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The Issue of Zemstvos in Right Bank Ukraine 1864–1906. Russian Anti-Polonism Under the Challenges of Modernization*

Introduction

While the Great Reforms granted the internal provinces (*gubernii*) of the Russian Empire (including Left Bank and Southern Ukraine) a system of local self-government under the name of *zemstvo* in 1864, this reform was extended to Right Bank Ukraine and Belarus only as late as 1911.¹ This delay in the introduction of zemstvos was caused by the government's fear of the local Polish landed nobility, who continued to be "masters" of the Western Provinces² of the empire even after the failure of the second Polish uprising in 1863. This ethnopolitical situation could only be changed by the revolution in 1917–1921, which physically eliminated the Polish landowning class.

Although the issue of the Western zemstvos is quite well known, it has not attracted adequate scholarly attention even in comparison with other spheres of tsarism's anti-Polish policy in the Western Provinces. This is symbolized by the fact that Daniel Beauvois, who has written a book covering all the main aspects of the "Polish problem" in Right Bank Ukraine during 1831–1863, in his more recent book on the same issue in the following epoch, 1863–1914, concentrates on the "battles for land" between Poles, Russians and Ukrainians.³ Witold Rodkiewicz allotted only eleven pages for the issue of Western zemstvos in his book dedicated to Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces during 1863–1905.⁴ Obviously, for these historians such issues as tsarism's discriminatory land and language policies against Poles were more interesting (probably because they are histories of what was done)

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¹ There were three provinces in Right Bank Ukraine (Kiev, Volyn' and Podoliiia), subordinated to the Southwest governor-general. There were three Belarus provinces (Minsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk).

² Besides the six provinces listed above, the mainly Lithuanian provinces of Vil'na, Kovno, and Grodno were subordinated to the Northwest governor-general.

³ DANIEL BEAUVOIS *Le Noble, le Serf et le Révizor: La noblesse polonaise entre le tsarisme et les masses ukrainiennes (1831–1863)*. Lille 1985; IDEM *La Bataille de la Terre en Ukraine 1863–1914: Les Polonais et les conflits socio-ethniques*. Lille 1993. I have relied upon the Ukrainian translations of these books: DANIEL' BOVUA *Shliaktych, kripak i revizor: Pol's'ka shliakhta mizh tsaryzmozom ta ukrains'kymy masamy (1831–1863)*. Kyiv 1996; IDEM *Bytva za zemliu v Ukraini 1863–1914: Poliaky v sotsio-etnichnykh konfliktakh*. Kyiv 1998.

⁴ WITOLD RODKIEWICZ *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863–1905)*. Lublin 1998. The original manuscript of this book, i.e. Rodkiewicz's dissertation, was submitted to Harvard University in 1996. Rodkiewicz compared the anti-Polish policies in the three (German, Russian and Austrian) peripheral territories of the former Rzeczpospolita, and concludes that Russia's anti-Polish policy was more tolerant (inconsistent) than the German one, under which the abundant resources of the country made possible a massive immigration of German peasants to the former Polish territory, but less tolerant than the Austrian one, since the Habsburg Empire preferred to rely upon the Polish elites to govern Galicia.

than the zemstvo issue (which is a history of what was not done).⁵ Traditionally, the issue of the Western zemstvos has been studied only as a part of high, intra-Petersburg politics (the battle between Goremykin and Witte in the 1890s, Stolypin's tactics towards the State Duma, or the fate of the so-called 3rd June system).⁶

The Soviet Union did not welcome the study of the histories of non-Ukrainians who lived within the present Ukrainian territory.⁷ Under socialism, the only dissertation focusing on the issue of the Western zemstvos was written by Ivan Sesak in Lviv (1987).⁸ Sesak's indisputable merit is that he evaluates the practical performance of the non-electoral pseudo-zemstvos that existed in Right Bank Ukraine from 1904 to 1911, but he appears to be too obedient to the traditional framework of zemstvo studies in the Soviet Union, which was molded through studies of the "old zemstvos." Too much attention is paid to managerial and financial problems, while various specifics of the "new zemstvos," in particular ethnopolitical aspects, are almost completely ignored.

The thriving constructionist approaches in recent studies of nationalities are not likely to change this dismal historiographical situation, because it is improbable that the inert, in principle, characteristics of the debate about Western zemstvos would attract constructionists' attention. After the tsarist government began to wager on the "Russian" (Ukrainian)⁹ peasantry in order to weaken the local Polish influence in the mid-19th century,¹⁰ Right Bank Ukraine was destined to become a battlefield of two imperial ideas. With significant reservations, we may call them Polish and Russian. Brian Porter has brilliantly illustrated the process of transformation of the archaic *szlachta* identity, cosmopolitan and elitist, into a modern Polish national identity.¹¹ But this could not happen in Right Bank Ukraine, mainly for demographic reasons. Being an absolute minority in the Western Provinces of the Russian Empire (as they had been in the Eastern provinces of Rzeczpospolita), "Poles" could continue to be coherent and dominant only if they remained citizens of an imagined empire, but not members of an ethnic minority.

⁵ This tendency can also be observed in N. O. SHCHERBAK'S dissertation, titled "Natsional'na polityka tsaryzmu u Pravoberezhnii Ukraini v kintsi XIX – na pochatku XX st. Za materialamy zvitiv mistsevykh derzhavnykh ustanov" (Dys. kand. ist. nauk. Kyiv University 1995).

⁶ A. YA. AVREKH Vopros o zapadnom zemstve i bankrotstvo Stolypina, in: *Istoricheskie zapiski* 70 (1961) pp. 61–112; GEOFFREY A. HOSKING *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907–1914*. Cambridge 1973, Ch. 5; *Krizis samoderzhavii v Rossii 1895–1917*. Leningrad 1984, Ch. 5.

⁷ See NATALIYA YAKOVENKO *Early Modern Ukraine Between East and West: Projectories of an Idea, in: Regions: A Prism to View the Slavic-Eurasian World. Towards a Discipline of "Regionology"*. Ed. by Kimitaka Matsuzato. Sapporo 2000, pp. 50–69.

⁸ I. V. SESAK *Zemskie uchrezhdeniia na pravoberezhnoi Ukraine (1904–1917)*. Diss. kand. ist. nauk. L'vov University 1987.

⁹ In this paper, the historical usage of the word "Russians" (meaning Eastern Slavs, not Great Russians) will be emphasized by quotation marks.

¹⁰ For the latest study of this conversion of imperial management from the traditional, cosmopolitan, and elitist style to a modern, populist style, see MIKHAIL DOLBILOV'S paper, "The Bureaucratic Mind as an Obstacle to Nationalism: Russification in the Northwest Region of the Russian Empire in the 1860s," presented at the 7th Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities (Columbia University, New York, 11–13 April 2002). As the title shows, Dolbilov argues that this conversion was far from smooth.

¹¹ BRIAN PORTER *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imaging Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*. New York 2000.

Likewise, in Right Bank Ukraine it was difficult to replace the traditional “Little Russian”¹² identity, according to which Little Russians were an inseparable part of the “common Russian people” (i.e. Eastern Slavs), with a modern idea of a separate Ukrainian nation.¹³ As is well known, the notion of the “common Russian people” was the sacred core of the Russian imperial ideology, which previously legitimized Russia’s Western expansion and afterwards cemented the empire.¹⁴ However, it would be a mistake to regard this notion as solely an official one enforced from above, from the imperial center. There were local bases for the acceptance of this notion. In Left Bank Ukraine the notion of the “common Russian people” was consolidated owing to Little Russians’ long history of cohabitation with Great Russians, whilst in the Right Bank, pretensions to the modern Ukrainian identity was the luxury of the few. Being absolutely inferior to the local Poles and Jews in political, social, and cultural resources, most Little Russian elites in the Right Bank could not afford to search for a third path of Ukrainian-ness. On the contrary, they were often proud that they were more devoted to the “common Russian” cause than Great Russians in their struggle with Polish and Jewish influences. Every precarious attempt in St Petersburg in the post-1905 period to “modernize” ethnic categories by curtailing the meaning of “Russians” from Eastern Slavs to Great Russians (in other words, to recognize Ukrainians as a different nation) provoked furious protests from the Kievan Little Russian elites. Even during 1917–1918 the Ukrainian nationalist parties were eventually defeated by the Little Russian parties, such as the Non-Partisan Bloc of Russian Electors (*Vnepartiinyi blok russkikh izbiratelei*), in electoral competitions in Kiev.¹⁵

Thus in Right Bank Ukraine the “Poles” were barely able to be transformed into a modern nation, while the notion of the “common Russian people” had not lost attractiveness even in 1917–1918. There was an obvious synergy of tenaciousness between the two camps. These circumstances, in turn, qualify the applicability of Brian Potter’s scheme. It will be misleading if we adopt his scheme, based on the Polish Kingdom’s experiences, to the “Poles” of the former peripheries of the Rzeczpospolita, where the transformation of cosmopolitan imperial citizens into a modern nation was extremely difficult. Considering this, were there no reasons for changes in ethnic relations in Right Bank Ukraine? I would respond to this question negatively. The momentum for changes originated from local socioeconomic conditions, in particular the challenges of modernization. The introduction of zemstvos in the Western Provinces was postponed because the government feared that local self-government would possibly be used by the local Polish elites to preserve their dominance in the region. Before long, however, it became obvious that without zemstvos it was impossible to promote public

¹² I rely upon this word since English does not have other translations of the Russian word “Malorus” or “Malorusskii.” It is still very important to note that in pre-revolutionary Russia this word did not have contemptuous nuances.

¹³ As is shown by the categories in the renowned 1897 Census, in pre-revolutionary Russia the word “Russians” meant Eastern Slavs but not Great Russians. See KIMITAKA MATSUZATO: Pol’skii faktor v Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainie s XIX po nachalo XX v., in: *Ab Imperio* 1 (2000) pp. 91–106.

¹⁴ ANDREAS KAPPELER *Rossiia, mnogonatsional’naia imperiia: vzniknovenie, istoriia, raspad*. Moskva 1997, pp. 63–64; A. I. MILLER “Ukrainskii vopros” v politike vlastei i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii: vtoraia polovina XIX v. S.-Peterburg 2000, pp. 31–41.

¹⁵ See VLADIMIR LIUBCHENKO *Malorusskii faktor v russkom natsional’nom dvizhenii na Ukraine v 1917–1918*, in: *Istoriia Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy kak mnogonatsional’nogo prostranstva: sbornik dokumentov*. Ed. by Kimitaka Matsuzato. Sapporo, forthcoming in 2003. If the Ukrainian nationalists won over the supporters of the Little Russian idea in the countryside, this is mainly because the Ukrainian nationalists’ land policies were much more radical and, accordingly, more popular among the peasants than those of the Little Russian parties, but not because Ukrainian narratives were more appealing to the peasants than Little Russian narratives.

schooling, medical care, cooperative movement, etc. to improve the local Ukrainian population's social and cultural situation and, as a result, the predominance of Poles and Jews would be protracted. On the other hand, the anti-Polish (de-Polonizing) policy in Right Bank Ukraine pursued by the government was not successful enough to create a stable local "Russian" landed nobility, who could match the Poles and Jews in electoral competitions. Therefore, imperial officials regarded the introduction of electoral zemstvos as quite risky. This was a dilemma from which tsarist officials suffered for almost two decades before they devised a national curiae system for zemstvo elections.

To sum up, (1) the main ethnopolitical cleavage in pre-revolutionary Right Bank Ukraine was between the two, Polish and "Russian," imperial traditions, and not between the ruling (Great Russian) and ruled nations (Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews). (2) In the battle between these two imperial traditions the Polish one was always victorious, at least in imperial officials' imagination. (3) Steadily after the first (1830), decisively after the second Polish uprising (1863–1864) the Southwest and Northwest governor-generalships devised tactics to wager on the weak, in other words, began to legitimize Russia's rule of the Western Provinces by a program to emancipate the local peasants from "Polish and Jewish exploitation." In other words, tsarism's anti-Polish policy could not but have social connotations. (4) From this point of view, the improvement of the Ukrainian peasants' social status *vis-à-vis* Poles and Jews was a serious political issue. This is why the absence of zemstvos, finding the most effective instrument for modernization, provoked serious debates in the bureaucratic and public circles.

The paper will conclude with an analysis of the events of 1906, when the new prime minister, P. A. Stolypin, submitted to the Council of Ministers a memorandum on the Western zemstvos. Choosing this date might seem unusual, since it was exactly this memorandum that opened the final stage of designing viable Western zemstvos, and those Western zemstvos were introduced in 1911, not in 1906. However, the post-1906 legislative process on the Western zemstvos was closely intertwined with Stolypin's parliamentary intrigues, and the debate became focused on the institutional designing of the national curiae system and on property qualifications for the suffrage (*tsenz*). To analyze these problems would double the length of this paper.

We can begin with a survey of local government in non-zemstvo provinces (Right Bank Ukraine amongst them), which demonstrates how the lack of zemstvos affected local governance and why the local "Russian" elites yearned for them. Next we will examine the most typical arguments against Western zemstvos advanced when governor-generals' opposed the introduction of zemstvos in the 1860s. Then we will describe changes in the debates on the Western zemstvos under the impact of modernization in the 1890s. The following section analyzes the first attempt to introduce zemstvos and the bankruptcy of these "half-minded" measures. In the final section, we will analyze the influence of the 1905 revolution.

*The System of Local Government in Right Bank Ukraine:
Why Were Zemstvos Needed?*

The zemstvo reform in 1864 was a continuation of the 1851 fiscal reform. This fact was widely known to pre-revolutionary jurists and specialists of government in Russia, such as

V. V. Ivanovskii¹⁶ and Boris Veselovskii,¹⁷ but passed into oblivion after the 1917 revolution. Quite recently Elena N. Morozova, Saratov historian, rediscovered it.¹⁸

The origin of modern Russian local self-government can be traced to the emergence of the concept of “local levies” (*zemskie povinnosti*). From the beginning of the 19th century various levies began to be classified according to their purposes and methods of collection into all-state (*gosudarstvennye*) and local (*zemskie*). Following this development, not surprisingly, a problem emerged as how to manage these local revenues. In Russia, the participation of local educated society in this management was taken for granted from the very beginning. During the first half of the 19th century the implementation of local budgets (based on these levies) was placed under a sort of “dual subordination”: it was accountable both to central ministries and to the provincial noble assemblies, however nominal the latter’s accountability may have been. The budget term of this local levy management was three years. The method of management of these levies became the embryo of local self-government. This is testified to by the fact that the two concepts, “local self-government” and “the management of local levies,” were mutually exchangeable in Russian state theory until the end of tsarism.

The Statute on Local Levies, enacted on 13 June 1851, systematized the practice of these levies: the purposes and kinds of local levies were determined. The budget term continued to be three years. Provincial committees of local levies (*gubernskie komitety o zemskikh povinnostiakh*) were introduced. Their composition was amazingly similar to that of the future provincial committees of zemstvo administration (*gubernskie komitety po zemskomu khoziaistvu*), namely the non-electoral pseudo-zemstvos that would appear a half century later (1903–1904) in Belorussian and Right Bank Ukrainian provinces. The provincial committees of local levies were presided over by the governor, and attended by the marshals of the provincial and county nobilities, noble assembly deputies, representatives of the treasury chamber (*kazennaia palata*), the chamber of state properties, the crown land administration, and the mayor of the provincial capital. The executive organ – the special board of local levies (*osoboe o zemskikh povinnostiakh prisutstvie*) – was also presided over by the governor. Unfortunately, this system did not raise the managerial integrity of local budget. Accountability to the nobility continued to be nominal, and the “special boards” remained only “on paper.”¹⁹

Because the state treasury was on the brink of bankruptcy in the aftermath of the Crimean War, the government decided to advance the idea of the 1851 reform even further. The government desperately needed to produce budget cuts by promoting geographic deconcentration (in other words, by raising the intra-territorial integrity) of state functions. The latter purpose was closely connected with the attraction of local educated society into public administration, which was also expected to produce economies in the state budget.²⁰ Since functions concerning local levies were transferred to the zemstvos, on 10 December 1874 the special boards of local levies were abolished and a new institution, namely the provincial and county administrative committees (*gubernskie i uezdnye rasporiaditel'nye komitety*) under the chairmanship of the governors, were introduced. In zemstvo-functioning provinces, these

¹⁶ V. V. IVANOVSKII *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*. Tom 1. Vyp. 3. Kazan' 1896, pp. 65–69.

¹⁷ BORIS VESELOVSKII *Istoriia zemstva: za sorok let*. Tom 1. S.-Peterburg 1909, pp. 1–13.

¹⁸ E. N. MOROZOVA *U istokov zemskoi reformy*. Saratov 2000, pp. 61–73.

¹⁹ *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*. Izdat. B. F. A. Brokgauz, I. A. Efron (hereafter ESBE). Tom 24 (XII–A). S.-Peterburg 1898, pp. 514–518. See also MOROZOVA *U istokov* pp. 67–68.

²⁰ For example, in Novgorod province the number of state officials was cut from 1138 in 1860 to 696 in 1869 (M. M. SHUMILOV *Mestnoe upravlenie i tsentral'naia vlast' v Rossii v 50-kh–nachale 80-kh gg. XIX veka*. Moskva 1991, p. 47).

administrative committees did not play any visible role. But in the Western Provinces, which lacked zemstvos, these administrative committees substituted for the zemstvos.²¹ The budget term of the administrative committees continued to be three years, while zemstvos adopted a one-year budget system. To sum up, the government tried to achieve a spatial deconcentration of power in order to raise administrative efficiency in non-zemstvo provinces, but without relying upon the local public.

In financial terms, the introduction of zemstvos had two important implications. First, in the first half of the 19th century the only unit of the management of local levies was the province, so "local levies" actually meant only "provincial levies." As zemstvos were introduced also at the county level and these county zemstvos came to play an even more important role than provincial zemstvos in practical activities, a new concept of "county levies" emerged. And this concept was ratified by the introduction of county administrative committees as a result of the 1874 reform. Although county administrative committees were also introduced in non-zemstvo provinces (as substitutes for county zemstvos), no such decentralizing process was observed there. The intra-provincial financial structure of non-zemstvo provinces continued to be centralized under the provincial center.²² Let us call this "provincial centralism."

The second financial implication of the zemstvo reform was that, while the 1851 Statute listed the possible objects of expenditure of provincial levies, the 1864 Statute allowed zemstvos to spend money also for items not listed in the 1851 Statute (the contradiction between the two laws was not resolved to the end of tsarism). These expenses would later be titled "non-obligatory expenses." The sum of these "non-obligatory expenses" skyrocketed after the end of the 19th century and this helped the shift of zemstvo activities from traditional bureaucratic affairs (*kazennye dela*) to more socioeconomic spheres. This did not happen, however, in non-zemstvo provinces, where each expense on items not listed in the 1851 Statute required new, concrete legislation.²³

Both these factors, "provincial centralism" and the legal limits on the expansion of the activities of the local institutions towards the socioeconomic sphere, disturbed the development of public administration in Right Bank Ukraine. Although the grass is always greener on the other side, the envy that Right Bank elites felt towards zemstvo provinces had solid statistical bases. On the eve of the 1903 local reform, Right Bank provinces were tangibly inferior to Left Bank provinces in terms of medical care, public schooling, literacy, etc.²⁴ This

²¹ Another archaic institution, which was abolished in zemstvo provinces but continued to play an important role in non-zemstvo provinces, were the offices of social care (*prikazy obshchestvennogo prizreniia*). This institution was introduced under Catherine II and was in charge of schools, medical care, etc.

²² ESBE, tom 24, p. 516.

²³ ESBE, tom 24, p. 519.

²⁴ At that time, one physician was responsible on average for as many as 94 217 inhabitants in Volyn', 107 818 in Kiev and 99 874 in Podolia provinces, whereas 47 808 inhabitants in zemstvo-functioning Poltava, 32 255 in Bessarabia, 26 740 in Kherson and 34 921 in Ekaterinoslav provinces came under one physician (SESAK *Zemskie uchrezhdeniia* p. 28). According to the 1897 census, literacy among Orthodox/Ukrainian-speaking men was 16.6% in Volyn', 18.6% in Podolia, and 20.9% in Kiev provinces, as opposed to 22.7% in Kharkov, 25.4% in Poltava, and as much as 28.7% in Chernigov provinces. Likewise, literacy among Orthodox/Ukrainian-speaking women was 2.0% in Volyn', 2.8% in both Podolia and Kiev provinces, compared with 4.4% in Kharkov, 3.9% in Poltava, and 4.7% in Chernigov provinces (my calculations, based on: *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii, 1897 g.*: Tom VIII. S.-Peterburg 1904; Tom XIII. S.-Peterburg 1904; Tom XVI. S.-Peterburg 1904; Tom XXXII. S.-Peterburg 1904; Tom XXXIII. S.-Peterburg 1904; Tom XLVIII. S.-Peterburg 1904; and Tom XLVIII. S.-Peterburg 1905). In contrast to the Poles, Czechs, Germans, Jews and Tatars living in

situation, not surprisingly, created a negative public opinion towards the existing local system in the Western Provinces, about which governors and governor-generals of the region often complained.²⁵

In the Aftermath of the Second Polish Uprising

On 25 May 1863, in order to implement the Emperor's Injunctions (*Vysochaishie povele-niia*) on the reform of local government (issued four years earlier),²⁶ the minister of internal affairs, P. A. Valuev, proposed to the State Council to introduce provincial and county zemstvos in forty-four European provinces of the Empire, including the nine Western Provinces. The State Council, however, required Valuev to consult with the Western governor-generals on this matter. Both the Southwest and Northwest governor-generals, understandably for men who were then struggling with the second Polish uprising, spoke out categorically against the measure.²⁷

The Southwest governor-general, N. N. Annenkov, responded that the issue of zemstvos in the Western Provinces should be decided by "the solution of the Polish problem in general." As long as the Polish uprising continued and the emancipation of serfs (i.e. the process of redemption, or *vykup*) was still ongoing, it was inconceivable to introduce zemstvos, which would become a mighty instrument for the Polish nobility's resistance. Even the successful resolution of these problems should not lead directly to the introduction of zemstvos in the Western Provinces, as long as the Polish landowners, hostile not only to the government but also to the "indigenous population of the region," continued to be dominant. Thus, Annenkov wished to postpone the introduction of zemstvos in the Western Provinces almost indefinitely.²⁸

Even once it became possible to introduce electoral zemstvos, Annenkov continued, in order to guarantee the predominance of "the Russian element" (Russian landowners, Orthodox priests, and peasants), the property qualification for suffrage (*tsenz*) should be lowered further in the Southwest provinces than in the internal provinces, and that Jews, a significant number of whom owned commercial/industrial assets and thus fulfilled the *tsenz*,

the Ukrainian territory of Russia (who often could not read Russian, but read in their national languages), "literacy" for Ukrainian-speakers meant predominantly literacy in Russian. For example, 9.1 % of Ukrainian-speakers in Volyn' province were literate in Russian, but only 0.2% of them were literate in "other languages." This suggests that the relatively favorable literacy among Ukrainian-speakers in Left Bank Ukraine should be credited to zemstvo schools, which taught, at least officially, in Russian.

²⁵ For example, a memorandum prepared by the Southwest governor-generalship to realize the 1903 local reform stated: "How unsatisfactory is the situation of local government to this day – this is testified to by repeated statements by the governor-generals in their reports to the tsar. Obsolete laws, absolutely mismatched to real life, guided the institutions [of administrative committees], in which functions of various fields of local government were concentrated. The very composition of these institutions lacked local forces, such as landowners and representatives of the peasantry. All of these factors doomed actual and complex local undertakings to stagnation, and created the conditions under which all the work more often than not, ended up in desk-bound correspondence" (TsDIA, f. 442 [The Office of the Kiev. Podoliia and Volyn' governor-generalship], op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 45).

²⁶ V. V. GALMIZA *Podgotovka zemskoi reformy 1864 goda*. Moskva 1957, pp. 131–132.

²⁷ The governor-general of the Northwest region, M. N. Murav'ev, commented that the electoral principle laid down as the basis for zemstvo institutions would make all the public administration of the region dependent on the local "nobility antagonistic to Russian statehood, a class of small *s-lachta*, urban estates of Polish origin and of Roman Catholic confession," and thereby "subordinate the peasant estate to their influence" (TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 176).

²⁸ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 813, spr. 654, ark. 60–61 zv.

should be excepted from the elections.²⁹ Annenkov expressed his inferiority complex towards the Poles and Jews in an almost grotesque manner, saying:

“To struggle with these numerous, strong and skillful enemies, who have planted deep roots in this soil and for a long time been accustomed to behave in the spirit of strongly organized corporations [...] lies beyond the reach of the Russian people, who live here only accidentally without any ties between each other and behave separately in the midst of the obstacles set at each step by these experienced enemies. To neutralize, at least to a certain degree, the strength of these enemies, it is indispensable to place the Russian people in the region in a privileged position *vis-à-vis* Poles and Jews.”³⁰

Not content with his opposition to zemstvos, Annenkov attacked the last bastion of the local Polish nobility's corporate privileges, i.e. the right to elect the marshals of the nobilities.³¹ Even prior to the second Polish uprising, the famous “address” to the tsar adopted by the Podolia provincial nobility in 1862 (which denounced Russia's rule of Right Bank Ukraine and requested the incorporation of Podolia into the Polish Kingdom) provoked the government to fire the marshal of the provincial nobility, bring him to court, and appoint his successor.³² Annenkov proposed to expand this system of appointment to all of the Western Provinces, including those at the county level. In the face of the Podolia event, the government was shocked by the fact that two of the only three Russian deputies of the nobility's assembly joined with the Polish deputies in signing the “address,” which convinced Annenkov that estate self-government should be abolished also in order to “emancipate the local Russian nobles from the yoke of Polishness.”³³

Remarkably, all of Annenkov's proposals were realized in the Western Provinces: the postponement of zemstvos and the suspension of marshals' elections; and fifty years later when zemstvos were introduced in these provinces, Jews were excluded from zemstvo elections, and a quota for Orthodox priests in zemstvo assemblies was instituted.

Receiving the governor-generals' negative responses, the State Council decided not to expand zemstvos to the Western Provinces. Instead, according to its opinion, confirmed by the tsar on 1 January 1864, the State Council authorized the minister of internal affairs to work out, in coordination with the governor-generals, when and how the zemstvo institutions could be introduced there and to submit his conclusion to the State Council. This authorization, however, would not be fulfilled for more than thirty years.

²⁹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 813, spr. 654, ark. 62 – 63 zv.

³⁰ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 813, spr. 654, ark. 64 – 64 zv.

³¹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 813, spr. 654, ark. 74 zv. 75 zv. In the Western Provinces prior to the first Polish uprising in 1830 a significant number of the police and judicial functionaries were elected from local nobles by themselves, but after the 1830 uprising these privileges had been gradually abolished. On the difficulties in this shift from an electoral to an appointment principle and the Great Russification of the local officialdom in Right Bank Ukraine during 1830–1863, see: O. I. KOZII Stanovyshe pol's'koi shliakhty na Podilli v period mizh povstanniamy 1830 i 1863 rokiv. Dys. kand. ist. nauk. L'viv University 1997, pp. 116–125.

³² Ironically, the Southwest governor-general, I. I. Vasil'chikov, who had softened his predecessor Bibikov's relentless anti-Polish policy, was shocked to death by this event (KOZII Stanovyshe pol's'koi shliakhty p. 143). The naivete of the “address” made T. Bobrowski, a famous chronologist of Polish life in Right Bank Ukraine of the 19th century, suppose that the event was caused simply by the Polish nobles' inability to read the Russian text of the “address,” while M. N. Dragomanov paid attention to the participants' apologies in the Senate that they saw “unification with the Polish Kingdom as the only guarantee to prevent the victory of the party of Chlopomany (Ukraine/peasant maniacs)” (ibidem p. 141).

³³ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 813, spr. 654, ark. 76 zv.

Three Positions on the Western Zemstvos

After Annenkov, the Southeast “Russian” elites split into three positions concerning the issue of zemstvos. The first position was to demand the urgent introduction of zemstvos, but with modifications to limit Polish representation. This position took shape earliest and attracted the absolute majority among the Southwest “Russian” elites, because their urge to modernize (to introduce medical care, public schooling, agricultural assistance, etc.) and envy of the zemstvos in the internal provinces changed the logic of anti-Polonism. While Annenkov’s anti-Polonism had been at base a primitive desire to exclude the local Poles from any policy-making, this majority began to argue that electoral zemstvos with modifications would become the best instrument to weaken the Polish influence in the Southwest region. After the zemstvo counter-reform in 1890, the supporters of this position repeatedly proposed to introduce zemstvos in accordance not with the 1890 but the more democratic 1864 Zemstvo Statute. Another modification often suggested was “provincial centralism,” according to which zemstvos were to be introduced only at the provincial level. Certainly, this was a case of inertia, caused by the centralized financial/administrative system in non-zemstvo provinces, but there were also anti-Polish nuances. Provincial politics were regarded as more Eastern Slavonized and therefore controllable, while many counties continued to be the bastions of the local Polish nobility.

The second position, professed by the pro-Polish minority, emerged in the 1890s, when it became more difficult to justify discrimination against Poles, as the bitter memory of the second Polish uprising faded away. This minority called for the introduction of zemstvos in uniformity with those in the internal provinces, without anti-Polish modifications. A representative of this group, the Volyn’ governor S. P. Sukhodol’skii, even argued that the zemstvos would serve as the “best school for Russian civil education” for the region’s Poles.³⁴ The third position was primitive anti-Polonism, a bad second to Annenkov. Opposed to electoral zemstvos in general, the supporters of this position thought it possible to improve administrative efficiency in the Western Provinces without changing the fundament of the existing statified system of local government. This tough position was weaker in the Southwest than the Northwest provinces, probably because the ethno-demographic situation in the Southwest was more favorable for Russians; the presence of an overwhelming “Russian” (Ukrainian) majority allowed the local authorities to pursue more tactful policies. However, the real epicenter of this tough line was a group of politicians in St. Petersburg, in particular I. N. Durnovo, D. S. Sipiagin and B. K. Pleve.

The First Round: Goremykin’s Attempt to Introduce Electoral Zemstvos

Soon after Annenkov’s categorical rejection of zemstvos and even during the decade of reaction in the 1880s, the Southwest authorities continued to request the introduction of zemstvos in the region. As early as 1873, the Southwest governor-general, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, proposed to introduce zemstvos (with a modification of the electoral system and “provincial centralism”) in one of the three Southwest provinces – Kiev, in which the Polish influence had become comparatively weak.³⁵ Likewise, when the Volyn’ governor, L. P. Tomara, requested to introduce zemstvos into this province in 1882, he requested electoral

³⁴ From the report to the tsar Nicholas II for the year 1894. Quoted in RODKIEWICZ *Russian Nationality Policy* p. 35; THEODORE R. WEEKS *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914*. DeKalb 1996, p. 136; and Krizis samoderzhavii p. 95.

³⁵ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 176 zv.

modifications to increase the representatives of “Russians” and “the people of German and Czech nationalities.”³⁶

In spite of these sporadic examples, it was only in the second half of the 1890s that the Western zemstvo issue became active again. There were three reasons for this. First, rising interest in agricultural innovations after the famine of 1891 strengthened the opinion among the educated public in favor of less bureaucratic but more managerial/socioeconomic local government. Second, Nicholas II succeeded his father in 1894; I. L. Goremykin succeeded I. N. Durnovo in the post of the minister of internal affairs in October 1895; and in January 1898 the Southwest governor-general, A. P. Ignat'ev, was replaced by M. I. Dragomirov. All these newcomers were more sympathetic to Poles than their predecessors.³⁷ Third, as mentioned, the second Polish uprising was now too far in the past to justify discrimination against Poles.

Exploiting the opportunities for nationwide debates in 1894 (initiated by the minister of internal affairs, I. N. Durnovo, when the central and local institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture were introduced), the Southwest “Russian” elites spoke for the introduction of zemstvos in their provinces. For example, on 28 August 1894 the Volyn' governor, S. P. Sukhodol'skii, convened a provincial conference to discuss how to organize local agricultural committees. Summarizing the discussion, Sukhodol'skii remarked that the existing administrative committees had neither the legal competence, staff, budget, nor expertise to conduct agricultural policies, so that the proposed local agricultural committees would barely be able to function if they were organized on the basis of the existing local state institutions. On the other hand, in Sukhodol'skii's view, it was almost impossible to rely as an alternative upon the method of encouraging social activities by organizing agricultural societies, because most of the local landowners were Polish and (no doubt) the future agricultural societies would fall into their hands.³⁸ A similar conference organized by the Kiev governor, L. P. Tomara (transferred from Volyn' in 1885), on 12 September 1894 concluded that the success of the new local agricultural committees would depend on the “maximally wide participation of local forces” in the committees' activities. Therefore, for Kiev province, “the most important condition” for successful agricultural aid was the introduction of zemstvo institutions.³⁹ Tomara and Sukhodol'skii repeated this view in their annual reports to the tsar for the year

³⁶ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 535, spr. 324, ark. 2–7. It was typical thinking of tsarist officials to regard the Protestants (German and Czech colonists) as potential allies of Great Russians in the Southwest, although experience after the arrival of electoral politics (aimed at the State Dumas and zemstvos) would show that this was not always true.

³⁷ Further, in 1902 the Northwest governor, V. N. Trotskii, was replaced by Prince P. D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii. The reshuffling of the both Southwest and Northwest governor-generals was followed by a series of appointments of soft-liners (towards the Poles) to the posts of governors in the Western Provinces (RODKIEWICZ Russian Nationality Policy pp. 44–45). This could happen because in regard to the peripheral provinces placed under the jurisdiction of governor-generals, even the minister of internal affairs was not authorized to appoint governors without gaining the agreement of the governor-general concerned (A. D. GRADOVSKII Istoricheskii ocherk uchrezhdeniia general-gubernatorov v Rossii, in: *Sobranie sochinenii A. D. Gradovskogo*, Tom 1, S.-Peterburg 1899, p. 327).

³⁸ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 693, spr. 294, ark. 3–3 zv. Sukhodol'skii's logic (“by neither the state nor social organizations, but by zemstvos”) became widespread among the “Russian” elites in Right Bank Ukraine after the 1905 revolution since this revolution strengthened the Polish nationalist tendencies of local agricultural societies. An archival material from Volyn' in 1907 reveals that, defeated by the Polish landowners in the competition for the leadership in agricultural societies and also for the influence on the local peasantry on agricultural matters, “Russian” landowners desired to influence the peasantry “through zemstvo institutions, and impatiently yearned for electoral zemstvos of the Russian type” (TsDIA, f. 442, op. 637, spr. 545, ark. 54).

³⁹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 693, spr. 294, ark. 28.

1894,⁴⁰ and gained the sympathy of Nicholas II, who minuted “Correct” on their reports,⁴¹ an act which could not but make the tsarist bureaucracy tremble.⁴²

Although appointed to the post of minister of internal affairs in October 1895 due to the support of K. P. Pobedonostsev and I. N. Durnovo, I. L. Goremykin nevertheless tried to return to the ideals of the Great Reforms and to spread zemstvos to the Western and other non-zemstvo provinces.⁴³ Pushed by Nicholas II’s positive notes minuted on the Kiev and Volyn’ governors’ reports, in February 1896, after more than thirty years of almost complete oblivion, the State Council authorized Goremykin to submit his conclusion concerning the “transformation of the institutions responsible for the affairs of local levies” in non-zemstvo provinces. In the summer of 1896, Goremykin questioned the Western governor-generals and governors on this matter. Their responses fall easily into the three positions explained in the previous section. The majority view promoting zemstvos with electoral modifications and “provincial centralism” was represented by the governors of Kiev (L. P. Tomara), Volyn’ (F. F. Trepov), Grodno, and Mogilev provinces. The pro-Polish minority was represented by the Kovno governor (again S. P. Sukhodol’skii, who had been transferred from Volyn’ province) – the only governor who supported the unconditional introduction of zemstvos, according to the existing 1890 Statute.

The third, tough position was represented by the other four (including Podolia) governors who spoke against the introduction of zemstvos in general, regardless of any modifications.⁴⁴ The Southwest and Northwest governor-generals, A. P. Ignat’ev and V. N. Trotskii, both supported this position.⁴⁵ These hard-line governors argued that “the Russian element” was doomed to be defeated by Poles in competitive elections, because “Russian” landowners were usually absentee and had “not been consolidated into an independent and solid landowning class.” The predictable Polish dominance in zemstvo assemblies and boards would inevitably influence the general political situation of the Western Provinces and provide the Poles with an instrument to resist Russian statehood “in unnoticeable and hidden legal fashions.”⁴⁶ Thus, we find here an amazing inertia around the issue of Western zemstvos; the hard-line governors were repeating what Annenkov had argued more than thirty years earlier.

In 1898 the State Council again directed the attention of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and Ministry of Finance (MF) to the “urgent necessity” to transform the local government in non-zemstvo provinces, in particular, in the nine Western Provinces. By this time Goremykin had worked out a project for the Western zemstvos, which confirmed the majority

⁴⁰ Sukhodol’skii remarked that the adoption of the universal City Charter in Right Bank Ukraine in the 1870s and its expected result, the Polish and Jewish domination of city self-government, had not caused any problem (WEEKS *Nation and State in Imperial Russia* p. 136; RODKIEWICZ *Russian Nationality Policy* pp. 34–35). This argument would be borrowed by Stolypin twelve years later. Strangely enough, the authors of “Krizis samoderzhaviia” think that the report to the tsar from Volyn’ for the 1894 year was written by F. F. Trepov (p. 95), who would become the Volyn’ governor as late as July 1896. However, this mistake is not fatal since F. F. Trepov was of the same opinion as Sukhodol’skii (RODKIEWICZ *Russian Nationality Policy* p. 35).

⁴¹ *Krizis samoderzhaviia* p. 95; RODKIEWICZ *Russian Nationality Policy* p. 36. Rodkiewicz attributes Nicholas II’s pro-Polish attitude during the first few years of his reign to N. Kh. Bunge’s influence, who was then Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, a former tutor of Nicholas, and had once submitted a memorandum with a recommendation to soften Alexander III’s policy towards Poles (pp. 30–33).

⁴² By 1897, however, Nicholas II changed his mind and took the view that zemstvos in the Western Provinces were “premature” (*Krizis samoderzhaviia* p. 115).

⁴³ *Krizis samoderzhaviia* p. 94.

⁴⁴ *Krizis samoderzhaviia* p. 96. TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 177.

⁴⁵ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 177 zv.

⁴⁶ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 177–177 zv.

position of the Southwest “Russian” elites: “provincial centralism” and “affirmative action” for non-Polish electors. The introduction of zemstvos into one or another county was a matter for deliberation at the Committee of Ministers in each case, according to the minister of internal affairs’s proposal.⁴⁷ Another impetus came from the appointment of Dragomirov to the post of the Southwest governor-general in 1898. Dragomirov called for the introduction of zemstvos in the region urgently, but according to the 1864 Statute. Goremykin convened a conference of the Western governors and governor-generals in St. Petersburg in March 1898. This time the participants’ reaction to Goremykin’s project was largely positive, although the Northwest governor-general, Trotskii, continued his previous categorical objection to electoral zemstvos.⁴⁸

However, Goremykin then encountered opposition from almost all the ministries. The leaders of this resistance were Durnovo and Witte.⁴⁹ In October 1899, Goremykin was replaced as minister of internal affairs by D. S. Sipiagin, who immediately buried Goremykin’s project and instead proposed a very different project of local reform within the existing statified structure. While Goremykin prepared two projects, treating the Western Provinces and Southeastern provinces (Astrakhan’, Orenburg and Stavropol’) separately, Sipiagin prepared a single project covering all twelve provinces. In Sipiagin’s project, “provincial centralism” was confirmed again: there would be only boards but no assemblies at the county level. The members of these boards would be appointed by the government, and even property qualification in the localities was not required for the nominees. Sipiagin’s project confronted substantial opposition within the State Council, sympathetic to zemstvos in general and to the previous project prepared by Goremykin in particular. The vote split 20 (against) to 41 (for).⁵⁰

After Sipiagin was assassinated on 2 April 1902, the new minister, V. K. Pleve, continued Sipiagin’s line in principle, although he excluded the three Southeastern provinces from the project. On 2 April 1903, the tsar confirmed the project of the Statute on Management of Zemstvo Administration in Vil’na, Vitebsk, Volyn’, Grodno, Kiev, Kovno, Minsk, Mogilev and Podoliia provinces.⁵¹

The Failure of the “Margarine Zemstvos”

The State Council decided to enact the April 1903 Statute in Belarus by the end of that year. Based on the Council’s authorization and after coordinating with the Southwest governors, Pleve decided to enact the Statute in the Southwest region on 1 May 1904.⁵²

The provincial and county committees for zemstvo administration (*gubernskie i uездnye komitety po delam zemskogo khoziaistva*; below, zemstvo committees), presided over by the governors, were a hybrid of government, noble corporate, and public elements, and therefore nicknamed “margarine zemstvos.” The public element, i.e. provincial “councilors,” less than five for each county, were to be appointed by the minister of internal affairs from among the

⁴⁷ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 177 zv.–178.

⁴⁸ Krizis samoderzhaviiia p. 99.

⁴⁹ Witte’s opposition to Goremykin provoked an eventually famous debate between them concerning the nature of the autocracy and its compatibility with local self-governments (Krizis samoderzhaviiia pp. 105–113).

⁵⁰ Krizis samoderzhaviiia p. 118.

⁵¹ Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, Sobr. 3 (hereafter PSZ-3). Tom 23, 1903, otd. 1. S.-Peterburg 1905, St. 22757.

⁵² TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 1–6.

owners of taxable real estates or commercial-industrial assets.⁵³ The county committee, presided over by the marshal of the county nobility, was composed of “councilors” nominated by the county marshal of nobility, less than five *volost’* elders for each county appointed by the governor, land captains, tax inspectors and other county state officials. The executive organs were the provincial and county boards for zemstvo administration. The chairperson and members of the provincial boards were appointed by the minister of internal affairs.⁵⁴ While the previous administrative committees compiled three-year budgets, the budget term of the provincial zemstvo committees was one year, as was the case with zemstvos.

The “provincial centralism” observed in Goremykin’s 1898 project was slightly softened in the 1903 Statute, since it allowed county zemstvo committees to exist (although as appointed organs). Nevertheless, these committees did not compile their own budgets, the representation of local notables in these committees (from five to ten, including *volost’* elders⁵⁵) was visibly weaker than that in provincial committees, and the members of county committees were less professionalized than those of provincial committees.⁵⁶ As a result, the position of county zemstvo committees *vis-à-vis* provincial committees was much weaker than that of county zemstvos *vis-à-vis* provincial zemstvos in the internal provinces.

The flaws of the 1903 reform became manifest almost immediately. First of all, the lack of electoral principles nullified one of the crucial merits of zemstvos – the encouragement of public interests and the mobilization of local notables – and, at the same time, humiliated the local notables, who had waited to obtain their own local self-government for forty years. Moreover, the governors’ selection of councilors often turned out to be problematic. For example, of the five councilors appointed by the Kiev governor in 1904, only one could be regarded as a “local representative,” possessing the necessary quantity of real estate (*tsenz*) in Kiev province, while one of the others, a former land captain, was even recruited from Minsk province.⁵⁷ Expressing great disappointment, the newspaper “Kievlianin” wrote: “This is not the zemstvo institution that exists in other provinces, but an absolutely specific organization. The new institution is being created in an almost grave-like bureaucratic silence” (5 April 1904) and “the lists of candidates, seemingly, were limited to job seekers, acquaintances or friends of friends” (19 April 1904). In his report to the tsar for 1905 the Podolia governor noted that “only four landowners agreed to become members of the provincial and county zemstvo committees, while the other posts were filled by appointment from among the officials of various ministries who in fact do not have any professional experience of work in local government.”⁵⁸

Another negative consequence of the 1903 reform was loose financial control. Immediately after the introduction of zemstvo committees, their budgets began to expand uncontrollably. For example, the zemstvo budget in Kiev province increased from 1 510 261 rubles in 1904 to 2 938 712 rubles in 1906 and total taxes increased by 934 062 rubles or 86% over

⁵³ Besides these appointed councilors, the provincial committee was composed of representatives of both the provincial state administrations and the provincial and county nobilities, the chairperson and members of the provincial board for zemstvo administration, and the mayor of the provincial capital.

⁵⁴ The county boards were composed of the county police chief, one representative of the tax inspectors, and two representatives of the county councilors.

⁵⁵ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132-a, chast. 2, ark. 55.

⁵⁶ The marshals of the county nobilities, who were to preside over the county committees and boards, were overburdened even without this task. There was only one salaried member of staff (“permanent member”) for each county committee.

⁵⁷ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132-a, chast. 2, ark. 10; op. 657, spr. 216, ark. 19.

⁵⁸ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 637, spr. 99, ark. 5 zv.

these two years.⁵⁹ Despite the “provincial centralism” that seemed to facilitate organizational economy, organizational expenditures increased visibly, and this discredited the zemstvo committees even more in the eyes of the public.⁶⁰

The “provincial centralism” was not justified either. The weakness of county zemstvo committees meant that provincial committees were nothing but generals without soldiers. The lack of county budgets led to serious conflicts between provincial and county committees. This was not surprising since county committees collected zemstvo taxes; these revenues were then concentrated in provincial treasuries; and provincial committees decided how to spend them, often ignoring the counties’ needs. Moreover, tax burdens were distributed amongst the counties without proper balance.⁶¹

The disappointing situation in the zemstvo committees led to absenteeism of the councilors. In his letter to the minister of internal affairs dated 16 July 1906, the Podolia governor remarked that in his province rampant absenteeism of county councilors had made the provincial committee adopt a dishonorable resolution asking county councilors who did not wish to attend sessions any more to give up their positions as councilors.⁶² In the same letter this governor even stated that the people of his province commonly think that under the previous administrative committees “there was more order, and local needs were better fulfilled with expenses ten times less than now.”⁶³ Disappointment with the “margarine zemstvos” was so strong that in June 1906 the Kiev governor even asked the Southwest governor-general to allow him not to compile the list of candidates for the second zemstvo committees (1907–1909). He thought that in any case electoral zemstvos would be introduced soon, and that it would be easier to persuade the present councilors to continue to work until then.⁶⁴

Thus, the history of public administration in Right Bank Ukraine during 1903–1911 reminds us of the Gorbachev reforms: in both cases halfway reforms destroyed the old system, which had been criticized for its ineffectiveness but proved, in hindsight, to have been more or less functioning, and produced nothing but a more chaotic situation. And the cure for this situation, which at that time allegedly allowed no alternative, was similar too: a more radical, decisive reform. For Right Bank Ukraine, this was the introduction of electoral zemstvos.

The Second Round: The Revolution of 1905 and the Zemstvo Issue

In addition to the shortcomings of the 1903 Statute, the 1905 revolution strengthened the tendency to equalize peripheral and internal provinces of the Empire. First, as the revolution made an empire-wide parliament foreseeable, and the members of this parliament were to be elected also from peripheral, non-zemstvo provinces, the traditional division of local institutions into two kinds (internal and peripheral) became contestable. Second, the revolution

⁵⁹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 179.

⁶⁰ Considering that notables in non-zemstvo provinces, as a rule, desired to catch up with the level of public administration in zemstvo provinces as soon as possible (in other words, to overcome the forty or fifty years’ gap in a short time), it is unfair to blame only the “margarine zemstvos” for these increasing expenditures. Indeed, after the 1911 reform budget expansion continued. If the average per year taxation on ten desiatina of land in 1911 in Kiev province was 47 kopecks, in Podolia 73, in Volyn’ 41, in 1912 these amounts rose to 1 ruble 4 kopecks, 1 ruble 53 kopecks and 53.8 kopecks, respectively (TsDIA, f. 442, op. 642, spr. 497, ark. 31 zv.; SESAK Zemskie uchrezhdeniia p. 75).

⁶¹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 657, spr. 217, ark. 66; op. 637, spr. 99, ark. 5 zv.

⁶² TsDIA, f. 442, op. 657, spr. 217, ark. 66-66 zv.

⁶³ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 657, spr. 217, ark. 66 zv.

⁶⁴ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 659, spr. 98, ark. 1.

strengthened the public's interest in citizenship and thus highlighted the paradox of the Polish problems in the Western Provinces: the anti-Polish policy pursued by the government in the last half century eventually limited the local "Russian" elites' citizenship as well. Third, the local elites in the Western Provinces expected that the introduction of all-estate local self-government would soothe not only the class struggle but also the ethno-confessional schism, which was quite acute there. Fourth, in contrast to the nationalism of so-called "non-historical" nations, it was easier for "historical," elite nations, in particular for Poles, to gain Russian liberals' sympathy and to create a united front with them. All of these factors strengthened the position of the pro-Polish minority amongst the Southwest elites.

The wave of protests that arose immediately after the enactment of the 1903 Statute in Belarus and Right Bank Ukraine liquidated the Pyrrhic victory of Sipiagin and Pleve. Moreover, Pleve was assassinated on 15 July 1904. By the end of 1904, the Committee of Ministers formed a very critical attitude towards the 1903 Statute, and the enactment of the Statute in the last remaining territory, i.e. the Northwest provinces, became problematic. The atmosphere was strengthened by the Emperor's Decree on 12 December 1904, which promised a general democratization.⁶⁵ Two of its articles, namely the widening of the competence of the zemstvos and city authorities, and religious tolerance, visibly contradicted the 1903 Statute. In February 1905, the enactment of the 1903 Statute in the Northwest provinces was finally suspended, leaving the traditional system of administrative committees and the offices of social care intact.⁶⁶

In the Southwest provinces neither social nor bureaucratic circles needed one year to become convinced that the 1903 Statute was not viable. In their annual sessions the Volyn' and Podolia provincial zemstvo committees petitioned for the introduction of electoral zemstvos.⁶⁷ In his letter to the minister of interior, A. G. Bulygin, on 29 April 1905, the Southwest governor-general, V. A. Sukhomlinov, criticized the one year of operation of the 1903 system for the "complete estrangement of local forces from work on complex local affairs," as well as for its weak county organs. Sukhomlinov saw "the only solution" as the introduction of universal zemstvos. In his view, there remained no political reason not to take this step since "the Polish population of our provinces show complete solidarity with the interests of the Russian population and work, to a sufficient extent, for the general development of the well-being of the region." Sukhomlinov regarded the lack of universal zemstvos in the Southwest provinces as "an obstacle to the quite desirable complete unification of this periphery with the other part of the Empire."⁶⁸

In the same month of April 1905, an extraordinary session of the Kiev provincial zemstvo committee also petitioned for the introduction of electoral zemstvos, based on the principles of the tsar's democratizing decree of 12 December 1904. According to this petition, the danger, which had been observed in 1864 and 1890, of harming the state's "highest interests" by introducing zemstvos had disappeared. The crises of the system based on the 1903 Statute would deepen in the near future since the councilors were becoming disgusted with their position. Because the councilors were not elected, the population was indifferent to the new institutions. The present complete isolation of the landowning class from the peasant population was generating class antagonism. The introduction of zemstvos "will show [the peasant

⁶⁵ PSZ-3. Tom 24, 1904, otd. 1. S.-Peterburg 1907, St. 25495.

⁶⁶ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 179 zv.-180.

⁶⁷ The Volyn' committee called for zemstvos based on the 1890 Statute, while Podolia supported the 1864 Statute (TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 181-181 zv.).

⁶⁸ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132-a, chast. 2, ark. 54-57.

population] legal ways to fulfill their urgent requests.”⁶⁹ In December of the same year, the Kiev governor, P. Savvich, supported this April resolution in his letter to the Southwest governor-general, V. A. Sukhomlinov. Savvich argued that the electoral procedures should be based on the 1864 Statute, otherwise “the interests of the indigenous Little Russian population” would fall under the aegis of the Polish nobility and small *szlachta*.⁷⁰ Sukhomlinov, in turn, supported Savvich’s proposal in his letter (31 December 1905) to the minister of interior, Durnovo.

Durnovo’s response to Sukhomlinov (25 January 1906) was predictable. In Durnovo’s view, the 1890 Statute could not be introduced in the Southwest provinces immediately, since it had been recognized as unsatisfactory even for the internal provinces. Moreover, partial revision of the 1890 Statute with elements of the 1864 Statute was inconceivable without giving the internal provinces a similar chance for reconsideration. Durnovo argued that the discontent on the part of councilors was caused mainly by the unsuccessful nomination of councilors, “since a similar phenomenon has not been observed in Belorussian provinces.” Durnovo advised increasing the number of peasant councilors who, as the Belorussian experience had shown, often proved to be more active than landowners, scornfully borrowing a phrase from the April 1905 petition by the Kiev committee: “This measure will also show the peasant population legal ways to articulate their urgent problems.”⁷¹

The local authorities in the Western Provinces continued to call for zemstvos. In a session of the Podolia provincial zemstvo committee held in July 1906, two marshals of the county nobilities, sympathetic to the Octoberists, proposed a resolution petitioning for the introduction of zemstvos based on the 1864 Statute into the province. The Podolia governor (in attendance) did not oppose this resolution, but was only able to convince the audience that it should be addressed to the tsar, not to the State Duma.⁷²

This Podolia resolution was motivated by the councilors’ anger at the MIA’s rejection of the provincial committee’s petition to borrow 450 000 rubles from the provincial insurance capital, while the same MIA transferred exactly the same sum of money from the same capital for famine relief in Saratov province. Moreover, the MIA did not provide 30 000 rubles for public education despite the committee’s petition, but allotted 6000 rubles for stock service points, although the committee had not included this in its budget.⁷³ Considering the MIA’s disrespectful actions, it is not difficult to imagine the effect one of the initiators of the resolution provoked from the audience by his speech:

“Whatever we decide here, whatever resolution we adopt, our decisions need to climb up a steep staircase, each step of which is a desk [*kantseliariia*] and each pace is at the discretion of the almighty bureaucracy. If it were not for the Ukrainian blue sky, if it were not for our tough Little Russian characters, God knows, we possibly would have stopped beating our foreheads against this impenetrable wall. Revolutionary times in any country are characterized by the fact that the people do not follow practical activists, men of business, but they follow abstract thinkers, – and only life, relentless reality after a series of hard experiences, deep perturbations and numberless sacrifices force the life of the people within the limits and borders that actually represent a step of popular history at the existing cultural and intellectual development of the popular masses. Only the voice of popular representatives will be able to voice in a proper and powerful way in order to defend local interests and local needs.”⁷⁴

⁶⁹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 181 zv.

⁷⁰ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 182; spr. 132-a, chast. 2, ark. 99–100.

⁷¹ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132-a, chast. 2, ark. 103–103 zv.

⁷² TsDIA, f. 442, op. 657, spr. 217, ark. 67.

⁷³ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 657, spr. 217, ark. 66 zv.

⁷⁴ Podol’skii krai, 27 June 1906.

It was in this situation that P. A. Stolypin became the minister of internal affairs in April 1906. The ministry returned to Goremykin's course immediately. A memorandum submitted in November 1906 by the Main Administration of Local Management of the MIA to the Council of Ministers,⁷⁵ visibly reflecting Stolypin's own view, laid the cornerstone of the 1911 reform. Exactly as governor-general Annenkov had done forty years earlier, the memorandum gave a historical overview of not only the zemstvo issue but also the Polish problem in the Western Provinces in general. This overview led to the conclusion that in the Western Provinces the composition of land ownership had been improved significantly over the last forty years and had reached almost parity between Poles and "Russians." The memorandum even stated: "The previous acute attitude of the local, mainly Polish, inhabitants towards anything Russian has changed to a peaceful and cultural, sometimes even collaborative attitude towards the benefit of the region." Thus we find that the logic in the debates on Western zemstvos had not changed from the time of Annenkov, through the discussions among governors and governor-generals at the turn of the century, and up to this period. Conclusions might differ, depending on precarious judgments on the significance of the "Russian" presence in the Western Provinces. Several years earlier, the hard-line governors emphasized the fact that a significant portion of the local "Russian" landowners were absentee, while the MIA memorandum in 1906 ignored this fact.

Based on this optimistic judgment, the memorandum criticized the discrimination of Poles. "Although several discriminatory laws were abolished in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution," most of them remained in effect, and already "the third generation since the uprising" was suffering from these discriminations. "In these circumstances, naturally, these people do not know in the name of what they are deprived of many of the rights and privileges which other tribes and nations belonging to the Russian Empire enjoy."⁷⁶ One of these deprivations was the lack of local self-government. The 1903 reform could not compensate for the absence of local self-government since "those who entered *en masse* into the zemstvo administration were the officials who had almost nothing, save their services, to do with the localities."⁷⁷ The memorandum concluded that there could not be any objection in principle to the introduction of electoral zemstvos in the Western Provinces. Remarkably, the memorandum advocated that the Western zemstvos should be introduced by means of the tsar's Emergency Decrees; considering the revolutionary situation, this problem could not await proper parliamentary procedures. In spite of its pro-Polish tone, the memorandum represented the majority view of the Southwest "Russian" elites, reserving that the 1890 Statute should be modified for the Western Provinces, lest the "most active, but small number of" local Poles should become dominant amongst the councilors.⁷⁸

Conclusions

The conservative, unchangeable characteristics of the debates upon Western zemstvos reveals the central dilemma that tsarist Western policy faced. The widening gaps in various spheres of public administration between zemstvo and non-zemstvo provinces demonstrated that Russia was not able to respond to the challenges of modernization without zemstvos. The mighty development of zemstvo activities in the internal provinces, in particular since the beginning of the 1890s, created numerous zemstvo sympathizers not only amongst the "Rus-

⁷⁵ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 176–185.

⁷⁶ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 183 zv.

⁷⁷ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 179.

⁷⁸ TsDIA, f. 442, op. 656, spr. 132, chast. 1, ark. 184–185 zv.

sian" public but also in the bureaucratic circles of Right Bank Ukraine. The zemstvo had its sympathizers in the State Council as well; a number of the councilors took part in zemstvo activities at some stage of their career. This is one of the reasons why Durnovo's and Sipiagin's victory in 1899 was only ephemeral. On the other hand, the inferiority complex of the imperial officials towards the Poles in the Western Provinces was too strong for the former to believe that the local "Russian" elements would be able to match the Poles in competitive elections. It was impossible to dispense with electoral zemstvos, but the result of their introduction could not be predicted. This narrow range of policy choices seems to explain the conservativeness of those who were involved in the issue of Western zemstvos.

In the battle between Polish and "Russian" imperial traditions the Polish one was always victorious, at least in imperial officials' imagination. The Russian Empire was a peculiar empire, in which the ruling nation did not regard itself as the "eldest brother." The traditional understanding of Russification, according to which the strong harassed the weak, should be reconsidered.

The strategy to "wager on the people," chosen by the tsarist government in the mid-19th century to weaken the Polish influence in the Western Provinces, enriched its contents through not only the peasant reforms, but also the debate on the Western zemstvos. At first, the trauma delivered to the imperial officials by the second Polish uprising induced them to reject any kind of local self-government, under the pretext of depriving the Polish elites of an instrument to influence the local population. Before long, this primitive anti-Polonism gave way to a strategy to "emancipate" the local population from Polish and Jewish "exploitation" by encouraging the population's cultural and socioeconomic development. Thus emerged a new majority amongst local elites and imperial officials, which requested zemstvos with electoral modifications to prevent the Poles' dominance in zemstvo assemblies. Remarkably, we can observe a similar shift of emphasis in tsarist agrarian policy in Right Bank Ukraine. Immediately after the second Polish uprising the government tried to intervene in the relations between Polish landowners and Ukrainian peasants directly by, for example, controlling the redemption process. Afterwards, the government tried to strengthen the position of Ukrainian peasants *vis-à-vis* Poles and Jews by public education, agricultural assistance, and the promotion of cooperatives. As a result, the role of peace arbitrators, which continued to function in Right Bank Ukraine until the end of tsarism, changed from something like anti-Polish commissars to what might remind us of zemstvo agronomists in the internal provinces.

The 1905 revolution strengthened the pro-Polish minority in Right Bank Ukraine, who requested zemstvos without electoral modifications. However, local "Russian" elites' appeasement of Poles would not continue for long, because the Polish nationalism during the 1905 revolution and, later, the "Kolo" fraction's activities in the First and Second State Dumas revealed that the Poles had not abandoned their ambitions towards their "historical territory," namely the Western Provinces. Stolypin's June 3 *coup d'état* limited Poles' representation in the State Duma to the extent that the embryonic union of pro-Polish "Russian" liberals and "realistic" Polish elites was destroyed. Moreover, the advent of electoral politics made the "Russian" elites in Right Bank Ukraine rely upon traditional anti-Polish and anti-Jewish narratives to win the elections to the State Duma and zemstvos. In one way or another, the issue of Western Zemstvos influenced the formation of a party system in Right Bank Ukraine after the advent of electoral politics, an analysis of which requires another paper.