

## The Romanovs and national education. Essays on the history of the establishment of Russian education and enlightenment system during the reign of the Romanov dynasty (1613 - 1917)

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### ABSTRACT

The relevance of the research is determined by some aspects of establishment and development of the public enlightenment and education system in the age of the Romanov dynasty reign (1613 - 1917). The authors of the work pay special attention to the role of the ruling dynasty in the gradual and consistent reformation character of the national education system in all its manifestations, and also challenges faced by the modern Russian society, which cannot disregard the experience of its predecessors in this area. For this reason, the purpose of this article is to research archive materials, research the education system starting from the czardom of Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov up to 1917.

### KEYWORDS

Russian education, enlightenment, the Romanov dynasty, public education

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### Introduction

Changes in all spheres of social-economic and political life of the country that happened in the 17<sup>th</sup> century evolved into a quality and scale breakthrough in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The medieval Muscovy turned into the Russian Empire, which would be the leading state of the world throughout the following centuries.

So it is no secret that extremely high attention was paid to improvement of the national education notwithstanding all the twists and turns of their subsequent policy and ruling in general.

The struggle between the progressive forces orienting to reformation of the country “from the top” and the conservative wing of Russian nobility ended up with the stage of the “Great Reforms”, and the peasant reformation became the main one.

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## Goals and Hypothesis

The problems the Romanov dynasty solved put the Russian Empire among the world leaders. Hundreds of scientists, state and public persons, writers, poets, artists, composers and commanders are commonly known to the world community.

## Methodological Framework

The main methods for research of this problem are: dialectical, abstract, and also deduction methods. We determine theoretical approaches, which might serve as a basis for searching the ways to improve the education system.

## Results and Discussion

The solemn ceremony of enthronement of Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov took place, as we know, on July 11, 1613 in Moscow (Kostomarov, 2009). These day and year are considered to be the date of ascent to Russian throne of the Romanovs dynasty who made great contribution to development of Russian statehood.

It is indisputable that we cannot uncover the whole string of the historical events accompanying more than three hundred years of the dynasty's reign in a small article. So the authors propose revealing certain aspects of establishment and development of the enlightenment and education, which mostly were laid and improved exactly under the Romanovs.

In the autumn of 1612, Moscow was completely freed from foreign intervention. The Time of Trouble, or the "great ruin", which had lasted for over ten years, ended. The question of electing the head of the Russian state was openly brought up. On the 21 of December (1612) – great Russian historian N.I. Kostomarov writes – the salvation of Moscow was announced all over Russia, which was followed by a message to all cities to send the best and the wisest people to Moscow for election of a ruler. We can state that what happened was the first election campaign in the history of Russia, which a little resembles the today's elections. Assemblies were held where self-nominated candidates appeared, the voters were bribed, etc. "Some of the boyars, - N.I. Kostomarov says, - sought to get the crown and bought votes". There is information that there were votes for Vasily Golitsyn, others inappropriately mentioned the return of the crown to Shuysky. There were opinions in favor of Trubetskoy, Voroshynsky and even, as it was told later, in favor of Pozharsky. He was accused of spending about twenty thousand rubles buying votes in his favor afterwards" (Kostomarov, 2009). As you can see from this quote, there have been no noticeable changes and new election campaign techniques in Russia over four hundred years.

In the meanwhile, the noblemen's and boyars' children, Streltsy, Cossacks and elected people from cities and districts proposed electing Mikhail Romanov as the ruler of Russia. This procedure took place from the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of February. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 1613, the Embassy arrived at Kostroma, where sixteen-year-old Mikhail lived with his mother in the Monastery of St. Ipaty (Gumilyov, 2008). The authors of these lines twice visited this magnificent architectural monument of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, from where the three hundred year long staying of the Romanov dynasty on Russian throne began. Obviously this monument will stand yet more than one century, but the house of engineer

Ipatyev where the Romanov Dynasty tragically came to its end was demolished by B.N. Yeltsin when the latter was the first secretary of Sverdlovsk regional council of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But this is another story. The authors would like to draw attention to the following fact. The Romanovs Dynasty came out of the walls of the Monastery of St. Ipaty, and ended its life journey in the house of engineer Ipatyev. Apparently, there is a certain symbolic connection in this, about which, naturally, hardly anyone could assume in the distant 1613. Moreover, the history of the country and the dynasty itself was far from being destined.

Thus, regardless of agreements and the charter of the Assembly of the Land notifying of the election of Mikhail for czardom, the mother and the son replied with a refusal. "Moscow people became weak-willed, - they said – and the state was eventually devastated by Polish and Lithuanian people and impermanence of the Russians. The Czar's treasury was robbed. Palace villages and "black districts" were given as estates. Service men were poor, how to reward them? How to stand against enemies?" (Gumilyov, 2008).

However, the mother with the son could not resist lengthy and diplomatic persuasions by the visitors to Kostroma to settle the state business. The mother blessed the son, Mikhail agreed and accepted the czar's baculus as a symbol of power from the hands of Ryazan archbishop Theodorit. This act on the part of sixteen-year-old Romanov can justly be called a feat, as the Moscow state's authority, according to N.I. Kostomarov, looked terrible.

Moving on to highlighting the Romanov Dynasty's efforts in the area of education, the authors believe it is necessary to at least briefly remind of some aspects of its development in the period that we have mentioned.

Thus, a noticeable event was creation of the famous ABC book by V.Burtsev in 1634, which was re-issued many times. The cheapness of this and other editions like this, for example the ABC by Karion Istomin or Meletiy Smotritsky, brought the number of copies in the second half of the century up to 300 thousand copies. This and other measures promoted reading among the Russians.

In 1665, a specialized school, the first listeners of which were clerks from various offices (Ministries), opened in Moscow, in Nikolskaya street at the Monastery of Our Savior. Among the graduates of this school there was a fairly large number of known names, the most famous one being scholar and writer, the author of a famous historical work of Sophia's regency, monk Silvestre.

In 1687, Slavo-Greek-Latin school, which later was called an academy, was opened. This was an educational institution with quite broad syllabus, starting from grammar and ending with philosophy. According to modern standards, this educational institution was simultaneously a higher and secondary educational establishment, which admitted people of "any rank, office and age".

However, despite these innovations in the efforts of enlightenment, the education affected Moscow and just partially other cities. It is also necessary to note that Russian education system got under influence of two cultures: Polish and German. In this case, we can notice a more active influence of Polish culture represented by poet and theologian Simeon Polotsky, who in succession was a tutor of the elder son of czar Aleksey, and then the tutor of the next son of czar Aleksey - Fedor. All this led to spread of polonofilia at the czar's court and

among the boyars. Many of the czar's dignitaries knew the Polish language and culture well, and also had Polish books in their home libraries.

German culture, the sources of which were in the countries of central and northern Europe, competed with the Polish cultural influence. However, the main source of influence, in our opinion, was the Foreign Quarter in Moscow, which began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Zamoskvorechye between Polyanka and Yakimyanka. When Peter the Great came up to the czar's throne, the influence of the Foreign Quarter in particular and especially German culture would dominate in Russia throughout almost the whole 18<sup>th</sup> century (Encyclopedia of kings and emperors, 2012).

Marking certain merits of Peter the Great's predecessors, it is necessary to mind that Russia was behind European countries in many positions of internal and external development as it entered into the new century. Industry and agriculture, army and fleet, state machine and management system, interaction between the state and the church and many other required radical reforms. Lagging in enlightenment, education and science was substantial. It is enough to provide such an example. There were no schools opened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Russia to teach natural and technical sciences.

The situation that existed at the turn of the century in Russia could be resolved by radical reforms, as such path could secure a place among the states of West and East for the largest state in the world. The reforms started by Peter the Great urgently required radical changes in the issues of enlightenment and education. First of all, it is necessary to note that the main content of the reforms in this area was establishment and development of secular enlightenment and education after European model. After opening secular schools, education began to acquire the traits of the secular nature. First and foremost, this affected textbooks. New textbooks came to replace church books. In 1708 Peter the Great introduced a new civil font, and also use of Arabic figures. New printing houses were opened in Moscow and Petersburg for mass issuing of secular educational, scientific, political literature and numerous legislative acts. One should suppose that these printing houses worked at full capacity. "According to the calculations that are far from being full, 3,314 orders, regulations and charters were issued during his ruling. Peter the Great participated personally in creating and editing most of them" (History of Russia, 2009).

An appreciable contribution in fulfillment of the reforms conceived by Peter the Great was issuing of the first printed newspaper "Vedomosti" (News), which first came out in December 1702. "Since that time, 1 to 56 issues with 300 to 400 copies and volume of 4 to 16 pages came out every year. Over 500 newspaper issues appeared from 1703 through 1724" (Gumilyov, 2008).

On the second year after proclamation of St. Petersburg as the capital of Russia, the first state library that laid foundation for the library of the Academy of Sciences opened there in 1712. The logic continuation of this direction of activity was establishment of the Kunstkamera Museum in 1719 in St. Petersburg, which made the start of collection and broad demonstration of zoological and mineralogical collections in Russia. Obviously, this event can be considered to be the start of the museum business in Russia. An important stage in the concern of reformation of the enlightenment and science system in the

country was signing in 1724 of the Order of establishment of the Academy of Sciences in the new capital of Russia.

Finishing the discussion of this historical period lasting more than a century, the authors believe that the changes in all spheres of social economic and political life of the country that took place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, evolved in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century into a quality and scale breakthrough. Medieval Muscovy turned into Russian Empire, which would be the leading state of the world throughout the following centuries. “Peter, as the historical person, – Russian historian N.I. Kostomarov writes – represents a peculiar phenomenon not only in the history of Russia, but also in the history of the whole humankind of all centuries and peoples... anything he knew he strived to apply to Russia to transform it into a strong European state” (Kostomarov, 2009).

The successors of Peter the Great were to continue the trend he started in the cause of turning Russia into a strong European state. So it is not by accident that utmost importance was placed on the improvement of the national education notwithstanding all the twists and turns of the following policy and the direction in general.

In 1755 the Moscow University with two gymnasiums in it – for children of noblemen, and also children of merchants and commoners was opened. And its significance as the most important cultural and public center grew day after day. Here, publishing of the first non-governmental newspaper of Russia – “Moscow News” started in 1756. Appearance of the first Moscow magazine – “Useful entertainment” – is also connected with the university. Its publisher was the assessor of the Moscow University, poet M.M. Kheraskov. The rise of Moscow journalism at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is connected with the name of N.I. Novikov who rented the university’s printing house from 1779 through 1789. Five scientific and ten literature and publicistic journals were published in Moscow during that period.

In the reign of Catherine the Great, major efforts were made in the cause of reforming the whole Russian society and her policy in general got the name of “Enlightened absolutism”. According to famous Russian scientist A.A. Leontyev, “Catherine carefully studied the experience of education organization in the leading countries of Western Europe... For example, works by Ya.A. Komensky, Fenelon, “Some thoughts concerning education” by Locke in Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, incidentally, the new definition of the school’s task was not only to educate, but also to bring up (The newspaper “Russian language”, 2001).

It is natural that in those far-away years the main burden and responsibility for education and bringing up of the youth fell on the shoulders of the teachers. It is for this purpose that the Main Public School was opened in Petersburg in 1783, which in three years became the teachers’ seminary – the first prototype of a pedagogical institute.

However, despite all the good endeavors, “Catherine’s reform had never been finished, but, nevertheless, it played a considerable role in development of Russian education. About 180 thousand children including 7% of girls graduated from various types of schools during 1782-1800. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were about 300 schools and boarding schools with 20 thousand pupils and 720 teachers in Russia” (The newspaper “Russian language”, 2001).

Economic and sociopolitical development of Russian Empire at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries urgently required a considerable number of educated people. The demand of the state for domestic specialists noticeably grew. In implementation of these tasks, Emperor Alexander I in 1802 approved the Ministry of Public Enlightenment. According to the Emperor's Manifest, the primary task of the ministry was "Bringing up the youth and spreading science", and it had the Head School Administration, Academy of Sciences, universities and other educational institutions as its subordinates.

Count P.V. Zavadovsky was appointed the First Minister in September 1802 under whose supervision "Preliminary Rules of Public Enlightenment" were published in January 1803, and the "Charter of educational institutions accountable to the universities" was published in 1804 with each university being the education center in its educational district. A curator reporting directly to the minister of public enlightenment was appointed the head of the six districts.

However, the universities were not only scientific and educational institutions, and administrative functions for control of all educational institutions of the district fell on them too. And as we said before, there were six districts like this where new universities either already existed or were created. Thus, for example, Dorpt University resumed its activity in 1802, Vilne University – in 1803, Kazan University – in November 5, 1804, Kharkov University – the first Ukrainian university was founded on the 17 of January, 1805.

On the 5 of November, 1804, Alexander I approved the charters of the Moscow, Kazan and Kharkov Universities. This charter set forth no requirements to enter a university except one – no one can be admitted to a university as a student without having the needed knowledge to hear the courses in the university. Unfortunately, we must state that this criterion does not always work in modern Russia.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the opinion of many historians, entered the history of Russian state as the century of reforms and counter-reforms. This process is particularly noticeable in the acts of Russian emperors concerning education and enlightenment.

The Decembrists revolt in 1825 not only led to strengthening of the conservative tendencies in ruling the country, but also exerted a tremendous influence on development of Russian education. Via the Rescript of the 14 of May, 1826, the new emperor assigned the special committee of arrangement of educational institutions, which existed till 1835. This committee drew up new regulatory documents: Charter of Gymnasiums and District and Parish Schools (1828), Provision on Educational Districts (1835) and General Charter of the Emperor's Russian Universities (1835). These documents defined the single official policy in the area of education for many years.

In this regard, it would suffice to remind that measures were taken to strengthen discipline among the students, which means overt and secret surveillance of them. Students wore uniform, even their hair-do was regulated, not to even mention behavior and manners. School uniform for boys (for girls this will happen only in 1896) is introduced for the first time in all educational institutions in Russia in 1834. It may seem that everything was so long ago that there is no need even to mention it. However, the society cares about the

problem of unified school uniform again, although already at the modern stage of its development.

Thus, the education system rolled back to the conservative positions. The universities lost much political freedom. Election of rectors, pro-rectors and professors who had been directly assigned by the Ministry of Public Education was cancelled. God's law, Russian and ancient languages (Greek and Latin) were introduced in gymnasiums, philosophic and social sciences, general grammar, economics were excluded.

At the same time, we should remember that several special higher education institutions were founded in Russia during the ruling period of Nicholas I. Thus, the technological institute was opened in 1828, in 1830 – the architectural school, in 1842 – the school of civil engineers (later they were combined into a building school), in 1835 – the agricultural school was reorganized into the Agricultural Institute in 1854. These higher education institutions, as well as ones founded earlier, prepared several hundreds of highly educated specialists who provided the basis for the new social group with the characteristic features of the bourgeois society new for Russia. Besides, it is necessary to admit the lagging of Russia behind the countries of the West in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Crimean War (1853-1856), which ended in the overthrow of the czarism, showed it to the full extent.

The struggle between the progressive forces oriented to reformation of the country “from the top” and the conservative wing of Russian nobility ended up with the stage of the “great reforms”, the main one being the peasant reform.

Let us dwell on the reformation in the education sphere. We turn to specialist in this area A.A. Leontyev. “In 1863 – he writes - a new university charter was adopted, which returned the universities autonomy, gave extensive rights to the university councils permitting opening of scientific societies and even allowing the universities to release scientific and educational editions without censure (more precisely, with own censure). Rectors and deans became electable again, professors began to be sent abroad again, the departments of philosophy and state right re-established, reading public lectures was simplified and became widespread, student admission limitations were abolished. The role of the publicity in the education system (curator and pedagogical councils) considerably grew. However, even in these years, all textbooks at schools were approved centrally – at the academic council of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment. After the beginning of the 70's, the centralization enhanced even more: this also affected the syllabi, the programs (they were unified), and choice of the textbooks” (The newspaper “Russian language”, 2001).

However, regardless of the strengthening of the state influence on the education system, it was in these years that new elements appeared which one has to face in modern Russia after introduction of the Unified State Exam. Let us refer to the speech of A.N. Krylov, the chairman of the Marine Engineering Committee in the State Duma in 1908 who reminded the member of the Duma A.I. Zaveginov about the common years of study. “I referred to the fact that the subjects of examination works for gymnasiums sent in sealed packs are stolen, and the gymnasiums sell these subjects offering them to other gymnasiums. This is done in the most diverse ways – by the director's governess, by the inspector's maid, and so on.

Turning to Zvegintsev I said: “Aleksandr Ivanovich, we were at the marine school together. Your class jointly bribed “red savior” Zuyev to get examination assignments on the nautical astronomy. These assignments had been printed in the lithography of the marine school under supervision of the class inspector, the sheets of paper were released counted, upon the printing the stone was washed in presence of the inspector and so on. However, once the inspector came out for a minute, Zuyev took off his trousers, set down on the lithographic stone and got a print of the astronomy assignments. You personally, Aleksandr Ivanovich, copied this print down by the choice of the whole class, didn’t you?”

Through the Homeric laughter of the whole room Zvyagintsev’s meek answer was heard: had the sin” (Krylov, 1984).

Undoubtedly much has changed since then: the methods of “preparation” of pupils and students for examination have become more perfect and refined. Obviously, and the many years’ pedagogical experience suggests this, that the number of students trying to pass an exam in this way remains noticeably stable.

The line of the 70-80’s became the time of a revolutionary crisis in Russia: the activity of the revolutionary organizations intensified, there were a few attempts on Alexander II, and on the 1 of March, 1881 he was assassinated by members of the “Narodnaya Volya” (People’s Will). As soon as a week after the assassination of the czar, the council of ministers rejected the constitution draft prepared by Loris-Melikov. On the 29 of April, 1881, the manifest of “The Firmness of the Autocracy” was made public. Continuing to strengthen the law and order in the country, the government approved the “Provision on measures for maintaining state security and social peace”. According to this provision, any locality could be announced in the state of emergency, and its every resident could be arrested, transported without trial for five years or court marshaled. Local administration received the right to close educational institutions, trade and industrial enterprises, suspend activity of district councils and city Dumas, close printing bodies. The state subsisted till 1917.

In fact, assassination of Alexander II brought to naught a lot of the positive gains the reforms of 1863-1864 had given. First of all, this is explained by the conservatism of the nobility and the ruling elite, weakness of the liberal movement, scare of the onset of extreme revolutionary forces, lack of confidence of Russian intelligentsia in its power. In the following years this situation often changed, although not always, to the negative side.

Thus, for example, by the end of the century, syllabi of gymnasiums and real schools were brought closer to each other, classes of Latin and Greek were cancelled in junior forms of gymnasiums and replaced with classes of Russian language, geography, Russian history. The number of gymnasium pupils grew, and the percentage of children of noblemen and officials in them dropped to 35%, and that of children of petty bourgeois, workers and peasants grew up to 45%. The number of illiterate people in Russia decreased, the interest in education increased. Universities got autonomy back (officially this happened in 1905), women were admitted to certain faculties, new universities and other higher education institutions were opened. This includes Moscow Commercial Institute – the future Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 110-year anniversary of which we will celebrate on the 19 February of 2017.

## Conclusion

To conclude this topic, the authors would like to emphasize once more that the problems partially considered in this article, which the Romanovs Dynasty solved, put Russian Empire among the world leaders. Hundreds of scientists, state and public persons, readers, poets, artists, composers and commanders are commonly known to the world community.

Being the successors of those dignified people of Russia, we should understand well and be aware that the higher education is one of the basic values of the Russian society. Education should be considered as a strategic factor of social and economic progress of the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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