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## **A History of Everyday Life in Female Schools within the Kharkov Educational District (1860–1862). Part 1**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the history of everyday life in female schools within the Kharkov Educational District of the Russian Empire in the period 1860–1862.

The principal sources for this study are the schools' annual reports for the first year of their operation, which were published in *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District*. These reports were analyzed, key similarities and differences were identified between the female schools, and conclusions were drawn as to the extent of the influence of local factors on their operation. The schools were analyzed across the following seven aspects: 1) prehistory; 2) Board of Trustees; 3) staff pay; 4) student composition and tuition pricing; 5) teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council; 6) curriculum; 7) budget.

The first part of the article examined three educational institutions, which operated under significantly different conditions to each other: 1) Mariinsky Kharkov First-Class Female School – the district's largest and richest school; 2) the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School – extremely poor and weak, yet set to be transformed into a second-class female school in the year following its establishment; 3) Lipetsk Second-Class Female School – a stable, successful uyezd school. It was shown that, despite formal unity across the country's laws on female education, in actuality the schools were significantly different from each in key parameters: 1) cost of attendance (Mariinsky Kharkov Female School was not free to attend, Lipetsk School was free to attend for most, and students at the Female Department of Kupyansk School could attend the school's core courses for free and would have to pay to attend its elective ones); 2) staff pay (which in Mariinsky Kharkov Female School was twice what it was in Lipetsk School, while most of the teaching staff in the Female Department of Kupyansk School worked for free); 3) social composition of the student body (Mariinsky Kharkov Female School had many students of noble descent,

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but there were almost no urban commoners, and it was the other way round in Lipetsk Female School). With that said, a key factor determining a school's special nature was the attitude of the local community toward it, as each was managed by a board of trustees composed of representatives thereof and all efforts to make the schools self-sufficient would eventually fail, with each mainly subsisting on donations.

**Keywords:** history of pedagogy, female education, female schools, history of everyday life, Kharkov Educational District.

### **1. Introduction**

The history of female education in the Russian Empire can hardly be considered a little-researched subject. The latest trends in science, such as the recent interest in gender-related research, have led to the emergence of a body of literature in Russia dealing with female educational institutions, as opposed to the history of Russian education as a whole. Of particular note in this regard is the fundamental work by E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, 'Secondary Female Education in Russia', published in 2009 (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009). However, most of such research by Russian scholars has been characterized by a generalizing approach – as a rule, the primary focus is on female education in fairly large geographic areas or within a fairly wide chronological span. While such an approach may be productive, it may also be worth taking one that is the exact reverse of it – one focused not on national or regional history but on micro-history, such as the history of everyday life, when the researcher seeks to identify not trends that are common across the imperial or regional education system but unique traits of particular educational institutions in the context of a specific historical era. This approach is also important for assessing the degree of differentiation among particular educational institutions and understanding to what degree a country's common educational characteristics and trends may be considered as uncontested and universal for each educational institution of a certain type in it.

A critical stage in the development of female education in the Russian Empire was the time at the cusp between the 1850s and 1860s. According to E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, it is during this time that the Empire adopted an education system inclusive of females of all social estates, one oriented toward curricular unification with male gymnasiums at that (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 118). However, in complete alignment with the above-mentioned approach, despite the fact that the above monograph devotes as many as two sections to the emergence of female schools of a new type in the Russian Empire, the operation of specific schools is examined in those sections only episodically, with most of the text being based on various national documents (e.g., those setting out rules for female educational institutions and those containing correspondence between educational district trustees and the Ministry) and the capital's pedagogical press (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 115-144).

Between 1861 and 1862, *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District* carried a series of reports from the local female schools. What makes these reports all the more interesting is that they tend to describe a school's activity over the first year of its existence and that there is interest in not only various formal items, such as students' social status, but in facts that today can hardly be retrieved from other sources, such, for instance, as the reasons behind the locals' indifference to female education. With such a source base available, it was decided to look at Russia's early-1860s female education reforms from a rare historiographical angle – not from above but from below, i.e., not from the standpoint of the imperial, district, or even gubernia authorities but that of the actual female educational institutions. How did the first school year go in them? How does one explain the differences in their budgets, tuition fees, curricula, and teaching staff compositions? How great were those differences? All these questions will be answered in detail below.

### **2. Materials and methods**

The situation in the female schools within the Kharkov Educational District was analyzed through the lens of the following seven aspects: 1) prehistory (crucial for understanding the status of an educational institution, yet not covered in some of the reports); 2) Board of Trustees; 3) staff pay (important to consider, as there is an obvious idealization in the literature of free-of-charge education in female educational institutions in the Russian Empire (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 124)); 4) student composition and tuition pricing; 5) teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council; 6) curriculum (the suggestion about the schools' curricula being unified, even partially, with what was offered in the male gymnasiums (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 118) appearing rather inaccurate);

7) budget. The reports examined in the present study contain a lot of other interesting information, overall serving as a highly valuable source in terms of describing the history of everyday life in female educational institutions in the Russian Empire. The caveat must be made here as to why this study does not consider one important narrative that is present in all the reports examined – the one about student successes after the first year of study. The thing is that all these reports were published in the public domain, and they spoke of students' achievements exclusively in a positive light, compared with the aspects examined in the present study, which were described in a fairly impartial manner. With that said, as will be shown later below, the local community did not always understand the significance of female education, so publications about poor student progress could have had a highly negative effect in terms of the community's support of those schools. Hence, since there is little objectivity in the content in those publications that praises students, this kind of material will be left out of account in the present work.

The present study is focused on the operation of female schools within the Kharkov Educational District. It will draw upon reports for three educational institutions of different types that operated under completely different conditions. The report for Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, a first-class female school established in a university city, the capital of an educational district, is the most detailed of all those published in *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District*. It sets an example by providing an insight into what local pedagogues and education officials wanted this female school, which was well-to-do and enjoyed the support of the local community, to be (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 22-47). On the contrary, the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School led a meager existence, with the local community being completely indifferent to its concerns. Its situation can be regarded as the worst a female educational institution in that region and that era could have been in, and that is despite the fact that it was set to be transformed into a second-class female school (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 175-180). Finally, Lipetsk Female School, a second-class educational institution, epitomized what could be achieved in an uyezd town if there were a small but sustainable budget and the support of the local community (Tsirkulyar, 1862a: 180).

### **3. Discussion**

A brief characterization of the historiography of female education in the Russian Empire up to the 21st century is provided in the book 'Secondary Female Education in Russia' by E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 11-12). According to these researchers, prerevolutionary works on female education must be classified as sources rather than academic literature, and the subject was not researched extensively during the Soviet period (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 11-12). Consequently, the majority of research on it was conducted during the post-Soviet period.

This research may be split into the following two groups. The first group addresses female education on an imperial scale and often from an imperial standpoint. Specifically, in the monograph by E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, female education is positioned not only as a social phenomenon but as a state one as well. For instance, it is stressed that on the Empire's outskirts female educational institutions acted as an "effective means of national policy" (i.e., Russification and promotion of imperial ideologemes) (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 131). Unfortunately, such an approach is fraught with generalization and oversimplification. For instance, the article 'Female Education in Russia in the Mid-19th and Early 20th Centuries: Its Making and Development. Types of Female Educational Institutions', written by S.P. Vasil'yeva, describes the education reform in question and the process of creation of female educational institutions in Russia in the late 1850s and early 1860s in such a generalized manner that the characterization of the organization of such schools is limited in it to the composition of their boards of trustees (i.e., there is not even information about what was taught in them) (Vasil'eva, 2010: 255-256). Looking at it from an imperial standpoint may also sometimes lead to ideologization and idealization. For instance, in the article 'The History and Social Practices of Female Education in Russia: A Demythologization of the Topic', written by I.V. Gauzer, the difference between male and female educational institutions in the Russian Empire boils down to that girls were not taught the ancient languages and boys were not taught handwork, singing, and dancing, which leads the author to draw the following conclusion: "We are inclined to explain the difference in curriculum not by a desire to downgrade women but by the apparent pointlessness of teaching those subjects [i.e., the ancient languages] in female educational institutions, substantiated by men and women having different socio-

economic roles in society” (Gauzer, 2022: 78). Predictably, issues related to the operation of particular provincial educational institutions are given no attention in that body of research.

The second group of works on female education in the Russian Empire is represented by studies investigating female education in certain regions – most often, governorates. This group, most notably, includes the following articles: O.I. Shafranova’s ‘Female Secondary Education in the North Caucasus in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries’ (Shafranova, 2013: 130-143), M.V. Vorotnikova’s ‘Female Education in North Ossetia in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries’ (Vorotnikova, 2011: 30-33), Ye.N. Khabaleva’s “The Evolution of the Systems of Primary and Secondary Female Education in the Russian Empire in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries (The Case of Oryol Governorate)’ (Khabaleva, 2017: 103-109), L.V. Arkhangel'skaya’s ‘The Making of Female Gymnasial Education in Perm Governorate (Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries)’ (Arkhangel'skaya, 2015: 95-102). In some cases, it is a particular educational institution that becomes the focus of attention in this body of research, as is the case in the article by A.E. Altayeva, ‘The Making of Female Education in Buryatia in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries (The Case of Mariinsky Buryat Female School)’ (Altaeva, 2018: 22-28), and the one by S.V. Lyubichankovsky, ‘The Making of Orenburg Female Gymnasium at the Cusp Between the 1860s and 1870s’ (Lyubichankovskii, 2013: 24-27). However, in exploring a particular female educational institution, most modern-day authors fail to compare its experience with that of other schools of the kind, with the school’s successes and failures ending up being assessed based on the author’s personal notions and without any linkage to the era’s other educational institutions.

Thus, we can see that, while female education in the Russian Empire has been the subject of increasing interest among historians over the last few decades, there has yet to be produced a study comparing several female educational institutions. What has been prevalent is the use of a generalizing approach focused on exploring female education as a whole – nationally or within particular regions; and if modern-day researchers do set out to explore the history of particular educational institutions, they tend to do so in an isolated manner and without taking account of the experience of other schools of the kind.

#### **4. Results**

##### *Mariinsky Kharkov Female School (1860–1861)*

1) *Prehistory.* Although this school was under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education, it essentially owed its existence to donations from the Kharkov community. The biggest contribution to the cause came from Kharkov’s merchants and nobles. Not only did the merchantry offer in the late 1950s to contribute moderate funding to the school for a period of 3 years but also provided it with a house and a reservation was made that, if the building did not suit the school’s needs, the authorities could let it out and use the rent income to hire a suitable building for it (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 22). In 1859, a ball organized by the marshal of the Kharkov nobility helped raise 1,162 rubles for the school (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 23). Of note in terms of government priority setting here is the fact that the funds allocated toward the needs of this female school had initially been intended for a memorial arch commemorating the visit of Emperor Alexander II to Kharkov (4,500 rubles) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 23). Overall, more than 10,000 rubles was gathered by 1860 (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 23). This helped expedite the opening of the school, which led to the house contributed by the merchantry being not remodeled to serve as a building for the school but let out and another building being hired for it to start operation immediately (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 23). On July 17, 1860, the school’s Board of Trustees appointed its teachers and principal, and on August 16 it began operation (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 23-24). Thus, as evidenced in the report, the administration of the Kharkov Educational District did not play the decisive role in the opening of this school – a key impetus for that came from the enthusiasm of the local community, whose commitment to the support of the school made it possible to raise the necessary funding through organizing donations from the Kharkov nobility and merchantry, rather than soliciting the government for it.

2) *Board of Trustees.* The school was managed by the Board of Trustees, which had seven members: the emperor-appointed honorary trustee (the governor’s wife), four permanent members (the marshal of the gubernia nobility, the city mayor, the principal of the school, and a member appointed by the educational district), and two elective members (elected from among Kharkov’s nobles and merchants) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 25). It is to be noted that this composition of the Board

of Trustees is somewhat different from what has been furnished by modern-day researchers as statutorily prescribed for female schools. Specifically, here is what E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva say: “A board’s permanent members included the female trustee of the school, the uyezd marshal of the nobility or the person filling in for him, the director of the schools or of the gymnasium (the staff supervisor of the uyezd school where there was no gymnasium), the city mayor, and the female principal of the school. It appointed its elective members – one from among local nobles or officials and the other from among the merchantry” (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 140; Vasil'eva, 2010: 256). As we can see, the Board of Trustees at the female school in Kharkov included the gubernia, rather than uyezd, nobility marshal, which indicates the particularly high status of the school. On the other hand, it was the administration of the educational district that appointed a member of the Board of Trustees from among the directors in a town that had several gymnasiums. In any case, this focus on attracting wealthy and influential individuals to support female education was a factor contributing to the quick opening of the school. Issues related to getting furniture and all necessary classroom supplies and equipment were handled here by a member of the merchantry, while prior to the school’s opening and the appointment of its records manager those related to records management were handled by the director of Second Kharkov Gymnasium, who would become the Board of Trustees member from the educational district (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 24-25). However, this system was not perfect, as it made the operation of the school dependent on decision-making by third-party persons. As early as the school’s first year in existence, despite the evident enthusiasm of members of its Board of Trustees, the operation of the latter was completely paralyzed from mid-September to November 24, as during this time Kharkov Governorate was changing its nobility marshal, and the person holding this position at the time was the Board’s chairman (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 25). As a result, there was a delay in resolving an important issue such as letting out the house provided to the school by the merchantry, with the building starting to be let out in an adequate manner only on January 1, 1861 (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 25-26). The result was a major financial loss – whereas from August 22, 1860, to January 1, 1861, the rent income was just 120 rubles and 72.5 kopecks, from January 1 to July 1, 1861, it was 424 rubles and 97.5 kopecks, a more than threefold increase (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 33). The Board of Trustees interfered in pedagogical work as well – it would resolve organizational issues, but it also would put out directives as to how to conduct instruction at the school (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 26-27). The school’s 1860–1861 Board seemed reluctant to abuse this right – it had voiced the view that the principles underpinning the work of the school must “stem from actual life and be refined by practice”, while directives it issued would have to be adjusted in the future “as necessary and in accordance with what experience suggests” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 26). Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that this way of running the school placed its activity, including in terms of instruction, in complete subordination to the will of local public figures, most of whom had no pedagogical experience.

3) *Staff pay.* Of note is the fact that the school’s Board of Trustees, whose ambit included resolving this particular issue as well, was of the view that its principal, educatresses, and teachers must be paid a salary, reasoning that “unpaid labor is the least productive labor” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 27). The school’s principal and educatresses (concerned with overseeing students’ behavior; one per grade) were to be paid a fixed annual salary of 600 and 300 rubles, respectively (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 27). The size of teacher salaries was based on the number of lessons to be given each week during the school year (“annual lessons”) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). Of note is the fact that the work of instructors in different disciplines was valued quite differently. The largest salary was paid to the teacher of dancing – 80 rubles per “annual lesson”, but that involved the obligation to bring performers of music over to each Dancing class (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). For most of the subjects (Religious Education, Russian and Russian Philology, Arithmetic (inclusive of the fundamentals of geometry and physics), Geography, History, Natural History, the foreign languages, and Singing), the annual lesson was valued at 40 rubles (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). The rate of 20 rubles per annual lesson was paid to the instructors of drawing, penmanship, and music, although teachers of music were paid on a per-student basis, meaning that they worked with girls individually, not with whole classes) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). The lowest rate was paid to the teachers of handwork, just 15 rubles per “annual lesson” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). If a teacher missed a lesson, their salary would be reduced and the remaining funds would be used to pay the educatress who was with the class and to pay bonuses to the school’s top-performing teachers (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). The school’s financial statements let us see how often teachers were absent

from school there. For instance, the teachers of arithmetic were to give eight lessons per week (across grades), i.e. their annual salary was based on payment for eight “annual lessons”, totaling 320 rubles (8 lessons multiplied by 40 rubles). However, a teacher’s final pay being just 240 rubles would have meant that 25 % of lessons failed to be held (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 36). The school’s teachers of German were to hold nine lessons weekly, i.e. their annual salary was to be 360 rubles (9 lessons multiplied by 40 rubles, and in the 1860–1861 school year each was paid the entire amount (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 36). As regards Arithmetic and Music, approximately 25 % of the lessons were left unpaid. For most subjects at the school, there were few to no teacher absences in that year (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 36).

4) *Student composition and tuition pricing.* By and large, students had to pay to attend this school. At the instance of the Board of Trustees, parents were to pay 25 rubles per year for each girl if she was taking core subjects only and 50 rubles if she was taking both core and elective subjects (more detail below) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 29). Students were to prepay the tuition for a half-year, in January–February and in July–August, with the rules being fairly strict – failure to make payment on time would result in a student getting expelled immediately, and, in the event of leaving the school before the end of the period paid in advance, no money was to be refunded (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 29). On the other hand, the Board of Trustees had directed that the school admit “females of all social groups, regardless of one’s religious affiliation and nationality”, limiting enrollment only for reasons of limited classroom capacity and desiring to provide students with quality instruction (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). If parents could pay the tuition fees, they would need to get in touch with the principal. The Pedagogical Council would then test the child’s knowledge level to decide on which grade to assign her to (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 28). If parents could not pay the tuition fees, they would have to file a petition with the Board of Trustees, to which a certificate of poverty would need to be attached, requesting that the Board exempt them from paying their child’s tuition (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 29). Of note is the fact that a number of benefactors would only donate to the school on condition that the money would be used to fund the education of girls from poor families. Overall, by the end of the 1860–1861 school year, the school had 140 paying and 20 non-paying students – 7 non-paying students based on donations from the Kharkov merchantry (the figure was initially supposed to be 20, but the Kharkov merchantry agreed to meet the school halfway on this in its first year of operation); 3 non-paying students based on donations from the Kharkov nobility; 2 non-paying students based on the choice of the school’s principal, who were the daughters of poor Ministry of Public Education officials; 4 non-paying students allowed to attend the school for free owing to certain teachers and educatresses doing free work for the school; 4 non-paying students based on donations from particular individuals (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 44). There also were 2 orphan girls, whose parents were in service with the Ministry of Public Education. These were on the books as “grant-aided students” (their tuition was not free, but it was paid for by third-party persons (employees of Second Kharkov Gymnasium)). It, actually, was specifically stressed in *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District* that it would help to expand this practice, as it helped ensure that “society will have more girls with a substantial education” and that “the school has more funds in its budget and does not worry about having to limit the number of non-paying students” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 44-45). The school’s student body had the following social composition: 24 daughters of hereditary nobles, 54 daughters of personal nobles, 64 girls representing the merchantry, 7 daughters of members of the clergy, 10 urban commoners, and 1 foreigner (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 44). Thus, it was dominated by daughters of minor officials (personal nobles) and merchants.

5) *Teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council.* The administration of the Kharkov Educational District had final say as to the appointment of teachers in this school, with most appointed from among the teachers of Second Kharkov Gymnasium, with which, as mentioned above, the school worked in close cooperation – the school’s two teachers of Russian and its teachers of Religious Education, Arithmetic, German, French, and Drawing (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 30). An interesting case involved the director of Second Kharkov Gymnasium, a member of the school’s Board of Trustees, who agreed to substitute for a sick history teacher. Of note is the fact that on the money he received for this he would purchase magazines and books for the school’s library (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 30). Quite logically and predictably, another source that would provide teaching staff for this school was Kharkov Institute for Noble Maidens – this group included the school’s third teacher of Russian and its teachers of Geography, French, and Dancing, who had been in service there; the school’s third teacher of French was a graduate of that institute

(Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 30-31). The school hired employees of other educational institutions as well (e.g., an adjunct named F.V. Tikhonovich, who was a Kharkov University instructor), and its staff also included an official from the Office of the Trustee of the Kharkov Educational District, a female home tutor, and a few individuals who did not teach anywhere else (e.g., its Handwork class was taught by the widow of some colonel) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 30-31). In terms of gender composition, most of the subjects at the school were taught by males, with only two taught by females – Dancing and Handwork (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 30-31). On the other hand, there were four educatresses – three single ladies (with two of these being certified to teach by a gubernia schools directorate and one being a silver medal graduate of Kharkov Institute for Noble Maidens) and one married lady (a graduate of Alexander Orphan Institute) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 31). The school's principal was a married lady with nearly ten years' experience working for a couple of private female boarding schools (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 24). Thus, on the whole, the school's pedagogical composition may be considered more than satisfactory, although it was somewhat uneven – from a university instructor to a recent noble maidens institute graduate. The school's Pedagogical Council, which was to be strictly concerned with resolving pedagogical issues, including the design of curricula, was composed of its principal, all of its instructors and educatresses, and the director of Second Kharkov Gymnasium, and it was chaired by the director of Second Kharkov Gymnasium, not the school's principal (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 38-39).

6) *Curriculum*. The initial plan was to have six consecutive grades (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 24). However, in the first year of its operation, only the school's first three grades received enough students to launch, and it had so many students enrolled in Grade 1 that the class had to be split in two (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 24). Thus, although the Pedagogical Council had designed rough curricula based on a six-grade program of study, in actual fact the school would be implementing only those for Grades 1 through 3. As mentioned earlier, the school had core and elective subjects. The core subjects were Religious Education, Russian, Arithmetic, Geography, History (starting in Grade 3), Natural History (starting in Grade 3), Penmanship, and Handwork (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 39-41). The electives were German, French, Drawing, Music, Singing, and Dancing (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 41). No curricula had been designed for a number of subjects (Penmanship, Handwork, Drawing, Music, Singing, and Dancing), with the Pedagogical Council limiting itself to directing that those subjects be taught "with proper graduality" (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 40-41). On the other hand, the rest of the subjects had curricula of a very general nature, with it mostly being left up to an instructor to decide how to teach their course. For instance, the syllabus for Geography class was as follows: "Grade 1. Brief mathematics- and physics-based survey of the globe using a model globe and maps of Earth. Grade 2. Brief survey of each part of the world. Grades 3 and 4. Geography of the Russian Empire. Grade 5. Brief survey of European countries. Grade 6. Brief survey of countries in other parts of the world. Review" (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 40). As we can see, this set of subjects covered the major domains of human knowledge. Unfortunately, the number of subjects across grades is not provided in the report, which only states that there were four lessons a day, each 1.25 hours long (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 41). Student knowledge was evaluated using a 6-point scale (from 0 ("absolutely poor") to 5 ("excellent")) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 41). At the end of each month, students' parents or guardians would be handed a sheet listing their grades and absences (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 41).

7) *Budget*. At first glance, at the end of its first year of operation, the school was in excellent condition, with its overall receipts being 23,434 rubles and 5 kopecks and its expenditure being just 10,928 rubles and 26 kopecks (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 33, 38). The problem, however, was that the bulk of its receipts, 15,888 rubles and 35 kopecks, came from donations, which included what it received prior to opening up (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 32). The revenue the school generated on its own was much smaller than its expenditure. The rent income from the house contributed by the merchantry brought it 545 rubles and 70 kopecks, the sale of textbooks to students – 172 rubles and 50 kopecks, and tuition fees – 6,500 rubles (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 33). As regards its expenditure, just 2,008 rubles and 70 kopecks went to the fit-out work and 8,919 rubles and 56 kopecks was spent to keep it running (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 38). Even the likely increase in its house rent income would not have prevented a budget deficit for the facility. The school's main item of expenditure was its staffing costs, with 1,582 rubles and 50 kopecks going to pay the salaries of its instructors of core subjects, 2,943 rubles and 50 kopecks – those of its instructors of elective subjects, and 2,288 rubles and 75 kopecks – those of its other staff members (e.g., its principal, educatresses, and housekeepers) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 36-37). With that said, the electives were fairly costly for the school – mainly because of Music class, which was taught on an individual basis and, therefore,

required a large number of “annual lessons” (although, as was mentioned earlier, “annual lessons” of Music were valued at half as much as “annual lessons” in most subjects, the school ended up spending 1,867 rubles and 50 kopecks to pay its music teachers, i.e. more than all of its core subject teachers) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 36). Having said that, as evidenced in the report, it is Music that the overwhelming majority of the parents of students at the school regarded as the most important of the elective subjects, with just one of the 138 students who paid to attend these courses choosing not to enroll in Music class (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 38). Consequently, the Board of Trustees saw Music class as the main culprit for its budget deficit, which would lead it to ordain that, starting the following year, Music class would no longer be offered as an elective course and to attend it each willing student would have to pay an additional 15 rubles a year (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 38).

Let us summarize what has been covered about Mariinsky Kharkov Female School in this work. We know now that the school received a lot of support from the local community and authorities prior to its establishment. This support came in the form of substantial funding, with the school’s Board of Trustees including a number of influential individuals and its teaching staff even including an employee of the local university. This helped the school achieve impressive results as early as its first year of operation, which include the following: it did hire a house suitable for itself, launch four grades with a combined enrollment of 160 students, and provide its staff with decent salaries. Nevertheless, its position was not so sustainable – although the school’s tuition fees were pretty high, this income was not enough to operate without a budget deficit without relying on external donations. In fact, the school was totally dependent on benefactors, which was also amplified by the fact that its highest authority was not the Pedagogical Council but the Board of Trustees, mainly composed of individuals with no pedagogical experience but with connections to benefactors (e.g., the governor’s wife, the marshal of the nobility, and the city mayor). As a result, as early as its first year of operation, the school’s administration was paralyzed for over a month due to a change of gubernia nobility marshal. Thus, the school’s prospects were directly bound up with how long the Kharkov community and members of the Board of Trustees personally would sustain their interest in the operation of this educational institution. Nevertheless, the school’s Board of Trustees did look for ways out of the situation, with the solution found being not to reduce teacher pay but raise the cost of tuition (i.e., charge an additional fee for Music class). Dependence for funds on support from the local community and free labor from teaching staff (something practiced in the other female schools as well, as will be shown later below) at the best female school in the Kharkov Educational District was not viewed as something normal and acceptable – the school’s leadership was perfectly aware of the need to pay the teachers decent salaries in order to achieve quality instruction and of the necessity for the school to strive for self-sufficiency. This is of note because some of the related modern-day research contains an idealization of these characteristics of female education in the Russian Empire. Specifically, here is what E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva say about free instruction in the country: “This noble practice would later become widespread across Russia, essentially going on to turn into an ordinary phenomenon in the life of the nascent female school system” (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 124). As will be shown later below, the other female educational institutions within the Kharkov Educational District did, likewise, try to pay their teachers well enough and derive decent income from their students, and the schools were seen as being themselves to blame for their failures in these areas, which did require some sort of rectification, and not as setting a “noble” example to others (with the exception of some special cases (e.g., a school being free to attend being a condition for entitlement to a large donation)).

*Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School (1861–1862)*

1) *Prehistory*. In Kupyansk, unlike Kharkov, the local community was quite indifferent toward female education, and it was mainly on the initiative of Ministry of Public Education officials that this female school was established. On May 26, 1861, a supervisor at the local uyezd school approached the administration with the idea of opening a female department in it, citing as a reason the fact that “this town has seen several female schools established by private individuals close down as a result of failure to achieve the desired results due to lack of funding” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 175). On August 21, the administration of the Kharkov Educational District gave the green light to opening the female department, and, as early as September 19, it began its classes (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 175). Thus, in this particular case, the education authority had decided not to establish a female school using private donations but use a different approach – establish a female

department at a male educational institution, which would make it possible to start educating girls in the area sooner and at less cost.

2) *Board of Trustees*. The Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School did not have a board of trustees of its own, with the role of trustee assumed by the wife of a midlevel local official (a collegiate assessor); this lady had also pledged herself to donate to the school 75 rubles yearly (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 175-176). Consequently, whereas Mariinsky Kharkov Female School could count on patronage from influential Kharkov residents, who essentially were the ones who ran it, the situation around the female educational institution in Kupyansk developed in a completely different way – for the entire first year, the female department was managed by its female trustee and the Kupyansk Uyezd School supervisor exclusively (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176).

3) *Staff pay*. At the time the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School just opened up, its entire budget must have been made up of the 75-ruble donation from the female trustee and the first payments from students attending French class (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). It immediately became clear that the majority of the instructors would have to teach for free (for which the head of the Kharkov Educational District, K.K. Voigt, extended to them his “most sincere gratitude”) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). As a result, the only teacher paid on a per-lesson basis was the instructor of French (75 kopecks per lesson) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). On the other hand, the department’s only staff member paid an adequate annual salary was its female overseer (concerned with watching over the students), although her annual salary was a mere 60 rubles, and that is considering that she also taught Handwork class (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). As we can see, pedagogues at the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School taught either for free or for token wages, while it had already been understood in the Kharkov Educational District, as already seen above, that “unpaid labor is the least productive labor”.

4) *Student composition and tuition pricing*. The department clearly experienced underenrollment – at the end of the school year, its lower and higher divisions had a combined enrollment of just 21 students (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). With that said, its core courses, unlike at Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, were provided completely free of charge, with its elective ones costing 10 rubles a year to attend (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178). The institution’s income in this respect must have been just 30 rubles, as there were 18 non-paying and 3 paying students (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 177). Its social composition of the student body was different from that at Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, too – 9 nobles (both hereditary and personal), 5 daughters of members of the clergy, 2 daughters of members of the merchantry, and 5 urban commoners (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). Thus, whereas the female school in Kharkov was dominated by daughters of minor officials (personal nobles) and merchants, i.e. people who were not members of the top elite but were fairly rich and influential, the student body of the institution in Kupyansk had a much smaller share of girls representing the rich merchantry and a much larger share of those from the not-so-wealthy ecclesiastic and urban commoner social groups.

5) *Teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council*. The bulk of the pedagogues in the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School were male teachers from Kupyansk Uyezd School itself and from Kupyansk Ecclesiastical School, all teaching for free (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). Only those subjects were taught for which instructors had been found. Of note is the fact that the teacher of French was hired only 3 months after the department opened up, and that is considering that it was a paid position. The annual report contains no information about the educational background of the female who filled the position on November 20, 1861 (i.e., she may have held no certificate empowering her to teach this discipline) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). The post of overseer was, likewise, held by a female whose educational background is not mentioned in the report, the widow of a clergyman (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 176). Thus, the overall skill level of instructors in the female department was not very high, especially in the subjects not taught in the school’s male department (the institution may have hired any instructor willing to do the teaching for money).

6) *Curriculum*. It was designed with teacher availability in mind. The core subjects were Religious Education, Reading and Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Russian History, Penmanship, and Handwork (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178). Of note is the fact that at the much better staffed Mariinsky Kharkov Female School history was taught only beginning in Grade 3. On the other hand, the curriculum of the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School included no natural sciences. The only elective course offered was French (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178). There were plans to introduce Drawing class the following year, as an instructor was found who was prepared to teach it for free (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178). The department was split into the higher

and lower divisions by the Pedagogical Council after the school year was under way “in accordance with the girls’ intellectual development”, with the higher one offering all subjects in the curriculum and the lower one not offering History and Geography (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178-179). The institution, which had no senior grades as yet at the time, lacked adequate learning programs, but most of the teachers would provide reports on what was covered during the year. For instance, students attending the Reading and Grammar course in the higher division, read Krylov’s fables, did dictations, and learnt grammar rules, while those attending it in the lower one were only taught pronunciation and reading (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 178-179).

7) *Budget*. Essentially, the picture here was similar to that with the budget of Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, if more contrastive. On one hand, the institution’s total receipts amounted to 835 rubles and 39.5 kopecks, surpassing by a huge margin its expenditure (252 rubles and 99.5 kopecks) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 177). On the other hand, its own annual income was limited to the above-mentioned 30 rubles, received for the electives, with the rest of it coming from donations gathered by the female trustee and the supervisor (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 177). Thus, it was more than just a significant budget deficit, as in the case of Mariinsky Kharkov Female School – the department had virtually no income of its own, subsisting strictly on donations from those caring about female education.

As we can see, the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School scraped by, with its lack of popularity within the local community leading to a small student body and perennial funding shortages. There actually was little hope for the situation to improve if nothing was done about it. In that climate, the administration of the Kharkov Educational District resorted to some fairly risky measures. Firstly, it decided to introduce at least a small fee payable by students for attending its core subjects, 3 rubles a year for a start. Secondly, it resolved to transform the department into a second-class female school, making it an independent institution with a full-fledged board of trustees of its own (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 180).

#### *Lipetsk Female School (1862)*

1) *Prehistory*. Unfortunately, the report provides no information regarding the school’s prehistory. What is only known is that it opened up in the middle of a school year – on February 4, 1862 (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 187).

2) *Board of Trustees*. The school’s Board of Trustees was formed in a fashion standard for female schools at the time – it was composed of the female trustee (the wife of the uyezd nobility marshal), the uyezd nobility marshal, the city mayor, the principal, the supervisor, and two elective members (one from the nobility and the other from the merchantry of Lipetsk) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). Unfortunately, the report does not provide any details regarding how successfully the Board members combined their main job with running the school, either. With that said, as will be shown below, at this school the Board of Trustees was vested with even broader functions than its Mariinsky Kharkov Female School counterpart.

3) *Staff pay*. The financial assistance from the community of Lipetsk (this is discussed later below) enabled the school to offer generous salaries to its staff, even though it paid less than Mariinsky Kharkov Female School. It had an annual payroll of 950 rubles – 350 rubles for its teachers, 300 rubles for its principal (200 rubles in salary and 100 rubles in cash bonuses), 150 rubles for its only principal assistant, 100 rubles for its housekeepers, and 50 rubles for its chief clerk (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 189-190). Lipetsk Female School paid half as much to some of its staff members as what Mariinsky Kharkov Female School did. Specifically, the principal was paid 300 rubles – versus 600 rubles at the other school, and the principal assistant received 150 rubles – versus 300 rubles paid to each educatress at the other school. A salary of this size was enough to attract teachers capable of adequate instruction and not to be limited to the services of persons prepared to teach for free, as in the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School. However, a teacher could earn more in a large city than what Lipetsk Female School was prepared to offer them.

4) *Student composition and tuition pricing*. This educational institution had the most noteworthy tuition payment system among the three examined in this study. The Lipetsk community, which had chosen not to limit itself to one-off donations, had taken on the obligation to pay the school 1,112 rubles and 80 kopecks a year (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 189). In return, the school had agreed to teach girls representing the town’s merchantry and urban commoners completely free of charge (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 190). Perhaps, it is for this reason that the school had no fixed tuition fees in place – when a girl not from the Lipetsk community enrolled in the school, the Board of Trustees would consider her case individually and the cost of her tuition would

be based on the financial circumstances of her family (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 190). At the end of the first school year, the school had an enrollment of 78 girls, with just eight of these paying to attend it (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188, 190). However, of the eight formally paying students, three were later exempted from paying tuition fees by the Board of Trustees due to poverty, with the remaining five getting to pay 42 rubles a year by way of semi-annual payments (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 190). Quite expectably, with a tuition payment system like this in place, the social composition of the school's student body was completely different from that at the educational institutions in Kharkov and Kupyansk – it was a lot more democratic, but it was also dominated by girls representing the wealthy merchant social group. It was attended by not a single daughter of a hereditary noble, 4 daughters of personal nobles, 30 girls representing the merchantry, 43 urban commoners, and 1 daughter of a soldier (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). If we compare this situation with that at the educational institution in Kupyansk, we can see that in the Kharkov Educational District being free to attend alone was not enough for parents to want to send their children to a particular female school, while being free to attend and being cared for by the local community made a school quite attractive to relatively average people.

5) *Teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council.* In this area, the school was similar to the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School – the majority of its teachers were male instructors from the local uyezd school, with only the organizational positions of principal and assistant principal being held by females (the assistant principal combined her post with that of teacher of handwork) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). The report says nothing about the educational background of these two staff members.

6) *Curriculum.* Although initially the school had been intended as a three-grade educational institution, it had to limit itself to enrollment in Grade 1 and a special (preparatory) grade due to low levels of knowledge among the initial entrants (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). In terms of learning programs, the focus may have been on making them as close to those of male uyezd school as possible. Specifically, Grade 1 offered “the same subjects as those offered in Grade 1 at the uyezd school, with the only difference being that girls were to be provided slightly simplified instruction to ensure it matched the time's child-rearing practices used for girls (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). There were no elective subjects in the curriculum – neither French, nor Drawing. The report for this school says nothing about whether or not there were plans to introduce any there. Other than that, the curriculum was similar to that of the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School. There was History, but there was no Natural History. The school offered the following subjects in both its Grade 1 and preparatory grade: Religious Education, Russian, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Penmanship, and Handwork (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188). The syllabus for the school's preparatory grade may have been not a very well-designed one. For instance, the report does list History and Geography in its lesson distribution section, but it mentions none of these courses in the section concerned with what specifically was covered in that grade (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 188-189).

7) *Budget.* Compared with the other two schools, Lipetsk Female School had a surplus budget, although that was mainly owing to annual donations. In addition to the sum of 1,112 rubles and 80 kopecks, received from the city community, 300 rubles was to be annually donated by members of the Board of Trustees and 61 rubles by different private individuals, amounting to annual receipts of 1,473 rubles and 80 kopecks, even exclusive of the school's own earnings (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 189). The school's planned annual expenditure was 1,285 rubles for a start (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 190). Thus, Lipetsk Female School not only had a surplus of funding at the end of its first year of operation but could also rest assured that its annual revenue would continue to surpass its annual expenditure in the future as well. However, the price to pay for that was its ever-increasing dependence on the local community and members of the Board of Trustees personally – this is whom the school drew almost all of its funding from.

As we can see, during its first year in existence, Lipetsk Female School achieved significant success, in terms of both academic-organizational (the size of its student body reaching 78) and organizational-financial (its fixed annual revenue surpassing its fixed annual expenditure) performance. With that said, the school was dominated by non-paying students, while in terms of social background the overwhelming majority were urban commoners, i.e. members of one of the lower social groups. Thus, the school was successful in spreading female education among members of the relatively poor strata of society and was accessible to them. However, this exclusively was achieved owing to input from the local community, whose members had agreed to

not only fund the opening of the school but provide funding annually toward its operation going forward as well.

## 5. Conclusion

The study's findings, derived from an analysis of the operation of three educational institutions within the Kharkov Educational District of the Russian Empire, produced the conclusion that in the early 1860s the operation of most female schools in the Russian Empire may have depended not so much on national documents and decisions made in the capital as it may have on local factors. A critical factor was the attitude of a local community toward a school. In the Kharkov Educational District, they by no means considered it normal to have teachers work for free and have a school subsist on donations from people who had chosen to support it. However, none of the schools examined in this part of the study (and none explored in its second part, either) were able to attain self-sufficiency – not even where the bulk of the pedagogues worked for free.

Donations represented a critical contributor to a female school's budget, and their volume depended on how interested members of a local community were in its existence. A local community could have a say in various matters concerning the operation of a school, even including whether or not it would be free to attend for students. For instance, the local community in rich Kharkov did not guarantee annual donations for the female school, but it did manage to enroll enough girls from rich families for payments received from them to cover the bulk of the school's expenditure (there were cases where the education of poor girls was paid for by people who felt pity for them and cases where teachers provided instruction free of charge). Although in *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District* this approach was touted as one helping ensure that "the school has more funds in its budget and does not worry about having to limit the number of non-paying students", it was not embraced in the other schools. At the same time, the local community in Lipetsk had agreed to donate annually to the female school a sum covering most of its expenditure on condition that Lipetsk girls representing the merchant and urban commoner social groups (i.e., the majority of the student body) attend it free of charge. As a consequence, the bulk of the school's student body was made up of girls from the relatively poor urban commoner social group.

Consequently, this state of affairs inevitably resulted in each female school in the Kharkov Educational District being tangibly different from the rest in the early 1860s. Depending on the wishes of the local community, each school had a different budget (both in size and in source of funding), a different staff composition, a different social composition of the student body, and even a different set of subjects in the curriculum. More specifically, in some cases (i.e., the extremely poor Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School) the actual set of disciplines was formed based on the availability of pedagogues prepared to work for free – the introduction of Drawing class in the Female Department of Kupyansk uyezd school was motivated exclusively by there becoming available an instructor prepared to work for free teaching it. However, it was not always about the financial side of it. Specifically, the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School, which desperately lacked funding, did nonetheless introduce French, a prestigious language to learn at the time, as an elective. By contrast, Lipetsk Female School, which was a much more financially fit educational institution, offered no electives in the prestigious disciplines that would be reflective of one's high status in society. The other schools offered French, German, Music, and Dancing as electives. Quite naturally, the schools differed in the social composition of the student body, too. Specifically, the dear Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, which offered French, Music, and Dancing, was dominated by girls representing the nobility and the merchantry and did not enroll many urban commoners. Lipetsk Female School, which was free to attend and offered no prestigious courses, enrolled almost no noble students but was attended by many urban commoners.

Thus, in the early 1860s, the term 'female school' could be used in the Russian Empire to refer to educational institutions that were fairly different in terms of curriculum, level of teaching, and social composition of the student body. A critical factor determining the image of a school was the attitude of the local community toward it. Unfortunately, most of the reports published in *Bulletin of the Kharkov Educational District* provide little insight into this. Thankfully, there are two exceptions – two school reports offering a fairly detailed look at the complex relationships between a school and a local community. These two reports will be examined in detail in the study's second part.

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