

## RESUME

The social transformation of nobility of Katerynoslav province in the context of the social, political, and cultural processes, that took place in the Russian Empire in the second half of the XIX – early XX ct., is investigated in the present monograph.

Katerynoslav province was the largest of all nine Ukrainian provinces of the Russian Empire. As a result of its division in the 1920–1930's, the modern Dnipropetrovs'k, Donets'k, Zaporizhzhia and parts of Kherson, Kirovograd, Lugans'k, Poltava regions were formed. Therefore, the study of social processes, which took place in that significantly large region, is sufficient for understanding the historical situation not only in the Southern Ukraine but also throughout the entire Russian Empire.

The nobility of Katerynoslav province was apart of the «higher» class of the Russian Empire, institutionalized from the end of the XVIII ct. till the beginning of the XX ct. It had an overall impact on the political, social, economic, and cultural components of the South Ukraine and the whole Russian state. Therefore, the historical science of the early XIX ct., with a short break in the XX ct., pays a meticulous attention to the Russian nobility.

The nobility of Ukrainian provinces as a support to the autocracy had regional specifics which were shaped in the process of its development on the Right Bank, Left Bank, in the Slobodian and the Southern Ukraine. The nobility of Katerynoslav, which was formed in the Southern region, stood out from among the other noble community (Volyn', Podolsky, Chernihiv or Kharkiv). There were no established traditions of the local nobility in the Southern Ukraine. Its genesis was forcefully interrupted at the end of the XVIII ct. The nobility of Katerynoslav was formed on the basis of multi-ethnic alien element at the turn of XVIII–XIX ct., which had no stable relations with regional (national) tradition. It had an indelible impact on the development and activity of «higher» estate in the post-reform period.

After the peasant reform in 1861, the nobility of Katerynoslav turned out to be in the conditions typical to the entire «higher» estate of the Russian Empire. Katerynoslav Noble assembly did not become a place of concentrated forces for retaining the positions of nobility in the new social, economic, and political conditions of post-reform Russia. During the period, covered by the study, about two hundred people served as the permanent members of the estate organization while the nobility of Katerynoslav countered more than thousands. Among the reasons for such absenteeism were objective and subjective circumstances.

A relatively small number of representatives of the «higher» estate participated in the Noble Assembly meetings. However, nobles often could not find a common ground on many issues. That was affected by the age and ideological discrepancies, discordant stances to the reforms of Alexander II and the role of the nobility in the society, hostility based on the struggle for the influence over the county structures of Estates self-government. The only thing that was almost unnoticeable among Katerynoslav nobility was the confrontation on ethnic grounds, which was typical for Volyn' and Podolsky nobility. The confrontation of different stake holders was held by the provincial and district nobility Assembly, and it often occurred beyond Estates organizations within the Institute of conciliators and Zemstvo. Discordance among the Noble Assembly members led to the fact that many decisions, which have been taken, were in favour of only one party, which belonged to the so-called «conservative» wing. Conservatism was observed in the approaches and methods used for solving the problems that the Assembly faced, as well as in the objectives which had to be achieved while applying those methods.

The nobles of Katerynoslav tried to keep as much authority and privileges as possible to dominate in the socio-economic and socio-political environments at the expense of the state and other estates. There was no reliance on the own strengths of the nobility. While the importance of the Noble Assembly declined significantly, the influence of the provincial and district Marshal in the public, social and economic life of Katerynoslav province substantially increased. The Marshal held an outstanding position which made it a powerful and influential core at the provincial and district levels.

For the Noble Assembly of Katerynoslav province that was important to substantiate the necessity for a comprehensive state support only for the nobility and not for another estates of the realm. They explained that the nobility considered themselves the main stay of the throne and of the state, without its stable existence the crisis of the society will come. However, the authority did not share such an over estimation by the nobility of its social value, and therefore constantly rejected the numerous requests of Katerynoslav Noble Assembly.

The main instrument whereby the nobles tried to influence the autocratic government were the petitions. Most of them were purely economic in nature, indicating the importance of this trend in the actions of the Noble Assembly. Although, they did not bring forth the desired result, the Noble Assembly regularly filed the petitions, and the autocratic government rejected most of them, because the fulfillment of all petitions could

cause a crisis in the economy of the Russian Empire. Furthermore, the autocratic government did not trust the nobility after its intention to change the socio-economic structure of the state without a due consent.

Emphasis on merely economic issues by the Noble Assembly was a direct consequence of the changes caused by peasant reform. The year 1861 can be treated as a kind of bifurcation point which divided the two more or less stable social structures. The first system contained the relics of serfdom that affected the economy with a notorious management style, which can be characterized as authoritarian, political system, which was close to absolutism, public relations, which prevailed paternalistic tendencies. The serfdom hampered the development of cities, the bourgeoisie, private property, personal and political freedoms, social movements and migration, distorted social psychology. The latter system had the opposite direction and specifics – the industrial revolution, which led to the modernization of the economy, fortified the role of merchants and peasants, facilitated the formation of the bourgeoisie, which gradually ousted the «higher» estate from the dominant position, liberalized the public life, intensified the social activity of population. Only the political component was intact.

Conceptual transformations in the social and economic environments, caused by the peasant reform, released a tremendous power of all social classes, but primarily invigorated the «higher» estate. Within two or three years, Katerynoslav nobility evolved from a negation to a forceful acceptance, and then understood the need for the abolition of serfdom. Time, like a geological stratum, shifted and moved to another level of existence.

During the preparation, discussion and implementation of the peasant reform, the nobles of Katerynoslav province did not go beyond the provisions, laid down by the Imperial authority. That was the evidence that there were no stable opposition groups among the nobles with clear objectives for the future changes.

The Noble Assembly of Katerynoslav acted in line with the Russian general principles while split into a few groups of influence: opponents who did not perceive the reform; proponents of a compromise who were ready to support any projects initiated by the authority provided that they get a full compensation; supporters who believed in the need for emancipation. Some groups were amorphous with no clearly defined objectives. The general trends that characterized the attitude of Katerynoslav Noble assembly towards the abolishment of serfdom, can be defined as subjective and selfish. The interests of serfs in the projects and notes of Katerynoslav nobility were almost never reflected. Former landowners were not ready to unconditionally lose a part of their social and economic benefits.

The interest of Katerynoslav nobility in the necessity of land reform and of the entire society was only noticeable the Institute of Conciliators during the «first call» (1861–1863 y.), which was typical for most noble communities in the Russian Empire. Due to the conciliators the peasant reform was implemented at the local level, though not without difficulties. The conciliators did not defend the noble or peasant interests, they were kind of exception to the general mood that prevailed among the majority of Katerynoslav nobility. The nobles of Katerynoslav at the Institute of Conciliator, in the absence of real influence on the policy of the autocratic government, demonstrated the civic stance regarding the «rural» issues. The large landowners and the heads of Noble assembly, which were also concerned about the fate of the «higher» estate, saw their role in the possibility to control the process of enacting the peasant reform and maintaining their influence at the local level, especially in the area of the rural management.

Landed nobility could not stop the emancipation process, because it could lead to confrontation with the authorities. Therefore, they decided to take that process under control. Their decision led to a changes in philosophical systems and social practices of Katerynoslav nobility. 1861 year awakened the noble initiative, the result of which was the formation of active civic stance of the «higher» estate. However, the active position of the nobility did not indicate that the civil society was formed, because there was no change in the main trappings of that phenomenon – in the power which remained autocratic.

One of the priorities for the nobility at the post-reform time was the sector of rural management. By 1861 y. that was under their full control, thus they had to return at least a part of the control functions over it to get the needed social affirmation. That explains such an active participation of Katerynoslav nobles in the initiatives of the Institute of conciliators, Community Court, and Institute of Land captains.

The Conciliator, Mediator, Land captain – they are the links of the same logic chain in the system of the local government of the post-reformed Russia. Due to those links the Katerynoslav nobility tried to play a common role of a defender, judges and guardian. That indicated a substantial reflection of the nobles in understanding the system of relations «noble-peasant», which remained from the times of serfdom. Nobleman, who served as Conciliator or Land Captain could again feel his significance in the life of the rural community. Then, however, he acted not as a master but as the mediator, but at the same time was a kind of above him.

Despite a total formalization of relations prevailing in the rural self-government, Katerynoslav nobles participated in the Institutions of conciliator, mediation court and land captain, because they felt the need in recognition of them as «leading» social estate. The rural management power provided by the government did not fully satisfy the nobles, therefore they tried to strengthen their real authority. That pushed their aspirations to create the model farms in their private estates. The nobles tried to be the role model not only in the management areas but also in the household activities. They demonstrated the leadership not only in the administrative but also in the economic dimensions.

The reasons that forced the nobility of Katerynoslav to participate actively in the rural, zems'ka, judicial reforms and zems'ka (1889 y.) counter-reform, satisfied the imperial authority. The nobleman got some authority in the local government, the government – a «class» of well-educated and sometimes sympathetic managers at the local level. The power of the nobility over the local rural management was elusive, since it was formed from the top, and therefore, it could also be wiped it by the top. The rural reform of 1861 was the most beneficial to the autocratic government, which at first incited and then tamed the initiative of the nobility.

The service for the state and society by nobles was construed as important components of their lives. The institutes of conciliators, mediation court and land captains were not only a place of service for members of the «higher» estate, but the place, where they could apply their energy and strength with an attempt to do something useful for the citizens of the province and of the whole country. In the process of time, those institutions have lost their appeal, because the positions of the conciliator or the land captain became to be perceived as routine, daily sessions, which resembled a bureaucratic service.

The attitude of the «higher» estate to activities of zemstvo was different. Katerynoslav nobles felt themselves to be significant, because zemstvo institutions facilitated the problems solving in the socio-economic and socio-cultural areas. They impacted the development of education, medicine, roads, procurement, fire safety, in other words, what inhabitants of the province always required. Some nobles perceived their role in zemstvo as a service for all the inhabitants of the province. For other nobles (mainly small and medium landowners) service in zemstvo was the ability to implement career aspirations. Before 1861 y., the nobles, who came from families of small and medium landowners usually were military or officials, which to some extent was a forced step. With the advent of Zemstvo organization those nobles could improve their financial and social position there,

and in addition to earn credibility among inhabitants of the Katerynoslav province.

Zemstvo, unlike other institutions that emerged in the post-reform time, led to the increased social mobility and deepened the social adaptation of the nobility to new socio-political and socio-economic conditions. From 1866 y., the nobles of Katerynoslav who became the members of Zemstvo, had to regularly tackle various problems, which were relevant not only to the «higher» estate. In the first years of Katerynoslav provincial and district Zemsky assemblies the nobles tried to solve problems, which primarily were important to them. In the process of time, due to the long-term cooperation with other social estates, there was a noticeable change of the paradigm among the nobles which shifted from positioning themselves as «higher» estate of the society to realization themselves as a part of it. However, the nobles, due to a better education, higher welfare could not finally get rid of prejudice to the representatives from other social estates. Among the nobles there were view points, which implied the solving of social and economic problems together with peasants, whom they sometimes even called «brothers». In reality, the nobles of Katerynoslav rarely coordinated their position with the peasants and representatives of other social groups.

Zemstvo contributed to the self-identity of the nobility in the new conditions of social interaction, mainly because of its regularity and comprehensiveness. In Zemstvo, there were presented not only all estates of the population, but also different ethnic groups (Germans and Greeks) and population group (officials, business persons, technical intelligentsia).

Search by the Katerynoslav nobles of their place on the social map of the landscape occurred not only in the Zemstvo assembly. They competed with former serfs and German colonists in agriculture and landholding. A large part of the Katerynoslav nobility at the verge of the XIX and XX ct. perceived with extreme hostility the German colonists who settled in Katerynoslav province at the turn of XVIII–XIX ct. The nobles considered German colonist as a threat to their landownership. Confrontation with German settlers became one of the hallmarks of genesis for Katerynoslav nobility in the post-reform period.

The relations of Katerynoslav nobles and Jews were traditionally hostile. Katerynoslav province was at the boundary line of settlement, therefore Jews constituted a significant percentage there. In the absence of available loans, the nobles often had no choice but to apply for a loan with the Jews, which gradually were buying out the land for the nobility debts. The nobles could not patch up without Jewish available loans, so

they suggested transforming the character of the Jews to make them close to the nobles' mentality.

The nobles began to give in to merchants and new born estate bourgeoisie in entrepreneurship. The nobles of Katerynoslav failed to take proper place, in their opinion, in the urban society. Despite the aspirations to play a prominent role in the city government, they could not oust the merchants from the city administration.

The nobles were in environment, which, to some extent, was perceived by them as hostile. That was a result of the ideological conflict. After they lost the privileges and confidence in their public importance, the nobility of Katerynoslav could not abandon stereotypes about their place in the society. Their social identification was unstable, so they had difficulties to adapt to the new socio-economic and socio-political conditions.

Important areas through which the nobles tried to assert themselves as a «leading» estate of the society were charity and education. It is quite logical, because the level of education and general culture of the majority of the nobility was high. The nobles of Katerynoslav cared most about education. They were giving out considerable funds for the construction of schools, providing scholarships for children of nobles and material and moral support to the educational institutions of the Katerynoslav province. However, the nobles supported mainly those schools, where most pupils consisted of noble children. At the turn of the XX ct. because of the increasing number of educational institutions in the Katerynoslav province and the emergence of broader possibilities for different categories of society to study, the nobles lost their monopoly among all social estates of the Russian Empire at the level of education.

The nobles Katerynoslav with different welfare traditionally engaged in charitable activities in the post-reform period. They manifested themselves in all directions from the army to support the funding of museums. Private donations dominated. Occasionally, the noble Assembly appeared as a benefactor. Charity, which in the first half of the XIX ct. was mostly associated with the «higher» estate on the turn of the XIX and XX ct. become the prerogative of other social estates. The nobility gave away their primacy in charity to merchants and entrepreneurs.

The nobility of Katerynoslav was not a victim or a hostage of a deep transformation, which the society experienced in the period of modernization of the Russian Empire. They were active participants in the historical process and they tried to adapt to the new world. The adaptation was seriously hampered by the usual stereotypes, economic and social rivalry, but on the whole the nobles succeeded to adapt to the changes brought by the

reforms of Olexander II. Moreover, the adaptation was more or less successful for some representatives of Katerynoslav nobility, but not for the Noble Assembly, which was never able to become a source of ideas for the nobility, which would help minimize losses from the abolishment of the serfdom.