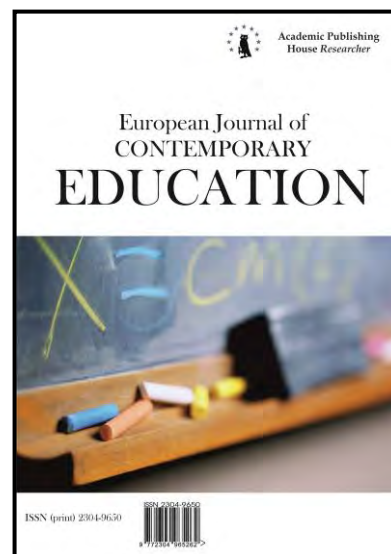




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Published in the Slovak Republic
European Journal of Contemporary Education
E-ISSN 2305-6746
2021, 10(1): 219-230
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2021.1.219
www.ejournal1.com

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Transformations in Public Education in the Ukrainian State in 1918. Part 2

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Abstract

This paper continues the authors' analysis of the policy pursued by the government of the Ukrainian State in the area of public education in 1918. The primary focus in the work's second part is on the government's policy on preschool, primary, and secondary education.

The key sources employed in the work are materials from the period's periodical press, memoirs by contemporaries of the events, and published statutory enactments of the government of the Ukrainian State regulating policy on primary and secondary education.

It is in the year 1918 that the primary, secondary, and higher education systems in the Ukrainian State were formalized legally. The government was deeply aware of the decisive role of the public education system in the development and strengthening of Ukrainian statehood. The authors drew the conclusion that primary and secondary schools in the region enjoyed a high level of autonomy in terms of organization of the educational process at the time. The exception was that government policy actively facilitated the Ukrainization of the educational process – by way of introduction of instruction in the Ukrainian language and disciplines related to Ukrainian studies. This was a positive influence amid the formation of a young Ukrainian state. Despite a challenging military/political and economic situation, the government did manage to **provide most of the region's educational facilities with all appropriate** course materials. The government worked closely with local authorities and the public, which had a positive effect on the development of the systems of primary, secondary, and preschool education locally.

Keywords: Ukrainian Derzhava (State), Ministry of Public Education, Pavlo Skoropadsky, secondary education, primary schools, preschool education, zemstvo.

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1. Introduction

The process of the making of Ukrainian statehood has a long and very complex history. Without question, one of the more significant periods in this process was the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921. A key outcome of this event was the formation of the Ukrainian State, headed by Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky. During that time, Ukraine was in a very complicated military/political situation. Government policy in the Ukrainian State was often the object of criticism, both from its contemporaries and from later researchers. However, it must be acknowledged that it was quite an active policy focused on advancing state interests.

With that said, most researchers are convinced **that the region's most systemic transformations were undertaken in the area of education. It is also worth taking into account that the Hetman's government had to build the region's public education system virtually from scratch.** P. Skoropadsky, personally, was critical of the activity of his predecessors, the Central Rada government, with regard to education. **He wrote in his memoirs that "the Central Rada did not open a single educational facility"** (Skoropads'kii, 2016: 103). In 1918, the region became home to a branched network of institutions of preschool, primary, and secondary learning. It is these institutions, as well as institutions of higher learning, that were to play a key role in the making and strengthening of young Ukrainian statehood.

This part of the work focuses on government policy in the Ukrainian State in the area of organization and development of the systems of primary and secondary education. Some attention is also devoted to the organization of preschool education and the participation of local authorities and the public in the development of public education in Ukraine in 1918.

2. Materials and methods

As in the first part of the work, the authors drew upon memoirs by contemporaries of the events, relevant published statutory enactments of the government, and materials from the **period's periodical press. These sources helped analyze government policy in Ukraine in the area of public education as a whole and preschool, primary, and secondary education in particular.** The recollections of various public and political figures from the period of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 provide a valuable insight into how members of the various strata of Ukrainian society perceived the transformations to the system of public education that took place in 1918. Traditionally, the more factually substantive sources will include materials from the periodical press and statutory enactments from a period. Sources of this kind were largely instrumental in helping assess the effectiveness of reforms to preschool, primary, and secondary education in Ukraine at the time.

In putting this work together, the authors employed both general research and special principles and methods of enquiry. The principles of historicism and objectivity enabled as objective an assessment of the issue under study as possible. It was possible to reconstruct the process of implementation of reforms to preschool, primary, and secondary education in the region thanks to the use of the historical/comparative, chronological, and formal/legal research methods. Of special significance was the use of the source-studies criticism method to establish the credibility of the sources drawn upon in the work.

3. Discussion

Up to now, there has been conducted a decent amount of research exploring various aspects of Ukrainian history in the Ukrainian State period, including the formation of the bureaucratic apparatus in the region (Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2004; Hyrych, 2016; Myronenko, 1996; Pyrih, 2009; Degtyarev, 2018; Kudlai, 2008; Rublov, Reient, 1999) and the foreign policy pursued by Hetman P. Skoropadsky at the time (Hedin 2012; Degtyarev, Zavhorodnia 2018; Degtyarev et al., 2019).

As noted earlier, the transformations in the area of public education initiated by Hetman P. Skoropadsky and the government of the Ukrainian State may be described as overall positive. This view is shared both by most contemporaries of the events and by most researchers (Shkilnyk, 2016; Degtyarev et al., 2020: 973).

Having said that, in historiography (above all, Ukrainian historiography) very little attention is devoted to reforms to the system of public education in the Ukrainian State in 1918. The subject appears to have been touched upon only fleetingly (Rublov, Reient, 1999: 141-142; Hurzhii, Reient, 2011: 197-200; Verstiuk, 2008).

Some of the related research has focused on certain aspects of the process of transforming **the region's public education system in 1918, like the development of a network of institutions of secondary and higher learning, the recruitment and staffing of the teaching workforce in various universities, and lawmaking in the area of public education** (Ostashko, 2018; Zavalniuk, 2008; Kudlai, 2008). **A more integrated insight into the Ukrainian State's government policy on public education** is provided in a study by D. Doroshenko (Doroshenko, 2002: 233-256).

The present work is a part of a more substantial study (Degtyarev et al., 2020) that is aimed at **gaining as much insight as possible into the Ukrainian State's government policy on public education** and activities aimed at organizing the educational process in various regions of Ukraine. This part of the study is focused on this kind of activities aimed at organizing preschool, primary, and secondary education in the region.

4. Results

Purview over preschool, primary, and secondary education in the region was exercised by the Departments of Secondary and Primary Education at the Ministry of Public Education in the Ukrainian State. Many of the activities aimed at reforming the above areas were often initiated by these two departments specifically.

At the local level, public education was overseen by gubernia and uyezd commissioners of public education, concerned with supervising the activity of institutions of primary and secondary learning. Part in this was also taken by local authorities and various non-governmental organizations. Specifically, each uyezd had in place special school commissions, which began to emerge back in 1917. The transformations in school education undertaken by the Hetman administration did not impact the activity of these bodies of authority. The school commissions oversaw all school matters in towns and uyezds, serving, in essence, as a supervisory body. The uyezd school commissions, which were answerable to zemstvo assemblies, enjoyed quite a high level of autonomy in their activity. These institutions made decisions respecting the opening of various types of schools in uyezds and regulated the number of teachers in them. The number of members in each uyezd school commission must have depended on the size of the actual uyezd and the number of educational institutions in it. As a rule, half of the membership was made up of delegates from among the teaching workforce. For instance, the Sumy uyezd school commission (Kharkov Governorate) consisted of 11 teachers elected at district congresses, six members of the zemstvo assembly, and one representative from each of the following categories: town government, clergy, rural schools, secondary school teachers, and out-of-school education instructors (Luch №34: 3).

Amid the rapid growth of its network of institutions of primary and secondary learning, the region increasingly found itself facing the workforce issue. It is to be noted that at the time of P. Skoropadsky's rise to power **the region's primary school system was in a lamentable state**. There even was a probability that school would not begin on time in the new school year. Many schools **were experiencing a shortage of teachers. To compound the problem, many of the region's institutions of secondary learning were witnessing a strong antagonism between Russian and Ukrainian teachers**. An attempt to open in Kiev four Ukrainian gymnasia was met with fierce resistance from pedagogues in Russian-language gymnasia that were already in operation in the capital. The problem reached the extent where the Hetman himself had to interfere. Eventually, the Ukrainian gymnasia were provided with buildings to house classrooms, and were able to commence operation (Skoropads'kii, 2016: 226-227).

The state was in need of a large number of teachers and educators, a workforce that was to be **prepared in teacher's institutes and via special teacher training programs. Fast-track teacher training programs for the region's newly established Ukrainian educational institutions were also offered by ecclesiastical teacher's seminaries**. Note that **the region's ecclesiastical educational institutions** (seminaries and ecclesiastical schools) were still run by the Ministry of Confessions at the time.

Pursuant to an ordinance adopted on August 1, 1918, the region's teacher's institutes were to admit persons who had completed a program of study in schools with an educational program recognized by the Minister of Public Education as sufficient for "allowing their students to enter a teacher's institute". The rule was to take effect starting in the 1918-1919 school year (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 558).

In special cases, the Minister of Public Education reserved the right to appoint to the post of **teacher in the region's higher primary schools males and females with the "title of rural school teacher or that of home tutor, as well as graduates of teacher's ecclesiastical seminaries"** (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 153).

Throughout Ukraine, there were organized numerous preparatory programs of study for future primary and secondary school teachers. Ukraine also had in operation a large number of Jewish and Polish schools, which, too, were taken care of by the state. In July, the government allocated 87.7 thousand karbovanets toward programs of study for teachers of Jewish schools and 112,000 karbovanets toward such programs for teachers of Polish schools in Kiev, Odessa, and Ekaterinoslav (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 487, 503; Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 143, 144). Overall, the state had under its care 35 Jewish and 12 Polish gymnasia (Verstiuk, 2008: 151).

The government was taking measures to motivate potential future teachers to be serious about being a pedagogue, including by way of offering them scholarships. Note that a person on a **state scholarship while attending a teacher's institute** would have to work for a certain period of time as a teacher upon graduation from university (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 170). In November 1918, the Minister of Education, V.P. Naumenko, proposed to exempt from military service former servicepeople who were either attending or teaching at an institution of secondary learning, as well as professorial-scholarship holders. However, the Council of Ministers agreed only to exempting former servicepeople attending an institution of secondary learning (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 389).

The then-present military/political situation in Ukraine was affecting the staffing of educational institutions too. Specifically, following a pay raise for teachers the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, M.M. Voronovich, suggested the need to also impose stricter requirements on them. Note that it was proposed to set such requirements not only for the education level and moral qualities of teaching job candidates. It was also suggested that teaching positions should not be **allowed to be filled by individuals with "a socialist frame of mind, for it is socialist propaganda that is to blame for the shambles the country is in"**. The Minister of Public Education, N.P. Vasilenko, responded to that by expressing his negative attitude toward any anti-state activity **by pedagogues, noting, however, that he did not think it "is right to persecute people for their frame of mind or beliefs exclusively"** (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 165).

Besides, the Ukrainian State was much in need of pedagogical personnel who spoke and could teach in Ukrainian. The government was planning to introduce Ukrainian between 1918 and 1919 as a core subject in higher primary schools and in the curriculum for preparatory and first grade students in state gymnasia. This required training and retraining teaching staff and increasing the number of teachers with a confident command of the state language. In May, the government adopted a plan of compulsory six-month programs of study in Ukrainian studies to be completed by all public and secondary school teachers. There were three major types of program of study: lecturing, for secondary and higher primary school teachers, and for teachers of lower educational institutions. Such programs were in place in Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Poltava, and Ekaterinoslav. During the summer break of 1918, programs of this kind were attended by nearly 48,000 teachers. In Kholmshchyna, Podlachia, and Polesia (Ukrainian regions) alone, starting on June 15, 1918, the Ukrainian studies program was completed three times over and was attended by a combined 600 teachers (Ostashko, 2018: 194). The government covered all expenses associated with the cost of accommodation for program attenders, with each program attender paid 100 karbovanets a month for food expenses. Textbooks were provided for a part of the program. Lecturers were paid a state salary (Doroshenko, 2002: 239). A law adopted on June 2 provided for the allocation by the Ministry of Public Education of nearly 2.2 million karbovanets toward the programs (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 103, 402-403).

Programs of study in Ukrainian studies for teachers were often organized by the governments of uyezds. For instance, in July a program of this kind was organized by the governments of the Kharkov and Valkovsky uyezds (Kharkov Governorate), drawing a combined 300 participants (Degtyarev, 2018: 42). Each time, the program commenced with a lecture on Ukrainian history by well-known professor G. Khotkevich. Participants also attended lectures on the Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian art of music (*Zemske dilo* №320b: 4).

In arranging such programs of study for teachers, the government was sometimes faced with issues of a political nature. A significant portion of the Ukrainian intelligentsia professed socialist **views and did not regard the Hetman's government to be nationally oriented. Pedagogical**

employees often took part in antigovernment campaigns. That said, there also were members of the local administrations with anti-Ukrainian views, who used every effort to thwart the creation of programs of study in Ukrainian studies, arguing that such programs could serve as a platform for antigovernment activity (Ostashko, 2018: 196). For instance, the head of the zemstvo government of Zmiev Uyezd, A. Ryadnov, invoked this concept to admit certain candidates and reject others at his discretion. As a consequence, the month-long program was attended by around 150 learners, instead of the expected 250–300 (Zemske dilo №332b: 4).

In June 1918, the Minister of Public Education, himself, complained that certain uyezd headmen interfered with the process of organizing the teacher programs, trying to thwart it by hindering the public education commissioners from performing their duties (Degtyarev, 2018: 33-34). This led the head of the Council of Ministers, F. Lizogub, to issue a special ordinance enjoining that members of the local administration treat the cause of organizing the teacher programs with a more benign attitude (Ostashko, 2018: 196).

At the time, the region had a vast network of institutions of primary and secondary learning, with the secondary education sector represented by secondary male and female comprehensive, **vocational, and commercial schools, teacher's seminaries and institutes, and ecclesiastical seminaries.**

Some of them were not even run by the Ministry of Public Education in the Ukrainian State (e.g., the afore-mentioned ecclesiastical teacher's seminaries). **In June 1918, the government raised the issue of placing the region's gymnasia run by the military authorities under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education.** Four female institutes previously run by the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria were placed under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education as well (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 473, 671).

In the summer of 1918, Kiev alone had in place as many as three state gymnasia now. By that time, there were 54 gymnasia in operation across Ukraine, with another 40 gymnasia and 10 schools established in fall. By the time of the fall of the Hetmanate, Ukraine had in operation close to 150 Ukrainian secondary schools (Ostashko, 2018: 193). On August 21 alone, the region became home to 50 secondary educational institutions – 40 gymnasia and 10 real schools. The government allocated 906,000 karbovanets toward the organization and upkeep of these facilities (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 582). On August 26, an additional 400 thousand karbovanets was provided.

Close to the end of 1918, out of Ukraine's 838 gymnasia in operation at the time 161 were state schools, 409 were public schools, and 268 were private schools (Rublov, Reient, 1999: 142).

In August 1918, the government subsumed under the single category of lower primary schools all two-grade and one-grade rural schools, parochial schools, and a few other types of primary school. All teachers in these schools were to receive the same treatment in rights and pay (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 214).

In addition, the region witnessed an active creation of vocationally oriented secondary educational institutions, both independent and at universities. In late August, they organized in Kiev a program of study in directing/instructing. The government backed the project, directing the Minister of Education to formalize it legally. In another example, Kharkov University had in place a precision mechanics workshop/school (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 592, 715).

Certain educational institutions had so-called bursas (boarding schools) operating at them, which were under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education too. In October 1918 alone, the government allocated 20,000 karbovanets toward the upkeep of three boarding schools of this kind operating at gymnasia in Kiev. The Ministry also had purview over many orphanages where schooling was provided. The government spent significant funds on the upkeep of 24 orphanages in the area (nearly 130,000 karbovanets each month) (Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 642, 660).

Without question, reforms to primary and secondary education in the region were not confined to creating a branched network of educational institutions. The government was also pursuing a policy in the area of providing material support for the facilities and their staff, organizing a nationally oriented educational process, etc.

P. Skoropadsky's government was aware of the significance of developing the education sector. One of the resolutions of the Council of Ministers recognized the development of public education to be **“a cornerstone issue in state-building”**. **With that said, it was clear that it was not possible to achieve success in that area without “improving the material status of public teachers**

and teachers of religion to enable them to dedicate themselves entirely to the critical objective of **educating the rising generation**" ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 164](#)).

The government allocated large amounts of money toward the upkeep of various educational institutions. These funds included pay for teachers and other staff in the schools. To provide for the **upkeep of the region's lower** and higher primary schools alone, the Ministry of Public Education needed in 1918 nearly 122 million karbovanets. The government did provide a significant portion of these funds. In some cases, only some of the required funding was provided. Specifically, the **region's local authorities received 1.5 million karbovanets to fund the upkeep of higher primary schools**, whereas the amount required at the time was 4.5 million karbovanets ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 513-515](#)).

In the short period that the Ukrainian State was in existence, the government issued a large number of statutory enactments regulating pay, various pay raises, and one-time allowances for pedagogical employees. For instance, on July 19 it was resolved to establish a salary of 1,800 karbovanets for public school teachers. Around the same time, the government upped the pay for personnel in higher primary schools. In August 1918, the government established salaries for teachers in lower schools (1,800 karbovanets) and teachers of religion (300 karbovanets). After every seven years of service, teachers became eligible for a raise of 120 karbovanets ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 164](#); [Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 214](#)). In November, the government allocated 3 million karbovanets toward pay for personnel **in the region's commercial schools. Officials at the Ministry of Public Education and the Ministry of Commerce suggested that funding should be increased to an amount where the government's share in the upkeep of commercial schools would be 60 %**. In their view, this was important for spreading quality commercial education across the country. In the last days of the Hetmanate (November 30, 1918), the government provided the private gymnasium of Princess Volkonskaya with an allowance of 15,000 karbovanets and employees of the Ministry of Public Education with an emergency allowance of 100,000 karbovanets ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 400-401, 684](#)). Between late November and early December, the government adopted a draft law on establishing temporary staff in **arts-and-crafts workshop/schools in the printing business. Some of the document's provisions dealt with issues of an everyday nature**. For instance, alongside secondary school principals and secretaries, administrative staff and secretaries in workshop/schools became entitled to state-provided housing too. Where there was no such housing available at the school, an officer received an addition of 25 % to their pay ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 698, 706](#)).

Despite the Ukrainian government's best efforts to resolve the issue of material support for pedagogical employees, it was not always easily possible. Locally, the upkeep of educational institutions was to be handled by town and uyezd local authorities. To this end, these authorities received funding out of the state budget, including toward pay for pedagogues. Funds allocated toward the upkeep of educational institutions were first transferred to local authorities, which, in turn, then distributed the money as required. In this regard, the government more than once raised the issue of the need to have the Minister of Public Education keep control over the distribution of allocated funding by local authorities. Quite often, local authorities were even short of funding. For instance, teachers in the village of Kovichi in Valkovsky Uyezd (Kharkov Governorate) received their pay not from the uyezd zemstvo government but from a local cooperative partnership, which provided loans for some time. As a consequence, there were long delays in paying the teaching workforce, with salaries for July and August left unpaid altogether ([Zemske dilo №329: 3](#)).

Concurrently, the government tried to stimulate the region's talented or low-income students. Specifically, between July and August the government established 350 scholarships for low-income students of Ukrainian ethnicity in Ukrainian secondary comprehensive schools. For this purpose, the Ministry of Public Education received 77.5 thousand karbovanets. Each scholarship carried the name of one of 27 prominent Ukrainian public figures, scholars, writers, and composers, including Gregory Skovoroda, Taras Shevchenko, Nikolay Kostomarov, Ivan Franko, Mikhail Dragomanov, Lesya Ukrainka, Nikolay Lysenko, Vladimir Antonovich, and others ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 539](#); [Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 213](#)).

In general, the provision of financial support for the education sector was one of the priority areas for government policy. Funding was needed to open educational institutions, erect new buildings or repair existing ones, provide the schools with textbooks, lab equipment and supplies, etc.

As early as May 1918, a sitting of the Council of Ministers saw the provision of funding for secondary educational institutions recognized as one of the issues needing to be resolved as soon as possible. For the region's schools already in operation during the period 1917-1918 alone, the government allocated on July 19 4.5 million karbovanets. Another 5 million was to be provided for the upkeep of schools slated for opening in the 1918-1919 school year. And that was on condition that there will be opened no more than 400 schools (on the basis of 12.5 thousand karbovanets per school). If the number of newly opened educational facilities were to exceed 400, the Council of Ministers empowered the Minister of Public Education to request additional funding for the schools' upkeep. In late July, an additional 600,000 karbovanets was allocated toward the needs of the region's state comprehensive secondary schools. In late August, funding was allocated for Kamenets-Podolsky Technical School (60,000 karbovanets), Kiev Polytechnic Institute (293.8 thousand karbovanets), Kiev Tradesman's School (11.8 thousand karbovanets), and Slavic Technical School (101.7 thousand karbovanets) ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 26, 164, 539, 581-582](#)). Decisions of this kind were made quite often. On September 2, the government raised the issue of the need to place under the state's care the male gymnasia evacuated to Ukraine – Vilna Gymnasium, Kovno Gymnasium, and Telshevsky Gymnasium. However, consideration of the proposal was postponed. The three institutions were sited in the towns Glukhov, Kharkov, and Korsun, respectively. In mid-October, the government did, finally, allocate some funding toward their upkeep – around 51,000 karbovanets ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 602, 658](#)).

Even some of the last decisions made with regard to the region's schools under the Ministry of Public Education dealt with the provision of funding for secondary schools (allocation of 183,000 karbovanets toward building maintenance and infrastructure development) and recruitment of staff in and provision of funding for vocational secondary technical and tradesman's schools (allocation of 2.3 million karbovanets) ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 727](#)).

No less attention was given to funding the region's primary school sector. Specifically, toward the upkeep of existing and the establishment of new higher primary schools the government transferred to the Ministry of Public Education 20.7 million karbovanets on August 6, 1918 ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 212-213](#)).

The Ministry of Public Education was always supportive of the local communities' initiatives with regard to the establishment of various educational institutions, although the bulk of the responsibility for implementing the search for buildings to house the schools and material support for them sat with local authorities. For instance, the zemstvo government of Lebedin Uyezd (Kharkov Governorate) obtained from the Ministry permission to establish in the village of Boromlya a mixed-type Ukrainian state gymnasium – on condition that the zemstvo and the local community provide it with a building and funding ([Zemske dilo №330: 4](#)).

Sometimes, there were issues related to a shortage of buildings to house gymnasia and other educational institutions and support for them ([Zemske dilo №324: 4](#)). For the most part, issues of this kind were to be handled by local authorities.

Some of the region's educational institutions were on the brink of being closed down. In the summer of 1918, this was the case with Sumy Real School (Kharkov Governorate). The Town Duma had not provided the school with appropriate material support (the school's upkeep required 56,000 karbovanets) ([Luch №23: 3](#)). In the end, the issue was resolved only partially. The real school received just 3,000 karbovanets from the Sumy Union of Cooperatives against security from the zemstvo.

To resolve in part the issue of providing buildings to house the educational institutions, on October 28 the government resolved to keep the buildings of school diocesan councils and their uyezd and district divisions (built wholly with diocesan funding and sited on church and monastery lands) that housed church/parochial schools in the ownership of the church but deliver temporary possession of them to the Ministry of Public Education (a term of no more than five years). Note, however, that the Ministry was not to assume temporary possession of buildings erected in church or monastery cemeteries, as well as church school buildings erected with willed money if such a school was founded in accordance with the intention of the testator ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 674](#)).

The government paid a significant amount of attention to the issue of providing the region's educational institutions with course literature. In the summer of 1918, the Minister of Education, N. Vasilenko, asserted that in the then-current market there were on offer a large number of coursebooks in the Ukrainian language for Ukrainian public schools. An even larger amount of

course literature was still in the press. This was enough to meet in full measure the needs of all schools in Ukraine ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 179](#)).

As early as June 1, the government approved a draft law to allocate 2 million karbovanets toward school textbooks. Two days later, the Ministry of Public Education received 1 million karbovanets for urgent educational needs. There were produced 1.62 million books for public schools and 345,000 books for secondary schools ([Doroshenko, 2002: 254](#); [Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 50, 52, 54](#)). Many of the textbooks were printed abroad. For instance, in September the government expected the arrival in Ukraine of 30 train cars filled with textbooks for primary schools published in Vienna (Austria) ([Zemske dilo №323: 4](#)).

If in the region's higher educational institutions the educational process was largely regulated via government ordinances, its primary and secondary schools enjoyed greater autonomy in this area. For instance, in the region's workshop/schools the boards of trustees could make decisions as to setting the number of lectures on particular disciplines ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 706](#)). In drawing up the curriculum, a certain amount of consideration was given in many educational institutions to learning languages. For instance, even in an agricultural school in Vasilyevskaya Volost (Poltava Governorate) they introduced German to be taught alongside Ukrainian and Russian ([Luch №30: 2](#)). Admission to a secondary school was available only to those who had passed the entrance exams. However, due to a complicated military-political and economic situation in the Ukrainian State at the time, as early as May 13 the Ministry of Public Education resolved to postpone all entrance exams for admission to the preparatory and first grades of the **region's secondary schools until fall, the reason being stated as "abnormal living conditions in Ukraine and a severe food crisis in major areas of the country"** ([Derzhavnyi visnyk №2: 1](#)).

An issue that remained under the state's firm control was the Ukrainization of primary and secondary schools in the region, i.e. providing instruction in the Ukrainian language and teaching certain subjects related to the history, geography, language, and literature of Ukraine. The government of the Ukrainian State issued a whole set of ordinances on the compulsory learning of Ukrainian in all secondary male and female comprehensive, vocational, and commercial schools in the region ([Zemske dilo №320: 3](#)).

On July 23, the government approved an initiative of the Minister of Public Education on the compulsory teaching of a Ukrainian Studies course in all secondary educational institutions in the region. To this end, the government established permanent positions of teacher of Ukrainian studies ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 176](#)). The switching of all schools to instruction in Ukrainian **was to be handled by the region's gubernia and uyezd zemstvo and town governments.** The responsibility of monitoring the process sat with gubernia and uyezd education commissioners ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 179](#)).

On August 1, the government passed the Law on the Compulsory Learning of the Language, Literature, History, and Geography of Ukraine in All Secondary Schools ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 201](#); [Derzhavnyi visnyk №32: 1](#)). The curriculum assigned to Ukrainian and Ukrainian literature classes no less than three hours a week in the first five grades and no less than two hours a week in sixth and seventh grades. In addition, the curricula of the last two grades assigned to Ukrainian history and Ukrainian geography two hours worth of instruction each. In this type of educational institutions, the government established a permanent position of teacher of Ukrainian and Ukrainian literature, with part-time positions of teacher of Ukrainian history and teacher of Ukrainian geography established as well ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 201](#)).

With the region's sector of so-called higher primary schools being most popular with the wider public, the government sought to switch, as fast and efficiently as possible, the entire educational process in all schools to Ukrainian. Special hope in this respect was pinned on the region's gubernia and uyezd zemstvo and town governments, as it is under their purview that all higher primary schools were locally.

The Ministry of Public Education proposed to introduce instruction in the Ukrainian language in all of the region's higher primary schools that began to teach Ukrainian in the 1917–1918 school year, as well as in the ones established in 1918 for Ukrainian children. Besides, there were plans to teach in Ukrainian all subjects in the first grades of schools where children of Ukrainian descent accounted for over 50 % of the student body. With that said, it was recommended that senior grades in such schools switch to instruction in the Ukrainian language "where physically possible" ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 211-212](#)).

The region's schools not switched to comprehensive instruction in the Ukrainian language were to teach subjects related to Ukrainian studies on a compulsory basis (e.g., Ukrainian, Ukrainian history, and Ukrainian geography).

Public education commissioners, i.e. the highest representatives of the educational authority locally, who were to monitor the process of creation of the national system of primary education, were expected to facilitate it in every way possible ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 212](#)).

The general public, too, took an active part in the development of the system of public education in the region. On May 10 and 11, Kiev hosted a congress of the Council of All-Ukrainian Teachers' Union. The key decisions made at the congress included the establishment in Kiev of the All-Ukrainian Teachers' House and the All-Ukrainian Teachers' Publishing Society and pledging of commitment to facilitating the development of a network of teacher associations in the region ([Ostashko, 2018: 197](#); [Vidrodzhennia №50](#)). On August 3, the region saw the establishment of the Ukrainian partnership of Kholmshchyna, Podlachia, Polesia, and Western Volhynia. The organization was instantly joined by more than 100 people ([Doroshenko, 2002: 239](#)).

The transformations in the area of public education were met with a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of a significant portion of the Ukrainian public. The region witnessed the creation of various nongovernmental organizations and associations whose primary focus was on resolving pressing issues in school and higher education, preschool education, etc. The local authorities enlisted these societies in organizing various activities aimed at enhancing the education system (e.g., congresses of people's teachers). A congress of people's teachers was held in June in Sumy, an uyezd town in Kharkov Governorate. In addition to employees of educational institutions, the event was attended by representatives from zemstvo authorities, the Teachers' Union, the Prosvita partnership, and the Literacy Society. Presentations delivered at the congress focused on issues related to school management, the activity of professional teacher associations, improvement of pedagogues' cultural level, etc. ([Luch №33: 3](#)). The Prosvita partnership was particularly instrumental in helping bring to fruition the government's national policy in the area of public education, with its Lvov division actively engaged in educational work among Ukrainian teachers. Specifically, the institution conducted propaganda urging refusal to join Polish professional teacher associations and was engaged in putting together pedagogical programs of study ([Torskyi, 1918: 2-3](#)).

In that tough time, the authorities did not neglect the out-of-school and preschool education of children either. In rural areas, townships, and towns, they established night schools for teaching literacy, public libraries/reading rooms, clubs, choirs, excursions, etc. For children of preschool age, they organized kindergartens, playgrounds, and daycare facilities. All this was handled by the region's zemstvo and town governments. For instance, in the town of Sumy (Kharkov Governorate), playgrounds were organized by the local Women's Partnership with permission from the board of the Literacy Society ([Luch №25: 3](#)). Facilities of this kind could also be established by teachers' unions and other nongovernmental and professional associations. Note that some of the facilities were freely accessible to the public, while others required payment.

The Ministry of Education provided all-round support – it organized the training of specialists for out-of-school education and preschool education and shouldered half of the zemstvos' expenses for activities in that area. The Ministry also provided support for various education organizations and organized programs of study for instructors on out-of-school education and preschool education ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015b: 244-245](#)). In early June 1918, they organized in Kiev a program of study in out-of-school education, provided under the guidance of Shchukayevsky and Yarmolenko. The program was taught by various representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia ([Doroshenko, 2002: 238](#)). Around the same time, 10,000 karbovanets was allocated toward the publication of a book entitled 'A Manual for Staff Involved with Out-of-School Education and Preschool Education' ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 473](#)). In July, Kharkov saw the first issue of the magazine 'Pozashkilna Osvita' ("out-of-school education"). It was the first print periodical devoted to the issue. It was published by the Cultural/Educational Bureau for United Corporate and Nongovernmental Organizations. The magazine was bi-lingual – it was published in Russian and Ukrainian ([Zemske dilo №332a: 2](#)).

In the last days before the fall of the Hetmanate, the Ministry of Public Education was still planning the holding of the Congress of Representatives of Zemstvos and Towns on Preschool and Out-of-School Education ([Ukrains'ka derzhava, 2015a: 715](#)).

5. Conclusion

During the period the Ukrainian State was in existence, from April 29 to December 14, 1918, the process of the formation of the public education system in the region was distinguished by high activity. **The region's primary, secondary, and higher education systems were formalized legally.** The government was deeply aware of the decisive role of the public education system in the development and strengthening of Ukrainian statehood. Hetman P. Skoropadsky, personally, stressed in one of his speeches the need to combat narrow national intolerance, spread across the education system (above all, at the higher education level) best practices from European and Russian scholars, and enrich Ukrainian culture (Zavaliuk, 2008: 207).

Ukrainian universities were being positioned as centers where national culture was concentrated. **With that said, the school body for the region's institutions of higher learning was formed in its primary and secondary schools, which had a branched network.** In terms of organizing the educational process, these institutions enjoyed quite a high level of autonomy. The exception was that government policy directly influenced the educational process – by way of introduction of instruction in the Ukrainian language and a number of disciplines related to **Ukrainian studies. This, in the authors' view, may be regarded as a positive step, as a measure of this kind was quite needed amid the formation of a young nation state.**

The degree to which government policy on primary and secondary education in the Ukrainian State was successful may be illustrated by the fact that, amid a highly complicated military/political and economic situation in the region at the time, the government did manage to provide most educational facilities with required course materials. The government worked closely with local authorities and the public, which had a positive effect on the development of the local systems of primary, secondary, and preschool education. There, however, did remain some issues that it was not possible to resolve overnight, like material support for the schools, lack of buildings to house classrooms, etc.

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