

PEHPP 2019**Pedagogical Education: History, Present Time, Perspectives****DISCUSSIONS ON EDUCATION IN THE ANT REVOLUTIONARY
RUSSIAN DUMA**

B. N. Kovalev (a), E. I. Kokkonen (b)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Saint-Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint-Petersburg, Russia,
bnkov@mail.ru

(b) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russia, keli77@mail.ru

Abstract

In Russia, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were several types of schools: parish, zemstvo and ministerial ones. Each type of educational institution had its own programs as well as goals that were set for teachers. In the State Duma of the Russian Empire, deputies of both right and left factions debated about education. But representatives of the liberal centre– the Cadets and the Octobrists–more often spoke on this question. The leader of the Cadet Party, Pavel Milyukov, was one of the most prominent speakers in the Duma. In discussions about the development of schools and teacher training in Russia, he regularly criticized the old educational system. In 1906, the All-Russian Education League was created to facilitate the establishment of educational institutions on a basis consistent with the fully developed democratic system of society. The main goal was the foundation of scientific and educational institutions. The activities of this organization were fiercely criticized by the right-wing deputies. Though educational issues were actively discussed in the Third Duma, the law on compulsory primary education was not adopted in the Russian Empire. The reason was that Russian liberals demanded that it be introduced in various languages, and right-wing deputies – only in Russian. Many deputies of the State Duma understood the importance of teacher training. However, those issues were relegated to the background as they frequently caused conflicts between right- and left-wing deputies.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: State Duma, Russian Empire, teacher training, 20th century.

1. Introduction

One of the most important factors ensuring successful development for citizens of any state is the social elevator. But it is practically impossible without an educational system accessible to most people. In the Russian Empire, the law on compulsory primary education was not adopted. The reason was that the Duma liberals demanded that it be introduced in various languages, and right-wing deputies – only in Russian. In the Duma, representatives of various factions fiercely debated about the system of teacher training in Russia.

Most actively educational issues were discussed in the Third Duma (1907-1912). This can be explained by the fact that it was a relatively peaceful time and there were no internal tensions. The First Russian Revolution was already over, and before the start of World War I there were still two years left.

Over the past hundred years, scientific books and articles that have come out are united by a common critical approach to the realities of the Russian educational system of that time. Among them are the research by Dneprov and Raskin (2015), Deich (2012), Kapterev (1915), Konstantinov and Struminsky (1949), Medynskiy (1916), Cherkasov (2011), and others. Issues of public education discussed in the State Duma were covered by Pavlov (1908), Ropp (1912) and Simonov (1912).

2. Problem Statement

The revolutionary upheavals of the beginning of the 20th century radically changed the lives of millions of people, not only in Russia, but also in other countries of the world. One of the reasons for the Great Revolution was the class structure of Russian society. The social elevator did not work because of the almost total illiteracy of lower classes. The development of the educational system became very urgent in the realities of that time.

The relevance of this study is due to the importance of comprehensive considering the solution to the problems of teacher training in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century through the activities of its legislative body – the State Duma.

3. Research Questions

The question about the goals and objectives of teacher training still remains relevant for modern Russia. In the State Duma, at the beginning of the 20th century, deputies tried to determine the role of teachers and that of students, and the future of school; tackle main educational issues and establish new goals for schools.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to consider the discussions of deputies of the State Duma and officials of the Ministry of Education who were invited to the Duma meetings to define the role and importance of teacher training for Russian society on the eve of the October Revolution.

5. Research Methods

This study is based on the comprehensive interdisciplinary approach; therefore, its methodological basis is the fundamental research principle of the humanities: scientific objectivity when analyzing sources and interpreting empirical data. For this purpose, such particular methods as generalization, classification, and comparative analysis were used. Comparative-historical, structural-functional and formal-logical methods made it possible to systematize factual information and to identify crucial issues

6. Findings

The Third Duma deputies of both right and left factions debated about the educational system in general and teacher training in particular. But most often representatives of the liberal centre– the Cadets and the Octobrists– spoke on these questions. So, Mikhail Kapustin, a professor at the University of Kazan and that of Warsaw, are presentative of the Kazan province in the Duma, raised the question of the need to make education accessible to all social groups in Russia. “We have a vast territory, inexhaustible natural wealth, we know that our descendants can live comfortably if they are armed with the wealth and light of knowledge. If we make every effort to carefully teach the younger generation our country will not go bankrupt in the future, but will prosper, and our descendants will say that we were entitled to spend large sums on public education” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2332).

Kapustin stood for the idea that a new type of teacher should work at a new 20th-century school. “It is not enough to increase the number of schools. It is very important that they be well-organized and guarantee good results of education and upbringing. This would contribute to graduates’ capability of hard work and independent thinking based on serious knowledge” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2332).

The liberal intelligentsia was not satisfied with the Russian educational system. “Schools are poor-performing; it is not clear how to organize the educational system, what should be put in the forefront and how to handle the matter. Teachers have little credibility as thought leaders among students. Our school is not yet an institution that has its true educational influence. And it should give each student a moral and mental grounding” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2332).

The Octobrists, who advocated school reform, opposed revolutionary upheavals. In their opinion, both student education and teacher training were important state tasks. Vasily von Anrep, a physiologist, professor of medicine, a member of the Central Committee of the Octobrist Party, regularly spoke on educational issues. It was Anrep, together with Guchkov, who obtained the permission of the chairman of the Council of Ministers of Russia Stolypin for girls-students to complete their studies. They had to fight for women’s right to study because ministerial officials believed that women had been illegally enrolled in the higher education institution and therefore should be immediately excluded.

Von Anrep, in his report to the deputies of the Duma, outlined the basic requirements the state should impose on schools and teachers: understanding the importance of nation-building, the national idea and a sense of patriotism. In his opinion, “freedom, broad rights without a sense of patriotism, without a national idea will give neither strength nor stability to the state. In all civilized countries, where national identity is clearly expressed, you will see that the transmitter of these ideas is school; a well-performing educational

system, art and literature direct the development of any country” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2345).

In Russia, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were several types of schools: parish, zemstvo and ministerial ones. Each type of educational institution had its own programs as well as goals that were set for teachers. Vasily von Anrep put the following question to the Duma. “Does our school meet the requirements of the moral standards? If a young man leaves school with joyful realization – yes, I’m a son of great Russia, I will serve her with my life – then the school fulfilled its great task. But at the same time, one should not forget that school is preparing the youth for an independent life” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2345).

According to von Anrep, “we do not need the expansion of new programs, the introduction of fundamentally new subjects, we need the development of students’ initiative and independence; we need to adopt a new approach to physical education in school” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2345).

The leader of the Cadet Party, Pavel Milyukov, was known as one of the most prominent speakers in the Duma. His speeches attracted special attention of both journalists and the public, as well as the authorities. When discussing the development of schools and issues of teacher training in Russia, he fiercely criticized the old educational system. “Under our old order, we could not tolerate independent thinking or free will. And the task of our school was to kill this will and thought and develop the student as an obedient tool in the hands of the state. The headmaster was considered as a strict and responsible manager. The teacher was an ordinary official” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2349).

Pavel Milyukov was one of the famous Russian historians of that time, well-known for his work *Essays on the History of Russian Culture*. In his Duma speeches, he considered various aspects of the history of Russian pedagogy. What did he not like in the educational system? “The student was looked on as a kind of “enemy from within”, a candidate for future crimes that had to be prevented. And there was only a formal relationship between the student and teacher: scores and exams were means of control by the almighty administration” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2349).

Milyukov considered that the old educational system formed a downtrodden humiliated teacher rejected by society, stealthily avenging children whom he should teach. And society had a sense of disgust, a feeling of hatred for old school. But the need for reforming the educational system was also recognized by the authorities, including the Ministry of Education. In 1899, The circular of the Minister of Education N.P. Bogolepov was issued. It recognized that school was “devoid of vital and national character”, full of “dry formalism”, characterized by “alienation from the family and bureaucracy”; mutual relations of teachers and students were considered “false” as “personal qualities of students were not taken into account” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Duma, 1909, p. 2360).

In 1909, the Honoured Professor of Moscow University, philologist Alexander Schwartz was the Minister of Education. His representative in the State Duma was Lev Georgievsky who did not agree with Milyukov. He quoted an excerpt from the circular of the Minister of Education of August 1, 1908. “For close acquaintance with students, and for monitoring their progress, headmasters should attend teachers’ classes more often. There they are obliged to discuss with teachers learning issues, the division of teaching material into separate parts during the academic year, the progress of students, the correct assessment of

their achievements, and the development of students' individual initiative" (Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2375). According to Schwartz, everything was done to change the relationship between teachers and students. The circular was supposed to help teachers carefully and sympathetically address students' needs, seriously and thoughtfully delve into their concerns, and to enhance their mental and physical development.

During the First Russian Revolution, in 1906, the Education League was created – the All-Russian public pedagogical organization. Its task was to “facilitate the establishment of educational institutions on a basis consistent with the fully developed democratic system of society” (Mikhailova, 2010, p. 444). The main goals of the League were creating an educational school network on the entire territory of Russia; developing training methodology and establishing scientific and educational institutions. The secretary of this organization in St. Petersburg was Pavel Milyukov.

The activities of the League were fiercely criticized by the right-wing deputies, particularly by Vladimir Purishkevich. He declared the following. “Anyone who graduates from a gymnasium enters a university. But only the aristocracy of the mind, young aristocrats of working capacity enter the Mining Institute, the Polytechnic Institute, the Technological Institute, or the Electrotechnical Institute. These institutes admit people who graduated from secondary school with awards, and passed the exams associated with great difficulties. Their students strive to get an education for applying it later in their life” (Kovalev, 2017, p. 10).

It was easy for Purishkevich to reason things out. In Russia, at the beginning of the 20th century, for most young people getting a complete secondary education, which gave a chance to enter a university, was a pipe dream. Regarding the development of teacher training in Russia, Vladimir Purishkevich did not agree with the proposals of the Education League that pedagogical institutions should not be private but public, so that the teacher could get access to all sources of knowledge.

This conservative-monarchist deputy believed that further education courses for teachers would make them anti-state nihilists. “In order to create such a semi-intelligent class, they [the Education League] require for these public teachers to increase their level of knowledge that is not obligatory for performing their duties; they require general education for other specific purposes” (Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2415).

At the same time, Purishkevich expressed quite sensible doubts about the qualities of teachers of these courses, the necessary funding for effective organization, and results that students achieve. “Our Education League proposes that such institutions be organized in all cities with at least 10,000 people, which means 153 educational organizations. It will cost a lot. And classes are organized in a chaotic way. Today they read in psychology, tomorrow – in physics, the day after tomorrow – in natural history. You can imagine what happens in the heads of unfortunate teachers who are attending courses to improve their knowledge” (Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2415).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the state was responsible for all teacher development courses. The funding was inadequate. The information given to teachers was not always relevant, interesting, and necessary for educators. Vladimir Purishkevich was extremely negative about the idea of engaging representatives of public organizations for this work. He perceived many teachers as revolutionary

agitators. For him, the Education League was an anti-monarchical organization trying to negatively influence ordinary teachers.

Vasily Sokolov, a deputy from the Kostroma province, opposed Vladimir Purishkevich. He was the chairman of the Kostroma district zemstvo council. Sokolov raised a set of very important issues. One of the most relevant was the financing of Russian education and its targeting. The deputy noted that “in 1909, the government allocated 22,000,000 roubles for education. We have given money, but have favourable conditions been created to take advantage of the expenses? I’ll say that these conditions are completely unfavourable” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2429).

Sokolov was a proponent of smaller-scale schools and was supportive of rural schools. The Kostroma deputy emphasized that for peasant children acquiring knowledge was a completely conscious process and for teachers working in a rural school was not a professional activity, but a kind of allegiance. “You ask a boy to solve an easy arithmetic problem and he solves it. He reads with passion, consciously retells, takes dictation, and does a narrative writing. Here are our honest servants of Russian education: a catechist and a rural teacher who teach children and achieve everything with their arduous work in school” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2429).

A teacher cannot be an official standing on the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder. Their role is much more serious. Russian Duma deputies thought it important to change the approach to teachers. “What is needed for the moral influence of school? Common people know the answer. For this, it is necessary that during the entire study time and after graduating students were close to teachers, so that the latter supervise them, provide them with books to keep up students’ interest. And the teacher is punished for visiting students or being visited by them” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2429).

Russian schools needed not only funding; many deputies understood this. A special attention should have been paid to the moral education of the younger generation. Andrey Vyazigin, a deputy from the Kharkov province, stressed that school should prepare, first of all, loyalists. Vyazigin, as a monarchist, considered that “school graduates who have only knowledge, without religious and moral education, with no sense of duty and discipline, with no respect for the monarch and elders, are not only useless, but even harmful, capable of developing self-will and conceit” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2591).

In the disputes between the right- and left-wing deputies, their main contradictions were revealed. None of them thought that schools needed financing. Deputies suggested paying special attention to the main issue – the educational outcome: who should leave school? A citizen or a loyalist?

At that time, Russia did not yet have the experience of the First Russian Revolution. But there was a certain anticipation of civil unrest. Therefore, Nicolas II called for educators: “After the sad experience of the past years, I expect from the educational administration and from professors to give young people genuine sympathy. They ought to remember that in all cases of doubt, struggle and preoccupation young people have the right to receive support from teachers” (Stenographicheskie otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2591).

At the beginning of the 20th century, one of serious educational issues was creating specialized educational institutions. Andrey Tkachev, a lawyer and a representative of the Pskov province in the Third Duma, identified the problem as follows. “The main reason for all the turmoil in the activities of the

Ministry of Education is very simple: we do not have any educational institution that would teach the teaching profession. It always seems like such a simple thing – to teach – you just need to enter a classroom to become a wonderful teacher” (Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2625).

In the new realities, according to Tkachev, pedagogical activity had turned the occupation into a science. However, the authorities did not want to notice this. “With the same confidence, they [Ministry officials] began to consider public education as something comprehensible and began to entrust it to the military, or to professors – to people who are themselves very knowledgeable, but who are complete ignoramuses in pedagogy. They mastered this complex science neither practically nor theoretically. Pedagogy has recently grown into a great science. This is a science that encompasses a whole range of sciences” (Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, 1909, p. 2625). The deputy thought it would be a time-consuming process to found pedagogical academies to prepare future teachers.

7. Conclusion

Today a state that does not want to prepare and educate the teacher sooner or later is doomed to decline. The Russian Empire could not survive the First World War. She ceased to exist after the start of the Great Revolution – in 1917. Many deputies of the State Duma understood the importance of teacher training. However, educational issues were often relegated to the background. The problems associated with education became politicized. They were the cause of conflicts between right- and left-wing deputies. It seemed to the authorities that there were more pressing problems. The State Duma – the main legislative body of the Russian Empire – did not develop a common approach to solving the problem of teacher training.

References

- Cherkasov, A. A. (2011). All-Russian Primary Education (1894-1917): Developmental Milestones. *Social Evolution & History*, 10(2), 138-149.
- Deich, B. A. (2012). Issues of out-of-school education in Russian scientific and pedagogical literature of the late 19th – early 20th centuries. *Educational Studies*, 2, 257-272. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1814-9545-2012-2-257-272> [in Russ.]
- Dneprov, E. D., & Raskin, D. I. (2015). Legislation in Education in Pre-Revolutionary Russia *Educational Studies*, 2, 241-278. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1814-9545-2015-2-244-278> [in Russ.]
- Kapterev, P. F. (1915). *History of Russian pedagogy*. Petrograd: Publishing house Zemlya. [in Russ.]
- Konstantinov, N. A., & Struminsky, V. Ya. (1949). *Essays on the history of primary education in Russia*. Moscow: Akademiya pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR. [in Russ.]
- Kovalev, B. N. (2017). *Vladimir Milyutin: A proponent of technical education in Russia. Member of the Fourth Duma*. Velikiy Novgorod: Novgorod State Museum Press. [in Russ.]
- Medynskiy, E. N. (1916). *Extracurricular education, its meaning, organization and technology*. Moscow: Publishing house Nauka. [in Russ.]
- Mikhailova, M. V. (2010). Education League. *Great Russian Encyclopedia*, 17, 444. Moscow: Bolshaya Rossiyskaya Entsiklopediya Press. [in Russ.]
- Pavlov, A. P. (1908). *Reform of secondary education*. Moscow: Publishing house V. Rikhter. [in Russ.]
- Ropp, A. N. (1912). *What has the Third State Duma done for public education?* Saint-Petersburg: Printing house A. Suvorin.
- Simonov, M. I. (1912). *Questions of public education in the Third State Duma, 1910–1911*. Ostrogozhsk: Printing house A. Paul-Azarova. [in Russ.]
- Stenographicheskije otchioty Gosudarstvennoy Dumy [Duma verbatim records. Part III]. (1909). Saint-Petersburg: State printing house. [in Russ.]