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The System of Public Education in Penza Governorate in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Part 2

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Abstract

This set of articles explores the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate, a region in the Russian Empire, in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (through to 1917).

The present paper is the second part of the series. It examines the timeframe from 1855 to 1894, i.e. the periods of the reigns of Alexander II (“Alexander the Liberator”) and Alexander III (“Alexander the Peacemaker”). The paper relies on the relevant statistical data to analyze the effect of the reforms of Alexander II and the counter-reforms of Alexander III on the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate.

The primary source used in this study was the so-called “memorandum books”. Use was also made of certain relevant reference materials (e.g., the so-called “address calendars”) and regulatory documents.

In terms of methodology, use was made of a set of traditional (the historical-comparative, historical-typological, historical-systematic, and historical-genetic methods) and nontraditional historical research methods (the historical-statistical method) and a set of general research methods (analysis of the literature and sources, synthetic analysis, systems analysis, and mathematical methods).

A statistical analysis conducted as part of this study revealed that the period under examination witnessed a sharp increase in the numbers of secondary (nearly 300 % in the 1870s and around 170 % in the 1880s) and primary educational institutions (from 109 (in 1866) to 542

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(by 1894)) in the region. Arguably, the explosive growth in the numbers of educational institutions and students in the region was associated with the liberal education reforms of Alexander II. In the 1880s, i.e. the period of the so-called “counter-reforms”, the region witnessed an increase not in the number of humanities-focused secondary educational institutions (gymnasiums and progymnasiums) but in the number of technical educational institutions (real, industrial, and tradesman’s schools), which was in keeping with the nation’s industrial boom and nascent technological revolution.

Keywords: system of public education, Penza Governorate, education in Penza Governorate, public schools.

1. Introduction

Penza Governorate was a relatively small administrative territorial unit situated in the heart of the Russian Empire. Primarily focused on arable farming, it had a population of about 1.5 million as at 1897. As Penza Governorate the area existed between 1796 and 1797 and later between 1801 and 1928. Its capital was Penza.

The present paper, which is the second part of the work, analyzes the timeframe from 1855 to 1894. What is interesting about this period of history is that it witnessed the reign of two Russian emperors who pursued diametrically opposite policies on education, each of which had a distinctive effect on the development of the region’s education system.

2. Materials and methods

Primary reliance was on a set of relevant prerevolutionary materials. The key sources were the period’s memorandum books (e.g., [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1854](#) and [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1884](#)), address calendars (e.g., [Adres-kalendar', 1869](#)), reference books (e.g., [Spravochnaya kniga, 1893](#) and [Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858](#)), and collections of historical, geographical, and statistical materials on Penza Governorate (e.g., [Sbornik..., 1869](#)).

Use was also made of the following periodicals: the journals *Narodnoe Obrazovanie* ([NO, 1898](#); [NO, 1900](#)), *Narodnaya Shkola* ([HIII, 1869](#)), *Obrazovanie* ([Obrazovanie, 1892](#); [Obrazovanie, 1899](#); [Obrazovanie, 1908](#); [Obrazovanie, 1909](#)), *Pedagogichesky Sbornik* ([PS, 1872](#); [PS, 1890](#)), and *Pedagogichesky Listok* ([PL, 1873](#); [PL, 1897](#)) and the newspapers *Nizhny Novgorod Governorate Gazette* ([NGV, 1865](#)) and *Penza Governorate Gazette* ([PGV, 1869](#); [PGV, 1871](#)).

Valuable information for this study was obtained from the following sources of a regulatory nature: ‘The Regulation on Female Schools under the Purview of the Ministry of Public Education’ ([Polozhenie o zhenskikh uchilishchakh, 1861](#)), ‘A Digest of Ordinances of the Penza Governorate Zemstvo Assembly (1865–1911)’ ([Postanovleniya Penzenskogo..., 1911](#)), a set of collections of ordinances by the Ministry of Public Education (e.g., [Postanovleniya MNP, 1865](#); [Postanovleniya MNP, 1876](#); [Postanovleniya MNP, 1877](#)), ‘A Collection of Ordinances and Directives on Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums under the Purview of the Ministry of Public Education’ ([Postanovleniya po gimnaziyam, 1874](#)), and ‘The Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire’ ([PSZRI, 1884](#); [PSZRI, 1914](#)).

In terms of methodology, use was made of both historical research methods (traditional and nontraditional) and general research methods.

The following traditional historical research methods were employed:

– historical-comparative (the statistical data on education in Penza Governorate were compared both chronologically (at different time points within the period under examination) and geographically (with data for other areas within the Russian Empire));

– historical-typological (the region’s educational institutions were classified by level);

– historical-systematic (the statistical data were analyzed through the prism of the period’s historical situation);

– historical-genetic (the effect of the government’s decisions on the development of the region’s education sector was investigated).

The only nontraditional historical research method employed in this part of the work was the historical-statistical method (a quantitative analysis of the region’s educational institutions and student body was conducted).

The general research methods employed here were analysis of the literature and sources, synthetic analysis, systems analysis, and mathematical methods.

The use of the above methods in an integrated manner helped conduct the research as objectively and comprehensively as possible.

3. Discussion

Overall, there is a lack of research on the education system in Penza Governorate.

A detailed historiographical survey of the literature was attempted in the first part of the work. The present paper will only focus on the works analyzing the system of education in Penza Governorate in the timeframe 1855–1894.

In the prerevolutionary period, the subject was explored by the following scholars: A.V. Dubrovsky, who analyzed statistical data on public education in European Russia (including Penza Governorate) in 1872–1874 ([Dubrovskii, 1879](#)); N. Ezersky, who analyzed the didactic and instructional content of education in zemstvo schools ([Ezerskii, 1910](#); [Ezerskii, 1912](#); [Ezerskii, 1913](#)); P.P. Zelenetsky, who wrote a historical essay on the operation of Penza's first gymnasium in the period 1804–1871, where he personally worked as an inspector ([Zelenetskii, 1889](#)); P. Kazantsev, who explored the issue of optimizing didactic content in the education sector in Penza Governorate ([Kazantsev, 1912](#)); K. Korol'kov, who investigated the role and place of parochial schools in the system of education in Penza Governorate ([Korol'kov, 1898](#)); I.F. Kuz'min, who provided a brief description of Penza Governorate, including its education sector ([Kuz'min, 1895](#)).

In the Soviet period, the topic was investigated by the following scholars: I.M. Bogdanov, who explored the development of literacy and education in prerevolutionary Russia ([Bogdanov, 1964](#)); E.D. Dneprov, who investigated the historiography of pedagogy in prerevolutionary Russia ([Dneprov, 1979](#)); A.G. Rashin, who explored issues of literacy and public education in prerevolutionary Russia ([Rashin, 1951](#)); V.Z. Smirnov, who investigated issues of discipline in prerevolutionary secondary educational institutions and explored progressive ideas in Russian pedagogy ([Smirnov, 1956](#); [Smirnov, 1963](#)). A lot of useful information on the subject is available in 'Essays on the History of the Penza Region (Spanning the Period from the Earliest Times to the Late 19th Century)' ([Ocherki..., 1973](#)), 'Essays on the History of the Education and Pedagogical Thought in the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Second Half of the 19th Century)' ([Ocherki..., 1976](#)), and 'Essays on the History of the Education and Pedagogical Thought in the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Period from the Late 19th to Early 20th Centuries)' ([Ocherki..., 1991](#)).

Among the contemporary researchers with a contribution to the study of this subject, of particular note are the following: L.D. Goshulyak, who analyzed the making and development of the zemstvo concept of public education in Penza Governorate and the development of the nation's gubernia educational complex through the example of Penza Governorate in the prerevolutionary period ([Goshulyak, 1995](#); [Goshulyak, 2002](#)); O.V. Dunayeva, who investigated the social composition of vocational educational institutions and the development of vocational education as a whole in Penza Governorate ([Dunaeva, 1999a](#); [Dunaeva, 1999b](#)); O.A. Kostyukova, who explored the development of gymnasium education in Penza Governorate ([Kostyukova, 2006](#)); O. Makarkina and N.I. Polosin, who investigated issues related to female education in Penza Governorate ([Makarkina, Polosin, 1998](#)); V.N. Parshina, who explored the development and key characteristics of female education in Penza Governorate ([Parshina, 2007](#); [Parshina, 2008](#); [Parshina, 2010](#)); N.N. Chetvertkova, who investigated the system of public education in Penza Governorate in the period 1900–1905 based on materials from the Penza Governorate Gazette newspaper ([Chetvertkova, 2007](#)). A general insight into the region's education system is provided in 'Essays on the History of Public Education in the Penza Region' ([Ocherki..., 1997](#)) and in 'The Penza Region in the History and Culture of Russia' ([Penzenskii krai, 2014](#)).

4. Results

The study's chronological range is 1855–1894, which includes the periods of the reigns of Alexander II ("Alexander the Liberator") and Alexander III ("Alexander the Peacemaker"). These two monarchs pursued two diametrically opposite policies on education. Of particular interest is to explore the effect the reforms of Alexander II and the counter-reforms of Alexander III had on the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate.

In terms of classifying the region's educational institutions, the work takes as a basis the four-level system employed in prerevolutionary Russia, which was comprised of the higher, secondary, lower, and primary education sectors.

The higher education sector included universities and institutes, the secondary one – gymnasiums and progymnasiums, real schools, higher and secondary technical schools, and teacher's institutes and seminaries, the lower one – uyezd, urban, and rural schools, industrial schools, tradesman's schools, and Mariinsky schools, and the primary one – primary schools, rural schools, and parochial schools.

As at 1854, Penza Governorate had 3 ecclesiastical and 25 secular educational institutions, with a combined enrollment of 2,713 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1854](#)).

The 1858 Reference Book for Penza Governorate contains 69 pages (exclusive of the alphabetical index at the end of it). It devotes just a few pages to the region's education system, mentioning a noble institute, a gymnasium, an institute for noble maidens, a private boarding school, an ecclesiastical seminary, and three uyezd schools (the ones in Penza, Nizhny Lomov, and Krasnoslobodsk) ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858](#)).

The staff roster at Penza Noble Institute included the following positions: Honorary Trustee; Principal (holder of the rank of state councilor); Physician (collegiate assessor); Inspector (collegiate councilor); Teacher of Religion (protoiereus); Senior Teachers (collegiate, court, and titular councilors); Junior Teachers (titular councilors and unranked); Overseers (collegiate secretaries and titular councilors) ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858: 23-24](#)).

The staff roster at Penza Gymnasium included the following positions: Honorary Trustee (normally, a military retiree of noble descent; Poruchik N.P. Obukhov held this post at both the Institute and the Gymnasium); Principal (state councilor); Inspector (collegiate councilor); Teacher of Religion (priest); Senior Teachers (court and collegiate assessors); Junior Teachers (titular councilor, collegiate secretaries, and unranked) ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858: 24-25](#)).

At the Institute for Noble Maidens and the private Boarding School, instruction was conducted by pedagogues from the Noble Institute and the Gymnasium.

The administrative staff roster at Penza Ecclesiastical Seminary included the following positions: Rector (archimandrite); Inspector (archimandrite); Steward (protoiereus); Secretary (professor). Its teaching staff roster included the following positions: Professor of Civil History (master); Teacher of Philosophy (candidate); Rector's Assistant in Theology (professor, master); Teacher of Philology (candidate); Professor of Scripture Reading (master); Professor of Ecclesiastical and Biblical History (master); Professor of Mathematics (master); Teacher of Mathematics; Teacher of Natural History and Agriculture; Teacher of Medicine; Attending Physician ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858: 57](#)).

As at 1858, Penza Governorate had 3 uyezd schools: the one in Penza (staff: Rector; Inspector; teachers), the one in Nizhny Lomov (Supervisor; Inspector; Teachers), and the one in Krasnoslobodsk (Supervisor; Inspector; Teachers) ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1858: 57](#)). Considering that instruction at these schools was conducted by students of the Institute and priests and that the school in Penza had openings for the positions of Rector and Inspector, one can venture the assertion that the region's education was understaffed at the time.

According to the 1864 Memorandum Book for Penza Governorate, the region had the following educational institutions at that time: a gymnasium offering surveying classes, a noble institute, 8 uyezd schools, 9 parish male schools, a seminary, and 3 uyezd ecclesiastical schools. Females had access to the following educational institutions in the region: a private boarding school, 2 first-rate female schools, 3 uyezd female schools, and a female ecclesiastical school. In addition, there were 60 rural schools for state peasants under the purview of the Department of State Assets, 72 rural schools for formerly private peasants, and 54 Muslim schools. The secular male schools had a combined student body of 2,003, the secular female ones – 443, the ecclesiastical male ones – 1,187, the ecclesiastical female ones – 15, the state peasant ones – 2,421, the formerly-private peasant ones – 504, and the Muslim ones – 2,926. As at 1862, Penza Governorate had a combined student body of 9,499 (9,041 males and 458 females). There was 1 male student per 68 male residents and 1 female student per 1,110 female residents in the region, which, overall, had 1 student per 138 residents. In terms of estate composition, the region had 1 male student per 1 person among nobles and functionaries, per 5 persons among the clergy, per 112 persons among state peasants, per 580 persons among formerly private peasants, and per 15 persons among Tatars ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1864: 33-34](#)).

According to the Memorandum Book for Penza Governorate for the period 1865–1867, as at 1866 the region had in operation the following educational institutions under the purview of the

Penza Directorate of the Ministry of Public Education:

1) In the city of Penza:

– Penza Governorate Classical Gymnasium, with a teaching staff of 20 and an enrollment of 311 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– Penza Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 6 and an enrollment of 186 (males only) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– 2 parish schools, with a combined teaching staff of 12 and a combined enrollment of 238 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– 1 second-rate female school, with a teaching staff of 7 full- and 4 part-timers and an enrollment of 62 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– Madame Gofman's female boarding school, a private institution funded through tuition paid by students, with a teaching staff of 14 full- and 10 part-timers and an enrollment of 62 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– 3 private schools, funded through tuition paid by students, with a combined teaching staff of 6 and a combined enrollment of 17 (13 males and 4 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#)).

2) In Penza Uyezd:

– 5 schools in state peasant villages, with a combined enrollment of 211 (204 males and 7 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200](#));

– 8 schools in temporarily-obligated peasant villages, attended by boys only, of which 7 were publicly funded (221 students) and 1 was privately funded (60 students) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#)).

3) In the city of Saransk:

– Saransk Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 8 and an enrollment of 93 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Saransk Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 75 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Saransk Parish Female School, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 49 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Rural Parish School, funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 81 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#)).

4) In Saransk Uyezd:

– 5 schools in state peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 5 and a combined enrollment of 211 (204 males and 7 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– 1 school in a temporarily-obligated peasant village, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 10 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#)).

5) In the city of Krasnoslobodsk:

– Krasnoslobodsk Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 6 and an enrollment of 81 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Krasnoslobodsk Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 117 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Krasnoslobodsk Parish Female School, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 48 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– Krasnoslobodsk Rural School (under the purview of the Department of State Assets), funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 35 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#)).

6) In Krasnoslobodsk Uyezd:

– 8 male and 1 female schools, funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a combined teaching staff of 18 and a combined enrollment of 425 (414 males and 11 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 201](#));

– 3 schools in temporarily-obligated peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 3 and a combined enrollment of 110 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));

– 2 private schools, with a combined teaching staff of 2 and a combined enrollment of 47 (26 males and 21 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#)).

7) In the city of Nizhny Lomov:

– Nizhny Lomov Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 7 and an enrollment of 88 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));

- Nizhny Lomov Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 61 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));
- Nizhny Lomov Parish Female School, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 57 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#)).
- 8) In Nizhny Lomov Uyezd:
 - Golovinshchino Parish School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 85 (80 males and 5 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));
 - 12 male and 1 female schools in state peasant villages, funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a combined teaching staff of 20 and a combined enrollment of 625 (590 males and 35 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));
 - 2 schools in temporarily-obligated peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 3 and a combined enrollment of 67 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#)).
- 9) In the city of Narovchat:
 - Narovchat Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 5 and an enrollment of 71 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));
 - Narovchat Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 50 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#));
 - Madame Sorokina's female boarding school, a private institution funded through tuition paid by students, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 32 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#)).
- 10) In Narovchat Uyezd:
 - 12 male schools in state peasant villages, funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a combined teaching staff of 14 and a combined enrollment of 355 (337 males and 18 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 202](#)).
- 11) In the city of Insar:
 - Insar Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 62 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#)).
- 12) In Insar Uyezd:
 - 8 schools in state peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 12 and a combined enrollment of 324 (312 males and 12 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#));
 - 1 school in a temporarily-obligated peasant village, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 79 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#)).
- 13) In the city of Kerensk:
 - Kerensk Zemstvo Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 35 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#));
 - Kerensk Rural Male School (under the purview of the Department of State Assets), funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 45 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#)).
- 14) In Kerensk Uyezd:
 - 5 schools in state peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 10 and a combined enrollment of 239 (237 males and 2 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#));
 - 1 school in a temporarily-obligated peasant village, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 23 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#)).
- 15) In the city of Chembar:
 - Chembar Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 6 and an enrollment of 70 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#));
 - Chembar Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 63 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#));
 - Chembar Parish Female School, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 30 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 203](#)).
- 16) Chembar Uyezd:
 - 6 schools in state peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 8 and a combined enrollment of 282 (262 males and 20 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));
 - 10 schools in temporarily-obligated peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 12 and a combined enrollment of 181 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));

– 3 private schools, with a combined teaching staff of 3 and a combined enrollment of 37 (30 males and 7 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#)).

17) In the city of Mokshan:

– Mokshan Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 6 and an enrollment of 37 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));

– Mokshan Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 3 and an enrollment of 70 students ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));

– Mokshan Rural Male School, funded through dues collected from state peasants, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 28 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));

– Madame Bakulina’s school, a private institution funded through tuition paid by students, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 9 (3 males and 6 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#)).

18) In Mokshan Uyezd:

– 1 school in a temporarily-obligated peasant village, with a teaching staff of 1 and an enrollment of 25 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#));

– 2 private schools, with a combined teaching staff of 2 and a combined enrollment of 20 (16 males and 4 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 204](#)).

19) In the city of Gorodishche:

– Gorodishche Uyezd School, with a teaching staff of 6 and an enrollment of 41 (all males) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 205](#));

– Gorodishche Parish Male School, with a teaching staff of 2 and an enrollment of 47 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 205](#)).

20) Gorodishche Uyezd:

– 12 male and 2 female schools in state peasant villages, with a combined teaching staff of 21 and a combined enrollment of 510 (436 males and 74 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 205](#)).

Overall, as at 1866 Penza Governorate had 145 educational institutions with a combined teaching staff of 301 and a combined enrollment of 6,464 (5,851 males and 613 females) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 205](#)).

The Memorandum Book for Penza Governorate for 1868 and 1869 has a separate section describing the rules for admission to Penza Classical Male Gymnasium. These rules reflect pretty well the changes that took place in Russia’s education system following the launch of the education reform. The document characterizes the Gymnasium as follows: “Pursuant to the imperial Statute of 1864, Penza Governorate Gymnasium is a classical educational institution with one ancient language, which is Latin. The Gymnasium has 7 grades and 3 parallel departments” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 59](#)).

It also states that “the Gymnasium is open to children of all social and religious backgrounds” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 59](#)), which was well in line with the spirit of the liberal reforms undertaken in the 1860s.

Education was not free, but there were exceptions. According to the 1869 Memorandum Book, “exemption from paying for education may be granted, at the discretion of the local Pedagogical Council, to children from disadvantaged families who deserve to be treated this way for their exemplary behavior and assiduity; it is, furthermore, to be noted that the total number of those exempt from paying for education cannot be more than 10 % of the entire student body” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 59-60](#)).

The rule whereby “students who have completed their designated program of study with honors such as a gold or silver medal will be eligible to work in civil service, regardless of their social background, and will be automatically promoted to Rank 14” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 60](#)) enabled even a person of humble birth to start building a successful career. Theoretically, a decision by the Pedagogical Council could make it possible for a son of a temporarily-obligated peasant to attend school free of charge and then gain entrance into the Table of Ranks with a gold or silver medal. However, no such cases are known to have taken place in the 1860s.

On September 22, 1869, Penza became home to the region’s first female gymnasium. The facility was open to “ladies of all social and religious backgrounds” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 67](#)).

By the end of 1869, Penza Governorate had 258 educational institutions with a combined teaching staff of 450 and a combined enrollment of 9,056 (8,241 boys and 815 girls) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 249](#)).

The Address Calendar and Memorandum Book for Penza Governorate for 1884, released during the reign of Alexander III, inform one of the following new educational institutions in Penza Governorate: a surveyor's school, male and female progymnasiums, a real school, a teacher's seminary, and a six-grade female diocesan school ([Pamyatnaya kniga, 1884: 30-38, 47](#)). As can be seen, the region witnessed a leap in its secondary education, with the number of institutions in this sector growing 3 times. A separate chapter in the Memorandum Book, 'Revisiting the Development of Literacy among Rural Residents in Penza Governorate', covers the development of education in the region's rural areas, 58 pages worth of detailed analysis of the development of the region's rural education sector from the early 1860s to the early 1880s. The chapter provides a significant amount of statistical information on various aspects of education in the region's rural areas, including sources of funding used and student body statistics. Such information is provided for individual uyezds and even specific schools in the region ([Pamyatnaya kniga, 1884: 217-274](#)). In addition, an insight is provided into how well each uyezd contributed to the development of the region's network of rural schools. The source notes the direct effect of the 1864 education reform on the development of the region's system of public education – "with the advent of zemstvo institutions, one has seen a vast improvement in literacy – that is an indisputable fact" ([Pamyatnaya kniga, 1884: 217](#)). Unfortunately, this source does not provide statistical information on lower and primary educational institutions in the region, unlike its previously published counterparts.

The 1889 Memorandum Book for Penza Governorate expands the roster of secondary educational institutions in the region, adding the following schools to it: F.E. Shvetsov's Tradesman's School, Technical Railway School, School of Horticulture, Zavivalovka Agricultural School, and Zemstvo Feldsher School ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 7](#)).

As at the early 1890s, Penza Governorate had in operation the following secondary educational institutions ([Spravochnaya kniga, 1893: 71-74](#)):

- First Penza Male Classical Gymnasium;
- Second Penza Male Gymnasium;
- Penza Female Gymnasium;
- Saransk Female Progymnasium;
- Krasnoslobodsk Male Progymnasium;
- Penza Real School;
- Penza Teacher's Seminary;
- Penza Surveyor's School;
- Female Diocesan School;
- Penza F.E. Shvetsov's Tradesman's School;
- Penza Technical Railway School;
- School of Horticulture;
- Zavivalovka Agricultural School;
- Zemstvo Feldsher School;
- First Penza Ecclesiastical Male School;
- Second Penza Ecclesiastical Male School.

The network of urban schools within the region's lower-level sector of education included the following educational institutions ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 149-151](#)):

- Krasnoslobodsk Urban Four-Grade School;
- Saransk Urban Four-Grade School;
- Nizhny Lomov Urban Four-Grade School;
- Insar Urban Four-Grade School;
- Kerensk Urban Three-Grade School;
- Chembar Urban Three-Grade School.

The region's lower education sector also included the following uyezd schools ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 152](#)):

- Penza Uyezd School;
- Mokshan Uyezd School;
- Gorodishche Uyezd School;
- Narovchat Uyezd School.

As at January 1, 1893, there were 426 educational institutions in Penza Governorate ([Spravochnaya kniga, 1892: 5](#)). The statistical data are provided in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Number of Educational Institutions in Penza Governorate by Type of School in the Period 1858–1893 ([Spravochnaya knizhka, 1854: 23-26, 57-58](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1864: 33-34](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1867: 200-205](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869: 244-249](#); [Pamyatnaya kniga, 1884: 30-38, 47](#); [Pamyatnaya kniga, 1884: 145-152](#); [Spravochnaya kniga, 1893: 71-92](#)).

Year	Educational institutions				Number of students		
	Higher	Secondary	Lower	Primary	Boys	Girls	Total
1858	2	2	3 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1862	1	2	26	186	9,041	458	9,499
1866	N/A	2	29	109	5,851	613	6,464
1869	N/A	3	29	226	8,241	815	9,056
1884	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1889	N/A	15	10 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1893	N/A	16	10 ³	542	N/A	N/A	N/A

The following conclusions can be drawn based on the data in Table 1:

1) There was a sharp increase in the number of secondary educational institutions in the region between the 1870s and 1880s. In the 1870s, the growth was nearly 300 % (from 3 to 9), and in the 1880s the figure was around 170 % (from 9 to 15). Taking into consideration the counter-reforms undertaken in the 1880s, which by no means facilitated growth in the number of secondary and higher educational institutions in the region, one can venture the assertion that this brilliant result was wholly a consequence of the liberal reforms of Alexander II.

2) In the mid-1860s, the region witnessed an unaccountable drop in the number of primary educational institutions. The fact that the number of students dropped too (by 30%) leads one to consider the source data valid. The late 1860s witnessed an equally fast recovery in the number of schools in the region, with the figure growing subsequently at an exponential rate (from 109 in 1866 to 542 in 1894), which, too, can be regarded as a consequence of the education reform.

3) Overall, at the beginning of the period under examination, Penza Governorate had a fairly mediocre education system – even compared with the areas of the Kuban Cossack Host, Black Sea Governorate, and the then-newly incorporated areas of the Caucasus (e.g., [Cherkasov, 2011](#); [Magsumov et al., 2018](#); [Molchanova et al., 2020](#); [Natolochnaya et al., 2016](#)). However, following the launch of the education reform, the governorate experienced brisk development in its education sector, becoming at the end of the period under review a decent performer and pulling ahead of many of the southern areas in this respect.

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the insights gained from this study:

1) In the period between the 1870s and 1880s, Penza Governorate witnessed a sharp increase in the number of secondary educational institutions. It was nearly 300 % in the 1870s. In the 1880s, the growth decreased to 170 %. Most of this growth was accounted for by an increase in the number of technical educational institutions in the region.

2) The region witnessed a significant increase in the number of lower educational institutions as well (from 109 schools in 1866 to 542 schools by 1894). There appears to be a lack of valid data on the region's lower education sector in the sources employed in this study.

3) Arguably, the explosive growth in the numbers of educational institutions and students in the region was associated with the liberal education reforms of Alexander II.

¹ Data potentially incomplete

² Data potentially incomplete

³ Data potentially incomplete

4) In the 1880s, i.e. the period of the so-called “counter-reforms”, the region witnessed an increase not in the number of humanities-focused secondary educational institutions (gymnasiums and progymnasiums) but in the number of technical educational institutions (real, industrial, and tradesman’s schools). This must have been the result of both the Education Administration of the Penza Directorate of the Ministry of Public Education and Emperor Alexander III becoming perfectly aware of the critical role of technical education in the nation’s nascent technological revolution and industrial boom.

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