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The System of Public Education in Tiflis Governorate in the Period 1802–1917. Part 1

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Abstract

This paper addresses the development of the education system in the Russian Empire during the pre-revolutionary period. Its geographic scope is confined to Tiflis Governorate, and its chronological scope covers the period of integration of the system of public education in Tiflis Governorate into the all-Russian system of public education and its centralization – 1802–1871 (this includes the “departmental” period, when there was in operation the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education (1817–1824)). The work provides a short analysis of key sources on the issue of the development of the public education system in pre-revolutionary Russia, a brief historiographical survey, an outline of Tiflis Governorate’s geographic, economic, and ethnic characteristics, and a summary of key issues relating to the topic’s periodization.

The authors’ conclusion is that the process of integration of the system of public education in Tiflis Governorate into the all-Russian system and its centralization was completed by 1871. Throughout the country, there now was in operation a network of educational institutions with uniform standards in place with regard to school administration and curricula. This made it possible to move on to the next stage in the process of spreading literacy in the outlying regions of the Russian Empire – to enable more of its citizens to receive public education.

Keywords: public education, Tiflis Governorate, gymnasium, primary school.

1. Introduction

In the view of a number of researchers, the process of integration of the Caucasus’s education system into the imperial Russian system was quite complicated (Shevchenko et al, 2016: 363).

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To ease the integration process, attempts were made to create writing systems for the region's ethnicities and design curricula factoring in the regional component (Shevchenko et al, 2016: 363). With that said, by the time of the fall of the monarchy and disintegration of the empire, having compulsory primary education in place was already a fait accompli throughout Russia (Cherkasov, 2011: 148). The present work examines the process of development of the education system in the Caucasus through the example of Tiflis Governorate.

2. Materials and methods

In putting this work together, the authors drew upon the following materials: enactments, edicts, and other documents issued by pre-revolutionary authorities regulating the operation of the education system, as well as pre-revolutionary statistical reports.

Specifically, this included the following:

1) 'A Statistical Description of Transcaucasian Krai', published in 1835 in Saint Petersburg by historian, ethnographer, statistician, and political writer O.S. Evetsky. It provides an originally in-depth analysis of the region's geographic, biological, and economic characteristics, as well as well-detailed descriptions of the ethnic, numerical, estate/class, and (even) professional makeup of populated localities in the Caucasus, an account of the numbers and categories of public institutions (including schools), and much more (*Statisticheskoe opisanie, 1835*).

2) The Statute 'On the Caucasus Educational District and Educational Institutions' of October 29, 1853, issued by Emperor Nicholas I, accurately reflects the key trends in the government's reformation of the education sector in the Russian Empire. It illuminatingly illustrates the process of integration of educational institutions within the Caucasus Educational District (which incorporated Tiflis Governorate as well) into the all-Russian education system and their centralization. The authors analyzed this document particularly thoroughly, as they consider it fundamental to the integration of the Caucasus's education system and centralization of education in the Russian Empire as a whole (*Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853*).

3) 'A Statistical Digest on the Caucasus', published in 1869 in Tiflis by Caucasus ethnographer N.I. Voronov, which likewise provides a consistent and in-depth ethnographic, economic, and social analysis of the region (*Sbornik statisticheskikh svedenii, 1869*). Of major interest is also so-called 'Black Sea Letters', published in the journal *Russky Vestnik* (*Voronov, 1857*).

4) 'A Digest on the Caucasus' (1871–1885). Two years later, there came out the first volume of a nine-volume digest under the editorship of world-famous Russian naturalist, statistician, and ethnographer N.K. Seidlitz. While focused pretty much on the same subjects as those mentioned above, the work devoted special attention to winemaking in the Caucasus (*Sbornik svedenii o Kavkaze*). In 1894, N.K. Seidlitz published 'A Corpus of Statistical Data on the Population of Transcaucasia, with a Complete Alphabetical Index to the Region's Cities and Villages', which included a 10,000-item list (*Zeidlits, 1894*).

5) 'Acts of the Caucasus Archaeographic Commission, 1881', one of the 12 volumes published by the Main Office of the Viceroy of the Caucasus. The Caucasus Archaeographic Commission was established in 1864 by Viceroy of the Caucasus Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov. The publication provides descriptions of various statutory enactments issued in the Caucasus starting in the 14th century (*AKAK*).

6) 'The First Nationwide Census in the Russian Empire, 1897', published under the editorship of N.A. Troinitsky in the capital by the Central Statistics Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Rightfully one of the most valuable statistical sources out there, it provides vast information on the ethnic makeup of Russia's population as at the end of the 19th century. In the context of the topic under study, of particular interest is Volume 18, which deals with Tiflis Governorate specifically (*Vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya, 1897*).

7) 'Complete Laws of the Russian Empire', which is the most substantial source on the subject. It consists of three collections, and all three of them were used by the authors (in keeping with the work's chronological scope). The first collection comprises 45 volumes (nearly 30,000 enactments) and covers the period 1649–1825. It was compiled and edited by M.M. Speransky, dubbed "a top connoisseur of Russian law". The second collection includes 55 volumes (over 60,000 laws) and covers the period 1825–1881. The third collection incorporates over 40,000

statutory enactments, consists of 33 volumes, and covers the period from March 1, 1881* (i.e. starting from the day Emperor Alexander II passed away) to the end of 1913 (PSZRI).

8) In the context of the topic under study, of interest is also 'A Historical Survey of the Activity of the Ministry of Public Education (1802–1902)', compiled by S.V. Rozhdestvensky and published in Saint Petersburg, which was dedicated to the completion of one hundred years' work by the ministry (*Istoricheskii obzor, 1902*).

This, of course, is by no means a complete list of sources on the subject, but the authors deemed it as sufficient for the conduct of an objective, comprehensive analysis of the topic under study.

3. Discussion

There has not been much research into the development of the education system in the Caucasus in the pre-revolutionary period. This may be due to a number of reasons. Above all, it is the relatively narrow source base. An outline of most of the fundamental sources on the subject used by both historians and political writers has already been provided above. This information is widely available on the Internet – so there is nothing novel about it, as this was explored during the Soviet period quite extensively. Some of the information that is available on the subject, a relatively insignificant pool, has been scattered across multiple periodical pre-revolutionary publications (e.g., *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*). This suggests another difficulty – the need to explore a vast pool of information in order to obtain just a tiny nugget of information. Therefore, it is no wonder that many contemporary historians tend to “steer clear” of this subject, with most opting to employ only commonly known statistical information.

However, the afore-said is not related to the pre-revolutionary period, when historians covered the making of the education system quite eagerly and meticulously. Below is an outline of some key research on the topic conducted by Russian scholars.

Above all, it is worth mentioning 'A Historical Survey of the Activity of the Ministry of Public Education (1802–1902)', which had a volume of nearly 800 pages, published by well-known Russian historian S.V. Rozhdestvensky (*Istoricheskii obzor, 1902*). The work provides an insight into the operation of the education system in the Russian Empire in the period specified. From the perspective of the present study, the work is of substantial interest as a reference material with a large volume of systematized data.

Another fundamental work on the subject is L.N. Modzalevsky's 'Education in Caucasus Krai in the Period 1802–1880', published in 'The Memorandum Book for the Caucasus Educational District for 1880' in Tiflis in 1880 (*Modzalevskii, 1880*). The work contains nearly 100 pages worth of analytical and statistical information on the development of education in the Caucasus, serving as a “reference point” for many contemporary research studies on the history of the region and its education system.

The development of urban schools in Russia as a whole and the Caucasus in particular, through the prism of the Statute of 1872, is explored in a work by P. Zazhaev published in 1909 in the journal *Na Kavkaze* (*Zazhaev, 1909*).

Of interest from a standpoint of reference information on the Caucasus and general characterization of the region are two articles by N.I. Voronov collectively entitled 'Black Sea Letters', published in the journal *Russky Vestnik* in 1857 in Issues 1 and 3, respectively (*Voronov, 1857*).

The making of the education system in the Caucasus was explored by a number of Soviet researchers as well. Of the greatest interest, in the context of the present work, is a collection of scholarly works entitled 'Public Education and Pedagogical Thought in Russia on the Eve and at the Beginning of Imperialism: Little-Researched Issues and Sources', which came out in 1980 under the editorship of E.D. Dneprov. Aside from the ideological pretentiousness of Soviet historians in the form of a harsh criticism of Tsarist education, the collection provides a systematized account of the state of the pre-revolutionary system of education and a useful evaluation of certain events. However, for the most part, this information was taken from well-known sources (most of which are mentioned above). Unfortunately, the authors of the articles in the collection did not introduce

* All dates hereinafter are provided in the old style.

any new sources into scholarly discourse ([Narodnoe obrazovanie, 1980](#)). In the historiography from the USSR period, even certain collections of sources newly introduced into scholarly discourse were named in a propagandist and clearly inappropriate fashion, including from a standpoint of Soviet statehood (e.g., [Materialy po istorii, 1942](#)).

Contemporary research on the subject appears to be a lot more objective from a standpoint of impartiality. Most of this research covers the actual development and operation of the education system in the Caucasus as a whole (without a particular focus on any of its specific regions). Scholars N.A. Shevchenko, E.V. Vidishcheva, and O.V. Emelyanova have focused on the periodization of the development of education in the Caucasus and analysis of the quantitative and national makeup of the student body in the region's educational institutions, with lots of statistical information provided ([Shevchenko et al, 2016](#)).

Of major interest is a study by A.A. Cherkasov devoted to the process of development of all-Russian general (public) education during the reign of Emperor Nicholas II (1894–1917) ([Cherkasov, 2011](#)). The characteristics of the development of the public education system in the interrevolutionary period (1905–1917) have been explored in a work by O.V. Natolochnaya, N.I. Kryukova, and S.I. Buslaev ([Natolochnaya et al., 2016](#)).

In the context of the present work, definitely worthy of mention is a work by L.S. Gatagova that explores the efforts of the Tsarist government in the area of implementing public education in the Caucasus and integrating the region's education system into the all-Russian system in the 19th century ([Gatagova, 1993](#)).

Rulemaking activity in the area of education by the imperial government in the period between the 1840s and 1870s and its role in the process of integration of the Caucasus's education system into the Russian public education system have been explored by E.I. Kobakhidze ([Kobakhidze, 2015](#)).

In terms of related research by foreign scholars, worthy of particular mention is a work by Georgian researchers I. Shiukashvili and M. Gogitidze that provides an in-depth analysis of issues related to the making of the Tiflis Cadet Corps ([Gogitidze, Shiukashvili, 2016](#)).

While the above publications form but a small portion of the works devoted to the making of the Caucasus's education system and its integration into the all-Russian system, the authors regard them as of the greatest interest to the present study.

4. Results

Above all, it is worth accurately defining the study's object, for as an administrative unit Tiflis Governorate was created only in 1846, while as a purposeful policy the state's education policy for this region began to be implemented with the launch of the ministerial reform, i.e. starting in 1802. Tiflis Governorate was the successor of Georgian-Imereti Governorate, established in 1840, which, in turn, was formed of the following three regions – Georgian Governorate (created in 1801), Armenian Oblast (1828), and Imereti Oblast (1811). Given the geographic scope reflected in the name (i.e. Tiflis Governorate), at first glance the chronological scope should also be treated accordingly (i.e. the period the administrative unit was in existence) – 1846–1917. However, administrative division in the region changed, whereas its geographic elements (areas and populated localities within it) remained the same. Therefore, considering that the present work is focused on the state's education policy, rather than administrative division, in the region, it may be worth also examining briefly the education system that was in place in the region prior to the emergence of Tiflis Governorate, i.e. in its future areas.

Thus, the present study's "geographic" object is the following populated localities within Tiflis Governorate (in descending order by population size as at 1897; these were uyezd centers): the city of Tiflis (160,000), the city of Akhaltsikhe (15,500), the city of Telavi (14,000), the city of Gori (10,000), the city of Signagi (9,000), the city of Akhalkalaki (5,500), the village of Shulaveri (4,500), the city of Dusheti (2,500), the city of Zaqatala (3,000), and the village of Tianeti (1,000). Chronologically, the study covers the period 1802–1917.

As evident, the governorate's capital had an overwhelming edge over the other cities in population size. This factor, as will be shown below, had a major effect on the quality of education too, as it is in Tiflis that the best educational institutions were located. Note that the number of residents in an administrative center did not always correspond with the size of the population in the uyezd it represented. For instance, the village of Shulaveri (the administrative center of

Borchaly Uyezd) had a population of around 4,500, whilst the uyezd's was nearly 129,000; the large city of Telavi had nearly 14,000 residents, whilst the population of Telavi Uyezd was just around 67,000 ([Vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya, 1897](#)).

Another important consideration to touch upon is the chronology of the process of implementation of imperial education policy in the Caucasus. As fairly suggested by a number of researchers (e.g., [Shevchenko et al, 2016: 364](#)), the process of making of the pre-revolutionary education system in the Caucasus can nominally be divided into the following three stages:

1) the period 1802–1834 – the start of the process of implementation of public education in the Caucasus;

2) the period 1835–1871 – centralization of the educational process and stiffening of requirements for the quality of teaching;

3) the period 1872–1917 – the end of the process of integration of the Caucasus's educational institutions into the public education system of the Russian Empire.

A significant amount of information on the process of making of the education system in Tiflis Governorate is provided in 'A Statistical Description of Transcaucasian Krai', published by O.S. Evetsky in 1835 ([Statisticheskoe opisanie, 1835](#)).

The Caucasus Educational District comprised four departments (the so-called 'directorates for schools'): Tiflis, Kutais, Stavropol, and Black Sea Host (its ambit included the areas of the Black Sea Cossack Host* and the coastline of the northeastern part of the Black Sea region).

The Tiflis Directorate for Schools oversaw educational institutions within the following three governorates: Tiflis, Shamakhi, and Derbent. The actual educational institutions were as follows ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: 4](#)):

- the Tiflis gubernia gymnasium;
- the higher four-grade school in Shamakhi;
- the uyezd commercial school in Tiflis;
- the eight district schools in Gori, Signagi, Telavi, Elisabethpol, Nukha, Shusha, Baku, and Derbent (in Tiflis Governorate – in the first three areas);
- the four "initial" schools in Dusheti, Tianeti, Lankaran, and Quba (in Tiflis Governorate – in the first two areas).

Thus, at 1853 the Tiflis Directorate for Schools permanently oversaw a total of 15 educational institutions, with seven of these located in Tiflis Governorate, which is testimony to the government's increased attention to this particular area. This could be attributed both to the area's sizable population and to its well-developed infrastructure and economy.

The fundamental outcome of the work conducted by the Tsarist government in terms of implementing the education system in Tiflis Governorate (1802–1835) was a network of continually operating gymnasia and schools. In this respect, there is validity in the view of the above-mentioned author of a statistical publication O.S. Evetsky that "the opening of gymnasia and schools helped provide all classes of the citizenry with the means to nurture their youth and lay a solid groundwork for the education of Transcaucasia's residents" ([Statisticheskoe opisanie, 1835: 244](#)).

However, the network was not large and its operation was not particularly centralized, i.e. the region had yet to arrive at an education system that would operate based on uniform principles, standards, and curricula. Therefore, the government's next step in developing the education system in the Caucasus was to centralize it (1835–1871).

Below is a detailed overview of a fundamental document that thoroughly covers the centralization and popularization of education in Tiflis Governorate – the Statute 'On the Caucasus Educational District and Educational Institutions' of October 29, 1853.

Pursuant to the Statute, all educational institutions under the Ministry of Public Education operating in the region would form a special educational district, the Caucasus Educational District, and, accordingly, be subject to the authority of the Viceroy of the Caucasus ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: 1-2](#)). The statute is a fundamental document substantiating the intensification of the process of integration of the Caucasus's education system into the all-Russian system and its

* The Black Sea Cossack Host was created in 1787, under the reign of Catherine II, to help protect the northeastern part of the Black Sea area against units loyal to Zaporozhian Cossackdom (eliminated earlier). It was the precursor to the Kuban Cossack Host (officially formed in 1860).

centralization. It clearly set out the goals, objectives, and working principles for not only public educational institutions (e.g., gymnasia, four-grade schools, and uyezd and district schools) but private institutions as well (boarding schools and private schools; this also included the activity of “home teachers” (family tutors)) (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 10). Essentially, these goals and objectives were similar to those stipulated for educational institutions in other regions of the empire. The overall administration of the Caucasus Educational District was to be performed by the Trustee, who not only was to oversee the region’s education system but also was a member of the Council of the Main Office for Transcaucasian Krai. As evident, essentially this system of administration was similar to a gubernatorial system, where officials in charge of all public spheres, including the education sector, were subject to the authority of the governor, for the Trustee was subject to the authority of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, not the Minister of Public Education. The Statute expressly stipulated that the Trustee of the Caucasus Educational District would have the same rights and obligations as his counterparts in other regions (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: assets 16-18), which once again substantiates the primary objective for the document – to help integrate the region’s education system and centralize it. The Trustee was to be assisted by an aide (deputy), an inspector for public schools, an architect, an administrative support office, and a special trustee council concerned with assisting him in running the district (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: assets 12-13). An agency that was subject to the authority of the Trustee indirectly was the Censorship Committee (i.e., its services were enlisted upon the Trustee’s request). Understandably, the Trustee did not have authority over private educational institutions and those run under the aegis of other ministries. Note also that the post of trustee was not new – it was introduced back in 1803 via The Preliminary Rules for Public Education, i.e. essentially around the time that the Ministry of Public Education was created. On a side note, the Ministry of Public Education was established via Alexander I’s manifesto ‘On the Establishment of the Ministries’ of September 8, 1802, a move undertaken with a view to helping better educate the nation’s youth and spread science throughout it.

Along with the Aide, the Trustee Council included the Inspector for Public Schools, the principals of schools within Tiflis Governorate and other governorates within the Caucasus Educational District, inclusive of the lands of Black Sea Cossackdom, and functionaries appointed by the Viceroy to handle various issues related to education within the district.

Each type of educational institution had a chapter devoted to it within the Statute. The operation of the region’s gymnasia and boarding schools at them was substantively regulated by the Statute’s Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

The Statute expressly set out the objectives for the region’s gymnasia: preparation of young people for public service, preparation of capable students for university, and provision of willing students with the knowledge to set them on course to succeed in areas other than public service (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 26). The capitals of each governorate within the district were to have in operation one gymnasium. In Tiflis Governorate, there, accordingly, was one in Tiflis. The “patron” of the gymnasium was the honored trustee, appointed by the local nobility. Day-to-day administration of the gymnasium was performed by the principal and the inspector, his aide (the equivalent of today’s head of teaching). The Statute expressly stipulated that in the event of the post of principal becoming vacant, the “closest” candidate for that post would be the gymnasium’s inspector (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 31). Inspectors (heads of teaching) were to be selected from among in-house supervisors at uyezd schools or senior (i.e. highly esteemed) instructors at the gymnasium itself. The prerequisite to become a principal (and an inspector) was to have a higher education (i.e. university) degree or to be enrolled in a university at the time.

Just like in other governorates within the Caucasus Educational District (and throughout Russia), the program of study at a gymnasium was seven years long, which was tantamount to seven grades. There also was the “zero” (preparatory) grade – thus, all in all, the program of study was eight years long. However, the program of study could extend even beyond that. Specifically, if a student needed preparation to enter a university or become a teacher at a district school or in the lower grades of a gymnasium or a home teacher, the program of study could also include a set of special courses in addition to those taught in the institution’s preparatory and seven general grades (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 32).

A separate article provided that the gymnasium must admit children from all the free estates only (Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 33). The Statute specified the age limit for entrants:

preparatory grade – 8–12 years, first grade – 9–13 years, second grade – 10–14 years, third grade – 11–15 years, and fourth grade – 12–16 years. The gymnasium did not admit individuals older than 16. Those whose age did not allow them to attend the gymnasium as a full student could do so only as a non-degree student.

Education in gymnasia within Tiflis Governorate was provided on a paid basis – it cost each student three rubles a year (the equivalent of three live geese in the mid-19th century). This was a relatively affordable sum for urban residents, who earned from five rubles (female domestic servants) to 15–20 rubles (petty functionaries) a month, What is more, it was cheaper than, say, in neighboring Stavropol Governorate, which was a more well-to-do region (five rubles a year). Separate provision was made for the cost of tuition for relatively well-to-do families – it could be raised to five rubles a year with the approval of the Viceroy ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 37](#)). However, the cost was quite high for the majority of rural residents. Not many rural families could afford being left without a helper after sending their child to the city, no matter if the individual was still young at the time. It is also worth remembering that serfdom was abolished in Russia in 1861, i.e. eight years subsequent to the adoption of the Statute – as already mentioned above, only members of the free estates were allowed to attend a gymnasium. Therefore, in the 1850s attending gymnasia in Tiflis Governorate (just like throughout the Russian Empire) was something that mainly urban citizens could afford.

Of interest is the roster of courses taught in gymnasia within the Caucasus Educational District. Notably, it was expressly stated that the roster would be entirely the same as in any other gymnasium in Russia: Orthodox God's Law, Russian, Mathematics, Geography, History, Physics, Mathematical and Physical Geography, Natural History, Penmanship, Drafting, and Drawing. Separate provision was made for the roster of disciplines in the Tiflis gymnasium: in addition to the above, instruction was to be provided in Armenian Gregorian God's Law, Roman-Catholic God's Law, Moslem God's Law (with these taught to members of the respective faiths), Georgian, Tatar, and Armenian (with these taught to members of the respective ethnic groups).

The differentiation of didactic content in the Tiflis Gubernia Gymnasium depended on the students' vocational preferences as well. More specifically, if a student wished to be in public service, they additionally would have to take the Russian Jurisprudence course. Similarly, if a student planned on entering an institution of higher learning, the program of study would incorporate courses such as Latin and/or French ("as required"). Future gymnasium teachers were taught courses such as Pedagogics and Didactics. The principle of differentiation of the educational process was upheld through the Statute providing for the introduction of courses such as Agriculture, Auxiliary Sciences, Practical Mechanics, and Chemistry (although instruction in them required permission from the Viceroy and was to be provided only to students willing to enter service) ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 38](#)).

Upon being proposed by the Trustee of the Educational District and approved by the Viceroy, the roster of courses could be expanded even further. The roster of "core" courses was developed by the Ministry of Public Education, and these were taught via ministerial curricula exclusively. "Optional" courses could be taught via "regional" curricula as well, this requiring approval from the Viceroy. Thus, while staying true to the principle of having a centralized education system, the government tried not to overlook the importance of the regional component too.

The Tiflis gymnasium had in place a set of core "regional" courses too, like Georgian and Tatar. Armenian was to be taken only by members of the Armenian ethnic group.

The teaching workforce in all gymnasia within the Caucasus Educational District was divided into the following two major categories – "senior" and "junior" teachers. The first category included teachers of Russian, Mathematics, Physics, and Jurisprudence. In terms of the Tiflis gymnasium specifically, this group also included instructors of Natural Sciences, Agriculture, and Latin. The category of junior teachers incorporated teachers of languages and other sciences, as well as instructors of the arts ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 42](#)).

A few words will now be said about the schedule of classes. Each school day comprised four classes and ran from 8 am to 2 pm. The schedule was established by the Trustee of the Educational District. In the event of teachers being unable to work due to illness, the teaching of the disciplines handled by them was entrusted to other teachers, with the person's pay remaining in place if it was a short sick leave. As a rule, the school year began on January 1 and ran to the end of the calendar year. Exams were held between November 15 and December 23. There was a summer break. In the

Tiflis gymnasium, the summer break ran from July 1 to September 1 (as was the case throughout Transcaucasia).

Each gymnasium ran a “noble boarding school”, which was intended to help ease, materially and organizationally, the process of receiving education for members of the highest (noble) estate. The boarding school at the Tiflis gymnasium had 120 places, with 65 of these wholly funded by the state. The Statute expressly stipulated the number of places based on intra-estate gradation: 30 places for children of “princes and nobles”, 20 places for children of “honored Russian officials, descended from hereditary nobles predominantly”, and 15 places for children of “honored Moslems from the highest estate and Armenian meliks”^{*}. The rest of the places were called ‘half-public’ and were funded jointly by the state and the parents: the state provided 50 rubles to cover the children's education and living expenses, and the parents contributed another 40 silver rubles[†] towards their uniforms ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 48](#)). Successful boarding school students could go on to enter a university, with this funded entirely by the state. The region's boarding schools admitted children aged no younger than nine and no older than 15 years.

The statute's Chapter 5 deals with higher four-grade schools. The law expressly stipulated the key objective for these schools – provide the population with higher education where there had yet to be established gymnasia. It also was possible for district schools to be transformed into higher four-grade schools. It was a common practice for higher schools to incorporate ‘noble boarding schools’. The region's first-ever higher four-grade school was established in the city of Shamakhi, the administrative center of neighboring Shamakhi Governorate. A key difference between these schools and gymnasia was their openness to children from all the estates, not only the free ones. Having said that, it is somewhat hard to imagine children of peasant serfs attending a facility of this kind, especially considering the special nature of life in the Caucasus back then. Another crucial difference is that education in the higher four-grade schools was totally free (with the exception of services provided at the boarding schools). The roster of disciplines taught was similar to that in the gymnasia.

Initially, the region's higher four-grade school was a “one-of-a-kind” institution, whereas there were many district and uyezd schools in operation in it. Specifically, Tiflis Governorate had in operation three uyezd schools (see above). The governorate's capital, Tiflis, had in operation a specialized commercial school as well.

Both types of school were uniestate. One of the objectives behind establishing them was also to prepare a teaching workforce for lower “initial” schools and private schools.

Day-to-day administration of the facility was performed by the supervisor (selected from among the most responsible and dedicated teachers). The person above the supervisor was the “honored supervisor” (selected from among esteemed citizens). This post was “buyable” (one could become an “honored supervisor” for the immodest sum of 500 silver rubles. Nobles were magnanimously exempted from paying this “contribution” ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 82](#)). The school's principal (this post coexisting alongside the post of supervisor) was in charge of organization of academic work (i.e., being, in essence, a head of teaching).

For the most part, the region's district and uyezd schools were two-grade. If an institution could afford it, it could also have both a preparatory grade and a third grade. The post of teacher was offered to pedagogues with a higher education or a gymnasium degree received through the completion of a special program of study in pedagogics within the Caucasus Educational District. In Tiflis Governorate, compared with some other districts, district schools did not have boarding schools running at them.

^{*} In the Armenian feudal hierarchy, the title of melik (from Arabic: ملك malik (king)) was the equivalent of the title of prince in Russian noble tradition. A synonym of it that is often used in the historiography is another princely title – ishkhann (from Armenian: իշխան (prince, lord, master). This appears to be not quite correct, as the melik (despite the existence of different hierarchies and groups even within the title itself) initially had “independent”, “khan”, or “royal” (using European terminology) roots and, unlike the “serving” ishkhann, was in the old days a sovereign ruler.

[†] On the eve of the Crimean War, the government experienced much difficulty due to a shortage of precious metals, which urged it to collect payment in silver. As a consequence, in Russian society the silver ruble had more value than its paper counterpart.

The schools had easier subjects compared with the gymnasia, which is quite logical. Instruction was provided in God's Law, Russian, Russian Grammar, Local Language, Arithmetic, Brief Geography (general and Russian), Brief History (general, Russian, and local), Introductory Geometry, and Penmanship.

In addition to the above disciplines, noble students were also taught the equivalent of today's commercial law (e.g., Judicial Procedures and Action (with Exercises), Accounting, etc.). Schools in Tiflis Governorate also taught Georgian, with the express requirement that the mother's tongue be taught by an Orthodox Christian teacher of God's Law. The roster of disciplines taught could be expanded via an edict by the Viceroy. The study break in Tiflis Governorate ran from July 1 to September 1.

The region's schools were totally free to attend. What is more, no special knowledge was required to enroll in the preparatory program of study ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 94](#)). The above facts unequivocally attest to the aspiration of the Tsarist government to implement literacy across the board, which, in essence, was done on a liberal basis – no one was forced to go to school, but the conditions that would urge the people to do so were, actually, there. In this respect, it is hard to agree with the assertion by many of the Soviet historians of education that the government succeeded in spreading literacy throughout the nation only under the Soviets – which was achieved thanks to the launch of a campaign against illiteracy. The key difference is that during the period that campaign was being implemented everybody, regardless of age and gender, was forced to go to school, which is what actually explains the efficiency of the process of spreading literacy in the USSR in the 1920–30s.

Apart from district and uyezd schools, the region also had in operation so-called "initial" schools. These institutions were set up "when decidedly necessary" and with permission from the Viceroy of the Caucasus ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 109](#)). However, certain initial schools were established in a compulsory manner and were maintained at the state's expense. In Tiflis Governorate, there were initial schools in the city of Dusheti and in Tianeti, a large village.

These schools admitted only boys aged at least eight. They were free to attend and required of students no initial knowledge of any kind. The program of study was either one year long (one-grade) or two years long (two-grade). The two-grade program of study incorporated disciplines that could be taught to members of particular estates. This is another example attesting to the region's differentiated education system.

The core disciplines included God's Law (depending on the faith, it was taught to Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Moslems), reading and writing in Russian combined with practical learning of spoken Russian, reading and writing in the local language, and the basics of arithmetic (the four core operations and operations with "abstract and concrete numbers") ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 115](#)). God's Law was taught not by teachers but by members of the local clergy.

The two-grade program of study additionally included Brief Catechetics and a Brief Holy History, Brief Russian Grammar, Brief Arithmetic (e.g., common fractions and operations with them), and Penmanship.

The special program of study included Agriculture, Horticulture, and, as elective courses, Merchant Book Keeping (a course to be taken by those willing to work in an area with a well-developed trade infrastructure), advanced study of a local language, and advanced study of trade terminology.

Pedagogical personnel were selected by the principal from among persons with at least a gymnasium-level education. Teachers were paid a salary of 200 silver rubles a year (16.7 rubles a month), which at the time was a medium-level salary tantamount to the pay of a lower-level official.

By default, the school year began on January 1, but decisions regarding the study break and exam schedules were made by the principal in coordination with the trustee based on the region's seasonality. A new administrative post was introduced in the region's initial schools – the "honored guardian" (selected from among the more esteemed citizens).

Of course, the statute provided for private education as well: boarding schools, schools, and schooling via home teachers (male and female family tutors).

The region's boarding schools were divided into two major types. The first category included facilities founded wholly on private capital (which includes charitable contributions) with curricula designed by the institution. The second category included boarding schools at state-run institutions

serving children whose parents could not afford their education. However, those boarding schools had very few places available in them (see above). In this respect, the Soviet education system, which was based on the principles of socialist economics, proved a lot more efficient, as it did provide across-the-board education in a compulsory manner, whilst the economy of the Russian imperial period, founded on the capitalist paradigm, clearly could not afford this.

Boarding schools of the second type typically had the following personnel on staff: keepers (caretaking personnel) and overseers (educators, who guided the children through school, the equivalent of pedagogues in Ancient Greece). Girls were allowed to attend first-type boarding schools only. Personnel at boarding schools of the second type could not run boarding schools of the first type or handle their student body – this was directly provided for by the law. The law did not regulate the level of education for instructors in boarding schools, but only held that “the post of instructor in private boarding schools could be held only by persons who had the right to do so”. Presumably, this could be a school graduate who had completed a special program of study (i.e. a pedagogue meeting the lowest requirements for the teaching job).

The region’s private educational institutions included initial schools, which provided instruction to children of both sexes and of all estates in literacy*, the local languages, and prayers of a particular religion ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: asset 141](#)). Girls and boys had to attend separate schools, as the law directly prohibited them from pursuing education together within one school. These schools had no exams or any other graduation requirements. To get a job in them, teachers had first to complete a qualification assessment (“a test of knowledge of certain subjects”) in a district school and obtain a certificate on completion thereof. In Tiflis Governorate, the duty of supervising the operation of private schools in Tiflis was entrusted to school principals, and in other cities and villages this was the duty of in-house supervisors.

Home-based education was regulated as well. To be a home teacher, one had to have completed a special program of study (Home-Based Instruction) at a gymnasium and have a length of teaching service of at least six years ([Polozhenie ot 29.10.1853: assets 145-146](#)).

Teaching personnel in the Caucasus Educational District were to be employed based on a special regulation. The post of district trustee was to be held by an official with a rank of no lower than Grade 1 in the Table of Ranks. In addition to the core salary, this position paid an additional 1,200 rubles a year. The aide to the district trustee, a Grade 5 official, had a salary of 2,000 rubles a year (166.7 rubles a month), plus an additional food and housing subsistence allowance of 1,200 rubles a year. School inspectors were paid 1,200 rubles a year (100 rubles a month) and were entitled to compensation for subsistence expenses, a sum of 720 rubles a year. A censor (Grade 7) was paid 1,000, a Tiflis school principal (Grade 6) – 1,200, a gymnasium inspector (Grade 7) – 900, a senior instructor (Grade 9) – 800, a junior instructor (Grade 10) – 500–600, a boarding-house overseer (Grade 12) – 300, a commercial school overseer (Grade 8) – 700, and a school teacher – 400–900 rubles a year (the numbers listed here reflect the region’s core salaries only, i.e. they are exclusive of the various subsistence allowances and other types of financial assistance) ([Shtat KUO](#)). The above statistics suggest quite decent financial support for educational functionaries and efficient stimulation of their career growth. An appendix to the regulation set out a detailed list of all official positions and salaries for educational functionaries, which helped minimize abuse of power by top officials.

Understandably, the 1853 Statute, signed into law by Nicholas I, with his quite a specific view of the world order as a whole and Russian society in particular, “had no room” for public (i.e. free) unistate female vocational secondary education and higher education, which could be offered only privately. This gap was remediated during the reign of his son, Alexander II, under whom the education system did become unistate and across-the-board. Another important fact worthy of mention (which, in particular, is fair in relation to female education, given the unique mentality of the region’s population) is the significant role played by Empress Maria Alexandrovna, who could bring “direct” pressure to bear on the emperor in relation to the development of the education system – and not only the education system, with the Red Cross and dozens of charitable organizations (shelters, poorhouses, societies, etc.) and hospitals being under her direct patronage as well. It is hard to disagree with the fact that it was Empress Maria Alexandrovna who laid the groundwork for a

* The term ‘literacy’ hereinafter implies the four core operations in arithmetic and reading, writing, and speaking in Russian.

new period in the history of female education in Russia through the establishment of open, uniestate female educational institutions (gymnasia) (Fedorchenko, 2003: 91).

5. Conclusion

Summing up, it is worth underscoring the following:

1) The system of educational institutions in Tiflis Governorate comprised a gubernia gymnasium and a district commercial school in the region's capital, three district two- and three-grade schools in the cities of Gori, Signagi, and Telavi, two lower ("initial") one- and two-grade schools in the city of Dusheti and the township of Tianeti, and a few private schools. The network of educational institutions included boarding schools, both private and public (which operated as part of the region's gymnasia and schools).

2) The operation of the region's educational institutions was thoroughly regulated by the Statute 'On the Caucasus Educational District and Educational Institutions' of October 29, 1853, intended to help integrate the Caucasus's education system into the all-Russian system and centralize it.

3) The highest official within the education sector in the Caucasus Viceroyalty was the Trustee of the Educational District (the equivalent of today's regional minister of education) – a Grade 4 official who was directly answerable to the viceroy. Statutorily, the vertical hierarchy of personnel within the education sector was enshrined in law in a most exhaustive manner.

4) A salient testimony to the successful integration of the Caucasus's education system into the all-Russian system is the requirement of compulsory instruction in Russian, as the official language, in all educational institutions in Tiflis Governorate. The region's private schools and boarding schools likewise were expected to provide instruction in Russian.

5) Public education was guaranteed for boys only – girls could pursue education only privately. Except for gymnasium education, education for males was uniestate. The education reform initiated by Alexander II largely helped remediate these flaws, making the imperial education system across-the-board and uniestate (if on a voluntary basis). Compared with the efficiency of the process of implementation of compulsory primary education during the Soviet period, the outcomes were less effective, which was due to a completely different economic paradigm. The Russian Empire's capitalist economy was primarily oriented at deriving profit and achieving corresponding boosts in production, whilst the socialist model of a commanding economy followed in the Soviet Union was based on compulsion.

6) Educational functionaries (including teachers) were paid quite decent salaries, while the system of staffing and payroll management was regulated at the statutory level, which helped minimize abuse of power by top officials.

7) The law provided for the differentiation of education. Students could choose to not only attend a particular department but take particular courses as well. This kind of differentiation was associated with a set of estate-related and regional preferences. For instance, in Tiflis Governorate the key focus was on the economic-commercial sphere (e.g., disciplines such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Commerce, etc.), whilst in the areas of Black Sea Cossackdom it was on military science (e.g., courses such as Fencing, Gymnastics, Military Science, etc.). At the same time, there also was a set of "core" disciplines that were taught, which included God's Law (depending on the faith, it was taught to Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Moslems), Russian, Arithmetic, and Local Language. The region's public educational institutions provided education by way of curricula established by the Ministry of Public Education.

Essentially, the process of integration of the system of public education in Tiflis Governorate into the all-Russian system and its centralization was completed by 1871. Throughout the country, there now was in operation a network of educational institutions with uniform standards in place with regard to school administration and curricula. This made it possible to move on to the next stage in the process of spreading literacy in the outlying regions of the Russian Empire – to enable more of its citizens to receive public education.

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