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A History of Everyday Life in Female Schools Within the Kharkov Educational District (1860–1862). Part 2

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Abstract

This work 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 their first year in operation, published in *Tsirkulyar po Khar'kovskomu uchebnomu okrugu*. 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 work's second part is focused on Kozlov Second-Class Female School and Oryol Second-Class Female School. It gives extensive consideration to the local communities' attitude toward the schools, which is described in the reports in a fairly detailed manner. It was found that neither in Kozlov nor in Oryol did the local community have a very good understanding of what female education was for, with most girls there being totally unprepared for it when starting school. Of note are the two different approaches taken by each school's administration in that climate. More specifically, at Kozlov Female School a primary focus was on prestigious electives, instruction in fundamental sciences was limited, and the staff who taught these sciences did so for free. Oryol Female School offered just one prestigious elective (French), whilst instruction in core subjects there was fairly high-quality, it was done by male gymnasium teachers, and more of such courses were offered there than at most of the other female schools. There was a difference in the reaction of the two local communities to the above, too – whereas Kozlov witnessed a sort of vogue for placing girls in school, although, in actual fact, most of the parents were little interested in their

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child's schooling, the school in Oryol received a reputation as an institution for the poor and had not a single girl student from a well-off family (such girls typically attended a private boarding school). Thus, due to local differences between them, the female schools had different policies in terms of designing the curriculum and dealing with the local community. Technically, choosing not to embrace the fundamental curriculum of a male gymnasium and opting to focus on prestigious subjects could bring a school a situational benefit, making it attractive to a significant number of little-educated parents.

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

1. Introduction

The scholars E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva view Russia's early-1860s system of female schools under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education as a "public-private establishment" within which pedagogical councils enjoyed a maximum of rights, with the attainment of such rights for male gymnasiums and real schools being something that "many zemstvos, non-governmental organizations, and educational organizations would desperately strive for through the rest of the 19th century" (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 139-140). As revealed by our previous analysis, the experience of several specific schools within the Kharkov Educational District attests to this perfectly. However, E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva's view of society's specific influence on the operation of female schools seems to differ completely from what is described in the schools' annual reports from *Tsirkulyar po Khar'kovskomu uchebnomu okrugu*. As shown previously, the successful Mariinsky Kharkov Female School and Lipetsk Female School enrolled many daughters of merchants, with the merchantry contributing significant funding to the upkeep of these schools (directly in Kharkov and through the city community, which included merchants and urban commoners, in Lipetsk). According to E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, on the other hand, "female schools for members of all social classes in the late 1850s and early 1860s owed their emergence and spread most importantly to the Russian "middle class"" (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 143). The researchers then also stress the "democraticity" of the female schools' student body, although they only limit themselves to two examples: Yekaterinoslav Female Gymnasium (formerly a first-class school) had in 1865 an enrollment of 99 female students, with only 11 of these being nobles; Tambov Female Gymnasium (a higher female first-class school) had in 1863 an enrollment of 46 noble commoners, 2 daughters of merchants, and 22 nobles (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 143). However, in actual fact this information does not prove much, for, as was shown in the work's first part, during that time each female school had a special social appearance. For instance, of Mariinsky Kharkov Female School's 160 students, 78 were nobles, 64 were daughters of merchants, and just 19 were noble commoners, and of Lipetsk Female School's 78 students, just 4 were nobles and as many as 30 were daughters of merchants (plus there were 43 urban commoners).

Thus, in practice, female schools for members of all social classes could be oriented toward different specific estate and social population groups. On one hand, since they were opening for the purpose of spreading literacy among girls, it is logical that many of the schools were trying to bring education to those strata where women tended to receive little to no education (an example of this will be provided later below). Yet, on the other hand, as shown in the work's first part, since most female schools were funded by the local community they served, their administration was, above all, interested in support from the local elite, i.e. rich and influential citizens; it was about either enrolling well-paying girls from good families, which would help cover at least a portion of a school's expenditure (as was the case with Mariinsky Kharkov Female School), or receiving steady annual funding from the local community (Lipetsk Female School).

Hence, the relationship between a school and the local community it served was of special importance. As evidenced by the case of the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School, without support from the elite a female educational institution would be doomed to poverty and without popularity among the locals – to a low number of students.

It is the issue of how a female school was building a rapport with a local community that was largely unable to comprehend the significance of female education that has not been explored up to now. *Tsirkulyar po Khar'kovskomu uchebnomu okrugu* appears to contain some interesting information on this. The work's second part will be focused on two schools whose reports communicate interesting information about the local community, the student body, a variety of issues faced in trying to interact with those people, and how those issues were tackled.

2. Materials and methods

The work is focused on the following seven aspects of the operation of the female schools under examination: 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 instruction in female educational institutions across 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 each school's report – the one about its students' successes in the first year of study. The thing is that 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, since the public did not always understand the significance of female education, publications about poor student progress could have had a highly negative effect in terms of community 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.

This part of the work will draw upon the annual reports for the following two educational institutions within the Kharkov Educational District, published in *Tsirkulyar po Khar'kovskomu uchebnomu okrugu* for 1861–1862, as the most informative sources for the truth about the attitude toward them of the local communities they served: Kozlov Second-Class Female School (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 140-147) and Oryol Second-Class Female School (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 70-76). Of particular interest is the fact that in the climate of lacking community understanding of the significance of female education that both schools were facing their boards of trustees adopted completely different strategies for development, which eventually would produce diametrically opposite results.

3. Discussion

As noted earlier, the issue of interaction between society and female schools in the 1860s Russian Empire has been explored very little up to now. The scholars E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, who address this issue in their fundamental monograph quite extensively, appear to pass education trends observed in certain regions of the Russian Empire off as common around the country. That being said, many of the assertions put forth by these authors appear to be insufficiently well-grounded and focused on developing the Soviet ideologemes. For instance, there is the claim that initially the only proponents of female education in Russia were its “innovative teachers and education figures” – as opposed to local communities (there is mention of an unwillingness to fund female education on the part of the residents of Kherson, Yaroslavl, and Ryazan Governorates) (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 135). However, as we read further into the monograph, we will learn that the real improvements in the area of the establishment of new female schools witnessed across the Russian Empire actually came after the release of a special directive by the country's Minister of Internal Affairs, S.S. Lansky, who was a representative of imperial bureaucracy, not an innovative pedagogue (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 135). According to E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva, some governorates welcomed S.S. Lansky's directive and others did not – however, the researchers provide no explanation of this fact (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 135-137). Thus, while it follows from the monograph by E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva that there were differences in the public's attitude toward female education across governorates in the early-1860s Russian Empire, the researchers fail to explore the actual factors that governed community support for a female school.

Of note also is the article by T.Ye. Pokotilova and Ye.Yu. Oborsky, ‘The Person, The Public, and the Government in the Development of Female Education in the Russian Empire’ (Pokotilova, Oborskii, 2022: 72-80). This article, however, cites as the main reason behind community support for female education the fairly abstract “tradition of benefaction” (Pokotilova, Oborskii, 2022: 75). The authors associate the genesis of this tradition mainly with the work of the imperial government

(Pokotilova, Oborskii, 2022: 74). Consequently, they regard instances of community support for female educational institutions (mainly viewed through the lens of the Stavropol region) as a sort of given, something indissolubly associated with the “potential and ambitions of members of the merchantry, nobility, and city intelligentsia, who, on one hand, were interested in the modern development of their daughters and many of whom, on the other, took an active part in social-charitable work” (Pokotilova, Oborskii, 2022: 75). The authors, however, are silent on why local community members became interested in the “modern development of their daughters” more in the 1860s specifically, what led to the opening of a second-class female school in Stavropol, and why they chose female education specifically as the object of their charitable work. Thus, the specific practices that helped female educational institutions in the 1860s Russia attract the attention of the public have not been explored up to now.

It is worth noting that this part of the work will also briefly touch upon the operation of private female boarding schools in the Russian Empire, which it will do through the lens of the following two interesting articles – N.A. Mitsyuk’s “Education Is Not Only for the Living Room”: The Phenomenon of Provincial Female Boarding Schools’ (Mitsyuk, 2012: 3-9) and V.A. Veremenko’s ‘Boarding Schools in Russia in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries’ (Veremenko, 2015: 33-38).

4. Results

Kozlov Female School (1861–1862)

1) *Prehistory*. The report provides no information on the history of the establishment of this school, with the exception of the fact that it began operation in the middle of a school year, on December 18, 1861 (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 140).

2) *Board of Trustees*. The school’s Board of Trustees was to have a traditional composition: the trustee (the wife of an uyezd landed gentleman), the uyezd marshal of the nobility, the city mayor, the female principal, the Ministry of Public Education official (Supervisor for Kozlov Schools), and two elective members (elected from among Kozlov’s nobles and merchants) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 140). However, no principal was appointed for the school (possibly for financial reasons), with its management being performed by the Supervisor for Kozlov Schools personally, which he did for free (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 140). Thus, here we witness the most substantial deviation from the board of trustees composition prescribed by the country’s legislation among the schools examined hitherto – one of this governing body’s members was simply not appointed, with the office remaining vacant for the entire school year. Based on the report, the school’s Board of Trustees mainly handled organizational-financial issues (e.g., budget distribution and control, determination of tuition fees, and guardianship over poor students), while pedagogical issues were the responsibility of the school’s Pedagogical Council, whose activity is discussed in the greatest detail in the one for this school among all the reports examined (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 141-144).

3) *Staff pay*. For reasons unknown, Kozlov Female School rented a very expensive building – paying 500 rubles per year for it. (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142). By comparison, the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School was paying a rent of 85 rubles (Tsirkulyar..., 1862b: 177) and Lipetsk Female School – 150 rubles (Tsirkulyar..., 1862c: 189). Therefore, although in Kozlov, as in Lipetsk, the local city community and several private persons had agreed to make yearly contributions to the school’s budget (and that, compared with Lipetsk, was even without asking in return that some of the girls be educated free of charge), achieving a no-deficit school budget was a problem. Besides, the school in Kozlov attempted to introduce full-featured instruction in elective subjects, with these including not only French but dancing as well and singing even becoming a free core subject (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142-143). Most of the school’s teachers (specifically, those of religious education, Russian, arithmetic, and geography) worked for free and instruction in both dancing and French was conducted by one of its educatresses (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142). As a result, whereas Lipetsk Female School spent on pay for its staff (inclusive of housekeepers) 950 rubles in the year (of this amount, 350 rubles was paid to the teachers and 150 rubles to the principal assistant), Kozlov Female School paid, even inclusive of unpaid work, a combined 336 rubles and 30 kopecks to its pedagogical staff and another 36 rubles to its housekeepers over a half-year period (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142). Understandably, this was fraught with danger to the very long-term existence of the school – however substantial the local community’s financial contribution to its budget was, its large expenditure (much of this incurred in renting an expensive

building and running the ambitious French and dancing programs) made its Board of Trustees heavily resort to having instructors teach free lessons.

4) *Student composition and tuition pricing.* The situation in this school was somewhat ambiguous in relation to the student body as well. As in the Lipetsk school, here only the first and preparatory grades were in place in the first year, with students allowed to enroll in the preparatory grade without taking an exam (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 144). Based on the school's financial records, this grade was free to attend. By and large, the school's extremely low cash receipts from tuition matched the size of its Grade 1 enrollment, whilst there also was a separate revenue item – “voluntary contributions from students in the preparatory grade” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 141). As a result, there was a significant disproportion between the two grades – whereas Grade 1 enrolled no more than 15 students, the preparatory grade had an enrollment of 104 (!), which would eventually prompt considering the cessation of admission to it (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 144). Of interest is the fact that, compared with the other educational institutions, this school's report provides a breakdown of the student body by social group. The two grades differed in this respect significantly – Grade 1 was dominated by daughters of nobles and merchants (5 daughters of hereditary and personal nobles, 2 daughters of members of the clergy, 4 girls representing the merchantry, 3 urban commoners, and 1 peasant), whilst the overwhelming majority of students in the preparatory grade were urban commoners (10 daughters of hereditary and personal nobles, 3 daughters of members of the clergy, 11 girls representing the merchantry, 67 urban commoners, 9 peasants, and 4 *raznochintsy*) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 144). As a result, the school was faced with an interesting phenomenon – whereas Grade I was relatively stable (only one girl left the school in the year), the preparatory grade lost 20 % of its student body (21 girls) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 144). Normally, the school's administration by all means refrained from expelling its students and tried to reason with parents who wished to remove their daughter from it, which, however, did not always work (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145). Some of the claims such parents had against the school were fairly well-grounded (e.g., good students having to be part of a large class alongside bad ones) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145). However, most of those claims indicate the unpreparedness of the Kozlov community for regular female education. For instance, some parents did not like that girls attending the school were asked to dress plain and did not have to wear a crinoline, some were not happy with the school not practicing corporal punishment as a measure against naughtiness, and others wished that the learning program be limited to teaching students to read the Book of Hours and the Psalter (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145). It follows from the report that Kozlov witnessed a sort of vogue for placing girls in school, which, however, was not something underpinned by a real interest in female education (“Many of the parents, while inspired by the example of others who had placed their daughter in the school, were still not fully aware of why that was needed” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145)). Even sadder was the situation with the intellectual development of the school's students (“Many of those enrolling in the school were noticeably characterized more by being barbarous and stupid as a result of being browbeaten than by exhibiting signs of some development, even if rather poor” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145)). On the other hand, many of those who became its students would take the high road in their schooling endeavors – only to be met with indifference on the part of their parents (“Some would never even bother to find out how well their child was doing in school” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145)). Furthermore, some parents would ask the school's administration not to overwhelm students with schoolwork and not to load them with it during the holidays (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 145-146). The official cost of tuition at this school (these fees would, apparently, have to be paid when in Grade 1) was 3 rubles, 6 rubles, and 10 rubles per year, depending on one's financial circumstances, for core subjects and 15 rubles for electives, with there existing the possibility of poor girls being exempted from tuition fees at the discretion of the Board of Trustees (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142).

5) *Teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council.* Unfortunately, the report for this school provides no information on the education level and main place of employment of most of its instructors. A noteworthy fact is that the school's teaching staff included a large number of persons of ecclesiastical status (besides its teacher of religious education, it also employed two clergymen as its chief instructors in the preparatory grade and instruction in singing was conducted there by a clerk vicar) (Циркуляр, 1862a: 143). Despite the fact that many of the school's teachers worked for free, its Pedagogical Council would regularly hold sittings and discuss common issues relating to female education. In fact, among the female educational institutions considered in this study, this school's was the only pedagogical council to offer detailed explanations regarding the logic behind

the design of the curriculum – and, as was the case in many other female educational institutions within the Kharkov Educational District, the school’s administration would have to base its judgment on what was practicable rather than desirable. For instance, when certain instructors suggested using a better, more state-of-the-art textbook available on the market, the administration opposed it, citing both complexity and price as the reason (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). The idea of teachers producing lesson material (“notes”) based on various books, i.e. creating a textbook of their own design, was rejected on the grounds that not all instructors were prepared to do it for free or for a small remuneration and some of those prepared to do it were doubted as capable of doing it the right way (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). Based on a piece published by a Novocherkassk Host Gymnasium teacher, A.M. Savel'yev, in *Tsirkulyar po Khar'kovskomu uchebnomu okrugu*, while the practice of teachers creating “notes” was a fairly common one in the Kharkov Educational District in the early 1860s, it mostly was done out of vanity and most of such notes were poor quality (Tsirkulyar..., 1863: 65-67). A.M. Savel'yev describes his own experience in this area as follows: “I didn’t know where to start, what to do, or what sources to use. Yet I was spurred on by ambition; the desire to uphold my reputation amongst others made me work hard and assiduously. My predecessor had used notes – accordingly, I would want to have mine too” (Tsirkulyar..., 1863: 67). Thus, while rejecting the idea of having teachers create “notes” may have been a well-justified move, doing so left the following two options – either not use textbooks in class altogether (this was not approved by the Pedagogical Council, which reasoned that it would be wrong to rely on student memory alone) or utilize textbooks accepted in the Kharkov Educational District for use in the uyezd schools (this was approved) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). In the end, the decision was made to model the school’s curriculum after what was used in the uyezd schools (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). That said, the Pedagogical Council did try to adapt instruction in this educational institution to the capabilities of its students. The report for Kozlov Female School contains detailed information about how the Pedagogical Council discussed “various ways of instruction” and describes the ways that were selected in the end (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143-144). For instance, in teaching prayers in the preparatory grade, the first step was to explain each word separately, then each word combination, and lastly the overall meaning of a prayer (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). With that said, the aim for the teacher of religious education was not so much to explain to students a particular prayer but provide them with a “clear understanding of the importance, lofty significance, and sanctity of prayers”, with a view to cultivating in them a “sense of religious piety” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). Geography lessons in Grade 1 were conducted pretty much in the form of free conversation, with the aim of “arousing curiosity in students and making them want to find out the causes of various natural phenomena” (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 144). While not all decisions made by the school’s Pedagogical Council were worthwhile, it was the only educational institution among those examined in this study whose annual report attested that its Pedagogical Council discussed not only what was to be taught but also how to teach it, which was particularly important in a climate where the local community was not fully prepared for female education.

6) *Curriculum*. Since the female schools in Kozlov and Lipetsk modeled their curricula after the uyezd schools’, one would have expected them to be fairly similar. However, that was not the case in practice. The differences between the two curricula boiled down to two major characteristics. Firstly, as shown earlier, Lipetsk Female School completely gave up on electives, whilst Kozlov Female School introduced French and dancing, which were not on the curriculum in the uyezd schools but were taught in several other female schools. Secondly, possibly because Kozlov Female School did not pay teachers for lessons, the number of core subjects taught there was much smaller than in Lipetsk Female School, especially in the preparatory grade (as a reminder, the school in Lipetsk had the same set of subjects in the preparatory grade and Grade 1). Ultimately, the preparatory grade taught just four subjects – religious education, reading, penmanship, and handwork (there was no arithmetic, history, and geography compared with the school in Lipetsk) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). Grade 1 taught religious education, Russian, geography, arithmetic, penmanship, handwork, French, and dancing (i.e., compared with the Lipetsk school, there was no history but there were French and dancing) (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 143). Thus, in practice, the curriculum at Kozlov Female School was noticeably different from that of a regular uyezd school, which primarily had to do with the introduction of the prestigious subjects into it.

7) *Budget*. The situation in this area was rather ambiguous. On one hand, Kozlov Female School earned a decent annual income, well comparable to that of the financially fit Lipetsk Female School. As in the case of the latter, its main source of income was yearly donations from the caring

local community, with 838 rubles and 50 kopecks coming from the city community, 600 rubles – from members of the Board of Trustees, and as much as 745 rubles – from different private individuals (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 141). This comes to 2,183 rubles and 50 kopecks, i.e. nearly 1.5 times the amount contributed to the budget of the female school in Lipetsk (1,473 rubles and 80 kopecks). That said, the school earned a modest, if noticeable, income from student tuition fees – 94 rubles and 50 kopecks from fees for core subjects, 58 rubles and 50 kopecks from fees for electives, and 233 rubles and 20 kopecks from voluntary contributions from its students in the preparatory grade (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 141). Leaping ahead a bit, it is worth noting that this theoretically earned Kozlov Female School the largest annual income among the schools examined in this study (except for Mariinsky Kharkov Female School). In practice, however, there was an issue that was similar to the one with student enrollment – a sizable portion of the school's benefactors, including the city community, had committed themselves to contributing large sums – but in actuality, only some of that money was provided, with the school's receipts in the first school year (inclusive of one-off contributions and several other sources of income not mentioned above) amounting to 2,391 rubles and 50 kopecks; the unreceived 518 rubles and 58 kopecks in promised annual donations was treated as arrears (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 141). The school's expenditure was 1,311 rubles and 60 kopecks (Tsirkulyar..., 1862a: 142). However, it must be taken into account that during the school's first year in operation it had no spending on major expense items such as pay for the principal (as a reminder, Lipetsk Female School paid its principal 300 rubles per year) and pay for teachers, with most of its teachers doing it for free (Lipetsk Female School spent on this 350 rubles per year). As we can see, while Kozlov Female School could technically continue having a no-deficit budget in the future, even with someone in office as Principal and teacher pay in place, that required the continuation of support from the local community – and that support was unprecedented even vis-à-vis Lipetsk's. The problem was that a large portion of the Kozlov community was treating the idea of female education as a sort of vogue and did not have a clear idea of what it was for, which was reflected both in promised contributions not being provided to the school and in parents seeking to remove their daughters from it.

Kozlov Female School could be regarded as the most controversial and unbalanced of the schools examined in this study. This educational institution, while behind Mariinsky Kharkov Female School by a large margin in terms of one-off donations, enjoyed the largest volume of annual contributions from the local community. However, in actual fact, a significant portion of these funds were not put to use. The school rented an expensive building. Unlike the other uyezd female schools, it taught dancing, but it did not have a principal and many of its teachers worked for free. Over the year, it had an enrollment of 119, which was a definite success. However, 22 of its students were removed from the school by parents – some for reasons fairly absurd, like the absence of corporal punishment there. Nevertheless, judging by the report's detailedness and the unprecedented cogency of the opinions expressed by the Pedagogical Council, this unbalancedness was hardly due to carelessness and thoughtlessness. The school's administration may have been specifically trying to create for it the image of a prestigious, and even swanky, educational institution, where girls would be treated as high-society ladies, being taught not only the sciences but French, and even dancing – believing that this approach would help it win over the community. At any rate, the importance of a school's prestige is attested to by the report for Oryol Female School.

Oryol Female School (1860–1861)

At first glance, Oryol Female School comes across as the most successful of the female educational institutions examined in this study, except, of course, for Mariinsky Kharkov Female School, which was located in a university town. First of all, Oryol, unlike Kupyansk, Lipetsk, and Kozlov, was a gubernia town, not an uyezd one, which potentially promised it greater attention on the part of the authorities and the possibility of enlisting teachers from the gubernia gymnasium to work in the female school. Second of all, only here was the female school not created from scratch (it was the product of a merger with a local female parish school, which originated in 1840) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74-75). However, the first-year report for this educational institution paints a fairly bleak picture in terms of operation, and that is despite the fact that Oryol Female School was in a pretty solid situation in terms of both revenue and pedagogical staff.

1) *Prehistory*. In addition to organizational errors, it is the school's prehistory that played the most negative role in its operation. An educational institution known as Lancasterian School for Girls was opened in Oryol back in 1840. Subsequently, it was transformed into a female parish school, which in 1860 had an additional grade, where teachers from the uyezd school provided free

instruction in religious education, Russian grammar, arithmetic, history, and geography (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 75). According to the report, this educational institution was popularly known in Oryol as “the philistine school” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 75). The new school gradually absorbed the female parish school. The bulk of its first cohort was enrolled from among the student body of the female parish school (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). Furthermore, at that time Oryol had two private female boarding schools, which, unlike the “philistine school”, enjoyed a solid reputation with the influential segment of the local community; ultimately, even at the end of its first school year this school’s student body included no children from wealthy families of nobles, officials, and merchants, whereas in the private boarding schools, where tuition was 20 times more expensive, the enrollment was nearly 50 students (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). As we can see, what could have become the formula for the school’s successful operation (its long history and being located in a gubernia town) did it, in actual fact, a disservice – the reputation of the educational institution that the school was established on the grounds of was not that great and the town already had competitors that were more successful. As a result, Oryol Female School was the only one of the educational institutions considered in this study to find itself in a competitive environment – to achieve more effective development it would need to find a way to woo students away from the private female boarding schools. It was about not so much the actual student body and how much could be earned from tuition fees but the attention and support of their parents, the rich segment of the local community, and potential benefactors.

2) *Board of Trustees*. Of note is the fact that Oryol Female School had the largest Board of Trustees, which, apart from regular members, also included honorary ones. It was composed in a regular manner – the female trustee (first it was the wife of the governor and later it was the wife of the marshal of the gubernia nobility), the uyezd nobility marshal, the city mayor, the Ministry of Public Education official (Director of Oryol Schools), the female principal, and two elective members (elected from among Oryol’s nobles and merchants) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 70-71). The Board of Trustees also included three honorary members – two guards officers and an active state councilor (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). The report does not explain the principle behind the choice of these members; what is known is that one of them, Rittmeister N.V. Kireyevsky, was a donor of 10,000 rubles toward the establishment of the female school (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Thus, an honorary member of the school’s Board of Trustees would be someone who had done a lot to help the school open or operate. A fact worthy of note is that female schools in the Russian Empire became statutorily empowered to expand their boards of trustees only in 1862 (Dneprov, Usacheva, 2009: 140). Evidently, the practice of expanding a board of trustees with generous benefactors was allowed in the Kharkov Educational District before it was at the national level, which once more goes to show the importance of regional characteristics to the operation of female schools in the early-1860s Russian Empire.

3) *Staff pay*. The significant volume of contributions helped pay teachers and educatresses at Oryol Female School very well – almost as well as at Mariinsky Kharkov Female School. Specifically, its female overseer was paid 300 rubles – the same as educatresses at Mariinsky Kharkov Female School (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). The report helps calculate the school’s teacher pay based on the rate for the “annual lesson”. Specifically, the teacher of religious education would be paid 100 rubles at 4 lessons per week (i.e., 25 rubles per “annual lesson”), the teacher of Russian – 210 rubles at 6 lessons (35), the teacher of mathematics – 140 rubles at 4 lessons (35), the teachers of history and geography – 175 rubles at 5 lessons (35), the teacher of natural history – 70 rubles at 2 lessons (35), and the teacher of penmanship – 120 rubles at 6 lessons (20) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). As a reminder, while Mariinsky Kharkov Female School paid its teachers of these subjects (with the exception of penmanship) 40 rubles per annual lesson, it had a system of deductions for missed classes (something that Oryol Female School did not do, as suggested by its budget figures); in fact, its teacher of penmanship was paid 20 rubles. Thus, overall the situation with staff pay was noticeably better in Oryol Female School than in most of the female schools in the Kharkov Educational District, which gave it the potential to enlist good pedagogues. That said, Oryol Female School did have cases of staff working for free, such as its principal and teacher of drawing refusing to accept remuneration for their services (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 70, 72).

4) *Student composition and tuition pricing*. Here the situation was the worst. As shown earlier, most of the female schools in the Kharkov Educational District considered in this study had preparatory grades with large enrollments. However, in Oryol Female School the role of such a grade was played by the female parish school, merged with it, which enrolled as many as

138 students at the school year end (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 75). On the other hand, enrollment in the actual newly established school was highly limited, as it would accept only girls with a level matching a first-grade level of knowledge at least, although, as shown earlier, parents representing the area's wealthy families, i.e. ones with the most educated girls, typically preferred placing their daughter in a private boarding school. Ultimately, Oryol Female School was the only of the educational institutions considered in this study to actually witness a decline in the size of the student body in the first school year – it started the first year with an enrollment of 28 girls, mainly students from the parish school; during that school year, 4 new students joined it and 6 students left it (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). Thus, at the school year end it had an enrollment of just 26 students, most of whom were daughters of minor officials – 3 daughters of hereditary nobles, 11 daughters of personal nobles, 1 daughter of a person of ecclesiastical status, 3 girls representing the merchantry, and 8 urban commoners (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). A factor that held out the prospect of a good future for the school was that the establishment of a not-so-successful new school was breathing new life into the parish female school – whereas it retained just 49 learners from the former student body, during that year it admitted 91 new students, two students left it, and three of its students passed away (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 75). In terms of social composition, the parish school was still dominated by urban commoners – there were 32 daughters of hereditary and personal nobles, 25 girls representing the merchantry, and 81 urban commoners (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 75). The size of the student body at the female school could increase via the enrollment of students from the parish female school, but that only strengthened the link between the new educational institution and the old “philistine school”, which was unpopular with the area's wealthy residents. What additionally complicated the situation was the extremely low level of preparation among students, which, as in Kozlov Female School, was associated with a lack of support for the education of the girls within their families. The annual report provides the following unflattering characterization of the school's student body: “Nearly every single student from a poor family at the school was characterized by a lack of any sort of development and a complete absence of preparation, i.e. of something that is such a boon to any educational institution and an indicator of parents' efforts to bring up their children in a proper way, i.e. with school in mind” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 73). As regards tuition, which was not free (the report mentions no cases of enrolling non-paying students), it would cost between 3, 5, and 12 rubles to attend a core course depending on one's financial circumstances (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). The report provides no information on the school's tuition fees for elective courses.

5) *Teaching staff and the Pedagogical Council.* The school's relatively high staff pay helped form the male segment of its pedagogical workforce not from instructors of the local uyezd school but from teachers of the gubernia gymnasium, both junior and senior (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Only instruction in religious education was conducted by the local archpriest and drawing was taught by a teacher from the uyezd school (as a reminder, the drawing teacher worked for free) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). The annual report for this school even stresses that it outdid the city's private boarding schools in terms of the caliber of the teaching staff (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). Things typically were more complicated with the female segment of the school's pedagogical workforce. Apart from the principal and the overseer, its female members also included the teachers of French and handwork. The report says nothing about the educational background of the French teacher, who combined her position with the post of overseer (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Of note is what occurred in Handwork class – a rather curious happening. Specifically, on February 1, 1861, the lady who taught this class had to leave the school for reasons not mentioned in the report; the school would hire a substitute teacher only on March 1, 1861 (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Thus, even offering a good salary, good enough to interest male instructors from the local gymnasium, would not guarantee back then hiring a good female instructor easily in a small gubernia town. While pretty active, the school's Pedagogical Council would discuss methods of teaching in a more general way than its counterpart at Kozlov Female School. Nevertheless, the annual report contains the interesting assertion that the school was able to succeed in teaching initially low-achieving students only thanks to its skilled pedagogical team (reportedly, each of its male science instructors was an “individual with a higher education and someone who had developed the proper tact as a teacher after just a few years of working as one” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 73)). The report also brings up several issues that were left unresolved by the Pedagogical Council (e.g., some of the school's impoverished students being unable to purchase the required study guides in the entire school year) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 73).

6) *Curriculum*. Rather contentious, it was more fundamental than that of most of the educational institutions considered in this study. Apart from the usual set (religious education, Russian, arithmetic, history, geography, penmanship, and handwork), the school's core subjects also included drawing and natural history, both added to the curriculum with permission from the administration of the Kharkov Educational District (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). Thus, this school would provide its students with knowledge in natural science that was atypical for the normal curriculum of female schools within the Kharkov Educational District. The report stresses that the school's curriculum was much larger than that of the local private boarding schools (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). However, as noted earlier, this merit of the school was of no particular interest to the local community. On the other hand, things were extremely challenging there with elective courses. The only elective offered by the school was French (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). However, it was not taught in actual fact – the report openly states that the curriculum included no “new languages” (i.e., French or German) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). This may have been due to the school having received no payment for that class from its poor students. Consequently, the curriculum at Oryol Female School was the complete opposite of the one at Kozlov Female School – it included more fundamental sciences (by virtue of natural history) than that of most of the female schools but not a single prestigious subject. And, as acknowledged in the annual report, this choice of fundamental, yet unprestigious, education for girls was a critical mistake by the school. It was the absence of new languages, music, and dancing on the school's curriculum that was believed to be a major reason behind the lack of attention to it on the part of the wealthy segment of the local community, in addition to its prehistory and the prevalence in it of students from the “philistine school” (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74). According to the report, the school's Pedagogical Council had discussed this issue more than once – but to no avail, with a lack of funding typically cited as the reason (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 74-75). However, in actuality, based on the experience of some other female schools, Oryol Female School could well have expanded its offering of elective (prestigious) courses for girls, but that would have been possible only at the expense of reduced pay for its fundamental science instructors, which must have been unacceptable to its Board of Trustees.

7) *Budget*. A distinctive characteristic of Oryol Female School was that it had some sizable capital that it put out at interest. This is how it used the sums of 10,000 (donated by N.V. Kireyevsky) and 6,000 rubles (from other private individuals) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Another 3,300 rubles was left from the parish female school (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). In all, the interest earned on these sums was 911 rubles in the year (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). A little more came in from annual contributions provided based on a principle we are already familiar with – the City Duma being the biggest donor (989 rubles and 55 kopecks in the year), followed by members of the Board of Trustees (300 rubles). Private individuals had agreed to pay the school just 175 rubles per year – and not on a regular basis but for the first 3 years (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). The school's income from tuition fees was around 125 rubles (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). Thus, the total annual income for Oryol Female School was 2,500 rubles and 55 kopecks, which was a little less than that for Kozlov Female School (or a little more, if we are to look at the latter's income exclusive of arrears) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 71). However, even though it earned that much, because of paying high salaries to its staff and renting an expensive building the school in Oryol ended up being the only of the educational institutions considered in this study to have a deficit budget at the end of the first year in operation, even taking donations into account – its expenditure that year amounted to 2,526 rubles and 15 kopecks (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). A major expense item for the school was staff pay, with 815 rubles going to pay the instructors of the school, 367 rubles and 15 kopecks going to pay the instructors of the female parish school, 468 rubles going to pay the overseer, the handwork teacher, and the records manager, all of whom worked in both schools (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). Among the rest of the expense items, the biggest were rent (400 rubles) and utilities (350 rubles) (Tsirkulyar..., 1861: 72). Evidently, the school, indeed, had no budget reserves available, with any new expenditure being possible only through cuts in spending. Operating in a climate of indifference on the part of the community, the school was actually faced with the prospect of losing a portion of its income from annual contributions.

On balance, the female school in Oryol had the least promising situation among those considered in this study (with the exception of the Female Department of Kupyansk Uyezd School). And that was despite the fact that, arguably, it was doing everything right from a pedagogical standpoint – there was a focus on teaching fundamental sciences rather than prestigious subjects and its curriculum included not only humanities and mathematics subjects but natural disciplines

as well, it had a well-qualified team of teachers, and it offered decent pay. However, it appears that the school had failed to coordinate its strategy for development with the views of the public – the Oryol community may have been unprepared to embrace a version of female education focused on fundamental sciences as opposed to prestigious subjects. As a result, the wealthiest and most influential segment of the Oryol community was mainly indifferent toward the new female educational institution. While it did receive substantial contributions from individual enthusiasts, most of Oryol's wealthy residents preferred placing their daughters in a private boarding school with a stronger focus on teaching prestigious subjects and a weaker fundamental science curricular component. This led to Oryol Female School being stigmatized as a “philistine”, low-status educational institution. The situation could have been improved by the inclusion in the curriculum of prestigious foreign languages, music, and dancing, but that was being thwarted by the paying of high salaries to its fundamental science teachers – there simply were no budget reserves left. Also, instead of putting out at interest the funds donated by benefactors, the school might possibly have been better off investing them in boosting its popularity during the first years in operation (e.g., once again, by way of including prestigious subjects in the curriculum).

5. Conclusion

The existing research on the subject (above all, the monograph by E.D. Dneprov and R.F. Usacheva) considers the following two variants of the public's attitude toward a female school in the early-1860s Russian Empire: 1) support in the form of making financial contributions to and placing girls in it; 2) refusal of support, i.e. refusing to provide it with financial assistance, which would make the proper operation thereof impossible. The exceptional cases of Kozlov Female School and Oryol Female School indicate the possibility of there being a third variant – there being a sort of vogue for placing girls in school, with the locals financially supporting the opening of a female school without having a clear idea of why that was necessary. In a climate like that, an already running school would have to look for ways to attract the attention of local residents and ensure that placing girls in school was not a vogue but a necessity for members of different strata of society.

Each faced with a lack of community understanding, Oryol Female School and Kozlov Female School went different ways. Oryol Female School acted in line with a set of trends that tend to be idealized in the modern literature – its curriculum and teaching staff converged with the male gymnasium's and its student composition was fairly democratized owing to the prevalence of girls representing the urban commoner social group. In practice, however, this strategy turned out to be not very successful – the school had a reputation of being an unprestigious educational institution (“the philistine school”); wealthy families would not enroll their girls in it and all of its financial reserves would be used to pay the staff. By contrast, Kozlov Female School curtailed significantly its fundamental science curriculum but introduced instruction in prestigious subjects (French and dancing). As a result, it became a vogue amongst the local community to place girls in it, although what that was for was not always clearly understood by local residents, with things getting as absurd as some parents removing their daughter from the school only because she was not made to wear a crinoline (i.e., going to school was for some like taking part in a sort of fashion show). There even was misunderstanding regarding the already curtailed curriculum – some parents considered it too complex and impractical, asking that children not be overwhelmed with schoolwork.

Thus, the issue of how female schools built their relationship with the public in 1860s Russia does merit separate study. It is important both from the standpoint of such schools, whose operation depended wholly on support from the local community, and from the viewpoint of the history of the woman question in the Russian Empire, as it reveals variants of the public's attitude toward female education that are more complex than just support or refusal of support.

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