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The System of Public Education in Volyn Governorate in the Period 1796–1917. Part 3

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Abstract

This work explores the system of public education in Volyn Governorate in the period 1796–1917. This part of the work examines the timeframe 1900–1917.

Use was made of the Memorandum Books for Volyn Governorate for the period 1901–1915. During the period under review, this source carried reports on the state of the system of public education in the region. While mainly focused on educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education and parochial Orthodox Christian schools, it also carried data on schools of other faiths (e.g., Jewish and German schools) in the region. Use was also made of relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation).

The authors' conclusion is that in the period 1900–1917 the development of the system of public education in Volyn Governorate was mostly governed by regional factors. The system of public education in this region of the Russian Empire was also influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1905 and later World War I, as well as the religious composition of the population. Overall, the region's system of public education developed in an evolutionary and dynamic manner. In the period under review, the size of the region's network of secondary educational institutions increased 3 times. Throughout the period, the region witnessed growth in the number of female students at its secondary educational institutions. By 1913, the number of girls at secondary educational institutions in the region had surpassed the number of boys at them. The number of girls at the region's lower educational institutions increased 4 times, with the overall number of students at them increasing more than 3 times. A unique phenomenon was primary education in the region. With the number of primary educational institutions in the region remaining virtually

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unchanged, growth in the number of students at them was just about 20 %. This growth was almost entirely associated with growth in the number of girls attending primary school in the region.

Keywords: Volyn Governorate, Russian Empire, system of public education, parochial schools, period 1796–1917.

1. Introduction

Volyn Governorate was established in 1796 following the third partition of Rzeczpospolita. By 1900, the region had built an extensive network of educational institutions, which included a number of secondary educational institutions, nearly 40 lower schools, and a large number of primary schools (most of which were parochial).

This part of the work is focused on the timeframe 1900–1915.

2. Materials and methods

Use was made of the Memorandum Books for Volyn Governorate for the period 1901–1915. During the period under review, this source carried reports on the state of the system of public education in the region. While mainly focused on educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education and parochial Orthodox Christian schools, it also carried data on schools of other faiths (e.g., Jewish and German schools) in the region. Use was also made of relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation).

As in most of the similar works, use was made here of the chronological and statistical methods. The use of the chronological method made it possible to explore the characteristics of secondary, lower, and primary education in Volyn Governorate. The statistical method was employed to analyze a large body of statistical information and gain an insight into aspects such as the types of educational institutions and the size and gender composition of the student body across the region.

3. Discussion

The previous part of the work examined the limited historiography of the subject under review accumulated in the prerevolutionary and Soviet periods ([Cherkasov et al., 2021a: 1049-1050](#)).

Public education in the Russian Empire has been the subject of more extensive research in the contemporary period, with historical statistical research being conducted on various educational districts across the Russian Empire. These studies have examined the various aspects of the system of public education in the early 20th century Russian Empire, including the number and quality of educational institutions and the number and gender composition of students at them. For instance, research has been conducted on public education in the following areas: Kuban Oblast ([Molchanova et al., 2019a](#); [Molchanova et al., 2020](#)), Stavropol Governorate ([Natolochnaya et al., 2020a](#); [Natolochnaya et al., 2020b](#)), Orenburg Governorate ([Magsumov et al., 2020b](#)), and the Kharkov Educational District ([Degtyarev et al., 2020](#)).

4. Results

As already noted in the work's previous part, by 1900 the region had built a network of educational institutions, which included secular, ecclesiastical, private, and national educational institutions ([Cherkasov et al., 2021: 795](#)) across the secondary, lower, and primary education sectors.

Secondary educational institutions

As of 1900, Volyn Governorate had 9 secondary educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education (5 gymnasiums (3 male and 2 female), 1 male progymnasium, 1 real school, 1 first-rate female educational institution (modeled after the gymnasium), and 1 teacher's seminary). Three of these were in Zhitomir, the region's capital, 5 – in its uyezd cities, and 1 – in one of its uyezds ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1901: 86-89](#)).

The period 1900–1917 was the heyday of secondary education in Volyn Governorate. It witnessed brisk development in both the private and public secondary education sectors. In addition, there emerged nontraditional forms of secondary education (e.g., pedagogical

programs). Table 1 displays the numbers of secondary educational institutions and students at them in the region at the time.

Table 1. Numbers of Secondary Educational Institutions in Volyn Governorate and Students at Them in the Period 1900–1915 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1901: 86-89; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1902: 94-97; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1903: 90-93; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 48-49; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1905: 40-43; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1906: 30-32; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1907: 33-35; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1908: 42-44; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1909: 45-47; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1910: 45-47; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1911: 46-48; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1912: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1913: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1915: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1916: 63-64)

Year	Number of educational institutions								Number of students		
	Gymnasiums		Progymnasiums		Real schools	First-rate private schools	Teacher's seminaries (pedagogical programs)	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female							
1900	3	2	1	-	1	1	1	9	1,936	798	2,734
1901	3	2	1	-	1	1	1	9	1,967	782	2,749 ¹
1902	3	2	1	-	1	2	1	10	2,156	848	3,004
1903	3	2	1	-	1	2 ²	1	10	2,184	1,302	3,486
1904	3	2	1	-	1	3 ³	1	11	2,194	1,589	3,783
1905	3	2	1	-	1	3 ⁴	1	11	2,356	1,475	3,831
1906	3	2	1	-	1	3 ⁵	1	11	2,495	1,842	4,337
1907	3	2	1	-	1	3 ⁶	1	11	2,267	1,880	4,147
1908	4	2	-	-	1	10 ⁷	1	18	2,786	2,393	5,179
1909	4	2	-	-	1	10 ⁸	1	18	2,926	2,278	5,204
1910	4	2	-	-	1	12 ⁹	1	20	2,993	2,502	5,495
1911	4	2	-	-	1	12 ¹⁰	1	20	2,846	2,821	5,667
1912	4	2	-	-	1	13 ¹¹	1	21	2,954	3,030	5,984
1913	9	13	-	-	1	-	2	25	3,296	3,659	6,955 ¹²
1915	10	15	-	-	1	-	3	29	2,671	1,928	4,599

As evidenced in Table 1, the period under review witnessed a threefold increase in the number of secondary educational institutions in the region – from 9 to 29. Worthy of particular note is the fact that starting in 1903 demand for secondary education in the region increased. A major role in this was played by private educational institutions. In an attempt to meet demand, a third private

¹ Data not available on the number of female students attending first-rate private education in the region

² The governorate had 2 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

³ The governorate had 2 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums) and 1 female progymnasium.

⁴ The governorate had 3 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

⁵ The governorate had 3 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

⁶ The governorate had 3 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

⁷ The governorate had 2 male and 4 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums), as well as 4 private female progymnasiums.

⁸ The governorate had 3 male and 4 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums), as well as 3 private female progymnasiums.

⁹ The governorate had 4 male and 8 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

¹⁰ The governorate had 3 male and 9 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

¹¹ The governorate had 4 male and 9 first-rate female schools (gymnasiums).

¹² There may have been one more first-rate private female school, but it is not possible to determine the number of students at it due to lack of statistics.

gymnasium was set up in 1904, and in 1908, i.e. right after the Russian Revolution of 1905, the region witnessed a sharp rise in the number of secondary educational institutions (an increase of 7). The region's system of public education entirely owed this increase to private educational institutions. Whereas in 1907 there were just 3 private female gymnasiums, in 1908 the region additionally became home to 2 male and 1 female gymnasiums, as well as 4 female progymnasiums. This indicates that female secondary education was especially in demand in the region at the time. The number of private educational institutions in the region rose up until 1912, when their combined number reached 13 to account for over 60% of the total number of secondary educational institutions in the region. However, as early as 1913, in conjunction with the opening of state (5 male and 11 female) gymnasiums, all private educational institutions in the region ceased operation.

As regards the number of students at secondary educational institutions in the region, it rose briskly up until World War I. More specifically, in the period from 1900 to 1913 it rose from 2,734 to 6,955, a more than twofold increase. Of particular note is the gender composition of students at the region's secondary schools at the time. Whereas in 1900 girls constituted less than a third of the total student body, in 1912 and 1913 they accounted for over half thereof.

Lower educational institutions

By 1900, Volyn Governorate had 51 lower educational institutions, including 6 ecclesiastical, 1 Jewish, and several sectoral educational institutions (e.g., a school for police officers). In the period 1900–1917, the system of lower education in the governorate, similar to its system of secondary education, experienced brisk development. In this regard, of particular interest is information relating to the region's educational institutions run by the Ministry of Public Education and two-grade parochial schools under the purview of the Holy Synod. In addition, the sample includes the region's feldsher, lower tradesman's, and lower agricultural schools. Table 2 displays the data on the region's lower educational institutions in the period 1900–1915.

Table 2. Numbers of Lower Educational Institutions in Volyn Governorate and Students at Them in the Period 1900–1915 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1901: 86-89; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1902: 94-97; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1903: 90-93; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 48-49; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1905: 40-43; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1906: 30-32; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1908: 42-44; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1909: 45-47; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1910: 45-47; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1911: 46-48; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1912: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1913: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1915: 90-91; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1916: 63-64)

Year	Number of educational institutions						Number of students			
	Two-grade schools		Higher primary schools	Parochial two-grade schools	Lower tradesman's and agricultural schools	Feldsher schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	Urban	Rural								
1900	16	22	-	2	-	1	41	5,533	2,457	7,990
1901	13	25	-	3	-	1	42	6,029	2,627	8,656
1902	14	45	-	5	-	1	65	8,440	2,963	11,403
1903	24	48	-	5	5	1	83	9,746	3,446	13,192
1904	26	51	-	6	4	1	88	10,045	3,847	13,892
1905	28	55	-	11	4	1	99	12,104	4,552	16,656
1906	28	58	-	12	4	1	103	12,612	5,193	17,805
1907	28	60	-	12	4	1	105	12,610	5,250	17,860
1908	28	72	-	14	4	1	119	12,687	5,531	18,218
1909	29	81	-	14	4	1	129	14,261	6,027	20,288
1910	30	83	-	14	4	1	132	15,981	4,730	20,711

1911	31	92	-	16	5	1	145	17,989	7,372	25,361
1912	31	96	-	17	7	1	152	19,004	7,738	26,742
1913	2	103	29	17	7	1	159	18,454	7,387	25,841
1915	-	113	34	17	7	1	172	15,483	7,389	22,872

As evidenced in [Table 2](#), the period under review witnessed brisk development in the region's lower primary education sector, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Specifically, the number of educational institutions in this sector rose 4.2 times. In terms of quality, near the end of the period under review the region witnessed an upsurge in the establishment of higher primary (six-year) schools (note that in 1900 the length of the program of study was 4 years (urban and rural schools)). In addition, there was brisk development in the parochial two-grade schools sector as well, with the number of such schools growing from 2 to 17, an increase of 8.5 times. A novelty was the establishment of lower tradesman's and agricultural schools.

The number of students increased 3.3 times – from 7,990 students (1900) to 25,841 (1913). As with the region's secondary educational institutions, the number of students in this sector dropped sharply in 1915 in conjunction with World War I. As regards the gender balance in this sector, in 1900 girls accounted for a third of the total student body. As early as 1902, their share started to decline. In 1913, it hit its lowest level – 28%.

Primary educational institutions

In the early 20th century, Volyn Governorate witnessed brisk development in its primary education sector as well. To add some more value to public education in regions on the periphery of the nation, with Volyn Governorate being one such region, the authorities also reported on national schools (German and Jewish) in the region. In 1900, their number reached 1,012. However, these schools did not have a curriculum, with the educational process in them often confined mainly to the study of ecclesiastical literature. In this regard, in calculating the number of primary schools in the region in the prerevolutionary period, the authors limited their research to schools under the purview of Ministry of Public Education and one-grade parochial schools. Note that, as in the late 19th century, a major role in the development of primary public education in Volyn Governorate was played by parochial schools, as the region had a large number of small populated areas. Opening ministerial schools in them was not seen as cost effective. [Table 3](#) displays the number of primary educational institutions in the region and students at them at the time.

Table 3. Number of Primary Educational Institutions in Volyn Governorate and Students at Them in the Period 1900–1915 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1901: 86-89](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1903: 90-93](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 48-49](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1905: 40-43](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1906: 30-32](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1907: 33-35](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1908: 42-44](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1909: 45-47](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1910: 45-47](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1911: 46-48](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1912: 90-91](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1913: 90-91](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1915: 90-91](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1916: 63-64](#))

Year	Number of educational institutions				Number of students		
	Public one-grade schools	Rural schools	Parochial schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1900	291	169	1,482	1,942	71,848	13,902	85,750
1901		314	1,480	1,794	69,071	13,160	82,231
1902		313	1,493	1,806	68,963	13,032	81,995
1903		332	1,506	1,838	68,735	13,304	82,039
1904		335	1,603	1,938	74,827	17,125	91,952

1905	357	1,502	1,859	75,785	17,546	93,331
1906	364	1,457	1,821	80,004	18,588	98,592
1907	362	1,388	1,750	79,486	19,034	98,520
1908	374	1,401	1,775	79,073	18,841	97,914
1909	410	1,408	1,818	83,002	21,708	104,710
1910	437	1,413	1,850	83,877	22,216	106,093
1911	448	1,465	1,913	84,153	22,503	106,656
1912	70	441	1,448	84,731	22,858	107,589
1913	266	430	1,368	2,064	85,686	26,909
1915	281	428	1,401	2,110	77,530	27,535

As evidenced in [Table 3](#), the influence of parochial education in Volyn Governorate cannot be underestimated. In 1900, 51,219 out of the 71,848 boys (71%) attending primary school in the region were students of parochial schools. The figure was even higher with girls – 10,160 out of the total 13,902 (73%). In 1904, the number of parochial schools in the region reached its maximum (1,603). The figure started to drop during the Russian Revolution of 1905. This decline may have been associated with the process of schools in the region getting larger. Specifically, whereas in 1901 there were 41.8 students per parochial school, in 1906 the figure was 50.8, in 1910 – 56, and in 1913 – 54.4 students.

The number of students increased just slightly – from 85,000 to 105,000. Whereas the number of boys remained virtually unchanged, the number of girls rose 2 times – from 13,900 (1900) to 27,500 (1915). This may have been associated with the fact that as early as 1900 parochial education had reached the majority of boys in Volyn Governorate.

A study conducted by the Russian authorities on January 1, 1915, to determine how many school-age children (ages 8–11) in the governorate were attending school at the time revealed that out of the region's 375,303 children just 150,805 were going to school (RGIA. F. 733. Op. 207. D. 39. L. 1), i.e. just around 40 %. The region's children not attending school at the time included around 50,000 Orthodox Christian girls, as well members of other faiths.

5. Conclusion

In the period 1900–1917, the development of the system of public education in Volyn Governorate was mostly governed by regional factors. The system of public education in this region of the Russian Empire was also influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1905 and later World War I, as well as the religious composition of the population. Overall, the region's system of public education developed in an evolutionary and dynamic manner. By 1915, public education had become equally available and accessible throughout the governorate, i.e. in all its urban and rural areas.

In the period under review, the size of the region's network of secondary educational institutions increased 3 times. Throughout the period, the region witnessed growth in the number of female students at its secondary educational institutions. By 1913, the number of girls at secondary educational institutions in the region had surpassed the number of boys at them. The number of girls at the region's lower educational institutions increased 4 times, with the overall number of students at them increasing more than 3 times. A unique phenomenon was primary education in the region. With the number of primary educational institutions in the region remaining virtually unchanged, growth in the number of students at them was just about 20 %. This growth was almost entirely associated with growth in the number of girls attending primary school in the region.

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