatul Tsarij was formed, which included 120 representatives of Bessarabian political public organizations.³⁴

In general, it is worth noting that the local administration managed to maintain order in Bessarabia. However, everything had radically changed after the October Revolution and the overthrow of the Provisional Government. At this time, the army, taken to extremes due to poor supplies, began to get out of the control of

³³ Zhukov, V. I. (ed.) (1987). *Istoricheskoe znachenie prisoedineniya Bessarabii i levoberezhnogo Podnestrov'ya k Rossii* [The historical significance of the accession of Bessarabia and the left-bank Transnistria to Russia]. Kishinev: 1987. P. 261.

³⁴ Repida, L. (2008). *Suverennaya Moldova: istoriya i sovremennost'* [Sovereign Moldova: history and modernity]. Kishinev: Inst. Patrimonial. P. 109.

the command. The soldiers left their positions massively and went home. At the end of 1917, many deserters from the Romanian front flooded Bessarabia and looting had begun. To avoid this, in some districts rural volosts were ordered to organize armed self-defense. The local intellectuals had to gather healthy people into “national self-protection”. Everyone took weapons and rose to defend their settlements. It was noted in the order that “because of anarchy and decay, without getting food and clothes, the army of the Romanian front left the front... the cold and hungry army in search of shelter and food can sweep away all the towns and villages in anger, as it had already happened”. It was recommended to convene rural gatherings immediately and to start organizing stations to feed the troops that could pass through the villages. Each conscious peasant should be given 5-10 poods of wheat to make bread to the soldiers who could come to “be greeted hospitably and peacefully peace”.³⁵

The military command did not admit the power of the Bolsheviks. The reorganization of armed formations in order to reassign them to local authorities began. For example, on November 11, 1917, the Committee of National Commissars of the Sixth Army decided: all Bessarabian officers, soldiers, doctors, officials and members of a militia unit who were on leave or on medical treatment within Akkerman and Izmail districts, should immediately appear in Akkerman and Bolgrad to join the newly formed Bessarabian regiments. The main aim of these formations was to protect the property and security of citizens of the Bessarabian province “from violence and robberies covering the native land”. These officials were to arrive to Bolgrad to the Commander of the Novobessarabsky Regiment (Aleksandrovskaya Street), or to Ackerman to the commander of the 227th Ukrainian Reserve Regiment (Dumbrzova Street). The Akkerman Infantry Regiment was formed from them.³⁶

The victory of the Bolshevik coup was regarded as a threat not only by national organizations, but also by organizations of all-Russian parties that had a majority in the Soviets of Bessarabia. These organizations represented the interests of the petite bourgeoisie. They believed that the fate of the country should be decided by the Constituent Assembly. Representing the interests of the social lower classes, the Bolsheviks opposed private property; they put forward the slogans of creating a society of universal equality and social justice.

These circumstances contributed to the unification of all anti-Bolshevik forces. On November 9, 1917, the Chisinau Committee for the Protection of the

³⁵ MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105, P. 269.

³⁶ MIIA, Fund 782, List 1, File 3, P. 22.

Revolution and the Constituent Assembly was created and included the representatives of the Chisinau Executive Committee (body of the Interim Government), the provincial executive committee of the Soviets of the RS and SD, the Central Military Museum, the Moldovan Military Congress, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, the Bund, the Chisinau city Duma, provincial zemstvo, as well as county committees for the protection of the revolution.³⁷

In November, political parties, local governments and national organizations nominated their representatives to Sfatul Tsariy. On December 4, 1917 the first meeting was opened. It adopted the Declaration on the Establishment of the Moldavian Democratic Republic. The composition of the government was approved – a 9-person board of directors headed by P. Erhal.

On December 15, 1917, Sfatul Tsarij proclaimed Bessarabia the Moldavian Democratic Republic, equal in rights as part of the united Russian Democratic Federal Republic.³⁸ Bessarabian province, as one of the administrative regions of Russia, ceased to exist.

Conclusions

We can make a conclusion on the basis of an analysis of archival documents that in 1917 the Bessarabian authorities took a number of actions aimed at maintaining order in one of the key front-line provinces of Russia. In general, they managed to control the public attitudes in the region. The region was filled with deserters and Bolshevik subdivisions. Under such circumstances, the fragile order, maintained during the Provisional Government, was completely destroyed. It should be noted that the declared subject matter requires further investigation with the involvement of new archival sources.

³⁷ Caranov, V. K (ed.) (2002). *Istoriya Respubliki Moldova s drevnejshih vremen do nashih dnei* [History of the Republic of Moldova from the Ancient Times to the Present]. Kishinev: Elan Poligraf. P.180-181

³⁸ Nazariya, S. (2013). *Sfatul Cerij, "ob'edinenie" s Rumyniej i otnoshenie k nemu moldavan i nacmen'shinstv Bessarabii (1917-1918 gg.)* [Sfatul Tsarii, "unification" with Romania and the attitude towards it of the Moldavians and of the national minorities of Bessarabia (1917-1918)]. *Rusin.* (33). P. 140-141. <https://doi.org/10.17223/18572685/33/10>

Bibliography

Aftenyuk, S. (ed.). (1964) *Revolucionnoe dvizhenie v 1917 godu i ustanovlenie Sovetskoj vlasti v Moldavii* [The revolutionary movement in 1917 and the establishment of Soviet power in Moldova]. Kishinev.

Bereznyakov, N.V. (ed.). (1957). *Bor'ba za vlast' sovetov v Moldavii (mart 1917 – mart 1918): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [The struggle for the power of the Soviets in Moldova (March 1917 - March 1918): Collection of documents and materials]. Kishinev, 1957.

Bessarabian Life, 1917, July 21, No. 177.

Bessarabian Life, 1917, May 21, No. 127

Caranov, V. K (ed.) (2002). *Istoriya Respubliki Moldova s drevnejshih vremen do nashih dnei* [History of the Republic of Moldova from the Ancient Times to the Present]. Kishinev: Elan Poligraf.

Drozdov, V. (2016). Defitsyt spozhyvchykh tovariv u mistakh Pivdennoi Bessarabii v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny [Consumer Goods Deficiency in Southern Bessarabia During the First World War]. *Izmail State Humanities University Scientific Bulletin*. (34).

Free Bessarabia, 1917, May 12, No. 29.

Free Bessarabia, 1917, November 5, No. 157.

Free Bessarabia, 1917, September 12, No. 123.

Municipal institution “Izmail archive” (further MIIA), Fund 2, List 1, File 705.

MIIA, Fund 292, List 1, File 233.

MIIA, Fund 4, List 1, File 551.

MIIA, Fund 779, List 1, File 105.

MIIA, Fund 782, List 1, File 3.

National Archives of the Republic of Moldova, Fund 2, List 1, File 9435.

Nazariya, S. (2013). *Sfatul Cerij, “ob'edinenie” s Rumyniej i otnoshenie k nemu moldavan i nacmen'shinstv Bessarabii (1917-1918 gg.)* [Sfatul Tsarii, “unification” with Romania and the attitude towards it of Moldavians and national minorities of Bessarabia (1917-1918)]. *Rusin*. (33). <https://doi.org/10.17223/18572685/33/10>

Os'kin, M. V. (2018). Raspad i demobilizaciya Rumynskogo fronta zimoz 1917-1918 g.: mezhdru krasnymi, belymi i interventami. *Rusin*. (53). <https://doi.org/10.17223/18572685/53/5>

Os'kin, M. V. (2019). Demobilizaciya Rumynskogo fronta zimoy 1917–1918 g. i sud'ba russkogo voennogo imushchestva v Moldavii i Bessarabii [Demobilization of the Romanian Front in the winter of 1917–1918 and the fate of Russian military property in Moldova and Bessarabia]. *RUDN Journal of Russian History*. (18). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8674-2019-18-1-31-49>

Reient, O.P. & Serdiuk, O.V. (2004). *Persha svitova viina i Ukraina* [World War I and Ukraine]. K.: Heneza.

Repida, L. (2008) *Suverennaya Moldova: istoriya i sovremennost'* [Sovereign Moldova: history and modernity]. Kishinev: Inst. Patrimonial.

Tatarynov, I. (2014). Antyalkoholni zakhody v Bessarabskii hubernii u 1914-1915 rr. [Anti-alcohol measures in Bessarabia province in 1914-1915]. *Scientific notes of the Ternopil national pedagogical university named after Vladimir Gnatyuk. Series: History*. Ternopil. (1).

Tatarynov, I. (2014). Osoblyvosti viiskovoho stanu v Bessarabskii hubernii (1914-1915 rr.) [Features of martial law in Bessarabia province (1914-1915)]. *Black sea. Scientific journal of academic research*. Tbilisi. (10).

Tsyhanenko, L. (2015). Dunaiska ekspedytsiia osoblyvoho pryznachennia na pochatkovomu etapi Pershoi svitovoi viiny [Danube Special Purpose Expedition at the First Stage of the First World War]. *Challenges and Prospects for the Development of Science at the Beginning of the Third Millennium in Europe and Asia*. Pereiaslav-Khmelynskyi.

Zhukov, V. I. (ed.). (1987). *Istoricheskoe znachenie prisoedineniya Bessarabii i levoberezhnogo Podnestrov'ya k Rossii* [The historical significance of the accession of Bessarabia and the left-bank Transnistria to Russia]. Kishinev: 1987.