# Social innovations of local self-government on the territory of Ukraine at the end of the XIXth – beginning of the XXth centuries: historical aspect

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**Abstract.** The formation of all-nobility elected local self-governing bodies on the territory of Ukraine has been analyzed. These bodies – zemstvos were created as a result of 1864 reform. Attention is paid to the social problems of different level which were solved by zemstvos in the second half of the XIXth – the beginning of the XXth centuries; their approach to work and selfnessness can be the example to contemporaries. Their activities connected with equipping zemstvo schools, orphanages, hospitals, and providing them with medicines, job placement of doctors and fighting children mortality, organizing fire prevention measures, instructive work, developing veterinary medicine, repairing roads during World War I, and solving other urgent social problems even outside their competence had positive results.

**Keywords:** Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary, Ukraine, local self-government, the provincial council (zemstvo), povit (district) zemstvo.

**Statement of the problem.** At present, local self-government bodies are actively functioning, solving a variety of economic, social, and political issues. Some new approaches to overcome the crisis in the social sphere, offered by the local self-government, are positively perceived by our society. However, today there is a need to consider the origins of their formation in the 1860s, because the experience accumulated by the previous generations is still relevant and can be used in practice.

At the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries Ukrainian lands were ruled by the two empires – the Russian and Austria-Hungarian. Of course, at that time it was very difficult to consider the development of self-governing traditions in Ukraine. But despite strict police control of the tsarist autocracy, the sprouts of cultural and political consciousness emerged in Ukraine: certain segments of the population were ready to talk openly about urgent problems which were particularly acute in the social sphere. The following problems, especially in the provinces, can be mentioned: the problem of social insecurity of peasant families, transport, a low cultural and educational level of the population, a low level of medical care, the absence of nurseries, the poverty of asylums, and others. In the middle of the nineteenth century the system of management in the countryside was seriously neglected. That is why the question of finding a new local management mechanism became important and elective bodies of local self-government - zemstvos, appeared; they offered rather innovative approaches for overcoming the urgent problems of the contemporary society. After the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the government of the tsarist Russia developed the «Regulations on zemstvo institutions» that defined their structure, methods of formation, and the authority of zemstvos [1], [2]. The Regulations were the main document during their implementation in Ukraine, as it outlined the limits of competence of zemstvos and the order of their formation. Local self-government bodies in nine provinces of the Left Bank Ukraine started functioning beginning from 1865. The "Regulations" did not concern the south-western area. After discussing the "Regulations" in 1863 Kyiv Governor-General decided not to allow the spreading of the "Regulations" in the region where the majority of landowners were of Polish origin, who actively participated in the liberation movement for their freedom. So, the Russian Empire slowed down the formation of self-government bodies on the Right-Bank of Ukraine for a long time. For the first time local self-government institutions began to operate in the South-Western Region in 1904 on the grounds of the "Regulations on the zemstvo economy management in the provinces" of April 2, 1903 [3]. The action of the document concerned such Ukrainian provinces as: Kyiv, Volyn, Kovel and Podillya. According to the "Regulations", zemstvos of the western lands had so limited rights that they were included in the history as "scanty". Only on March 14, 1911 the Tsar government passed the law that allowed to introduce elective local zemstvo institutions on the Right- Bank Ukraine on the basis of the "Regulations" of 1890 [4].

The analysis of the recent research and publications. At the turn of the XXth–XXIth centuries, Ukrainian historians published a number of major studies on various innovations in the social sphere of the local self-government of those days. Conventionally, scientific works by contemporary authors can be divided into two groups:

- 1. The research of summarizing the content in which only the directions of zemstvos' social work are outlined. These include modern monographs, textbooks, manuals, reference books.
- 2. Dissertation works of modern Ukrainian scientists on specific types of social innovations initiated by local self-government authorities in Ukraine at the end XIXth beginning of the XXth centuries.

In the books and works of educational and scientific nature historians tried to classify economic, social, and political achievements of zemstvos in Ukraine. The scientists noted the successes and shortcomings, pointed to the absence of clear action plans and the lack of professionalism in the first self-government bodies created in 1864. Due to such complex work there is an opportunity to understand the whole wide stratum of social work, which was started by zemstvos, successfully supporting the population of rural areas in their effort to achieve the social standards. The most famous works by H.A. Gerasymenko [5], I.M. Mykolaenko [6], V.I. Borysenko [7], F.H. Turchenko and V.M. Morocco can be included here [8]. Certainly, the list of works of general character is not

complete; it only persuades us in the importance of the problem concerning studying zemstvos.

Among the most famous theses the works of R.L. Havrysh [9], A.M. Huz [10], L.M. Drovozyuk [11], L.V. Korzh [12], V.V. Kurchenko should be distinguished [13]; they are dedicated to the school, cultural, and educational activities of zemstvos in Ukraine. Separate aspects of self-government involvement in local historical movement of the Left-Bank Ukraine have been analyzed by A.A. Hapiyenko [14]. Educational activities of zemstvos have been investigated by O.I. Marmazova [15]. Charity activities on the example of Yekaterynoslav zemstvo have been analyzed K.L. Shyhov [16].

**Task statement.** Considering the current lack of a complex study of the innovations of the local self-government bodies in the social sphere in the Russian Empire at the end of the XIXth – beginning of the XXth centuries, we aim to analyze this issue.

The main material the research. Immediately after zemstvo reform in 1864 zemstvo deputies began to determine the main directions of activities of local self-government bodies in the social sphere. At that time, the main problems of the local population were: building roads, establishing charity institutions, opening nurseries and orphanages, developing the measures to fight begging, paying attention to the development of medicine, etc [17]. Zemstvos even raised the issue of social protection of the population in the legal sphere, as illiterate population of the provinces in the second half of the XIXth century could not defend themselves in court.

However, people who were the first to develop local self-government openly admitted that significant obstacles to its successful activities were the following problems:

- The absence of experience and competence, as 1. some deputies were uneducated peasants. It can be explained by the following statements: "The professional composition of zemstvo activists testified that they were men of good will, and not practice; they had not enough experience. The experience came only ten years later. The main details of medical, social questions could be found out only at the beginning of the 1880s ... the average zemstvo budget per capita was 70 kopecks ... Such difficulties could be overcome only at the beginning of the 1880s" [17, p. 48]. The Corresponding Member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences F.A. Scherbyna emphasized that the society lacked visual proofs of successful management; the principles of forced administrative management dominated [18].
- 2. The shortcomings of basic legislation, in particular not clearly devided power between provincial and povit (district) zemstvos [19].
- 3. Misunderstanding between zemstvos and state authority institutions that tried to restrict the activities of zemstvos and fully control them. The first obstacle for zemstvos was the implementation of new regulations by the imperial government, which limited the power of zemstvos or financial resources for their functioning. For example, the scientist Y. Abramov indicated that, the law dated 11.11.1866 limited the rights of zemstvos in the taxation of trade and industry [20]. The government did not take into account a considerable poverty of the population for whom it was difficult to pay increasing zem-

stvo's financial collections. Also, in 1901 the Senate made the explanation by which marshals of the nobility participating in zemstvo assembly had decisive votes. "This resulted in solving social problems by the persons who mostly cared about their own career and welfare, and were completely indifferent to zemstvo's duties" [21, p. 212]. Secondly, zemstvos suffered from counter reform of 1890, the essence of which was the introduction of zemstvo chiefs who interfered in their work and had the right to cancel any zemstvo's decisions.

- The absence of small zemstvo unit at the level of volost (small rural district). K. Odarchenko [22]. in his work emphasized that the advantage of the European system of self-government over the Russian zemstvos was a developed small zemstvo unit at the level of volost, which was the prerequisite of coordinated activities at all levels and the rise of economic well-being of the people. After analyzing about 30 projects concerning introducing volost zemstvos, we emphasize that each of them contained the motivation of the necessary changes in the society. However, only time specified the accents and the state responded up at the beginning of the First World War. The lowest level of the local self-government institution in the volost became the necessity, first of all in taking care of the families of soldiers and sailors, helping wounded people, solving food problems in rural areas, organizing the population to help the army. However, under those conditions, the researchers noted that the volost councils lived according to the clear instructions of the government [23]. The conclusions of the famous historian B. Veselovsky who studied zemstvos are quite logical: "The tsarist Russia as a country economically and culturally backward has to understand the width of state tasks, and not reduce the problem of limiting self-government rights. It is high time to manage local problems by local residents themselves, but not through zemstvo authorities and courier office» [24, p. 256].
- 5. Zemstvos were not included in the state administration system.
- 6. The state did not actually allocated funds for financing of zemstvos introducing a new tax for local residents "on zemstvo". The historian of that time V. Doroshenko emphasized that "in 1890 peasant land in the povits of Ukraine was extremely burdened by zemstvo's collection and there was a long delay in the correct evaluation work, because it was profitable for the lord, zemstvos delayed to replace natural payments of farmers by money for a long time; it was also difficult to pay for road using" [25, p. 14]. Consequently, not all segments of the population were aware of the usefulness of introducing zemstvos, most people saw only the burden in the formation of these units.

However, despite the current organizational problems and drawbacks of legislation, zemstvos started organizing social assistance to the population and their immediate duties included:

- in the sphere of improving people's health the development of plans for the volost medicine, budget allocation and improvement of the composition of the medical staff, the order of medical supplies, supervision of the hospitals, etc.;
- arranging hospitals for the poor, and homes for mental patients;

- arranging reformatories and organizing patronage for the persons who served their sentence;
- the development of veterinary service by appointing povit veterinary doctors who would monitor the spreading of epidemics among animals and prevent these phenomena;
- organizing rural zemstvo schools and educational activities among the illiterate population;
- the repairs of communications, including postal roads between the provinces and povits [26]. A well-known researcher of zemstvos H. Dzhanshyiev, summarizing the activities of the local self-government bodies pointed out that traditional medicine did not exist at all until the emergence of zemstvos [27, p. 99], [28].

It is possible to sum up the real achievements of the local self-government bodies, after analyzing jubilee publications dedicated to the 50th anniversary of their formation. As a rule, they usually contain the material on zemstvos' achievements in different spheres of their activities. The people in zemstvos believed in their success, so as V. Golubev wrote: "The activities of local zemstvos are ahead of fruitless, boring, legislative work in the center. The improvement of the country will come, obviously, from the bottom" [29].

M. Plotnikov underlined that zemstvos publicly raised the issue of scoffing at the peasants by the landlords and at children in schools. It is known that whipping in the Imperial Russia existed until 1905. And zemstvos actively this counteracted it, disclosing these facts [30, p. 93].

Zemstvos supported the idea of providing legal assistance to illiterate population. They were actively counteracted by the bureaucracy, who argued that legal assistance did not belong to any of the sections in Article. 2 of zemstvo's "Regulations". M. Mohyliansky described the following facts: "Olexandrivsk council conducted a survey, and about 60% of zemstvos supported providing legal assistance to the population" [31, p. 94, p. 96].

The researcher noted that Chernihiv, Ekaterynoslav, Poltava zemstvos were mentioned among those who addressed the government to allow legal assistance to the population, but the Senate refused, despite the fact that it was 1913.

The issue of medical care was brought to a high professional level by zemstvos. A. Avchinnikov in his work "The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of zemstvos" [32] emphasized that the number of professional doctors in zemstvos increased 5 times, and vaccinations against infectious diseases were conducted by zemstvos in 24 provinces.

Chernihiv zemstvo was famous for their activities in the struggle for personal hygiene of pupils because the zemstvo considered this problem as the cause of mass children's diseases of epidemiological character [33].

Social and political journalism of the 80s of the XIXth – the beginning of the XXth centuries often mentioned Poltava zemstvo and its volost zemstvos. Researcher L. Yakovenko [34] distinguished Poltava zemstvo as an active spreader of medical knowledge, and pointed out that together with Chernihiv zemstvo it supported the principle of building medical stations with the average range of activities of local doctors. The distance between the stations in Poltava region was10-11 miles, which was not much compared to other zemstvos.

Comparing the development of medical service in Kharkiv region from the beginning of the formation of zemstvo in 1910 the researcher R. Budberg emphasized that it became possible to establish the necessary medical institutions, open stationary hospitals and significantly increase the spending on medicine that "...in 1909 already amounted to 147,338 roubles" [35].

R. Budberg also compared the medical activities of Volchansk zemstvo of Kharkiv province at the beginning of the formation and in the later on. The author noted that "the zemstvo began medical activities from four small stations, and in 1910 there were already 14 and medical expenses for one povit amounted to 147,338 roubles" which was a significant sum [35].

In 1916, a Kyiv newspaper published a praising article dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Yekaterynoslav zenstvo, stressing that "the zemstvo is considered to be the richest in the Russian Empire and its spending is 5,172,345 roubles including medical expenses – 1,265,537 roubles" [36].

In 1905, T. Tykhonov noted that "there was an extremely difficult situation in zemstvo hospitals and there were two problems – the lack of funding and silence of the bureaucracy" [37, p. 148]. It turned out that the local functionaries sent 60-70 appeals per year to the government from each province and they could not receive a response for 5-7 years Individual complaints and requests for financial aid concerning medical affairs were not answered for 8-10 years.

Summing up, the zemstvos' achievements in the field of medicine should be quoted by the words of M. Kapustin: "Europe provided medical care to its patients in the form of personal contact between doctor and patient, and zemstvo medicine of Russia is not a personal service at the expense of patient, it is a public service..." [38, p. 14]. In fact, at that time the foundations of free public medicine were laid.

At the beginning of the XXth century zemstvos fought for the right to open pharmacies and supply medicines to the population. This problem did not disappear and was not adequately solved by the state. Zemstvo set the goal to create the All- Russian organization for purchasing medical goods. And, as it is known, the reason for setting such a goal was the fact that intermediaries received large profits on selling medicines, and zemstvos overpaid them significant sums of money that could be usefully spent for medical purposes. Military situation demanded wholesale purchases of medicines, because rural hospitals were extremely overloaded by the wounded in the First World War [39].

At the beginning of the XXth century, the public raised the problem of social protection of orphans and children's asylums. As it is known, there were no kindergartens at that time. Adults were very busy with work in summer, leaving children unattended. The situation often resulted in fires. Poltava zemstvo initiated establishing children's summer asylums, in which from 25 to 45 children could stay at the same time. By 1900 more asylums had been organized and as a result, the number of fires decreased significantly. These facts were covered in the Zemstvo Collection of Chernihiv province but Chernihiv zemstvo was not engaged in these activities for a long time. Summer asylums arranged by zemstvo people should be dis-

tinguished from permanent asylums for abandoned children or orphans. As it is mentioned in the publications, there were a lot of unsolved problems in this sphere. In 1910, a very serious medical article by A. Amsterdamsky was published, in which he said that only Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Tavriya and Yekaterynoslav zemstvos really helped in fighting infant mortality. They allocated funds for establishing asylums, but the other zemstvos did not develop a clear program of assistance [40].

The shortcomings in this area were analyzed in more details in the monograph by the researcher V. Charnoluskyi [41]. He emphasized that the activities of zemstvos in this area had a random nature. The author pointed out that some zemstvos supported orphanages where children lived only to a certain age and then their future was unknown. In the best case, the orphans were sent to farmers' families who were paid a little for their keeping. By 1914, the problem of caring for orphans had been raised in newspapers infrequently. Caring for abandoned children became urgent and relevant again during the First World War, when the number of orphans increased considerably.

In 1915–1916 the published sources about zemstvos were mostly devoted to military events. Brief praising articles were combined with the publications that disclose in details zemstvos' help for the sick and wounded, orphans, the army directly. Zemstvos began their fruitful work during the war years with the formation of different kinds of organizations, such as the "Organization of zemstvos' people in Kyiv province", or Russian Zemstvo Union (1914). For example, B. Doroshkevych emphasized that "by 1916 the Zemstvo Union equipped thousands of hospital beds, organized functioning of mobile hospitals, laundries, shoe repair shops ..." [42].

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Most zemstvo people reported openly to the public about their work. On the June 10, 1916 social assistance of zemstvo people to the state was amazing: "173,000 permanent hospital beds, 2,111 beds for tuberculosis patients in the Caucasus had been opened, 51 sanitary trains had been arranged, about 10 million things for the front had been collected. All that had been done by Poltava, Kharkiv, and other Ukrainian and Russian zemstvos. Zemstvo Union supplied medicines worth about 1 million roubles to 198 zemstvos..." [42], [43, p. 25].

Many kinds of the activities were not the duties of zemstvos. In particular, zemstvo took the responsibility for organizing horse transport for the army, together with the Committee of the South-Western Front. Zemstvo people spoke and wrote very little about such facts. Such material can be observed only as zemstvo advertisements in the press that were published in the Chronicle entitled "Local Life": "Zemstvo Union and the Committee of the South-Western Front took the lead in organizing horse drawn transport for the front. 1,500 people are needed to service the transport. Everyone who is interested to get the job and help, please, respond". Later, the item concerning settling the supplies of meat, ammunition, carts, artillery equipment, and bread to the army was solved.

At the same time, those were the zemstvos that were healing the wounds of the war because hundreds of zemstvo doctors and also prominent experts in different spheres, who went to fight on general principles, died on the war fields. Their frank and honest service to people and the whole Ukraine deserves respect and good memory. Nowadays, their activities during the First World War are quite similar to the modern volunteering and can serve as an example of sacrifice for the sake of the victory, because Ukraine is experiencing the problems similar to those a hundred years ago.

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## Социальные инновации местного самоуправления на территории Украины в конце XIX – в начале XX века: исторический аспект

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Аннотация. Анализируется становления на территории Украины органов всесословного избирательного местного самоуправления — земств, согласно реформы 1864 г. Внимание уделяется социальным проблемам разного уровня, которые успешно решали земства во ІІ пол. XIX — в нач. XX вв., а их подходы и самоотверженность в сложных ситуациях могут служить примером современникам. Результативной была их деятельность по — благоустройству земских школ, сиротских приютов, госпиталей и обеспечении их медикаментами, трудоустройству врачей и борьбе с детской смертностью, организации противопожарного дела, просветительства, развитие ветеринарной медицины, ремонту дорог в Первую мировую и других острых социальных проблем даже вне компетенции.

**Ключевые слова:** Российская империя, Австро-Венгрия, Украина, местное самоуправление, губернское земство, уездное земство.