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Initiative of Zemstvo Liberal Opposition in the Chernihiv Governorate to Educate Population in the 1870s

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Abstract

The article deals with policy of zemstvo liberal opposition in the Chernihiv Governorate to educate population. Some historical sources are first-ever used in research. From authors' perspective, the zemstvo liberal party of the Chernihiv Governorate possessed a firm and well-grounded policy to develop public education among local uyezds, which was supported by corresponding legal acts. The historical analysis reflects the conceptual approach for the zemstvo liberal opposition to settle education as a relevant social issue. Firstly, a document was considered to define progressive initiatives and resource provision. Secondly, the paper was submitted to self-government authorities within the zemstvo liberal party of the Chernihiv Governorate. They argued and defended the considered ideas. Such an approach succeeded in an effective educational reforming by the zemstvo opposition.

Keywords: zemstvo liberal party, Chernihiv Governorate, zemstvo institutions, public education, educational policy, educational reform.

1. Introduction

History of the zemstvo liberal movement on Ukrainian north-east lands in the second part of the 19th century is topical and requires new study. In particular, that concerns the humanities policy. Education priorities of the Chernihiv Governorate are still not researched in detail.

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However, in one of our previous articles, we represented an education policy foundation laid by local zemstvo liberals in the second half of the 1860s (Kotelnitsky, 2023b). Therefore, the current article reveals the conceptual basis of education policy among zemstvo liberals of the Chernihiv Governorate in the 1870s.

2. Materials and methods

The article is based on protocols, regulations and records of zemstvo meetings in the Chernihiv Governorate. Such sources were taken from the Chernihiv State Archive, the V. Tarnovskyi Chernihiv Historical Museum and the Kyiv Central State Historical Archive. Some of sources are first-ever used in research.

The authors apply general scientific and special historical methods. The former deals with analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, description. The latter comprises history comparison and problem chronology.

Analysis and synthesis defined the essence and relevance of historical events and processes in education development. Induction and deduction collected a set of empirical materials to explain research principles. Factual data provided theoretical statements while scientific conclusions were argued and illustrated with historical materials. The description method reviewed participation of zemstvo liberals in a large-scale education development within the Chernihiv Governorate in the 1870s.

History comparison determined the activities of local aristocratic opposition in the public education sphere with assessment of practical achievements. The problem chronology method produced a general idea of zemstvo liberal imperatives in public education (within its chronological sequence and logical completeness).

3. Discussion

First publications on zemstvo liberalism in the pre-revolution historiography emerged at the 20th century beginning. They reviewed respective main political events in the Russian Empire liberation (Belokonskij, 1910; Belokonskij, 1914; Veselovskij, 1905; Veselovskij, 1911).

Because of ideological and political reasons, the Soviet history science did not research the zemstvo liberal movement for a long time. It was only in the 1970s when fundamental investigations were conducted to analyze the opposition movement in terms of origin, ideological and social basis, policies and staff. Nevertheless, the Soviet historiography (like the pre-revolution one) was not aware of an urgent need to study different directions of this movement and subsequent branch policies (Itenberg, 1983; Katrenko, 1975; Petrov, 1976; Pirumova, 1977). Such limited publications remain relevant and define topicality among young historians.

With no solving entirely the above-mentioned issues, foreign researchers contributed significantly to studying philosophical paradigms of zemstvo liberalism and national composition of opposition movement (Morgun, 1969; Timberlake, 1972). After the Soviet Union collapse, Ukrainian and Russian historians started focusing on the zemstvo liberalism. However, in new ideological conditions, researchers confined themselves only to case study of opposition movement with no aim to analyze branch activities and respective policies (Katrenko, 1994; Katrenko, 2001; Mojsijenko, 1999; Red'kina, 2002; Sekirinskij, 1999).

Within the modern historiography, a detailed research of zemstvo liberalism in Northern Ukraine has been launched only recently.

As an example, we can mention works by S. Degtyarev, A. Ziakun, N. Kotelnitsky, A. Lebid (Kotelnitsky, 2020; Kotelnitsky, 2021; Kotelnitsky, Degtyarev, 2022; Kotelnitsky et al., 2022; Kotelnitsky, 2023a; Lebid, Kotelnitsky, 2022; Lebid et al., 2023). These publications were first to investigate clerical policies of zemstvo liberals, the 1864 zemstvo reform, the Jewish issue, the opposition role in female education, the Russian despotism repressions against local aristocratic oppositionists, the Ukrainian question importance for the liberal party itself.

Yet, humanitarian policies of the zemstvo liberal party in the Chernihiv Governorate still require detailed research of public education. Therefore, historiography of the Ukrainian zemstvo liberalism lacks for high-quality and substantial publications to provide the domestic historical science with new knowledge.

4. Results

The 1870s beginning was marked with revolutionary achievements of zemstvo liberals for education policies. In January 1870, the Regulation on Teaching Seminary was drafted to unfold an institution in Chernihiv. The paper was prepared by local zemstvo authorities whose members were usually liberals. It was sent for consideration to all 15 zemstvos of the Chernihiv Governorate. Let us review the document content.

Since its founding, the Chernihiv Teaching Seminary was proclaimed a zemstvo institution exclusively. It had to be controlled by zemstvo authorities, funded via state budget and situated in a zemstvo building. It was mainly peasants who were going to study free of charge with personal scholarships from zemstvo authorities. Thus, a group of up to 50 students had to be selected. The institution supervision and inspection were a responsibility of zemstvo authority representatives. The seminary education course was three years. Annually, the institution was checked by the Public Education Ministry of the Russian Empire. The staff consisted of five zemstvo officials: a headmaster, three teachers and a technical worker.

The headmaster was elected by the Chernihiv Governorate zemstvo authorities among skilled persons with higher education. The decision was approved by the Kyiv Educational District. The same concerned elections of seminary teachers (with a requirement of higher or incomplete higher education). Secular teachers were approved by the Kyiv Educational District. Positions of religion educators were confirmed by the Chernihiv Governorate Episcopate. The headmaster was assigned and resigned via resolutions of the Kyiv Educational District. Employment of teachers were regulated by zemstvo authorities. To settle issues of strategic development of the teaching seminary, there was a consulting organization – the Seminary Board. Its participants were the headmaster, all teachers and a zemstvo authority representative.

The seminary admitted students above 16 years of age. They were referred by the Chernihiv Governorate zemstvos. Students from all governorate uyezds had to be educated in equal proportions. Zemstvos provided their students with scholarships to cover their livelihood needs. Having finished the education course, graduates returned to their uyezds for employment as elementary school teachers. To select the best seminary applicants, examinations were held for entrants. Students could also get education via commercial contacts. The corresponding applications were submitted directly the Seminary Board. Unfortunately, the draft regulation did not provide for a dormitory. Students lived with relatives or rented accommodations in Chernihiv.

Seminary graduates were awarded with personal certificates from zemstvo authorities of the Chernihiv Governorate. Having been funded for study from zemstvo budgets, they had to work as school employees in local uyezds for at least 3 years. Otherwise, graduates paid back 2,400 roubles, a full cost of money spent for their education (calculated as three annual scholarships of 800 roubles). If graduates had worked on such school positions for over 6 years, they got preferences from uezd institutions. For example, a 300-rouble commercial credit (recovered via 10-year installments) to satisfy personal needs and annual salary supplements up to 120 roubles.

Also, the document provided for annual salaries among the teaching seminary workers: headmaster – 1,500 roubles, religion teacher – 600 roubles, secular teachers – 2,000 roubles, music teacher – 100 roubles (ZCHZ, 1870, №5: 124-133). It is worth saying that the Chernihiv Teaching Seminary was unfolded in 1871 as a leading institution to train educators of elementary and public schools.

In September 1870, the Borzna Zemstvo Assembly adopted a draft reform to create an elementary education system. It was submitted for consideration by I. Petrunkevych, the leader of zemstvo liberals in Left-Bank Ukraine. The aim was to establish the Borzna Uezd School Fund for promoting elementary education. The idea was realized via taxation of each land tithe. Higher assets meant higher taxes. Also, money was deposited in banks. Such principles allowed the Chernihiv opposition to secure a regular income for the Borzna budget. These annual bank interests were used to create an elementary school in each uezd village. With 60 schools, the Borzna zemstvo was one of the most successful regions in the Chernihiv Governorate education. The progress lasted for many years while the uezd education itself functioned independently from that of other governorate communities (Kotelniysky, 2012: 74-76).

Zemstvo liberals succeeded in future as well. On 26 April 1871, the special session of the Borzna Uezd Assembly considered a report of liberal opposition. It concerned the Draft Instructions for Zemstvo School Headmasters. The authors were zemstvo liberals M. Imshenetskyi and N. Volk-Karachevskyi. Let us analyze the act.

The instructions regarded zemstvo schools as free-of-charge educational institutions for males and females of all social classes and confessions. Children studied from 9 years of age in the daytime. Illiterate adults could study from 16 years of age in winter evenings or on weekends and holidays during the whole year.

Both rural communities, volosts and private individuals could unfold elementary schools. The document offered to divide the Borzna Uezd into separate educational districts led by members of the teaching board from zemstvo institutions. These officials inspected district schools and accounted to the uezd assembly for education conditions. Each district school had an elected warden with inspecting duties.

The act made uezd authorities transfer tax and charge interests to the school fund. The money was converted into bank securities with the highest commercial profit. Alternatively, lands were bought for lease and subsequent income to the school fund. Via the collected money, local authorities and zemstvo officials were supposed to build one school annually in any uezd area. Allocated from the Borzna budget within education per year, 15,000 roubles were divided into two parts. 8,000 roubles were invested in school fund securities. 7,000 roubles were used to finance all needs of uezd educational institutions.

The pedagogic school staff was approved by resolutions of the uezd teaching board. Applicants were proposed by the uezd authority for intelligentsia employment. In case of several applicants, there could also be a contest when people demonstrated their skills within test lessons and written tasks.

Teachers worked for the whole academic year on the 6-hour-daily basis. They arranged study schedules as well. Curricula were compiled by the pedagogic staff for three years with lessons on non-agrarian days. The instructions focused on no using physical or other punishment for students. Curricula required approvals by members of the uezd teaching board. Each curriculum comprised the following subjects as a great educational force: Law of God, Russian language and literature, Slavic literature, basic mathematics, choir service, music.

The draft ensured a 200-rouble monthly salary for teachers. It was paid by zemstvo authorities. Besides, teachers were provided with a municipal service accommodation. There were supplements and rewards: 30 roubles monthly for over 60 children at school. In case of over 100 students, a teacher assistant was assigned with a 120-rouble annual salary. For each 5 years in office, there was a 50-rouble seniority pay. It could be also replaced by agricultural products. Via the Borzna budget, the zemstvo authorities could encourage teachers with extra 25-100 roubles.

The uezd library was free of charge for teachers and students. It gave knowledge, provided students with books and exhibited the latest scientific achievements in school subjects. Each summer, there was a pedagogical congress called by the uezd teaching board as a methodological conference. Teachers were granted a travelling and per diem allowance.

After consideration, the Borzna Uezd Assembly unanimously adopted the Instructions Act with a zemstvo authority duty to implement it (ZBZ, 1871, №3: 64-84).

Local zemstvo liberals conducted the same progressive policy in municipal self-government institutions. They were elected by the population majority as дума and council officials.

On 5 April 1872, the Chernihiv City Дума considered the school performance issue. V. Khyzhniakov, the city head and a liberal opposition member, spoke on the unsatisfactory school work: Chernihiv residents did not acquire an adequate elementary education. He noted an increasing education demand, which set an idea to create Sunday classes for illiterate adults. Within city schools, these classes were taught by experts for salary from local authorities.

Moreover, V. Khyzhniakov offered certain annual remunerations from the city budget: 100 roubles (teachers), 50 roubles (Law of God educators). Extra annual cash was granted to cover study needs: 50 roubles (learning materials) and 100 roubles (lease of premises). According to V. Khyzhniakov, the general budget of Sunday classes was up to 500 roubles annually. To supervise and inspect classes, an authorized person was elected. Annually, he reported on Sunday class activities during the дума session.

Finally, the Chernihiv municipal дума made the following decisions:

1. To create Sunday classes at municipal schools for adults (on the trial basis);
2. To develop Sunday class curriculum (V. Khyzhniakov as the author);
3. To charge city authorities with an application to the Chernihiv Uezd Teaching Board for the Sunday class unfolding;
4. To entrust the municipal дума to equip Sunday classes with necessary facilities.

Having not approved any financing issues of Sunday classes, V. Khyzhniakov as a city head allocated cash from his salary paid by the local authorities (SPCD, 1883: 79-80). Therefore, zemstvo liberals funded public education on the charity basis if there was no alternative way.

The Sosnytsia Zemstvo contributed significantly to the public education development. Here, the main liberal was O. Karpynskiy. On 26 September 1871, the Sosnytsia Uezd Assembly approved his proposal to reform the elementary education system like that in the Borzna region. Among his plans, there were the following ideas:

1. To comprehend the public education conditions in the Sosnytsia Uezd;
2. To offer peasant communities to unfold elementary schools and service infrastructure via zemstvo budget money as a seed capital;
3. To create four public schools in volosts in affordable circumstances;
4. To inform the Chernihiv Governorate authorities about the Sosnytsia Uezd interest in training elementary teachers. Therefore, the zemstvo budget had to grant three annual 80-rouble scholarships for future educators at the Chernihiv Teaching Seminary.

O. Karpynskiy initiatives displeased assembly conservatives who noted the weak uezd development and budget deficit. Alternatively, they offered a corporate noble education when aristocrats had more financial resources to support educational institutions.

From O. Karpynskiy's perspective, such a position is unacceptable. Elementary schools must be affordable for peasants as well. As the main zemstvo electorate and taxpayers, they should be supported in terms of getting education.

After consideration of O. Karpynskiy's ideas, the Sosnytsia Uezd Assembly resolved:

1. To recognize the public education development as a zemstvo economics priority;
2. To charge zemstvo authorities and peasant communities with unfolding elementary schools in all possible volosts;
3. To grant more zemstvo scholarships for recruiting teachers at uezd public schools;
4. To approve the Sosnytsia education monthly salaries: 200 roubles (educators), 30 roubles (religion teacher). 70 monthly roubles were also given to buy learning materials;
5. To allocate 100 roubles for creating a trade class at the Mena Public School;
6. To prepare a zemstvo resolution to establish the annual pedagogic courses and the Sosnytsia Women's Progymnasium (Bushtedt, 1893: 93-99).

The zemstvo opposition made also a great contribution to public education when the Petrushyn Public School was created in the Chernihiv Governorate. O. Karpynskiy became the draft author and lobbyist because the village of Petrushyn was his "dynastic nest".

On 4 June 1874, the Kyiv Educational District warden received a note from O. Karpynskiy (as the Petrushyn peasant community representative). He applied for unfolding a 2-grade public school in the village. His initiative was explained as following a successful example of created 1-grade public schools in the Sosnytsia Uezd villages with a 550-rouble annual budget. He focused on progressive development of public education in this uezd whose general annual budget was 10,000 roubles (CGIAK. F. 707. Op. 225. D. 119: 7-8ob.). At the same time, the Petrushyn school budget was up to 915 roubles annually (CGIAK. F. 707. Op. 225. D. 119: 2).

On 5 October 1874, the headmaster of public schools in the Chernihiv Governorate informed that he did not object to the draft resolution on the Petrushyn Public School. Simultaneously, the Petrushyn peasant community was charged with insuring school facilities and covering administrative expenses. The community consented to such conditions.

The Chernihiv zemstvo authorities allocated 400 roubles to unfold the Petrushyn Public School. The peasant community collected 2,000 roubles for erecting the institution: 600 roubles – private donations; 300 roubles – Chernihiv zemstvo credit; 300 roubles – peasant taxes and duties; other money – charity (CGIAK. F. 707. Op. 225. D. 119: 23). Before construction, the institution was located in the house of aristocrat A. Shukhytskyi.

On 18 January 1875, the Public School Department within the Russian Empire Education Ministry sent a letter to the Kyiv Educational District warden. Signed by the education minister, the document reported on the State Treasury allocating 515 roubles to create the 2-grade Petrushyn Public School. The money was transferred to the bank account of the public school directorate within the Chernihiv Governorate (CGIAK. F. 707. Op. 225. D. 119: 15-16). On 2 May 1875, the headmaster of Chernihiv public school informed the Kyiv warden about the Petrushyn Public School work since 27 April (CGIAK. F. 707. Op. 225. D. 119: 18). Thus, it was the first leading 2-grade institution in the Chernihiv Governorate.

Till the 1870s end, O. Karpynskyi succeeded in education development. In 1876, his initiative made the Sosnytsia Uezd allocate 600 roubles for supporting the local women's progymnasium. In 1877, the zemstvo assembly approved the liberal idea of subsidizing uezd public schools with 250 monthly roubles (Bushtedt, 1893: 112-113; 117).

5. Conclusion

The 1870s were highly productive in education among the zemstvo liberal opposition of the Chernihiv Governorate. Their important achievement was creation of the Chernihiv Teaching Seminary in 1871. The Chernihiv zemstvo authorities (usually represented by liberals) drafted the Seminary Resolution. It ensured priorities of providing peasants with education when all 15 uezds of the Chernihiv Governorate were equally represented by students. Having studied on the zemstvo scholarship basis, graduates returned to teach at local elementary schools for at least three years.

According to this resolution, there were encouraging tools for teachers and students. That attracted new people to the seminary.

Drafted by M. Imshenetskyi and N. Volk-Karachevskyi and approved by the Borzna Uezd Assembly in 1871, the Instructions for Zemstvo School Headmasters were a confirmation of liberal approaches to the public education development in the Chernihiv Governorate. The document raised the following issues: individual upbringing ideals; a free compulsory elementary education for all social classes at zemstvo schools; an equal access to education (regardless of sex, race, nation, estate and confession). Elected zemstvo representatives could supervise and inspect such institutions. Curricula were arranged by zemstvo educators. There were regular pedagogic congresses and a detailed remuneration system for teachers. Till the Counter-Reform Period, zemstvo liberals implemented most above-mentioned principles to some extent.

Another relevant contribution was initiatives of V. Khyzhniakov, the Chernihiv mayor and a liberal oppositionist. He opened evening and Sunday classes to educate illiterate people. With a lack of municipal allocations, V. Khyzhniakov charged himself with economic and administrative provision of such institutions.

O. Karpynskyi, a Ukrainian zemstvo liberal, promoted public education as well. He realized his progressive ideas within the Sosnytsia and Chernihiv Uezds. In particular, the 2-grade Petrushyn Public School was unfolded as the first Chernihiv institution of such a type. To reach this aim, O. Karpynskyi collected donations and succeeded in financing via the state treasury money.

Finally, we can conclude that the vivid public education activities of zemstvo liberals within the Chernihiv Governorate reflected attempts of deep local and state transformations. The goal was creation of literate and sensible citizens as a part of the capitalism order.

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