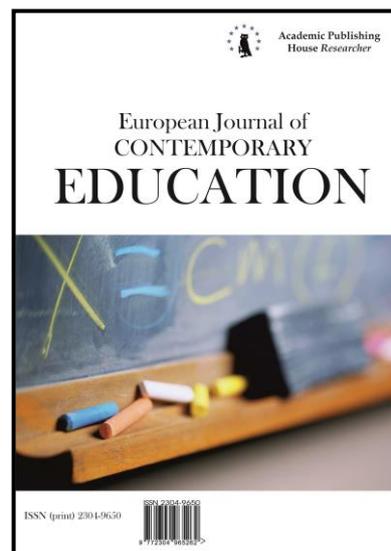




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The History of Education

On the Establishment of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) University in Austria-Hungary and Its Coverage in “Kievskaya Starina” Journal

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the attempts of Rusyns-Ukrainians living in the Galician lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to obtain the right to open their own university in Lviv. The main sources for this article were materials of historical, ethnographic and literary journal “Kiyevskaya starina”.

The idea of establishing a Rusyn university in Lviv appeared in the middle of the XIX century. The authors focused on the events that unfolded around this project at the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries. Rusyns-Ukrainians were unable to defend their idea of establishing a university. The main reasons for the failure were the complex social and political situation in the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire and the oppression of the Ruthenians by the representatives of the Polish nationals in Galicia.

Keywords: “Kievskaya starina” journal, Rusyns-Ukrainians, university, Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1. Introduction

The study of issues related to the development of higher education, including the nationally oriented ones, is a promising trend in historical and pedagogical researches. Analysis of the historical experience of higher education in difficult social and political conditions, accompanied by manifestations of national intolerance, allows modern states to avoid errors and mistakes in

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educational policy, helps the education system to adapt to the needs of society, to make it oriented to all categories of the population, including different nationalities.

In this article, the author covers the attempt of Rusyns-Ukrainians (who were mostly residing in the territory of Galicia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) to achieve the right to open their own university in Lviv. Although the idea of establishing a separate Ruthenian-Ukrainian university in Austria-Hungary dates back to the mid-XIX century (after the revolutionary events of 1848), it became popular among the Ukrainian population only in 1895 (according to M. Grushevsky) after the opening of the Ukrainian history department in 1894 ([Grushevskiy, 1910: 7](#)).

2. Materials and methods

The materials taken from the historical, ethnographic and literary journal “Kievskaya starina”, published in Kiev in 1882-1906 were used as the main source for this article. The journal highlighted some aspects of the educational policy of the Austro-Hungarian government regarding Rusyn-Ukrainians, as well as their struggle for the right to establish a national university in Lviv.

In this article, the author applied the principles of objectivity and historical anthropologism. In particular, the principle of objectivity involves the study of the historical process, taking into account the objective laws that determine the processes of state and socio-political development in this historical phase, the use of real facts, etc. Therefore, the author took into account both the policy of the Austro-Hungarian government in the educational sphere and the internal social processes, especially those in the midst of certain national minorities of Austria-Hungary. The principle of historical anthropologism allowed the author to focus on the humanistic essence of the research. This principle became one of the key ones, since the central orientation of the article is a certain human community (Ruthenian-Ukrainian), which acted as the bearer of specific values and traditions.

The nature of this research also required a critical approach. Considering the “Kievskaya starina” as a historical source, we used the works of other authors, (including modern ones), to clarify the information in the journal. Comparative-historical, problem-chronological and retrospective methods were also applied in the research.

The use of certain terms in this research is due to the specifics of the terminology on the pages of “Kievskaya starina”. The authors of the notes used as our main source, referring to the Ukrainian population of Austria-Hungary, call them the Rusins, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Galician Little Russians, the Rusins of Galicia or Bukovina. The Ruthenian students of Lviv University used both the terms “Ukrainian” and “Rusyn” in relation to themselves. In the article, published in the Czech newspaper “Golos naroda”, as well as in the “Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti” Ruthenian students wrote: “... we are the Ukrainian (Rusyn) youth, a part of a thirty-million people living in Russia and in Austria-Hungary” ([K voprosu o studentakh-rusinakh, 1902: 116](#)). The language spoken by the representatives of this ethnic group was also referred to as Russian, Ruthenian, Galician Russian, Galician Ruthenian or Ukrainian. In this research, the author mainly used such terms as “Rusyns”, “Rusyns-Ukrainians”, “Russian-Ukrainian” and “Rusyn-Ukrainian” to avoid confusion.

3. Discussion

Due to the high level of information content, “Kievskaya starina” has been actively used as a source for studying history problems, literary criticism and etc. The social significance and informational potential of this monthly publication was studied in detail by the Ukrainian scientist M. Palienko ([Paliienko, 2005a](#); [Paliienko, 2005b](#)).

A lot of materials on various issues of the history of education in the Ukrainian ethnic lands were published on the pages of “Kievskaya starina” at various times. Attention was paid in particular to the policy of the government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in their offer of higher education to representatives of Ukrainian nationality, who were very numerous in the Bukovinian and Galician lands of the empire. Various problems related to the organization of the educational process for students of Ruthenian-Ukrainian origin were highlighted, as well as attempts to solve them. The publications paid special attention to the status of Ruthenian students at the University of Lviv and their movement in favor of establishing a separate Ruthenian-Ukrainian university in Lviv. “Kievskaya starina” covered all these events on its pages for several years ([Veche studentov,](#)

1902; Zayavlenie studentov, 1904; K istorii voprosa, 1902; K voprosu o studentakh-rusinakh, 1902; K voprosu o universitete, 1904; Pol'skaya gazeta, 1903; Proekty novogo universiteta, 1901; Ukrainsko-ruskyi universytet, 1899).

Issues related to the establishment and functioning of the Ruthenian-Ukrainian primary and secondary educational institutions in the Galician and Bukovinian regions of Austria-Hungary, the situation of the youth studying in them and problems of using Ruthenian/Ukrainian language in schools and gymnasiums (*K goneuiyam na rusinskiy yazyk, 1903; Pol'skiy i rusinskiy yazyk, 1904*) were also discussed on the pages of "Kievskaya starina" (*Galitskie gimnazii, 1902; Narodno-prosvetitel'naya deyatel'nost', 1902; Narodnye shkoly, 1903; Otkrytie novoy gimnazii, 1900; Polozhenie rusinskih shkol, 1904; Razvitie rusinskoy shkoly, 1905; Rusiny v srednikh shkolakh, 1905*).

The indicated problems were covered on the pages of other periodicals of that time, in particular in the journal "Slavyanskiy vek", published in Austria-Hungary (*Slavyanskiy vek 1; Slavyanskiy vek 2*).

The contemporaries, participants or witnesses of the events devoted their works to various aspects of the activity of Lviv University in the second half of XIX - early XX, its students of Ruthenian-Ukrainian origin and their role in the university and society. This was mainly journalism. In most cases, the problem of establishment a separate university occupied a prominent place in their works (*Grushevskiy, 1910; O.N., 1910; Ukrainsko-ruskiy universitet, 1899*).

Modern researchers such as B. Yakimovich (*Yakymovych, 2014: 45-46*), S. Fominykh, A. Stepnov (*Fominykh, Stepnov, 2016*) and others studied these problems or mentioned them in their researches on the cultural or social and political life of the Galician region of Austria-Hungary.

4. Results

On the pages of "Kievskaya starina" it was indicated that the Ruthenian population of Galicia was largely assimilated with representatives of other nationalities, especially with the Poles. Nevertheless, a large number of Rusyns-Ukrainians and a significant number of representatives of "intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia" had the right to "seek recognition of the rights of their language in government and school", and it was also necessary "to take measures to remove these people from national slumber and death" (*Rusiny v zapadnoy Galitsii, 1903: 47-48*).

In the end of the XVIII century, Austrian emperor Joseph II allowed lectures in the Ruthenian language at the University of Lviv. But in 1808 language of these lectures was replaced by Latin, and later by German and Polish. This made it difficult for representatives of Ruthenian-Ukrainian nationality to receive education.

Two Rusyn departments "with lectures in Russian" - civil procedure and criminal law were established at the University of Lviv by the Imperial decree of 1862, but they functioned with long breaks. The department of civil procedure operated until 1873 (taught by Professor Lopushansky), after which the professor post remained vacant for more than 30 years. The criminal law was very briefly taught by Professor Srokovsky, and then it also remained vacant until 1892, until it was replaced by Professor Stebelsky (*K voprosu o universitete, 1904: 35*).

A decree that recognized at the University of Lviv Polish and Ruthenian-Ukrainian languages as equal as local languages was issued in 1871. In fact, this university became Russian-Polish. But this fact almost did not affect the problems associated with the education of the Ruthenian youth; it did not activate the Ruthenian departments. The reason for this was, first and foremost, discrimination of the Ruthenian students and teachers in the university, which was represented mainly by Polish professors. In particular, professors of Ruthenian origin were never elected rectors, various obstacles to obtaining doctoral degrees were created for them, etc. (*K voprosu o universitete, 1904: 35; Ukrainsko-ruskyi universytet, 1899: 112*). The de facto Polish element turned out to be dominant. The Ruthenian-Ukrainians continued to experience great oppression on the basis of their language. This situation was precisely commented by researchers S. Fominykh and A. Stepnov: "School and university education was fundamental in consolidating and relaying cultural identity to future generations at all times". This led to the fact that the problem of a dominant language often became a cause for conflict at universities (*Fominykh, Stepnov, 2016: 143*).

A group of students of theological faculty of the University of Lviv was forced to continue their studies at the University of Vienna. It was a reaction to the harassment to which they were subjected, in the first place, by the administration of Lviv University. In general, as a result of these oppressions, about 680 Ruthenian students left the university (K istorii voprosa, 1902: 185). By the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, students of Ruthenian origin studied at various universities in Austria-Hungary. It is known that in Krakow and Prague universities they were welcomed very warmly by the student community (K voprosu o studentakh-rusinakh, 1902: 115).

The Greek Catholic metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, during his stay in Vienna, attempted to negotiate with the Ruthenian students and return them to Lviv. Students put a number of conditions under which they could return in a special note, which was later presented even to the Minister of Education. This note allows us to reconstruct some events in the life of the students of Lviv University:

- "The rector of Lviv University should take back his abusive expressions about Ruthenian students voiced in the review of the university senate about the unrest" - there were probably some students speaking in defense of their rights, and it was perceived as unrest (led by the students) by the university. Perhaps the Polish leadership of the university, often known for its national intolerance, was offended / outraged by the activity of the Ruthenian students. This assumption is confirmed by B. Yakimovich, who mentioned the clash between Ukrainian and Polish students on November 19, 1901 (Yakymovych, 2014: 46);

- "Ruthenian students should be relieved of the obligation to attend lectures by professors Fialka and Tvardovsky" - apparently, these teachers were the most biased and intolerant towards students of Ruthenian origin;

- "Ruthenian students have the right to use the Ruthenian language in all relations with the university authorities" - hence it follows that the right to use their native language, which was legally assigned to the students, was not implemented (K voprosu o studentakh-rusinakh, 1902: 115).

All these conflicts in the university environment between different nationalities prevented the normal functioning of the university, creating difficulties for students-Rusyns during exams or during courses. This caused dissatisfaction with the Ruthenian students (Fominykh, Stepnov, 2016: 143-148). As a result, on July 1, 1899, a meeting of about 500 students of Lviv University and representatives of a number of other cities and corporations (associations) took place in Lviv, at which the issue of creating a separate Russian-Ukrainian university in Lviv was again raised. According to the Ukrainian researcher B. Yakimovich, there were 450 participants. Based on the discussion of this issue, a relevant resolution was prepared and sent to the Ministry of Religions and Public Education for consideration (Ukrainsko-russkiy universitet, 1899: 112-113; Yakymovych, 2014: 46).

From the various strata of the Ruthenian population of Austria-Hungary, and the organizations representing them (clubs, reading rooms, etc.), the decision of the student meeting was taken very positively. At the same time, the idea of establishment of a Russian-Ukrainian university provoked a wave of criticism from a part of the Polish public. Polish periodicals ("Daily Polish", "Time") called the demand of Ruthenian students a "ridiculous and wild claim" (Ukrainsko-russkiy universitet, 1899: 113).

The struggle for the establishment of Russian-Ukrainian educational institutions reached a political level to a certain extent. Galician Sejm deputies Olesnitsky (a member of the Russian-Ukrainian Radical Party) and Barvinsky made a proposal to open a Ukrainian university in Lviv and the Ukrainian gymnasium in Stanislavov. The proposals were ignored in the Sejm, which became, according to the Polish newspaper "Warsaw Courier", the reason for "the withdrawal of Russian deputies from the Sejm" (Proekty novogo universiteta, 1901: 26).

The Czech and Ukrainian deputies in the Austrian parliament proposed an alternative to the Ruthenian university in Lviv. They submitted a draft, according to which the German university in Chernivtsi should be transferred to the Czech city of Brno, and in Chernivtsi it was proposed to establish a university for Ruthenian youth from Galicia and Bukovina. It was assumed that this project would not be popular in the Rusyn-Ukrainian circles in Chernivtsi (K istorii voprosa, 1902: 186). At the same time, the Polish newspaper "Poland daily" (in which the idea of creating a Rusyn-Ukrainian university in Lviv was actively criticized) reacted very positively to the project of Czech and Ukrainian deputies. In one of the articles on this issue, it was stated that 42% of the population

of Bukovina are Ruthenians (probably here – both the Ruthenian and Ukrainian population). In addition, some counties of Galicia are adjacent to Bukovina. For this reason, the establishment of this university would be more logical in Chernivtsi. The article voiced a direct appeal to the fact that “the Ruthenians must demand the transformation of Chernivtsi University into a Rusyn university” (*Pol'skaya gazeta, 1903: 193*). Apparently, the authors of this article tried to influence the shift of the center of public and possibly political activity of the Ruthenians, which was to arise along with the establishment of such a university in the lands of Galicia, where the Poles tried to maintain their maximum influence, including assimilation policy. The desire of the Ruthenians to have their own university in Lviv was supported by the Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society, which turned to the Austrian parliament with a request to support this project. In general, the idea of establishing this university had a great resonance in the international university community and among the intelligentsia. In particular, it was supported by the students of the Russian Higher School of Social Sciences in Paris and other Parisian higher educational institutions, artists of the Warsaw Opera - Rusyn-Ukrainians by origin S. Krushelnitskaya, K. Blonskaya, A. Myshuga and 34 other representatives of the Ruthenian intelligentsia in Warsaw (*K voprosu o studentakh-rusinakh, 1902: 116; K istorii voprosa, 1902: 184-185*).

The question of the establishment of a Ruthenian university was also discussed at the University of Prague in the presence of the rector, deans and a large number of students in the first half of 1902. The resolution of this meeting expressed the need to establish such an institution (*K istorii voprosa, 1902: 186*). This idea was also supported by the Polish students from the University of Leipzig (*K istorii voprosa, 1902: 186*).

Probably, the opposition to the idea of creating a university in Lviv of a part of the Polish society was quite strong, and the efforts of the Ruthenian deputies in parliament in this direction were relatively unsuccessful. There were also disappointments in the circles of supporters. Attempts to change the tactics of upholding this project were made. To a certain extent, this is confirmed by the speech of student Kosevich at a meeting of Ruthenian youth, which took place in the second half of July 1902 in Lviv. After analyzing the situation, he said that “the struggle for the Rusyn university should be replaced by the struggle against the strength and influence of the Polish gentry” (*Veche studentov, 1902: 144*).

The Rusyns in Lviv University continued to be harassed. It was often initiated by the university administration, on behalf of which representatives of the highest officials acted. The Minister of Public Education even issued a rescript, according to which the students of Ruthenian/Ukrainian nationality did not have the right to read the oath (the student vow). For this reason, many students even refused to register for the new semester at the end of 1903 (*Zayavlenie studentov, 1904: 24-25*).

In the first half of 1904, the question of establishment of a university was raised again. The impetus for this was the discussion in the Austrian parliament on the issue of opening a law faculty in Rovereto for Italians, of whom there were about 800 thousand people in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is almost 4.5 times less than the Ruthenian Ukrainians. In addition, the Minister-President Dr. Kerber announced the establishment of the university for Slovenes (*K voprosu o universitete, 1904: 33-34*).

The Rusyn-Ukrainians hoped that the issue of the Ruthenian university would also be considered in parliament, since their population in the empire was quite numerous. In 1890 and 1900 censuses were conducted in Austria-Hungary and the most numerous ethnic groups there were the Germans, the Czechs and the Poles. The Ruthenians were the fourth largest group – in 1890 there were 3,105,221 people, and in 1900 – 3,375,576 people (*Statistika ukrainskogo naseleniya v Galichine, 1903: 96*). The representatives of several ethnographic groups, primarily the Ukrainians, were assigned to Rusyns at that time.

But their hopes for establishing of the university were not meant to be realised. As a result, the most active were not the parliamentarians, but the Ukrainian and Ruthenian students and professors of Lviv University. Not abandoning the idea of a separate university, they began to pursue the creation of Ruthenian departments. In particular, the meeting of law students and a number of professors decided to demand the establishment of a legal department with lectures in Ruthenian. In addition to the already existing, but not functioning Ruthenian department of civil procedure, it was proposed to establish departments of political economy, trade and exchange law. The students also wanted the examination committee to use the Ruthenian language during the

tests. All these wishes were planned to be spelled out in a special resolution, which, after consideration by the university senate, should have been passed to the Ministry of Public Education ([K voprosu o universitete, 1904, 1904: 34-35](#)).

One of the justifications of the Ruthenians for their right to their own university was the number of Ruthenian students at universities in Austria-Hungary. In 1904, in one of the editions of "Kievskaya starina" the average number of Rusyn students (per 10 semesters, prior to 1901) is said to be 618 people. And in the spring semester of 1904, there were about 800 Ruthenian students at Lviv University alone. At the same time, injustice on the part of the government in relation to the Ruthenians was aggravated by the fact that less numerous nationalities nevertheless received the promise of the authorities to open separate higher educational institutions for them. For example, such promises were made to Italians and Slovenes ([K voprosu o universitete, 1904: 35-36](#)).

The struggle for the right of Rusyn-Ukrainians to have their own university in Lviv continued further, especially escalating in 1906-1907 and 1910. In 1912, the Austrian government agreed to establish the university and it was scheduled for 1916. But this was not meant to happen due to the outbreak of World War I. In general, in 1914, only 8 Ruthenian-Ukrainian departments out of 80 existing functioned in Lviv with 4 associate professors ([Yakymovych, 2014: 46](#)).

5. Conclusion

The Ruthenian-Ukrainians could not defend their idea of a university in Galicia, which was meant to be nationally oriented to the representatives of this ethnic group. There were several reasons for the failure of this project – and first of all, it was due to the complex social and political situation in the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire. The growing popularity of ideas of socialism among the Ukrainian youth distracted them from the struggle for the university. In addition, various national movements, which often competed with each other, became increasingly active, and it led to the oppression of representatives of certain ethnic groups. In the case of the Galician Rusyns-Ukrainians, the Polish nationals were the antagonistic force in that region, as they were "attacking" the cultural life of the Ukrainians.

All steps of the Ruthenian-Ukrainian students' struggle for their rights, for the Ruthenian university in Lviv were regularly covered in the press of that time. It should be noted that "Kievskaya starina" journal was one of the print media that most quickly and objectively covered the problems of the Ukrainian population living in Austria-Hungary, including issues related to the development of higher, secondary and primary education of this ethnic group in Austro-Hungarian lands. The editorial staff of "Kievskaya starina" also paid attention to various aspects of the university life of Ruthenian students as well as the struggle of the Ruthenian-Ukrainians to establish a separate university. They were covered in a number of small publications, which described events and sometimes conflict situations objectively and tolerantly. The authors' notes mostly avoided emotional assessments. Though such materials were not devoid of factual inaccuracies.

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