

Excursion method in regional educational institutions in early 20th century Russia

Yulia V. Bodrova^{1*}, *Aleksey V. Vinnik*¹, *Olga K. Ermishkina*¹, *Elena A. Makarova*¹, and *Angelina V. Tsyganova*¹

¹Tver State University, Department of Social and Cultural Service, Tver, Russia

Abstract. Studying the history of private-public partnership is still relevant for the discussion on modernizing education. In the early 20th century, it was common practice to attract private capital to solve financial problems associated with the work of educational institutions in Russia, which opened the way for using new forms of organizing the educational process. The excursion method became a groundbreaking phenomenon in the pedagogical system. Studying the history of the application of this method in regional educational institutions is of interest from the perspective of modernization of the educational process and the development of educational tourism. The authors aimed to study the practice of using the excursion method in educational institutions of Tver and determine the role of the state and public figures in organizing excursions for students from outside of Russian metropolitan areas. The authors apply the local history method that allows them to link the processes that take place in the capitals and the regions in the interdisciplinary field and highlight the regional features of modernizing the education system. Unpublished archival records are used in the article. The novelty of the study consists in the reconstruction of educational regional tourist-excursive practices of the early 20th century in the case study of Tver. The authors identify the mechanisms of the private-public partnership in the solution of organizational and financial problems of arranging excursion trips. The significance of individual public figures' funds when arranging long excursion trips is discovered.

Keywords: educational history, teaching methods, educational travel abroad, Russia.

1 Introduction

The modernization processes in Russia in the 1860s-1870s led to the formation of a new educational paradigm aimed at creating public-private partnerships in education and the development of affordable primary, female, and vocational education [1]. A typical phenomenon was the participation of public figures in the establishment of the public school and the attraction of private capital to solve economic, financial, and educational issues of educational institutions [2, 3]. Strengthening the intellectual ties between the regions and the capital contributed to the expansion of the educational space [4]. New pedagogical practices

* Corresponding author: bodrova.yv@tversu.ru

were introduced into the regional educational environment. The excursion method in teaching had a breakthrough nature [5].

2 Methods

The study is based on the methodology of local history. The rationality of using it in the study of the regional features of sociocultural history in the context of global trends has been substantiated by prominent Russian and foreign researchers [6–10]. This method allows us to link the processes that occurred in the capitals and the regions in the interdisciplinary field and highlight the modernization processes in the education system at the local level [11–13]. The research is based on published records [14] and unpublished materials from the State Archive of the Tver region [15].

3 Results and discussion

By the early 20th century, favorable conditions had formed for the development of excursion work in Russian educational institutions. The excursion method was actively promoted by the progressive part of the pedagogical community.

The convenient location of Tver between Moscow and St. Petersburg contributed to a steady influx of graduates who wished to devote themselves to pedagogy from the capitals' educational institutions to the region. In Tver, N.A. Kun, A.V. Alexandrov, A.P. Pavlov, F.F. Oldenburg, and V.M. Bradis started their careers. Many of them were familiar with the excursion method which was widely used at the Higher Courses for Women, St. Petersburg University, and commercial schools and actively used the method in their teaching [16].

Much attention was paid to the excursion method in the educational activities of women's educational institutions: the Tver Mariinsky Women's Gymnasium, the Women's Teachers' School named after P.P. Maksimovich, pedagogical courses. The excursions were varied in topics and routes and included field trips and out-of-town journeys, with instructional, cultural, educational, and pedagogical purposes.

Out-of-town excursions were organized as part of studying individual courses: natural science, history, and physics. There would be production excursions to the railway car manufacturing plant, glass plant, and power station, where the students could get acquainted with production technologies.

Field trips were made to Sevastopol, Yalta, St. Petersburg, Pyatigorsk, Nizhny Novgorod, the Urals, and the Solovetsky Islands to get acquainted with the sights and visit museums. Most often, excursions to Moscow were organized, which was due to the proximity of the capital and insignificant expenses.

When organizing excursions, the pressing issue was funding, which was formed from various sources. A significant part of the costs was covered by the Tver Zemstvo, donations were made by the Provincial Zemstvo Council, and part of the funds was contributed by the students themselves. Thus, the Zemstvo allocated 900 rubles for the Ural trip (600 rubles for the organization of excursions and 300 rubles for the remuneration of guides), the Provincial Zemstvo Council contributed 150 rubles, and the contribution of the students was 15 rubles per person.

A fundamental role in the development of the excursion method of teaching was played by the Tver Men's Gymnasium, where from 1903 to 1918, there was a Society for the Organization of Student Travel. It organized educational trips across Russia and abroad. The Society became a prominent phenomenon in the pedagogical and cultural environment of the Tver gubernia and beyond, moving from isolated excursions to systematic activities. The

Tver excursionists not only formed but also broadcast their experience due to the reports of the head of the society P.P. Chernyshev for 1903–1917 [14].

The Society consisted of gymnasium teachers, members of the Tver Academic Archival Commission, and other representatives of the Tver community who sympathized with the Society's plans and assisted in organizing travel. It is difficult to assess the participation of its members in the activities of the Society based on existing sources. However, it is clear that the members made financial contributions that allowed some students to travel, provided other assistance (helped with transport, accommodation), etc. The number of members of the society varied from 66 people at the time of creation to 33 in 1916 [17].

The excursion routes were varied and the cognitive resources and financial capabilities that formed the experience of travel were considered. During the existence of the Society, 14 long-distance trips were made, including to the Caucasus, the North (Arkhangelsk, the Solovetsky Islands), and other places. In the summer of 1910, after a lot of preparatory work, it was possible to carry out a long trip abroad, mainly to the Slavic lands and places of battles of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878.

Financial support was a serious problem in the trip arrangement. Funds came from the Tver Men's Gymnasium, membership fees of the Society members, voluntary donations, and social and charitable activities of the gymnasium students and teachers. Later, the Society formed a financial reserve which was kept in a savings bank and brought in a small annual income. However, the Society's funds could not provide all interested students with the opportunity to travel. Therefore, a differentiated approach was applied. The excursionists were divided into scholarship recipients and semi-recipients; the latter contributed half of the payment.

The trips were educational; participants underwent serious theoretical training and got acquainted with the objects of excursions in advance. They studied the history, geography, and culture of the planned routes, as evidenced by the diaries and reports of the gymnasium students.

The Society's work was not limited to the organization of excursions but also included the promotion of educational tourism in society. During the academic year, the excursionists carried out various educational events, during which the acquainted the results of their travels were made public. As a rule, reports, concerts, and popular lectures were charitable and helped to raise funds for new excursions.

Since 1914, travel routes were noticeably shortened; mainly they were reduced to visiting the sights of the Tver province. This can be explained both by the beginning of the First World War and by the marked complication of the internal situation in Russia. The last trip took place in 1917. Later the Society ceased its activities.

4 Conclusion

The involvement of specialists from leading Russian educational institutions helped to quickly and efficiently spread the excursion method in the regional educational space. The Tver gubernia is an example of the successful development of new educational methods due to its convenient location at the crossroads of thoroughfares, proximity to major cultural and educational centers in the capitals, and the availability of qualified and motivated teaching staff. The experience of a public-private partnership at the beginning of the 20th century made it possible to finance educational excursions mainly at the expense of individuals and organizations (about 60%). The share of the state was about 30%, and the contributions of students did not exceed 10% of the cost of the trip. A funding option was the creation of public excursion organizations that attracted funds from various sources and provided scholarships to students for their participation in excursions.

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