

The Dialectics of the Authority and Morality on the South of Ukraine at the End of 18th, the Early 20th Centuries

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This article is dedicated to the investigation of the fundamental philosophical values which lead the activity of the self-government deputies in the Southern Ukraine region. A complex and ambiguous process of the new socio-cultural reality formation took place at the end of 18th century. The South of Ukraine is considered as the frontier area where the modern Western European, family-protective Ukrainian and bureaucratic Russian traditions come into cross-cultural collaboration. Their close intermingling and contact provided a basis for shaping the new philosophy, the system of values, stereotypes, mentality and awareness of the local elites. The South of Ukraine became a modern region. That enabled to understand the further necessity to intensify the process of decentralization, democratization and autonomization of the local government. The conclusion has been done as to the values the present day politicians should adopt.

Key Words: philosophy of politics; self-management; local government; South of Ukraine; regions; worldview.

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The up to date society is politically charged. It is connected with the general process of the Ukrainian state construction as well as the reformation of the local self-government bodies based on the decentralization principles. In this case, the guidelines and priorities of the local importance turn into the necessary elements. The communities' authority should have some definite humanitarian values which enable them think independently from the central authority in order to provide better life for people. Moreover, the decentralization process makes the local authority play more important role in the civil society construction. In its turn, this process leads to the development of some morality standards and social values. The compulsory element of this process is taking care about people, their education, and medical services, social and legal defense. The formation of common and necessary morality standards and values for the representatives of the local elite will become the guarantee for normal human existence. In this aspect, the historical experience is very useful because it illustrates how destructive for the development of decentralization the inhuman and egocentric manifestations of the local authority could be. The communities in the South of Ukraine had rich experience in creating decentralized self-government bodies and it could help the representatives of the local power mark the standards and values, which play the decisive role in the society life.

The present day political philosophy recognizes the priority of social and moral values to be one of the principles of the power. Politics and morality cooperate not only strategically but they also are the daily forms of social awareness and practice. Ethical concepts of the good, fairness, honesty and decency help estimate the activity of any authority, deputy or politician but as well as support this activity giving it moral sanctions and motivation. It is the morality that estimates the activity of any politician and helps make conclusion about the level of his or her social reliability. Historical bibliography contains numerous examples of such cooperation of political and moral elements.

While studying and analyzing the relationship between the authority and morality the political philosophy defines the nature of this dialectics and its basics. Among the main aspects that the political philosophy studies is the historical investigation of the relationships between the politics and morality as the integral parts of the comparatively whole system that regulates the behavior, defines the points of commonality and controversy and peculiarities of the authority and morality cooperation in the context of "society transitional period" [Andrushchenko, 2003a: 245-247].

To investigate the relationships between the politics and morality one needs to know their social nature, laws, the way they operate, the peculiarities of a theoretical backlash in the social realities defined by the methods of political and ethic sciences as well as one should be aware of the spirit of this particular age.

Political philosophy defines four main points of the politics and morality convergence:

- a) Optimistic (politics and morality can coincide and their discrepancy can be regulated);
- b) Pessimistic (proves that politics and morality are incompatible);
- c) Objectivistic (the specific nature of the politics and morality makes the attempt to establish a constant link between them irrational);
- d) Relativistic (interaction of the politics and morality depends on the particular social and political situation) [Andrushchenko, 2003b: 245-247].

Careful examination of the historical past is of great importance for practicing effective political management in regions in the frames of contemporary decentralization process because this examination will provide the opportunity to analyze the peculiarities of the

political process within “society transitional period”. The history of the South of Ukraine from the end of 18th till the beginning of 20th centuries testifies this.

The authors of this article support the relativistic point of view as to the relationships of the politics and morality (authority and morality) due to the collision of modern and traditional worlds that took place at the specific historical conditions of that time in the South of Ukraine. That collision led to the formation of new living conditions for both authority and society and defined the qualitative changes in the relationships of authority and morality.

The South of Ukraine was a unique territory for the Russian Empire as it differed a lot from other regions. It took the path of modernization earlier than the other regions, the processes of adaptation, urbanization, identification and formation of the city patriotism among the local population developed with numerous peculiarities. Such a phenomenon as “the new life” was cultivated because many people got the possibilities to earn more money, obtain a new status, freedom, fast career progression and so on. The important place in the society functioning was taken by the local self-government bodies which were declared to base on the decentralization principles. For the Russian Empire that fact became the new milestone in the history of the relationships of the society and authority. Traditional stereotypes and modern views on politics, authority and morality united to form the society in transitional period in the South of Ukraine.

At the end of the 18th century considerable changes in the territory, philosophy of life and values connected with the incorporation of the South of Ukraine into the Russian Empire. Took place. In order to keep these territories within the Russian Empire its government started the process of colonization in the southern part of Ukraine. That made the people from different parts of Western Europe, Russia and Ukraine move there and during some years two worlds, modern and traditional ones, which were previously isolated from each other, came into touch and interaction. That influenced not only the everyday life of many nationalities but also their mentality, philosophy of life, mode of their behavior and identity and led to the formation of new socio-cultural reality and the set of values even towards the politics and authority. During a short period, people of many nationalities adapted to new conditions of living and changed their views as to the system of power. Thanks to new territorial acquisition Russia made a giant leap “from barbarism to civilized lifestyle” that influenced the new world outlook. Enlightening ideas of improving the state organization that would change the international isolation of Russia into its global leadership became popular among the representatives of the Russian government. Big seaports in the South of Ukraine opened the ways for trading as well as for philosophic ideas of the French Enlightenment scientists that comprised organizing councils to govern cities. If we take into consideration the fact that those ideas in the countries of Western Europe started to take shape in 18th century, then for feudal monarchic Russia the city councils were a revolutionary event.

It was the incorporation of the South of Ukraine into the Russian Empire that gave rise to the administrative and territorial reforms and initiated the policy of decentralization of the authority [Mikhailovskiy, 1908].

The society, which was chaotically made up in the southern region of Ukraine during just 20 years, formed its regional identification and city patriotism as a measure of love towards the region and city. The South of Ukraine revealed itself as the most modernized region where archaic life could not reach new (modern) patterns. Such elements of civic life as European architecture, literature, philosophic ideas etc. quickly became popular among people whereas they kept their traditions while visiting their relatives in the other regions. For example when the Jews who previously had lived along the right bank of the Dnieper River and kept their

traditional way of living moved to the South of Ukraine they forgot some of their traditions quite soon. However, they knew that their relatives from other regions wanted them to be loyal to the national traditions. That is why long before visiting the relatives the Jewish migrants took out their old traditional clothes and items, grew side curls and appeared before the relatives like that. Some factory workers getting higher salary changed their view of life and morality, led quite free lifestyle, began drinking and so on [Turchenko, 2003: 45-47]. German people always known to be honest, practical and meticulous joined Odessa traffickers [Guthrie, 2012a]. Anyway, society in transitional period caused changes in mentality and lifestyle of all the nationalities that lived on that territory, affected the activity of the local authorities and developed new patterns of collaboration between the society and authority.

Those new (modern) directions in the development seemed to displace the old order. Fed up with Old Russian traditions of bureaucracy, corrupt practices and bribery Russian migrants turned into anti-corrupters while immigrants from the Western Europe when becoming a region or city executives in their turn became corrupted. For example, James Kortazzi being the Mayor of Odessa could not even speak Russian. He became famous due to his corruption scheme for purchasing gravel. As a result he was sentenced [Chizhevich, 1894: 26-32]. Foreign travelers were much surprised by the extent of the corruption and bribery in the South of Ukraine. They thought all Russian people to be bribers and all Jews to be scammers. Nevertheless, in their recollections, they mentioned that nobody else but foreigners turned this region into the most civilized and developed part of the Russian Empire [Guthrie, 2012b].

Among the members of the local authority bodies one could find those characterized by the following types of social behavior:

- a) Self-centered people;
- b) Conformists;
- c) Patrons (benefactors);
- d) Progressive leaders (“City Fathers”);
- e) “Silent people”.

The groups were distinguished by their own morality, values, attitude to common deal and had their own views as to the ways of the city development.

Self-centered people were aimed at their personal beneficiation. Such human values as honesty, diligence and decency were alien to them. Pavlo Zelioniy, the Mayor of Odessa, wrote in his memoirs that such deputies did not appreciate honesty and claim that nobody liked honest people [Zelioniy, 1888a: 2-4]. Those members of the self-government bodies gained their fortune by selling community’s property, raising city taxes in two or even three times, taking away the harvest grown by the citizens, taking bribes, creating corruption schemes and so on. They did not like being informed on and tried to put into prison their most honest opponents. To their great surprise, the foreigners who came to this region noticed the emperor’s portraits in the offices of such officials who accepted bribes. When being asked if they were not afraid of justice, those officials replied arrogantly “The sky is as far and high as the Tsar is!” [Guthrie, 2012c: 64]. Such members of the local authority bodies were absolutely not in fear of any punishment, and by their attempts the policy of decentralization was turned into the policy of amateur hour. Such abuse of power became so public that it was even mentioned in the Royal Ordinance by Pavel I. The citizens suffered from such activity very much.

It is obvious that people living in the cities did not like the local authority members of that kind. The development of the local self-government bodies excluded any interference of the community representatives. Each social group looked out for its own interests and that

is why nobody wanted to spend money other people's needs. Since the reform of 1870, the self-centered members of the local authority bodies had changed their tactics and strategy in their personal fortifying due to such modern inventions as water supply and sanitation, electrification and telephone penetration. Since house owners were the basic group in the city self-government bodies, those technical innovations in their own houses enabled them raise the house prices to a maximum. At the same time, they provided the high-quality service. And it should be acknowledged [Gorbachov, 1908: 6-12]. The representatives of the urban peripheries were not able to provide any significant fortune to the self-centered members of the local authorities and hence were not taken into consideration at all.

As a result, corruption and bribers had never abandoned southern Ukrainian cities. Self-centered representatives of the local authority bodies thought honesty, decency, responsibility and concern for ordinary people needs to be negative features. They tried to hide the very fact of being corrupted. Many of them received a sentence. Hence, the mistrust grew more and more and those who were more of revolutionary started criticizing the decentralized self-government bodies.

Conformists were another widely spread type of the authority members. Their main characteristic feature was the ability to adapt to the existent orders of the life having no desire to change anything their own life as well as in the residents' life. They were completely satisfied and did not discharge their public duties responsibly. The representatives of that kind did mainly nothing. As Pavlo Zelioniy wrote in his memoirs the deputies and the officials of that type were mostly illiterate and seldom showed up to work. They adapted to the established order of things and found no necessity to change somehow both the local or state authority and even the way of living. The conformists did not fulfill their duties as they thought them unnecessary. They were not punished for such a neglect. They were often met in small unimportant county towns. In those towns, the modernization process was slow; many streets did not even have names; the authorities thought unnecessary to have water supply, sanitation, and other civilization achievements. The officials and judges held up with the final decisions for decades. The only serious matter for them was to complain at each other exaggerating their opponents' faults. One should mention a remarkable fact that local people were not irritated or shocked with the activity of conformists and many of the citizens even supported them. In the times after the reforms, there were many of such conformists. The members of that kind often lived having no aim or punishment and spending community or state money [Zelioniy, 1888b: 2-4].

In the history of the Southern Ukraine, one can find numerous examples when the local deputies were devoted to their public work and tried to improve the conditions of life for the city residents. Such members of the local authority were called benefactors. They were unique and interesting people, whose lives were devoted to improving the dwellers living conditions. They were active participants of the City Council debates. They had no need to join any grouping as they thought and acted independently, using their own money [Galagan, 1895: 3-7]. The representatives of that kind were considered as super responsible. They were members of numerous committees. At their own expense, they financed different charity events, libraries, and lecture halls. They built schools, hospitals and took part in a lot of other projects. Those benefactors were the very deputies who created the positive image of the local self-government bodies. The interest of the people was the main motivator for their activity. The only thing they received in return was satisfaction from their own deeds.

There also were such situations when the representatives of the local authority bodies, who were previously punished for their self-centered activity, restored their reputation by doing

something good. For example, they helped the needy or ill and those who had no possibility to leave the South of Ukraine at the time of epidemics. People admitted anybody could make a mistake and thought everybody should have a chance to start fresh. People also believed that even the worst official could understand people's problems and needs.

The benefactors differed in their social or family status, wealth or any other characteristics. The desire and possibility to work in favour of the community was their common feature. They had never been formalists or bureaucrats whereas their activity was based on the humanity principles of decency, honesty and diligence. By their own role model, they proved that despite numerous examples of the officials' dishonesty the authority representatives could become the facilitators for human relationships, renovations and what the most important thing is they could become a voice of the best inner forces.

The best advocates for the community needs and interests were so-called "City Fathers" who loved their community, its past and future. These representatives of the authority took an active part in sociopolitical and renovation activity. Due to the "City Fathers" activity, the professionals now replaced those officials who previously had held electoral posts on the amateur basis. The "City Fathers" numerous efforts were appreciated and the city residents loved and believed them so much that let them govern the community for decades. They always tried to be helpful in intensification of the community life, make the cities in the South of Ukraine lead in the financial and modernization development. They also were active enemies of corruption and bribery [Overview of the Activity, 1880: 2-36]. Owing to the activity of the "City Fathers" the South of Ukraine turned into the most modernized, independent and autonomous region. The way they governed the region was always characterized as responsible and respectable one. They themselves were the best model to be followed.

The personalities of the "City Fathers" were often identified with their city and vice versa. The most significant "City Fathers" were N. Blazhkov and D. Gorlovskiy (Kherson), V. Dotsenko and P. Turchaninov (Nikolaev), Ya. Novitskiy (Aleksandrovsk), I. Androssov and V. Novoselskiy (Odessa), A. Pashutin (Yelisavetgrad) and many others. Those deputies and Mayors always cultivated their self-improvement. They were the devoted enemies of corruption, bribery and embezzlement. They were active citizens, exemplary for others. Thanks to their heroic attempts people in the South of Ukraine started living in new modernized conditions with the railway and tramlines, running water, sanitation, electric lighting and telephone communication. Their cities became the leaders of the economic growth. Even during the World War I when a lot of the cities and towns of the Russian Empire suffered losses the cities in the South of Ukraine received high incomes [Veselovskiy, 1916: 394-404].

It is due to their excellent management and activity the communities in the South of Ukraine developed, improved their sanitary conditions, won the most of epidemic diseases and raised the level of culture and literacy among the people. They always advocated for free education and medical service [Veselovskiy, 1917: 10-28]. Later those ideas were adopted by the Soviet leaders. The intensive activity of the above mentioned officials and Mayors helped people keep positive attitude towards the local self-government bodies till nowadays. The cities became self-sufficient economic complexes. The authority members understood that the central government had been implementing discriminatory policies. That is why they led the movement to promote the reforms aimed at decentralization and autonomy of the local authority bodies [Turchenko, 2011: 138-144].

The activity of the so-called "silent" deputies of the city councils was considered the quietest and rather humble one. Those deputies came to the authority by accident and were

almost unknown to the public. They always attended the city council sessions but kept silence. That turned them into the inert mass among the members of the local self-government bodies. That is why they got a nickname “a group of silent members.” Though they became very active as far their personal interests were concerned. They behaved as if the most sufficient problems of the community had no relations to them. Many deputies made excuse for themselves saying about the lack of time, experience or were busy with their own enterprises [Fiodorov, 1903: 3]. Those deputies preferred to run things that needed less time and attempts, were easy and clear. In addition, that was their moral choice and position. They could not understand that the life had accelerated, upgraded and went far beyond the old mere patriarchal relationships. The deputies like those turned to be unprepared for the tasks the new life was setting.

The sluggish and slow work of the “silent group” became the object for residents to criticize those deputies [A Voter’s Letters, 1885: 10-36]. The “silent group” argued and proclaimed their work active, helpful and benefiting.

On the pages of periodicals, the local journalists constantly asked one and the same question “How could happen that such inactive and less-than-enthusiastic people had been elected deputies? What were the residents guided by at the elections?” [Yaichkov 1903: 3]. The following simple formulas defined the voters’ behaviour:

- a) The necessity to honour the local businessmen and factory owners;
- b) The candidates were rich people;
- c) The voters were fond of the candidates.

Hence the support groups were formed. For example, the support group for Marchenko, for Blazhkov, for Becker and so on. The residents did not trust those who advocated for modern advanced ideas and that is why they voted according to their own preferences. Nobody thought about the moral qualities of the deputies or realized that their future was determined by their choice during the elections. The elections were considered to be a formality, the only thing to do was to come and vote. The further development of the local life did not depend on the voters any more. That is why the attendance was always very low. Another characteristic feature of that time elections was the voters’ negative attitude towards the intellectuals. The majority of the voters did not take into consideration their words, points of view or arguments. As a result, the elected deputies of the local self-government bodies were often characterized as being inactive, having no independent points of view or thinking, less-than-enthusiastic, incompetent or having poor management skills.

Thus, such phenomena as bureaucracy, bribery, corruption, dishonesty were daily events. However, at the same time there were a large number of the initiative, active, enthusiastic, honest deputies with high moral standards united by their desire to think and create in a new modern way. Alongside with the residents the local authorities accelerated the process of renovation. The deputies supported the decentralization, democratization, a wish to be autonomous. They fought against bribery and corruption. Some deviation from the traditional relationships within the authority bodies of the Southern Ukraine region revealed itself in the absence of strong family protective links, which played the leading role in other regions of the Russian Empire.

With the beginning of the new life and the formation of the society in transitional period, the self-governance in the South of Ukraine obtained more initiative professionals who strived to further changes on the way towards better modern equal to European life.

Nowadays the South of Ukraine has got great potential based on and created by its history. Today’s deputies of the local self-government bodies got a historic opportunity to encourage the

further modernization of the region, and form the new domestic model of the self-governance with the morality basis of honesty, decency, initiative and competence. Reference to the local self-government experience of the end 18th, early 20th centuries can be useful to specify the weak and the strong sides in the relationships between the authority, morality and community.

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