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Published in the Slovak Republic

European Journal of Contemporary Education

ISSN 2304-9650

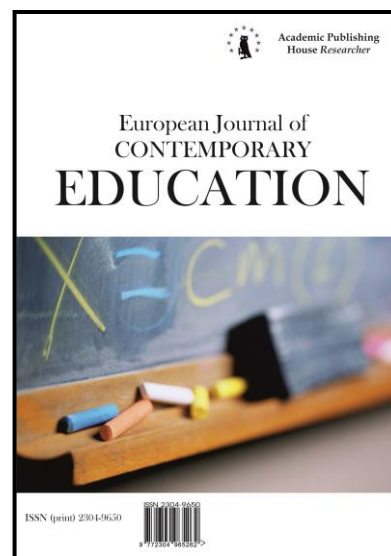
E-ISSN 2305-6746

2017, 6(4): 817-829

DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2017.4.817

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## The History of Education

### Project of Reforms Proposed for the Don Public Education IN THE first half of 1860: A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Kh.I. Popov, N.I. Krasnov

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#### Abstract

The paper reviews the project of reforms in the Don education, which were proposed by prominent public figures in the early 1860s., namely by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Kh.I. Popov and N.I. Krasnov. Based on archival materials and publications by these authors, which in some cases have not been previously used in scientific studies, the paper shows that it was the different visions of the future Don education, which revealed a very clear and representative distinction between Don conservative “Kazakomans,” (from Kazakomanstvo – Cossack-mania) and liberal “Progressists”. Kazakomans counted on consistent reforms addressing the most pressing and obvious issues of the Don education. Contrary to them, Progressists believed that these issues would sort themselves out following the system reforms of the Cossack society, which would eliminate it as a purely military estate. Unfortunately, due to the political struggle, neither Progressist nor Kazakoman version of the reforms saw the light of the day, which had a negative impact on further development of the Don education.

**Keywords:** Land of the Don Host, Don Cossackdom, Don education, A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Kh.I. Popov, N.I. Krasnov.

#### 1. Introduction

The 1860s were a time of hopes and fears for Russian Cossacks, a time when the authorities and local public figures proposed blueprints for radical reforms and at the same time were concerned that the poorly-conceived transformations could ruin the Cossack estate itself. Even

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conservatives saw the need for some changes, but they urged to take a path of evolution, rather than a revolution from above. In 1862, an anonymous conservative author, who hid himself behind the pseudonym “The Orenburg Cossack,” reminded in the official “Voenny Sbornik” (Military Collection of Articles) that “no matter how commendable is the aspiration to improvements in general, but achieving right and favorable results in the improvement process <...> requires implementing the law of succession” (Orenburg Cossack, 1862: 103).

And in the Don Host, both conservative “Kazakomans” and liberal “Progressists” attached great expectations to the sphere of education. Although Don Cossacks were traditionally literate and intellectually developed, they themselves expressed the training initiative, rather than local authorities. V.D. Novitsky, an official from another town, who served in the Don region in the 1860-70s and was far from not at all sympathetic to Cossacks, wrote that “literacy in the Don Host formed itself and followed a consciously path even when the Ministry of Education was in the cradle to address literacy among the people” (Novitsky, 1991: 58-59). However, the Don Cossacks’ craving for literacy found very limited support in the government: in the early 1860s, in the Land of the Don Host, one student was accounted for by 321 people, and this proportion was one of the worst in entire European Russia (Krasnov, 1863: 402). Nevertheless, the educational system that evolved in the Don Oblast by this time also had advantages. For example, talented Cossacks, even from common and poor families, had a chance to study at a high school or a university at public expense (Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017: 376). However, it was the opinion of local public figures that the time had come to initiate major reforms to propel the Don national education to the next level.

In our paper, we aim to analyze the views of three authors who regarded the future evolution of the Don Cossacks as inextricably linked with the progress of the public education system on the Don. They belonged to completely different social groups, and in the discussion on the future of the Don, which took place in the early 1860s, they joined the opposing camps – A Russian aristocrat, prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, and a common Cossack, Kh.I. Popov, supported Kazakomans at this time, while N.I. Krasnov, a representative of a noble Don family, was a convinced Progressist. Based on their texts, we will endeavor to understand what changes liberals and conservatives wanted to see at Don schools, what barriers hindered the development of education on the Don, and whether government regulations of the early 1860s were effective in addressing them.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The foundation for our study will be created by the following primary sources: works by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Kh.I. Popov and N.I. Krasnov, written in the early 1860s. Some of these texts have long been familiar to scholars and are used in scientific studies. “The Note on the Don Host” (Zapiska o Voiske Donskom) by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov was analyzed and published in full by a local Don historian, A.A. Karasev already in 1896 (Karasev, 1896: 569-591), “Materials for geography and statistics of Russia, collected by officers of the General Staff. The Don Host Oblast” (Materialy dlya geografii i statistiki Rossii, sobrannye ofitserami Generalnogo Shtaba. Zemlya voiska Donskogo) by N.I. Krasnov are the most complete historical and statistical description of the Don in the middle of the 19th century. “A Cossack’s thoughts on the Cossackdom concerning the current rumors” by Kh.I. Popov is less known, but it was mentioned in the latest historical literature (Volvenko, 2015: 199). Despite the above references, both Kh.I. Popov and N.I. Krasnov remain to be half-forgotten authors of a kind. Their names are familiar to any serious student of the Don region history, but many of their works, including those which particularly focus on the educational issues, have attracted only cursory attention of historians so far.

This specifically refers to “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” (Zamechaniya deputatov, naznachennykh ot stanits Khoperskogo okruga, na proyekt osnovnykh nachal Polozheniya o Voiske Donskom). This work is not written exclusively by Kh.I. Popov, but the Don local historian played an active role in its creation and edited the final version of the document (Dontsy, 2003: 409). Moreover, while working on the manuscript of “Comments...,” which is, by the way, stored in the Kh. I. Popov fund in the State Archive of the Rostov Region, we found out that part of the text was written personally by him (the handwriting is identical to a signed note on the margins (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 66). A comprehensive and detailed text of the manuscript contains the opinions of simple Cossacks of the Khopersky district regarding the

vital needs of Cossacks, but, unfortunately, even R.G. Tikidzhyan does not mention it in the paper specifically devoted to the preparation of the new “Regulations on the Don Host” (Tikidzhyan, 2014: 95-98).

An even more interesting situation developed around “Military Review of the Land of the Don Host” (Voyennoye obozreniye Zemli Voyska Donskogo) by N.I. Krasnov. Contemporary historiography positions the Don statistician as the author of two major books, “Materials for geography and statistics of Russia, collected by officers of the General Staff. The Don Host Oblast” and “Military Review of the Don Host Oblast” (Korolev, 1991: 237). The year of publication of the second work raises certain doubts, and we expressed our disagreement with V.N. Korolev who dated it 1864 (Peretyatko, 2017: 6). However, our work at the Russian National Library allowed us to come to an unexpected conclusion: it turned out that N.I. Krasnov wrote two books with the same title “Military Review of the Don Host Oblast,” in which only a part of the text coincides. While the 1870 edition is used by modern authors, the book of 1864, which criticises the proposed governmental reforms in the Cossack host, is just unknown to historians who chose the second half of the 19th century as the area of their expertise.

Since our research employs the texts, which so far have not been spotlighted by historians, we will apply the descriptive method to retell and quote key points in them. The comparative method will be instrumental to us both to compare the proposals on the coming reforms in the Don education, put forward by different authors of the early 1860s, and to identify their connection with governmental reforms and the Don day-to-day realities.

### **3. Discussion and results**

The thought leader of the Don Kazakomans and even a “martyr” for their cause was the Chief of Staff of the Don Host, Prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov. In 1862, when the government's projects of proposed radical reforms reached Novochoerkassk, the young general, who was expected to become an ataman in the future, expressed complete disagreement with them, voicing his criticism not only unofficially, but also in “The Note on the Don Host,” sent to the Ministry of War of the Russian Empire. The official's demarche did not go unnoticed and almost cost him his career: A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov was removed from office and was in disgrace until 1869 (Karasev, 1896: 570-571). But within the framework of our research, it is more important that “The Note on the Don Host,” the first policy paper of the Don Kazakomans, gives educational problems a noticeable or even a key role.

It is the item on “the distribution of funds for the education of the young Cossack generation” which opens its section “Current needs of the Don Host” and is an alternative scenario of future reforms. A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov drew the attention of the imperial authorities to three issues that required immediate solutions. First of all, in the early 1860s, the only high school in the Don Host Oblast, located in Novochoerkassk, did not even have its own building, and had to operate in a small private home. As a result, the high school management could not accept all those who wished to study, and had to refuse potential students simply because of the lack of space in the classes (Karasev, 1896: 580). Another problem was that one high school was evidently not enough for 14,000,000 dessiatines of land, and there was an urgent need for a new secondary school in the up-river areas (Karasev, 1896: 580). Finally, many villages realized the need to arrange their own secondary schools, and applied to local administrations to open the institutions (Karasev, 1896: 580). According to A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Cossacks themselves, from noblemen to ordinary Cossacks living in stanitsas, were well aware of these three issues and “constantly expressed their aspirations” to address them and “eagerly awaited for their fair hopes to come true” (Karasev, 1896: 580).

But the military authorities could not meet the expectations. The reason for the barrier was an ill-conceived policy of rigid centralization, which prevented the opening of new educational institutions, even when local and imperial authorities had the required funds and were willing to do so. For example, in 1861, the Ministry of War gave an order to construct two buildings for high schools in Novochoerkassk and even allocated appropriate funds for the purpose. However, the construction was not started in 1862, and, based on his past experience, the Chief of Staff of the Don Host supposed that the proper order of the government would be drown in the sea of recommendations and approvals, and would not be executed because of bureaucratic paperwork (Karasev, 1896: 580-581). “Most of such projects drag on for several years, are returned to make

changes to the designs of some column cap, a pediment or an internal arrangement of rooms, which is most easily evaluated on site and by the direct authorities, and are approved when the quoted prices in initial estimates do not correspond to the existing ones” (Karasev, 1896: 581). A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov warned that rumors already circulated in the Cossack community that “the government is aimed to suspend education of Cossacks,” because even the Don region most pressing need for primary and secondary schools were not satisfied (Karasev, 1896: 581).

Thus, the ideologist of Don conservatives, a man who earned great respect in the Cossack community (Karasev, 1900: 167-174), believed that the coming reforms of the Don Cossackdom should be started with expanding the network of primary and secondary schools in the Don region. And, paradoxically, this part of the “The note on the Don Host” was implemented almost in full, despite the author being in disgrace. The 1860s became a time when the number of schools grew exponentially on the Don. While there were 28 parish secondary schools in Cossack stanitsas and farms in 1859 (Krasnov, 1863: 398), their number had reached 110 by 1868 (Krasnov, 1870: 227). Particular improvements could be seen in the situation with the peasant education, which was, without exaggeration, disastrous: in the late 1850s, peasant settlements in the Don Host Oblast had not a single school, and only 52 peasant children studied at parish schools in Cossack stanitsas (Krasnov, 1863: 401-403). And within one decade peasant settlements already outstripped them in the number of schools: there had been 117 schools functioning there by 1868 (Krasnov, 1870: 228). A Don statistician of the late 19th century, S.F. Nomikosov, already noted that there was an unprecedented quantitative leap in the Don education in the 1860s. Although he highlighted another point: while in Nicholas’ epoch enrollments at Don schools grew quite slowly, and it only doubled over 30 years from 1830 to 1860, over the next decade the number of schoolchildren increased sixfold! It is significant that the growth rate of school enrollments again slowed after 1870, although it was much higher than performance in Nicholas’ period (Nomikosov, 1884: 575). The growing number of schools and pupils at them was mainly contributed by parish secondary schools, but the 1860s also marked the opening of the second high school on the Don. As A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov proposed, it was established in the up-river districts of the Don Host Oblast, in the Ust-Medveditskaya stanitsa (Donskova, 2011). Nevertheless, the number of people, who received a robust secondary education, demonstrated an insignificant growth. If the late 1850s registered 532 people who studied at the Novocherkassk high school, the number of students in both high schools – in Novocherkassk and Ust-Medveditskaya – did not exceed 785 people in the late 1860s (Krasnov, 1870: 227).

It remains to acknowledge that the reform of local education, proposed by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, really reflected “the actual need of the Don Host,” and neither party struggle between Don liberals and conservatives, nor limited resources of the Ministry of War hampered the implementation of the reform. In fact, A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov offered to bring the system of the Don educational institutions to a state that would at least help to satisfy minimum needs felt by Cossacks and at least address its most evident and conspicuous issues.

Other Kazakomans went much further in their hopes and proposals. In 1863, in the environment of open discontent with governmental projects of the coming transformations, the Ministry of War gave the green light to rather a bold initiative of Army Ataman P.Kh. Grabbe. As a result, stanitsa deputies were allowed to have a hand in the formulation of the new “Regulations on the Don Host,” an underlying document that defines the rights and duties of the Don Cossacks (Volvenko, 2014: 16). On November 8 of the same year, representatives of the up-river Khopersky and Ust-Medveditsky districts began their joint meetings (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 1-10b). The Preobrazhenskaya stanitsa elected Kh.I. Popov, later a famous Don local historian and founder of the Don Museum, to represent the settlement at this meeting (Dontsy, 2003: 409). The document “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” (Zamechaniya deputatov, naznachennykh ot stanits Khoperskogo okruga, na proyekt osnovnykh nachal Polozheniya o Voyske Donskom), created by the deputies of the up-river stanitsas, appeared to crystallize not only the position of the people living in the Khopersky district, but also the opinion of the entire Kazakoman majority among the Don Cossacks. The deputies, appointed by the Ust-Medveditsky district, as we have already mentioned, initially gathered at joint meetings with the Khopersky district representatives, and apparently intended to jointly draw up a text that would oppose the government's project. This is already evidenced by the fact that the draft handwritten text of



“The remarks...” started with the preamble which positions it as the result of collaborative efforts by the representatives of the Khopersky and Ust-Medveditsky districts. And it was not until afterwards that the reference to Ust-Medveditsky district deputies was deleted (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 1). In our view, the act can be explained not through some controversy but this can be done for the sake of apparat struggle. Starting from the middle of the text, references to the representatives of the Ust-Medveditsky district change their character, and they speak not of their consolidated position with the Khopersky district deputies but that the Ust-Medveditsky deputies independently drew similar conclusions (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 310b-32). Probably, it was supposed that two documents from different districts would make a greater impression on the government than a single jointly prepared paper. The attitude to the text of “The remarks...,” which existed among Cossacks of other Don districts, can be seen in the following fact. Shortly after they were completed, Kh.I. Popov was appointed representative of the entire Don Cossackdom to the main committee that was engaged in devising new “Regulations on the Don Host” (Dontsy, 2003: 409).

“The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” contain a broad range of points on the Don education. This seems logical to us, since Kh.I. Popov, who had an active role in formulating this document, as did A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, believed that the Don’s successful future could be driven precisely by enhancing education in the Cossack community. A few months before the representatives of the up-river districts opened their meetings, the future Don local historian published an article in the military edition “Donskiye voiskovye vedomosty,” where he came up with his own program for the reforms of the Cossack community. Of the eight points in this program, two dealt with education. Almost literally quoting the words of A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Kh.I. Popov called on the government to “increase funding for education” in the territory of the Don Host Oblast. However, unlike his ideological predecessor, the deputy from the Preobrazhenskaya stanitsa urged that not only new secondary and high schools should be to created on the Don, but a full-fledged university should be set up in the region (Kh.P. 1863: 2-3). This proposal seems to be as audacious as it was unrealistic: in the context of the poorly developed network of Russian universities in the 1860s, the Don Host Oblast, which had no large cities, was territorially located near the Kharkov University and operated only two high schools on its entire area, was by no means suitable for the role of a new university center. However, the second proposal by Kh.I. Popov looks far more attractive. The Don social activist considered it necessary to exempt Cossacks “who received vocational knowledge, and scientists and artists who received education at their own expense” from the compulsory military service (Kh.P, 1863: 2-3).

It was this idea that “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” put the greatest emphasis on – the idea of conferring on educated Cossacks special rights. In principle, it could not be described as a new concept, because certain steps in this direction were taken by the government even before the 1860s, but they achieved no good results. The Novocherkassk high school, in addition to standard curricula, delivered courses in agriculture, legal and military science. Those who graduated from these courses and who had high average grades (over 4) were granted the right to receive the first commissioned grade immediately after graduation (Krasnov, 1863: 399). Unfortunately, in practice, courses in legal and military science were run instead of Latin lessons, and the number of those who signed up for them was small, and these were mostly weak students. As a result, over 2-3 years only one graduate of a high school could become a candidate for a commissioned grade, and the rest, because they had low average scores or failed to take the course in military science, had serve in the army on a regular basis (Krasnov, 1863: 399). The Ministry of War realized the depravity of this situation and proposed in its draft reform to give special benefits in obtaining commissioned grades to all graduates of the Novocherkassk high school, who completed the military science course. On the other hand, the scope of these benefits was reduced. When enrolled in the service, such graduates could claim only the grade of uryadnik (junior officer), while the first table of ranks grade of khorunzhiy (senior officer) was given only after a year of service (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 41-410b).

The deputies found this proposal too limited. They believed that it would be reasonable to entitle Cossack high school graduates to a simpler promotion to the first table of ranks grade when being enlisted both for the military and civil service. Accordingly, there was no point in tying this

privilege to course in military sciences, but it was necessary to give it to all Cossacks who graduated from high schools (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 41-41ob). Unfortunately, the text of “The remarks...” does not provide a more detailed substantiation for this decision, but it seems that representatives of the Khopersky district wanted to stimulate the Cossacks who received the education. There are no detailed motivations in those parts as well, which recommend to facilitate the career progression of graduates of other educational institutions, but the opportunities that the deputies wanted to give them were very rich. In this respect, it was actually recommended to confer graduates of theological seminaries the same status as that of high school graduates (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 41-41ob). And it was also advised to give those who successfully completed the academic program at district secondary schools the right to apply for uryadnik grades after the first year of service (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 41ob-42).

The text of “The remarks...” also supported the proposal made by Kh.I. Popov to exempt the Cossacks who received a vocational education from the compulsory military service and all related duties without any compensation. It specifically emphasized that all rights due to the Cossack estate, including the right to own land shares, should be preserved by educated Cossacks (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 6ob). In their core, the proposals put forward by Khopersky deputies actually implied that in addition to the Cossack nobility and tradesmen, one more sub-class would appear on the Don with its own set of rights and duties, a group of educated Cossacks.

The proposal to exempt educated Cossacks from conscription to some extent resonated with the concept of “Don Host citizens,” popular among the Ministry of War officials in the 1860s. According to this concept, which was in place for a short time in most Cossack troops in the next decade, part of Cossacks were completely exempted from military service for additional tax and could channel their skills and energy to the civil development of the region (Volvenko, 2016: 68-71). This organization of the Cossack society did not survive, and contemporaries criticized it, among other things, for the fact that Cossacks most often get into the group of “Don Host citizens” not because they were willing to engage in agriculture, trade, manufacturing or other activities incompatible with the active service, but thanks to a mere game of chance (Khoroshkhin, 1873: 143). The proposal of the stanitsa deputies to exempt from conscription on the basis of the received education looks much more logical and thoroughly considered, and it only remains to regret that it was not put into practice because of the opposition between the imperial authorities and Don conservatives.

“The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” also contain other ideas for reforms required for the Don education. The most important of these them offers that all Cossacks should have equal rights to education. The deputies only formulated a general concept of the proposal, demanding to legally formalize the situation of the early 1860s, when children of various descent – from noble Don families to ordinary Cossacks – were admitted to most civilian educational institutions on equal grounds (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 41), and when defining the status of specific educational institutions, both civilian and military ones. For example, the situation regarding the school of Don uryadniks (military officers) was recognized as extremely unfair (it is evidently about the class of Don uryadniks in St. Petersburg, since there was no separate school of Don uryadniks in the early 1860s (Krasnov, 1863: 402). Representatives of the Khopersky district noted that tuitions were paid by the entire host, but only noblemen had the right to study in the institution. According to the authors of “The remarks...,” the only way to remedy the situation was the permission to admit all Cossacks to the school of uryadniks, regardless of their origin (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 51). An equally unfair situation existed around the Oriental languages department of the Novocherkassk high school, although the reason for it was different. While all other departments accepted on equal grounds children of all Cossacks, the Oriental languages department was open only to the children of noblemen and officials. The deputies saw no rational explanation for such a distinction and proposed to lift it (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 64). Finally, the deputies did not bolster their idea to restrict women's education on the Don to daughters of noblemen, officials, priests and merchants from the Cossack estate and prohibit girls from ordinary Cossack families to join the Don girls institute. Representatives of the Khopersky district recommended making it available for all Cossack girls (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 64-64ob).

Furthermore, poverty should not deprive a Cossack of a chance to receive an education as well. The proposal by the Ministry of War to form military school capital from fees paid by students for taking courses of lectures in the Novocherkassk and Ust-Medveditskaya high schools already before November 1863 split the codification committee which discussed the government draft project of the new “Regulations on the Don Host.” Some of its members spoke against the education fees and demanded that they be lifted. The Khopersky district deputies unanimously supported this decision, offering to preserve free education (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 75).

Thus, Kh.I. Popov and other elected delegates from the Khopersky district stanitsas sought to make the network of Don educational institutions as accessible to all Cossacks as possible. However, many of the measures proposed by them can hardly be considered as beneficial. For example, the introduction of tuition fees in high schools was an absolutely necessary step, and besides it by no means affected economically disadvantaged students. The reason is that salaries of high school faculties in the Russian Empire were acknowledged as inadequate by the Ministry of Education itself, and to address this problem, it was permitted to charge wealthy students 5-10 rubles in silver annually. The money was then divided between teachers and the poorest pupils (Artinsky, 1907: 187). The Novocherkassk high school, almost the only one in the Empire, had not such tuition fee in place, and the education was free here, but its teachers were forced to engage in additional private lessons or look for other ways to earn for the life. The Ministry of War made efforts to deal with the situation using commonly accepted practices, by introducing a tuition fee in the amount of 5 rubles per year in the Novocherkassk high school since 1861, and immediately stipulating that poor students would not have to pay the fee, but they would receive part of the collected money (Artinsky, 1907: 187). However, the Don society viewed this decision very negatively. High school director S.S. Robush complained in 1863 that “The tuition provokes discontent here, and not only among the undeveloped class, but also in more educated circles. Complaints about the high school's administration of its charging fees from students were filed with the Appointed Ataman by such people for whom it was not a great burden at all to pay 2 rubles 50 kopecks in silver per semester for their sons' studies, but who saw some kind of infringement of their own *privileges* in this charge (italics added by S.S. Robush – A.P.)” (Artinsky, 1907: 187-188). But in another case, the deputies from Khopersky district clearly demonstrated double standards. We noted above their demand that all Cossacks be admitted to the school of *uryadniks* on the grounds that their training was paid for by the entire army, and not only by nobles, but the fact that the Don Institute for Girls was run at the expense of special fees paid by noblemen and compulsory donations from them (Krasnov, 1863: 401), was totally omitted in the text of “The remarks...,” which on the other hand contained a recommendation for the institution to accept girls from Cossack families of any background.

Local, but very profound significance can be attached to the proposal specified in the “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host,” which offered to redefine the principles of the medical education on the Don. The Russian historiography features a dominating opinion that traditional folk medicine quite successfully replaced professional medicine for Cossacks. A recently published textbook on the history of the Don Cossacks says, for example, the following: “Being at the crossroads of civilizations, Cossacks created a unique natural pharmacy, devised methods and ways of treating wounds and diseases, tested and secured medical knowledge in experience and a distinctive conceptual system. <...>. Herbalists and healers cured wounds from gunshots, stabs and cuts, sore throats, fever, insomnia, hernias, hiccups, lichen, splenic fever and many other diseases” (History, 2008: 292). A more cautious stance on the subject is taken by V.G. Vasilenko who devoted her scientific work to the history of healthcare and medical education in South Russia. According to her, folk medicine was not a panacea, but it had its positive aspects – some of its developments remain relevant even today, and even after professional doctors started to practice medicine, Cossacks not just continued to visit healers, but at times preferred them to qualified medics (Vasilenko, 2005: 24-29). On the contrary, S.V. Solovyeva actually arrives at the claim that Cossacks did not need comprehensive medical institutions and professional doctors were not needed: “For a long time, Cossacks did not feel any critical need for specialized medical institutions. <...>. Each Cossack was a healer of a kind and could always render first aid to his comrade” (Solovyeva, 1995: 60).

And it was not until recent years that the effectiveness of traditional Don medicine has been questioned. A.V. Zakharevich, well-known historian of the Caucasian war, has recently published a paper where he showed that in the early 19th century, the general situation in medicine was bad on the Don (Zakharevich, 2016: 49-71). Having cited numerous statements about the supposedly highest levels of the Cossack folk healing, the modern author set them against real facts, the most revealing of which is the fact that the annual losses of Don regiments from diseases reached 10 % on the Caucasian Line (Zakharevich, 2016: 61). However, later A.V. Zakharevich cast doubt on his own conclusions, and in the next paper suggested that, possibly, documents about the “futile” Cossack folk medicine and its victims were compiled by professional medics of the 19th century who as people with medical education simply... “did not understand what benefits could give some herbs, incantations, etc., as compared to high science” (Zakharevich, 2017: 15).

In the dispute between supporters and opponents of the Cossack folk medicine, the Khopersky district deputies took the side of professional medics of their time rather than the view of modern historians. Moreover, they considered it a serious drawback of the draft future reforms, which had been provided from above, precisely the fact that they failed in principle to somehow address the vital problems of the Don medicine. Meanwhile, Don stanitsas experienced a “dire need” in real medical professionals. Kh.I. Popov and his supporters not only thought that it was possible to make do with healers and herbalists but insisted that every stanitsa of the Don Host should have its own full-time medical attendant (feldsher) (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 80).

But in the context of desperate shortage of people, who received medical education, to formally introduce the positions in stanitsas was not enough. It was necessary to find those who would occupy the offices, and the Khopersky district deputies proposed to organize targeted professional medical training on principles that had not been used on the Don ever before. Again, the very concept of such training was not new and had long been resorted to by the government: in 1860, 159 state-financed places for Don Cossacks were allocated in various educational institutions of the Russian Empire with 6 of them being in medical schools (Krasnov, 1863: 404-405). However, the deputies of the Khopersky district proposed to refuse from a fixed number of vacancies, determined by the imperial and military authorities, and, instead, allow stanitsa communities to send to medical schools as many Cossacks as they considered necessary, and, in return, the studies of such students would be paid from both the military chest and stanitsa budgets (GARO. F. 55. Op. 1. D. 240. L. 80). From our viewpoint, the proposals formulated by the Khopersky district deputies were once again more practicable than the government's ideas. In the early 1860s, the number of vacancies for Don Cossacks in educational institutions did not always correspond to the number of people who were willing to take them. For example, the Mikhailovsky Artillery School allocated eight such vacancies in 1860, and only one was in fact occupied (Krasnov, 1863: 402). On the other hand, introducing the targeted education, sponsored not only by the entire Host, but by other local authorities as well, provided that these authorities could determine an institution for those who wished to apply for, seems to be a viable response to the Don's many problems in the mid-19th century. For example, at that time, the Ust-Medveditsky district struggled to cope with heavy demand for land surveyors, which resulted in the more than decade-long surveying of the land after the peasant reform. It came to almost anecdotal situations. The assembly of Ust-Medveditsky district conciliators had to wait for several years for the military authorities to send a land surveyor to them. As the specialist never arrived, and the assembly had to look for the required profession independently. And the only candidate found demanded payment in advance, and, after he had got it, he disappeared (GARO. F. 46. Op. 1. D. 1057. L. 3).

We believe that unlike “The note on the Don Host” by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov who offered quantitative changes, “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” envisioned qualitative transformation of the Don educational system. This document failed to elaborate on the basic Kazakoman idea to expand the network of educational institutions in the Don Host Oblast land and accordingly increase their funding. On the other hand, the Khopersky district deputies considered it necessary to significantly amend the principles themselves, which created the core of the Don education. It was recommended to grant an extended package of rights and privileges to educated Cossacks, which, in fact, singled them out into a special sub-estate along with the Don noblemen and trade Cossacks. The education itself was planned to be made available to all Cossack children as much as possible, and stanitsas were supposed to be given the capacity to



independently allocate funds for targeted education of Cossacks, even though only in feldsher schools for the moment. We illustrated that while some of the proposals developed by the Khopersky district deputies were not deeply considered, but other suggestions at least deserved some attention of the Ministry of War. It is not surprising: the deputies from the stanitsas actually were representatives of ordinary Cossacks that supported conservative Don Kazakomans, and their text reflected the position regarding the upcoming reforms, which was adopted by the most population in the Don Host Oblast. Therefore, although the representatives of Khopersky stanitsas gave up to some populist but widespread ideas in the Cossack society, at the same time they managed to voice the underlying needs of Cossacks, which had been missed by the Ministry of War, and to point out which of the governmental regulations concerning education did not work well and were, in fact, half measures.

Unfortunately, in the end, “The remarks of the deputies, appointed by stanitsas of the Khopersky district, on the proposed main provisions of the Regulations on the Don Host” proved to be of no demand in the government. The draft project of the new “Regulations on the Don Host,” devised in cooperation with the stanitsa deputies, was rejected, and moreover it was shelved not only at the initiative of the Ministry of War, but of other central bodies of the Russian Empire as well (Volvenko, 2014: 18). And this outcome had its reasons. With the support from the government, the liberal concept of reform in the Don Host differed from the proposals of Kazakomans not in particulars, but in its essence. This was also true to the sphere of education. If conservatives suggested focusing on addressing the most acute and obvious issues, “the real needs of the Don Host,” as A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov put it, liberals demanded a complete overhaul of the very pillars on which the Cossack class existed, and expected that the abolition of the most obsolete rights and privileges of the Don Cossacks would eliminate the root causes of existing problems. Accordingly, it was advised instead of developing the network of educational institutions in Cossack stanitsas or changing the legal status of their graduates, to consolidated efforts to deal with the barriers that prevented this network from developing.

In this regard, the position of N.I. Krasnov, one of the most prominent Don statisticians of the 19th century and a supporter of the governmental program of reforms, put forward by the Ministry of War in the early 1860s, is very exemplary. Despite his liberal mindset, the General Staff officer agreed with Kazakomans when he admitted that the crying situation in the Don education slowed the development of the Don Host in general. He wrote: “Education is on the decline, and the backwardness has a disastrous impact on all branches of industry and social activities; all positions that required special knowledge were occupied with people who did not belong to the Don Host class, which, in turn, irritated the Don population” (Krasnov, 1863: 403). However N.I. Krasnov also noted that the “passionate commitment of the Don Host Oblast population to enlightenment” became visible only in 1860, and before that even educated Cossacks did not rush to spread their knowledge, and “there hardly were twenty research papers published by writers from this region (the Don – A.P.) over the last half-century” (Krasnov, 1863: 403). Therefore, according to the Don statistician, potential successes of the Don education were determined not by the developed network of educational institutions or the scope of the rights possessed by their graduates, but by the attitude towards the education of Cossacks themselves. “The doors of enlightenment are open to all comers. It remains to take advantage of the government's reasonable direction and enter the sphere of arts and science. It remains to take advantage of those gifts of nature that have been kept under wraps for so many years” (Krasnov, 1863: 404). It is noteworthy that these words were written almost simultaneously with “The note on the Don Host” by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov. Thus, when the conservative author demanded specific changes from the government in the Don education, his liberal opponent called on Cossacks to start making use of what the authorities had already done. And this, too, was meaningful: as we noted above, in the early 1860s, part of state-subsided places in educational institutions outside the Host remained vacant. Accordingly, the range of areas that were not in demand, except artillerymen training, included civilian fundamental education. Vacancies in Kharkov University were filled only by two thirds, and there were cases when the Cossacks who wanted to study there were not supported by their own families (Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017: 371).

But on the other hand, N.I. Krasnov did not absolve the imperial government of the state in which education existed on the Don. However, in his opinion, the mistake of the central authorities had much more serious implications than insufficient funding of schools or excessive

centralization. The Don statistician perceived the situation itself, which arose in the Don Host, as unnatural. This perspective was in line with the government's project of reforms, which was criticized by A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov and the Khopersky district deputies. Here is a key quote from this document, entitled "Considerations of the committee established under the Office of the Irregular Troops regarding the main principles that must be taken into account when drafting new provisions on Cossack troops": "The position of the society is unnatural if all members of such a society belong to the military class which is obliged to have weapons ready at all times and, at the first request, set out on the march in complete equipment and at their own expense" (Volvenko, 2016: 69). N.I. Krasnov not only quoted these words verbatim in one of his works (remarkably, he did it without quotation marks (Krasnov, 1864: 199) but also confirmed them with specific examples, proving, among other things, that the receiving any skills by Cossacks other than the military ones was of little use. "Both hereditary and personal nobles in Cossack communities are even deprived of the right to freely choose the way of life and occupation, before a certain period of service expires, which, being extremely long, ends only when Cossacks due to their advance age, are not able to devote themselves to some professional occupation. As for Cossacks of the lowest estate, only the most limited number of them is able to engage themselves in trade, manufacturing and crafts" (Krasnov, 1864: 198). And the government's project of reforms was aimed precisely to correct this situation. To support this, N.I. Krasnov also quoted another statement from the document, even though he did not put quotation marks again (Krasnov, 1864: 199): "It is possible to ameliorate this false position, in which the Cossack population has to live, only by limiting the military estate to a certain size, so that the excess of the Cossack population would be exempted from conscription even in case of emergencies, and continuing to be citizens of their land could freely turn to other occupations" (Volvenko, 2016: 69). Accordingly, the Don statistician believed that the project of reforms, proposed in the "Considerations of the committee established under the Office of the Irregular Troops regarding the main principles that must be taken into account when drafting new provisions on Cossack troops," was designed to enhance "civic consciousness and *education* (italics added by me – A.P.)" in the Cossack troops (Krasnov, 1864: 196), although its further detailed analysis by the Don statistician did not mention a single proposal on education (Krasnov, 1864: 196-210).

However, while acknowledging that since the early 1860s, the Ministry of War took the right direction by gradually rectifying issues of the Don education, N.I. Krasnov did not agree with the principles which, according to "Considerations ...," were intended to be employed to exempt part of Cossacks from service. We will not review these principles in detail but will only emphasize that they, as the concept of Don Host citizens" implemented later in the Cossack troops, provided no benefits to the educated Cossacks. The vision outlined in the government's project of reforms specified that any Cossack, regardless of education and financial situation, would be able to refuse from military service (Krasnov, 1864: 204), but he would lose the right to receive a land share (Krasnov, 1864: 199). N.I. Krasnov considered this proposal inexpedient and criticized it expressing thoughts that were surprisingly close to the ideas of the Don Kazakomans and, especially, to those offered by Kh.I. Popov. The General Staff officer stressed that "the Don people consider the land right to be of the greatest importance among their rights," and fewer Cossack allotments "will arouse secret murmurings of displeasure" (Krasnov, 1864: 208). On the other hand, N.I. Krasnov expressed hopes that the government had initiated the reforms to ease the situation of Cossacks, and not to replace their service with another one "more profitable for the government" (Krasnov, 1864: 207). For this reason, the Don statistician advised the Ministry of War to exempt part of Cossacks from the conscription, without violating the major privilege enjoyed by the Don Host and reserving land for them. But the right to be exempted from military service should not be granted to all those who wished to have it, but only to certain categories of Cossacks, which in the second place, after people who were ready to pay compensation for the release from conscription, should include "specialists of various sciences and arts," that is, people, who received education (Krasnov, 1864: 204). Thus, in the early 1860s, public figures of the opposite camps called on the Ministry of War to directly link the receiving education by Cossacks with their release from compulsory military service in order to give individuals of the military estate who accomplished a high school or university course the opportunity to fully put their knowledge in practice. It remains only to regret once again that these calls were not heard.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The projects of reforms for the Don national education, put forward in the early 1860s, constitute an interesting area for scientific scrutiny already because they clearly showed the fundamental differences between Don liberals and conservatives. Kazakoman conservatives believed that only consistent transformation could be successful, and to ensure the well-being of Cossacks, it was necessary first to deal with the vital issues of the Don region, including those related to education. They proposed that the government focus on specific changes, which brought obvious benefits, such as expanding the Don network of educational institutions, introducing incentives for Cossacks to choose the education in them, as well as linking professions of graduates with actual needs of the Don Host. Progressist liberals, on the contrary, argued that the Cossack community was unable to normally progress not because of some unfortunate legal provisions, but because of the very archaic essence of the military class. No consistent reforms that left this essence unchanged could be fully efficient. For example, to increase the number of educated Cossacks, it was not enough to open new secondary and high schools, but it was crucial first to exempt part of the Don's military population from service so that people who received a civil education could realize their potential as civilians. It may seem that liberals and conservatives saw eye to eye on some practical questions, opposing projects based on the Don realities to abstract ideas of the government: for example, the Don public figures of the opposing camps considered it wrong that the Ministry of War planned to exempt part of Cossacks from military service but did not try to connect this exemption with the education received. But the point is that this similarity was of a practical nature, while their ideologies were entirely different. In the above example, Kazakomans offered to give the right to conscription exemption to graduates of higher educational institutions, so that a small, not fixed number of Cossacks who had already demonstrated their abilities in the civilian area, were released from military service. The number of such "Don Host citizens" would grow in a natural way, and this process should only be accelerated through encouragement and more available education on the Don. Unlike them, Progressists proposed to immediately release from service a significant part of the local population which would include only a small proportion of educated people. According to liberals, this roadmap would greatly contribute to the faster development of Cossacks, including their advancement in education, since the skills, obtained in secondary and high schools, would be much more appreciated in the civilian environment than in the military one. This, in turn, would inevitably strengthen the "passionate commitment of the Don Host Oblast population to enlightenment," which formed in the early 1860s.

Despite such ideological differences between Don liberals and conservatives, the proposals by Prince A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov can be regarded as a kind of minimum agenda for the Don education, which should be necessarily implemented, and the necessity was clear to everyone. A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov offered no qualitative changes but limited his initiative to technical requirements which sooner or later would have to be fulfilled in any case. The Chief of Staff of the Don Host considered it imperative to construct a separate building for the Novocherkassk high school, establish a new high school in the up-river districts, from where it was difficult to send children to study in the administrative center of the Don Host Oblast, and to expand the network of stanitsa schools, which was inadequate even by Russian standards. Although this program was of a universal nature it was only logical that it was put forward precisely by a Kazakoman, a representative of the party whose members spotlighted the need to tackle obvious and burning issues of Cossacks.

Unfortunately, more ambitious projects involving qualitative changes in the Don education were implemented, primarily because conservatives and liberals were locked in the political struggle. No special rights were granted to educated Cossacks either in the Progressist version or in the Kazakoman variant. Meanwhile, even such implacable ideological opponents as N.I. Krasnov and Kh.I. Popov share one view that members of the military estate who graduated from higher educational institutions should be exempted from military service to receive a chance to build civilian careers. But the Ministry of War failed to hear the Don public figures. It is illustrative that during the military reform of the 1870s, educated Don Cossacks received only part of the privileges that were due to representatives of other estates in the Russian Empire, and the total term of military service was stipulated for them on general grounds ([RGVIA. F. 330. Op. 61. D. 1937. L. 43-43ob](#)). Our conclusion is that this unwillingness of the government to support educated Cossacks, and the fact that even basic privileges that had university graduates from other classes were

unavailable to them, are the root causes explaining why in the 1870s, the growth in the number of students on the Don slowed dramatically, and the traditional aspirations of the Don Cossacks to education were not fully used.

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