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**INSTITUTE OF KYIV PROVINCE COMMISSIONER  
(MARCH – NOVEMBER OF 1917):  
TO THE HISTORY OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION (1917 – 1921)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research* is to elucidate of the place and role of the institute of Kyiv provincial commissioner in the system of a local government in Ukraine under conditions of the revolutionary events of 1917; to characterize the normative legal bases of the institution of Kyiv provincial commissioner activity. Having used **the methodological basis** of the research: the dialectical, axiological, historical philosophical, system structural, functional, formal legal, comparative legal and historical legal methods, the problem of transformation of imperial institutions of autocratic power in Ukraine during the Ukrainian revolution has been researched and generalized on the basis of the new archival materials (1917 – 1921). **The Scientific Novelty.** The authors have studied the socio-political conditions, which prevailed in Ukraine at the beginning of 1917; have elucidated the development of events in connection with the reform of local government institutions; have described the legal acts, which regulated the power transition, in particular, in Kyiv province; have highlighted the political and legal status of the new institution of power – Kyiv provincial commissioner of the Provisional Government; have provided unique biographical information about the last imperial governor, Count Olexiy Ignatiev, and his successor, the first Kyiv provincial commissioner, the head of Kyiv provincial zemstvo, Mykhailo Sukovkin. **The Conclusions.** In the article it has been asserted that the introduction of the institute of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government, whose legal status was regulated by both current imperial legislation and new legal acts of the Provisional Government, transformed the system of the imperial local authorities, which took place peacefully. The introduction of the institute of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner had to ensure the continuity of power, to prevent the destructive processes of the state government mechanisms, to preserve the territorial integrity and governance of the regions of the former empire. However, under conditions of the growing national liberation movement, the newly appointed leader could not keep the situation under his control, which under conditions of further development of the Ukrainian revolution put on the agenda the change in the model of a public administration and local government.

**Key words:** Kyiv Provincial Commissioner, the Provisional Government, Kyiv Province, Count O. Ignatiev, M. Sukovkin.

**ІНСТИТУТ КИЇВСЬКОГО ГУБЕРНСЬКОГО КОМІСАРА  
(БЕРЕЗНЬ – ЛИСТОПАД 1917 р.):  
ДО ІСТОРІЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ (1917 – 1921)**

**Анотація.** *Мета дослідження* – розкриття місця та ролі інституту київського губернського комісара у системі місцевого управління в Україні в умовах революційних подій 1917 р., характеристикі нормативно-правових засад його діяльності. Застосувавши **методологічний інструментарій**: діалектичний, аксіологічний, історико-філософський, системно-структурний, функціональний, формально-правовий, порівняльно-правовий та історико-правовий методи, досліджено й узагальнено на основі нових архівних матеріалів проблеми трансформації імперських інститутів самодержавної влади в Україні періоду Української революції (1917 – 1921 рр.). **Наукова новизна.** Автори дослідили суспільно-політичні умови, які склались в Україні на початок 1917 р., висвітлюючи розгортання подій у зв'язку з реформуванням інститутів місцевої влади, охарактеризували нормативно-правові акти, що врегульовували процес передачі влади, зокрема у Київській губернії, розкрили політико-правовий статус нової інституції влади – київського губернського комісара Тимчасового уряду, подали унікальні біографічні відомості про останнього імперського губернатора графа Олексія Ігнат'єва та його наступника – першого київського губернського комісара, голову київської губернської земської управи Михайла Суковкіна. **Висновки.** У роботі стверджується, що запровадження інституту київського губернського комісара Тимчасового уряду (правовий статус якого регламентувався, як чинним імперським законодавством, так і новими правовими актами Тимчасового уряду) здійснювало трансформацію системи органів імперської влади на місцях, яка відбулася мирним шляхом,

*та мало забезпечити наступність влади, унеможливити деструктивні процеси руйнації державних механізмів системи управління, зберегти територіальну цілісність та управління регіонами колишньої імперії. Проте в умовах наростаючого національно-визвольного руху, новопризначений очільник не зміг утримати ситуацію під контролем, що в умовах подальшого розвитку Української революції, поставило на порядок денний зміну моделі державного управління та системи місцевих органів влади.*

*Ключові слова:* кийвський губернський комісар, Тимчасовий уряд, кийвська губернія, граф О. Ігнат'єв, М. Суковкін.

**The Problem Statement.** The decentralization reform of the management system in modern independent Ukraine, as a component of the entire system of state power reform, the new principles formation of interaction between different levels of government and a local government determine a socially important and scientifically relevant analysis of the historical experience of the beginning of the XXth century, when the Ukrainian society faced similar challenges related to the social transformations in the context of the revolutionary changes in the imperial state model.

The Ukrainian national democratic revolution of 1917 – 1921 and the liquidation of the autocracy in Russia initiated the changes in the socio-political, social, cultural and educational life of the Ukrainian provinces of the former Russian Empire. These changes, primarily, concerned the principles of the state system, including the system of a local government and administration. The imperial institutions of the state power, as the personification of the monarchy, needed to be reorganized, and imperial officials, direct representatives of the Crown in the provinces – governors, had to be dismissed immediately and substituted by new officials to take seats in new institutions of power. The formation of new institutions of power, the constitutional registration of their authority took some time. Under such circumstances, the question arose of maintaining power control at the local level, ensuring the effectiveness of the state mechanism of power under such terrible conditions, to prevent the collapse of the state, not to allow the destructive processes to cover all spheres of the society. The new revolutionary government needed an effective system of a local government. One of the components of this process was the introduction of the provincial commissioner institute of the Provisional Government.

**The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications.** The functioning of the imperial system of a local government during the liquidation of the autocracy, the transfer of power in towns, cities, provinces to the new revolutionary administration and new officials is a poorly studied problem in Ukrainian historiography. The historians, studying certain issues of the history of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917 – 1921, partially elucidate the problems of the imperial administrative institutions, which functioned under conditions of the autocracy overthrow (Ishin, 2012; Kozachenko, 2017, p. 3). In this context, the research of S. Kamenyeva, the director of the State Archives of Kyiv region, deserves a special attention “Kyiv province was handed over... Kyiv province was taken ...” (from the documents of the State Archives of Kyiv region) (Kamenyeva, 2017). In this research the author, making a review of the fund “Office of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government” (f. 1716), stored in the State Archives of Kyiv region, for the first time elucidated and analyzed the organizational and legal aspects of the power transition in Kyiv province in March of 1917 and described the administrative institutions formed the same year. The influence of the revolutionary events in Russia in February of 1917 in the Ukrainian provinces was elucidated by M. Kovalchuk in the article “The February Revolution of 1917 in the Ukrainian

province” (Koval’chuk, 2007), in which the author on the basis of publication of new and little-known archival documents, memoirs, recollections of contemporaries, the materials of periodicals, analyzed the course of the revolutionary events in February – March of 1917 in the regions of Ukraine. In the research by T. Matviyenko (Matviyenko, 2010), on the basis of materials of the State Archives of the Russian Federation, there were characterized the attitude and relations of zemstvos of Ukraine concerning appointments by the Provisional Government in local bodies of the government of the provincial and county commissioners. A number of authors did the researches on the functioning of local authorities in 1917 at various levels. Among them there are the works of L. Dolbunov, V. Kornilov, N. Chorna, which deal with the activities of Kharkiv Provincial Commissariat (Dobrunova, Kornilova, Chorna, 2001); the research of T. Vintskovsky, who studied the history of local authorities and administration of the Ukrainian Central Council of Kherson province in March of 1917 – April of 1918 (Vintskovs’kyy, 2002); V Adamsky, who elucidated the activities of Yampil district commissioner in March of 1917 – April of 1918. In a separate group it is necessary to single out the researches, which are of a scientifically narrative character, written on the basis of memoirs or materials of periodicals and do not contain proper analytical conclusions and generalizations (Cheremukhin, 2017; Posledniy gubernator, n.d.).

At the same time, the researchers did not pay a proper attention to the evolution of provincial imperial authorities, the relationship between different government agencies, their place and role in governing Kyiv province. The lack of the researches on the evolution of provincial imperial authorities, their place and role in governing determine the social importance and scientific novelty of our research.

The source basis of our research is the archival materials and published regulations of Imperial Russia and the Provisional Government. The materials, which are stored in the State Archives of Kyiv region (further – SAKR), constitute the main part of the archival sources on the stated issues. We used the cases stored in Fund 1716 of SAKR – “Office of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government, Kyiv” (1917). In Fund 1716 – The Office of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government there are represented the circulars of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government, the lists of employees of the Office of the Provincial Commissioner, the estimates, the information on the payment of salaries to employees of the Office, the correspondence on violation of mandatory regulations, the correspondence with the Ukrainian Central Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the correspondence on the cultural, socio-economic life of the province, the establishment and control of various administrative institutions in the province, etc.

**The purpose of the research** consists in elucidating the place of the institute of Kyiv provincial commissioner in the system of a local government in Ukraine under conditions of the revolutionary events of 1917; in characterizing the normative and legal bases of its activity.

**The Statement of the Basic Material.** The emergence and functioning of the institute of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government is closely connected with the local government system of the Russian Empire, in particular, the institute of Kyiv Civil Governor and Kyiv Provincial Administration.

At the beginning of the XXth century there was a county-provincial general-governor’s administrative territorial system of government in the Russian Empire. In the Russian Empire the Ukrainian lands were divided into 9 provinces (Kyiv, Podilsk, Volyn, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Poltava, Katerynoslav, Mykolaiv, Tavria), which were the part of the three governorships-general. The province was headed by a governor, who was appointed by a personal imperial

decree and subordinated to the governor-general. In accordance with the regulations of the Russian Empire, the governor was a representative of the Emperor at the local level and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the head of which determined the activities of the head of the province. The direct authority of the governor included a general supervision over the activities of all state and self-governing bodies of government and administration of the province; he had to be present and to be at the head of various provincial committees, commissions. According to "Kyiv Province Commemorative Books", Kyiv governor headed the provincial statistical committee, the provincial administrative committee, the provincial forest protection committee, the provincial prison guardianship committee, the provincial public health committee, the provincial committee for the affairs of zemstvo, the provincial committee for the affairs of small credit, the provincial committee of guardianship (curation) over the national sobriety, the provincial land management commission, the provincial commission of national provision, the provincial commission on the population census, the order of a public guardianship, the provincial guardianship of shelters for children, the provincial presence in city affairs, the provincial presence in peasant affairs, the provincial presence for zemstvo duties, the provincial presence for military service, the provincial church-building presence, the provincial presence for income tax, the provincial presence for society issues, the provincial presence for factories and mining issues, The Red Cross Society, the Society of Pigeon Sports Enthusiasts. Kyiv governor was also the guardian of the public library and a member of the provincial presence in the issues of the Orthodox clergy and the Equestrian Society. The direct superior of the governor was the governor-general, who performed control and police supervision over life in the provinces, which were the part of the governorship-general. The governor performed his authority and administration through his office, which was headed by the secretary (Nikolaychuk, 2018, pp. 112–113). The vice-governor was the second most important official after the governor, who substituted the governor during his absence and controlled the records of the provincial government – a collegial body of a local government, which according to the "Institutions for the Administration of the Provinces of the All-Russian Empire" (November 7, 1775), carried out the general management of the province (Nikolaychuk, 2018, p. 75).

In fact, the governor of Kyiv headed the province by means of the provincial government, but he was not independent in making decisions. As the modern historian D. Nikolaichuk noted, "being subordinate to the Emperor and the Senate directly, the provincial government was a local representation of the central government of the Russian state, which became the main organizational and administrative body of the province" (Nikolaychuk, 2018, pp. 112–113).

On January 1, 1917, Kyiv province consisted of 12 counties (Kyiv, Berdychiv, Vasylkiv, Zvenyhorod, Kaniv, Lypovets, Radomyshl, Skvyra, Tarashcha, Uman, Cherkasy, Chyhyryn) and was in the rear zone of the front army (during World War I). The governor of Kyiv was subordinate to the Chief of Supply of the armies of the South-Western Front. From September 11, 1914 (after the liquidation of Kyiv, Podilsk and Volyn governorships), Kyiv governor was directly subordinate to the commander of Kyiv military district.

Kyiv province was headed by Oleksiy Mykolayovych Ignatiev, the count, master of ceremonies, who had been the governor of Kyiv since August 19, 1915. Count O. Ignatiev studied at the Faculty of Law at St. Petersburg University, after graduating from which he began his service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (served as the Attache of the Russian Embassy in Constantinople) in 1897. During the period of 1898 – 1902 he served in Preobrazhensky Regiment of the Life Guards. According to the formulary list before the appointment of Count O. Ignatiev to the

governor of Kyiv, he gained a considerable experience in the civil service in various departments: the work in diplomatic missions (the Attache of the Embassy in Constantinople (1897), the Ensign of Preobrazhensky Regiment (1898), the Attache of the Embassy in Rome) and the positions in local governments and the provincial administration (a chamberlain (1901), a master of ceremonies (1903), Uman County leader of the nobility (1902 – 1908), Riazan Vice-Governor (1908 – 1909), Podilsk Vice-Governor (1909 – 1911), Podilsk Civilian Governor (1911 – 1915)) (State Archives of the Kiev Oblast, f. 1, d. 315, c. 250, pp. 13–19).

Count O. Ignaliev was the last civilian governor of Kyiv. His name is associated with the liquidation of the institute of the governor in Kyiv province, as the imperial institution of power in the Ukrainian provinces within the Romanov Empire.

On March 15, 1917, the Provisional Committee headed by M. Rodzianko, formed by the State Duma, which was entrusted with the functions of the Cabinet of Ministers, and Petrograd Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies announced the formation of the Provisional Government of Russia. Duke G. Lvov became the head of the Provisional Government of Russia and the Minister of Internal Affairs, an experienced Zemstvo figure and the chairman of the All-Russian union of zemstvo and cities (Milyukov, 2002, pp. 40–41). On the same day, the Emperor signed the Manifesto on the abdication in favour of his brother, Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich Romanov, thus giving the State Duma the exclusive right to establish a new constitutional order in Russia and determine the place of the monarchy (Payps, 2005, p. 420). When Grand Duke also abdicated on March 16, it meant the end of the autocracy – Russia became the republic.

The stormy news in the capital almost did not reach Kyiv – the leadership of Kyiv Military District intercepted the telegraph reports on riots in Petrograd. The generals were afraid of the repeat of Petrograd events in Kyiv. The city newspapers also diligently pretended that nothing extraordinary was happening in the capital of the Empire. For instance, when the situation in Petrograd reached its peak, and in a few hours the Empire collapsed, the newspaper “The Kievlyanin” reported on the news from the front, provided the information on the food crisis in France, paid attention to the meeting of the House of Commons in London, mocked on the report “New Germany” of the former German Minister, Bernhard Dernburg, reprinted the article about the railway in Baghdad (because it was built) from the American scientific journal. As if, by the way, the newspaper mentioned the introduction of bread and flour cards in Moscow, and also generously filled the columns with advertisements and the railway schedules. Meanwhile, Kyivans were having fun at Contract Fair in Podil, which lasted until March 12. One could buy something interesting or visit a cultural programme there. In addition, there was an unofficial “bridal fair” – provincial parents specially brought their daughters in the hope of getting acquainted with a respectable groom. When the head of the South-Western Railway, Erast Shubersky received the telegramme from Petrograd from the State Duma deputy Oleksandr Bublikov with the message that the power belonged to the State Duma, Kyiv newspapers reprinted the telegramme in the evening issues (Tsalyk, 2017). Kyievans, like the vast majority of the population in the Ukrainian provinces, as in the whole Russian Empire, welcomed the revolution with enthusiasm. “This telegramme was spreading around the city at the speed of an electric spark”, a lawyer, Oleksiy Goldenweiser recalled. – Everyone was on the phone tonight, reading, listening, rereading and asking” (Tsalyk, 2017). Mykhailo Rudnytsky, a literary critic, remembered the atmosphere of elevation, even the euphoria that gripped Kyiv at that time. “The first blows of the revolution are intoxicating, – he wrote. – In the streets, people kiss each other like at Easter and in the evenings Khreshchatyk is overcrowded, even on those days when

for some reason the lights are not lit. We live easily, like on clouds – and often we do not see the ground” (Tsalyk, 2017). Thus, the establishment of the new government in the province was peaceful and bloodless. In Kyiv, the change of the tsarist power also took place peacefully. On March 16, 1917, on the initiative of the city council and zemstvo organizations, the Executive Committee of Kyiv Council of the united public organizations was established, which was headed by M. Stradomsky, a comrade of the mayor. The Executive Committee decided to coordinate its activities completely with the actions of Petrograd Provisional Government. Kyiv Governor, Count O. Ignatiev did not show any intention to oppose the new government – without any obstacles on his part, the executive committee appointed its representative (Koval’chuk, 2007, p. 92). Despite the general elevation, caused by the news of the revolution in Russia and the overthrow of the autocracy, order and calm were maintained in Kyiv. The formation of the people’s militia began (Koval’chuk, 2007, p. 93). Thus, in March 1917, the civilian governor of Kyiv, Count O. Ignatiev, handed over his power to the new revolutionary government. On March 16, 1917, Count O. Ignatiev telegraphed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Petrograd: “In Kyiv ... peace has not been disturbed so far. The population is calm. Workers continue working. [At] the meeting of representatives of public [and] professional, workers’ organizations, which took place on March 1 (14) [in] the City Duma, the appeal was made [to] the population with a call to remain calm. It was published today together with the announcement of the chief of the military district. [At] meetings [in] higher education institutions, the resolutions were also made to remain calm” (Koval’chuk, 2007, p. 210). And already on March 17, 1917 the member of the committee of ministers, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Provisional government, Duke, G. Lvov in the telegramme to the heads of provincial zemstvo administrations noted that “to establish order within the country and for the defense of the state, to ensure the uninterrupted operation of all governmental and public institutions, – the Provisional Government (PG) has deemed it necessary to dismiss the Governor and Vice-Governor from office temporarily. The leadership of the province is temporarily entrusted to the heads of provincial zemstvo administrations as provincial commissioners of the PG with all the rights granted by the current laws of the governor, and with you retaining the leadership of the provincial zemstvo administration” (Dodonov, 2004, p. 24).

On March 17, 1917, the city council of workers’ deputies appeared in Kyiv. The constituent assembly was attended by 230 delegates from the labour collectives of 80 Kyiv factories, plants and workshops. The vast majority among them were the Russian social democrats (the mensheviks) and the socialist-revolutionaries. Kyiv Council of workers deputies acted as a representative body of the city proletariat, and immediately delegated its representatives to the executive committee of the council of the united public organizations (Manilov, 1928, p. 5). The Ukrainian community of Kyiv, having received the news about the revolution, on March 17, 1917, appointed from its membership the Ukrainian Central Rada to lead the national movement under the new political conditions (Hrushevskyyi, 1989, p. 129). A well-known Ukrainian historian, a public and political figure M. Hrushevsky, who at that time was in exile outside Ukraine, in Moscow, was elected the Chairman of the Central Rada in absentia. On March 22, the first appeal of the Central Rada to the Ukrainian people appeared, urging them to remain calm, to unite in political societies, the Ukrainian cultural, educational, economic organizations, and “calmly, but resolutely” to demand from the new Russian government to meet the national needs of the Ukrainian people – first of all, to give Ukraine the autonomy (Smolii, 1996, p. 38). It was in the very struggle for a national territorial autonomy, as M. Kovalchuk notes, in which the Central Rada of Ukraine considered the main meaning of its further activity (Koval’chuk, 2007, p. 93).

On March 19 (March 7), 1917, Ukraine received the order from Petrograd to dismiss temporarily from office all imperial governors and vice-governors – governance of the province passed to the heads of provincial zemstvos, who were to act as commissioners of the Provisional Government (Koval'chuk, 2007, p. 93). On the same day, Count O. Ignatiev handed over his authority to govern Kyiv province to M. Sukovkin, the head of Kyiv provincial zemstvo: "Taking into consideration [...] the order of the Minister of Internal Affairs, I ask Your Excellency to accept from me the administration of Kyiv Province. I ask you to accept the assurances of a full respect and true devotion" (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 18, p. 1) – the former Kyiv governor, Count O. Ignatiev addressed the newly appointed Kyiv provincial commissioner.

After leaving Kyiv on May 16, 1917, Count O. Ignatiev was appointed an authorized (representative) of the Russian Red Cross in Romania. Later he was in the army of General M. Yudenych, who opposed the Bolshevik government in 1919. But after the defeat O. Ignatiev emigrated to France, where he organized the Orthodox church and the Russian cultural center in his house (Koval'chuk, 2007, p. 93).

According to the decision of the Provisional Government of March 4, 1917, the first Kyiv provincial commissioner, who took over the powers of Kyiv governor and Kyiv vice-governor, was to be the chairman of the provincial zemstvo administration (Dodonov, 2004, p. 24). On January 1, 1917, Kyiv provincial zemstvo was headed by Mykhailo Akinfyovych Sukovkin (1857 – 1938).

Mykhailo Sukovkin came from a noble family. He was the brother of Kyiv Governor Mykola Sukovkin (he was the head of Kyiv Province from 1912 till 1915), the son of the head of the Committee of Ministers, a secret adviser of Akinfin Petrovych Sukovkin. The new head of Kyiv province, in the past the head of the provincial zemstvo administration, belonged to big landowners (more than 3,5 thousand acres of land in Kyiv province, 750 tithes in Nyzhniy Novgorod province). Mykhailo Sukovkin went to the Lyceum of Alexandria, after finishing which in 1877 he was enrolled in the office of the Committee of Ministers. The following year he was enrolled in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and sent to the disposal of Kyiv, Podilsk and Volyn Governor-General, Duke O. Dondukov-Korsakov (*Pamiatnaia knizhka Imperatorskogo Aleksandrovskogo Litceia na 1880 god*, 1880, p. 135). In 1866 Mykhailo Sukovkin was enrolled in the Ministry of State Property (*Aleksandrovskii litcei (Sankt-Peterburg)*, 1880, p. 109). In 1887 he was appointed the official on special assignments under the steppe Governor-General H. Kolpakovsky. In 1890 he worked in the Ministry of Finance. In 1891 he was appointed a member-estimator of Moscow branch of the noble land bank (*Gosudarstvennyi Dvorianskii Zemelnyi Bank*, 1893, p. 60). From 1898 till 1906 he occupied simultaneously the position of Kyiv county leader of the nobility, an honorary judge of Kaniv district and the chairman of Kaniv-Vasylkiv Congress of mediators. In 1907 Mykhailo Sukovkin began his service in the local self-government bodies as the head of Kyiv provincial administration for zemstvo affairs. Since 1911 with the introduction of an elected zemstvo in the Western region, he was elected the chairman of Kyiv provincial zemstvo council. In March 1917 he was appointed Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government (*Inspektorskii Otdel Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantceliarii*, 1916, pp. 1472–1473).

After the dismissal from the position of Kyiv provincial commissioner, Mykhailo Sukovkin's bureaucratic career received rather controversial reviews by researchers. Thus, in 1918 he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary of Pavlo Skoropadsky Ukrainian state

to Turkey. Being on a diplomatic mission, he defended the idea of a “united and indivisible Russia”. Thus, he officially stated to the Turkish government and all diplomatic missions in Istanbul that “Ukraine was and is the part of Russia. He issued the order to keep the records in Russian at the embassy” (Strel’s’kyy, n.d.). The main purpose of Mykhailo Sukovkin’s mission in Turkey, according to the Ukrainian researcher M. Prykhodko, was to resolve the issue of the annexation of the Crimean peninsula to Pavlo Skoropadsky Ukrainian State. “Since the Crimean issue is long overdue for the resolution in the Ukrainian metropolis, but for this Ukraine needed allies, one of which M. Sukovkin unquestionably considered Turkey, which had already withdrawn from the war, but sought revenge at the expense of smaller and weaker countries” (Prykhod’ko, 2018, p. 67). Among Mykhailo Sukovkin’s achievements at the diplomatic service, modern historians single out the signing of the Agreement with Vice Admiral Amet (the representative of the Allied Navy in the East), which recognized the right of Pavlo Skoropadsky Ukrainian State to the Black Sea Fleet (Strel’s’kyy, 1999, p. 37). Another Ukrainian researcher V. Holovchenko, analyzing the diplomatic activities of M. Sukovkin, notes that the latter tried “to use the potential of the Turkish Sultan Mohammed V for a political pressure on the countries of the Fourth Union in order to weaken the occupation yoke on the Ukrainian statehood, as well as in matters of building relations with the Crimea, and more precisely on the issue of joining the territory of the Crimean Peninsula to the Ukrainian State” (Holovchenko, 2004, p. 562).

Mykhailo Sukovkin, being the head of Kyiv provincial zemstvo council, happened to be an effective administrator and an active participant in a socio-political life. M. Hrushevsky mentioned about Mykhailo Sukovkin as a “rather good bureaucrat”, who “claimed the role of a mediator between Kyiv and Petrograd” (Strel’s’kyy, n.d.). At the same time, despite the existence of two other political centers in Kyiv (the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Council of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies), M. Sukovkin gained popularity among Kyivans, especially among the Ukrainians. D. Doroshenko, a historian, a publicist, a member of the Ukrainian Central Council recollected: “The importance of the Central Council grew day by day. Even then, it could be seen that it would soon become the highest regional authority in Kyiv. Now it is the matter of establishing the highest regional government in Ukraine, a kind of the Ukrainian governorship. I remember that V. Koroliv recommended the candidacy of M. Sukovkin, and I can’t say that this candidacy did not meet sympathy at that time. During the first weeks and months of the revolution, M. Sukovkin was a very popular figure among the Ukrainian citizens” (Dobzhans’kyy, 2008, p. 384).

After coming to power in Kyiv province, the newly appointed provincial commissioner was to perform the authorities, which belonged to the governor of Kyiv. The legal status of the institute of the provincial commissioner acquired a legislative form only on September 19, 1917, when “The Temporary Regulations on the Provincial (Regional) and County Commissioners” were issued and approved. Therefore, for almost half a year, Kyiv provincial commissioner had three political centres in Kyiv (Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government in Kyiv, Council of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, the Ukrainian Central Rada (UCR)) and having a legal basis to head Kyiv province, he was forced to be guided in his activities by the non-abolished imperial legislation. According to “The Provisional Regulations” (1917), the provincial commissioner, like the governor, was the representative of the highest state power in the province “supervising the exact and local observance of laws, decrees and orders of the Government by a local government and self-government” (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 16, p. 27 v.). Unlike the governor, the provincial commissioner was

required to have a higher education (preferably a legal one) (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 16, p. 27 v.). The provincial commissioner was appointed by the Provisional Government on the proposal of the Minister of the Internal Affairs. “The Temporary Regulations on Provincial (regional) and County Commissioners” (September 19, 1917) defined the following powers of the provincial commissioner of the PG: to distribute among the population the normative legal acts of the PG and other higher bodies of the state power (Article 4); to supervise the activities and records of all provincial and county institutions of the civil department, except for courts, institutions of the State Control, the State Bank and higher education institutions (in other educational institutions the supervision of the provincial commissioner was not the subject to the educational part) (Article 5); in case of violations in the institutions under his control to impose the disciplinary sanctions on responsible officials (Article 9); to supervise the execution of court decisions on administrative cases (Article 10); to supervise provincial and county public, administrative institutions (Article 12); to submit proposals to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the budget for the management of the provincial and county commissioners (Article 14); to provide the Ministry of Internal Affairs with reports on the state of affairs in the province (Article 15) (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 16, pp. 27 v.–28). Despite the desire of the population to have “new people” in leadership positions, in the counties, in addition to the newly established institution of county commissioners, the imperial system of administration actually remained. The authorities of county commissioners in Kyiv province were performed by the heads of county zemstvo, to whom the relevant unorganized (imperial) institutions of the county were subordinated (Kamenyeva, 2017, p. 149).

In addition to abolishing the institution of Kyiv governor, the position of Kyiv vice-governor was abolished. According to “The Provisional Regulations” (1917), the position of assistant provincial commissioner was introduced. Thus, the materials of the State Archives of Kyiv region testify that the introduction of the position of assistant to Kyiv provincial commissioner took place on June 8, 1917, when Z. Morgulsky issued an official certificate and granted the right to use the powers “as a former vice-governor” (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 1, p. 57). At the same time, due to the increase in a document flow, Kyiv provincial commissioner of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was allowed to have two assistants (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 1, p. 4). Under Kyiv provincial commissioner his office functioned, which was headed by the secretary, on the analogy with the office of Kyiv governor (SAKO, f. 1716, d. 1, c. 1, pp. 55–56).

In fact, the post of Kyiv provincial commissioner functioned until the end of September 1917, when M. Sukovkin, the provincial commissioner, voluntarily resigned and left Kyiv, realizing his inability to perform his powers in Kyiv and the province. “The further [the Central Rada – *the authors*] took an increasingly left-wing course”, D. Doroshenko recalled, and soon Sukovkin realized that he, a man of more moderate social views, was not on the right track with the Central Rada. In the summer of 1917 he resigned as a provincial commissioner of Kyiv region” (Dobzhans’kyy, 2008, p. 384). Legally, the position of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government functioned until the introduction by the Ukrainian Central Council in December 1917 of the institute of provincial and county commissioners of the UCR, which replaced actually the previous institution of the central government without changing anything in the activities, because in practice commissioners of the UCR continued to be guided by “The Provisional Regulations on Provincial (Regional) and County Commissioners” of the Provisional Government of September 19, 1917 (Kozachenko, 2017, p. 3).

**The Conclusions.** Thus, the introduction of the institute of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government (the legal status of which was regulated by both current imperial legislation and new legal acts of the Provisional Government) transformed the system of imperial local authorities, which took place peacefully. The introduction of the institute of Kyiv Provincial Commissioner of the Provisional Government had to ensure the continuity of power, to prevent the destructive processes of the state government mechanisms, to preserve the territorial integrity and governance of the regions of the former Empire. However, under conditions of the growing national liberation movement, the newly appointed leader could not keep the situation under his control, which under conditions of a further development of the Ukrainian revolution put on the agenda the change in the model of a public administration and local government.

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