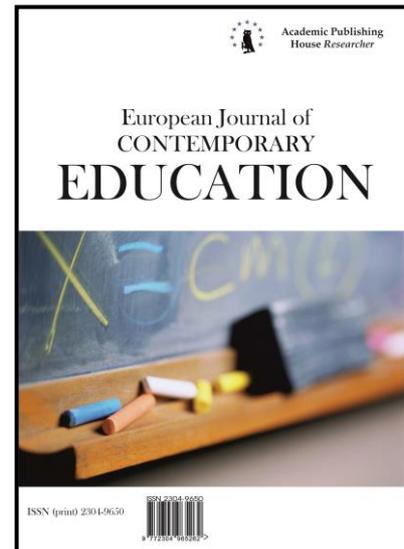




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The System of Public Education in Kars Oblast in the Period 1878–1917. Part 1

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Abstract

This paper examines the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1917. The present part of the work covers the period 1878–1908, which spans the timeframe from the incorporation of the region into the Russian Empire through to the commencement of preparatory activities related to the introduction of compulsory primary education in it.

A key source used in this work is the annual Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District, which provide data on the region's schools run by the Ministry of Public Education. The authors made an extensive use of the statistical method.

The authors' conclusion is that the system of public education in Kars Oblast was characterized by a number of distinctive features. Creating the system of public education from scratch subsequent to the incorporation of the formerly Turkish-controlled areas into the Russian Empire required convincing the locals of the need to have their children attend Russian secular schools. By 1908, the region became home to a network of primary schools, four lower schools, and two secondary educational institutions. Instruction was provided to both sexes, which means education had become more accessible to the local population. While the region's student body had long been dominated by representatives of Christian denominations, the period 1907–1908 witnessed a sharp increase in the number of students of the Moslem faith too.

Keywords: Kars Oblast, system of public education, period 1878–1917, Ministry of Public Education.

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1. Introduction

Kars Oblast was incorporated into the Russian Empire as a consequence of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. The region was situated in the southwestern part of Transcaucasia. In the north and east, it bordered on Kutais, Tiflis, and Erivan Governorates, which were part of the Russian Empire, and in the south it bordered on Turkey. The region's administrative center was the city of Kars. The oblast had an area of 18,646.6 km² and a population of under 200,000, a circumstance that led to it becoming home not to a directorate (as directorates were typically established in densely populated areas) but an inspectorate for public schools – the Inspectorate for Public Schools in the Caucasus Educational District. The Inspectorate for Public Schools oversaw all ministerial educational institutions. This part of the work covers the process of making and development of the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1908, which spans the timeframe from the incorporation of the region into the Russian Empire through to the commencement of preparatory activities related to the introduction of compulsory primary education in it.

2. Materials and methods

The key sources used in this work are the annual Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District, which provide data on the region's schools run by the Ministry of Public Education and the Reports of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, which contain information on the region's parochial schools. The Reports on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus Educational District, which up to 1904 (inclusive) were prepared by Trustee of the Caucasus Educational District M.R. Zavadsky, are distinguished by depth and consistency and provide a detailed insight into the network of educational institutions in Kars Oblast. In 1907, the report was prepared by a new trustee, N.F. Rudolf. The 1907 report is mainly focused on secondary educational institutions, with incomplete and fragmentary information provided on the rest of the schools. One may get the feeling that the report was prepared in haste, with multiple tables omitted. The report's quality may quite possibly have been affected by the events of the Russian Revolution of 1905. A fact that supports this argument is that the quality of the 1908 report was clearly better.

The work made an extensive use of the statistical method. The authors drew upon a diverse body of statistics that is based on reporting documentation, which covers the following: typology of educational institutions, numbers of schools, size of library stock, and numbers of students (by ethnicity, faith, estate, and gender). The use of this method helped identify some of the key distinct characteristics of the evolution of the public education system in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1908.

3. Discussion

Up to now, the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1917 has not been the subject of independent research. What is more, the topic has not been touched upon in research publications even incidentally. That being said, there does exist a body of summarizing research covering other regions of the Caucasus. The system of public education in the Caucasus, with Kars Oblast once part of the Caucasus Educational District, has been examined in close detail by scholars O.V. Natolochnaya, T.A. Magsumov, and N.A. Shevchenko ([Natolochnaya et al., 2018](#); [Magsumov et al., 2018](#); [Shevchenko et al., 2016](#)).

In recent years, researchers have expressed keen interest in the study of the systems of public education in the various governorates of the Russian Empire. For instance, a team of researchers led by A.A. Cherkasov has been focused on the study of the system of public education in Vologda Governorate ([Cherkasov et al., 2019](#); [Cherkasov et al., 2019a](#); [Cherkasov et al., 2019b](#); [Cherkasov et al., 2019c](#)). Elsewhere, A.Yu. Peretyatko has investigated the system of public education in the Don region ([Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017](#); [Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017a](#); [Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2019](#); [Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2019a](#)), O.V. Natolochnaya – in Vilna Governorate ([Natolochnaya et al., 2019](#); [Natolochnaya et al., 2019a](#)), and T.A. Magsumov ([Magsumov et al., 2018](#)) – in Vyatka Governorate.

4. Results

The network of educational institutions in the Caucasus was divided into the systems of secondary education, lower education, and primary education. The system of secondary education included male gymnasia and progymnasia, real schools, female gymnasia and progymnasia, and teacher’s institutes and seminaries. The system of lower education was represented by urban schools, mountain schools, Mariinsky schools, and industrial schools. The system of primary education comprised private and primary schools (Otchet, 1900: 606).

It is to be remembered that Kars Oblast’s population had quite a motley ethnic makeup. In 1886, i.e. eight years subsequent to it becoming part of Russia, the bulk of the region’s population was made up of Turks, 24 %, and Armenians, 21 %, with Kurds accounting for 15 %, Qarapapaqs – 13.8 %, Greeks – 13.5 %, ethnic Russians – 6 %, and Turkmens – 5 % of its population. The region’s total population was 174,044.

The fact that there generally was a problem establishing educational institutions in the region may be attributed to its somewhat complicated demographic conditions. With that said, in 1880 Kars Oblast became home to its first lower educational institution – the Kars Urban School (Otchet, 1885: 186). By 1884, Kars Oblast had in operation as many as five educational institutions (run by the Ministry of Public Education). At a population of 163,000, there were only 0.37 schools per every 10,000 residents. A lower figure was exhibited only by Dagestan Oblast – 0.21 (Otchet, 1885: 206). In 1898, the region became home to the Inspectorate for Public Schools in Kars Oblast, which was part of the Caucasus Educational District.

Secondary education

The region’s distinct characteristics were such as not to permit opening in it a secondary educational institution straightaway, as it did not have enough local youth with a lower education. It became possible to change the situation only 20 years later – in the early 20th century. Even in this area there were certain distinct characteristics at play: while it was common throughout the Caucasus to open male secondary educational institutions first, Kars Oblast’s first secondary educational institution was for women. On September 8, 1902, Kars Oblast became home to its first secondary educational institution – the Kars Female Progymnasium (Otchet, 1905: 163). Four years later, on October 15, 1906, they also established the region’s first male secondary educational institution – a real school (Otchet, 1908: 92).

Table 1 displays the region’s numbers of secondary educational institutions and students in the period 1902–1908.

Table 1. Numbers of Secondary Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast and Students at Them (Otchet, 1905: 163, 211; Otchet, 1908: 92; Otchet, 1909: 78, 125)

Year	Number of educational institutions					Number of students		
	Gymnasia		Progymnasia			Boys	Girls	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Real schools			
1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1904	-	-	-	1	-	-	137	137
1907	-	-	-	1	1	199	213	412
1908	-	-	-	1	1	244	226	470

As evidenced by Table 1, despite the relatively modest size of Kars Oblast’s network of secondary schools, by 1908 the region was able to ensure that both boys and girls could pursue secondary education – without having to relocate to other regions, which made secondary education more accessible.

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of students at the region’s secondary educational institutions by ethnicity.

Table 2. Distribution of Students at Secondary Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Ethnicity (Otchet, 1905: 211; Otchet, 1908: 78, 127; Otchet, 1909: 114, 183)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Jews	Other ethnicities	Total
1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1904	47	15	63	1	2	1	8	137
1907								412
1908	136	28	226	8	-		72	470

The bulk of students at the region’s secondary educational institutions were Armenians, followed by ethnic Russians. The student body included just a few Tatars, mountaineers, and Jews.

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of students at secondary educational institutions in Kars Oblast by faith.

Table 3. Distribution of Students at Secondary Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Faith (Otchet, 1905: 211; Otchet, 1908: 78, 127; Otchet, 1909: 80, 131)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Moslems	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1904	69	55	10	1	1	1	-	137
1907	183	198	13	8	2	8	-	412
1908	223	207	27	4	1	8	-	470

As evidenced by Table 3, around 50 % of the region’s students were Orthodox Christians, the figure reaching over 97 % inclusive of representatives of other Christian denominations. This was one of the highest figures exhibited within the secondary schools sector of the multiethnic Caucasus.

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of students at the Kars Oblast’s secondary educational institutions by estate.

As evidenced by Table 4, student nobles always constituted the bulk of the student body at the region’s secondary schools, followed by children of distinguished citizens and children of merchants, as well as children of petty bourgeoisie. The distribution of students representing other estates was even, with no intermittent growth recorded.

A major focus in the educational process was on out-of-school activities. In this respect, of special significance were the libraries and their accessibility to students. Normally, the region’s secondary and lower educational institutions had two library sections – fundamental (for teachers) and discipular (for students).

Table 4. Distribution of Students at Secondary Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Estate (Otchet, 1905: 211; Otchet, 1908: 79, 127; Otchet, 1909: 81, 131)

Year	Nobles*	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Distinguished citizens and first-guild merchants	Members of other urban estates	Peasants	Lower ranks and Cossacks	Foreigners	Other	Total
1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1904	64	3	19	45	-	6	-	-	137
1907	123	13	96	114	57	7	2	-	412
1908	164	18	118	107	59	-	-	4	470

In 1904, the Kars Female Progymnasium had a library stock of just 251 items (106 items in the fundamental section and 145 in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1905: 167). In 1907, the stock in the fundamental section rose to 300 items, and in the discipular section – to 350 items (Otchet, 1908: 151). By 1908, the school's library stock reached 896 items (Otchet, 1909: 155).

As regards the region's real school, which was established in 1906, at 1907 its library stock was relatively small – 708 items (376 items in the fundamental section and 332 items in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1908: 94). By 1908, the school's library stock topped a thousand – 1,067 items (Otchet, 1909: 97).

As can be seen, the library stocks of secondary educational institutions in Kars Oblast were not very large. This may be attributed to the fact that the region's system of secondary schools was still young at the time, with these institutions simply needing a bit more time to get in place a library of their own.

Lower education

As mentioned earlier, the system of lower education in Russia at the time was represented by urban schools, mountain schools, female Mariinsky schools[†], and industrial schools.

Kars Oblast's first lower educational institution was established two years subsequent to the incorporation of the region into Russia. This took place on November 8, 1880, with the educational institution named the Kars Urban School (Otchet, 1885: 186).

In 1889, Kars Oblast became home to its first private lower female educational institution (Otchet, 1890: table 288). However, as was the case with other regions of Russia, Kars Oblast's system of private schools lacked permanence, with the facilities often closing down for various reasons. By 1894, there was not a single private educational institution left in the region (Otchet, 1895: table 310).

On September 8, 1890, Kars Oblast became home to the Female Mariinsky School (Otchet, 1895: table 287) Twelve years later, on September 9, 1902, the region became home to its second urban school – the Kagyzman Urban School (Otchet, 1905: 293).

On January 26, 1903, the region also became home to its first lower tradesman's school (Otchet, 1905: 453).

Table 5 illustrates the dynamics of the numbers of Kars Oblast's lower educational institutions and students at them.

* Hereinafter inclusive of hereditary nobles, personal nobles, and functionaries

† Female educational institutions run by the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria

Table 5. Numbers of Lower Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast and Students at Them (Otchet, 1885: 205; Otchet, 1890: table 200, table 292; Otchet, 1895: table 197, table 303; Otchet, 1899: 329, 397; Otchet, 1901: 362, 492; Otchet, 1905: 293, 453, 489; Otchet, 1908: 237, 397, 454; Otchet, 1909: 275, 411)

Year	Number of educational institutions				Number of students		
	Urban school	Lower tradesman's school	Female vocational school	Private school	Boys	Girls	Total
1884	1	-	-	-	160	-	160
1889	1	-	-	1	181	80	261
1894	1	-	1	-	209	100	309
1898	1	-	1	-	379	224	603
1900	1	-	1	-	507	245	752
1904	2	1	1	-	382	217	599
1907	2	1	1	-	387	196	583
1908	2	1	1	-	353	223	576

As evidenced by Table 5, in Kars Oblast lower education started with education for boys. The region had neither unisex secondary nor unisex lower educational institutions in operation, i.e. boys and girls were taught separately. Up to 1900, the number of students at lower educational institutions kept increasing, but it would gradually drop later on. The negative dynamics may be explained by the fact that by 1900 the schools were simply filled to capacity. More specifically, based on statistics for the entire Caucasus, in 1900 there were 45 urban schools in operation, with a combined enrollment of 13,000 students (Otchet, 1901: 360-362), which makes it an average of 288 students per school. In the period that followed, the number of students was above the average figure, if not by much.

Table 6. Distribution of Students at Lower Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Ethnicity (Otchet, 1885: 205; Otchet, 1890: table 203, table 293; Otchet, 1895: table 202, table 303; Otchet, 1899: 329; Otchet, 1901: 362, 492; Otchet, 1905: 359, 489; Otchet, 1909: 351)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Jews	Other ethnicities	Total
1884	16	1	92	5	-	2	44	160
1889	77	2	143	7	1	12	19	261
1894	53	3	167	2	1	3	83	312
1898	86	4	351	32	-	-	130	603
1900	70	16	468	7	-	2	189	752
1904	64	10	323	4	3	3	192	599
1908	36	7	142	3	2	126	-	316*

As evidenced by Table 6, around 50 % of the region's students were Armenians, followed by ethnic Russians. A more or less even distribution was exhibited by the region's student Georgians. The number of student Tatars in the region rose sharply in 1898, but the figure would go back to minimum later on.

* Exclusive of data on the region's Female Mariinsky School and Tradesman's School

Table 7. Distribution of Students at Lower Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Faith (Otchet, 1885: 205; Otchet, 1890: table 203, table 293; Otchet, 1895: table 202, table 303; Otchet, 1899: 329; Otchet, 1901: 363, 493; Otchet, 1905: 359, 489; Otchet, 1908: 237, 326, 399; Otchet, 1909: 275, 368, 411)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Moslems	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1884	59	79	14	1	2	5	-	160
1889	102	136	7	3	1	7	3	261
1894	150	92	4	6	13	19	16	312
1898	235	321	31	3	-	4	9	603
1900	262	443	25	5	2	7	8	752
1904	257	297	26	1	3	4	11	599
1907	269	289	10	2	-	4	9	583
1908	241	307	10	3	2	6	7	576

As evidenced by Table 7, the bulk of the student body at the region’s lower educational institutions was made up of representatives of Christian denominations, with Armenian Gregorian Christians accounting for nearly 50–60 %. Only in 1894 was the number of non-Christians up somewhat, reaching nearly 15 %, with the figure being significantly lower in other years.

Table 8 illustrates the distribution of students at the region’s lower educational institutions by estate.

Table 8. Distribution of Students at Lower Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Estate (Otchet, 1885: 204; Otchet, 1890: table 293; Otchet, 1895: table 202, table 303; Otchet, 1899: 329; Otchet, 1901: 363, 493; Otchet, 1905: 359, 489; Otchet, 1908: 237, 399; Otchet, 1909: 275, 411)

Year	Nobles	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Distinguished citizens and first-guild merchants	Members of other urban estates	Peasants	Lower ranks and Cossacks	Foreigners	Other	Total
1884	19	17	92		29	2	1	-	160
1889	9	21	-	102	69	20	35	-	261
1894	24	13	-	172	78	20	5	-	312
1898	20	15	3	424	105	34	2	-	603
1900	45	26	6	473	171	20	11	-	752
1904	21	18	12	362	161	25	-	-	599
1907	7	14	20	143	185	5	1	12	387*
1908	8	4	18	131	181	3	1	7	353 [†]

Looking at Table 8, one cannot but notice the virtually continual increase in the number of peasants amongst the student body at the region’s lower educational institutions. Subsequent to

* Data not available on the Female Mariinsky School

† Data not available on the Female Mariinsky School

the opening of the region's secondary educational institutions, the number of student nobles at its lower schools began to drop, the figure decreasing more than two times in the period 1900–1904. By contrast, the number of peasants and petty bourgeoisie had been rising throughout the period.

A few words will now be said about the libraries of lower educational institutions in Kars Oblast.

By 1884, the Kars Urban School had a library stock of 1,481 items (1,159 items in the fundamental section and 322 items in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1885: 188-189). By 1889, the library stock increased, reaching 1,778 items (Otchet, 1890: table 186), and as early as 1894 it numbered 2,352 items (Otchet, 1895: table 185). By 1898, the library stock reached 2,969 items (Otchet, 1899: 297). In 1900, the library stock posted a decline, numbering 2,467 items (Otchet, 1901: 301). By 1904, the stock rose to 3,137 items (Otchet, 1905: 297). In 1907, the stock numbered 3,525 items (Otchet, 1908: 263). By 1908, the stock rose to 3,624 items (Otchet, 1909: 301).

By 1894, the Female Mariinsky School had a library stock of 2,529 items (1,250 items in the fundamental section and 1,279 items in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1895: table 288). By 1898, the school's library stock reached 2,770 items (Otchet, 1899: 382). In 1900, the stock numbered 2,929 items (Otchet, 1901: 432). In 1904, it was 3,334 items (Otchet, 1905: 428). In 1907, it was 3,504 items (Otchet, 1908: 333). However, in 1908 the school's library stock posted a sharp decline, dropping to 1,790 items (Otchet, 1909: 375).

By 1904, the Kagyzman Urban School, established in 1902, had a library stock of 821 items (341 items in the fundamental section and 480 items in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1905: 297). In 1907, the stock numbered 939 items (Otchet, 1908: 263). In 1908, it numbered 1,088 items (Otchet, 1909: 301).

In 1904, the Kars Lower Tradesman's School, established in 1903, had a library stock of just 291 items (266 items in the fundamental section and 25 items in the discipular section) (Otchet, 1905: 455). By 1907, the stock numbered 495 items (Otchet, 1908: 413). By 1908, it reached 485 items (Otchet, 1909: 425).

All in all, the region's lower educational institutions had a combined library stock of 6,897 items.

Primary education

The region's network of primary educational institutions comprised private, ministerial (schools under the Ministry of Public Education, including zemstvo and public schools), and parochial schools.

Private primary schools

Private primary schools did not receive wide use in Kars Oblast. Currently, data is available only for two primary private schools in the region, which were in operation in the period 1900–1904.

Table 9 illustrates the distribution of students at private educational institutions in Kars Oblast by gender.

Table 9. Distribution of Students at Private Educational Institutions in Kars Oblast by Gender (Otchet, 1885: 283; Otchet, 1901: 526; Otchet, 1905: 16, 522; Otchet, 1908: 454; Otchet, 1909: 466)

Year	Boy students	Girl students	Total
1884	-	-	-
1894	-	-	-
1898	-	-	-
1900	76	11	87
1904	60	22	82
1907	-	-	-
1908	-	-	-

As evidenced by Table 9, the region's private educational institutions had no particular focus on gender. As a rule, these schools were unisex and their gender balance kept changing.

Table 10. Distribution of Students at Private Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Ethnicity (Otchet, 1901: 528, Otchet, 1905: 524)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Jews	Other ethnicities	Total
1900	-	-	87	-	-	-	-	87
1904	-	-	82	-	-	-	-	82
1907	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As evidenced by Table 10, the entire 100 % of the student body at the region's private educational institutions was made up by Armenians.

Table 11. Distribution of Students at Private Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Faith (Otchet, 1901: 529; Otchet, 1905: 525)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Moslems	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1900	-	87	-	-	-	-	-	87
1904	-	81	1	-	-	-	-	82
1907	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As evidenced by Table 11, virtually all of the student Armenians were Armenian Gregorian Christians, except for one, who was Catholic.

Table 12. Distribution of Students at Private Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Estate (Otchet, 1901: 529; Otchet, 1905: 525)

Year	Nobles	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Distinguished citizens and first-guild merchants	Members of other urban estates	Peasants	Lower ranks and Cossacks	Foreigners	Total
1900	-	2	-	80	5	-	-	87
1904	1	-	-	73	8	-	-	82
1907	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As evidenced by Table 12, the overwhelming majority of students at private educational institutions were petty bourgeoisie, followed by peasants. At the same time, the student body included just a few children of nobles and children of persons of ecclesiastical status.

Ministerial schools

The first ministerial school in Kars Oblast was opened back in 1876, i.e. at a time when the region was part of Turkey. The region became home to another three educational institutions in 1882. Thus, by 1884 Kars Oblast had in operation a total of four primary educational institutions (Otchet, 1895: 260). Note that the school established in 1876 ceased operation as early as 1889, with one of the three schools opened in 1882 closing down too (Otchet, 1890: table 299). By 1894, one more of those three schools closed down (Otchet, 1895: table 321). By the start of 1898, Kars

Oblast had in operation 10 primary schools, with 10 more opening over the year (Otchet, 1899: 486). This was a time that marked the starting point for an increase in the number of educational institutions in Kars Oblast.

Table 13. Distribution of Primary Schools under the Ministry of Public Education in Kars Oblast by Type (Otchet, 1885: 256-257, 276; Otchet, 1890: table 315, table 332; Otchet, 1895: table 321, table 333; Otchet, 1899: 487, 516; Otchet, 1901: 537, 566; Otchet, 1905: 532-533, 562; Otchet, 1908: 352, 358; Otchet, 1909: 400)

Year	Tow-grade schools			One-grade schools			Total schools	Number of students		
	Male	Female	Unisex	Male	Female	Unisex		Boys	Girls	Total
1884	2			2			4	60	84	144
1889	1	-	2	1	-	2	6	335	72	407
1894	1	-	2	3	-	-	6	332	67	390
1898	1	-	2	9	-	8	20	1,002	164	1,166
1900	1	-	3	12	-	13	29	1,416	297	1,713
1904	2	-	4	19	2	28	55	2,481	388	2,869
1907	2	-	8	10	2	43	65	3,163	760	3,923
1908	2	-	11	-	2	51	66	3,360	830	4,190

Table 13 traces the dynamics of establishment of primary educational institutions in the period 1884–1908. During this time, the number of educational institutions rose 16 times. But what is most important is that the region’s school system had become more sustainable, with virtually no schools closed down in the early 20th century. During the period, the number of students rose 29 times. As regards the region’s gender balance amongst the student body, there was just one girl per every three boys, a balance that pretty much persisted through the entire period under examination (the year 1884 should be disregarded, as 84 of the girls were students at a private school that closed down that same year).

Table 14. Distribution of Students at Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Ethnicity (Otchet, 1885: 279; Otchet, 1890: table 311; Otchet, 1895: table 336; Otchet, 1899: 522; Otchet, 1901: 566, 572; Otchet, 1905: 562; Otchet, 1909: 402)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Jews	Other ethnicities	Total
1884	14	1	90	1	34	2	2	144
1889	23	2	135	8	-	-	199	367
1894	66	6	239	23	1	1	63	399
1898	33	2	722	8	14	3	384	1,166
1900	153	2	854	24	12	5	663	1,713
1904	~524	~11	~1,282	~86	~11	~11	~944	2,869*
1908	1,139	21	1,559	264	15		1,192	4,190

Of major interest is what is in Table 14: overall, by ethnicity the region’s primary school system exhibited percentages similar to those displayed by its secondary and lower school systems

* Of these, 18 % were Russians, less than 0.5 % – Georgians, 44 % – Armenians, 3 % – Tatars, less than 0.5 % – mountaineers, less than 0.5 % – Jews, and around 33 % – representatives of other ethnicities (Otchet, 1905: 570).

(i.e., the way being led by Armenians, followed by ethnic Russians, and then by representatives of other ethnicities. Of interest is the fact that in the early 20th century the region witnessed a sharp increase in Tatars attending its primary schools, with the figure topping 6 % by 1908.

Table 15. Distribution of Students at Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Faith (Otchet, 1885: 278-279; Otchet, 1890: table 311; Otchet, 1895: table 336; Otchet, 1899: 523; Otchet, 1901: 573; Otchet, 1905: 563; Otchet, 1908: 352; Otchet, 1909: 394)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Moslems	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1884	47	90	1	1	2	1	2	144
1889	214	113	22	-	-	8	10	367
1894	123	241	10	-	-	24	1	399
1898	339	563	103	56	3	98	4	1,166
1900	700	663	152	37	5	109	47	1,713
1904	~1,066	~1,186	~100	~14	~14	~114	~375	2,869*
1907	1,430	1,207	103	963	29	191	-	3,923
1908	1,399	1,391	132	13	25	284	946	4,190

As evidenced by Table 15, the way by number amongst the region’s student body was led by Orthodox Christians and Armenian Gregorian Christians, followed by representatives of other Christian denominations and Moslems. Of interest is the large number of Protestants in 1907, with the drop in their number in 1908 attributable to nothing other than a typo in the statistical data.

Table 16. Distribution of Students at Primary Schools in Kars Oblast by Estate (Otchet, 1885: 278; Otchet, 1890: table 311; Otchet, 1895: table 336; Otchet, 1899: 523; Otchet, 1901: 573; Otchet, 1905: 563)

Year	Nobles	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Members of the urban estates	Peasants, lower ranks, and Cossacks	Foreigners	Total
1884	13	4	108	19	-	144
1889	11	19	101	235	1	367
1894	14	9	89	287	-	399
1898	12	34	352	762	6	1,166
1900	14	33	512	1,153	1	1,713
1904	~20	~43	~839	~1,965	-	2,869 [†]

As evidenced by Table 16, the number of students at the region’s primary schools was up virtually 20 times. The period witnessed no major change in the number of student nobles, whereas the number of student peasants rose tremendously – as much as 103 times (!). There also was a major increase in the number of students born to persons of ecclesiastical status, as well as representatives of the urban estates.

* Of these, 37 % were Orthodox Christians, 41 % – Armenian Gregorian Christians, 3.5 % – Catholics, less than 0.5 % – Protestants, less than 0.5 % – Jews, 4 % – Moslems, and 13 % – representatives of other faiths (Otchet, 1905: 571).

† Of these, 0.7% were nobles, 1.5 % – persons of ecclesiastical status, 29 % – petty bourgeoisie, and 68 % – peasants (Otchet, 1905: 571).

A few words will now be said about the libraries of primary schools in Kars Oblast.

By 1884, among the region’s four schools at the time only two had libraries of their own, with a combined stock of 693 items (Otchet, 1885: 267). By 1889, four of the region’s five schools had libraries of their own, with a combined stock of 1,272 (Otchet, 1890: табл. 305). By 1894, all of the six schools run by the Ministry of Public Education had libraries of their own, with a combined stock of 3,054 (Otchet, 1895: табл. 327). Given the fact that in 1898 the region became home to as many as 10 more schools (i.e. half of the number of those already in operation at the time), the number of libraries was not large – 11, i.e. 55% of the total number of schools in place. The combined book stock was 7,251 items (Otchet, 1899: 504). In 1900, the region had 25 libraries against 29 educational institutions, with a combined book stock of 14,523 items (Otchet, 1901: 554). By 1904, 48 of the region’s 55 schools had libraries of their own, with a combined stock of 30,605 items (Otchet, 1905: 550). Thus, by 1904 there was an average of 637 items per primary school library in Kars Oblast.

Parochial schools

Kars Oblast had in place an entire network of primary schools run by the Holy Synod. However, because Kars Oblast had not formed a separate diocese, the exact number of parochial schools in operation in the period is unknown. That being said, there is some fragmentary information available for the period 1889–1898 (Table 17).

Table 17. Numbers of Parochial Schools in Kars Oblast and Students at Them (Otchet, 1890: table 319; Otchet, 1895: table 341; Otchet, 1899: 569)

Year	Number of schools				Number of students		
	Two-grade	One-grade	Grammar schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1889				5	153	14	167
1894				16	689	182	971
1898				20	802	131	933

As evidenced by Table 17, in the period 1894–1898 there was an average of 52 students per one-grade parochial school in Kars Oblast, the figure being above the average one for the Caucasus.

Table 18 illustrates the accomplishments of the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1908.

Table 18. Kars Oblast’s Public Education System in the Period 1878–1908 (Otchet, 1885: 305; Otchet, 1890: table 311; Otchet, 1895: table 340, Otchet, 1899: 566, 569; Otchet, 1901: 518, 614-615; Otchet, 1905: 610-611; Otchet, 1908: 352, 358; Otchet, 1909: 400)

Year	Number of schools under the Ministry of Public Education								Number of students			Population, thousand	Per every 10,000 residents	
	Secondary	Lower		Primary				Total	Boys	Girls	Total		Schools	Students
		Ministry of Public Education	Private	Ministry of Public Education	Private									
1884	-	1	-	4	-			5	220	84	304	162	0.3	18.76
1889	-	1	1	5	-			7	318	49	367	163	0.43	22.52
1894	-	2	-	6	-			8	541	170	711	214	0.38	33
1898	-	2	-	20	-			22	1,381	388	1,769	292	0.75	61
1900	-	2	-	29	1			32	1,999	553	2,552	292	1.1	87

1904	1	4	-	55	1		61	2,923	764	3,687	296	2.06	125
1907	2	4	-	65	-		71	3,749	1,169	4,918	~310	~2.29	~158.6
1908	2	4	-	66	-		72	3,957	1,279	5,236	~312	~2.3	~167.8

As evidenced by [Table 18](#), by 1908 Kars Oblast's public education sector had come a long way in terms of the development of the system of secondary education (male and female), with the number of lower educational institutions rising four times and the number of primary schools increasing more than 15 times. By contrast, despite trying hard, the region's system of private schools ended up failing to get a foothold in Kars Oblast. In the 30-year period from 1878 to 1908, the number of educational institutions run by the Ministry of Public Education rose 14 times, with the number of students increasing 17 times. It is to be remembered that significant effort in this area was put in by the Department of Religious Affairs.

Apart from educational institutions under the Ministry of Public Education and parochial schools under the Department of Religious Affairs, Kars Oblast also had in operation Armenian Gregorian schools at the Armenian churches and Moslem schools at the mosques. In 1889, there were 10* Armenian schools and 94† Moslem schools in the region, with the figures being 18‡ and 292§ respectively in 1894. In 1907, the region had 86 Moslem schools, with a combined enrollment of 2,515 boys and 227 girls ([Otchet, 1908: 155](#)). Statistically, the data on the region's Armenian Gregorian schools were left out, as for the most part these schools did not report on their performance to the Ministry of Public Education. Account was not taken of the region's Moslem schools either, as these almost exclusively taught the Quran, with some also providing instruction in the Turkish language.

5. Conclusion

The system of public education in Kars Oblast was characterized by a number of distinctive features. Creating the system of public education from scratch subsequent to the incorporation of the formerly Turkish-controlled areas into the Russian Empire required convincing the locals of the need to have their children attend Russian secular schools. By 1908, the region became home to a network of primary schools, four lower schools, and two secondary educational institutions. Instruction was provided to both sexes, which means education had become more accessible to the local population. While the region's student body had long been dominated by representatives of Christian denominations, the period 1907–1908 witnessed a sharp increase in the number of students of the Moslem faith too.

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* These were attended by 971 students (689 boys and 182 girls) ([Otchet, 1890: table 318](#)).

† These were attended by 1,585 students (1,373 boys and 212 girls) ([Otchet, 1890: table 320](#)).

‡ These were attended by 1,148 students (889 boys and 259 girls) ([Otchet, 1895: table 340](#)).

§ These were attended by 5,547 students (4,692 boys and 855 girls) ([Otchet, 1895: table 342](#)).

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