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The System of Public Education in Kars Oblast in the Period 1878–1917. Part 2

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Abstract

This work explores the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1878–1917. **The present part of the work covers the period 1908–1917, which spans the timeframe from the commencement of preparatory activities on the introduction of compulsory primary education to the start of the February Revolution.**

The key sources used in putting this work together 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. Of major importance** are also the records of the Ministry of Public Education stored in the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russia).

The authors' conclusion is that Kars Oblast's system of public education 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. A key role in making primary education accessible was played by the implementation of the project on the introduction of compulsory primary education. In the period from 1908 to 1914, the number of ministerial primary schools in the region rose from 66 to 202. This helped increase the number of students in the region from 4,000 to 12,000. In addition to this, a large amount of work in the area

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of public education was also conducted by the Russian Orthodox Church, which ran over 60 primary schools in the region.

By the start of World War I, schools in Kars Oblast were attended by nearly 100 % of all **Russian boys in the region, with similar figures posted by the region's Greek and Armenian boys** and much lower ones exhibited by its girl population. However, **on the war's eve, the region's** female education system was making such headway that the school system seemed capable of reaching all of its Christian population by as early as the period 1916-1917, which, of course, was achievable on condition that the pace carried on.

Keywords: Kars Oblast, system of public education, period 1908–1917, Ministry of Public Education, implementation of the project on the introduction of compulsory education.

1. Introduction

As mentioned earlier, Kars Oblast was incorporated into the Russian Empire as a result 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. In the early 20th century, its population surpassed 300,000 people. This part of the work will explore the process of the development of the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1908–1917, which spans the timeframe from the commencement of preparatory activities on the introduction of compulsory primary education to the start of the February Revolution. **The work's first part examined the process of the making of the region's system of public education in the period from 1880 to 1908** (Magsumov et al., 2020).

2. Materials and methods

The key sources used in putting this work together 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. Of major importance are also the records of the Ministry of Public Education** stored in the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russia).

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 development of Kars Oblast's system of public education in the period 1908–1917.**

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, V.S. Molchanova, and N.A. Shevchenko (Natolochnaya et al., 2018; Magsumov et al., 2018; Molchanova et al., 2019; Molchanova et al., 2019a; Molchanova et al., 2020; Shevchenko et al., 2016).

In recent years, researchers have expressed keen interest in the study of the systems of public education in various governorates within the Russian Empire. For instance, a team of researchers led by A.A. Cherkasov has explored 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). That, however, did not rule out the possibility of private schools in the region being at the level of gymnasia or lower educational institutions.

Secondary education

Secondary education in Kars Oblast was an issue of prime significance. By 1908, the region had only one real school for boys and one female progymnasium for girls. The purpose of these educational institutions was to provide the locals with secondary education so that they would not have to travel or relocate to neighboring regions in order to receive it. Prior to World War I, no other secondary educational institutions had been established in the region.

On September 1, 1909, the Kars Female Progymnasium was reorganized into the Kars Female Gymnasium (Otchet, 1910: 148).

Table 1 illustrates the dynamics of change in the number of students in Kars Oblast's secondary educational institutions in the period 1908–1914.

Table 1. Numbers of Kars Oblast's Secondary Educational Institutions and Students in Them in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 78, 125; Otchet, 1910: 77, 78, 128; Otchet, 1911: 114, 244; Otchet, 1912: 80, 162; Otchet, 1913: 68, 151; Otchet, 1914: 68, 177; Otchet, 1915: 125, 262)

Year	Number of educational institutions					Number of students		
	Gymnasia		Progymnasia		Real school	Boys	Girls	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female				
1908	-	-	-	1	1	244	226	470
1909	-	1	-	-	1	268	262	530
1910	-	1	-	-	1	300	291	591
1911	-	1	-	-	1	313	282	595
1912	-	1	-	-	1	364	307	671
1913	-	1	-	-	1	370	330	700
1914	-	1	-	-	1	317	262	579

As evidenced in Table 1, in the period 1908–1914 the number of students in the region's secondary educational institutions kept rising. This was testimony to a growing interest on the part of Kars Oblast's residents in pursuing a full secondary education.

Table 2 provides data on the region's student body at the time in terms of ethnicity.

Table 2. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast's Secondary Educational Institutions by Ethnicity in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 114, 183; Otchet, 1910: 114; Otchet, 1911: 114, 244; Otchet, 1912: 114, 214; Otchet, 1913: 110, 192; Otchet, 1914: 110, 256; Otchet, 1915: 170, 386)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Other ethnicities	Total
1908	136	28	226	8	-	72	470
1909	108	-	126	-	9	25	268*

* The table contains no data on the female gymnasium.

1910	167	33	272	13	2	104	591
1911	184	22	273	16	3	97	595
1912	229	29	286	18	2	107	671
1913	210	33	331	16	3	107	700
1914	154	37	278	10	3	100	579

Just like in the period preceding 1908, the bulk of the student body in the region’s secondary educational institutions was comprised of Armenians. It is worth remembering that Armenians were the largest ethnic group within Kars Oblast’s population, followed by ethnic Russians, and then by Greeks. By the start of the World War I period, the region’s Tatars and mountaineers did not eventually happen to make up a large portion of its student body.

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

Table 3. Distribution of Students Kars Oblast’s Secondary Educational Institutions by Faith in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 80, 131; Otchet, 1911: 80, 192; Otchet, 1912: 80, 162; Otchet, 1913: 68, 151; Otchet, 1914: 68, 177; Otchet, 1915: 125, 262)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Catholics	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Protestants	Jews	Muslims	Total
1908	223	27	207	4	1	8	470
1909	253	28	232	6	2	9	530
1910	299	38	231	7	2	14	591
1911	275	39	258	5	2	16	595
1912	345	28	270	7	3	18	671
1913	339	23	308	12	2	16	700
1914	280	22	243	23	1	10	579

As evidenced in Table 3, the largest group was Orthodox Christians, followed closely by Armenian Gregorian Christians, and then by Catholics.

Table 4 gives an idea of the student body in Kars Oblast’s secondary educational institutions at the time in terms of estate.

Table 4. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Secondary Educational Institutions by Estate in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 81, 131; Otchet, 1910: 81, 128; Otchet, 1911: 81, 192; Otchet, 1912: 81, 162; Otchet, 1913: 69, 151; Otchet, 1914: 69, 177; Otchet, 1915: 126, 263)

Year	Nobles and functionaries	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Distinguished citizens and merchants	Members of other urban estates	Peasants	Cossacks	Foreigners	Other	Total
1908	164	18	118	107	59	-	-	4	470

1909	184	18	115	139	66	1	-	7	530
1910	186	19	126	160	91	1	-	8	591
1911	186	20	106	173	103	-	-	7	595
1912	189	25	96	231	120	-	-	10	671
1913	210	25	105	248	106	1	-	5	700
1914	124	19	125	225	77	-	2	7	579

Virtually throughout the period under review, the region's largest estate group was represented by nobles and functionaries. The group started to shrink sharply in 1914, due to the start of World War I. A portion of the region's student body left the front-line area to be evacuated to areas that were far from the combat zone, while the rest went to the war as volunteers (Molchanova et al., 2013: 91-92; Cherkasov et al., 2016). At the same time, by no means all of the key groups posted a decline in number of students. For instance, there was an increase in the size of the 'Distinguished Citizens and Merchants' group, as well as that of the group designated as 'Other'.

By tradition, major significance in the education system was attached back then to the libraries. As mentioned earlier, most secondary and lower educational institutions in the region had the following two separate library sections in place – fundamental (for teachers) and discipular (for students).

In 1909, the region's real school had a library stock of 933 items in the fundamental library section and 672 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1910: 97). At the same time, the Kars Female Gymnasium had 419 items in the fundamental section and 815 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1910: 152).

In 1910, the region witnessed a major increase in the real school's library stock – to 1,686 items in the fundamental section and 1,080 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1911: 97). At the same time, the library stock of the Kars Female Gymnasium remained virtually the same – 449 items in the fundamental section and 845 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1911: 216).

The period 1911-1912 did not witness a major increase in the region's library stock. However, in 1913 the Kars Real School now had 2,074 items in the fundamental section and 1,474 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1914: 84). The Kars Female Gymnasium had 574 items in the fundamental section and 1,466 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1914: 210).

By the start of World War I, in 1914, the Kars Real School had 2,127 items in the fundamental section and 1,511 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1915: 142). The Kars Female Gymnasium had 670 items in the fundamental section and 1,466 items in the discipular one (Otchet, 1915: 314). Thus, the overall library stock of the region's real school had increased from about 1,600 to 3,600 items, and that of its female gymnasium had increased from about 1,200 to 2,100 items. That said, it is worth remembering that, due to quite high rates of wear and tear on the books and items not being returned, the library stock needed to be replenished regularly.

Lower education

The system of lower education in Russia at the time was represented by urban schools, mountain schools, female Mariinsky schools*, and industrial schools.

In 1908, in conjunction with the implementation of the program on the introduction of compulsory primary education, there began to open urban schools in the region. As mentioned earlier, prior to 1908 only two urban schools had been established in Kars Oblast – Kars and Kagyzman.

On September 1, 1911, Kars Oblast became home to two more lower schools – Ardagan and Olty (Otchet, 1912: 323). Thus, as early as 1911, all four districts within Kars Oblast had urban schools in place.

However, the reform process did not stop at that. On January 1, 1914, the Ardagan and Kagyzman schools were transformed into six-grade higher primary schools (Otchet, 1915: 522). That same year, they also transformed the Kars school, and on September 1, 1914 they did the Olty school as well (Otchet, 1915: 524). Consequently, all of the urban schools (all with a period of study

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

of three-four years) in Kars Oblast were transformed into higher primary schools (with a period of study of six years).

Table 5. Numbers of Kars Oblast’s Lower Educational Institutions and Students in Them in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 275, 411; Otchet, 1910: 293, 405; Otchet, 1911: 286, 301, 409; Otchet, 1912: 266, 301; Otchet, 1913: 232, 260, 350; Otchet, 1914: 286, 320, 442; Otchet, 1915: 433, 486, 488)

Year	Number of educational institutions				Number of students		
	Higher primary school	Urban school	Lower tradesman’s school	Female vocational school	Boys	Girls	Total
1908	-	2	1	1	353	223	576
1909	-	2	1	1	391	273	664
1910	-	2	1	1	427	250	677
1911	-	4	1	1	650	257	907
1912	-	4	1	1	709	284	993
1913	-	4	1	1	672	288	960
1914	4	-	1	1	490	209	699

In analyzing Table 5, it is worth understanding that in Kars Oblast, just like in many other regions of the Caucasus at the time, boys and girls were educated separately. For girls the region had in place a female Mariinsky educational institution, and for boys there were in place an urban school and a tradesman’s school. Through the period 1908–1914, the region’s gender balance did not change much percentagewise, despite an increase in the number of its male educational institutions.

Table 6. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Lower Educational Institutions by Ethnicity in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 351; Otchet, 1910: 375; Otchet, 1911: 375, 453; Otchet, 1912: 375, 441; Otchet, 1913: 232, 322, 383; Otchet, 1914: 286, 410, 475; Otchet, 1915: 432, 636, 638, 765)

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Other ethnicities	Total
1908	36	7	142	3	2	126	316*
1909	43	5	170	10	4	132	355†
1910	61	5	192	8	-	161	427*
1911	75	8	271	16	1	279	650§
1912	99	11	464	26	2	390	993
1913	112	20	463	27	4	334	960
1914	87	87	361	37	2	125	699

In analyzing Table 6, we can see that up to 50 % of students before 1908 (Magsumov et al., 2020: 226) remained the largest national group in lower primary schools. This group was followed by ‘Other Ethnicities’, which almost entirely was made up of Greeks, and then by ethnic Russians. Note that by 1914 the region witnessed quite a steady increase in the number of Tatar students in its lower educational institutions.

* Exclusive of data on the region’s female Mariinsky school and tradesman’s school

† Exclusive of data on the region’s female Mariinsky school and tradesman’s school

* Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

§ Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

Table 7. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Lower Educational Institutions by Faith in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 275, 368, 411; Otchet, 1910: 301, 409; Otchet, 1911: 306, 409; Otchet, 1912: 266, 301, 395; Otchet, 1913: 232, 260, 350; Otchet, 1914: 286, 320, 442; Otchet, 1915: 433, 486, 488)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Muslims	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1908	241	307	10	3	2	6	7	576
1909	194	167	8	2	1	12	7	391*
1910	214	179	15	7	1	9	2	427 [†]
1911	414	415	32	24	2	20	4	907
1912	458	454	32	10	4	28	5	993
1913	422	427	41	31	5	30	4	960
1914	288	360	27	3	1	18	2	699

In analyzing Table 7, we can see that in 1909, 1910, 1912 the number of students of the Orthodox faith began to prevail over a similar number of Armenian-Gregorians. It should be noted that until 1908 the number of students of the Armenian-Gregorian faith was about 50-60 % of all students (Magsumov et al., 2020: 227).

Table 8 illustrates the distribution of students in Kars Oblast’s lower educational institutions at the time by estate.

Table 8. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Lower Educational Institutions by Estate in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 275, 411; Otchet, 1910: 301, 409; Otchet, 1911: 301, 409; Otchet, 1912: 266, 301, 395; Otchet, 1913: 261, 351; Otchet, 1914: 321, 443; Otchet, 1915: 487, 489)

Year	Nobles and functionaries	Persons of ecclesiastical status	Distinguished citizens and merchants	Members of other urban estates	Peasants	Cossacks	Foreigners	Other	Total
1908	8	4	18	131	181	3	1	7	353 [‡]
1909	16	11	65	93	179	3	7	17	391 [§]
1910	14	5	89	104	181	3	7	24	427 ^{**}
1911	16	7	38	204	365	2	-	18	650 ^{††}
1912	16	13	44	235	374	8	-	19	709 ^{**}
1913	11	25	201	89	331	-	-	14	672 ^{§§}
1914	8	23	151	112	216	1	-	5	699 [*]

* Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

† Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

‡ Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

§ Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

** Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

†† Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

** Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

§§ Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

As evidenced in [Table 8](#), most of the region's estate groups did not perform stably in terms of their share of the student body in its lower educational institutions. For instance, there kept **fluctuating the numbers of 'Nobles and Functionaries', 'Persons of Ecclesiastical Status', and 'Cossacks'**. **By 1913, the region witnessed a sharp, almost abrupt, increase in the number of students within its 'Distinguished Citizens and Merchants' group.** At the same time, there was an increase in the number of peasant students as well.

A few words will now be said about the libraries of the region's lower educational institutions at the time.

As mentioned earlier, by 1908 the combined library stock of lower educational institutions in Kars Oblast numbered 6,897 items ([Magsumov et al., 2020: 228](#)). Below is an account of how the **library stock changed through the period 1909–1914.**

In 1909, the Kars Female Mariinsky School had 1,377 items in the fundamental library section and 451 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1910: 273](#)). At the same time, the Kagyzman Urban School had 571 items in the fundamental section and 549 items in the discipular one. There was a large library stock in the Kars Lower Urban School too (2,756 items in the fundamental section and 1,004 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1910: 327](#)).

In 1910, the Kars Female Mariinsky School now had 1,593 items in the fundamental section and 543 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1911: 273](#)). The Kagyzman Urban School had 664 items in the fundamental section and 549 items in the discipular one. At the same time, the Kars Lower School had 2,882 items in the fundamental section and 1,052 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1911: 327](#)). **The Kars Lower Tradesman's School had 436 items in the fundamental section and 245 items in the discipular one** ([Otchet, 1911: 423](#)).

In 1911, an increase in the number of urban schools in Kars Oblast resulted in an increase in the number of libraries in the region. For instance, in 1911 the Kars Female Mariinsky School had 1,605 items in the fundamental section and 543 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1912: 273](#)). The Ardagan Urban School had 354 items in the fundamental section and 208 items in the discipular one. The Kagyzman Urban School had 701 items in the fundamental section and 605 in the discipular one. At the same time, the Kars Lower School had 3,017 items in the fundamental section and 1,100 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1912: 327](#)). **The Kars Lower Tradesman's School had 320 items in the fundamental section and 143 items in the discipular one** ([Otchet, 1912: 409](#)).

Subsequently, the region witnessed a slow increase in the size of its combined library stock. For instance, in 1912 the Kars Female Mariinsky School had 1,256 items in the fundamental section and 527 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1913: 236](#)). The Ardagan Urban School had 217 items in the fundamental section and 218 items in the discipular one. The Kagyzman Urban School had 775 items in the fundamental section and 878 in the discipular one. At the same time, the Kars Lower School had 3,131 items in the fundamental section and 1,148 items in the discipular one. The Olty Lower School had 80 items in the fundamental section and no items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1913: 280](#)). **The Kars Lower Tradesman's School had 320 items in the fundamental section and 143 items in the discipular one** ([Otchet, 1913: 360](#)).

In 1913, the Kars Female Mariinsky School had 1,319 items in the fundamental section and 632 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1914: 290](#)). The Ardagan Urban School had 435 items in the fundamental section and 327 items in the discipular one. The Kagyzman Urban School had 811 items in the fundamental section and 906 in the discipular one. At the same time, the Kars Lower School had 3,143 items in the fundamental section and 1,148 items in the discipular one. The Olty Lower School had 164 items in the fundamental section and 142 in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1914: 348](#)). **The Kars Lower Tradesman's School had 269 items in the fundamental section and 124 items in the discipular one** ([Otchet, 1914: 452](#)).

By 1914, Kars Oblast's lower education sector had the following library stock: Kars Female Mariinsky School – 1,361 items in the fundamental section and 654 items in the discipular one ([Otchet, 1915: 442](#)); Ardagan Urban School – 456 and 434 items, respectively; Kagyzman Urban School – 867 and 923 items, respectively; Kars Lower School – 3,148 and 1,167 items, respectively ([Otchet, 1915: 532](#)); Olty Lower School – 173 and 462 items, respectively ([Otchet, 1915: 534](#)); Kars Lower Tradesman's School – 242 and 101 items, respectively ([Otchet, 1915: 720](#)). All in all, the

* Data not available on the female Mariinsky school

region's lower educational institutions had a combined library stock of 9,988 items. Thus, the region's total library stock had increased 1.5 times.

Primary education

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

Private primary schools

Private primary education was not common in Kars Oblast. In the period 1908–1914, the region had only one private primary school in place, which was in operation from 1911 to 1912.

Table 9 covers the student body within the region's private primary education sector at the time.

Table 9. Number of Students within Kars Oblast's Private Primary Education Sector in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 466, Otchet, 1912: 466; Otchet, 1913: 466; Otchet, 1914: 486-487; Otchet, 1915: 784)

Year	Number of Students		
	Boys	Girls	Total
1908	-	-	-
1909	-	-	-
1910	-	-	-
1911	13	-	13
1912	11	1	12
1913	Data not available		
1914	-	-	-

As evidenced in Table 9, the number of students in the region's private educational institutions was not large at the time. However, a distinctive characteristic was that they could be attended by boys and girls alike.

Ministerial schools

Kars Oblast's primary education sector commenced operation in 1908, i.e. the year the project on the introduction of compulsory education was launched, with a whole network of primary schools being established (there were 66 primary schools in Kars Oblast in 1908). Subsequently, the actual sector posted one of the highest growth rates across the Caucasus percentagewise. For instance, in Kuban Oblast the rate of growth in number of educational institutions over the same period was over 50 % (Molchanova et al., 2020: 99).

Table 10. Distribution of Kars Oblast's Primary Schools under the Ministry of Public Education by Type in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 400; Otchet, 1910: 390, 392; Otchet, 1911: 390, 392; Otchet, 1912: 448, 450; Otchet, 1913: 334-335; Otchet, 1914: 426-427, 428; Otchet, 1915: 668-669)

Year	Two-grade schools	One-grade schools	Special-status schools	Total schools	Number of students		
					Boys	Girls	Total
1908	12	53	-	66	3,360	830	4,190
1909	18	53	1	72	3,917	961	4,878
1910	20	70	1	92	5,011	1,263	6,274

1911	37	84	1	122	6,341	1,803	8,144
1912	42	114	-	156	8,401	2,117	10,518
1913	58	133	-	191	9,186	3,464	12,650
1914	58	144	-	202	9,335	3,369	12,704

As evidenced in [Table 10](#), in the period 1908–1914 the region witnessed a major increase in ministerial institutions of primary learning. The total number of these schools grew more than **three times**. An even greater increase was posted by the region’s two-grade schools – nearly five times. This helped place in school three times more boys in 1914 than in 1908, with the number of girls in school having grown as well – by four times.

Table 11. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Primary Schools by Ethnicity in the Period 1908–1914 ([Otchet, 1909: 402](#); [Otchet, 1910: 400](#); [Otchet, 1911: 399](#); [Otchet, 1912: 457](#); [Otchet, 1913: 343](#); [Otchet, 1914: 435](#); [Otchet, 1915: 683](#))

Year	Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Other ethnicities	Total
1908	1,139	21	1,559	264	15	1,192	4,190
1909	1,033	11	1,873	288	95	1,578	4,878
1910	1,138	20	2,604	568	163	1,781	6,274
1911	1,245	10	3,530	634	488	2,237	8,144
1912	1,235	9	4,991	478	660	3,145	10,518
1913	1,559	21	6,322	802	-	3,996	12,650
1914	1,539	21	6,481	874	760	3,029	12,704

Of major interest is [Table 11](#). As evidenced therein, the period under review witnessed **increases in the share in the student body within the region’s primary education** sector on the part of virtually all of its ethnic groups, except for the Georgians. With that said, the numbers of **Armenians and Tatars rose nearly four times**. An increase of **50 times** was posted by the region’s mountaineers, which could serve as testimony to the attitude of members of this group toward the **Russian Empire’s secular education system changing by the start of the World War I period**.

Table 12. Distribution of Students in Kars Oblast’s Primary Schools by Faith in the Period 1908–1914 ([Otchet, 1909: 394](#); [Otchet, 1910: 392](#); [Otchet, 1911: 375](#); [Otchet, 1912: 457](#); [Otchet, 1913: 336-337](#); [Otchet, 1914: 428-429](#); [Otchet, 1915: 672-673](#))

Year	Orthodox Christians	Armenian Gregorian Christians	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Muslims	Representatives of other faiths	Total
1908	1,399	1,391	132	13	25	284	946	4,190
1909	1,663	1,625	140	1,033	40	351	26	4,878
1910	1,985	2,338	141	1,034	34	708	34	6,274
1911	2,439	2,196	137	1,271	9	1,041	51	8,144
1912	3,150	4,898	211	871	13	1,375	-	10,518
1913	2,915	5,799	395	1,482	22	1,675	364	12,650
1914	2,813	5,907	397	1,373	17	1,853	344	12,704

As evidenced in [Table 12](#), **the situation with the student body in the region’s primary schools** in terms of religious affiliation was similar to that in its secondary and lower education sectors. **More specifically, the region’s primary education sector, too, was exhibiting an increase in Christian students**, with Protestants posting the largest increase. Negative figures were exhibited by

Jews. Surprisingly, the size of this particular group kept decreasing virtually throughout the period under review.

Parochial schools

Apart from ministerial educational institutions, Kars Oblast also had in place an entire network of primary schools run by the Holy Synod. Track of the activity of these schools was kept at the time quite meticulously by way of the Reports of the Chief Procurator. Some of the data are provided in [Table 13](#).

Table 13. Numbers of Kars Oblast’s Parochial Schools and Students in Them in the Period 1908–1914 (Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1911: 220-221, 244-245; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1912: 112-113; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1913: 178-279, 206-207; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1915: 122-123; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1916: 124-125)

Year	Number of schools				Number of students		
	Two-grade	One-grade	Grammar schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1908	9	57	-	66	3,182	719	3,901
1909	10	53	-	63	2,967	772	3,739
1910	14	48	-	62	3,120	896	4,016
1911	14	49	-	63	3,248	1,029	4,277
1912	15	48	-	63	3,225	1,162	4,387
1913	17	44	-	61	3,129	1,160	4,289
1914	17	44	-	61	Data not available		

As evidenced in [Table 13](#), during the period under review the Russian Orthodox Church was conducting work that was similar to what the Ministry of Public Education was doing. This, above all, involved supporting the operation of schools established before 1908 and by any means increasing the student body in them. On the other hand, the church was also conducting work on reorganizing one-grade schools into two-grade ones. The key difference from what the Ministry of Public Education was doing was that the Russian Orthodox Church was establishing schools and educating children at its own expense, whereas the Ministry of Public Education was using state loans.

[Table 14](#) illustrates the achievements of the system of public education in Kars Oblast in the period 1908–1914.

Table 14. Kars Oblast’s Public Education System in the Period 1908–1914 (Otchet, 1909: 400, Otchet, 1912: 466; Otchet, 1913: 392-393; Otchet, 1914: 486)

Year	Schools under the Ministry of Public Education						Students			
	Secondary	Lower		Primary			Total	Boys	Girls	Total
		MPE	Private	MPE	Private	Parochial				
1908	2	4	-	66	-	66	134	7,139	1,998	9,137
1909	2	4	-	72	-	63	141	7,543	2,268	9,811
1910	2	4	-	92	-	62	160	8,858	2,700	11,558
1911	2	6	1	122	1	63	195	10,565	3,371	13,936
1912	2	6	-	156	1	63	228	12,710	3,771	16,581
1913	2	6	-	191	-	61	260	13,357	5,242	18,599
1914	2	6	-	202	-	61	271	13,271	5,000	18,271

It is worth noting that, based on data from the Ministry of Public Education, at January 1, 1915 there were 35,216 children of school age (from 8 to 11 years) in Kars Oblast (RGIA. F. 733. Op. 207. D. 39. L. 3), **with already more than 18,000 of these attending school (at the region's ministerial, private, or parish schools)**. While it is apparent that the region still had lots of work to do in the area of education, **one must take into account the area's regional characteristics**. By January 1, 1913, Kars Oblast had a population of 333,000 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1914: Vedomost' 2). **Of these, 149,000 were represented by the region's three major Christian groups** (ethnic Russians – 16,000, Armenians – 85,000, and Greeks – 48,000), while 179,000 were represented by its four major Muslim groups (Turks – 68,000, Kurds – 52,000, Qarapapaqs – 43,000, and Turkmens – 16,000). Given that the number of children of school age within the Christian group was 10%, i.e. 14,900 individuals, in 1913 school was attended by nearly 85 % of all Russian children in the region, with nearly 100% of these being boys. There was a similar situation **with the region's Armenians and Greeks**. **Of note is the serious gender imbalance within the Christian group**. **More specifically, in 1913 the region's schools were attended by about 11,100 Christian boys and just around 5,000 Christian girls**, with the total number of Muslim girls in the schools being just 285. Given that Kars Oblast had a gender ratio of 55 % male to 45 % female, **at 1913 the region's schools were short nearly 5,000 girls, which accounted for 50% of the region's school-age female population**. At the same time, between 1912 and 1913 the region witnessed the largest increase in girls enrolled in school – an increase of 1,500 in 1913 on 1912. If this pace had carried on, the region would have been able to overcome its gender imbalance as early as between 1916 and 1917. However, with World War I starting in late 1914 in the Caucasus front, Kars Oblast would become a front-line area.

It was not long before military action in the region spread to the Ottoman Empire. A portion of the schools was transformed into hospitals. Overall, the school system in Kars Oblast continued to operate up to February of 1917. Concurrently, the Ministry of Public Education had plans to introduce compulsory primary education in Russia right after the end of the war. To this specific end, during the war the government built **teacher's seminaries and organized pedagogical programs of study**, but in February of 1917 the situation in Russia started to develop based on a totally different scenario.

5. Conclusion

Kars Oblast's system of public education 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. A key role in making primary education accessible was played by the implementation of the project on the introduction of compulsory primary education. In the period from 1908 to 1914, the number of ministerial primary schools in the region rose from 66 to 202. This helped increase the number of students in the region from 4,000 to 12,000. In addition to this, a large amount of work in the area of public education was also conducted by the Russian Orthodox Church, which ran over 60 primary schools in the region.

By the start of World War I, schools in Kars Oblast were attended by nearly 100% of all **Russian boys in the region, with similar figures posted by the region's Greek and Armenian boys** and much lower ones exhibited by its girl population. **However, on the war's eve, the region's female education system was making such headway that the school system seemed capable of reaching all of its Christian population by as early as the period 1916-1917, which, of course, was achievable on condition that the pace carried on.**

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