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## The Pedagogical Periodical Press in the Riga Educational District (1832–1915)

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### Abstract

This work explored the pedagogical periodical press in the Riga Educational District in the period 1832–1915.

The principal sources for the study were a set of works of a reference-encyclopedic nature.

The study's findings revealed that due to its small population the Riga Educational District had a relatively small number of pedagogical journals – just seven. A major producer of pedagogical periodicals was Reval Gymnasium (established in 1631). It is at this educational institution that one of Russia's first pedagogical journals, *Raduga*, and Europe's first journal on mathematics instruction, *Uchebny Matematichesky Zhurnal*, emerged in the 1830s. Both were published by the school's instructors. Another two pedagogical journals (*Gimnaziya* and *Pedagogichesky Yezhenedel'nik*) were published in the 1890s – both by G.A. Yanchevetsky, Director of Reval Gymnasium. Unlike the instructors, the director had significant funding at his disposal – and that enabled him to publish the periodicals for nearly 10 years, whereas the former had to discontinue their projects as early as the second year.

Two of the periodicals served as the educational district's official organ – first *Bulletin of the Dorpat Educational District*, and later (following a reorganization of the district and the transference of its capital to Riga) *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District*. In 1908, an attempt was undertaken to produce *Shkol'naya Zhizn'*, intended as a vehicle for publishing the unofficial part of *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District*. However, this attempt failed too – the publication ceased to exist that same year.

**Keywords:** periodical press, Russian Empire, Riga Educational District, period 1832–1915, sustainable development in education, education policy, education reform.

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### 1. Introduction

During the prerevolutionary period, the Russian Empire had a system of educational districts. By the start of the 20th century, there were a total of 15 educational districts in the country. The Riga Educational District, back then part of European Russia and comprised of Courland, Livonia, and Estland Governorates, was the country's least populated educational district, with a population of just 2,386,998 as at 1897 (Naselenie imperii..., 1898: 5-26). By comparison, the Moscow Educational District had at that time a population of 17,970,749, a difference of more than 7.5 times (Naselenie imperii..., 1898: 5-26). As a result, the area had a smaller pedagogical workforce and fewer pedagogical periodicals. The present work aims to explore the experience of creating pedagogical journals in the Riga Educational District during the prerevolutionary period.

### 2. Materials and methods

The principal sources for the study were a set of works of a reference-encyclopedic nature. These included reference publications on the periodical, including vocational, press in Russia (Bibliografiya..., 1915; Ablov, 1937) and biographical works on public figures in prerevolutionary Russia (e.g., 'Russian Public and Cultural Figures in Estonia' (Russkie obshchestvennye..., 2006)).

The following research methods were employed to match the work's historical-problem nature: chronological, which helped view the issue under examination in historical retrospective; content analysis, which helped single out the publications having a bearing on the Riga Educational District, and biographical, which helped analyze the biographies of the editors of the pedagogical journals examined in the work.

### 3. Discussion

The historiography on the subject is relatively thin. For the most part, the journals have been explored only episodically and mainly in conjunction with another topic. For instance, A.Yu. Minakov explored in 2006 the biography of A.I. Bürger, and in that context touched upon the activity of the *Raduga* journal, which that scholar was the editor of in the 1830s (Minakov, 2006). In 2011, the same scholar investigated the influence of M.L. Magnitsky on A.I. Bürger in editing the same journal (Minakov, 2011).

G.V. Kondrat'yeva addressed the experience of creating *Uchebny Matematichesky Zhurnal*, a narrowly specialized publication produced in the city of Reval, while examining the role of pedagogical journalism in enhancing the quality of instruction by mathematics teachers (Kondrat'eva, 2011).

Among the works secondary to the purpose of the present study, of particular note is G.F. Bauer's work on the history of Reval Gymnasium, the oldest gymnasium in the Russian Empire (Bauer, 1910). This educational institution produced four academic pedagogical publications. Other noteworthy works include the one by I.P. Paert and her colleagues, which explores the activity of the church and Orthodox Christian schools in the Baltic region (Pyart i dr., 2015), and the one by V.A. Bogov, which explores the historiography of issues of interethnic relations in Livonia Governorate (Bogov, 2018).

A separate group of works is represented by a set of studies on the history of pedagogical periodicals under the purview of the country's top government entities and educational districts. For instance, over the last few years, research has been undertaken looking at periodicals under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education (Allalyev et al., 2022) and those under the purview of the country's top ecclesiastical authority (Mamadaliyev et al., 2022). In terms of educational districts, research has been conducted on the Kazan Educational District (Muzykant et al., 2022) and the Kiev Educational District (Mamadaliyev et al., 2023).

Given the paucity of research on pedagogical periodicals in the Riga Educational District, the intent of this study was to fill a research gap on this topic.

### 4. Results

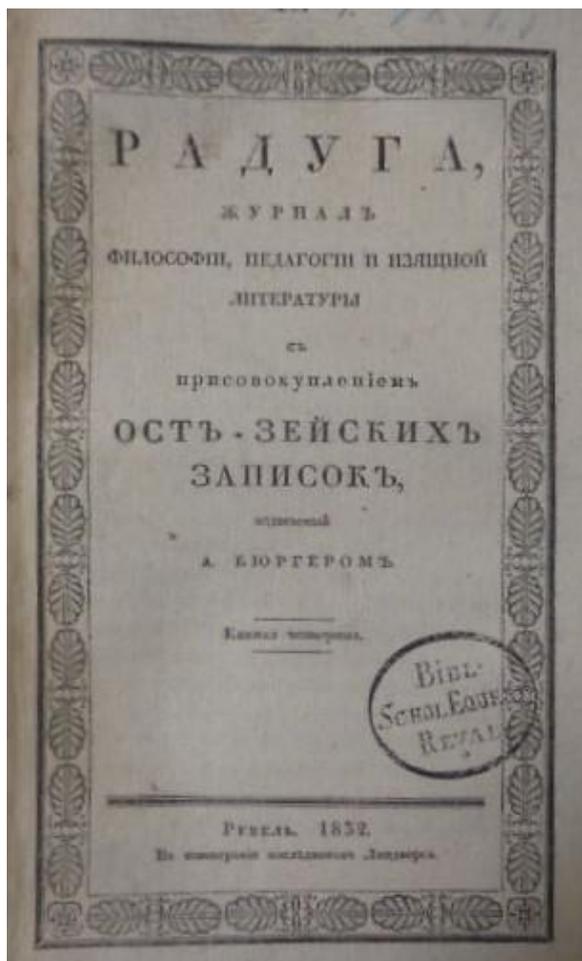
Overall, there were seven different pedagogical periodicals published in the Riga Educational District. No pedagogical periodicals were produced during the prerevolutionary period in Courland Governorate (capitalled in the city of Mitau). In Livonia Governorate, journals were published in two cities – Riga and Dorpat. In Estland Governorate, journals were produced in the city of Reval. The way in the number of publications produced was led by Reval (presently known as Tallinn) – 4,

followed by Riga – 2, and then Dorpat (Tartu) – 1. These publications are examined below in chronological order.

The first periodicals in the Riga Educational District emerged back in the 1830s. The region's first publication was the journal *Raduga* (Russian: "Rainbow"), published in Reval and focused on philosophy, pedagogy, and belles-lettres (Figure 1). There was an addendum to the journal – *Ostzeyskiye Zapiski* ("Ostsee Papers"). The publisher was litterateur and translator A.I. Bürger (1804–1876) (Minakov, 2006), a Moscow University graduate, who at that time was a senior teacher at Reval Gymnasium.

One of the oldest extant secondary schools in Europe, Reval Gymnasium was established in 1631 by Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus. In 1645, its teaching staff consisted of four professors and two colleagues (Bauer, 1910).

By the start of the 1830s, A.I. Bürger was famous for his translations from Farsi of 'The Unhandsome Prince' (Neprigozhii tsarevich, 1825) and 'The Gardener and the Nightingale'. The journal was published on a monthly basis in 1832–1833. It was one of the earlier attempts at publishing a pedagogical journal in the Russian Empire. As a rule, the journal was filled with articles and translations by A.I. Bürger himself, including translations of works of Arabic, Persian, and Indian literature. According to scholar A.Yu. Minakov, "a massive public response was triggered by A.I. Bürger's article 'The Destiny of Russia', in which he suggested that Peter I helped bring Russia and Europe closer together so that European civilization could be elevated to the level of Russia's Eastern Orthodoxy" (Minakov, 2011: 137). *Raduga* would carry copious materials of a pedagogical nature (e.g., parts of John Locke's 'Some Thoughts Concerning Education' and 'The Fundamentals of the Pedagogy of Saint Augustine'). *Ostzeyskiye Zapiski* carried a lot of material on the history of public education in the Baltic region.



**Fig. 1.** Cover of the journal *Raduga*

In 1833, a new pedagogical publication was launched in Reval – *Uchebny Matematichesky Zhurnal* (“Educational Mathematical Journal”). Its publisher was another Reval Gymnasium instructor, mathematician Karl Kupfer, a holder of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Dorpat University. According to G.V. Kondrat'yeva, *Uchebny Matematichesky Zhurnal* was “Europe’s first journal specifically focused on issues of teaching mathematics” (Kondrat'eva, 2011: 97). The journal was published in 1833–1834. Primarily focused on mathematics instruction, it would provide analysis of educational books on disciplines such as arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. The journal had had about 200 subscribers since its launch (Kondrat'eva, 2011: 97). In 1833, four issues of the journal were published, and in 1834 just one. Subsequently, the publication of this journal was discontinued.

In 1866, the Ministry of Public Education launched a periodical organ of its own – *Bulletin of the Dorpat Educational District*. It was produced monthly from 1866 to 1893 in the city of Dorpat. It mainly published ordinances for the educational district reflecting the overall policy of the Ministry of Public Education of the Russian Empire in the Baltic region. In 1893, two issues of this publication were released. That same year, the educational district was renamed as the Riga Educational District and its directorate was moved to the city of Riga. As a consequence, the journal’s third issue was released in 1893 in Riga under the title *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District* (Ablov, 1937: 36).

In 1888, a new pedagogical publication was launched in the city of Reval – the journal *Gimnaziya* (“Gymnasium”). A monthly focused on philology and pedagogy, it was published by classical philologist and pedagogue G.A. Yanchevetsky, an Imperial University of St. Vladimir graduate and the head of Reval’s Alexander and Nicholas Gymnasiums (Figure 2) (Russkie obshchestvennye..., 2006: 192). Engaged in literary work throughout his service, G.A. Yanchevetsky published numerous articles, most of which were focused on methodology for teaching ancient languages. Overall, it had a steady periodicity, although there were exceptions. Specifically, just four issues of this journal were released in 1891 – versus seven in 1897. The journal had the following rubrics: government ordinances; articles on philology; methodology and didactics; model lessons; school hygiene; gymnasiums abroad; general pedagogy; critiques and bibliographies. A significant amount of attention was paid in the journal to philological issues and translations of ancient classics. Its last issue was released in 1899. The journal was discontinued in 1902 due to health issues faced by its publisher, who eventually would resign as a result. In 1898, Ye.I. Vetnek would release an alphabetical and systematic index of authors and articles for the journals *Gimnaziya* and *Pedagogichesky Yezhenedel'nik* for 1888–1897.



**Fig. 2.** Grigory Andreyevich Yanchevetsky (1846–1903)

In 1893, G.A. Yanchevetsky began to publish the journal *Pedagogichesky Yezhenedel'nik* (“Pedagogical Weekly”) at Reval Gymnasium. A weekly, it was produced in 1893–1895, and later, after a hiatus, in 1899–1900. The periodical had the following rubrics: general pedagogy, methodology, didactics, and school hygiene; articles and short pieces of a historical-literary nature; bibliography. The journal would carry writings by pedagogues on staff with the journal *Gimnaziya*. The bibliographical section would be filled with reviews of works by ancient classical authors. In 1895, the publication of the journal was suspended. After it resumed publication in 1899, the journal would last just 48 issues (37 issues in 1899 and 11 issues in 1900) (Bibliografiya..., 1915: 764).

In 1893, following the renaming of the educational district and moving of its directorate from Dorpat to Riga, they began to publish *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District* in Riga. This publication was produced monthly at least until 1915. It had an unofficial part, which carried articles on pedagogy (Ablov, 1937: 55).

In 1907, an attempt was undertaken to set the publication’s unofficial part apart into a separate pedagogical journal – *Shkol'naya Zhizn'*. Serving as an addendum to *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District*, it was edited in Riga by A.A. Fomin. However, this attempt would fail, with the one released in 1907 being the only issue of the journal published. Subsequently, the unofficial part would continue to be published within *Bulletin of the Riga Educational District* (Ablov, 1937: 70).

## 5. Conclusion

Due to its small population, the Riga Educational District had a relatively small number of pedagogical journals – just seven. A major producer of pedagogical periodicals was Reval Gymnasium (established in 1631). It is at this educational institution that one of Russia’s first pedagogical journals, *Raduga*, and Europe’s first journal on mathematics instruction, *Uchebny Matematichesky Zhurnal*, emerged in the 1830s. Both were published by the school’s instructors. Another two pedagogical journals (*Gimnaziya* and *Pedagogichesky Yezhenedel'nik*) were published in the 1890s – both by G.A. Yanchevetsky, Director of Reval Gymnasium. Unlike the instructors, the director had significant funding at his disposal – and that enabled him to publish the periodicals for nearly 10 years, whereas the former had to discontinue their projects as early as the second year.

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