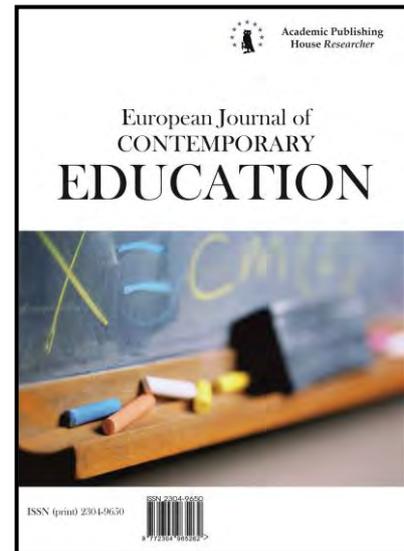




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On the History of the Pedagogical Thought in South Russia: Pedagogical Views of Major Pedagogues at the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the 19th century. Part III

Artyom Y. Peretyatko ^{a, b, *}, Teymur E. Zulfugarzade ^c

^a International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research, Washington, USA

^b Volgograd State University, Volgograd, Russian Federation

^c Russian Economic University named after G.V. Plekhanov, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

Recent years have witnessed the publication of a variety of scholarly papers highlighting region-specific peculiarities of education in the Russian Empire. However, they tend to focus on statistical information regarding the number of schools, the number of students, etc. Therefore, theoretical and pedagogical views and unique features of the methodological work done by major provincial teachers remain poorly researched. The paper discusses the case study of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium that was the most prominent scientific and educational center in the Don region in the 19th century and that boasted a teaching personnel of renowned local figures. Remarkably, the material on the actual pedagogical process in the gymnasium was already collected before 1917, **mainly in the initiative to celebrate the facility's centenary, and as many appropriate documents lacked**, much attention was paid to gathering information from former gymnasium students. As a result, the knowledge of real teaching practices used in the gymnasium is based both on official documents and on oral, often critical, accounts by contemporaries of its teachers, and the group of teachers include persons who played an important role in the Don history.

The third part of the paper encompasses the period in the late 1850-1860s, when the **Novocherkassk Gymnasium enjoyed a true "golden age"**. At the time, the institution had two teachers of national, not regional scale, the future authors of the famous textbooks, A.A. Radonezhskii and A.G. Filonov. S.S. Robush, director of the gymnasium, commanded great respect in Novocherkassk society, wrote pedagogical articles in the capital and local press and **worked to publish the Don's first pedagogical journal**. Each of the personalities shared a common pedagogical vision that epitomized a return to the ideas of A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky about the overriding importance of the moral benefits of education, but brought forth the return through a new theoretical and practical lens. Teachers of the new generation ventured to use a conscious

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: ArtPeretatko@yandex.ru (A.Yu. Peretyatko)

approach to the very process of teaching, giving consideration to how and what they taught children, for the first time in Don pedagogical practice. As a result, after it had abandoned attempts to adapt to the needs of the Don Host in the training of officers and officials, the gymnasium successfully brought up specialists in a wide range of subject matter areas and claimed a leading position in the Kharkov educational district for the first time in its history.

Keywords: history of pedagogy, teaching methods, historical pedagogical views, Novocherkassk Gymnasium, S.S. Robush, A.G. Filonov, A.A. Radonezhskii

1. Introduction

In 1907, the Don Host's regional printing house published a substantial book by priest I.P. Artinskii, which described the history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. The author **specifically emphasized in the preface that “the word ‘gymnasium’ in the title of the treatise is also defined using the adjective ‘military’, in addition to the attribute ‘Novocherkassk’”** (Artinskii, 1907: V). Indeed, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium was a center of thought first for the Land and later for the Oblast of the Don Host over many years, and its graduates and teachers included the majority of Don academics, writers and public figures of the 19th century. It is hardly surprising that for the gymnasium's 100th anniversary in 1905, the local authorities made efforts to uncover and structure materials on the history of the institution. It early became clear that only few such materials survived: the gymnasium archive was damaged in fire in 1858, later its files and records were actively sold out by negligent employees, and most gymnasium directors failed to keep systematic records of their activities (Artinskii, 1907: IV). In this situation, the pedagogical council decided to ask I.P. Artinskii to help find information on the gymnasium's past, and to this end, the latter contacted Don historians and local lore experts, many of whom once were students at the institution (Artinskii, 1907: IV). The outcome of the request was Artinskii's book that was, therefore, based not only on official information, but also on the accounts provided by former students of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium.

We should say that I.P. Artinskii was not the first person whom the lack of sources on the **history of the Don education prompted to use eyewitness accounts, the “oral history”, as defined by modern terminology. In 1859, a small book “Essays of the Don” by A.G. Filonov, which brought to light interesting facts from the past and present of the Don Cossacks in a somewhat haphazard manner. The last of the essays was entitled “Educational Institutions on the Don (from 1790 to 1807)” and was grounded, among other things, in the “unwritten accounts” given by several old men, of whom the author specifically singled out Esaul M.O. Nazarov, who in 1790 was accepted into the Don Principal Public School, later re-organized into the Novocherkassk Gymnasium (Filonov, 1859: 151-152).**

So, we can now benefit from a **fascinating first-hand source of information on the Don Host's** most important educational facility of the 19th century, a center of the intellectual life of the Don Cossacks. We thought it might be valuable to systematize the available evidence of how influential figures in the Don history carried on their teaching practice in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium and what theoretical pedagogical views they conveyed. It is also noteworthy that, as we will see below, for all its major role in the region, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium was rather an ordinary provincial school for the Russian Empire, and, moreover, the one that was chronically underfunded. With our research, we will be able to take a glance at famous Don figures from an unexpected angle by reviewing their pedagogical talents, as well as to better understand what methodology served as a basis for the learning process in the Russian province of the last century.

A relevant note should be made here that historians have become markedly more interested in recent years in studying the region-specific features of pre-revolutionary education in Russia. **Articles and article series on the education system development in the Vilna Governorate (Natolochnaya et al., 2019a; Natolochnaya et al., 2019b), Vologda Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2019a; Cherkasov et al., 2019b; Cherkasov et al., 2019c; Cherkasov et al., 2019d), and in the Caucasus (Shevchenko et al., 2016) have been published in recent years. Researchers are also striving to identify features of the primary education system in the Cossack territories (Molchanova et al., 2019a; Molchanova et al., 2019b; Molchanova et al., 2020). On the other hand, the experience of individual provincial pedagogues, which was greatly appreciated by contemporaries, has received only cursory learned attention so far. However, the large number of outstanding**

graduates of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium shows that the experience deserves careful examination, at the very least.

2. Materials and methods

The third part of our paper focuses on the late 1850-1860s in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, on the period that preserved the largest number of dedicated pedagogical works by its teachers. Director of the gymnasium S.S. Robush himself was the first researcher of the Don education history who devoted several articles to the topic (Robush, 1863; Robush, 1867). Teachers **A.A. Radonezhskii and A.G. Filonov, later transferred to St. Petersburg, published their works in Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya**, an edition owned by the Ministry of Public Education, which explored the peculiarities of teaching the Russian language and pedagogy (Radonezhskii, 1861; Radonezhskii, 1862; Filonov, 1856). In addition, considering the materials of this period's pedagogical councils, cited by I.P. Artinskii, which discussed not only organizational, but also issues on pedagogical theory (Artinskii, 1907: 185-194), we can confidently state that we have a vast array of materials at our disposal on theoretical pedagogical views of Novocherkassk teachers of the time, which were earlier hardly glossed over by researchers.

On the other hand, there are memoirs and even fiction works by students of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium from still available, which survived from the period starting in the 1860s to this day and describe the educational process in the institution. And here is where a **novelette “Tower of Babel. History of one gymnasium” (Vavilonskoye stolpotvoreniye. Istoriya odnoy gimnazii)**, written by A.I. Kosorotov, a student at the school under review in the 1880s, particularly stands out (Kosorotov, 1900). Although this is a work of fiction, and the names of Don teachers were changed there, I.P. Artinskii took the novelette very seriously and used references to it in his official history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium (Artinskii, 1907: 161). For this reason, the **“Tower of Babel” can be regarded as a memoirs work that provides detailed portraits of Novocherkassk teachers and their teaching styles as viewed by their student.**

So, we have sufficiently detailed information at last on the pedagogical theories the Novocherkassk teachers followed as well as on their teaching practices. It remains only to make the data a subject of research by using the historical descriptive method and compare them with each other by employing the historical comparative method.

3. Discussion

The situation, which existed in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the 1850s, was reminiscent of the situation observed there in the 1810-1820s in many respects. The pedagogical stagnation meant a certain regression in the learning process itself, and, apparently, at the end of I.Ya. Zolotarev's directorship, the gymnasium faced some kind of internal crisis. First, the number of students suddenly began to go down again: after the highest figure of 295 students in the 1850–1851 academic year the gymnasium reached in its entire history, in 1851–1852, the number dropped to 261, and in 1852–1853 to 242 (Artinskii, 1907: 156). I.P. Artinskii, who, unfortunately, had few first-hand and unofficial accounts of the period in the gymnasium's history, **wrote in generalities about “some ailment that afflicted the school life”, which required, however, “the most urgent treatment”** (Artinskii, 1907: 157). And again the gymnasium director was first in the firing line, but while in 1818, the Kharkov Educational District managed to defend A.G. Popov from the attacks by Don Ataman A.K. Denisov, in 1854 I. Ya. Zolotarev had to retire shortly after the audit of the Don educational institutions, carried out by the Inspector of Public Schools, F.L. Tyurin (Artinskii, 1907: 157).

Alas, the existing situation again showed that finding a good director for such an unconventional educational institution as the Novocherkassk Gymnasium was a very challenging matter. Another facet should be added to the background – the Don experienced growing xenophobic sentiments in the middle of the 19th century. In the 1860s, when the sentiments erupted into the surface, the deputies of the Don stanitsas (stanitsa is a village inside a Cossack Host) and local officials proposed to the Ministry of War the following laws, for example: **“All positions in educational institutions are replaced by school ranks of both genders, predominantly from the Cossack estate”** (Volvenko, 2014: 18). All indications were that the Don authorities wanted I.Ya. Zolotarev's successor to be a Cossack belonging to the military elite, otherwise it is difficult to justify their choice of A.A. Popov. He was already a middle-aged officer,

a son of A.G. Popov, who graduated from the Kharkov University back in the 1820s and worked as a history teacher at the Voronezh Gymnasium for several years after graduation (Artinskii, 1907: 311). From 1830, when he took dismissal from the gymnasium on reasons of ill health, A.A. Popov did not hold positions in the Ministry of Public Education, but served as an officer for special assignments under the Don Atamans for many years (Artinskii, 1907: 311). As a result, I. Ya. Zolotarev's post was inherited by a same-age peer and with rudimentary and long-outdated teaching experience on top of that. It was hardly possible to expect from him any solutions for conceptual pedagogical issues.

To make things even worse, A.A. Popov turned out to have rather a colorless personality. Almost all his characterizations found in the literature on the Don local history can be boiled down to the statement that he was the gymnasium's director (L.B., 1906: 59). The only exception was I.P. Artinskii, who described the successor of I.Ya. Zolotarev: **"He was a man of a kind, gentle and sympathetic heart, but <he> did not display any decisive character or courageous initiative. Therefore, he tried above all to maintain the gymnasium in the condition and order which were established during the sixteen-year directorship of his predecessor Zolotarev"** (Artinskii, 1907: 158). Finally, A.A. Popov was simply seriously ill, and when he died in 1859, holding the post of **director in the gymnasium, the corresponding certificate read the following: "Colonel and Cavalier Popov suffered from <...> affluxes to the chest and abdominal organs, chronic liver blockage, shortness of breath, palpitations, dizziness, insomnia, loss of appetite, total depression of strength and exhaustion; all these seizures intensified in a progressive way and brought Colonel Popov to the utmost exhaustion (despite all sorts of medical care provided to him), in which he deceased of nervous crisis"** (Artinskii, 1907: 173-174). In light of this, accusation against A.A. Popov that with his appointment, many aspects of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium's life deteriorated are hardly appropriate; the blame for this should be placed on the Don authorities that assigned for the position a Cossack who had serious health problems and lacked required competencies, but was close to the military elite.

During A.A. Popov's term, no competitions of teachers' research works were carried out, or at least we could not find any information on the activities. Although teachers filled out reports on the lessons delivered, and the pedagogical council held meetings on a regular basis, in fact, the new director, either by virtue of his illness or his placid disposition, did not even punish the teachers who conspicuously neglected their duties. Things got to the point that in the same 1859, A.A. Popov was called for by the administration of the Kharkov Educational District, which chanced upon the **fact that several gymnasium teachers were "gross absentees" at their own lessons and required that "teachers' proper attendance at lectures should be carefully monitored, and in case of failure to be present, timely provision of appropriate medical certificates was strictly demanded"** (Artinskii, 1907: 173). As it was the case before, the resign of the director, even if he had somewhat archaic views, was an active enthusiast and loved his work, led to dubious outcomes, and his immediate successor failed to facilitate the needed changes in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium.

But it was the period of inertia, linked to the weak director, which again saw a major renewal of the teaching staff and ideas of the new generation teachers proliferating in the gymnasium. One of these teachers was S.S. Robush, who was a significant but very unusual figure for the Don history. **Having a Jewish origin "from the nobility of the Minsk governorate", he was graduated from the Kharkov University only in the middle of the 1840s, and then served in gymnasiums and schools all his life** (Artinskii, 1907: 311-312). S.S. Robush joined the Novocherkassk Gymnasium as a teacher in 1850, and after the death of A.A. Popov, despite his peculiar roots, he became head of the gymnasium, emerging as its only director, of whom the local population kept memory for a long time. And we will take the liberty of citing several extensive excerpts that described the memory of S.S. Robush, the recollections of him that were preserved by Novocherkassk dwellers at the turn of the 19th and 20th century.

First of all, this point is opportune for turning to another unique source on the history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. One of its graduates in the 1880s, writer A.I. Kosorotov, wrote a novelette **"Tower of Babel. History of one gymnasium"**. Although this is a work of fiction, and the names of Don teachers were changed there, I.P. Artinskii took the novelette very seriously and used references to it in his official history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. For this reason, the **"Tower of Babel"** can be regarded as a memoirs work that provides detailed portraits of Novocherkassk

teachers as viewed by their student. And the gymnasium's ex-director, M.A. Zilber, (i.e., S.S. Robush) is positioned not only as a good organizer and an outstanding teacher, but also as a near saint.

“Director Mikhail Abramovich Zilber, better known to his former students under the nickname Shmul. This nickname, indicative of Jewish origin (as well as of the tendency pertaining to all school students to give mocking nicknames), totally disagreed with either the appearance or the character of the deceased... Yes, he now reposes in the eternal slumber of a righteous man in the cemetery of the city of Razboinsk (Novocherkassk – A.P., T.Z.), and his grateful alumni, by having taken up a collection, recently built a beautiful monument over his tomb with a bronze bust and touching inscriptions. The monument was constructed recently, although the memorable patriarch passed away long ago. The situation repeated the story with the memory of many good people. After his death the good beginning he had made continued to work by itself, and so everyone felt good, and he was then forgotten. But years went by, new figures emerged with their own new beginnings – and now people looked back with a deep sigh, remembered that their life was better then, and immortalized the memory of a good person with tears of gratitude.

<...>.

For eighteen years he headed the gymnasium. I only met him in the last year of his life, but I distinctly remember his intelligent, slightly mocking face, shaved protruding lips, his voice hissing **angrily when he pulled a student's ears**, and his kind, smug laugh when he awarded the best student or heard a smart answer at an exam. He was the father, in the full sense of the word, of the gymnasium, who took to heart all joys and sorrows of his pupils. He had such a great love for the gifted that he often forgave them their most outrageous pranks; he felt pity for the untalented and helped them in every way; he dealt with the dissolute with his own hands right at the crime scene, but he never liked washing dirty linen in public, and he firmly believed that expelling a student **from the gymnasium meant ruining him forever”** (Kosorotov, 1900: 60-61).

However, S.S. Robush had opponents as well, who provided a strikingly different and an avowedly demonic characterization. In an ironic twist, the description also made it into the literature and was used by a contemporary writer D.E. Galkovskii when he depicted a typical **“provincial Russian gymnasium”** (Galkovskii, b. g.). The point was that a successor of S.S. Robush, D.F. Shcheglov, wrote a whole letter to K.P. Pobedonostsev, where he complained as follows: most of Russian educational institutions, instead of training **“people of firm religious and patriotic views”, sought to meet local needs, to ensure “local inhabitants, zemstvo, administration and town communities were pleased with us”** (Shcheglov, 2010: 4). The letter, after having been partially published by D.E. Galkovskii, earned certain notoriety, and its full version came out in 2010 in the Moskva magazine (Shcheglov, 2010). It is now even available on the Internet, where it is usually referred to as evidencing the degrading state of Russian education, which resulted from the liberal reforms of 1860–1870. And it was quite in line with the spirit of Russian nationalism of the late 19th and early 20th century that D.F. Shcheglov presented the Jew S.S. Robush as the primary **mediator of detrimental ideas in Novocherkassk: “Over two and a half decades, in Novocherkassk, the director was the most prudent person (that is a person who tries as hard as he can to satisfy local needs and get along with the local authorities – A.P., T.Z.) almost in entire Russia, a Mr. Robush, a Jew by birth, as they say. This took place from the early fifties to the late seventies, amid the most dramatic progress. During his directorship, atheism was openly inculcated at classes, and he as if was unaware of this. Some strange agitators lived in the dormitory room, bringing there foreign revolutionary editions like Vperyod, Nabat, etc. And he did not notice this, and even persecuted the teacher, Mr. Polyakov, who revealed the case. As for Mr. Robush himself, monstrous things are told of him: being a teacher, he secretly, for money had students treated for syphilis (which is absolute truth confirmed by the investigation), married a protégé of the appointed ataman, a well-known lecher Khomutov, openly accepted bribes and more. And everything was fine in the gymnasium (that is its authority was unquestioned on the Don – A.P., T.Z.)”** (Shcheglov, 2010: 5).

At last, the third description of S.S. Robush belongs to I.P. Artinskii. It struck, perhaps, the most sensible balance, and when compiling it, the historiographer of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, apparently, gave consideration to the reviews of the still living supporters and opponents of the former director. However, the description creates an impression of some **incompleteness, as if the historian himself hesitated over his opinion of his personage: “Based on the archival data, it can be said with certainty that he was a very shrewd director, and his**

remarkable mental power, developed at the expense of his other spiritual strengths and clearly shown in his tact and in the ability to conform to conditions and circumstances, often manifested itself in his *cunning*. The latter trait in **Robush's disposition was the cause for conflicting attitudes** towards him and a conflicting judgment of his behavior and activities, formed by his contemporaries. The higher military and district authorities greatly appreciated the activities of Solomon Stepanovich, and he was the first director of the military gymnasium, who was awarded the rank of actual state councilor and the 1st class Order of Saint Stanislaus. Some professional colleagues of his felt distrust of him, and others were distinctly hostile towards the dictatorial director and his bossy patronage. The local society had admirers of Solomon Stepanovich in its midst, who expressed their gratitude to him by setting up a monument at his grave, in the Novocherkassk cemetery (Artinskii, 1907: 174-175).

So who was S.S. Robush, a teacher and later a director of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium? We believe that he, above all, was the first person on the Don after A.G. Oridovsky, who combined a prominent personality and a true vocation for pedagogy. We have mentioned many distinguished figures who taught between 1810 and 1840 in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, but most of them left mark in history not through their teaching activity, far from that. Moreover, after they ended their teaching career, they showed no visible interest in further attempts to improve education. Unlike them, S.S. Robush embarked to publishing the first specialty pedagogical magazine – “*Donskaya Shkola*” – in the Don Host Oblast just after he resigned from his position in the gymnasium (Sazyanin, 1892: 3). Although he failed to start the undertaking, he continued to actively publish dedicated pedagogical articles in the local press (Sazyanin, 1892: 3). Interestingly, **even in S.S. Robush's obituaries, his supporters could refer to any serious achievements of the deceased outside the pedagogical sphere. But, perhaps, none of the Don teachers was praised by contemporaries with such heartfelt words since the time of A.G. Oridovsky: “He was an inspired educator** in the broad and deep sense of the word; he was a *self-denying* public figure, selfless to sacrificing his family interests; he was a *perfect* administrator and education organizer in the Don, **and his name has become a powerful symbol in our area”** (Kalmykov, 1892: 2). In fact, biographies of A.G. Oridovsky and S.S. Robush have many parallels, from the fact that both teachers came to the non-native Don in their young age, devoted their lives to spreading education in the Cossack community and, after their death, were rendered more honor by Don Cossacks than local teachers. We can also point out at the support of the authorities that protected the outstanding teachers from criticism from some members of the local public. It is the certain similarity of their pedagogical views that is most noteworthy considering the topic of our paper.

As we mentioned above, S.S. Robush was not only a practicing teacher, but also a pedagogy theorist who widely collaborated with journals and magazines. He was one of the first Don teachers, whose works were published by both social literary and pedagogical editions. For example, in 1863, the “*Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*” (Journal of the Ministry of Public Education) featured his article “Do Don Cossacks want literacy?” (Robush, 1863). And, although the article was mainly historical and highlighted how literacy spread in the Don, **some of the thoughts it contained clearly reflected S.S. Robush's general pedagogical views.**

One idea which was uppermost in the views of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium's new director was that of education as the absolute good pre-requisite for the healthy progression of society. He even pronounced the specific goal of the Don education in the 1860s – “**to freely deploy spiritual forces**” for the “**civil development of the region**” (Robush, 1863: 126). This, of course, was a return to Oridovsky's ideas about the unconditional benefit of any education, but the return was a total reinvention and took place at a fundamentally different level. Considering education as the absolute good, **S.S. Robush did not glorified abstract “science”, but could substantiate why** Cossacks specifically need a general, mainstream and non-specialized education. Moreover, he set unequivocal priorities for its development, unexpectedly advocating that the Land of the Don Host **needed women's schools first of all because while Cossacks were away at the service, “their family and household remain in the hands of mothers who, due to the lack of any elementary education, convey their children the collection of superstitions, prejudices and primitive instincts, which they themselves assimilated from their childhood”** (Robush, 1863: 119). S.S. Robush summarized his discussion of the issue with a rhetorical question: “**What upbringing can a child receive in this primitive superstition, in this environment of blind attachment to ceremonial formalities?**” (Robush, 1863: 119). So, the central focus was again placed not on the acquisition of practical

knowledge, but on the general development of the personality, but now it was argued that the development was required to eradicate superstitions and prejudices, to break down formalistic upholding of traditions – to eliminate the factors that hindered the development of the Don region.

As for the pedagogical trends of the previous decades towards wider practice-oriented education and tighter control and regulation in gymnasiums, S.S. Robush adopted a definitely negative stance against them. For example, he condemned the initiative of 1850 to reorganize the Novocherkassk Gymnasium into a full-fledged cadet corps so that it met the needs of the Don Host. According to S.S. Robush, the reorganization would dramatically raise the cost of maintaining the new educational institution, while the benefits it could provide would be questionable (Robush, 1863: 125). **And then, noting that Cossacks' hunger for education was far greater than the opportunities provided to them by the government to satisfy it, the director wondered whether education on the Don was limited because "a Cossack is a warrior, and when a warrior has been required to know anything beyond weapons?" (Robush, 1863: 125).** Or, perhaps, the spread of literacy was slower than Cossacks themselves wanted because **"we were preoccupied with collar insignias on the uniforms of gymnasium students?" (Robush, 1863: 125).** It will also be appropriate here to quote S.S. Robush's commentary on the 1865 events, when jurisprudence and military science were erased from the Novocherkassk Gymnasium curriculum: **"The Novocherkassk Gymnasium got rid of the *needless and useless burden* that was an obstacle to the successes of other, undoubtedly useful and much-needed knowledge. It can now continue its onward journey with greater ease, its true destination is now more visible – to lead the way towards general education" (Artinskii, 1907: 207).**

But the most innovative and authentic feature of Robush's article was its close attention to the purely material and technical aspects of the educational process, which had no precedent in Don pedagogy. As a reminder, sporadic complaints about the "not too enviable" situation of teachers and proposals to "increase funding" allocated to the gymnasium were already voiced in the speeches of Don teachers in the early 1830s, but they were not properly elaborated on at the time. S.S. Robush, on the other hand, wrote honestly that the main and key problem of the gymnasium which persisted for a startlingly long time was the absence of its own building and the need to huddle in temporary facilities that did not meet even basic requirements. S.S. Robush emphasized that in the previous years it was the uncomfortable classrooms that made "the Don Host nobility send their children to other gymnasiums", and by the early 1860s, despite some improvement (the gymnasium was at least provided with one larger rented building instead of three small ones, scattered throughout Novocherkassk), "the cramped space and poor design of the premises exceeded any likelihood" (Robush, 1863: 117). By the way, despite his ties with the military authorities, S.S. Robush was so bold here as making very blistering attacks against them. As a reminder, money to construct a good building for the gymnasium was promised by M.I. Platov. S.S. Robush did not know of the fact but pointed out that the army made a commitment to build a gymnasium at their expense as early as in 1836 but failed to fulfil the pledge in a quarter of a century. **"It is more cost-efficient for the army to rent premises for educational institutions on interest yielded by the capital that should be spent on the construction of military houses for them. But can one be guided by the calculation of interest in the matters of public education?" (Robush, 1863: 117).** S.S. Robush also wrote about the "plight" of teachers in parish schools (Robush, 1863: 119), about extreme bureaucratic red tape in education management (Robush, 1863: 120) and the need for a special approach to the teaching staff in women's educational institutions (Robush, 1863: 128)...

Several years later, in 1867, S.S. Robush presented another very interesting article entitled **"On public education in the Don army" (Robush, 1867).** Although the article significantly repeated previous works by the Novocherkassk Gymnasium's director, he spoke in print for the first time on the way professional teachers should be trained. The relevant excerpt read as follows: **"The overriding purpose of teaching is not so much about acquiring extensive information as in general mental development, in learning a practical skill of teaching, and in general in preparing teachers with more up-to-date views of the primary education" (Robush, 1867: 129).** Put it differently, even when training subject-matter specialists, S.S. Robush suggested providing them with broad and universal knowledge, which they could utilize for the general development of their personality, and complementing it not so much with technical information as with practical activities within their profession. S.S. Robush further stressed that he always considered it

necessary when training parish school teachers not so much to teach them the theory of “pedagogy and didactics”, but to organize for them “classes in Novocherkassk parish schools where they could instruct pupils under the guidance and supervision of experienced teachers” (Robush, 1867: 129).

So, as a summary, S.S. Robush, like A.G. Oridovsky, was a devotee of education, committed to its as wide dissemination among Don Cossacks as possible. The gymnasium director believed that only knowledge could save the younger generation from superstition and spiritual backwardness, only a region where literate people lived could prosper and successfully develop in the modern world. On the other hand, excessively specialized education caused spiritual backwardness and was therefore dangerous. Moreover, S.S. Robush was well aware that organizing an efficient educational process required much effort and expertise. He no longer thought that recruiting teachers with qualification and even with love for their profession was enough; it was S.S. Robush, the first prominent Don teacher, who looked closer on the very process of delivering lessons in his publications and raised the issue of proper funding as vital to the existence of educational institutions.

As early as in the 1850s, S.S. Robush made efforts to build relations with people in his environment, who shared his pedagogical views. I.P. Artinskii specifically singled out two of them – **A.A. Radonezhskii and A.G. Filonov, already known to us as the author of “Essays by Don” (Ocherki Dona)** (Artinskii, 1907: 201). The teachers completed their studies not long ago, in the middle of the 1850s, and, what was more important, they graduated not from the Kharkov University, but from a vocational institution for teachers – the Main Pedagogical Institute in St. Petersburg (Artinskii, 1907: 324). Like their colleague and future director, not only did they work by profession, but also actively published works on pedagogy, where they demonstrated theoretical pedagogical views close to those of S.S. Robush.

Already the respect, with which **A.G. Filonov spoke about A.G. Oridovsky’s personality and assiduity** he demonstrated reciting the speeches of the protoiereus, are most suggestive of his pedagogical philosophy. Another indicative fact is that, as we remember, **A.G. Filonov compared A.G. Oridovsky’s ideas with the “deep” and “brilliant” ideas of N.I. Pirogov**, which declared that “it <was> first necessary to bring up a human, and after that train them as a soldier, professor, metalworker, diplomat, medical doctor...” (Filonov, 1859: 176). Obviously, the requirement to “bring up a human,” rather than training a dedicated specialist, also resonated with the teacher of the Novocherkassk gymnasium. But A.G. Filonov did not share the pedagogical idealism of the early 19th century, and moreover, he first came up with criticism over the professional incapacity of Don teachers at the time, which we illustrated in the first part of our paper. Finally, it was characteristic of A.G. Filonov to pay attention to the material support of the teaching process – for **example, comparing teachers’ salaries in the Novocherkassk gymnasium in the 1800s and 1850, he concluded that teachers now lived in absolute poverty that affected the quality of their teaching performance. “Either a gymnasium, or money, either a position, or your life, either teaching activity, or society – choose any!” he exclaimed** (Filonov, 1859: 163).

However, Filonov’s pedagogical views in the late 1850s were most clearly demonstrated in his **first pedagogical article “Russian textbooks on the theory of prose writings” (Russkie uchebniki po teorii prozaicheskikh sochinenii)**, published by the “Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya” in 1856 (Filonov, 1856). As a reminder, at the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, a senior colleague of his, A.A. Leonov, carried out lessons on the Russian language using a very formalist approach – he taught children theory at an age when they were not yet able to comprehend it, was not interested in the content of the texts, only analyzed grammatical aspects and in general, apparently, did not give thought to whether the structure of his lessons and the textbooks used were efficient or not. A.G. Filonov, a teacher of a new breed, adopted a totally different perspective on the practical application of his profession. To achieve the best effect from **his lessons, he tried to trace the “evolution of our (Russian) theory” of prose works, by reviewing both the advantages and weaknesses of all textbooks available at that time** (Filonov, 1856: 1-4). In his first article, A.G. Filonov, however, only made first steps in this monumental study and limited the research object to the analysis of the textbooks from the earliest period up to the 18th century inclusive. Nevertheless, his findings completely discredited the practice employed by A.A. Leonov. According to A.G. Filonov, old textbooks suffered from a major defect – “**scholasticism, the lack of legitimate, reasonable principles in the entirety of the narration**” (Filonov, 1856: 60). The scholasticism meant here the excessive focus on the theoretic

representation, when “the authors, citing the words of ancient rhetors, spoke about generalities, dozens of them, about tropes and figures of speech, bringing their number to more than one hundred, instructed about periods, chrias and syllogisms only because the same theory is described by Halicarnassus, Phalernum, Cicero and Quintilian” (Filonov, 1856: 60). A.G. Filonov contrasted **this speculative, dead knowledge against few “conscious characteristics” of old textbooks, i.e. the cases when their authors shifted from obsolete ancient instances to giving rules and providing examples for them, which could be efficiently put into practice in the “century when the authors of the textbooks lived”** (Filonov, 1856: 60).

Therefore, the Don pedagogy in the 1850s existed in somewhat a paradoxical situation: pedagogues, who in theory advocated practice-oriented education, which, however, was very formalist in practice, were replaced by the supporters of general education that, on the contrary, had **“conscious characteristics” and fitted the time. The Novocherkassk Gymnasium even initiated the development of the schoolbooks suitable for the education.** It was A.G. Filonov who after having reviewed learning aids on the Russian language, was not fully satisfied with them and began to publish his own reader – **“Russian chrestomathy, with notes”** (*Russkaya khrestomatiya, s primechaniyami*) in 1863 (Filonov, 1863). Apparently, the reader turned out to be quite good as it had a number of reprints and **receives quite positive evaluations by today’s authors** (Pil'd, 2013: 82).

Another contribution was no less interesting than the creative activity of A.G. Filonov, but despite this was the undeservedly forgotten – the articles by A.A. Radonezhskii, which explored one of the milestone episodes in the history of Don education, that is the start of training professional teachers for parish schools by the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. The first article in the series, **“The pedagogical department at the gymnasium in Novocherkassk”** (*Pedagogicheskoe otdelenie pri gimnazii v Novocherkasske*), was published in 1861 (Radonezhskii, 1861). It was a new experience for Don pedagogy – A.A. Radonezhskii described in detail the essential role of training real educators, not just specialists in a particular area of the school curriculum, but people who were able to **“play on the soul” of a child: “Proficient music teachers say, and famous artists confirm that the manner of holding the bow on the violin neck – fingers on the piano keys – ensures a singular power to their play on the instruments – why people don’t think (and whether we think?) that guiding children’s souls through first lessons in their school education is a delicate art?... Playing on the soul was not as easy as on a simple pipe, said Hamlet. Sadly, even in olden days gentlefolks assigned bad lackeys to supervise children, and we are also not picky about the choice of tutors, tutoresses and teachers, especially for primary education”** (Radonezhskii, 1861: 100).

Unfortunately, A.A. Radonezhskii did not suggest a positive image of a good teacher in this article, but wrote a lot about the negative image of a bad teacher, alas, typical of the Russian Empire at the time. The negative image again contained many traits and qualities characteristic of those teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, who, like A.A. Leonov, required that children formally memorized theories disconnected with reality. Here is a description A.A. Radonezhskii gave for typical content of subjects in gymnasiums: **“The very first page showed abstruse hieroglyphs: arithmetic is a study area, grammar is a study area, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, stol (Nominative for table), stola (Genitive of table), stolu (Dative of table) – the tropic of Cancer, the tropic of Capricorn, the ecliptic, etc. <...>. Should we wonder after that that we burst into tears and were as scared with the school as they scared with devils, witches and other monsters? Indeed, what kind of study area is this, where there are crayfish, and goats, and cases - what kind of game is it?”** (Translator’s note. Untranslatable wordplay: 1) words “Cancer” and “crayfish” are homonyms in Russian “rak”; 2) word “game” is used to translate Russian “dich” that has two meanings simultaneously expressed here – **“wild animals, fish and birds hunted for food” and “stuff, nonsense, absurdity”**) (Radonezhskii, 1861: 101-102). And so, instead of making it easier for children to comprehend these scholastic arts and sciences, remote from reality, teachers demanded that pupils thoughtlessly memorize them. In this regard, A.A. Radonezhskii cited an occurrence that took place with S.S. Robush, which, by the way, testifies to the cozy relationship between the director and the teacher of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. S.S. Robush was once visited by an applicant for a teacher position, who in fact had no idea how to teach lessons. The hapless applicant refuted all arguments provided by an experienced pedagogue that it was necessary to know special teaching methods, that a **child would “not understand” dark and vague explanations, with the following reply: “And if he doesn’t understand, I will whip him, and he will understand then”** (Radonezhskii, 1861: 96).

However, we should not idealize Radonezhskii's pedagogical views as well. Perhaps the most controversial point in his articles was his attitude towards children. We remember certain complaints were also made against S.S. Robush in this regard: while A.I. Kosorotov approved of the **director's unwillingness to bring it to public** violations committed by gymnasium students, D.F. Shcheglov, by contrast, **accused him of criminal negligence, that he "pretended to know" what a mess went on both in classrooms and in students' dorm apartments.** And A.A. Radonezhskii's article clarifies **why the director of the Novocherkassk gymnasium turned a blind eye to children's misconduct: "Submissive sitting, peace and quiet do not guarantee successes; childish playfulness is just as characteristic and excusable for the young age as grass is for the ground; things interesting to others have no meaning and are to no purpose for a child; it is not a teacher's Jupiterian importance and not the commanding attitude that unlock a door to a child's soul, but the treatment filled with motherly love, kindred and genuine affection, a family atmosphere fostered at the school"** (Radonezhskii, 1861: 102). Of course, these statements looked good on paper; but they had their darker side in practice, which we will describe later.

A.A. Radonezhskii suggested a positive **image of a good teacher in his article "Two years of studies in the pedagogical department at the Novocherkassk gymnasium"** (Dva goda zanyatii v pedagogicheskom otdelenii pri novocherkasskoi gimnazii) (Radonezhskii, 1862). From his viewpoint, the main quality of such a teacher was willingness to learn and develop themselves, and continuously embrace new pedagogical ideas (Radonezhskii, 1862: 290). Accordingly, a good teacher was not governed by dead written rules, but was committed to a strong desire to teach a child, and relied more on practice than on theory. In this regard, A.A. Radonezhskii's experience of **teaching "pedagogy and didactics" to would-be parish teachers is particularly indicative. Initially, he tried to teach pedagogy in the right way "according to the program", in the form of typical lessons, focused on such topics as "harmonious education", "Bell and Lancaster", "heuristic, academic, catechetical method"** (Radonezhskii, 1862: 297). However, he quickly found out that students either did not **remember such lectures at all, or understand them "with difficulty"** (Radonezhskii, 1862: 297). And then A.A. Radonezhskii deliberately rejected the program **verified and approved by the authorities, replacing "theoretical expatiation" in it with "practical exercises"** that completely covered the remaining part of the course (Radonezhskii, 1862: 297-298). During these practical lessons, both the teacher and his students drew up plans for potential lessons, and A.A. Radonezhskii even published the most successful works. Despite being simplified to a certain degree, the plans have not been outdated to this day in their structure, and could come out in a modern magazine on pedagogy. Here is an example of how a teacher should explain the concepts of **"liquid" and "solid" to the youngest children:**

Me: 'Does water feel like a stone or like a tree?'

Pupils: 'No.'

Me: 'So, why isn't water a stone?'

Pupils: 'It pours.'

Me: 'What other objects can pour like water?'

Pupils: 'Wine, oil.'

Me: 'Can you pour milk?'

Pupils: 'Yes, we can.'

Me: 'What about porridge or bread, for example, can you pour them?'

Pupils: 'No.'

Me: 'Why?'

Pupils: 'Porridge is thick.'

Me: 'And milk?'

Pupils: 'Milk is fluent.'

Me: All objects: water, beer, milk and wine that can be poured because you said they are *fluent*, are called *liquids* or *liquid* objects; while a tree, stone, earth are *solid*" (Radonezhskii, 1862: 300).

Unfortunately, A.G. Filonov and A.A. Radonezhskii did not stay long in the Don region. Their pedagogical works, apparently, were appreciated by the authorities, and the teachers were transferred to St. Petersburg the former in 1864, and the latter in 1862 (Artinskii, 1907: 324). Without dwelling on their further biographies, we should only note that in them the Novocherkassk Gymnasium lost teachers, standing out not only on the regional level but visible in the all-Russian

scale, the authors of a number of successful textbooks for educational institutions (we already wrote about A.G. Filonov's reader above, and A. A. Radonezhskii compiled, for example, "Essay on the history of Russian literature" (Ocherk istorii russkoi literatury) (Radonezhskii, 1899). Nevertheless, other teachers joined the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, who might not mark their careers with such achievements, but fully shared the new pedagogical views. By tradition we will mention only some of them, in the first place, those who played a major role in the Don history.

The issues of teaching the Russian language, which were interesting to A.G. Filonov, were later addressed by a young teacher, A.M. Savel'ev. In the early 1860s, he even sent a manuscript of the "Notes on teaching Russian language and literature in gymnasiums" to the Kharkov University (Artinskii, 1907: 190). However, A.M. Savel'ev made it into the Don history as a major local historian and the author of the book "Tercentenary of the Don Army" (Savel'ev, 1870). An even more renowned local historian was S.F. Nomikosov, author of "The statistical description of the Don Army Region" (Nomikosov, 1884). He worked as a teacher at the gymnasium for a very short time, and, apparently, did not show much interest in pedagogy, but the style of his lessons was totally in line with the new demands. S.F. Nomikosov succeeded in arousing a love for geology in one of the most outstanding graduates of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in its entire history, a geographer and explorer, I.V. Mushketov. "In the gymnasium, influenced by teacher Nomikosov, who taught natural science and enthralled his students with diverting stories, I.V. Mushketov began to create a collection of minerals and rocks," V.A. Obruchev, already a student of I.V. Mushketov and another great Russian scientist, wrote (Obruchev, 1962: 54-62). Finally, A.I. Kosorotov singled out "a teacher of religion, Father Hypatius" in his "Tower of Babel," and according to I.P. Artinskii, the character depicted priest I.G. Fesenkov, who taught the law of God in the gymnasium since 1855 (Artinskii, 1907: 161). The reader saw "Father Hypatius" as "exceptionally strict" in appearance, but an intelligent and kind priest who, when children were tired of "a multitude of Church Slavonic texts and abstract theological discussions," could dilute the biblical morality with a simple but suitable example from real life (Kosorotov, 1900: 63-64). A.I. Kosorotov's portrait of the teacher contains particularly interesting features – although some of the old priest's utterances seemed rather inappropriate (for example, his insults of children or complaints about the abolished physical chastisements), his masterly grip on the class's mood and his kind attitude towards pupils were clearly visible. For example, when a child in the back of the classroom tried to anonymously play a joke on "Father Hypatius", he beguiled the offender into coming to the blackboard, but instead of a real punishment he called the offender a "fool" "with a smile" and shamed not him, but the class that were equally willing to laugh at both, the teacher and their mate (Kosorotov, 1900: 65-67). We think this is an excellent illustration of the "family atmosphere" that, according to A.A. Radonezhskii, should prevail in a school: "Father Hypatius" in the "Tower of Babel" looks more like the children's elderly relative than a real teacher, a grumpy but loving grandfather, preaching at young people for their own good, but, alas, without any respect for personal boundaries. This impression is also confirmed by A.I. Kosorotov's general conclusion: the old teacher of the law, who not only calls children "fools", but also a "flock of donkeys," is positioned as a person who surprisingly "loves very much and understands pupils" (Kosorotov, 1900: 61).

However, "old school" educators, supporters of formalist scholastic teaching methods, still had strong positions in the Don region even as late as in the 1860s. A.A. Radonezhskii with sadness in his tone provided a story of one of his students who became a teacher at a stanitsa parish school. Having "more or less novel ideas about primary education," the young pedagogue tried to make the learning process more interesting for children, and designed his reading and writing lessons using literary texts from new readers (Radonezhskii, 1862: 390). However, this provoked the indignation of senior teachers, who were exasperated by the fact that in the classroom children analyzed some "fables" instead of the traditional "psalter and book of hours," and argued that such interesting studies would only produce "nothing but trifles" (Radonezhskii, 1862: 390).

Proponents of the old views could be met not only in parish schools, but in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium as well. We mentioned more than once the example of A.A. Leonov, a teacher of the older generation. However, young graduates of the Kharkov University also included some devotees of the formalist scholastic method of teaching. The group also features at least one outstanding Don Cossack, I.P. Pryanishnikov. He compiled the first collection of documents on the Don history (Pryanishnikov, 1864) and also was a very conservative public figure who urged to preserve Don traditions (Dontsy, 2003: 418-421). It was I.P. Pryanishnikov, who, despite his young

age, stood up against most Novocherkassk teachers to defend A.A. Leonov's views that the theory of language should be taught already in primary school, and the content of the texts studied at Russian lessons was of no importance at all (Artinskii, 1907: 193-194). I.P. Pryanishnikov demonstrated even more formalism in teaching geography. A detailed critical commentary of I.P. Pryanishnikov's lessons made by his colleagues has survived to our time. It is a revealing insight into the progressing pedagogical views of Don teachers, and we should have a closer look at it.

First of all, I.P. Pryanishnikov was attacked because he totally discarded pupils' mental development when he began the study of geography in the first grade with the so-called **mathematical geography, and young children were absolutely "incapable of elevating themselves" "to the abstract provisions" of the science** (Artinskii, 1907: 192). Alternatively, I.P. Pryanishnikov was advised to teach physical geography, i.e. to study with children the same phenomena of climate change and varying day and night lengths in different parts of the Earth, but consider them **"as facts," with a focus on entertaining, not on mathematical explanations** (Artinskii, 1907: 192). It was pointed out to I.P. Pryanishnikov that mathematical geography would anyway be studied in the last, seventh grade, and only by that time students would grasp the conceptual apparatus required to understand the discipline; for first grade children, giving strictly systematized theoretical knowledge was not essential – **it was more important to excite their curiosity with "picture-like" descriptions, "bringing a whole world of new ideas into the mindset of children"** (Artinskii, 1907: 192). However, I.P. Pryanishnikov argued with other teachers even about the textbook – while the majority considered Obodovsky's textbook **"unsuitable" for teaching in principle, the young geography teacher called it the best one for its "comprehensiveness and strict system"** (Artinskii, 1907: 192). Thus, at the turn of 1850-1860, the Don witnessed a full-blown clash of pedagogical schools for the first time, in which the old, scholastic, formalist approach collided with the new one that prioritized the needs and capabilities of a child. The old school was not prepared, as it was the case in the 1830s, to simply withdraw, allowing young pedagogues to put their ideas into practice; there was no unity in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium on how and what to teach.

At this point, S.S. Robush, who laid the foundation for the gymnasium's future prosperity under his leadership, made one of his main achievements – **he organized "pedagogical conversations" at pedagogical councils: at these councils, teachers now discussed not so much formal issues of missed classes, punishment of hooligans, etc., but argued about the best formats to conduct lessons** (Artinskii, 1907: 183). Although the initiative was put forward by the Kharkov educational district, S.S. Robush managed to make the pedagogical councils informative and engaging even from the point of view of a modern teacher. Participants discussed, for example, issues of introducing special tutorship by teachers for individual classes; holding the attention of students at lessons; creating a unified teaching system for Russian and foreign languages (Artinskii, 1907: 184). **Apparently, these "pedagogical conversations" served as a forum where teachers of the new generation gave a decisive battle to their more conservative colleagues.**

"Unconsciously memorizing countless rules and exceptions using Vostokov and Grech grammars, in my opinion, is not helpful at all in learning the native language. It is a common situation when a pupil confidently recites a grammatical rule and all the exceptions to it, but becomes confused when you ask him to provide some examples to illustrate the rule he told. In the mind of a child, the Russian language, he can speak quite fluently, and some grammar of Vostokov are two totally different worlds that have no relation to each other," A.M. Savel'ev attacked A.A. Leonov and I.P. Pryanishnikov (importantly, all three participants in this debate are prominent Don regional historians of the 19th century, and it never even occurred to anyone before to study their disputes in the aspect of finding the best methods to teach Russian (Artinskii, 1907: 185). For example, a history teacher, A.S. Zmiev also came under criticism from his colleagues – he defended the traditional program that offered to begin the study of the past with a general **theoretical overview concentrated on antiquity: "It will be much more valuable for the Russian youth if we, above of all, introduce them into such events in the Russian history that affected the life of the Russian people, instead of telling them all these tales and stories about Semiramises, Egerias and others, to which teaching history in the third grade of the gymnasium is mostly limited. The spirit of the century and the physiognomy of the Russian people will be represented in the imagination of a Russian pupil based on the stories about major events and figures from the Russian history, and the power and liveliness of the narration can enchant a child's attention and instill sympathy for the native country in a child's heart"** (Artinskii, 1907: 193).

Summing up the episode with “pedagogical conversations”, we should note that one of them discussed a project to significantly increase the number of hours for teachers, and probably, the reason was to improve their salaries (we should remind that A.G. Filonov complained about **teachers’ unbearable poverty**). However, most educators decided that **poverty was a lesser evil compared to the prospect to turn into “a machine that perpetually repeats the same wheel circle until it is completely worn out”** (Artinskii, 1907: 194). The actual citation of their verdict on the issue was as follows: **“For a teacher to be able to deliver his subject for the benefit of the institution and fulfill all duties required of him by modern pedagogical literature, he should have no more than 12 lessons or 15 hours per week. Only with this number of lessons, a teacher has enough time to take up self-improvement; only then he is able to keep pace with research and look for ways to better and more easily communicate the results of his pedagogical efforts, to produce beneficial impact on the mental and moral development of his students; only then there will be fewer attacks on the imperfections of our teachers and the lack of initiative of secondary educational institutions”** (Artinskii, 1907: 194-195). In reality it was not possible to keep the teaching load at 12 lessons per week, but in cases where the load was higher than 20 hours, S.S. Robush requested his superiors to provide one more teacher (Artinskii, 1907: 199).

There are indications that the ideas of new teachers about the need for a “family atmosphere” in education, about a special, individual approach, adapted to each child’s needs, gradually prevailed. This is how S.S. Robush characterized the teaching staff of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the middle of the 1860s: **“A happy union of capable and energetic people, committed to the same strong principles”** (Artinskii, 1907: 209). However, the practical outcome of the implemented “strong principles”, i.e. the new general pedagogical views of Novocherkassk teachers, was rather unconventional, although many students appreciated it. A.I. Kosorotov gave the following description to it: **“Why, in fact, was the described period (the period when the gymnasium was run by M.A. Zilber/S.S. Robush – A.P., T.Z.) was patriarchal in its nature? Because of these family-like relations. Educators took the kids as they were born, and looked on them as little savages who were more disposed to do silly things than anything worthwhile. As a result, it was such a joyous event when a little savage, beyond all expectation, showed aptitude for culture at a particularly happy moment; on the contrary, if he worked a nasty prank at some inappropriate time and place, then, without much chagrin, they rubbed his nose in it, like a puppy, so that he felt no desire to do it next time. This system, of course, fell far short of the ideal. However, I don't know about others, but I can find a lot of good in it”** (Kosorotov, 1900: 67). So, the Novocherkassk pedagogues indeed fully imbibed A.A. Radonezhskii's idea that **“submissive sitting, peace and quiet do not guarantee successes,” and tolerated childish pranks, hoping that education would be useful even for the most incorrigible students. Unfortunately, this resulted not only into good-humored insults of pupils by some teachers, but also, what was much worse, into extremely low requirements for gymnasium students. As a consequence, they also grew to consider themselves as “savages”, and the policy of permissiveness set in in the classes over time, which roused the indignation of D.F. Shcheglov.**

But this happened after S.S. Robush completed his directorship term. On the contrary, the situation with behavior and discipline somewhat improved and became more stable when he managed the gymnasium, judging by what I.P. Artinskii wrote. Mechanisms to maintain order in the gymnasium, which lost some of their efficiency under A.A. Popov, were restored. For example, right at the first pedagogical council chaired by S.S. Robush, the new director highlighted the issue of the need to **“preserve proper order and silence among students” by reducing the number of breaks and prohibiting teachers to leave classrooms during lessons to fetch textbooks from the library** (Artinskii, 1907: 175). During A.A. Popov's directorship, as we remember, teachers so frequently skipped classes that the breach was even noticed by the administration of the Kharkov Educational District, while under S.S. Robush's leadership, skipping dropped dramatically, and each teacher, if he had to be absent at his class, provided a good reason (Artinskii, 1907: 209). S.S. Robush tightened control over the students both in quantity (the number of inspectors who supervised teachers’ **presence at lessons was increased from one to two** (Artinskii, 1907: 216), and in 1867 two more class teachers were recruited for the gymnasium staff (Artinskii, 1907: 227), and in quality – **in 1868, special rules “on disciplinary measures for students of the gymnasium” were introduced for the first time** (Artinskii, 1907: 229). The only point was that in the view of those who supported harsh discipline, S.S. Robush's general concept of enhancing control over students was

wrong: the director and his teachers strove to achieve not the strong discipline, but rather to raise children's awareness of their mistakes and ensure their rectification (it is appropriate here to remind of "Father Hypatius," who called the prankster "a fool" and explained his silliness to him, but refrained from any disciplinary action). The gymnasium's official documents enshrined the idea in the following way: "When determining a disciplinary measure for a student, one should not so much try to punish him for his offense as to rectify his morality through remonstrances" (Artinskii, 1907: 229).

As a result, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium took the lead in the Kharkov Educational District for the first time in the institution's history. In 1865, District officials qualified the gymnasium's performance as "most satisfactory" and attached to the opinion excellent attestation documents of some of the teachers, of which we will cite only those concerning the figures mentioned above (Artinskii, 1907: 209). "Teaching the Law of God was entrusted to an experienced mentor, a priest, Master Ioakim Fesekov, whose pedagogical talent was already appreciated by the Novocherkassk society thanks to his essay published in 1864, "Explanation of the first commandment of the Law of God" (Artinskii, 1907: 209). "Based on pupils' comprehensive answers on the subject of Russian Language and Literature, I had time to learn more about the very essence of Savel'ev's teaching practice (Senior Teacher of Russian Language and Literature). The practice can be called exemplary in all respects. Each subject area is explained using the historical method; students were introduced to all classic works of ancient and new Russian literature – as it was found out at the test – under the direct guidance of their teacher" (Artinskii, 1907: 210). In 1866, the gymnasium was audited personally by the Educational District Trustee, K.K. Voigt, who concluded that the absolute majority of subjects were taught in an "appropriate", "strong" and "scientifically grounded" manner (Artinskii, 1907: 224). The only exceptions in the opinion were history, which was delivered only at a "satisfactory" level (children knew facts, but could not analyze them), and political geography in which performance did not stand up to any criticism ("one of the students with good grades was unable to answer a single question" (Artinskii, 1907: 224). The last but not the least, in 1867, D.A. Tolstoy, Minister of Public Education, stated in plain terms that "the Novocherkassk Gymnasium was one of the best gymnasiums in the Kharkov Educational District, both in its curriculum and student performance" (Artinskii, 1907: 228).

Since the paper is not intended to describe the history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, we will not list all the successes it achieved in the 1860s. We simply note that it was the institution's booming time. The number of students increased to 582 by 1871, which means it actually doubled in twenty years (Artinskii, 1907: 234). Its graduates include many eminent personalities. We have already written about I.V. Mushketov, I.V. Timoshchenkov and F.K. Trallin, famous researchers of the Don, studied at the gymnasium's pedagogical department. The importance of these personalities is already confirmed by the fact that they were featured in monograph of a renown historian N. A. Mininkov several years ago (Mininkov, 2016: 10, 14). The last graduates at the department of oriental languages, predictably closed up under S.S. Robush, included P.M. Vlasov, the Russian Empire's future ambassador to Persia (Artinskii, 1907: 212). Interestingly, P.M. Vlasov had a significant impact on the history of Russian diplomacy in general, as he headed the first diplomatic mission of the Russian Empire to Ethiopia (Artamonov, 1979: 27).

Nevertheless, it is apparent that S.S. Robush, besides being a prominent educator, was also a resourceful official who knew how to exaggerate the already impressive achievements of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. Probably, during his directorship, inappropriate behavior and disciplinary violations among students were covered up and their grades were inflated by the staff. According to I.P. Artinskii, the critical event, which brought the dubious situation in the gymnasium to light, happened just in 1870. First, a senior pupil inadvertently killed a child with an "accidental" gun shot (Artinskii, 1907: 237). The story might have been attributed to an unhappy combination of circumstances, but then Novocherkassk Gymnasium graduates disgraced themselves by failing admission exams to the Moscow University: 6 out of 14 applicants, including one who finished the school with honors, showed outrageously weak knowledge (Artinskii, 1907: 237). The university administration reported the incident to D.A. Tolstoy, who personally required to take action on the incident, but 1871 continued to witness scandals related to the Novocherkassk Gymnasium: the same Moscow University complained to the minister that out of 11 worst works on the Russian language, written by applicants, 5 belonged to graduates of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium (Artinskii, 1907: 237-238). But it is the Russian language teaching practice

implemented by A.M. Savel'ev, in line with the new pedagogical ideas, that the entire Kharkov Educational District was especially proud of!

So, once again, the pedagogical theory of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium teachers had initially produced a major positive impact and then started to lose their relevance, proving to be a barrier to further progression of the Don education. However, this time there was no internal contradiction in the outdated pedagogical views: S.S. Robush and his supporters believed **“patriarchy,” “domesticity,” a kindly treatment of students, lenient marking and covering up their misconduct** were quite acceptable. Moreover, justifying their actions, teachers could refer to the truly remarkable successes of the gymnasium it achieved in the 1860s. But the Ministry of Public Education was not prepared to tolerate the unconventional environment that was cultivated in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. What was worse, **after S.S. Robush's resignation, it became clear that the educational process efficiency largely relied on the director's charisma and the willingness of spoiled students to listen to his opinion.** Unfortunately, S.S. Robush should leave the gymnasium sooner or later, and following this another conflict was to be expected between the older generation teachers, committed to **“patriarchy,” and their younger colleagues.**

This time, the controversy, caused by the teachers' opposing pedagogical views, was so deep as to inflict irreversible damage on the gymnasium, which it never fully repaired. We will review this period in the last, ending part of our research paper.

4. Conclusion

The **“golden age” of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the 1860s** was brought about by the shift in the pedagogical views of its teaching staff. The change was indeed revolutionary at its heart when the ideas of the previous generation of teachers – **I.Ya. Zolotarev's concepts of practice-oriented education** – were completely rejected to pave the way for a return to the ideas of A.G. Oridovsky and A.G. Popov, brought into being at a fundamentally new theoretical and practical angle. The Novocherkassk Gymnasium was perceived by its employees as the Don Region **“leader in general education,” as a full value educational center for the entire Don, as a place for training teachers and nurturing educated Cossacks, capable of eradicating the superstitions and archaic traditions that were still alive in stanitsas.**

The advances of the new generation teachers, champions of new pedagogical ideas, were also linked to the fact that a whole constellation of outstanding pedagogues were brought together in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium at the time. S.S. Robush, director of the gymnasium since 1859, was the first **true “educator activist” on the Don after A.G. Oridovsky, who was more than a good teacher and school administrator** – he was a person genuinely passionate about spreading knowledge among Cossacks. He first tried to publish a pedagogical magazine in the region, he launched a school for parish teachers in the gymnasium, he advocated women's education among Cossacks. The very fact that grateful alumni built a monument to a director with Jewish origins in rather xenophobic Don Host Oblast testified to the tremendous respect he commanded at least in some part of the local public. A.A. Radonezhskii and A.G. Filonov were educators of the national level. They worked in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium only for a short time, but seemed to play a major role in translating new ideas to its teachers. While teaching in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, A.G. Filonov began to compile one of the most well-known anthologies of Russian literature of the second half of the 19th century. These prominent figures were followed by people who **made less significant contributions to pedagogy: “exemplary” teacher A.M. Savel'ev, I.G. Fesenkov, who greatly influenced students, and others.** The fate of the old school ideas was sealed not only because they outlived their usefulness and reached the limit of their potential in educational terms; A.A. Leonov and I.P. Pryanishnikov, who struggled to defend them, were clearly less good teachers than supporters of the new trends. To the credit of S.S. Robush, he managed to set up a really valuable debates among teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the format of **“pedagogical conversations” during pedagogical councils, which helped the entire teaching staff gradually embrace new ideas.** I.Ya. Zolotarev once succeeded in enlisting bright personalities and prominent local researchers to teach in the gymnasium; S.S. Robush achieved even more – the gymnasium received qualified educators during his directorship.

In the late 1850-1860s, a lot of teachers with diverse pedagogical views worked in Novocherkassk, and as they had no single recognized leader, systematizing their ideas is not an easy task. We would, however, venture to suggest the following paradigm:

1) Education is an immanent value and is pre-requisite for the comprehensive development of society. So, **the fast “civil evolution of the region” is impossible** without promoting literacy (S.S. Robush).

2) Education should be general without excessive technical focuses. It is crucial “not so much to acquire extensive information as to ensure general mental development” (S.S. Robush).

3) Education needs teachers with relevant training who can understand children and are able **to awaken their interest in subjects. “Guiding children’s souls through first lessons in their school education is a delicate art” (A.A. Radonezhskii).**

4) In the middle of the 19th century, the key issues of Russian education were its excessive **scholasticism and theoretical nature. “Unconsciously memorizing countless rules and exceptions using Vostokov and Grech grammars, in my opinion, is not helpful at all in learning the native language” (A.M. Savel’ev).**

5) On the contrary, a starting point for a good teacher should not be theory, but practice, and the instructional power should be based not so much on speculative knowledge as on the interests **and desires of students. “Things interesting to others have no meaning and are to no purpose for a child; it is not a teacher’s Jupiterian importance and not the commanding attitude that unlock a door to a child’s soul, but the treatment filled with motherly love, kindred and genuine affection, a family atmosphere fostered at the school” (A.A. Radonezhskii).**

6) Finally, the material support of the educational process and a teacher’s needs were recognized among top priorities. The biggest risk for a teacher was believed to be the possibility to **become a “a machine that perpetually repeats the same wheel circle until it is completely worn out,” to satisfy the desire to receive a decent salary (the entire pedagogical council of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium).**

Of course, we can look on these statements as “general phrases repeated from time immemorial” (as a reminder, we wrote in the first part of our paper that this was the characterization given by N.A. Dobrolyubov to A.G. Oridovsky’s pedagogical speeches). However, in our opinion, the importance of these basic statements is often forgotten in education even today. At any rate, they ensured the success of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium – the school quickly increased enrollment, its pupils included outstanding figures, the gymnasium earned indisputable authority in the local society.

It was the informal atmosphere and kind attitude towards children that played a cruel joke with the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. In 1870, the facts of lenient marking were revealed, which drew severe criticism from the Ministry of Public Education. In addition, it became clear later that **the discipline was built in the gymnasium on the students’ respect for the director and some of the teachers**, and this created a precondition for a serious crisis if the people left the school. Finally, the beneficial potential of the ideas of S.S. Robush and his followers was drained by the 1870s, but young teachers, mediators of new pedagogical views, were flung into the worst conditions for the entire 19th century to implement their concepts – the Novocherkassk Gymnasium’s development ground to a halt, but the local society held it in such great respect that wanted to see no changes.

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