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Published in the USA

European Journal of Contemporary Education
E-ISSN 2305-6746
2022. 11(3): 994-1003
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2022.3.994
<https://ejce.cherkasgu.press>

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The Policy on Women's Education Pursued by the Zemstvo Liberal Party in Chernigov Governorate in the Period between the 1870s and 1880s. Part 1

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Abstract

This paper explores the policy pursued by the opposition aristocratic fronde in Chernigov Governorate in the area of women's education in the second half of the 19th century. The Era of Great Reforms (1856–1874) in the Russian Empire facilitated the emergence of a whole network of state and municipal, as opposed to private, women's educational institutions, such as gymnasiums and boarding schools. The retrieved historical sources, most of which are being introduced here into scholarly discourse for the first time ever, indicate that a key role in these processes was played by the zemstvo institutions, particularly the Zemstvo Liberal Party in Chernigov Governorate. Nominally, the period under review witnessed two stages in the policy pursued by the zemstvo opposition in Chernigovshchina with regard to women's education: (1) the 1870s and (2) the period of the reign of Emperor Alexander III. The first stage was characterized by devoted efforts on the part of liberal zemstvo members in building the network of women's educational institutions in the province. Chronologically, the first part of the present work will cover this particular stage.

The authors' conclusion is that initially the building of the region's network of women's educational institutions was largely done through the devoted efforts of liberal zemstvo members in Chernigov Governorate. An undoubted achievement of the Liberal Party was the establishment of Borzna Zemstvo Female Progymnasium. The zemstvo liberals managed to obtain funding for this educational institution. No less important is the fact that members of the local liberal aristocracy were initiators of the provision of financial assistance by Chernigov Governorate's self-governing zemstvo authorities, including toward the needs of women's educational institutions outside of the region.

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Keywords: education, education policy, education reform, Zemstvo Liberal Party, women's education, zemstvo institutions, women's educational institutions.

1. Introduction

The issue of zemstvo liberalism in the north of leftbank Ukraine, a major political current in the liberation movement in the Russian Empire in the Era of Great Reforms (1856–1874), remains quite a topical one. At the same time, it is one of the more underresearched areas in the history of the Ukraine of the second half of the 19th century. A case in point is the humanitarian policy pursued by the Zemstvo Liberal Party in Chernigov Governorate in the area of public education, particularly the women's education sector. To date there has been no dedicated research on this subject. The present paper seeks to fill this gap and explore the key characteristics of the policy pursued by the opposition aristocratic fronde in the north of leftbank Ukraine in the area of women's education.

2. Materials and methods

In putting this work together, primary use was made of relevant print sources, like protocols, verbatim records, and minutes of sittings of the Uyezd and Gubernia Zemstvo Assemblies in Chernigov Governorate, held in the specialized research libraries of the State Archive of Chernigov Oblast and the V. Tarnovsky Chernigov Oblast Historical Museum (Chernigov, Ukraine). Most of the historical sources used in the research reported in this work are being introduced into scholarly discourse for the first time ever.

To achieve the study's objectives, use was made of general and special research methods. Specifically, the use of universal methods such as analysis and synthesis helped to gain an insight into the key historical events and processes directly associated with the development of women's education in the region, explore some of their specific aspects, and draw meaningful conclusions. The use of induction and deduction helped to build the relevant body of empirical research to provide the basis for the study's imperatives. The factual material helped to develop relevant theoretical definitions, and the study's conclusions were supported with specific facts. The use of the descriptive method helped to provide a consistent account of the history of the participation and devoted efforts of the Zemstvo Liberal Party in the cause of institutionalization of women's education in Chernigov Governorate in the 1870s. The use of the comparative-historical method helped to gain an insight into the nature of the activity of the region's opposition aristocratic fronde in the area of women's education, assess its practical achievements, and compare the levels of the development of women's education prior to the mid-19th century and in the Era of Great Reforms. The use of the chronological method helped to gain a general idea of the policy of the zemstvo liberal movement in the area of women's education by exploring it in chronological and logical order.

The use of the term 'Zemstvo Liberal Party' appears to be valid, as the existence of two ideologically distinct parties engaged in bitter political rivalry with each other in the region – the "right" one (conservative and reactionary) and the "left" one (democratic and liberal) – has been confirmed by both prominent researchers of the history of the zemstvos in the Russian Empire (Veselovskij, 1911: 302-457) and actual participants in and witnesses to political structuring processes in the Zemstvo Assembly in Chernigov Governorate (Rusova, 1996: 35-53; Hizhnjakov, 1878: 243-245).

3. Discussion

The historiography on the development of women's education in the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century is quite extensive. The issue has been investigated both in the context of the education policy pursued by the Romanovs' empire and as a standalone research subject. Among the contemporary researchers of the subject, of particular note are I. Kornilova, T. Magsumov, R. Shakirov, D. Kudinov, A. Lebid, E. Panova, and M. Ponomareva (Kornilova, Magsumov, Shakirov, 2016; Kornilova, Magsumov, 2017; Kudinov, 2016; Kudinov, 2018; Panova, Ponomareva, 2022; Lebid, Shevchenko, 2021; Lebid, 2022a; Lebid, 2022b). These are just some of the many researchers interested in the study of the various aspects of the history of women's education in the Russian Empire.

Contemporary historiography contains numerous research studies exploring particular aspects of the history of the zemstvo liberal movement in the north of leftbank Ukraine. For instance, the summarizing works of I. Zhilenkova, V. Mojsijenko, and O. Red'kina explore the major landmarks in the political history of zemstvo liberalism, including in Chernigov Governorate (Zhilenkova, 2000; Mojsijenko, 1999; Red'kina, 2002).

It is only in recent years that Ukrainian researchers have made significant progress exploring zemstvo liberalism in northern Ukraine –with regard to both relevant personalities, i.e. members of the opposition aristocratic fronde, and specific areas of the activity of this current in the liberation movement in the Russian Empire. Of particular note are the works of P. Jucevych, A. Rahno, and N. Kotelnitsky (Jucevych, 2021; Rahno, 2017; Rahno, 2018; Kotelnitsky, 2018; Kotelnitsky, 2019; Kotelnitsky, 2021).

However, since the above-mentioned works are what the historiography of the zemstvo liberal movement is essentially limited to, the present publication appears to be both timely and overdue, as there is currently a paucity of research on the subject.

4. Results

It is commonly known that women's education was not a mass phenomenon in the Russian Empire up to the mid-19th century. Females were mainly educated either at home, as was the case with aristocrats who hired tutors, or at private specialized educational institutions, to which nobles, i.e. members of the dominant social class, sent their daughters so that they could get a top education. For instance, a school that was highly popular in Chernigov Governorate during that period was the private boarding school for noble maidens run by M. Volk-Karachevskaya, the mother of two prominent members of the region's opposition liberal fronde – N. and G. Volk-Karachevsky. This boarding school was famous for its broad curriculum, which included a range of disciplines from divinity, Russian, history, and arithmetic to several foreign languages, secular ethics, choreography, visual arts, and music (CHV, 1857; CHV, 1858).

The Era of Great Reforms changed in a revolutionary way the state of affairs concerning women's education in the Russian Empire. The upsurge of hope in the hearts of the public, the yet another "opening up to the world" of the Romanovs' state, the massive penetration of Western values and worldviews into the country, and the emergence of feminist trends and gender equality imperatives – all this led to the emergence of a network of women's educational institutions in the country, including in northern Ukraine. These educational institutions were established and funded with money either from the state budget or from the budgets of the institutions of urban and local government. The zemstvo institutions and members of Chernigov Governorate's Zemstvo Liberal Party played a key role in these processes. This will be illustrated below based on information from a set of relevant historical sources.

In September 1870, members of the Zemstvo Liberal Party in Chernigov Governorate came up with the suggestion that the women's night classes at Borzna School should be placed under the purview of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo with the aim of developing women's education in the region and with a view to transforming the classes into a women's school. The Board of Trustees for the night classes backed the progressive initiative. The decision was made to have two grades at the school, with basic core subjects studied in first grade and popular women's crafts in second grade. They appointed as the principal of the women's school M. Imshenetskaya, who was the mother of M. Imshenetsky, a member of the region's opposition aristocratic fronde.

Since most of the students were natives of Chernigov, the decision was made to turn to the Chernigov City Duma for financial assistance for the educational institution. The cost of tuition for students from middle-class families would be 3 rubles per year. Education would be free for students from the lower strata of society. However, the City Duma and the City Council of Chernigov refused to help the educational institution, with even a decent building not provided for the school. The school's Board of Trustees then sought assistance from the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo. The Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Council provided 720 rubles from its budget toward the rent of a building for the school. The chosen building was a property owned by a local merchant named P. Belous. The school's principal, M. Imshenetskaya, provided instruction in Russian and literature gratuitously. The circle of sponsors supporting the school included A. Petrunkevich (the wife of I. Petrunkevich, the "patriarch" of zemstvo liberalism in the Russian Empire), who donated

100 rubles, and M. Imshenetsky (I. Petrunkevich's party mate), who donated 70 rubles (ZSCH, 1872: 102-110).

It is particularly worth noting that members of the region's opposition aristocratic fronde, who constituted the majority in the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly and were in charge of the Uyezd Zemstvo Council, did not stop at what had been done and undertook a project on reorganizing the women's school into Borzna Women's Zemstvo Progymnasium. The idea behind this was to upgrade the status of the educational institution to a secondary school and make it independent from the interference of the regional bureaucracy by placing it under zemstvo patronage.

On September 22, 1870, a sitting of a session of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly featured a report by the Uyezd Zemstvo Council on setting up and operating a women's zemstvo progymnasium in the city of Borzna. This progressive initiative was opposed by the conservatives. Specifically, members of the reactionary aristocracy, who argued that the zemstvo authorities had done a lot for the development of public education already, proposed an alternative – provide funding from the uyezd zemstvo budget toward the education of members of the nobility, many of whom had allegedly gone broke as a consequence of the abolition of serfdom in the country, at secondary and higher educational institutions in the Russian Empire.

I. Petrunkevich, the leader of the opposition aristocratic fronde in northern Ukraine, delivered a speech on the subject, in which he expressed flat-out opposition to the conservatives' alternative proposal. He justly pointed out that the zemstvo institutions did not prevent the nobility from enjoying the benefits of education at primary public schools. I. Petrunkevich argued that the introduction of zemstvo scholarships for children of aristocrats entering a top gymnasium or a university would simply ruin the prospects of building and opening rural schools that could provide peasant children, i.e. descendants of former slaves who, moving forward, could form the basis of the province's society, with so-much-needed primary education. Accordingly, I. Petrunkevich considered the above-mentioned wishes of the nobility as baseless, being convinced that the nobility's corporate interests were incompatible with the interests of the peasant communities. In his view, the education of children of aristocrats was to be handled by specialized corporate institutions, while that of the bulk of the population was to be minded by elective urban and zemstvo self-governing bodies, whose votership was essentially made up of members of the peasant estate.

Following a lengthy debate, the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly directed that:

- 1) there be established a zemstvo women's school in the city of Borzna;
- 2) the sum of 250 rubles be provided from the budget of the Borzna Zemstvo to ensure the successful operation of the school;
- 3) a special board of trustees be formed in order to facilitate the school's large-scale development; I. Petrunkevich and his wife, A. Petrunkevich, be appointed as members of the Board;
- 4) a petition be filed with the Trustee of the Kiev Educational District to obtain permission to open up Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium, and, if permission was granted, the school be transformed at the start of the following school year into a women's progymnasium, with its status being thereby upgraded;
- 5) the sum of 700 rubles be provided annually from the budget of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo toward the comprehensive development of the progymnasium;
- 6) the Board of Trustees of the progymnasium, the Borzna City Duma, and the Office of the Chernigov Governor be petitioned for the allocation of state funding toward the needs of the educational institution, provision of a decent building for it, and development of a circle of sponsors and philanthropists committed to supporting it;
- 7) it be ensured that the progymnasium would be attended by students of all social backgrounds so that peasant children could enjoy the same benefits of attending the facility as their more socially advantaged counterparts.

The Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo formed the Board of Trustees of the women's progymnasium, which included prominent members of the Zemstvo Liberal Party in the north of leftbank Ukraine such as I. Petrunkevich, M. Imshenetsky, and N. Volk-Karachevsky (ZBZ, 1870. №2: 11-12).

On September 24, the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Council submitted to the Assembly an additional report covering the procedures for establishing and opening Borzna Women's Progymnasium. The executive body expressed the opinion that the upkeep of the future educational institution would require no less than 1,000 rubles per year. However, since the

progymnasium already had wealthy sponsors, who had donated to it 25 rubles each, and the Ministry of Public Education had reported the allocation of a financial subsidy from the state budget for the support of the school's operation, the Borzna Zemstvo's actual budgetary outlays for the purpose would not exceed 700 rubles per year. To conclude the bureaucratic procedures for the establishment of the progymnasium, the Council requested that the Assembly:

- 1) obtain official permission from the Trustee of the Kiev Educational District authorizing the activity of the school's special board of trustees;
- 2) elect and appoint members of the administration and the teaching staff;
- 3) petition the Borzna City Duma for assistance toward the progymnasium's upkeep (ZBZ, 1870. №4: 38-43).

The issue of establishing Borzna Women's Progymnasium was hotly debated in an extraordinary session of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly held in 1871. Specifically, on April 24, 1871, the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Council submitted a relevant report to the Assembly, in which it regretfully stated that the Borzna City Duma refused to the Council the provision of the Zemstvo with a building for the future gymnasium, as well as any procedures regarding its upkeep. Nonetheless, the Council, which was reluctant to engage in bureaucratic war with the city government, did manage to come up with some initial funding for the needs of the progymnasium, which it had scraped together from what was left of the tax revenue in the zemstvo budget. However, the Trustee of the Kiev Educational District quite unexpectedly did not give the go-ahead for the opening of the progymnasium because of a lack of financial guarantees. Afterwards, the Council forwarded all the documentation to the Board of Trustees of the future progymnasium.

Members of the Board, who wished to be independent from the interference of officials, resolved the issue on their own. Everyone who had the desire and capability became sharers of the school's capital stock, accumulating in a short period of time the sum of 1,700 rubles, which, in essence, was tantamount to the progymnasium's first two budgets. Specifically, A. Petrunkevich and M. Imshenetsky each donated 25 rubles, and 250 rubles came from families that had agreed to place their daughters in the school. In addition, the decision was made to have members of the Uyezd School Council pay a contribution of 5 rubles each month until permanent sources of funding were found.

The Chairman of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Council, M. Imshenetsky, proposed the following additional measures to ensure the operation of the future women's progymnasium:

- 1) petition the supreme authorities for the allocation of 1,000 rubles per year for the purpose;
- 2) increase the size of the contribution to be paid by members of the School Council of Borzna Uyezd in Chernigov Governorate from 5 to 10 rubles per month.

The Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly acknowledged the importance of having Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium and gave its approval for the Council's undertakings with regard to the establishment of the gymnasium. In addition, the methods of funding the educational institution proposed by the Council were ratified. The Uyezd Zemstvo Council was directed to work out the school's draft constitution and bylaws, which were then to be brought before the government of the Russian Empire for consideration and approval.

It is also worth noting that most of the members of the region's Zemstvo Liberal Party persistently recommended that the Uyezd Zemstvo Council incorporate into the school's constitution and bylaws a set of legally binding clauses entitling all of its teaching, administrative, and caretaking staff to special rights and benefits. Rights of this kind, in accordance with the Zemstvo Institutions Regulation, were to be granted to all payroll employees of institutions subordinate to the local government (including the right to a pension). Separately, the zemstvo liberals advocated for the teaching staff of the future gymnasium to be appointed through election. Girls from low-income families admitted to the progymnasium would have to be educated with money from the budget of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo (ZBZ, 1871a. №1: 14-23).

The sitting of an ordinary session of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly held on October 30, 1871, featured again the issue of funding for the women's progymnasium. M. Imshenetsky noted that funding for the progymnasium had to be provided by the local government, as the school was both located within the city of Borzna and attended by its natives. There, nonetheless, was virtually no help coming from the City Duma and the City Council, although most of the city's population attended the facility free of charge. M. Imshenetsky also stressed the fact that the institutions of urban government were not contributing funding toward the upkeep of schools,

although the city of Borzna was where most of the uyezd's secondary educational institutions were located. N. Volk-Karachevsky made a statement on the matter, too. He pointed out that the issue had already been discussed at a session of the Borzna City Duma, with the city's participation in funding the operation of the zemstvo women's progymnasium endorsed by only one deputy. A possible solution was suggested, which involved having to pay into the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo's budget a portion of the revenue from the city real estate tax, with these funds going toward the needs of the zemstvo women's progymnasium.

The suggestion by H. Volk-Karachevsky was seconded. It was ordained by majority vote of the Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly that the city real estate tax be increased to 250 silver rubles, with the proceeds going into the budget of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo (ZBZ, 1871b. №6: 62-64).

The extraordinary session of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo Assembly held on January 21, 1872, featured a special report by the Uyezd Zemstvo Council on the funding of the operation of Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium. It turned out that the Trustee of the Kiev Educational District had communicated to the Borzna Zemstvo that it was premature to establish the zemstvo women's progymnasium and form its executive team, as issues of this kind were within the competence of governors and directors of public schools in regions to solve. The Trustee also noted the absence of the school's budget and staff schedule. The Uyezd Council was advised to contact the Office of the Chernigov Governor, who had the powers to resolve the issue effectively. It was only after the Uyezd Council officially contacted the Chernigov Governor and the Director of Public Schools in the Governorate and presented them with all relevant arguments and reasons that they were able to move the matter off dead center. The gubernia authorities seconded the Borzna Zemstvo's initiative and gave approval for the project.

In addition, the Uyezd Council petitioned the Zemstvo Assembly for the allocation of an additional 200 rubles toward the needs of the Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium. The Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo approved the petition by majority vote (ZBZ, 1872. №1: 16-18).

The gubernia city of Chernigov became home to a women's gymnasium. A session of the Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly held in January 1878 examined the issue of funding for it. Members of the governorate's opposition aristocratic fronde took an active part in the discussion of this matter.

At the sitting of the Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly held on January 15, a liberal zemstvo member named V. Khizhnyakov stated that the annual amount allocated toward the upkeep of the educational institution was 10,000 silver rubles. He noted that subtracting from this amount the sums required for the pay of its staff would leave one with just 600 rubles available to fund the needs of the gymnasium itself, which was very little. V. Khizhnyakov argued that part in the funding and upkeep of the gymnasium must be taken by both the Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo and the Chernigov City Duma along with the Chernigov Uyezd Zemstvo, for the school was attended by girls from all over the governorate, including from Chernigov. With that said, the Chernigov's city budget was too tight at the time to afford this kind of expense.

The situation was such that the women's gymnasium could count only on Chernigov City Public Bank, which had already provided 4,000 rubles toward a building for the gymnasium. The bank had the capacity in 1878 to allocate additional funding for the purpose. Meanwhile, the Chernigov City Duma was expected to provide a subsidy for the gymnasium. In the event no assistance was granted by the zemstvo institutions, the women's gymnasium even risked to be closed. The school was in desperate need of funding. Furthermore, the liberals expressed a readiness to help other similar facilities in Chernigov Governorate as well (ZCHZ, 1877: 255-256).

Note that members of the conservative aristocracy contended that funding the Chernigov Women's Gymnasium was too costly for the zemstvo budget. A report on this was delivered by another member of the liberal camp named A. Karpinsky. He responded to the reproaches of the conservative aristocracy by stating that the women's eight-grade gymnasium was the only educational institution in Chernigov Governorate to be attended by female students of all social backgrounds without exception. It is with this in mind that the Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly provided 3,000 rubles in financial assistance to the gymnasium. A. Karpinsky placed particular emphasis on the fact that the Chernigov Women's Gymnasium had been established exclusively through the efforts of private sponsors and with their private, personal funds and that its budget was replenished via charitable contributions and annual bounties.

A. Karpinsky also mentioned that the governorate had in operation other women's educational institutions as well, most of which were maintained by the uyezd zemstvo institutions. Among the schools distinguished by successful operation were Sosnitsa, Borzna, Glukhov, Krovelets, and Novgorod-Seversky Women's Progymnasiums. The overwhelming majority of graduates from these schools would enroll at Chernigov Women's Gymnasium to continue their education, as this facility offered a broad curriculum. The combined annual budget of these schools was nearly 4,000 rubles, which was quite a burden on the uyezd zemstvo institutions. Therefore, it was no wonder that the above gymnasiums had turned to the Gubernia Zemstvo for financial assistance.

For instance, in 1877 Novgorod-Seversky Women's Progymnasium requested 6,000 rubles toward the construction of a new building for the school. The Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Council provided 2,000 rubles for the purpose after a contractor was enlisted who agreed to a large discount. The decision was made not to provide the annual subsidy, since the experience with Chernigov Gymnasium indicated that the educational institutions tended to use only a portion of the funds allocated to them, with the basis of the budget being formed from tuition, charitable contributions, and revenue from social events. Overall, the educational institutions spent no more than two-thirds of the zemstvo funding they received. But, since Chernigov Women's Gymnasium was a unique school, one answerable to the gubernia city and attended by residents from all over the governorate, its needs were arguably bigger than those of facilities of uyezd subordination.

In this regard, A. Karpinsky proposed working out a system of zemstvo subsidies for women's educational institutions with a focus on transparency and accountability in reporting to the public and the zemstvo authorities in Chernigov Governorate. Note that the Zemstvo Assembly and the Council reserved the right to refrain from taking part in the funding process in the event of abuse being spotted. In addition, it was proposed that a clear-cut list of expenditures on the schools be established for the uyezd zemstvo institutions (ZCHZ, 1877: 257-270).

The zemstvo liberals of Chernigov Governorate raised the issue of women's education in the region again in a session of the Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly held in January 1879.

The sitting of the Zemstvo Assembly held on January 15 featured an address by I. Petrunkevich focused on the provision of funding from the zemstvo budget for secondary educational institutions in the region. I. Petrunkevich noted that the idea of funding being provided for the already running Sosnitsa and Krovelets Women's Progymnasiums by the corresponding uyezd zemstvo institutions was correct only formally. Although these educational institutions were operating in Sosnitsaoro and Krovelets Uyezds in Chernigov Governorate, they were providing education to students from other uyezds in the governorate as well. Consequently, these educational institutions were of great importance for the region as a whole.

Attention was drawn to the fact that, although substantial funding was provided from the Sosnitsa and Krovelets uyezd budgets toward the development of women's education, there was still a lack of financial resources to cover the hire or construction of decent buildings for the progymnasiums. A member of the liberal wing, I. Petrunkevich called on the Gubernia Zemstvo to help these facilities for the common good. The Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly fully agreed with I. Petrunkevich. As a result, the decision was made to provide from the budget of the Gubernia Zemstvo the sum of 950 rubles in infrastructural assistance to Sosnitsa and Krovelets Women's Progymnasiums (ZCHZ, 1878. №3: 124-125).

At the same sitting (the one held on January 15), they examined the needy situation of female students of the Kiev Higher Women's Courses – natives of Chernigov Governorate. A. Karpinsky, a member of the Zemstvo Liberal Party, suggested providing 1,000 rubles from the budget of the Gubernia Zemstvo toward an allowance for these students. I. Petrunkevich proposed entrusting this money to the school's Board of Trustees so as to prevent corruption in distributing the funds among the students. Members of the school's Board of Trustees had all relevant information about the descent and material status of its students and could use a targeted approach to financial aid, i.e. provide it to those who really needed it.

Natives of Chernigov Governorate were the second largest group among the students of the Kiev Higher Women's Courses. The economic capacity of the zemstvo institutions was quite limited. Therefore, it was logical to leave the choice of scholarship recipients up to the school's teaching staff and Board of Trustees, rather than members of the Gubernia Zemstvo. Furthermore, disbursements were to be made by the economic units of the women's courses.

A member of the Zemstvo Liberal Party named I. Shrag put forth a proposal to entrust the allowance funds for students of the Kiev Higher Women's Courses to the school's Board of Trustees and let it decide on the candidates to receive this kind of aid. The Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly approved I. Shrag's proposal by a majority vote of 27 to 18 (ZCHZ, 1878. №3: 127-133).

However, as early as January 16, 1879, members of the governorate's conservative aristocracy called the provision of zemstvo aid to students of the Kiev Higher Women's Courses into question. They even contended that the possibility of a student receiving a scholarship funded by the Gubernia Zemstvo through guile and deception prompted the need to establish an institution of zemstvo scholarships so that the Gubernia Council and deputies could make the right decisions in this respect.

A person who stood in defense of the January 15 decision was I. Petrunkevich again. He provided valid reasons as to its viability. They had to conduct a revote on the issue. As a result, it was ordained by a majority vote of 26 to 22 that the decision of the Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly as to the provision of financial assistance to students of the Kiev Higher Women's Courses who were from Chernigov Governorate remain in force and without change (ZCHZ, 1878. №3: 153-158).

5. Conclusion

The 1870s were a period of Chernigovshchina's liberal zemstvo members putting a devoted effort into building and funding the network of women's educational institutions in the region.

A seminal achievement of the Liberal Party was the establishment of and provision of support for Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium. Despite the lack of real assistance from the urban government, the local gubernia administration, and the central executive government, systematic and persistent lobbying by the region's zemstvo liberals for the cause of women's education did bear some fruit. They managed to secure steady funding for the progymnasium from the budget of the Borzna Uyezd Zemstvo, ensure the admission to it of members of all social estates, consolidate the community of sponsors supporting the educational institution, and initiate the preparation of statutory documentation for it. Liberal zemstvo members and their immediate circle not only sponsored the educational institution and were members of its Board of Trustees but managed to enter the ranks of the progymnasium's administration and join its teaching staff.

Of particular note is the introduction, at the behest of members of the opposition aristocratic fronde, of a special progressive tax on urban properties to ensure the operation of Borzna Zemstvo Women's Progymnasium. Another telling fact is that Chernigovshchina's zemstvo liberals insisted on using an election-based system to form the progymnasium's teaching team, as well as granting the status of zemstvo public officers with corresponding rights to its entire teaching staff.

Members of the Zemstvo Liberal Party also did a lot for Chernigov Women's Gymnasium, the governorate's only educational institution at that level. Chernigov City Public Bank funded the needs of the gymnasium on a regular basis, while the Chernigov Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly paid student allowances out of its own budget. The liberals also suggested developing a system of zemstvo subsidies for all women's educational institutions in the region.

Note also that the zemstvo liberals in Chernigov Governorate helped not only women's educational institutions in that region but also had more than once initiated the provision of financial assistance from the budgets of gubernia and uyezd zemstvos toward the needs of women's educational institutions outside of the region attended by females born in Chernigovshchina. Importantly and indicatively, members of the opposition aristocratic fronde had adopted a responsible approach to dealing with corruption in implementing the budgetary policy of the zemstvo institutions in Chernigovshchina in an effort to combat social injustice toward female students.

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