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Time for Change

When analyzing socio-economic processes, one cannot ignore the factor of time, which reflects the change in the objects under study and their interrelations in the dynamics. The concept of time in economics is ambiguous. There is, for example, time, which characterizes the current state of the processes of creation (provision) of certain products and services; there is time of implementation of major projects and decisions, often counted in decades; there is time of transformational shifts and transformations, here already counted in many decades; there is time of civilizational processes, measured over centuries. Each period has its own economic and social assets and, accordingly, its own approaches to decision-making procedures for socio-economic development and to their evaluation. The degree of certainty of knowledge and understanding of the phenomena and processes under consideration also differ.

As it seems, in the example of a unique natural object, which is the "glorious sea, the sacred Baikal", we have a visual confirmation of the problems arising from the inconsistency and mismatch of different times, each of which has its own approaches to the analysis and evaluation of assets, and, accordingly, to the formation of economic policy measures. The latter nowadays are distinguished by a clear and increasing shift from a purely economic (commercial) assessment of the effectiveness of decisions to the determination of environmental, economic and social sustainability of objects and subsystems, which are, in our case, "in the field of influence" of the state and dynamics of Lake Baikal.

The transition from one time to another is a complex, multidimensional and very ambiguous process, which is often associated with the withdrawal from circulation of those assets that were created under completely different conditions, in particular – under the influence of goals and objectives of accelerated industrial development of the period of building the foundations of communism.

This is exactly how a unique complex of energy facilities – the Angaro-Yenisei Hydropower Plants Cascade – and large energy-intensive production facilities closely connected with them (as a rule, quite simple conversion operations, such as production of non-ferrous metals, cellulose and other electricity-intensive large-capacity

products) was once created. Today's attempts to consider and find the "optimal solution to the multi-criteria problem" related to the sustainable environmental and economic development of the Lake Baikal area are, perhaps, a priori doomed to failure. The main reason is the search for a solution within the framework and constraints of assets created to function in a completely different economic reality (or another economic time).

This does not mean that it does not make sense to set and solve such problems. In our opinion, it is not only appropriate, but essential. (the paper by V. I. Zorkaltsev, A. D. Kalikhman, T. P. Kalikhman, V. N. Sinyukovich). The modern approach to solving this problem is based not so much on shifting the emphasis in regulating the level of Lake Baikal from energy priorities to environmental ones, as on the formation of fundamentally different procedures of interaction (the paper by Yu. P. Voronov).

A key feature of the current situation, conditioned by the dynamics of socio-economic processes and awareness of the importance of preserving the purity of planet Earth for the further life of mankind, is the increasing importance and role of contractual relations, involving all interested parties in the process of resolving difficult, ambiguous and very often conflicting situations.

Unfortunately, numerous examples of subsequent "fateful" decisions made at the federal level about the long-suffering Lake Baikal illustrate a clear disregard for these principles (the paper of V. V. Kolmogorov and L. E. Khalyapin, as well as the paper of Academician A. K. Tulohonov).

Effective solutions to unravel the complex tangle of "sacred sea" problems lie, above all, in the way of forming procedures for interaction and resolution of conflict situations. In turn, the processes of discussion within the framework of these procedures and the adoption of the final qualified decisions must be based on a thorough scientific study and support. Alas, the practice of trying to solve the pressing problems of Lake Baikal is dominated by two principles – prescriptive and inertial.

The first one is connected with the outdated tradition of administrative prescriptions according to the principle "do and act only so". The second is associated with the orientation to the system of technological relations, which emerged in another economic time (industrial and "communist"). Issues of temporal alignment are

neither addressed nor discussed. A technocratic, prescriptive approach prevails in relation to Lake Baikal and the definition of its level regimes. The reasons are the complexity of the problem itself and the lack of appropriate specialists among those who are mainly involved in the process of discussing and preparing "fateful" decisions, as well as their subsequent implementation.

As a vivid example of the destructive influence of inertia in solving complex "water-energy problems", it is quite appropriate to refer to the experience of development of the Tennessee Valley in the USA: "The largest public construction project in the 1930s was the Tennessee Basin Authority (TVA). The TVA program included the construction of a series of dams and hydroelectric plants that provided cheap electricity and fertilizer to the people of the Tennessee River Basin…

But the TVA program created two kinds of problems. First, the concentration of benefits to the 2% of the population living in the Tennessee Basin was inevitably achieved by taxing the remaining 98%…Moreover…Tennessee lagged behind neighboring states in economic development for 50 years because…electricity subsidies encouraged many Tennesseans to stay in their small farms, not to change their lifestyles.

There's more: as industrialization went faster in states without TVA, it increased revenues and the market for urban electricity. As a result, even electricity sales were higher in states without TVA. Finally, TVA has flooded hundreds of thousands of acres of land in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama… Sometimes, as in the case of TVA, the subsidy prevents its recipient from developing to achieve better results."[1].

The difference between the Angaro-Yenisei HPP cascade and TVA, perhaps, is only that in our case "2% of the population" should be understood as the owners and beneficiaries of aluminum, polymetallic and pulp and paper assets. No new areas of economic activity over the past decades have been formed in the zone of their influence – until now, several decades later, there is a strengthening of the role and importance of project assets of the industrialization era. At the same time, the growth of these assets (such as Boguchanskaya HPP,

[1] *Folsom B.* A New Deal or a Crooked Path? How Did F. Roosevelt's Economic Policy Prolong the Great Depression? / B. Folsom: Translated from English by A. Plisova, ed. by A. Kuryaev. Moscow: Thought, 2012. 352 p. [P. 127–129].

pulp and paper industry enterprises) steadily leads to degradation of the natural environment and reduction of forest plantation area. With such inertia in the structure of the economy and employment of the population, it is difficult to argue about the possibility of an "optimal" (rather, acceptable) solution to the difficult task of sustainable socio-economic development of the adjacent territory.

"The time of change," which we all felt again acutely in 2022, urgently requires a "departure" from the outdated "rut of the past. Knowledge, understanding, cooperation and collaboration – these concepts are on everyone's lips today. The question of achieving an acceptable result in the interests of both current and future generations of Siberians, as well as all Russians and humanity as a whole, is more critical than ever.

Editor in chief of 'ECO'  V.A. Kryukov