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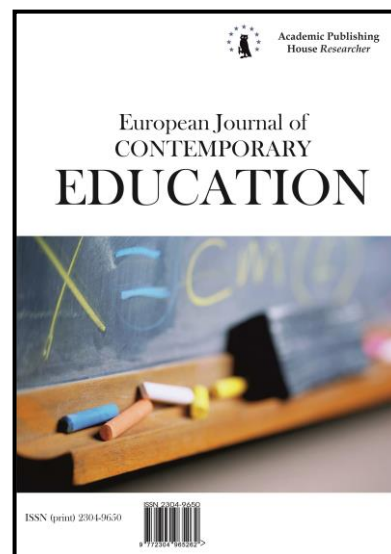
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## **Revisiting the History of Pedagogical Thought in Russia's South: the Pedagogical Beliefs of Major Pedagogues at the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the 19th century. Part 2**

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### **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 informal, 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 second part of the paper is dedicated to the evolution of theoretical pedagogical thought and educational methods in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium from 1810 to 1850. The paper demonstrates that the educational process became relatively streamlined only since this period – this happened at the end of 1830 when I.Ya. Zolotarev, the first Don Cossack, who taught at a higher educational institution (Kharkov University), was appointed its director. It was he who introduced for teachers regular reporting on class attendance, topics covered, firmly required teachers to prepare curricula and drove other changes. Parallel to the process, there were shifting theoretical views of

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Novocherkassk teachers as advocates of practice-oriented and applied education, helpful in building a career, strengthened their position. The Novocherkassk gymnasium was envisioned as a “military” educational institution that served the interests of the Don Host by training officers and administrators. However, the plans were hindered by excessive formalism in teaching, lack of focus on actual cognitive abilities of children and too a scholastic educational process that had no touch with reality. By 1850, a certain development crisis had began looming over the Novocherkassk Gymnasium: the number of people willing to be students at practice-oriented courses gradually went down while the needs of the Don Host were not addressed.

**Keywords:** history of pedagogy, teaching methods, historical pedagogical views, Novocherkassk Gymnasium, T.I. Selivanov, I.Ya. Zolotarev.

### **1. Introduction**

In 1907, the Don Host's regional printing house published a substantial book by priest I.P. Artinsky, 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**

Only the least amount of information on the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1810 and 1850 (it is the period that the second part of our paper deals with) has survived to our days. A.G. Filonov, who created his works in the middle of the 19th century, did not collect information on the immediate past; and by the early 20th century, when I.P. Artinskii set out to his research journey, too few people still lived who were students and teachers at the gymnasium in those years. This is why the primary source for this part of our paper will constitute materials from the gymnasium archive, made public by I.P. Artinskii ([Artinskii, 1907](#)). Thankfully, latter not only quoted many excerpts from the official correspondence of the gymnasium's director, I.Ya. Zolotarev, in his book, but also enclosed verbatim records of official speeches made by some of the gymnasium teachers, beginning in 1846 ([Artinskii, 1907: 355-419](#)). Despite all the limitations of such materials, they allow for a possibility to provide a general evaluation of the changes that evolved in the pedagogical views of teachers at the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the period under review.

The most fragmented picture, that I.I. Artinskii reflected in his book, refers to the period from 1820 to 1830. Fortunately, the second of the decades is described in a little-known and very important source that still exists today. The Pushkin Central Library in Novocherkassk preserved a mysterious manuscript "Speeches delivered in the ceremonial meetings in the Novocherkassk gymnasium since 1832" (Rechi, proiznesennye v torzhestvennykh sobraniyakh Novocherkasskoi gimnazii s 1832 goda) ([Rechi..., b. g.](#)). Who wrote down the speeches, why he did it, why only speeches at ceremonial meetings in the gymnasium from 1832 to 1837 were recorded – we can only guess the answers to the questions. It is so much stranger that I.P. Artinsky never made the slightest mention of the manuscript: apparently, "Speeches" were not stored in the gymnasium archive before the revolution but in some private collection and remained unknown to researchers. Nevertheless, the text plays a crucial role both as the earliest document that provides the complete public speeches of ordinary, average teachers of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, rather than those of prominent figures like A.G. Oridovsky, and as evidence of the dynamically evolving pedagogical views of Novocherkassk teachers in the 1830s. By using the historical-descriptive method, citing the key provisions of the manuscript, which has not previously been reviewed by scholars, comparing them with other sources on the basis of the historical-comparative method, and finally, by employing historical analysis to explore the information given by I.P. Artinskii, we succeeded in delivering a relatively accurate reconstruction of the changes in the pedagogical theory and pedagogical practices in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1810–1850.

## **3. Discussion**

We do not put down the history of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium here, but it will be difficult to comprehend the stagnation in the pedagogical views of its teachers if we fail to consider the fact that three events most adverse for the Don education occurred in 1810. The Patriotic War of 1812 was most large-scale of them, during which young Cossacks joined the Don militia en masse, inspired by a patriotic uplift. We mentioned the family boarding house of the Krasnov family in the first part of our paper. I.I. Krasnov described with deep emotion how his students lived "between fear and hope" to go to the field army with their grandfather, how he, yielding to their desire, agreed to take all the children with him, and only the entreaties of more prudent relatives persuaded him to leave the Cossack boys under twelve at home ([Vospominaniya..., 1873: 376-377](#)). The children of other generals, who were far under the military service age, also went into the army ([Vospominaniya..., 1873: 378](#)). One cannot but agree with I.P. Artinskii, who wrote that "tumultuous circumstances of the war, which swept up most of the population for the military service" came as a crushing blow for the Novocherkassk Gymnasium that lost many students ([Artinskii, 1907: 74](#)).

The outbreak of war seemed to completely push the death of A. G. Oridovsky, the "first distinguished teacher" of the Land of the Don Host, which happened on March 11, 1812, into the background in the memory of contemporaries ([Artinskii, 1907: 14](#)). We were unable to uncover any

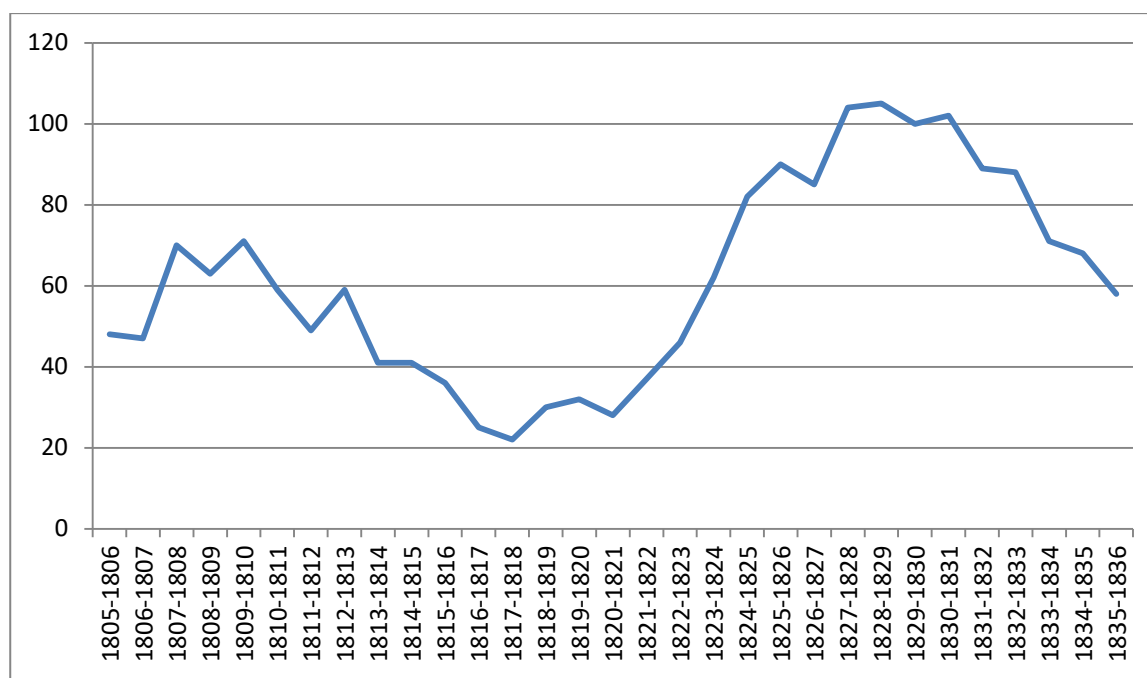
information in the works by contemporaries either on the death itself, or on the reaction it produced in Don society. But it is perfectly obvious that the death of the leading “advocate of education” on the Don should mean a significant loss in the influence and popularity for the Novocherkassk Gymnasium.

Lastly, it became clear in the same 1812 that the Don authorities very often adopted an unfavorable attitude to the gymnasium, and in fact, its director, A.G. Popov only managed to build positive relations with Ataman M.I. Platov, but not with people who surrounded him. In 1812–1813, A.K. Denisov who acted for the ataman who commanded the Cossacks in the fight against Napoleon, orchestrated a number of attempts to completely bring the gymnasium under his total control and even force part of its teachers to transfer from civil ranks to the military (Artinskii, 1907: 63-65). The situation only deteriorated over time, especially after the death of M.I. Platov, when A.K. Denisov became a full-fledged Don Ataman. Just a few months after his appointment, he required A.G. Popov to resign from his post of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium director, qualifying the latter as “a man of honest rules, but the one who, due to his disposition, limited knowledge and lack of affinity for this service, is unable to see the accuracy of the educational order” (Artinskii, 1907: 68). The Kharkov educational district succeeded in defending A.G. Popov, and to this end even dauntlessly accused A.K. Denisov of lying: his officials reminded the higher authorities that the director of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium was “well educated in the sciences he teaches at the Moscow University”, and that “no complaints so far about Director Popov have ever reached the authorities from anyone” (Artinskii, 1907: 69-70). Nevertheless, in the summer of 1819, an educational district trustee personally came to the Don, and a rigorous check of students’ knowledge was conducted (L.B., 1906: 57-58). Against the background of such coldness between the military authorities and the gymnasium, it is not surprising at all that the funds promised by M.I. Platov for a robust gymnasium building, were never allocated (Artinskii, 1907: 71). As a result, conditions in which teachers had to conduct classes left much to be desired and in the 1820s, for example, V.D. Sukhorukov described the premises as “makeshift outbuildings”, “very cramped and with shabby appearance” (Sukhorukov, 1891: 139).

In addition, the period between 1810 and 1820 failed to resolve the central pedagogical issue that became clearly visible at the first stage of the existence of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium – the issue of the mostly incompetent teaching staff. I.Ya. Zolotarev, appointed the head of the Don educational institutions in 1830, gave the following description of the situation he faced: “In the gymnasium itself, the exception was one or two teachers, while the rest were totally inept at performing their job duties” (Artinskii, 1907: 76). All indications are that the last drop was the resignation of A.G. Popov in 1824: the director was past sixty, he lost his beloved wife by death, his health was damaged, and he decided to retire (L.B., 1906: 58). Already in the next year, the library and dedicated classrooms, which the previous head continuously struggled to replenish, were destroyed by fire, and search for a new director, who would agree to such an unfavorable position and have the minimum competencies required for it, took five years (Artinskii, 1907: 76).

In the context of all the events, the enrollment in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium almost did not grow as well. Of course, one could hardly expect an inflow of students into an educational institution with knowingly incompetent teachers and without its own premises and special-purpose equipment. This rather once again underscores the importance of the work done by A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky in 1800 – thanks to it the gymnasium managed to survive even in these harsh conditions, and the outflow of student was always followed by an increase. We will provide below a chart showing the number of students in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1800-1830, and as will be shown in the chart by the middle of 1830, the school had only slightly more children than in 1800, at the time of A.G. Oridovsky's speeches about the benefits of education.





**Fig. 1.** Trends in the number of students in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. 1805-1836.

Source: [Artinskii, 1907: 76](#)

Thus, in the period from 1812 to 1836, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium simply did it best not to perish, and its teachers had other things to worry about rather than about pedagogical theories or new teaching practices. The stagnating pedagogical views of Novocherkassk teachers were also brought about by the fact that after A.G. Popov's resignation, no other prominent figures remained in the Don region, and even the new gymnasium director, T.I. Selivanov, appointed in 1829, apparently, turned out to be a completely colorless person, since even I.P. Artinskii did not give any specific information on the man.

However, just at the end of this period of inertia, the teachers of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium began to shift away from the clearly outdated pedagogical ideas of A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky, looking for innovative educational concepts whose outlines were often not yet completely clear to the agents of change themselves. The progression can be easily traced in the above-mentioned "Speeches delivered in the ceremonial meetings in the Novocherkassk gymnasium since 1832". While the earliest of the speeches relied on the idea of moral self-improvement and approaching to God through education, were idealized and overfilled with poorly conceptualized rhetoric and in general were highly reminiscent of the extant texts of A.G. Oridovsky, the later speeches showed clear signs of a turn towards practice-oriented ideals of education.

The collection of speeches opens with a speech by history teacher V.A. Kallistratov, under the declarative title "On the importance of teaching profession". As for V.A. Kallistratov, little is known about the person: after several years of work in the Don region, he was transferred to the Kursk Gymnasium, and then took the position of inspector at the Tambov Gymnasium ([Artinskii, 1907: 330](#); [Kholodnyi, 1886: 142](#)). Thus, unlike A.G. Popov, who was originally a military official, and A.G. Oridovsky, the unofficial leader of the Don clergy, V.A. Kallistratov was a trained teacher who had a corresponding work experience in several provinces of the Russian Empire. Speaking of the content of his speech, it had few connections with the title. V.A. Kallistratov mainly spoke about the vital role of education in general – he even failed to suggest a conceptual and stylistic development for Oridovsky's ideas but, to be more precise, simply repeated the proposition of the Protoiereus that "man is the image of the invisible divine being; <...> but this godlike man humbles oneself greatly if he is left without nourishment for his talents" ([Filonov, 1859: 170-171](#)). Here is the definition, for example, the history teacher gave to the term "education": "The only instrument that by destroying the rough crust that constrains the inner abilities of a man and gradually expanding

the range of his moral activity, paves the way unimpeded to the purest concept of virtue, Truth and God" (Rechi..., b. g.: 30b.-4). Accordingly, most of the arts and sciences (namely, "physics, philology, general history of human race, natural history, etc.") were interpreted by V.A. Kallistratov as "a replication of the earth and heavens", as a path to the "purest idea of God" (Rechi..., b. g.: 6). And finally, the teacher, according to V.A. Kallistratov, was supposed to act as a "moral educator for the mind and heart of inexperienced youths" (Rechi..., b. g.: 30b.). Of course, the speech did not elaborate on any qualities required for a teacher nor did it clarify on the requirements for teachers. Therefore, the speech "On the importance of teaching profession" is an illustrative example of the stagnation that pervaded the pedagogical views of Don teachers and lasted from 1800 until the early 1830s: it only paraphrased things long known to the audience, which by the time had become common not only in Western countries and Russian capitals, but on the Don as well. If V.A. Kallistratov's speech conveyed any substantially novel ideas, they were expressed in a number of hesitating statements about the teacher's role underestimated by society. "This modest title is not too enviable, brilliant or big," V.A. Kallistratov admitted but immediately lapsed into elevated rhetoric about the "internal delirious pleasure" that the teaching profession gives (Rechi..., b. g.: 30b.).

A speech "On the sublime" by another gymnasium teacher, V. Kondratyev, was very akin to V.A. Kallistratov's speech. Even less information on the former has survived to this day: we know neither the details of his biography, nor even his patronymic, only that V. Kondratyev taught natural history and physics at the Novochoerkassk Gymnasium (Artinskii, 1907: 310). The teacher devoted his speech to "the overview of the great, diverse and wise Divine creations which truly instill a feeling of love and reverence for the author of our existence in the heart of man" (Rechi..., b. g.: 110b.). We can conclude that V. Kondratyev was also a supporter of the doctrine about the predominant religious and moral significance of education. And yet, the speech "On the sublime" marks a crucial step forward as compared to A.G. Oridovsky and V.A. Kallistratov: V. Kondratyev believed not some abstract "sciences", but natural history, a specific discipline with its unique features, to a path to religious self-improvement. Although still very tentatively and clumsily, V. Kondratyev emphasized that the coming generation especially needs natural sciences because they teach to scrutinize the world around and rest upon "experiments and observations" (Rechi..., b. g.: 100b.). He also sought to explain the educational role of two other major sciences, history and mathematics. For example, from his perspective, history was important as "not only does it reveals the picture and progression of events and circumstances that happen to major states, it instructs us in penetrating into the very essence of them" (Rechi..., b. g.: 220b. 100b.). Mathematics taught "to combine theoretical knowledge with practice," V. Kondratyev wrote (Rechi..., b. g.: 100b.). But, perhaps, the most indicative detail in V. Kondratyev's speech was that, after he finished with eloquent speculations about the sublime God and nature, he did not draw a conclusion, but straightforwardly addressed the "Don Host administration", begging officials to "enhance funding" allocated for the gymnasium that was badly needed by Don Cossacks (Rechi..., b. g.: 19). The teacher of natural sciences seemed to worry much more about real-world problems than about the abstract discourse about God, but, with all restraints imposed by the tradition of public speeches, he had to verbosely describe the sublime of God only to jump from the ground to an unexpected conclusion about the need to increase funding for the Novochoerkassk Gymnasium where they studied God's glorious creations.

Individual cautious elements of novelty in the speeches, made by V.A. Kallistratov and V. Kondratyev in the first half of 1830 (1832 and 1833, respectively), set the stage for the way for a truly revolutionary speech by teacher of mathematics G. Rytsky in 1835. At an official test of knowledge taken by gymnasium students, the teacher spoke for the first time about the purely practical benefits received through the application of a specific science, about how graduates could put the knowledge gained to use in their careers, with no references at all to moral self-improvement and the more intimate connection between an educated person and God. Instead, G. Rytsky identified the following "key applications" of pure mathematics in contemporary society:

- 1) "In surveying and demarcating lands" (Rechi..., b. g.: 220b.).
- 2) "In trade" (Rechi..., b. g.: 24).
- 3) To calculate bank interest (Rechi..., b. g.: 25).
- 4) "In mixing silver or gold of two or more standards to receive a certain amount of silver of the desired standard" (Rechi..., b. g.: 28).

There was almost no rhetorical flourish and generalities in G. Rylsky's speech. But the mathematics teacher pointed out for the first time in the practice of such speeches, which branches of his science and which special tools would serve best his students in succeeding in various fields of practical activity. Let us confine ourselves to one example. While describing the work of land surveyors, G. Rylsky mentioned that "it is even better if he (land surveyor – A.P., T.Z.), with a good command of the initial principles of rectilinear trigonometry, logarithms of numbers and trigonometric lines, employs the astrolabe in addition to chains and stakes" (Rechi..., b. g.: 23). One can hardly conceive of a more striking contrast to the speeches by the "old school" Novocherkassk teachers who abstractly elaborated on the divine goodness of sciences. However, there was no complete break off with their ideas, but there was a radical shift of focus: teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium emphasized since the time of A.G. Oridovsky the moral importance of education as well as mentioned its usefulness in real life, and G. Rylsky in fact only concentrated exclusively on the last proposition, discarding the first one. One consideration that ran through his entire speech was the one about the practical value of education, and the speech even ended with reasoning that students "should not waste time spending it in idleness," because in the future they "will experience applications of all the sciences they were taught to a greater or lesser extent" (Rechi..., b. g.: 29ob.).

It is obviously that G. Rylsky's speech signaled a turning point in the pedagogical views expressed by the majority of teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. Until 1835, the school's ceremonial meetings heard only speeches on abstract and general topics about the benefits of enlightenment (along with the speeches by V.A. Kallistratov and V.Kondratyev, we should mention the speeches delivered in 1834 by G.G. Mozharov "On enlightenment as a sole source of happiness and glory for a generation that begins its life in the Don Host" (Rechi..., b. g.: 30-36ob.) and by Protoiereus S. S. Saltykov, who once again stressed that sciences "not only enlighten and educate the mind, but also ennoble and elevate the young heart" (Rechi..., b. g.: 21-22). After 1835, speeches were increasingly more devoted to the issues of specific disciplines and more widely promote sciences. In 1836, the same V.A. Kallistratov no longer discussed the general benefits of enlightenment, but made a report "On the gradual rise to power by Russia that secured a leadership position among the states of Europe," on his subject, which, in fact, offered a brief overview of the history of Russia (Rechi..., b. g.: 40-50). In 1837, a teacher of mathematics and physics, I.D. Gamov, spoke with students and guests of the gymnasium "On the necessity to know the laws of nature when studying physical phenomena," introducing the audience to basic physical concepts (Rechi..., b. g.: 68-74).

The fundamental change in the pedagogical views of Novocherkassk teachers can be also demonstrated by the events of 1836, when the local gymnasium was reorganized in compliance with the Gymnasium Charter of 1828. In his official speech on the occasion, Director T.I. Selivanov presented his interpretation of the ongoing reform to "distinguished guests", an interpretation that was quite consistent with the new pedagogical trends. He stressed that thanks to the reform, which significantly broadened the gymnasium curriculum (which was even extended from four to seven years), "children who choose to go to a seven-grade gymnasium, can acquire such a comprehensive knowledge that will empower them to easily enter a university for higher education and apply for a military or civil service where they will be able accomplish any assignment with flying colors" (Rechi..., b. g.: 52ob.). Thus, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium has officially announced a new main purpose of education for students – preparing for entering a university and gaining practical knowledge, rather than moral self-improvement. Moreover, T.I. Selivanov paid a special attention in his speech to the fact that the very program of the gymnasium curriculum was adapted to the Don environment by the Ministry of Public Education, to include subjects relevant for Cossacks in their future careers, such as fencing, gymnastics, court proceedings, artillery and fortification (Rechi..., b. g.: 52ob.-53). We will take the liberty of citing an extensive excerpt from his speech, which clearly demonstrates a more practice-oriented core of Don education: "With what paternal beneficence our Most August Monarch Sovereign himself takes care of the education of young Don Cossacks. It is his wish that along with refining their spiritual abilities, educating their minds and hearts, they will develop their physical strength, and from a very young age, by doing gymnastic exercises, children will improve themselves for their vocation, namely: in horseback riding, in the skill of moving quickly and easily, in deft use of weapons, in training eyes and hands to accurately shoot at a target, in swimming across rivers and in other types of speedy and swift activities

pertaining to the service of Cossacks. In this way, Don's alumni, prepared in this educational institution, when they enter the military profession, would be notable there not only by their fearlessness and valor innate to each Don Cossack, but in places unreachable for valor they would be able to defeat enemies with a great skill and strategic information acquired through the study of military sciences. And when, after accomplishing their military exploits, they return to the bosom of their native land and are called to civil service, then, with the information about the practice of legal proceedings, acquired here, they could fully comprehend the power of laws and defend the honor and life of a citizen. This proves that the children of Don Cossacks cannot receive a better upbringing and education for their military and civilian journey, for their future responsibilities in any other educational institution" ([Rechi..., b. g.: 53-53ob.](#)).

Consequently, the conflict between the ideas about the unconditional benefit of any education and the actual incompetence of many teachers, which characterized the teaching staff in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the first decades of the 19th century, was finally resolved in the 1830s. This change was set in motion through a radical rethink of their pedagogical views by Novocherkassk teachers. The notion of religious and moral benefits of any, even the weirdest and most preposterous learning was now a thing of the past; education was no longer regarded as a peculiar route to God. Education was expected to give useful advantages and provide students with knowledge in specific subjects, and the knowledge would be actionable and instrumental in the future career. Accordingly, a model teacher began to emerge from a "moral educator of the minds and hearts of inexperienced youths" as a teacher of a specific subject, who was perfectly knowledgeable about the subject content and was willing to communicate it to his students.

Such transformation might be caused simply by a physical change of generations of teachers. We mentioned above that Don educational institutions were headed by I.Ya. Zolotarev in 1830, who was fully aware of the problem of teachers' incompetence. According to I.P. Artinskii, under his leadership, the staff of the gymnasium teachers "changed for the better, although, perhaps, not as quickly and definitely as it should be" ([Artinskii, 1907: 89](#)). Although the process spanned a period until the 1840s, as we will see below, new teachers often showed much better proficiency in their subjects, and in some cases even carried on research work. In addition, the head of the educational institutions of the Don Host himself was sympathetic to practice-oriented education ([Artinskii, 1907: 126](#)). In fact, it seems plausible to assume that the revolutionary change that took place in the Don pedagogical thought in the 1830s, was connected with the personality of I.Ya. Zolotarev. Unfortunately, this advocate of Don enlightenment did not attract even such scant attention of historians, which was paid to A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky – there are no special works dedicated to the person. Since I.Ya. Zolotarev also replaced T.I. Selivanov as director of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1838, we will take the liberty of taking a closer look on his characterization.

The inattention of historians to I.Ya. Zolotarev is all the more surprising that the latter was, apparently, the first Don Cossack who was a teacher at a higher educational institution. Here is what I.P. Artinskii wrote about Zolotarev's young years: "Zolotarev Ivan Yakovlevich, a son of a Voyskovoy Starshina of the Don Host, upon completing the course of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1816 and Kharkov University in 1820, was awarded the title of candidate in 1822; at the university he was a sub-inspector, a teacher of rhetoric (1823) and poetry (1826), an assistant librarian, an adjunct professor of Russian language and literature (1829) and finally, a teacher of literary history" ([Artinskii, 1907: 311](#)). Thus, the personal pedagogical experience of I.Ya. Zolotarev was gained at a top-class university by the standards of the Russian Empire, and could not be compared with the experience of his prominent predecessors, A.G. Popov, who had never worked as a teacher, and A.G. Oridovsky, who taught only in secondary and primary educational institutions (and, by the way, had no higher education at all). At the same time, the future director of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium showed himself to be if not a brilliant, but quite a good teacher at a university level: the author of the monumental treatise "Historical experience of Kharkov University," D.I. Bagalei, even contrasted I.Ya. Zolotarev, "who gave lectures with at a fairly decent standard, although did not stand well with his students," with Professor of Russian Philology D.S. Borzenko, a much weaker lecturer, popular among students for his "jokes and witticisms" ([Bagalei, 1904: 600](#)). We also uncovered an interesting review of I.Ya. Zolotarev, made by one of his students, who preferred to conceal his identity behind the initials "I.B." This I.B. wrote about his lecturer that he "had a remarkable ability to recite Mogilevsky's Rhetoric; but the reciting was



monotonous and sent everyone to sleep” (Bagalei, 1904: 1111). We should add another detail to the portrait. According to D.I. Bagalei, in 1820, the Kharkov University and Kharkov society had more need in education propaganda than in scholarly activity proper, and several of its employees, including I.Ya. Zolotarev, “reduced almost all their scholarly efforts to purely literary and journalistic activities” (Bagalei, 1904: 731-732). We can see that despite his university-level teaching experience, I.Ya. Zolotarev was not a scholar; rather, it is more appropriate to consider him as an “ardent champion of education”, like A.G. Oridovsky, who, by the way, also received education in Kharkov. Another common feature brings closer the candidate of sciences and the protoireus – that is poetic attempts. I. Ya. Zolotarev, probably, was also the first Don poet who began to publish his poems in metropolitan editions. For example, two of his poems came out in Moskovskiy Telegraf in 1826. We should point out that, despite their low literary quality, the poems far exceeded the heavy classicism of A.G. Oridovsky and corresponded to the ideals of the then popular romanticism. For example, one of them, “Evening at the sea”, was almost a parody as it replicated the poetry of the most renowned romantics:

“The shore has already set off... and here it runs away –  
And in a moment it’s gone in the gloomy distance...  
So, why does sadness overwhelms your chest with longing,  
And an unconscious tear fell from your eyes?” (I. Z-v', 1826: 60).

In D.I. Bagalei’s view, many teachers of Russian language and literature, including I.Ya. Zolotarev, were invited to Kharkov University just for their “literary experiments” (Bagalei, 1904: 899). It is quite possible that the director-to-be of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium wrote his poems not out of inward inspiration, but because of career motives, trying to even up the lack of research works. In any case, after he returned to the Don region, he made no further attempts to show up in the poetic field.

As we can see, the few snippets of information about I.Ya. Zolotarev's work at Kharkov University depicts him as a serious teacher who thoroughly knew the material and even memorized it, and at the same time aspired to follow the spirit of the age. His superiors obviously valued him; I.Ya. Zolotarev had to leave the University only because the command of the Don Host tried to conscript him to active military service as Zolotarev was a Cossack by birth, and that the trustee of the Kharkov Educational District requested to replace the military service for him with the work of managing the Don educational institutions (Bagalei, 1904: 601). However, the new director of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium could neither impress with a bright personality that set apart A.G. Oridovsky, nor at least display any fundamental works comparable to “History of the Don Host” by A.G. Popov. As a result, any significant information about I.Ya. Zolotarev was only provided by I.P. Artinskii even among the Don authors of the early 20th century, who wrote a lot about the Don education. Giving an extraordinarily high appraisal of Zolotarev’s activities as the head of the gymnasium, the local lore expert called “demand for discipline” towards himself and the teachers, happily combined with “kindness and care” about students, as one of the most crucial qualities of the director (Artinskii, 1907: 87).

As for I.Ya. Zolotarev's general pedagogical ideas, unfortunately, his detailed speeches have not survived to our days, except for those related to the Kharkov period. And only the reports sent by the Novocherkassk Gymnasium to the authorities and cited by I.P. Artinskii, give us an opportunity to identify the above-mentioned sympathy of its director for practice-oriented education. In this respect, the most characteristic example of the attitude can be rather a tough position taken by I.Ya. Zolotarev during the gymnasium reforms in the late 1840 and early 1850s. He successfully maneuvered not to introduce the Greek language into the curriculum of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, on which the authorities of the Kharkov educational district insisted (Artinskii, 1907: 124, 127), and to postpone the start of teaching sciences until a special, seriously abridged curriculum was prepared (Artinskii, 1907: 132). I.Ya. Zolotarev justified his position in the following way: “Keeping in mind that the prime mission of the Don Host youth studying in a military gymnasium is military service after graduation, and that in the army civil service is so inseparable from the military one that servicemen engaged in special types of the service have military ranks and can freely move from one type of service to another, it was imperative to acknowledge that all students of the Cossack estate studying in the gymnasium, except for those who stated their willingness to enter the university and a small number of non-resident students, should necessarily have a course both on military sciences and on jurisprudence” (Artinskii, 1907:

126). However, in order to deliver the subjects in the “proper scope”, it was necessary not only to refuse from introducing new subjects that eat up course hours, but also to cut some of the existing ones, “without weakening, however, the main and most relevant ones” (Artinskii, 1907: 126). Therefore, I. Ya. Zolotarev obviously gave preference to practical courses over subjects that did not bring clear benefits to the majority of gymnasium students in their future careers.

We think it is also indicative that it was under I.Ya. Zolotarev when the Novocherkassk Gymnasium launched its first special purpose department – the department of oriental languages. It was supposed to train translators for the Separate Caucasian Corps, and the initiative was handed over from above as the corresponding order was issued by Nicholas I himself in 1843 (RGIA. F. 1268. Op. 1. D. 525. L. 10). However, the Don authorities, represented by Ataman M.G. Vlasov, offered their full support to the undertaking (RGIA. F. 1268. Op. 1. D. 525. L. 110b.), and, according to I.P. Artinskii, I.Ya. Zolotarev played a major role in facilitating the initiative (Artinskii, 1907: 134).

Finally, in the years when I.Ya. Zolotarev ran the gymnasium, the speeches delivered by teachers during official events, contained not a single argument about the advantage of enlightenment and about God, empty rhetorical flourish or generality. On the contrary, the speeches step by step transformed into real scientific and scholarly reports, and some of them have remained meaningful until now and serve as independent research objects for historians. For example, a speech by a history teacher, A.A. Leonov, “On textbooks to study the history of the Don Host”, which was the first attempt to provide a historiographic review of the works on the history of the Don Cossacks, became a subject for a full-fledged research paper by A.A. Volvenko (Volvenko, 2019). A speech “On languages and dialects used in the Caucasus” made by T.N. Makarov who taught Tatar attracts certain attention among today’s Dagestani historians and journalists (Mutsalkhanov, 2003). By the way, the changing topics and content of public speeches prepared by gymnasium teachers contributed to the growing interest among the public. For example, in October 1849, a set of lectures on agriculture was personally attended by Don Ataman M.G. Khomutov and many Don nobles (the set was not part of some official events or celebrations and attendance was voluntary) (Artinskii, 1907: 129).

Summarizing the above, I.Ya. Zolotarev’s general pedagogical ideas corresponded to the views about practice-oriented education, which were conveyed by Don pedagogues since the 1830s. At the same time, he was not by any means, like A.G. Oridovsky, a public leader of those who mediated innovative ideas as the theoretical justification of practice-oriented education on the Don was formulated not by him, but by G. Rylsky and T.I. Selivanov in their public speeches in 1835 and 1836. Generally speaking, the new educational concept never had such a charismatic propagandist as A.G. Oridovsky who advocated the concept of the predominantly religious and moral significance of education, and therefore many details and nuances of the new concept were never clarified. I.Ya. Zolotarev was not so much the successor of A.G. Oridovsky, as that of A.G. Popov – he was a remarkable teacher practitioner, who was committed to the organization of the learning process in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. The four most impactful measures in this area, implemented by I. Ya. Zolotarev, include the following:

1) Strict controls were introduced for the teachers to keep a range of records that correspond to modern class registers. A gymnasium inspector was instructed to “carefully monitor the following at all times: 1) that the overall monthly records for each past month are submitted in due time, i. e., not later than on the 6th or 7th day of the following month; 2) that in the overall records submitted by the inspector to the gymnasium council, the comments on the student attendance and marks, indicated by dates or scores, are completely aligned with the monthly records of the gymnasium teachers; 3) for the inspector to submit a special monthly report on the topics covered by the gymnasium teachers in the elementary and senior grades” (Artinskii, 1907: 88-89).

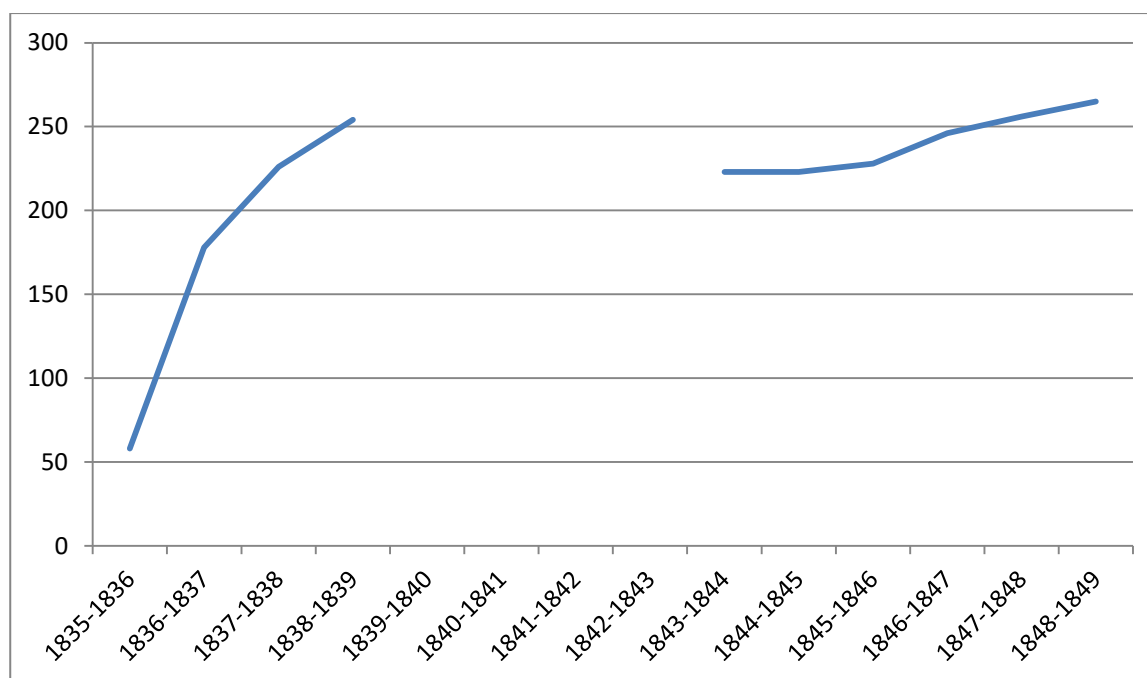
2) the pedagogical council of the gymnasium, which even had a Secretary, became fully functional (Artinskii, 1907: 96). Unfortunately, the minutes of the council meetings were lost by the beginning of the 20th century, but I.Ya. Zolotarev informed in one of his reports: “At the end of each month, the pedagogical council of all teachers in a body closely reviewed the successes in science, the diligence and behavior of the gymnasium students, and in line with this, immediate appropriate measures were taken” (Artinskii, 1907: 103).

3) I.Ya. Zolotarev managed to set up the process of skill enhancement for teachers, as it was understood at the time, more precisely, the process to “improve the activities of gymnasium mentors in the academic field”, not only by motivating some teachers to take up translations and

write essays, but also by introducing awards for the best works (Artinskii, 1907: 101). Although the number of such works was no more than 4 per year, the range of topics demonstrated the growing interest of Novocherkassk teachers in the subjects they taught. For example, in 1842, the translation “On the art of tragedy” from F. Schiller, made by another teacher of Russian philology A.V. Kotlov was recognized as the best work. Interestingly, Kotlov graduated from Kharkov University only in 1838 (Artinskii, 1907: 101-102, 320). In 1843, the best work announced was “The presentation of the analytical theory of motion from the rotation of the Earth in space and the precession of equinoxes” by F.I. Anisimov, who graduated from Kharkov University and was appointed a mathematics teacher in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1840 (Artinskii, 1907: 102, 327). The university graduation years of the winning teachers once again confirm our assumption that the new pedagogical ideas about practice-oriented education and the need for teachers to have the in-depth knowledge of their subjects were mostly supported by young teachers.

4) Finally, it was under I.Ya. Zolotarev that the Novocherkassk Gymnasium began to prepare curricula in active collaboration with the Kharkov educational district. I.P. Artinskii, with a reference to the gymnasium archives, dated the first known case of such relations to October 27, 1844, when the authorities turned their attention to the fact that “the grammar of the Latin language goes ahead of the grammar of the Russian language” in gymnasiums (Artinskii, 1907: 108). Appropriate corrective changes were made, and, in accordance with the new curricula, “Russian grammar preceded the foreign one, since the initial study of the former greatly simplified the study of the latter” (Artinskii, 1907: 108). In 1846, the Kharkov district adopted uniform programs for most subjects taught in gymnasiums, and it was the first time when this kind of order was actually put into action in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium (Artinskii, 1907: 110). However, the programs were extremely approximate and only in general terms determined what should be studied in which grade. For example, here is how the history program looked like: “3d grade – a short overview of world history; 4th grade – ancient history; 5th grade – medieval history; 6th grade – new history; 7th grade – Russian history” (Kholodnyi, 1886: 149). Moreover, even such a crude program was not developed for physics (Kholodnyi, 1886: 148-149).

All the measures were all the more important because the changes that began taking shape in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium after 1835 greatly boosted the number of students. To put that into perspective, we would like to provide the data of interest to us again in the form of a graph (the years, for which information has been lost, are omitted).



**Fig. 2.** Trends in the number of students in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. 1836-1849.  
Source: Artinskii, 1907: 85-120

Number of pupils in the first grade reached 100 people in late 1830, which choked off any normal teaching process, and beginning in 1840 the two initial grades of the gymnasium were split into parallel streams (Artinskii, 1907: 97). This way, the number of groups increased from 4 to 9, and this completely impaired the old methods of educational process monitoring, developed by A.G. Popov, which implied the director's personal presence at lessons. The growing number of students left the Novocherkassk Gymnasium without options – it had to embrace the forms of methodological support of the educational process that had evolved by that time in other gymnasiums of the Kharkov educational district, despite the difficulties that the change inevitably entailed. However, the process was far from smooth. Perhaps I.Ya. Zolotarev's "demand for discipline" proved not to be that beneficial for the development of pedagogy on the Don, and even I.P. Artinskii admitted that in the 1840s, the teaching process in the gymnasium was not "in the least encouraging", and the files of the gymnasium archives for the period "testify more to hollow clerical work than to vigorous pedagogical activities" (Artinskii, 1907: 114). And yet, even these excesses were more useful than the complete chaos in the educational process that had been predominant, with rare exceptions, in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium since its foundation until the appointment of I.Ya. Zolotarev as its director.

We can state that, although historiography rightly associates the establishment of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium with A.G. Popov, it was I. Ya. Zolotarev who managed to transform this gymnasium into an educational institution that might not be first-rate by the standards of the Russian Empire, but corresponded to the requirements of the 19th century. Teachers were at last made fully accountable for teaching specific disciplines according to the approved programs, and the programs were devised based on the needs of the Don and the Caucasus. The normal progression of the educational process was ensured not only by the director, but also by the pedagogical council that reviewed monthly report cards. But I.Ya. Zolotarev's main achievement was, perhaps, his success in organizing research and social activity of at least some of the teachers. We wrote at the beginning of our first paper that many Don scholars, writers and public figures of the 19th century taught at the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. The tradition was started by A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky, but they already were prominent personalities by the time they joined the gymnasium (as was, by the way, I.Ya. Zolotarev himself). However, later, from 1820 to 1830, no people that had any significant role in the history of the Don Cossacks, except for I.Ya. Zolotarev, remained in the gymnasium. But in 1840, the situation improved when some teachers, who started as young specialists unknown to anyone, fulfilled themselves and who forever went down into history, often through the most unexpected accomplishments.

In this regard, a particularly indicative figure is the mathematics teacher already mentioned above, F.I. Anisimov, the author of "The presentation of the analytical theory of motion from the rotation of the Earth in space and the precession of equinoxes". The point is that this is the F.I. Anisimov, who wrote the song "Vskolykhnulsya, vzvolnovalsya pravoslavnyy Tikhiy Don" (It has shaken, has stirred the Orthodox Quiet Don), which has been the anthem of the Rostov Region since that time (Babaitsev, 2012: 131). The very fact that a Novocherkassk teacher wrote the anthem of all Don Cossacks makes him a significant historical figure. In addition, considering that he was one of the first Don Cossacks who studied mathematics as a science, the important role of F.I. Anisimov grows even further. Alas, we know very little about him as we do about many other teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium of the first half of the 19th century. Perhaps, the only description of his personality given by the trustee of the Kharkov educational district is cited by I.P. Artinskii: "Demonstrates particular talents and love for mathematical sciences where he has already acquired very great knowledge and shows a considerable promise that over time he will become a useful scientist in this area" (Artinskii, 1907: 98).

We cannot omit to mention T.N. Makarov here, an iconic figure for the Kumyk people, who compiled the "first grammar of the Kumyk language" (Abdullabekova, 2018: 24). The appointment of the man to the Novocherkassk Gymnasium illustrates what care was taken to pick teachers for the department of oriental languages. His candidacy was discussed in St. Petersburg, where the teacher of the Tatar language finally was characterized as follows: "He is a graduate of the Astrakhan Gymnasium, and, being a child of a soldier, joined the St. Petersburg Battalion of Army Cantonists in 1842 as a private; as for his behavior and knowledge of sciences, his closest superiors give him excellent recommendations; in addition to teaching Russian in the clerks' class, Makarov sings in a choir and is preparing to become a teacher of history and geography for the battalion's



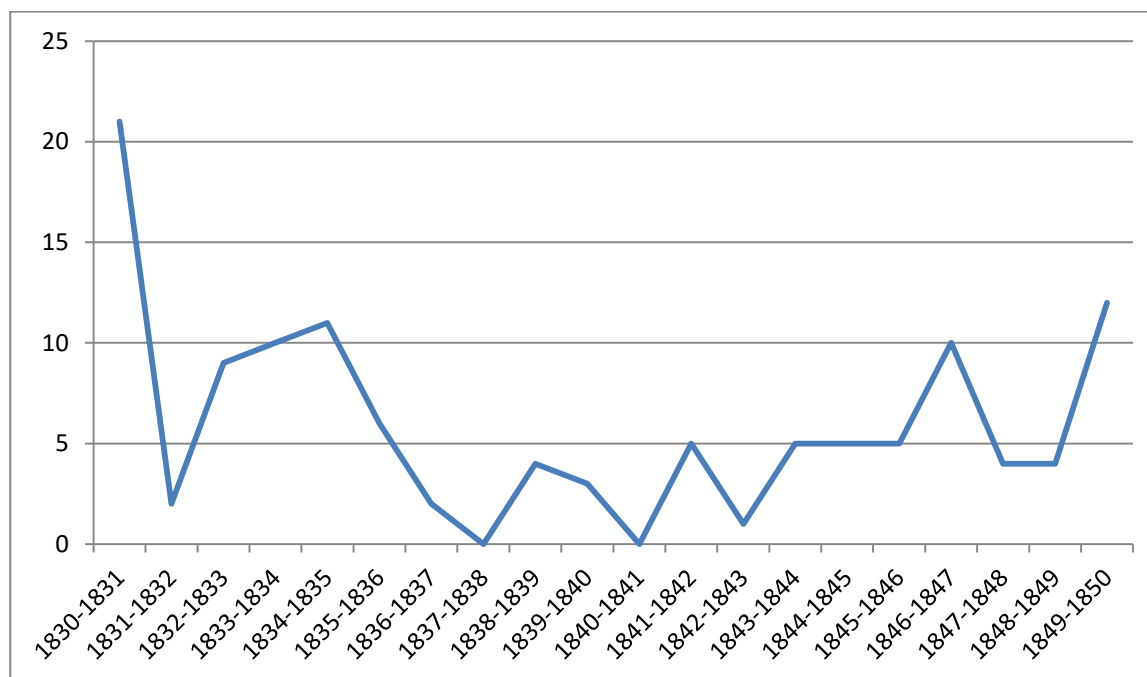
artillery classes” (RGIA. F. 1268. Op. 1. D. 525. Л. 120b.). While the process of organizing the department of oriental languages in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium proceeded with some delays and protraction, T.N. Makarov spent several years in the Caucasus “to familiarize himself with the position of a translator and interpreter” (Artinskii, 1907: 135). It was at this time that T.N. Makarov completed and published his “Tatar grammar of the Caucasian dialect”, “the first grammar of the Kumyk language”. With the work, he, apparently, pursued pedagogical goals by compiling a textbook for his future lessons. At least he explained it like this in the preface to his book: “I tried to compile some kind of guidebook to study the vernacular” (Abdullabekova, 2018: 26).

In fact, it was the development of the oriental languages department in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium that first inspired a number of gymnasium teachers to create proper textbooks. In addition to T.N. Makarov, textbooks on Caucasian languages were written by M. Khandiev (Avar) (Abdulaeva, 2009: 8-9) and A. Vizirov (Azerbaijani) (Vizirov, 1861). Interestingly, there were two men with the name M. Khandiev in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, who compiled textbooks on the Avar language. They were Magomet Khandiev from the village of Kafir and Magoma Khandiev from the village of Tida, who are confused on some popular Internet resources (Artinskii, 1907: 349-350). It was the book by A. Vizirov that became the first textbook that was written by a practicing teacher of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium and reached the stage of actual publication. However, Novocherkassk teachers appeared to have even more ambitious and long-term plans. In any case, as early as in 1851, T.N. Makarov, bolstered by I. Ya. Zolotarev, put forward a proposal to the authorities to print a textbook on the language of Caucasian Tatars, but in the end the book was returned for revision (GARO. F. 358. Op. 1. D. 157. L. 2-31).

We can conclude that when I.Ya. Zolotarev managed the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, the teaching staff qualification also improved considerably. Random people, even with excellent, metropolitan or foreign education, but without passion for their subject, were replaced by professional teachers, mostly graduates of Kharkov University. Some of them even carried out research projects, however primitive and amateurish forms they had, and we can point out that there were authors of first grammars for several Caucasian ethnic groups among the staff of the oriental languages department. Unfortunately, as we have already noted above, almost no accounts and descriptions of teachers exist today made by those who studied in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1830-1850. As for the gymnasium archive, already in the early 19th century, the materials there contained too little information to clearly identify the formats of the classes conducted by the teachers.

Despite the above, we can confidently assert that the actual teaching methodology remained rather weak and ineffective in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium even under I.Ya. Zolotarev. A narration reached out time retelling the reasoning of one of the teachers in this period, A.A. Leonov (he taught Russian philology and history), on how to organize lessons on the Russian language, and the narration is very eloquent: “Leonov failed to specify exactly which excerpts and articles, and in what consecutive order he suggests to be read in the classroom, while a strict selection of articles is prerequisite for the proper development of students. In his studies of the Russian grammar, Leonov focused on the formal side of the subject: he, as he put it, did not care “about the content” of the article he had read, as long as the article was correct “in expression”, since it was only needed on his lessons to “infer grammar rules based on it” (Artinskii, 1907: 193). Moreover, at one of the pedagogical council’s meetings in 1860, A.A. Leonov debated with the majority of teachers, arguing that already primary school pupils should study linguistic theory, despite the fact that the children in these grades were too young to comprehend the subject, and experience actually showed that the method had little practical value (Artinskii, 1907: 194). We should note that A.A. Leonov was one of the teachers who were the honor of the gymnasium, like A.G. Oridovsky and I. Ya. Zolotarev, he was one of the first Don poets, and his first collection of poem received positive reviews of V.G. Belinskii himself (Belinskii, 1953: 231-234), and at a mature age, he published a series of articles on local history and lore, becoming one of the major Don historians of his time (Volvenko, 2015: 196-197). It seems that other teachers did even worse. At least as early as in the 1860s, the meetings of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium’s pedagogical council raised the issue of formal and inconsistent teaching of basic subjects (Artinskii, 1907: 191-194). The fact that I.P. Artinskii, while doing his research in the gymnasium archive, could not find any information about methodological, rather than organizational or disciplinary meetings of the pedagogical council until the 1860s, also indirectly indicates that during I.Ya. Zolotarev’s

directorship, pedagogical inefficiency of lessons was of little concern to teachers. And the situation combined with a growing formality of requirements for students, led to a paradoxical result – after the 1835-1836 academic year, while the number of students in the gymnasium dramatically increased, the number of graduates who finished the academic course dropped. We would like to provide the data of interest to us again using a graph. It is appropriate to remind here that pre-revolutionary gymnasiums conducted promotion exams to transfer students to upper grades, and final examinations were extremely difficult, which explains why most students did not finish the full gymnasium curriculum. We will return to this point later when we discuss the proportion of graduates of the military and legal classes.



**Fig. 3.** Trends in number of Novocherkassk Gymnasium graduates who received a certificate of successful completion of the full course. 1830-1850.

Source: [Artinskii, 1907: 423-424](#)

So, it turns out that the number of students grew 2 or 3 times, while the number of graduates fell 2 or 3 times in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in the 1830-1840s. I.Ya. Zolotarev also appeared to understand the problem of inefficient teaching practices that were used because he wrote, for example, about the lessons in modern languages: “With all the diligence of instructors, teaching French and German was unsatisfactory and even poor not only in the lower grades, but even in the upper grades of the gymnasium” ([Artinskii, 1907: 115](#)). However, the director apparently did not know how to substantially remedy the situation.

In addition, as time passed, it became increasingly clear, that the main pedagogical goal, which had been announced by the authorities of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium since 1830, remained out of the institution's reach. Despite all bold statements by T.I. Selivanov and I.Ya. Zolotarev, “a better upbringing and education for their military and civilian journey” and the preparation of gymnasium students for their work in the Don Host went amiss. Perhaps the most fitting remark on the point was made by N.I. Krasnov, another outstanding Don Cossack who was a teacher at the gymnasium and the author of the first published historical and statistical description of the Land of the Don Host. It might seem that with him the gymnasium received a superior teacher of military sciences – by the time of his appointment, he graduated from the Academy of the General Staff and distinguished himself in the Crimean War ([Korolev, 1991: 234-235](#)). However, in practice, N.I. Krasnov's lessons were attended by very few gymnasium students, despite the fact that I.Ya. Zolotarev, as we could see above, expressed a desire “that all students of the Cossack estate studying in the gymnasium, <...> should necessarily have a course both on

military sciences and on jurisprudence”/N.I. Krasnov gave the following explanation to the situation: “Students, who were particularly diligent and enthusiastic in attending military sciences and jurisprudence, find themselves getting behind on other subjects, as a result there are no more than one graduate in two or even three years who exercises their right to join the military service with a rank; the rest begin as Cossacks and sergeants and are promoted to an officer’s rank after twelve years of service. This inequality in obtaining benefits and difficulties with entering the university dampen the aspiration to learn more about the military science, and the number of attendees at the lectures has been decreasing from year to year” (Krasnov, 1863: 399). In summary, with most subjects being taught in a weak and formal manner in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, those of its students, who were willing to receive a practice-oriented education, found themselves in the worst position – they studied military sciences and jurisprudence in addition to general subjects, and often flunked exams in the latter. In contrast to the high-flown speeches of the gymnasium authorities, the gymnasium’s actual performance in training officers and officials can hardly be called anything other than a failure – for example, in 1849-1858, only 27 students attended a jurisprudence course, 8 of them successfully completed the gymnasium curriculum and received certificates, and only 2 chose to continue their career in the army (Artinskii, 1907: 172). A paradoxical situation arose as the Novocherkassk Gymnasium under I.Ya. Zolotarev became a true educational, cultural and scientific center for the Land of the Don Host, it was unable to fulfil its primary officially declared mission – to deliver quality personnel training for this army.

And it remains for us to state that a period of booming progress at the end of 1830–1840 was followed by a new serious crisis for the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, and it is remarkable that both the progress and the crisis were the result of changes in the pedagogical views of the gymnasium teaching staff. By rejecting the idea of the beneficial nature of any education and the glorification of abstract “sciences” in favor of in-depth study of specific, practice-oriented disciplines using common methods for the Kharkov educational district, the institution managed to improve the qualification of the pedagogical personnel, attract a lot more students and, eventually, in the fourth decade of its existence, to set up a normal educational process. However, when all this was achieved, it turned out that the right process took something more than appointing professional specialists in their relative fields as teachers and outlining to them what they should teach gymnasium students. It was also necessary to somehow ensure the communication of knowledge from a teacher to students and identify productive formats of course programs and individual lessons. But it appears that I.Ya. Zolotarev and the teachers invited by him in 1830-1840 did not understand this, although they had a certain feeling of dissatisfaction over the results of their work. We showed that course programs were periodically revised, the gymnasium’s management made efforts to retain practice-oriented courses in their full scope, but those measures only yielded insignificant real-life results, and, according to I.P. Artinskii, “hollow clerical work” prevailed over “vigorous pedagogical activities”. After all, by 1850, the Novocherkassk Gymnasium lapsed in the same situation in which it existed in 1810 – the pedagogical views of most teachers were a barrier to its evolution, and further development required another change of the generation of teachers.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The first fundamental shift in the pedagogical views of the teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium took place in the 1830s. It is hard to pinpoint its reasons because too little information is available now on the subject. We can suggest that the agents of change were relatively young teachers, mostly graduates of Kharkov University, who had knowledge of modern trends in education and understood that the enlightenment concept of the benefits of any “sciences”, brought to the Don as early as by A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky, was badly behind the times. The pivotal point was most clearly illustrated by the public speeches of the gymnasium teachers. Until 1835, the speeches were devoted to very abstract topics, and, regardless of the details, their dominant theme was the praise of education as a road to man's moral and religious self-improvement. After G. Rytsky’s speech on the “key applications” of pure mathematics in contemporary society, delivered in 1835, we could see a dramatic U-turn in the situation when gymnasium teachers began to make presentations on research and practical topics related to their subjects, the rhetorical flourish was replaced with specific information, facts and advice to the audience, and some of the speeches (above of all on the history of Don Cossacks and on Caucasian languages) are of certain interest even today.

At the core of innovative pedagogical views conveyed by Novocherkassk teachers was the idea that gymnasium students needed a practice-oriented education. The teachers regarded the Novocherkassk Gymnasium as an educational institution specifically tailored to the needs of the Don Host, as a truly military school rather than an ordinary gymnasium. With this thought in mind, the gymnasium management introduced special courses in military sciences and jurisprudence for students who did not plan to enter the university. The gymnasium even went as far as opening a department of oriental languages, the first highly specialized educational institution on the Don. Perhaps the teachers also tried to link basic subjects with real-life needs. At least the same G. Rytsky emphasized the importance of pure mathematics for land surveyors and traders. However, the new generation of teachers in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium had no major theoretician pedagogue comparable to A.G. Oridovsky, and this can also be considered indicative of the changes that took place. For this reason, the theoretical pedagogical views of the teachers who worked in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium in 1830–1850, were never formulated with detailed precision.

The Novocherkassk teachers were now inspired not by a theoretician, but by a practitioner, the new director of the gymnasium, I.Ya. Zolotarev, the first Don Cossack who taught at a higher educational institution. It was I.Ya. Zolotarev who finally succeeded in organizing a normal educational process in the Novocherkassk Gymnasium. Indeed, subjects were now taught according to curricula unified for the Kharkov educational district; a version of records was introduced similar to modern class registers; finally, the pedagogical council of the gymnasium became a genuinely operative body. Of course, I. Ya. Zolotarev was not an innovator if considered on a national scale, and gymnasiums in large cities put all these measures into practice long ago. However, such a sharp focus on the all-Russian educational practices became a major innovation for the Land of the Don Host of the mid-19th century, which gave the local gymnasium a considerable momentum for development after a period of inertia that reigned since the death of A.G. Oridovsky. In addition, I. Ya. Zolotarev managed to find a number of prominent figures to teach at the gymnasium, such as F.I. Anisimov, the author of the anthem of the Don Cossacks, A.A. Leonov, one of the major Don amateur historians of the mid-19th century, T.N. Makarov and M. Khandiev, authors of the grammar basics textbooks on the Caucasian languages. Moreover, the merit of the achievements made by the people can be largely attributed to I.Ya. Zolotarev – through his efforts teachers' research and social work received encouragement, including financial rewards, from the gymnasium management. Therefore, while earlier any extracurricular achievements of Novocherkassk teachers were due to chance (in fact, only A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky had such achievements, and the gymnasium did not play any role in them), from 1840 accomplishments became a norm. The Novocherkassk Gymnasium restored its status as the leading cultural and scientific center of the Don Host to preserve it until the end of the century.

However, the weakness in the pedagogical views of I.Ya. Zolotarev and his subordinates was, oddly enough, lack of attention to the actual instructional side of teaching. Although any random people already left the teaching staff of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium, mere willingness to give knowledge to the younger generation was not sufficient. The Don teachers did not yet develop truly efficient practices of working with students. The course programs were very general and gave the teachers a free hand in selecting instruction formats; on the other hand, most teachers adopted a formal approach to the educational process organization and did not analyze the efficiency of their activities. The most striking example of the attitude are the methods used by an experienced and respected teacher, A.A. Leonov, who tried for many years to explain the linguistic theory to children in the lower grades, not taking into account that the majority of pupils were simply too young to understand it. The pedagogical council seemed not to discuss at all teaching methodology at its meetings in 1830–1850.

By the 1850s, it became clear that the teachers of the Novocherkassk Gymnasium faced a new contradiction between theory and practice, and addressing the issue was crucial for any further progress. Several decades earlier, the incompetence of the majority of gymnasium teachers stood in stark contrast to their ideas about the absolute benefits of any education. Now the prevailing ideas of the much-needed practice-oriented education provided an equally stark contrast to the fact that most students, who chose practical courses in military sciences and jurisprudence, could not even complete the gymnasium curriculum because of poor marks in basic subjects. Alas, I. Ya. Zolotarev and his supporters, it seems, did not even think to connect this fact with the problems in teaching



methods used for these subjects. Their pedagogical ideas, which created a positive impact on the development of Don education, exhausted their potential, just as earlier did the ideas of A.G. Popov and A.G. Oridovsky.

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