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The History of Education

The Periodical Press of the Ministry of Public Education in the Russian Empire (1803–1917)

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Abstract

This paper explores the periodical press of the Ministry of Public Education in the Russian Empire in the period from 1803 to 1917. Insight is provided into the Ministry's both official and narrowly specialized organs.

The following journals of the Ministry of Public Education were examined: *Periodicheskoe Sochinenie o Uspekhakh Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, *Zhurnal Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, *Zapiski Izdavaemye ot Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu*, and *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie*. Use was also made of some reference literature.

Methodologically, the study relied on a set of general research methods. Of particular note is the use of the historical-chronological method (the journals were considered in chronological order). The use of the systems method helped examine the Ministry's periodical press as a system, with characteristics considered such as period of publication, place of publication, number of issues published, and editorial personnel.

Between 1803 and 1917, a total of six journals were published in the Russian Empire under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Education. The first three were published from 1803 to 1829, a period that can be regarded as the time of the making of the Ministry's periodical press. This is

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when fundamental decisions were made regarding publication formats, content, and periodicity. In 1834, the Ministry launched the monthly *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, which would be published up to 1917, and during the subsequent period only narrowly specialized publications were published, including the popular science journal *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* and *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie*, a journal concerned with vocational education. In terms of editorial personnel, of particular note is the fact that the Ministry of Public Education never employed unknowns to manage its periodical press, with most of its editors being prominent researchers and specialists in the area of printing or censorship.

Keywords: periodical press, Ministry of Public Education, Saint Petersburg, period 1803–1917.

1. Introduction

By tradition, the history of the periodical press is of added interest to specialists in the areas of history and education. This especially is the case with narrowly specialized journals. Of particular note in this context is the periodical press of the Ministry of Public Education in the Russian Empire (1803–1917). The present work will focus on all periodicals of the Ministry and will go over characteristics such as period of publication, content arrangement, and editorial personnel.

2. Materials and methods

The following journals of the Ministry of Public Education were examined: *Periodicheskoe Sochinenie o Uspekakh Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (Russian: “periodical of achievements in public education”), *Zhurnal Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (“journal of the Department of Public Education”), *Zapiski Izdavaemye ot Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (“transactions published by the Department of Public Education”), *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (“journal of the Ministry of Public Education”), *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* (“current news in public education”), and *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie* (“vocational education”). Use was also made of some reference literature.

Methodologically, the study relied on a set of general research methods. Of particular note is the use of the historical-chronological method (the journals were considered in chronological order). The use of the systems method helped examine the Ministry’s periodical press as a system, with characteristics considered such as period of publication, place of publication, number of issues published, and editorial personnel.

3. Discussion

The periodical press of the Ministry of Public Education has more than once served as a source in the study of various issues. Currently, the Ministry’s journal used the most is *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, which is no wonder considering its having been published for more than 80 years – from 1834 to 1917. For instance, E.N. Malyuga and B. Tomalin considered *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* as a source on the history of public education in the Caucasus (Malyuga, Tomalin, 2021), L.L. Shpak – as a source on the historical sociology of education (Shpak, 2008), E.A. Pleshkevich – on the history of library science and librarianship in Russia (Pleshkevich, 2017), A.E. Lebid and his colleagues – on the history of higher education in the Russian Empire in the period between the 19th and early 20th centuries (Lebid et al., 2020), and S.Yu. Iyerusalimskaya – on the development of public education in Russia in the period between the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Iyerusalimskaya, 2010).

A number of narrower issues have been considered as well. Specifically, A.V. Kovekh investigated the editorial policy of *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* in the period 1834–1836 (Kovekh, 2012), Yu.G. Blagoder explored the coverage of China in it in the period 1850–1890 (Blagoder, 2014), M.A. Goncharov examined the role of *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* in the cause of building Russia’s scholarly-pedagogical potential, and A.N. Pozdnyakov relied on materials from it to discuss the education reform undertaken during the reign of Alexander II (Pozdnyakov, 2013).

4. Results

The Ministry of Public Education always had its own periodical press. The Ministry was established in 1802 – by way of reorganization from the Commission for Public Schools, and as

early as 1803 its organ, *Periodicheskoe Sochinenie o Uspekakh Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, was launched. It was published by the Central School Board (Figure 1), and its editor-in-chief was N.Ya. Ozeretskovsky. The journal was published in Saint Petersburg from 1803 to 1817. A total of 44 issues of the journal were released. A hardcover publication, it had no cover page as such. Content in it was arranged into the following sections: 1) Legislation on public education; 2) Measures undertaken by the Central School Board in terms of establishing new schools; 3) Benefactions by private individuals intended to help promote literacy; 4) Extracts from testimonials regarding student achievement; 5) Reports (Ablov, 1937: 25). In addition, there was room reserved for articles related to enhancing student learning. The organ operated in this way up to 1917.

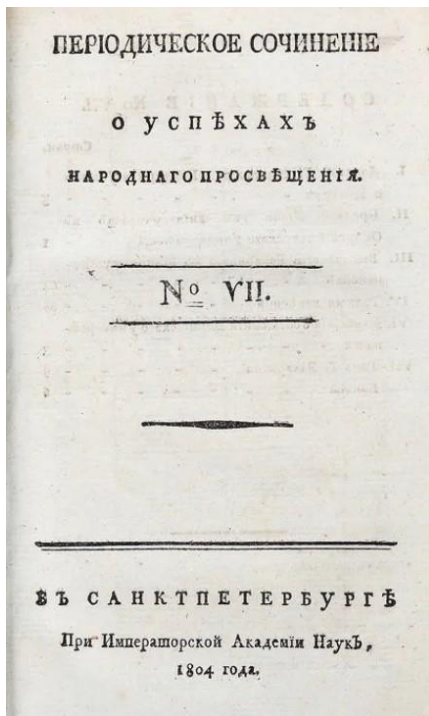


Fig. 1. Title page of the journal *Periodicheskoe Sochinenie o Uspekakh Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*

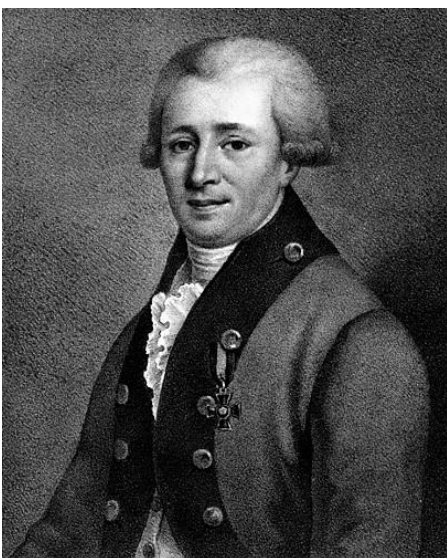


Fig. 2. Nikolay Yakovlevich Ozeretskovsky (1750–1827)

The journal's editor-in-chief, Nikolay Yakovlevich Ozeretskovsky (1750–1827), was a prominent Russian polymath, naturalist, member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences, and member of the Russian Academy (Figure 2). He published nearly 100 scholarly works on botany, zoology, geography, medicine, Russian, and language arts. A famous work of his is 'A Review of Various Places Located from Saint Petersburg to Staraya Russa and on the Way Back' (Knyazeva, 2021: 467). He taught natural history, Russian, and language arts. He headed the Kunstkamera museum between 1800 and 1827.

The first journal of the Ministry of Public Education was discontinued in 1817. The publication of the Ministry's journal resumed only four years later. The new publication was *Zhurnal Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (Figure 3). It was published in Saint Petersburg from 1821 to 1824. There were a total of nine parts. The journal was available in softcover format.



Fig. 3. Cover of *Zhurnal Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*



Fig. 4. Nikolay Fedorovich Ostolopov (1783–1833)

The journal's editor-in-chief, Nikolay Fedorovich Ostolopov (1783–1833), was a Russian poet and translator (Figure 4). He headed the Imperial Theaters between 1825 and 1829. A major work by N.F. Ostolopov is 'A Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Poetry', published in 1821. His other noteworthy work, 'A Key to the Writings of Derzhavin with a Short Description of the Life of This Famed Poet', published in 1822, represents one of the first attempts at literary commentary in Russia.

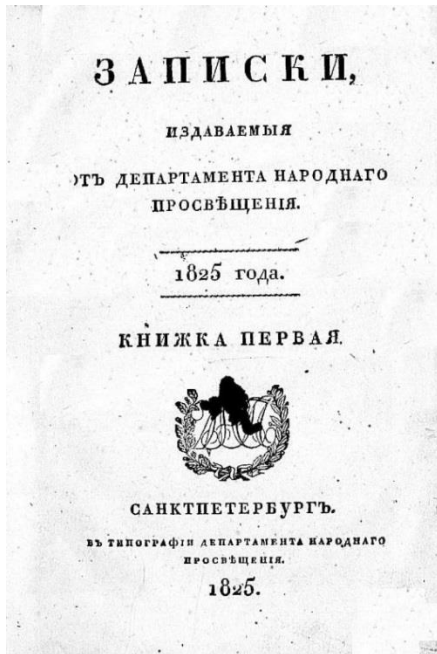


Fig. 5. Cover of the journal *Zapiski Izdavaemye ot Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*



Fig. 6. Cover of *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*

The journal was discontinued in 1824. In 1825, the Department of Public Education launched the yearly *Zapiski Izdavaemye ot Departamenta Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (Figure 5). Its editor-in-chief was again N.F. Ostolopov. A total of three volumes were released – in 1825, 1827, and 1829. The publication was comprised of two sections – official and non-official. The non-

official section carried articles focused on issues of education both in Russia and abroad. The publication mainly contained official data on public education in Russia (Ablov, 1937: 26).

Finally, in 1834 the Ministry launched *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (Figure 6). This monthly was published up to 1917.

In the period under review, the journal was managed by the following editors-in-chief: K.S. Serbinovich (from 1834 to 1856), A.V. Nikitenko (1856–1860), K.D. Ushinsky (1860–1863), Yu.S. Rekhnevsky (1864–1867), I.D. Galanin (1867), A.I. Georgiyevsky (1868–1870), E.M. Feoktistov (1871–1882), L.N. Maikov (1883–1890), V.G. Vasilevsky (1891–1899), and E.L. Radlov (1899–1917).

Being an official publication, the journal was not particularly rich in thought-provoking pedagogical content. Even the editorship of K.D. Ushinsky between 1860 and 1863 did not help much in this respect. Nevertheless, the journal was of great importance for the study of the history of public education in Russia. It carried acts of legislation on public education, circular letters, and ordinances from the Primary and Secondary Education Department of the Academic Committee within the Ministry of Public Education (Ierusalimskaya, 2010: 26). The input of certain prominent editors-in-chief of the journal, from K.S. Serbinovich, who helped N.M. Karamzin translate into French his 'History of the Russian State', to L.N. Maykov, was limited to a handful of articles and research studies of an academic nature. K.S. Serbinovich is credited with the launch in 1837 of "the index of all books published in Russia" (Lebid et al., 2020: 2496). During the editorship of K.D. Ushinsky, the journal carried a fair number of articles on pedagogy and some other subjects.

Some of the editors-in-chief of 'Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya' are briefly examined below.

Konstantin Stepanovich Serbinovich (1797–1874) was a prominent Russian memorialist, censor, statesman, privy councilor, and honorary member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences (Figure 7). During his editorship of the journal, he held the post of Director of the Chancellery of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod. In 1857, he became Director of the Ecclesiastical Educational Administration of the Holy Synod.



Fig. 7. Konstantin Stepanovich Serbinovich (1797–1874)

Evgeny Mikhaylovich Feoktistov (1828–1898) was a writer, journalist, and privy councilor. He headed the Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for Press Affairs, which made him Russia's censor-in-chief (Figure 8). He was the author of 'Greece's Fight for Independence' and 'Magnitsky: The Materials for the History of Education in Russia'. He also wrote the memoir 'Behind the Scenes of Politics and Literature'.

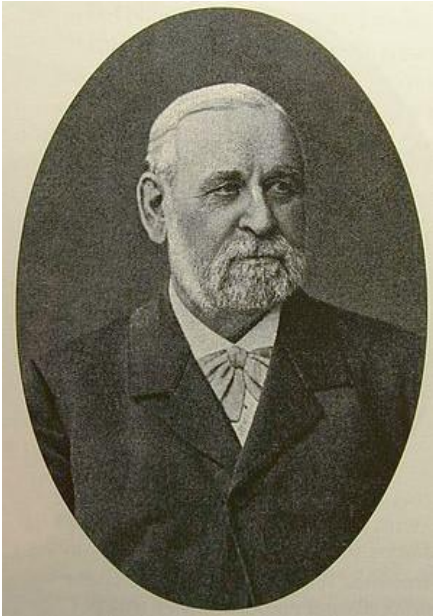


Fig. 8. Evgeny Mikhaylovich Feoktistov (1828–1898)

In 1904, the Ministry of Public Education launched the popular science journal *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* (Figure 9). It was published monthly in Saint Petersburg from 1904 to 1917.

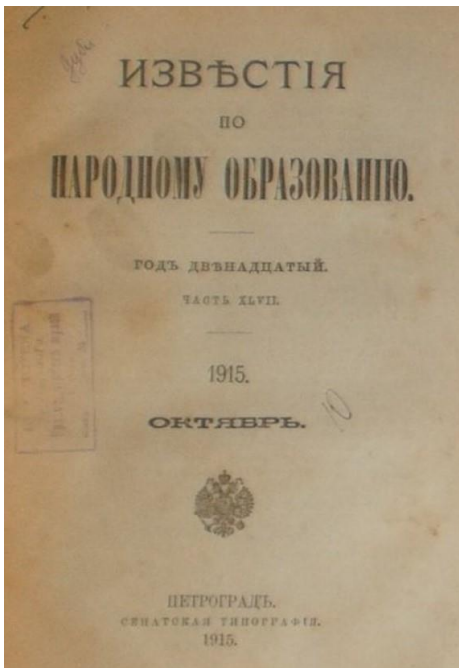


Fig. 9. Cover of the journal *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu*

The editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* was Ernest Leopoldovich Radlov, who also was the penultimate editor-in-chief of *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*. E.L. Radlov (1854–1928) was a Russian philosopher, historian of philosophy, philologist, and translator (Figure 10) (Krechko, 2020: 142). He was a co-founder of the St. Petersburg Philosophical Society and privy councilor. He gave lectures on logic, psychology, and history of philosophy. He worked at the Imperial Public Library, where he progressed from Sublibrarian to Director. He translated into Russian Aristotle's 'Ethics', and it is under his

editorship that ‘The Phenomenology of Spirit’ by Hegel and the writings of Fichte and Malebranche were published in Russian.



Fig. 10. Ernest Leopoldovich Radlov (1854–1928)

Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu was published at the behest of the Ministry of Public Education as a special organ focused on lower education exclusively. Outside of the official section, the journal carried articles on current issues in public education, pedagogical articles, and book reviews. Contributors included A.I. Anastasiyev, A.D. Weisman, E.P. Kovalevsky, M.Ya. Kapustin, and P.G. Mizhuyev. ‘A Reference Book on Lower Education’ was published on a yearly basis as a supplement to the journal (Ablov, 1937: 63).

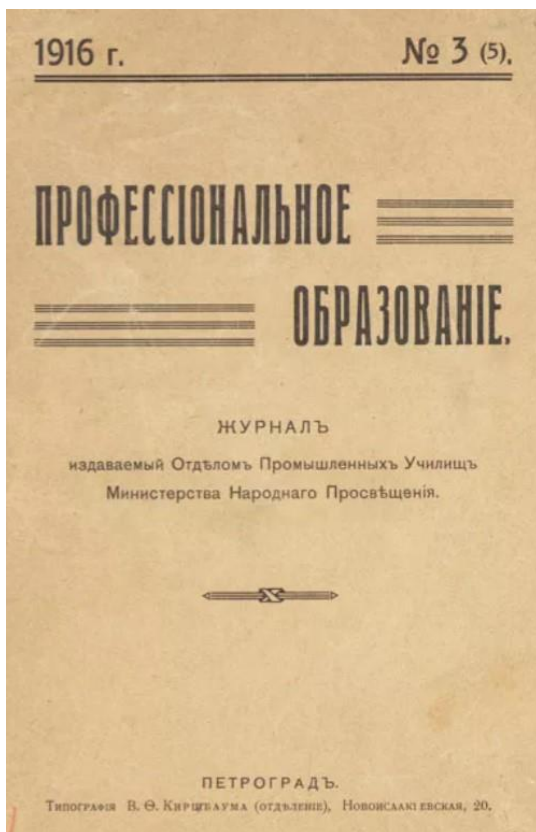


Fig. 11. Cover of the journal *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie*

Finally, the last journal published through the efforts of the Ministry of Public Education was *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie* (Figure 11). It was published by the Ministry's Department of Industrial Schools. Its editors were V. Rykov and A. Volokitin. Both were functionaries within the Ministry of Public Education, with V. Rykov heading the Department. The journal was published in Petrograd during World War I (between 1915 and 1917). Five issues were published each year.

According to the editors of *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie*, "growth in industry, improvements in its organization, and boosts in labor productivity and economic performance will only be possible if the country has in place a variety of technical and trade schools and there is a focus on developing a network of facilities for extracurricular vocational training". A significant portion of the material published in the journal during its first year was devoted to the discussion of the draft Regulation on Vocational Education in Russia. In fact, the very purpose of the journal was to help organize the country's vocational education system. The journal carried official documents on the activity of technical and vocational educational institutions. The 'Current Events' section carried the latest information on trade and technical schools in the country. The 'Bibliography' section contained material dealing with new works approved by the Academic Committee's Technical and Vocational Education Department (Polezhai, 2011: 86-87). In 1917, two issues of the journal were released – Issue 1 and a double issue combining Issues 2 and 3.

5. Conclusion

Between 1803 and 1917, a total of six journals were published under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Education in the Russian Empire. The first three were published from 1803 to 1829, a period that can be regarded as the time of the making of the Ministry's periodical press. This is when fundamental decisions were made regarding publication formats, content, and periodicity. In 1834, the Ministry launched the monthly *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, which would be published up to 1917, and during the subsequent period only narrowly specialized publications were published, including the popular science journal *Izvestiya po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* and *Professionalnoe Obrazovanie*, a journal concerned with vocational education. In terms of editorial personnel, of particular note is the fact that the Ministry of Public Education never employed unknowns to manage its periodical press, with most of its editors being prominent researchers and specialists in the area of printing or censorship.

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