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Published in the USA

European Journal of Contemporary Education  
E-ISSN 2305-6746  
2023. 12(4): 1508-1513  
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2023.4.1508  
<https://ejce.cherkasgu.press>

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**European Journal of  
Contemporary Education**



ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

## Revisiting the Pedagogical Periodical Press in the Odessa Educational District (1864–1917)

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### Abstract

This paper examines the pedagogical periodical press in the Odessa Educational District in the period 1864–1917. It considers the geographical distribution of these publications and gives an internal criticism of them as historical sources.

The principal sources for this study were prerevolutionary publications published in the Odessa Educational District (*Izvestiya Odesskogo Uchebnogo Okruga* and *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki*) and reference publications concerned with the imperial-period Russian periodical press. Methodologically, use was made of the content-analysis method, employed to draw a sample of journals published at different times in the Odessa Educational District. Of importance was the use of the retrospective method, employed to construct this work in historical sequence.

The study's findings revealed that, despite the fact that there were just five academic pedagogical publications in the Odessa Educational District, these were of considerable interest. More specifically, the journal *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki* was published in Odessa for more than 20 years and was one of Russia's first popular-science publications concerned with mathematics and physics. Of interest is also the operation of one of Russia's first pedagogical newspapers, *Shkol'noye Obozreniye*, published in Odessa weekly from 1889 to 1892. Lastly, in 1913 they launched in Odessa one of Russia's first narrowly specialized publications concerned with student excursions and school museums – the journal *Shkol'nyye Ekskursii i Shkol'nyy Muzey*.

**Keywords:** pedagogical periodical press, Odessa Educational District, Russian Empire, period 1864–1917.

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### 1. Introduction

The Odessa Educational District was established in 1832. With its capital in the city of Odessa, it comprised Bessarabia, Yekaterinoslav, Taurida, and Kherson Governorates. In 1897, these areas had a combined population of 8.2 million (4.2 million males and 3.9 million females), with 1.6 million of these being urbanites (Naselenie..., 1898: 5-29). In 1865, Odessa became home to Imperial Novorossiya University, the district's first university of its own (Cherkasov, 2023: 1687).

### 2. Materials and methods

The principal sources for this study were prerevolutionary publications published in the Odessa Educational District (*Izvestiya Odesskogo Uchebnogo Okruga* and *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki*) and reference publications concerned with the imperial-period Russian periodical press (Bibliografiya..., 191; Belyaeva, 1960; Ablov, 1937).

Methodologically, use was made of the content-analysis method, employed to draw a sample of journals published at different times in the Odessa Educational District. Of importance was the use of the retrospective method, employed to construct this work in historical sequence.

### 3. Discussion

The historiography on this subject may be divided into the scarce historiography on the Odessa Educational District and periodicals published there and the historiography on periodicals published in other educational districts across the Russian Empire.

Among the works concerned with the history of the Odessa Educational District and its periodical press worthy of particular mention are the one by V.V. Samodurova, which explores the journal *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki*, part of the holdings of Odessa National University (Samodurova, 2011), and the one by N.N. Andreyev and his colleagues, devoted to the same popular-science journal (Andreev i dr., 2014). In 1913, they launched in Odessa a narrowly specialized publication concerned, among other things, with student excursions – this subject is discussed in the work by N.V. Tarasova (Tarasova, 2014). On the other hand, the history of the Odessa Educational District has been discussed in the context of the work of this district during the imperial period, by T.V. Shushara (Shushara, 2015), and as part of a study investigating the work of the district's trustees, by I.S. Grebtsova (Grebtsova, 2017).

As regards the historiography on the periodical press in other educational districts across the Russian Empire, of particular note are the following works: the one by I.Yu. Cherkasova and her colleagues, which discusses pedagogical publications in the Orenburg Educational District (Cherkasova et al., 2023), and the ones by A.M. Mamadaliyev and his colleagues, which investigate similar processes in the Kiev (Mamadaliyev et al., 2023), Kharkov (Mamadaliyev et al., 2023a), Riga (Mamadaliyev et al., 2023b), and Caucasus Educational Districts (Mamadaliyev et al., 2022). In addition, the pedagogical periodical press in the Kazan Educational District is explored in the work by V.D. Muzykant and his colleagues (Muzykant et al., 2022).

### 4. Results

The fact that the Odessa Educational District had an imperial university of its own did not have a significant effect in terms of facilitating the development of the pedagogical periodical press there. In all, the district had five pedagogical journals, with four of these published in its capital, Odessa, and the fifth produced in the city of Simferopol, Taurida Governorate.

In 1864, they began to publish in the district its first monthly journal – *Tsirkulyar po Upravleniyu Odesskim Uchebnym Okrugom* (Russian: “Odessa Educational District Administration Bulletin”). In 1887, the journal was renamed as *Tsirkulyar po Odesskomu Uchebnomu Okrugom* (“Odessa Educational District Bulletin”), and in 1917 – as *Izvestiya Odesskogo Uchebnogo Okruga* (“Odessa Educational District News”) (Figure 1). That same year, 1917, the journal ceased publication.

As at 1917, the journal comprised the official section, the circular one, the one on the Odessa Educational District, the one on other educational districts, and the unofficial one.

The official section comprised eight themes: 1) imperially enacted regulations of the Council of Ministers; 2) imperial commands; 3) imperial commendations; 4) imperial awards; 5) edicts of His Imperial Majesty issued to the Directing Senate; 6) imperial directives; 7) edicts of the Directing Senate; 8) N.K. Kul'chitsky's assumption of charge of the Ministry of Public Education (Ofitsial'nyi otdel..., 1917: 71-81).



**Fig. 1.** Cover of the journal *Izvestiya Odesskogo Uchebnogo Okruga*. 1917. Issue 2

The circular section carried circular ordinances of the Ministry of Public Education concerned with various issues (e.g., the significance of directives issued by the Ministry of Public Education, the procedure for and ways of expending funds allocated by the government toward the preliminary military training of students, the recommendation of pedagogical works, the granting of deferment of call-up to persons of varying ages subject to military service, and the provision of percentage salary increments and one-time allowances in conjunction with the war) ([Rasporyazheniya ministerstva..., 1917: 81-89](#)).

The section on the Odessa Educational District carried ordinances from the Ministry of Public Education in respect of this district on various issues (e.g., renaming educational institutions, establishing scholarships, conferring new ranks on professors, and inviting parents' committee chairmen to attend board of trustees sittings) ([Rasporyazheniya ministerstva..., 1917a: 89-94](#)).

The section on other educational districts, likewise, carried ordinances from the Ministry of Public Education on various issues (e.g., preparatory grade teachers' entitlements, a 30% raise for the pedagogical staff of teacher's institutes, seminaries, and schools, the impossibility of appointing priests and deacons as full-time or part-time instructors of general subjects, and the hiring of females as instructors of general subjects at lower and secondary technical schools). It also carried directives from the Trustee of the Odessa Educational District and scholarship regulations ([Rasporyazheniya ministerstva..., 1917b: 95-106](#)).

The unofficial section carried pedagogical academic works and information about academic and vocational activities. More specifically, it published an extensive work by A. Shcherbina, 'Revisiting Students' Extracurricular Reading' ([Shcherbina, 1917: 49-58](#)), and V. Chemena's 'A Report on the Fieldwork Carried Out by a Work-Team of Students of Odessa Second Gymnasium in Villages Within Kurtovka Volost in the Summer of 1916' ([Chemena, 1917: 58-71](#)). In addition, the section carried information about the First All-Russian Congress of Teachers of Russian ([Pervyi vsrossiiskii..., 1917: 79-89](#)), as well as a list of new books just out ([Knigi..., 1917: 90](#)).

In 1891, they launched the second journal in Odessa – the monthly *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki* (“Annals of Experimental Physics and Elementary Mathematics”) (Dakhiya, 1956: 548), which basically was a continuation of the Kiev periodical *Zhurnal Elementarnoy Matematiki* (“Journal of Elementary Mathematics”), introduced in 1884 by Professor V.I. Yermakov. At different times, the journal’s publisher-editors were E.K. Shpachinsky (1886–1897), V.A. Zimmerman (1898–1904), and V.F. Kogan (starting in 1904) (Ablov, 1937: 48). The journal was published until 1915.

In terms of content, in 1900 the journal carried short pieces by the editorial staff, publications representing translated and original articles related to physics and mathematics, as well as extensive materials of an informative nature, like, for instance, reports of meetings of academic societies (Mathematics Department of the Novorossiia Society of Natural Scientists; Warsaw Club for Instructors of Physics and Mathematics). In addition, the journal published reviews of specialized academic journals, as well as books, brochures, and ads (Soderzhanie, 1900: 1).

In 1889, they began to produce in Odessa the periodical newspaper *Shkol'noye Obozreniye* (“School Review”). Its publisher was M.D. Gonzal', and its editor was P.I. Gusarenko. The newspaper came out weekly until 1892. It was one of the first attempts to produce a newspaper concerned with pedagogical issues. Alongside local pedagogues, this periodical was contributed to by authors such as Ya.V. Abramov, K. Abaza, V. Vakhterov, and others. Reviews for this newspaper were published in the journal *Zhenskoye Obrazovaniye* (“Women’s Education”) – in its first issue in 1890 (Ablov, 1937: 49).

The district’s fourth journal was *Tavricheskiy Narodnyy Uchitel'* (“Tauric Popular Teacher”), published in Simferopol starting in 1907. The periodical came out every two weeks. In 1907–1908, its editor-publisher was Ye.Z. Zotova, and in 1909–1910 – P.P. Kreshchanovsky (Belyaeva, 1960: 339). The journal was published until 1910. It was produced through the efforts of the local pedagogical community and those of the Society for Mutual Support Among Former and Current Teachers in Taurida Governorate. The journal aimed to explore issues of public education, draw attention to the arduous work conditions faced by teachers, encourage unity among teachers, and inform the public about local school life and schools in Southern Russia (Ablov, 1937: 71).

The fifth publication in the district was the illustrated popular journal *Shkol'nyye Ekskursii i Shkol'nyy Muzey* (“School Excursions and the School Museum”). The journal was published in 1913 in Odessa (Issues 1 through 4). Starting with the fifth issue, it was produced in the city of Bendery, Bessarabia Governorate, which was part of the Odessa Educational District, where it was published from 1913 to 1916. The head of its editorial staff and its publisher was A.F. Grekulov. In 1913, the journal was edited by S.A. Klipenina. Starting with the fifth issue, it was edited by A.F. Grekulov (Belyaeva, 1960: 614-615). Between eight to nine issues of this publication were produced yearly. The journal aimed to provide teachers with material for engaging students in discourse during excursions and having them build collections. In terms of content, the journal carried descriptions of excursions undertaken by students, materials related to geographical, botanical, and zoological excursions, and material related to the organization of excursions in the context of particular classroom lessons and activities.

## 5. Conclusion

Despite the fact that there were just five academic pedagogical publications in the Odessa Educational District, these were of considerable interest. More specifically, the journal *Vestnik Opytnoy Fiziki i Elementarnoy Matematiki* was published in Odessa for more than 20 years and was one of Russia’s first popular-science publications concerned with mathematics and physics. Of interest is also the operation of one of Russia’s first pedagogical newspapers, *Shkol'noye Obozreniye*, published in Odessa weekly from 1889 to 1892. Lastly, in 1913 they launched in Odessa one of Russia’s first narrowly specialized publications concerned with student excursions and school museums – the journal *Shkol'nyye Ekskursii i Shkol'nyy Muzey*.

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