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Public Education in the Upper Volga Region at the Turn of 18th to 19th Centuries from Archival Materials and Published Sources

Abstract

The article examines situation in the public education in the Upper Volga region in late 18th century. Traditionally, the term 'Upper Volga' covers Tver, Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Vladimir provinces. In late 18th century Catherine II made first steps to establish national school network. The new education system included two types of educational institutions: major four-year public schools and minor two-year public schools. The major public schools were mostly organized in gubernia (provincial) cities, while minor public schools were organized in uезд (district) towns. In 1782 Catherine II founded a Commission for Establishment of National Schools in Russia in order to solve teaching personnel problems. New schools were mostly funded by local authorities, which caused some problems. Further problems were caused by lack of uniform educational plans. The social structure of major and minor schools of the Upper Volga region comprised primarily of merchants' and petty bourgeois' children, running second were state officials' children, then the priests' offspring. Initially, there was a significant number of serfs sent by their landlords to study, but after a time the demand for educated peasants was satisfied and the number of serf students dropped. Major public schools were developing quite successfully, while minor schools in the region, as well as in the country itself, remained in a precarious position. This was primarily caused by a lack of funding. Despite some positive dynamics, such as increase in number of students and schools, the educational policies of Catherine II promoting minor schools proved ineffective by the end of her reign. In early 19th century Alexander I faced a task of carrying out new reforms in the primary and secondary school network.

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Keywords

Source, public education, Upper Volga region, major four-year public school, minor two-year public school.

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