Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute in the Second Half of the 19th–Early 20th Century

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Abstract. Reformation of female education in Russia in the mid-19th century led, among other things, to further evolution of closed class-selective women's institutes of the boarding school type that provided secondary, religious, and secular education of girls. Historical documents and archival sources are used in this article to describe the organization and content of learning in Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute, the largest institution of girls' secondary education in the vast Orenburg Governorate at the end of the 19th century. Institute education had a considerable social value for girls from civil and military middle-class families in the cities and remote suburbs of Orenburg Governorate, as it allowed them not only to acquire general knowledge but also to develop teaching skills that they could use to make a living. Evidence is provided that, given the local context, Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute matched most of the criteria of the institute education model typical of pre-revolutionary Russia, which transformed in response to society's demands concerning female education. Discontinuous interest, insufficient elaboration of the problem, and historical oblivion of valuable local history materials dictated the need to crane out a body of archival sources and reconstruct the process of creating a unique educational phenomenon, which Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute came to be.

Keywords: female education, Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, women's institutes in provinces of the Russian Empire, socialization of female students, Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute.

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The first half of the 19th century was marked by a key process in the life of Russian society—formation of a single educational space embracing the European and Asian parts of the vast empire. Female secondary education, represented by institutes for noble maidens, also underwent a major change. First, institutes of that type expanded dramatically in number and geography: "gradually, under imperial patron-

Translated from Russian by I. Zhuchkova.

age, arose new cradles of maidens' education in Russia, even in its most remote corners."[1] Under the auspices of Empress Maria Feodorovna, institutes for noble maidens were springing up abundantly across the empire in the late 18th–first half of the 19th century, depriving Petersburg and Moscow of their monopoly in female secondary education.

Second, the very concept of female education was radically revalued during the period specified. Catherine the Great and Empress Maria Feodorovna had different views of the purpose and ultimate goals of female education. Catherine the Great's perspective was national and large-scale; eager to make women educated and useful members of society, she tried to provide "not only upbringing but also education—general, not confined to any specific 'female' purposes." [Likhacheva 1899:131 (P. 1)] Meanwhile, the goals pursued by Maria Feodorovna were short-term, more narrow and utilitarian. Specifically, women's institutes were meant to raise "good wives, mothers and housewives", who had "no need for sciences or scholarly knowledge", so the "institutes turned into vocational institutions of female education." [Kapterev 1915:245–246] Education obtained by institute graduates was supposed to be regarded as perfectly complete. The idea of self-education and mental development of girls and women was persistently eradicated from the concept of education. As Elena Likhacheva points out, "this aspect was important for achieving the main goal of female education organization, but it was not given top priority by the early initiators of women's institutes. Empress Maria never expressed even a hint of such an attitude in her numerous letters and instructions to headmistresses. The thought <…> of beneficial effects of a knowledge-fed mind never came to her, and the direction that she gave to female education took firm roots across the institutes for a long time." [Likhacheva 1899:234 (P. 2)]

Third, the organization of institutes became unified; "while the governorate institutes were mainly organized by the example of Moscow and Petersburg, although having no unity in their standards either and going by individual rules of various recency, the establishment of numerous new Institutes unveiled the need for introducing a stable unified order across all institutions of female education."[2]

Fourth, women's institutes became not just the focus of governmental attention but part of national education policy, which sought to satisfy the demand for education not only among hereditary and personal nobility but also among the Third Estate (guild, citizens of honor and burghers), low-income families and children left without parental care for whatever reason.

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[1] Board of Trustees' Publishing House (1854) *Obozrenie uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii v 25-letie, s 1828 po 1853 g.* [Review of the Institutions of Empress Maria in 25 Years, Between 1828 and 1853], St. Petersburg: Board of Trustees' Publishing House, p. 234.

[2] Ibid.: 24–25.

Fifth, by the 1870s, women's institutes had gradually thrown off, as a result of reforms, the shackles of severe social class and privacy requirements inhibiting their development. The field became friendlier to teaching innovation; more focus came to be applied to the educational process; and an acute need for professional development of students was discovered. A number of new initiatives were pioneered by provincial institutes, such as the integration of advanced teaching ideas, active involvement of private charitable foundations, expansion of social composition of students, improvement of financial standing by increasing the number of visiting and self-funded students, etc.

Historiography of women's institute education of the first half of the 19th–early 20th century in Russia is represented by a number of sources. Below, the ones that served the basis for the subject of this study will be overviewed.

The first and foremost source to mention is Elena Likhacheva's four-volume oeuvre [1899] embracing the genesis and evolution of women's institute education in Russia, beginning from the 1760s and up until the cusp of the 20th century. Analyzing female education as a cultural phenomenon, Likhacheva traces changes in the public demand for women's education: "in the judgments of contemporaries to different eras of history of female education, the formula 'well-mannered' of Peter the Great's age—or 'nice, graceful and joyous', sometimes accompanied by 'educated', of Catherine the Great's times—came to include increasingly more often 'highly educated' at the end of the first third of our century." [Likhacheva 1899:301 (P. 2)]. Likhacheva's work is especially valuable for providing data on the organization of women's institutes in remote provinces of the Russian Empire, where demand for female education was rather high.

Information on the arrangement, management and regulation of various activities of women's institutes is contained in diverse normative factual documents: Collected Legislations of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Statute of Institutions of Women's Education, Review of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, and others. An essential database for source study is provided in the work of Ivan Seleznev published to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, which encompasses unique materials and authentic documents capturing the educational processes of all institutions of female education that were under imperial patronage in 1828–1878.[3]

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[3] Seleznev I. (ed) (1878) *Pyatidesyatiletie IV otdeleniya Sobstvennoy Yego Imperatorskogo Velichestva kantselyarii: [1828–1878]: khronika Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy Imperatritsy Marii, sostoyashchikh pod neposredstvennym Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv pokrovitel'stvom* [50th Anniversary of the Fourth Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery: [1828–1878]: A Timeline of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria under Immediate Patronage of Their Imperial Majesties], St. Petersburg: V. Demakov's Publishing House.

Some axiological aspects of female education in pre-revolutionary Russia attract the research interest of a number of modern authors. Eduard Dneprov and Raisa Usacheva analyze how the organization and content of female secondary education transformed in the context of national reforms, turning it into an independent "education industry", within the framework of which the model of institute education changed as well. With all the shortcomings, isolation from the general education system and criticism from the 19th-century elite, the authors point out, women's institutes played a groundbreaking role at some point of development: "For almost fifty years, the new century would preserve the model of closed women's institute designed by Ivan Betskoy and Catherine the Great as the only type of institution of female secondary education <…>—not only preserve but also spread it over many governorates of Russia, having made its essential amendments." [Dneprov, Usacheva 2009:35]

A unique retrospective analysis of different aspects of female education organization is provided in the cycle of works by Varvara Ponomareva and Lyubov Voroshilova [2017]. Unfortunately, the history of Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute still remains outside the focus of attention of the local research community, with the exception of some fragmentary publications.

This article aims at reconstructing the history of development of female secondary education in Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute in the second half of the 19th–early 20th century.

From Maidens' School to Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute

In the first third of the 19th century, Orenburg Governorate was a remote militarized cross-border outskirt of the Russian Empire, a territory of ethnic and religious heterogeneity partly inhabited by political exiles. Men's education had been institutionalized by the 1830s, while the issues of women's education remained unsolved, despite the large size of the governorate.

An especially meritorious contribution in the foundation and organization of the first women's (maidens') school in Orenburg Governorate was that of the military governor Paul Graaf van Suchtelen (governed in 1830–1833), who considered it timely to establish one and submitted a relevant claim to the emperor. Substantiating the need for creating such schools, Maria Feodorovna would say that "the sovereign himself takes care of the fate of soldiers' sons, but the destiny of daughters is yet unattended." [Likhacheva 1899:46 (P. 2)] Therefore, schools for daughters of Semyonovsky, Jaeger and Moscow Guard Regiment officers were opened in Peterburg in 1820, and schools for daughters of lower-rank Black Sea Fleet officers were founded in Sevastopol and Nikolayev in 1826. At the request of the Governor General of Orenburg, the project referred to as Resolution on a Special Department for Raising Female Children at Neplyuev Military School was approved and sanctioned by Emperor Nicholas I.

December 6, 1832 is the official date of establishment of the "department for raising maidens", which was named Orenburg Maidens' School and classified as Category 3 educational institution "for daughters of lower-rank officers and poor parents of all ranks."[4] At the opening ceremony, governor van Suchtelen underlined the significance of having a maidens' school in a remote province such as Orenburg Governorate: "Citizens of Orenburg, write down the present date and the present happening in the annals of your homeland <…> On this day, the foundation is laid for the education of your cherished children."[5]

At the early stage, the statute of the school was elaborated in accordance with the regulations of Petersburg schools for daughters of guard regiment officers and maidens' schools for daughters of lower-rank Black Sea Fleet officers "with modifications specific to the governorate."[6] According to the statute, Orenburg Maidens' School was established for children of all estates and "all free classes", "whose fathers served or currently serve as lower-rank officers of the Special Orenburg Corps." Additionally, it was "acceptable to admit children from unorthodox families at the request of their parents or in case of orphancy."[7] Development and management of the female education "department" was assigned to a committee consisting of the director of Neplyuev Military School, reputable ladies and spouses of generals doing military service in Orenburg.

The maidens' school enrolled 50 girls aged 7 to 12. Students would come to the school only to attend classes (boarding was not provided for). The term of education was not specified—girls would take exams every year and graduate upon completing all the courses. The list of enrollees attached to van Suchtelen's letter to St. Petersburg offers insight into the social composition of the first intake: "33 out of 50 vacancies were filled by maidens of 'military ranks', from retired colonel to orderly; the rest 17 came from families of "all free classes"—public servants, burghers, a merchant of the 3rd guild, a dyak, and an emancipated serf."[8]

Category 3 educational institutions were supposed to teach only "the subjects necessary for poor children, and all classes should have a paramount focus on handicraft as the main professional purpose of students in the future." [Likhacheva 1899:43 (P. 3)]. Girls were taught a basic set of disciplines, which included religious instruction, reading, writing, Arithmetic Basics: Textbooks and Abacus, manufacturing of clothes, gloves and shoes, embroidery, and other "useful handicrafts."

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[4] State Archive of Orenburg Oblast (hereinafter "SAOO"). Stock no 6, inv. no 5, doc. no 10601/10, p. 1.

[5] Vertousova E. (2006) Otvedi Bog bol'she vremeni... [May God Grant Us More Time...]. *Gostiny dvor*, no 20, p. 283.

[6] Russian State Historical Archive (hereinafter "RSHA"). Stock no 759, inv. no 4, doc. no 1615, p. 15.

[7] RSHA. Fund no 759, inv. no 8, doc. no 5, p. 196.

[8] RSHA. Fund no 759, inv. no 8, doc. no 35, pp. 9–10 rev.

The curriculum was getting more complicated throughout the 1840s as new disciplines were introduced. The library holdings were replenished with the magazines *Detsky Almanakh* (Children's Almanach), *Zvezdochka* (Little Star), books *A Journey Around the Globe*, *Collected Works for Children*, *Prokopiy Lyapunov*, textbooks and teaching guides[9].

In 1845, with the active participation of the Orenburg military governor Vladimir Obruchev (governed in 1842–1851), the maidens' school became class-selective. As the Governor General noted, "maidens of the lower class usually did not make use of the knowledge acquired and turned to menial labor or trade, whereas maidens of the middle class found the curriculum too elementary. Therefore, the number of those willing to send their daughters to the school decreased among the lower classes and increased among public servants because there were no other educational institutions for girls in the region."[10]

In 1847, at the request of Obruchev, the maidens' school was reorganized and received a "new structure", and "the living and learning standards were brought into compliance with the general rules of other institutions for noble maidens." [11] The educational institution for daughters of field and company officers of the troops in the Orenburg Defense Line and the Cossack troops, as well as civil officials doing military service in the region, priests and merchants of the 1st guild was intended to "consolidate and spread women's education in the region." [Likhacheva 1899:33 (P. 3)]

At the end of 1849, Olympias Jacquesmond became the headmistress of Orenburg Maidens' Institute. It follows from the memoirs of her son that the institute was in a deplorable state at that time: "The students, up to forty in number, were nearly all rude, ill-mannered Cossacks, pronouncing the unstressed 'o' as 'o' and often using obscene language in conversation. The institute's economy was based on a trifling practice of saving firewood and soap <…> Organization of educational affairs was also unsatisfactory. Teachers with no civilian rank <…> were heavy-drinking and illiterate people who missed a lot of classes during the school year."[12]

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[9] Printing and Lithography House of the Governorate Administration (1909) Sistematicheskaya opis' del arkhiva Orenburgskoy uchenoy arkhivnoy komissii. Trudy Orenburgskoy uchenoy arkhivnoy komissii [Systematic Inventory of the Archives of Orenburg Scientific Archive Commission. Proceedings of Orenburg Scientific Archive Commission], Iss. 20, Orenburg: Printing and Lithography House of the Governorate Administration, p. 28.

[10] SAOO. Fund no 6, inv. no 10, doc. no 362, p. 206.

[11] Board of Trustees' Publishing House (1854) *Obozrenie uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii v 25-letie, s 1828 po 1853 g.* [Review of the Institutions of Empress Maria in 25 Years, Between 1828 and 1853], St. Petersburg: Board of Trustees' Publishing House, pp. 63–64.

[12] Jacquemond P. (1905) Iz vospominaniy orenburgskogo starozhila [From the Memories of an Old Orenburg Resident]. *Istoricheskiy Vestnik / The Histor-*

The new headmistress was to change completely the educational and economic life of the institute. In 1850, a temporary preparatory class was established at the institute with 30 vacancies for young daughters of field and company officers of the Ural and Orenburg Cossack Hosts. Through the efforts of Jacquesmond, the institute improved its teaching, methodological, material and financial resources and kept increasing the number of students, most of whom belonged to nobility and, to a lesser extent, the merchant class. Geography of student enrollment expanded significantly, covering not only Orenburg Governorate but also Samara and Ufa Governorates, Turkestan, Turgay and Ural Oblasts.

At Jacquesmond's personal request to Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, Orenburg Maidens' Institute was renamed into Orenburg Nicholas I Institute of Maidens' Education and assigned Category 2 of institutions of female education by royal decree on October 13, 1855. The main goal of the reorganized women's institute was "to provide education to children of civil servants in remote steppe regions." [Likhacheva 1899:32–33 (P. 3)].

In 1880, the institute lost its status of a closed-type educational institution—in addition to 150 full boarders, it began to enroll day boarders and visiting students[13]. Furthermore, the three-course program with two-year courses in every subject was replaced with a seven-course program with one-year courses.

Since the 100th anniversary of Nicholas I in 1896, the institute has been known as Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute.

By the end of the 19th century, the institute had developed a solid infrastructure. Its premises and holdings were estimated at several million rubles and were of great value; its buildings and facilities had all necessary amenities, including electricity, running water, a bathing room, a laundry room, an ironing room, a dining room, an infirmary, classrooms equipped with visual aids, an extensive library, rent-free apartments for the headmistress and other staff, and a house church. The institute disposed of 10.8 acres of land in Troitsk Uyezd and 16 buildings.[14]

Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute: General and Educational Organization

The organization and specifics of the educational process at Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute are most fully reflected in its admission documents and materials, student progress reports, students' credentials and certificates of graduation, and minutes of meetings of the pedagogical council.

The following documents had to be submitted for admission: "1) copy of father's military service records (official list or certificate), if

ical Reporter, Vol. 100, April–June, p. 76.

13 SAOO. Fund no 11, inv. no 9, doc. no 21.

14 RSHA. Fund no 759, inv. no 32, doc. no 979.

any, as well as other legal acts indicating belonging to estates that entitle maidens to apply to institutions of specific categories; 2) religious certificates of legal birth and baptism; 3) medical certificate of health and certificate of smallpox eradication or vaccination."[15]

Minimal skills and abilities were required from applicants for vacancies at the institute: knowledge of prayers, ability to read, write and count, and speaking at least one foreign language[16].

The institute also accepted students transferred from institutions of female education in other cities, such as Petersburg (Petersburg Patriotic Institute), Moscow (Moscow Orphan Institute)[17], Samara and Odessa[18].

Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute was assigned Category 2 (1855) with less than 100 students enrolled, but this number was exceeded under various circumstances. Orenburg Maidens' School barely had 40 students in 1832. In 1855–1856, there were 80 girls including fresh enrollees. On December 17, 1866, standard enrollment requirements for closed institutions of female education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria was imperially established, in compliance with which the institute's maximum enrollment was set at 75 (while in reality it had 83 students)[19]. "There were 75 girls enrolled, of whom 20 were self-funded and the others were full boarders,"[20] in 1868, 167 in 1890[21], 202 in 1913, 209 in 1916, and 222 in 1917. In 1918, the women's institute took care of 200 orphaned and half-orphaned girls and had around 50 visiting students[22].

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15 K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House (1884) *Ustav zhenskikh uchebnykh zavedeniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii, vysochayshe utverzhdenny 30 avgusta 1855 g. S posleduyushchimi dop., izm., tsirkulyar. rasporyazheniyami i predpisaniyami po 1 yanv. 1884 g.* [Charter of Institutions of Women's Education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Imperially Approved on August 30, 1855, with Subsequent Additions, Amendments, Circular Orders and Instructions up to January 1, 1884], St. Petersburg: K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House, § 66, p. 23].

16 Orenburg Governorate Publishing House (1868) *Spravochnaya knizhka Orenburgskoy gubernii na 1868 g. Pravila priema devits v Orenburgskiy Nikolaevskiy institute* [Reference Book of Orenburg Governorate for 1868: Rules for Admitting Maidens to Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Institute], Orenburg: Orenburg Governorate Publishing House, § 8, p. 19].

17 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 21, p. 3.

18 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 21, p. 15.

19 *Orenburgsky Listok*, June 9, 1885, no 25, p. 3.

20 Orenburg Governorate Publishing House (1868) *Spravochnaya knizhka Orenburgskoy gubernii na 1868 g. Pravila priema devits v Orenburgskiy Nikolaevskiy institute* [Reference Book of Orenburg Governorate for 1868: Rules for Admitting Maidens to Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Institute], Orenburg: Orenburg Governorate Publishing House, § 2, p. 18.

21 Orenburg Governorate Publishing House (1892) *Statisticheskiy ocherk Orenburgskoy gubernii* [A Statistical Review of Orenburg Governorate], Orenburg: Orenburg Governorate Publishing House, p. 17.

22 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 24, p. 40.

Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute was under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, whose fundamental principle was, "Poverty gives priority right for full boarding at the expense of the crown". That is to say, such institutions raised and educated not only self-funded girls but also state-funded students—daughters of military men, disabled veterans and officers' widows, as well as orphans.

Children of hereditary nobles had the preferential right to study at the institute at public expense, but there was a competition for tuition-free places. Applicants did not take exams but were selected randomly. In 1916, for example, "an orphan vacancy was filled by the 6th-grade student Anna Yepaneshnikova, and one state-funded half-orphan vacancy fell to the lucky lot of the maiden Maria Loshkareva."[23]

Archival documents indicate that the institute's finances for education of "deficient" students were not restricted to state allocations but also included a variety of ministry scholarships and interest on charitable funds donated and bequeathed to the institute by individuals or organizations. In February 1904, for example, the Natalia Khondzynskaya Scholarship was established with the capital that Khondzynskaya donated to the institute[24]. A special category of students were eligible for scholarships of the Ministry of War and military committees as well as funding from the host and order[25] capitals. For instance, Tatyana Isaenko, daughter of a lieutenant *yesaul* of the Orenburg Cossack Host, had her education funded by donation capital[26]; Raisa Lysova, daughter of a retired *sotnik*, was awarded the Alexeev Military Committee Scholarship; Iraida Grigorovich was admitted in 1916 under His Majesty the Emperor Scholarship[27]; "students E. Belinskaya, E. Belyaeva and A. Yemelyanova were sponsored by the Governor General of Turkestan, and V. Timofeeva was granted the Widow Jonas Scholarship."[28]

On December 2, 1882, the Military Council's imperially approved Regulations On Withdrawal of Scholarships for Daughters of the Ural Host at Nicholas I Institute resolved the following: "1) scholarships allo-

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23 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 15.

24 State Publishing House (1913) *Sobranie uzakoneniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii. T. V. Tsarstvovanie gosudarya imperatora Nikolaya Vtorogo. Kn. 4. №№ 2018–2646. S1 yanv. 1904 g. po 30 dek. 1906 g.* [Collected Legislations of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria. Vol. V: The Reign of His Majesty Emperor Nicholas II, Book 4, nos 2018–2646, January 1, 1904–December 30, 1906], St. Petersburg: State Publishing House, p. 60.

25 Holders of Russian imperial and royal awards (orders) were required to make contributions to form an order capital to be spent on charitable affairs and education of "deficient" chevaliers' daughters in women's institutes.

26 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 15.

27 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 19.

28 RSHA. Fund no 759, inv. no 56, doc. no 218, pp. 21–23.

cated for the Ural Cossack Host at Nicholas I Institute shall be gradually withdrawn as the current scholarship holders complete their courses; 2) the amount withheld from the funds currently allocated for the maintenance of daughters of military fathers in the named institute as well as the entire amount as the scholarships have been withdrawn completely shall be used to reinforce the special funds of Ural Gymnasium for Military Daughters."[29] As Ponomareva notes, "by its type, Orenburg Women's Institute was a peripheral educational institution, just like the institutes of the Don and Kuban Cossack Hosts located in areas remote from the center, populated by poor and low-educated people. However, the Don and Kuban institutes were partially sponsored by the Cossacks and were governed with the participation of the Cossack elite. The Cossacks of Southern Russia were settled on fertile lands and paid a land tax to support their own women's institutes, whereas the Ural Cossacks had no such favorable conditions and could not afford such expenses." [Ponomareva 2018:351] Still, funding continued to be procured, and 19 vacancies were opened at the institute for daughters of the Orenburg Cossack Host in 1891 [Starikov 1891: 59]. In 1893, the institute had no students from among the military Cossack class funded at the expense of the crown; ten girls were sponsored by the host capital, and ten more, by their parents and public funds[30]. In 1918, the lieutenant colonel of the Orenburg Cossack Host decided to allocate 75 scholarships of 1,000 rubles yearly to daughters of Cossacks[31].

During World War I, "up to 70% of students were daughters of officers and Cossacks fighting at the Austrian-German front who were exempted from tuition and maintenance fees or were granted various scholarships for the period of war. Ten students were fully state-funded, 21 had scholarships from the Ministry of War, 11 were sponsored by the Orenburg Cossack Host, one by the headquarters of Turkestan Military District, four by the Governor General of Turkestan, six by Emperor Alexander I Committee and Alexeev Committee, seven by the Special Border Guard Corps, and 15 by other organizations and individuals[32]. There was a significant increase in the number of parents applying for tuition fee deferral during that period, as the financial situation of many families worsened radically. Starting with the end of 1914, the institute's admission documents feature more and more ap-

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[29] State Publishing House (1895–1916) *Sobranie uzakoneniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii. T. IV. Tsarstvovanie gosudarya imperatora Aleksandra Tretyego. Kn. 1. S1 marta 1881 g. po 31 dek. 1885 g.* [Collected Legislations of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria. Vol. IV: The Reign of His Majesty Emperor Alexander III, Book 1, March 1, 1881–December 31, 1885], St. Petersburg: State Publishing House, no 219, pp. 249–250.

[30] *Orenburgskie Gubernskie Vedomosti*, July 7, 1895, no 12, pp. 5–6.

[31] Report of the Military Government of the Orenburg Cossack Host to the Emergency Cossack Assembly dated September 19, 1918 [no place, 1918], p. 47.

[32] SAOO. Fund no 87. Dep. 1, doc. no 24, p. 41.

plications from officers of the army's combat forces and World War I veterans or their widows asking to enroll their daughters in vacancies funded by the crown.

A relatively small percentage of students had their studies funded by parents or benefactors. The size of boarding fee depended on the category and location of the educational institution[33]. For instance, the 1868 Rules of Admission to Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute set the following tuition fee rates: "130 rubles per year for boarders funded by institutional grants and His/Her Imperial Majesty Scholarships; and 90 rubles per year for maidens sponsored by individuals. In addition, 30 rubles shall be charged from every newly-admitted boarder to cover the initial acquisition of clothing and equipment."[34] By 1877, the tuition fee had increased to 150 rubles, and in June 1885, the institute's council brought to general notice that "on the 30th day of May this year, His Majesty the Emperor decided, by royal decree, to raise the yearly boarding fee at this institute from 150 to 250 rubles for each newly admitted boarder starting from the upcoming academic year 1886."[35] By the outbreak of World War I, the cost of a year of study was 180 rubles for 6th-graders and 460 rubles for 7th-graders."[36]

For all women's institutes, in accordance with their category, the Charter of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria introduced uniform "special schedules for sciences, languages and arts taught," which included The Law of God, Russian, Pedagogy, Geography, History, French, German, Physics, Natural Science, Cosmography, Mathematics, Arithmetic, Hygiene, Drawing, Calligraphy, and Singing. Points were also awarded for behavior and neatness."[37]

It was prescribed to complement the curriculum with "reading of edifying books." [38] To foster the development of mental abilities, liter-

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[33] K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House (1884) *Ustav zhenskikh uchebnykh zavedeniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii, vysochayshe utverzhdenny 30 avgusta 1855 g. S posleduyushchimi dop., izm., tsirkulyar. rasporyazheniyami i predpisaniyami po 1 yanv. 1884 g.* [Charter of Institutions of Women's Education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Imperially Approved on August 30, 1855, with Subsequent Additions, Amendments, Circular Orders and Instructions up to January 1, 1884], St. Petersburg: K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House, Supplements to § 42, p. 108].

[34] Orenburg Governorate Publishing House (1868) *Spravochnaya knizhka Orenburgskoy gubernii na 1868 g. Pravila priema devits v Orenburgskiy Nikolaevskiy institute* [Reference Book of Orenburg Governorate for 1868: Rules for Admitting Maidens to Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Institute], Orenburg: Orenburg Governorate Publishing House, § 2, p. 18.

[35] *Orenburgsky Listok*. June 1, 1885, no 24, p. 3.

[36] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 1.

[37] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 9, p. 3.

[38] K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House (1884) *Ustav zhenskikh uchebnykh zavedeniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii, vysochayshe*

ary taste and interest in reading among students, the institute provided a library "with a judicious selection of books," subdivided into the student library (2,698 books and 3,522 volumes) and the fundamental library (976 books and 3,942 volumes). To replenish its holdings on a regular basis, the library had subscriptions for such magazines as *Zhenskoe Obrazovanie* (Women's Education), *Semya i Shkola* (Family and School), *Niva*, *Russkaya Muzykalnaya Gazeta* (Russian Musical Newspaper) and *Nauchnoe Obozrenie* (Scientific Review) as well as periodicals in Russian, French and German[39].

Even though Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute was a provincial educational institution, it could compete with the most famous institutions of Moscow and Petersburg in terms of equipment with visual aids, maps, models, mechanisms and devices in every discipline. The institute's solid teaching and methodology base is reflected in a multi-page archival inventory of available teaching guides, scale models, maps and atlases. There were 40 to 60 units of various devices and instruments for a variety of topics in Physics, Chemistry, Natural Science and Cosmology, including a centrifugal machine, an apparatus to explain oblateness of the Earth, a Quincke device for demonstrating pendulum oscillation, a dynamometer, a Baume hydrometer, a magic lantern, a carbide lamp, an image projector, a model of a steam engine, a Kolbe's electroscope, a model of a telegraph key, a tellurion, a raised relief world globe, a collection of minerals, cosmographic charts, etc.[40] The first impressions of classroom equipment at the institute are captured in the memoirs of its student Anna Borodina: "I remember the first day of my stay [at the institute.—*Author's note*] <…> I was taken up a wide marble staircase covered with a carpet to the second floor and into a classroom. There were icons hanging in the corner, beautiful kerosene lamps under the ceiling, tall book cabinets with educational supplies and aids along the walls, various physics and geography instruments on the tables, and stuffed birds of all kinds on the tall cabinets <…> As I found out later, that was the classroom of Physics and Biology, and that was also where I saw a world globe for the first time. Equipment of regular classrooms was much more modest."[41]

The first subject on the curriculum was The Law of God and Catechism. Alexandra Tsaritsyntseva, a graduate of the institute and

utverzhdenny 30 avgusta 1855 g. S posleduyushchimi dop., izm., tsirkulyar. rasporyazheniyami i predpisaniyami po 1 yanv. 1884 g. [Charter of Institutions of Women's Education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Imperially Approved on August 30, 1855, with Subsequent Additions, Amendments, Circular Orders and Instructions up to January 1, 1884], St. Petersburg: K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House, Chapter V, § 105, p. 31].

39 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 9, p. 3.

40 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 18, pp. 61–93.

41 Bobrova E. (2015) "Sred' shumnogo bala…" [Amidst the Noisy Ball…]. *Gostiny Dvor*, June 21. Available at: http://orenlit.ru

daughter of Pavel Korelin, colonel of the Orenburg Cossack Host, notes: "The juniors studied The Law of God—prayers and their meaning, church holidays, some parables from the Gospel; the seniors studied church service from A to Z, its meaning and significance. We were taught by Father Dmitry Kononov, a protoiereus, who also served in our house church. Every day began with morning prayers and ended with evening prayers. We especially loved singing in the institute's church choir. Church singing was taught by the priest John Solomin, who had a court chapel certificate."[42]

Curricula were designed to allow for the heterogeneous religious composition of the students, as there were Orthodox as well as Catholic, Lutheran and Mohammedan (Muslim) girls. "Beginning from the 20th century, daughters of Old Believers were admitted to the institute as well." [Ponomareva 2018:351] In addition to an Orthodox priest, there were also a Roman Catholic priest and a Lutheran pastor to teach The Law of God. Maidens of "other faiths" were "not to be forced to attend classes where the Christian Law of God was taught,"[43]; "any forceful attempts to convert Mohammedan girls to Christianity should be avoided."[44]

The institute paid much attention to teaching the Russian language. In the introductory note to the Russian course, the Charter of Women's Educational Institutions postulates: "The task of the teacher of the Russian language <…> is not only to convey the content of what has been read but also to explain the structure and to point to logical connections among different parts of the whole piece <…> to give her moral and aesthetic evaluations, to develop students' ability to express their thoughts verbally and on paper correctly—not only in terms of grammar but also in terms of logic," "to cultivate <…> a passion for studying the historical development of the language and getting to know the most outstanding literary oeuvres."[45]

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[42] Semenov V. (1997) Eshche raz ob Orenburgskom institute blagorodnykh devits [Revisiting the Case of Orenburg Institute for Noble Maidens]. *Gostiny Dvor*, no 5, p. 230.

[43] RSHA. Fund no 759, inv. no 8, doc. no 35, p. 199.

[44] Seleznev I. (ed) (1878) *Pyatidesyatiletie IV otdeleniya Sobstvennoy Yego Imperatorskogo Velichestva kantselyarii: [1828–1878]: khronika Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy Imperatritsy Marii, sostoyashchikh pod neposredstvennym Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv pokrovitel'stvom* [50th Anniversary of the Fourth Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery: [1828–1878]: A Timeline of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria under Immediate Patronage of Their Imperial Majesties], St. Petersburg: V. Demakov's Publishing House, p. 396.

[45] K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House (1884) *Ustav zhenskikh uchebnykh zavedeniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii, vysochayshe utverzhdenny 30 avgusta 1855 g. S posleduyushchimi dop., izm., tsirkulyar. rasporyazheniyami i predpisaniyami po 1 yanv. 1884 g.* [Charter of Institutions of Women's Education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Imperially Approved on August 30, 1855, with Subsequent Additions, Amend-

Tsaritsyntseva's memoirs give quite a comprehensive picture of the institute's methods of teaching Russian: "In the junior grades, Russian was taught using the grammar textbook and chrestomathies; senior students read and analyzed classics and got acquainted with literary critics along the way, such as Pisarev, Dobrolyubov, and others. We would write essays and abstracts, sometimes as part of other courses; along with abstracts, we would do reports on the topic and always debate with opponents (students argued about the literary material read and learned). In the junior grades, we would write synopses, prosify poems, take dictations; in the senior ones, we would write compositions, the best ones to be read aloud to everyone. Mistakes—grammatical, stylistic and others—would be analyzed. Fiction—French, German, Russian—would be borrowed from the institute library."[46]

The institute library had a fundamental and sophisticated selection of methodology guidelines on teaching the Russian language and literature, written by famous etymologists, linguists, professors and academicians of philology departments of Russian universities as well as the best practitioners specialized in Russian literature. To ensure effective teaching in language and literature, the institute disposed of oeuvres created by such masters of Russian philology and etymology as Jonah Vertogradsky, Vyacheslav Voskresensky, Alexey Galakhov, Yakov Groth, Vasily Pokrovsky, Alexander Preobrazhensky, etc.[47]

Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute attached particular importance to the development of oral and written communication skills in "new" (European) languages. The most important method of teaching foreign languages involved regular speaking practice based on language immersion: students were requested to alternate German and French every other day in conversations with teachers and governesses, while speaking Russian was not allowed. The Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria even pursued a more challenging goal in teaching European languages, namely to promote comparative studies between foreign languages and Russian. "To achieve this goal, our teachers of foreign languages should master the grammar teaching techniques used by the best teachers of Russian, that is, to describe the etymological and syntactic features of the languages that they teach."[48]

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ments, Circular Orders and Instructions up to January 1, 1884], St. Petersburg: K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House, Supplement to § § 106, 108, pp. 225, 253].

46 Semenov V. (1997) Esche raz ob Orenburgskom institute blagorodnykh devits [Revisiting the Case of Orenburg Institute for Noble Maidens]. *Gostiny Dvor*, no 5, p. 230.

47 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 18, p. 88–89.

48 K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House (1884) *Ustav zhenskikh uchebnykh zavedeniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii, vysochayshe utverzhdenny 30 avgusta 1855 g. S posleduyushchimi dop., izm., tsirkulyar.*

Graduates of the institute spoke and wrote excellent French thanks to the high level of teacher professional training. It was considered normal and even necessary for women's institutes to recruit teachers, class mistresses and governesses from abroad. For example, it follows obviously from the personal record (1909) of the teacher Johanna Paten that the institute hired a French woman to teach French—that is, a native speaker of the target language.[49] The teacher E. Gartier also had a brilliant education—she had completed a full course of sciences at Emperor Nicholas I Petrograd Orphan Women's Institute and had diplomas of the Universities of Paris and Grenoble.[50]

Teachers of women's educational institutions had to meet rather stringent requirements, which especially concerned professional skills of subject teachers and governesses. Assessment criteria included deep knowledge of the subject, pedagogical excellence, tact, responsibility, and an exacting attitude to students. Personal and service records of some teachers preserved in the State Archive of Orenburg Oblast indicate that many of them obtained education in the leading Russian universities and pedagogical educational institutions of Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Riga, Pernau (Governorate of Livonia), Kharkov, Samara, Kazan and other major cities. For instance, it follows from A. Ginalskaya's credentials that she was awarded a first-class free artist honors degree and was a member of the All-Russia Teachers Union.[51]

Propagation of political opinions was radically suppressed at the institute—not only teachers but also Orthodox and Catholic priests were tested for loyalty by the administrators.[52]

A general idea of educational organization at Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute is provided by the surviving academic reports, internal notes and administrative registers. For example, the 1916/17 mid-year report compiled by V. Kazansky, collegiate councillor and chairman of the pedagogical council, contains a detailed analysis of the educational process. In particular, the document says: "Teaching in the first half of the 1916/17 academic year complied with the schedule adopted by the Education Conference in its meeting on August 20, 1916 as well as the curricula approved on July 16, 1911. Out of the total of 209 students, three demonstrate excellent, 67 very good, 36 good, 21 satisfactory, and 72 unsatisfactory performance; the re-

rasporyazheniyami i predpisaniyami po 1 yanv. 1884 g. [Charter of Institutions of Women's Education under the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria, Imperially Approved on August 30, 1855, with Subsequent Additions, Amendments, Circular Orders and Instructions up to January 1, 1884], St. Petersburg: K. Shtremer's Printing and Lithography House, Supplement to § 106, p. 229.

49 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 3.

50 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 16.

51 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 20.

52 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. nos 16–17.

maining ten have not been evaluated. The overall performance rate of the institute in the first half of the 1916/17 academic year was 75.4%. Classes began on August 23 and ended on December 17, which makes 85 school days in total. Scores obtained by every student during the first semester are recorded in the designated Score Book. The non-attendance rate was 6.4%."[53] Up until 1917, academic success of students was assessed on a 12-point scale, where 12 = "excellent"; 11 = "A–"; 9–10 = "good"; 7–8 = "satisfactory"; 6 = "mediocre"; 5 = "unsatisfactory"; and 1–4 = "very weak". Scores below 7 suggested grade retention. In 1917, institutions of women's education switched to a 5-point student performance assessment scale.

World War I with its inevitable hardships, reduced food rations, sharp deterioration in the financial standing of households and losses of breadwinners had naturally negative effects on students' performance. Therefore, in 1915–1917, the administration of Emperor Nicholas I Women's Institute provided assistance to low-performing girls who could not complete the program because of being overage, orphaned, slow in development or insufficiently prepared or missing classes due to illness. The measures taken by the management were undoubtedly successful: for example, "in 1916, 57 students were taken under supervision, of which 20 improved their results in three months; in the second trimester of the 1916/17 academic year, 20 out of 46 students improved; in the third trimester of 1917, 45 out of 57 improved."[54]

Socialization of Students of Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute: Class Organization

During the period analyzed—the second half of the 19th–early 20th century—the future of women's institute graduates was quite a concern due to a number of circumstances. In particular, Russian nobility was rapidly growing poorer and more "economically depleted" as a class, and noble parents increasingly often found themselves unable to leave a decent inheritance to their daughters. The middle class and provincial households also belonged to low-income strata, and a series of epidemics and wars inevitably entailed orphanage and poverty. The institute's management and the board of trustees sought to secure a self-sustained life for their students, first of all girls from poor families, orphans and daughters of disabled war heroes who had sacrificed their lives and health for the homeland.

In pre-revolutionary Russia, teaching was regarded as the most respectable occupation for self-sufficient women. "For the majority of female students, education is the only capital that can save them from poverty in the future in case a comfortable married life does not come their way; in most cases, they use this capital for teaching as governesses or home teachers," wrote Vladimir Stoyunin, a prominent Rus-

[53] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 18, p. 24.
[54] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 18, pp. 48–49.

sian pedagogue and educational theorist [Stoyunin 1892:541]. The issue of necessity and importance of professional training for girls was raised repeatedly by the local community. In 1885, *Orenburgsky Listok* wrote: "Institutions of women's education in Orenburg (institutes, gymnasiums, progymnasiums, two-year parochial schools) are overcrowded with students, of whom more than half come the poorest families. Generally speaking, such an aspiration for women's education is highly gratifying. At the same time, however, it has an uncomfortable side to it. Due to the predominance of theoretic elements in education, our "learned" young women enter life with almost no practical training. Very often, they are doomed to poverty, ill-being and becoming a burden for their family, their only alternative being teaching work, which is, however, very limited and not accessible to everyone."[55]

As part of induction to the teaching profession, the institute's management allowed final-year students interested in education issues to help class mistresses with younger children and master the basics of pedagogy. When issuing certificates of 7th grade completion, the pedagogical council recommended the most distinguished graduates for receiving a certificate of "home teacher (tutor) in those subjects in which she showed a high level of performance as a student" [56] from the Ministry of National Education.

After completing the main program, some of the graduates would take another year of *classe pépinière* to stay at the institute as teachers. To promote the *classe pépinière* initiative, the institute's management worked hard to expand the existing training course. According to a ruling of the board of trustees of March 4, 1878, *classe pépinière* in women's institutes involved six classes per week. The institute's council filed a petition to the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria asking to increase the number of teaching hours in *classe pépinière* from six to nine, "based on the fact that the majority of institute graduates should earn their livelihood by teaching, which requires training that is impossible to provide within the current one-year period of *classe pépinière*." On account of the above, the board of trustees decided "to ask His Imperial Majesty's royal permission to increase the number of classes from six to nine per week in the said *classe pépinière*, provided that 1) it does not require heavier expenditures from the Office and 2) such classes are distributed among no more than three or four subjects, the choice of which, as proposed by the institute's management, should be made by the Chief Administrator of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Institutions of Empress Maria." The relevant decree was approved by the emperor on October 16, 1892.[57]

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55 *Orenburgsky Listok*, March 3, 1885, no 10, p. 58.

56 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 9, p. 3.

57 State Publishing House (1913) Sobranie uzakoneniy Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii. T. IV. Tsarstvovanie gosudarya imperatora Aleksandra Tre-

The institute also organized dedicated pedagogical classes, where graduates learned to be home tutors, teachers of Russian literature and French. Such classes "were intended to provide the most capable graduates of the general program, orphans in the first place, with an opportunity to prepare for teaching work during two years at public expense."[58] The two-year study program assumed learning the fundamentals of pedagogy and all the necessary disciplines during the first year (theory course) and taking turns in teaching to lower grades in the presence of an experienced instructor during the second year (practice course). The list of subjects in pedagogical classes testifies to the presence of a well-defined methodological system that involved cycles of didactic disciplines. Compulsory subjects for all students of pedagogical classes included Pedagogy, Didactics, Children's Literature, Hygiene, Jurisprudence, French, and Domestic Science.

To be admitted to pedagogical classes, students had to "have an average of at least 9 points in languages and sciences cumulatively for the last two years, provided that the number of points in each of those subjects is satisfactory, and at least 9 points in Russian and the subjects that she would like to select for in-depth study." [59] For example, a certificate issued on August 22, 1917 to the graduate Lydia Suplatova provided the following entitlement: "This is to certify that Lydia Suplatova, a Christian Orthodox, daughter of a lieutenant colonel, completed a seven-year program at Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute. As a student, she showed excellent behavior and achievements in the following subjects:

The Law of God very good, 11 points;
Russian language and literature good, 10 points;
French good, 10 points;
German good, 10 points;
Mathematics good, 10 points;
History good, 10 points;
Geography very good, 11 points;
Physics and Cosmography excellent, 12 points;
Pedagogy very good, 11 points;
Natural Science good, 10 points.

Thereby, Lydia Suplatova has the right to receive, without being subjected to additional tests, a certificate for the title of home tutor or

tyego. Kn. 3. S1 yanv. 1891 po 20 okt. 1894 g. [Collected Legislations of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria. Vol. V: The Reign of His Majesty Emperor Alexander III, Book 3, January 1, 1891–October 20, 1894], St. Petersburg: State Publishing House, nos 2018–2646, p. 60.

58 *Uchebnye zavedeniya Vedomstva uchrezhdeniy imperatritsy Marii: Kratkiy ocherk* [Educational Institutions of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria: A Brief Overview], St. Petersburg, 1906, pp. 57–58.

59 SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 9, p. 3.

teacher in the subjects in which she showed a high level of performance."[60]

The dedicated pedagogical classes selected not just high-performing students but those who fully satisfied the "teacher's higher purpose" criteria in terms of their moral qualities. The 8th (pedagogical) grade completion evaluation report of someone Mary Martin, who served at the institute for many years, states that "the maiden Mary Martin treated her studies quite conscientiously and developed a proper pedagogical tact, observation skills and a responsible attitude to didactic techniques."[61]

Having highly qualified teachers of foreign languages among the faculty allowed the institute to initiate classes for preparing foreign language teachers for women's gymnasiums, schools and home education of children. For example, the two-year program for teachers of French involved not only mastering the fundamentals of pedagogy but also a detailed study of the history and geography of France, comparative grammar, history of world (universal) literature, history of French literature, modern grammar and methodology of teaching French.[62]

With the introduction of pedagogical classes, the institute itself became a supplier of teaching professionals to local educational institutions—for instance, two administrators and some teachers of French and Russian at the 1st Orenburg Women's Gymnasium were graduates of Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute.

Completion of studies at the institute was marked with final exams and a ball. Each cohort of graduates, starting with the very first one in 1854, was praised for high performance in arts and sciences. The Report on Students' Performance and Behavior (no. 1297 of June 12, 1907) notes that out of 30 graduates in 1907, two received the highest award for excellent performance—maid of honor ciphers[63], two were granted gold medals, three got silver medals, and six were awarded books. In addition, "the maiden Zinaida Ryabkova received a silver medal to be worn on the ribbon of the Order of St. Vladimir for her philanthropic feat." [64] Unfortunately, archival materials do not specify the nature of the young girl's philanthropic feat.

After the February events of 1917, Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute found itself isolated and its funding significantly reduced and eventually terminated. In the fall of 1918, feeling trapped and hopeless, the headmistress and the pedagogical council of the

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[60] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 22.
[61] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 7, p. 4.
[62] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 18, p. 46.
[63] A maid of honor cipher represented the imperial cipher of Maria Feodorovna under a crown on the ribbon of the Imperial Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky. Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute was granted the right to present such awards to its best students in 1894.
[64] SAOO. Fund no 87, inv. no 1, doc. no 1.

institute addressed the military government of the Orenburg Cossack Host, raising a question about the prospects for the institute's accountability and subsequent development.

In September 1918, under the terms of reorganization, the institute was placed under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Cossack Host and renamed into Orenburg Host Women's Institute[65]. The history of Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute ends in early 1919—like most institutions of this type, it turned out to be superfluous and unfitting into the new government's education paradigm.

Among the few surviving memoirs of the institute's graduates, there is not a single one in which the girls would speak negatively about their alma mater or complain about being severely punished or humiliated. The high standards of teaching and moral atmosphere at the institute are explained by a number of circumstances: the institution was under the constant supervision and tutelage of the Office of the Institutions of Empress Maria and members of the imperial family; the morals and general order were monitored by the headmistress and the board of trustees; teacher and governess candidates were thoroughly selected by their professional and personal qualities, which excluded recruitment of random or incompetent people; for many girls, being a student of the institute had a huge social value and was their only opportunity to get a decent education and build a life. The government of Orenburg Governorate also tried to support the high reputation of the institute in every possible way, as it had a direct influence on its own prestige and popularity.

Conclusion

Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute joined the ranks of Russian women's institutes and boarding schools in the mid-19th century. Its goal was to provide girls with general secondary education, spiritual, moral and aesthetic education, and practical teaching skills. Through the efforts of several generations of teachers and devoted support of the government, a unique educational phenomenon was fostered in Orenburg Governorate to educate women of a new culture.

The history of the origin and development of the institute proves that an understanding of the significance and value of female education was gradually and firmly established across different classes of Russian society. Emperor Nicholas I Orenburg Women's Institute had undeniable advantages over other institutions of women's education in Orenburg and Orenburg Governorate in the quality of education and good manners taught, equipment and maintenance, size of tuition fees, and boarding school opportunities. Girls learned teaching and language skills at the institute, which thus played an invalua-

[65] Report of the Military Government of the Orenburg Cossack Host to the Emergency Cossack Assembly dated September 19, 1918 [no place, 1918], p. 66.

ble role in the professional socialization of orphans and children from low-income families.

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