SSOAR

Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

Diversification in Russian-Soviet education

McClelland, James C.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
McClelland, J. C. (1982). Diversification in Russian-Soviet education. In K. H. Jarausch (Ed.), *The transformation of higher learning 1860-1930 : expansion, diversification, social opening and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia and the United States* (pp. 180-195). Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-339612

Nutzungsbedingungen:
Dieser Text wird unter einer Deposit-Lizenz (Keine Weiterverbreitung - keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.
Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

Terms of use:
This document is made available under Deposit Licence (No Redistribution - no modifications). We grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, individual and limited right to using this document. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.
By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

gesis Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

James C. McClelland

Diversification in Russian-Soviet Education

Characteristics of Tsarist Education:

The Russian higher educational network in the 19th century exhibited three major characteristics that directly influenced the process of institutional diversification. The first was the pre-eminence within the entire educational system of the research university based on the German model. To be sure, the country had a number of technical institutes with high standards (including an Institute of Transportation Engineers which had been modeled on the *Ecole Polytechnique*), but these in general had less prestige than the universities. What is striking is the extent to which autocratic education officials as well as members of the professoriate each accepted, though for different reasons, the ideal of a university system devoted to pure research in non-utilitarian areas of higher learning. Professors thought that the pursuit of science and learning was a sublime activity in its own right and one which furthermore would lead to a liberalization of the autocratic system and the Russian social structure. The two most important 19th-century ministers of education, S. S. Uvarov (1833–49) and D. A. Tolstoi (1866–1880), believed that a research-oriented university network with rigorous academic standards would add to Russia's prestige in the eyes of Europe, would produce the steady supply of hardworking, educated officials needed by the state and would avoid the pitfalls of exposing the students to politically dangerous topics and doctrines. The German influence also predominated at the secondary level, where (aside from theological seminaries) the most important institutions were the classical gymnasium, which had the exclusive right to prepare pupils for university study, and the less prestigious realschule, which sent many of its graduates to the technical institutes.

These institutions were not, of course, exactly identical with their German counterparts. The most important difference at the university level was the lack of theological faculties in Russia, which in the late 19th century accounted for 10% to 20% of the total enrollments of German universities.[1] The vast majority of the Russian clergy re-

1. Fritz K. Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe* (Bloomington and London, 1979), 295.

ceived no higher education, although the Church administered a separate network of theological academies for a select number of students.[2] Russian universities did have the traditional law and medical faculties, and after 1863 the philosophy faculty was subdivided into two separate faculties, one for history and philology, the other for the physical sciences and mathematics.

The second major characteristic of Russian higher education was strong administrative control by the central government. On this point the Russian system more closely approximated the French than the German. Universities were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Education, and all except those in the non-Russian cities of Dorpat (Iur'ev), Helsinki and Warsaw were required to conform to a single uniform charter. This charter was changed three times during the 19th century with the last version, adopted in 1884, containing the most extensive provisions for governmental control of university activities. Under the provisions of the 1884 charter, rectors and deans were appointed by the Ministry of Education rather than elected by the professoriate, student organizations were banned and control over student discipline was entrusted to government-appointed officials, students in a given field were required to take a prescribed schedule of courses which had been drawn up by the appropriate faculty but approved by the ministry, and graduating seniors were required to take examinations given by the state.

Did this highly restrictive charter have a negative impact on the research productivity of Russian universities? To put the question more broadly, do centralized governmental controls in general contradict the very spirit of scientific and scholarly creativity? Russian academics were quick to answer in the affirmative and to attack the 1884 charter as a serious impediment to their work. The free pursuit of knowledge, they argued, is inherently incompatible with governmental controls and requires, on the contrary, complete university autonomy.[3] More recently the sociologists Joseph Ben-David and Awraham Zloczower, in a study that did not include Tsarist Russia, also found a direct correlation between a non-restrictive type of university organization and research productivity. In their view, it was not necessarily the autonomous structure of the individual university that stimulated fruitful research, but rather the decentralization, flexibility and competitiveness within the university system as a whole. They found these conditions—and impressive research results—present in the German states during the first half of the 19th century (though diminishing thereafter), absent in England due to the stifling influence of Oxbridge and present in late 19th-century America.[4]

---

2. There were somewhat over 1,200 students in theological academies in 1914/15, which was about one percent of the enrollments of all higher educational institutions. If theology enrollments were added to university enrollments, they would represent three percent of the number of university and theology students. (*Trudy Tsentral'nogo Statisticheskogo Upravleniia*, 35 vols. [Moscow, 1920–28], vol. 28, pt. 1, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR* [1926], 518–19. Hereafter referred to as *Trudy*.)
3. N. I. Pirogov had eloquently stated this position in 1863 ("Universitetskii vopros," reprinted in N. I. Pirogov, *Izbrannye pedagogicheskie sochineniia* [Moscow, 1952], 380–463), and it remained an article of faith of the liberal professoriate until after the Bolshevik Revolution.
4. Joseph Ben-David and Awraham Zloczower, "Universities and Academic Systems in Modern Societies," *Archives europeennes de sociologie*, 3 (1962), 45–84.

The Russian experience during the decades following the adoption of the 1884 university charter does not validate either of these views, for Russian science and scholarship continued to flourish during this period despite the fact that it marked the nadir of university autonomy, the zenith of centralized control, and witnessed precious little flexibility or competitiveness among educational institutions. Indeed, it is possible that the government's heavy-handed policies may actually have stimulated pure research. Finding the possibilities for public-spirited activities and university administrative work severely limited, many academics may, as a result, have redoubled their efforts in research, one of the few channels for creative energies left open to them. This is one of several instances in which peculiarly Russian political and cultural conditions combined to produce educational results that were significantly different in Russia than elsewhere.[5]

The impact of centralized governmental control was mitigated to a certain extent by the fact that jurisdiction over educational institutions was shared by several governmental organs having varying outlooks and priorities. The Ministry of Education was, of course, the most important, with control over all of the universities and some of the lyceums and specialized institutes. But other ministries, including those of finance and communications, maintained their own higher educational institutions. The army administered one of the best medical schools in the country as well as several military academies and a network of secondary and primary institutions. The Orthodox Church was also active in the educational field, although primarily at the lower levels. This jurisdictional diversification meant that the Ministry of Education was able to impose a monolithic pattern only on those schools within its own jurisdiction. Consequently, a limited variety of approaches can be detected in the curricula and administrative structure of other schools. But it did not violate the fundamental principle that all educational institutions should be directly supervised by central governmental agencies. Local public and private groups were discouraged from taking the initiative in establishing schools, and in those cases where they were permitted to do so, the resulting schools were required to conform to detailed regulations handed down by the Ministry of Education.

The third major characteristic of 19th-century Russian education was its combination of relative strength at the higher educational level coupled with extreme weakness at the primary level. A consideration of this characteristic will go beyond the focus of this volume on higher education itself, but it is clear that an understanding of the ways in which a higher educational system is related to the primary and secondary sectors is essential to an adequate appraisal of its impact on society as a whole. Russia differed in this respect from every other country in the world, which makes an examination of the causes and consequences of her educational imbalance all the more important.

There are a number of reasons why the tsars and their advisers showed more concern for higher than primary education during the 19th century. The size and poverty of the empire, the weakness of the local governmental apparatus, the absence or au-

5. This point is developed further in my unpublished paper, "The Mystique of *Nauka:* Science and Scholarship in the Service of the People." See also V. I. Vernadskii, "1911 god v istorii russkoi umstvennoi kul'tury," *Ezhegodnik gazety Rech' na 1912 god* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 327–28.

tocratic distrust of local groups and individuals willing and able to establish and staff primary schools, the intellectual weakness of the Church, the government's fear that widespread education would be politically dangerous and, perhaps most importantly, the belief that the country's main need was for a relatively small number of highly trained personnel rather than a literate citizenry as a whole, all served to reinforce this tendency. The result was that in 1900 only two European countries (Serbia and Portugal) had a higher rate of illiteracy than Russia.[6] But Serbia and Portugal, unlike Russia, did not have a university system that was beginning to produce internationally known scholars and scientists. All the other countries which possessed well-developed higher education systems, on the other hand, had either attained or were approaching universal literacy by the end of the century. Russia thus stands alone in terms of her contrast between a creditable higher educational system and an abysmally developed primary sector.[7] The top-heavy Russian educational edifice rested on a precariously narrow base.

Two probable consequences of this severe imbalance between the higher and primary sectors should be noted at this point. A consciousness of their highly privileged status and of the vast chasm between themselves and the illiterate mass of the population may have been one contributing factor in the development of liberal and radical ideologies among professors and students, in contrast to the illiberalism of the right that came to flourish in German academic circles. But despite the pervasiveness of these ideologies among educated Russians, the emphasis of the state on extensive education for a few rather than modest schooling for the many must in reality have widened rather than narrowed the distance between the still-illiterate peasantry and the increasingly educated urban dwellers. It is more than likely that the extremely unequal distribution of education was sharpening social differences and antagonisms more rapidly than liberal or radical rhetoric was able to bridge or ameliorate them.

To what extent did the subsequent development of higher education in Russia produce changes or modifications in the three characteristics just discussed? Within the broad period of 1860–1930, two major turning points suggest themselves. The turn of the century ushered in a vibrant period of educational expansion which led to a slight diminution in the pre-eminence of the university and the central control of the government, while actually intensifying the dominance of the higher sector vis-a-vis the primary. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, on the other hand, unleashed a series of changes which reversed the previous dominance of both the university within the higher education sector and higher education as a whole, while reasserting if not intensifying the role of central government.

---

6. Serbia—78.9%; Portugal—73.4%; Russia—70%. See Paul Monroe, ed., *A Cyclopedia of Education* (New York, 1911-12), 3: 383.
7. One way of measuring this contrast is by calculating the ratio of the number of higher educational students to the number of primary pupils. See Michael Kaser, "Education and Economic Progress: Experience in Industrialized Market Economies," in E. A. G. Robinson and J. Vaizey, eds., *The Economics of Education* (London, 1966), 89–173; and Michael Kaser, "Education in Tsarist and Soviet Development," in C. Abramsky, ed., *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr* (London, 1974), 229–54. For an analysis of the resulting figures as they apply to Tsarist Russia, see James C. McClelland, *Autocrats and Academics: Education, Culture, and Society in Tsarist Russia* (Chicago, 1979), 49–53.

The most noteworthy changes of the years between 1900 and 1914 can be summed up in the words growth and diversity: a dramatic increase in enrollments at all schools and the establishment of a host of new types of educational institutions. The major causes of these changes were the emergence of a professional middle class having the strength and determination to press for educational changes, the temporary weakening of the autocracy's ability to resist public pressures as a result of the Revolution of 1905 and the bold vision of the Ministry of Finance in founding new schools tailored to meet the needs of an industrializing economy.

Liberal public opinion had been a persistent critic of tsarist educational practices throughout the second half of the 19th century. One of the goals of this movement was the establishment of higher educational facilities for women, who were prohibited from matriculating at the universities. A number of higher courses for women, most having university-type curricula but without the right of universities to confer special privileges on their graduates, were established in the 1870s.[8] Despite considerable public support, bureaucratic mistrust led to the closing of all the courses but one in the late 1880s. Official restraints were eased shortly before the turn of the century, however, and the next 15 years witnessed a tremendous boom in the establishment and growth of higher courses for women. By 1912–13 the two largest courses in Moscow and St. Petersburg enrolled 6,477 and 5,897 respectively,[9] and in 1914–15 the total enrollments in all higher courses was a staggering 33,489.[10] This number was almost as large as that of students at the men's universities and constituted 30.5% of all higher educational students in Russia. In Germany at this time women represented a mere seven percent of the entire student body, while in France they comprised 10% of all university students.[11] Although Russian women had still not achieved complete educational equality with men, Russia was clearly a European leader in women's higher education on the eve of World War One.

Women students showed an overwhelming preference for the traditional university courses of study—the liberal arts (including the sciences), law and especially medicine. In 1914–15 only 1,629 women, barely five percent of the total, were enrolled in agricultural, technical and commercial courses.[12] One consequence of the massive influx of women into higher education before World War One, therefore, was to reinforce the proportionate weight of university studies among the student body as a whole.

Women's higher courses were not the only educational institutions founded at this time outside the regular state network by individuals or local bodies. Shaniavskii University, funded by a private donor, sponsored by the Moscow City Duma and

8. See Christine Johanson, "Statesmen, Women, and Professors: Autocratic Politics and Women's Higher Education During the Reign of Alexander II, 1855–1881" (Diss. University of California at Santa Barbara, 1979).
9. Nicholas Hans, *History of Russian Educational Policy, 1701–1917* (New York, 1965, first pub. 1931), 241.
10. *Trudy,* 518–19.
11. Ringer, 291–95, 337–38; and K. Jarausch, *Students, Society and Politcs in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, 1982), 109.
12. *Trudy,* 518–19.

regulated by the Ministry of Education, opened its doors in 1908. Featuring an open admissions policy and a curriculum which emphasized the practical applications of subjects in the liberal arts, it achieved an enrollment of over 3,500 by 1912.[13] The psychologist V. M. Bekhterev was the moving force behind the establishment of the Psychoneurological Institute in St. Petersburg (1907) which sought to integrate the study of pedagogy with that of neurophysiology.[14] Strictly pedagogical institutes were established in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Private individuals and public organizations were also active at the secondary level. In particular, they founded a number of boys' gymnasia, most of which closely conformed to the state gymnasia so that their pupils would receive equivalent privileges.

The most innovative educational institutions, however, were established not by the liberal public, but by the Ministry of Finance. The leading figure behind this policy was Count Sergei Witte, who guided Russia's first industrial spurt during his tenure as minister from 1892 to 1903. Vocational education, including several of the venerable technical institutes, had been transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Education in 1881. Unimpressed by the educational policies of the Ministry of Education, Witte (building on the work of his predecessor I. A. Vyshnegradskii) created a new network, which was more flexible and more oriented to the economic needs of the country. Most important at the higher education level was the founding of three polytechnical institutes which stressed economics as well as technical disciplines and helped lay the intellectual groundwork for central economic planning.[15] Witte also established a commercial institute which quickly became the most popular higher educational institution in Moscow.[16] In addition to modern and innovative curricula, Ministry of Finance schools enjoyed freedom from much of the heavy-handed censorship and petty restrictions that afflicted the universities and institutes under the Ministry of Education. Most Russian liberals did not approve of Witte's methods of industrialization, but they flocked, both as students and as teachers, to his educational institutions. St. Petersburg Polytechnical Institute, founded in 1902, boasted an enrollment of 5,215 in 1913, making it the second-largest technical institute in the world.[17]

The universities during most of this period remained hobbled by the restrictions of the 1884 charter. The issue of university reform was fraught with political overtones and as a result the efforts of officials and professors to agree on a new university charter ended in failure. Nonetheless the autocracy in 1905, frightened by the rising tide of revolutionary unrest, temporarily granted considerable autonomy to the universities. Although this concession was in effect withdrawn when the government regained control after the revolution, it nevertheless did lead to increased flexibility

13. A. A. Kizevetter, *Na rubezhe dvukh stoletii* (vospominaniia, 1881–1914) (Prague, 1929), 471–95.
14. Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture, 1861–1917* (Stanford, 1970), 322.
15. *S-Peterburgskii Politekhnicheskii Institut Imperatora Petra Velikogo, 1902–1952,* 2 vols. (Paris-New York, 1952–58); Gregory Guroff, "The Legacy of Pre-Revolutionary Economic Education: St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute," *Russian Review* (July, 1972), 272–85.
16. Kizevetter, 470.
17. *Minerva: Jahrbuch der Gelehrten Welt,* 23 (1914), 1593. Belfast Municipal Technical Institute was first with an enrollment of 6,550.

within the university sector. Faculties were authorized to allow their students to take some of their courses on an elective basis. Academic specialties not envisioned in the 1884 charter could be added to the curriculum by hiring privatdocents to teach them on an *ad hoc* basis. Greater use was made of laboratories and seminars as instructional tools as well as for research. The physics laboratories of P. N. Lebedev at Moscow University and D. S. Rozhdestvenskii at St. Petersburg University evolved into specialized collective enterprises in which several researchers collaborated in their work on closely related topics.[18] Many scientists were, in addition, trying to obtain funds for the establishment of specialized research institutes that would be independent of both the universities and the Academy of Sciences. This movement received added impetus after 1911 when Lebedev and many other eminent scientists resigned from Moscow University to protest the actions of Education Minister L. A. Kasso.[19] Between the years 1905 and 1908 admission restrictions were eased for women, Jews and graduates of realschulen and seminaries, and, as a result, university enrollments increased sharply until 1909, when restrictions began to be reimposed[20] (See Alston Table 4). Nonetheless, Moscow University's enrollment of 9,760 in 1913 ranked it as the third-largest university in the world.[21] On the eve of the war, Russian universities, while restricted by an out-of-date legal structure, were nonetheless exhibiting many of the characteristics of modern universities elsewhere—in particular a rapid expansion of enrollment and large-scale collaborative research efforts.

What impact did the developments during the 1900–1914 period have on the three major characteristics of Russian higher education described earlier? First is the question of the pre-eminence of the university and traditional courses of study within the higher educational network as a whole. Rampant student activism and the important role of higher educational institutions in the Revolution of 1905 had helped to sour the attitudes of conservatives toward higher education in general and universities in particular. The decision in 1907 to found a new university (consisting at first only of a medical faculty) at Saratov was opposed by a strong minority in the Council of Ministers. The government rarely spoke with one voice on educational matters, but important figures, including the Tsar himself, were beginning to express a preference for specialized institutes over universities.[22]

Such an attitude was not shared by most elements within the liberal public. The Octobrists, a liberal party, argued for a policy of university expansion in the State

18. M. S. Bastrakova, *Stanovlenie sovetskoi sistemy organizatsii nauki (1917-1922)* (Moscow, 1973), 40; D. I. Bagalei, "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie russkikh universitetov," *Vestnik Evropy* (January, 1914), 222–27; Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture, 1861–1917,* 201–04.
19. K. A. Timiriazev, *Nauka i demokratiia: Sbornik statei, 1904–1919 gg.* (Moscow, 1963), 56–66, 424–52; Loren R. Graham, "The Formation of Soviet Research Institutes: A Combination of Revolutionary Innovation and International Borrowing," in *Economic Development in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,* ed. Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchl (New York, 1975), 1:135–40; Bastrakova, 29–42.
20. Bagalei, 222–24; Samuel D. Kassow, "The Russian University in Crisis: 1899–1911" (Diss. Princeton University, 1976), 473–74, 501–02, 556–59.
21. *Minerva,* 23:1593. By 1916 Moscow University's enrollment had grown to 11,184. Hans, *History of Russian Educational Policy,* 238.
22. Kassow, 598–619.

Duma.[23] It has already been noted that the overwhelming majority of the popular higher courses for women offered programs of study identical to those of the universities. Important spokesmen for the liberal professoriate, while welcoming the variety of new types of educational institutions that were emerging, nonetheless reaffirmed that the research university must preside at the top of the educational edifice.[24]

A look at enrollement trends between 1900 and 1912, on the other hand, reveals a decline in the proportion of students undertaking university-type programs. Enrollments at the state universities, while doubling in absolute numbers, declined from 51% to 32% of total higher education enrollments (See Table 1). These figures are misleadingly low, however, for many other institutions were offering programs similar or identical to those of the universities. It is more meaningful to group all such programs together, regardless of the precise nature of the institutions offering them. The group of institutions offering courses of study in the liberal arts and traditional professions of law and medicine includes all state universities, almost all women's higher courses, and some of the non-university institutions for men (the lyceums, the Historical-Philological Institute, and the Military Medical Academy are examples). The other group is composed of schools offering courses of study that are technical, practically oriented or innovative, and therefore includes not only technical and agricultural institutes but also new institutions such as Shaniavskii University and the Psychoneurological Institute. University-type enrollments, when grouped on this basis, also show a decline relative to technical-practical enrollments but not nearly as precipitous a one as that of the state universities alone. The decline is from 80% in the late 19th century to 74% at the turn of the century to 64% for 1912/13. The corresponding figures for Germany are remarkably similar until the period after 1900, when German universities recouped their previous position instead of continuing to decline (See Table 2).

Another way of analyzing the Russian data is to compare rates of growth between 1900 and 1912 for the different kinds of institutions and courses of study. All higher education enrollments increased by a factor of 3.3 during this period. Among the fastest-growing institutions were the women's higher courses, enrollments of which increased by more than five times between 1905 and 1912. (A comparison of enrollments between 1900 and 1914 would show an even higher growth rate.) In terms of courses of study, technical-practical institutions considered as a whole grew at a rate of 4.6 compared to 2.8 for the liberal arts and the professions. New institutions, such as the polytechnical institutes and Shaniavskii University, accounted for most of the enrollment growth in technical-practical courses of study. The older technological institutes experienced a growth rate of only 2.1, identical with that of the state universities and well below the average growth rate of all higher educational institutions (See Table 1).

What were the causes of this pattern of enrollment growth among the various types of higher educational institutions? Does it demonstrate that the newer institutions

23. Kassow, 561-62.

24. Kizevetter, 484; V. I. Vernadskii, "Vysshaia shkola v Rossii," *Ezhegodnik gazety Rech' na 1914 god* (Saint Petersburg, 1914), 310-11; N. V. Speranskii, *Krizis russkoi shkoly: Torzhestvo politicheskoi reaktsii: Krushenie universitetov* (Moscow, 1914), 1-12.

Table 1: Comparison of Enrollment Growth in Various Types of Higher Educational Institutions in Russia from ca. 1900 to 1912/13

	Enrollments (in thousands) 1899	1900	1905	% of total	Enrollments (in thousands) 1912/13	% of total	Rate of increase ca. 1900-1912/13
State Universities		15.6		51%	32.1	32%	2.1
Other Higher Educational Institutions for Men							
Total	9.6			32%	39.0	39%	4.1
Lib. Arts/Prof.	1.7				3.7		2.2
Tech./Prac.	7.9				35.3		4.5
Women's Higher Courses							
Total			5.2	17%	28.3	28%	5.4
Lib. Arts/Prof.			5.2		27.3		5.3
Tech./Prac.			0		.9		
Total Higher Education		30.4		100%	99.4	100%	3.3
Total Lib. Arts/Prof.		22.5		74%	63.1	64%	2.8
Total Tech./Prac.		7.9		26%	36.2	36%	4.6

Note: Poland and Finland not included.
Totals do not always tally due to rounding.

Sources: For universities, Rashin, "Gramotnost' i narodnoe obrazovanie, 77". For Warsaw University 1900/01, S. E. Belozerov, Ocherki istorii Rostovskogo universiteta (Rostov, 1959), 151. For Warsaw University 1912/13, Minerva: Jahrbuch der Gelehrten Welt, 23 (1914), 1484. For all other data, Nicholas Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy, 1701-1917 (New York, 1964, first pub. 1931), 239-41.

were more responsive either to the needs of the country or the preferences of the public than the more traditional schools? Such a conclusion would not be entirely warranted. Most women would have preferred to attend the universities, and in any event were undertaking university-type studies. Of the students in the schools of the Ministry of Finance, many were undoubtedly more attracted by their relatively free atmosphere than by the technical or practical nature of their curricula. Finally, we must remember that there was not really a free choice in Russia for most potential students. The demand for any kind of higher education in this period well exceeded the supply of available places. Students matriculated at institutions where they were

Table 2: Comparison of Percentage of Higher Education Students Enrolled in University-Type Programs in Russia and Germany for Selected Years, 1860–1931

Russia		Germany*	
1860-1900**	80%	1890	81%
		1895	74%
ca. 1900	74%	1900	71%
		1905	72%
1912/13	64%	1911	80%
1920/21	76%	1921	73%
1927/28	54%	1926	69%
1930/31	27%	1931	77%

*Unlike Ringer, I have considered German technical institutes and academies as part of the higher education sector for the entire period covered by this table.

**This figure represents the total number of graduates during the period in question. All other figures represent students enrolled in that year.

Sources: For Russia, 1860-1900, computed from data in V. R. Leikina-Svirskaia, Intelligentsiia v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka (Moscow, 1971), 69-70. For Russia, ca. 1900 and 1912/13, Table 1. For Russia, 1920/21, computed from data in Trudy Tsentral'nogo Statisticheskogo Upravleniia, 35 vols. (Moscow, 1920-28), Vol. 12, Pt. 1 (1922), ix. For Russia, 1927/28 and 1930/31, computed from data in Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: Statisticheskii spravochnik 1932 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1932), 512-13, cited hereafter as Narodnoe khoziaistvo 1932. For Germany, computed from data in Fritz K. Ringer, Education and Society in Modern Europe (Bloomington and London, 1979), 291-92.

accepted and for which their secondary education had prepared them—not necessarily where their first choice would have taken them. The pattern of institutional diversification in late Tsarist Russia was the result neither of a comprehensive plan on the

part of the government nor of conscious choice on the part of the public, but rather of a series of uncoordinated, *ad hoc* and sometimes mutually inconsistent actions of various groups within both government and public.

A similarly mixed response must be given to the question of whether state control over education was diminished in the decade and a half before World War One. On the one hand, it is indisputable that the increased activity of private and public organizations helped to produce a much more flexible and differentiated educational network, despite the fact that these actions had to be approved and were frequently hampered by the central government. Yet Ministers of Education A. N. Schwartz and L. A. Kasso made a valiant effort between 1908 and 1914 to stem the tide of public initiative and to reassert bureaucratic control over the increasingly complex educational institutions under their jurisdiction. They did not completely achieve their goal but came close enough to cause intense despair among educators and the liberal public.

Regarding the third characteristic, however, the conclusion can be clear and unambiguous. The great disparity between the higher and primary educational sectors not only did not diminish, but actually increased during this time. This fact may surprise those who are aware that the Duma helped initiate in 1908 a program for the gradual introduction of compulsory primary education, that the Ministry of Education's budget nearly quadrupled between 1902 and 1913 and that the ministry began to allocate a much larger share of this budget to the primary sector. Despite these actions, however, the higher and even the secondary sectors continued to grow at a faster rate than the primary. Table 3 shows that enrollments in all schools, when adjusted for population growth, increased at a rate of 1.6 during the years 1900–1914. The rate of increase of secondary school enrollments was slightly higher (1.8), whereas that of higher educational institutions was more than twice as high (3.8). International comparisons highlight the picture further. The Russian rate of illiteracy declined from 70% in 1897 to 61–62% in 1913[25]—a rate that was still almost immeasurably behind that of the other powers. In terms of higher education enrollments as a function of population, on the other hand, Russia was increasing so rapidly on the eve of the war that she was beginning to approach the levels attained by Germany and France (See Alston Table 12).

Soviet Policies:

Such was the educational heritage of Tsarist Russia—a strange combination of impressive strengths and appalling weaknesses. How did the Bolsheviks approach the task of reforming and expanding the educational system they inherited? If one overlooks the early years of 1917 to 1921, which witnessed wide fluctuations in educational policy, one finds that during the 1920s and 1930s the Bolsheviks reasserted the tsarist practice of strong central governmental control over educational institutions. This fact does not mean that Soviet educational policy was, any more than tsarist policy had been, the result of the implementation in practice of a preconceived blue-

25. A. Rashin, "Gramotnost' i narodnoe obrazovanie v Rossii v XIX i nachale XX v," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 37 (1951), 28–50.

print for reform. The Commissariat of Education (*Narkompros*) was not more successful in its efforts to gain jurisdiction over all educational institutions than its tsarist predecessor had been. Educational policies continued to be the outcome of clashes among interest groups in the central arena of government (plus, in the Soviet case, the party). Nonetheless, a distinctively Soviet pattern of reforms in the inherited educational structure can be detected. These reforms were implemented gradually but unmistakably during the NEP years of 1921 to 1928 before being pushed to extremes in the crisis atmosphere of the first Five-Year Plan (1928–1932).

Two very clear trends emerge. The first is a downgrading of the importance of universities and of the more theoretical and non-utilitarian types of education. Aside from a brief resurgence in university enrollments during the years immediately following the Revolution (which may indicate a public preference at that time for universities over other types of higher education), enrollments in universities and university-type programs continued their relative decline which had begun before the Revolution. Their share of all higher education dropped from 74% around the year 1900 to 64% in 1912/13 and 54% in 1927/28 (See Table 2). In fact, however, the decline in traditional university studies between 1921 and 1927 was much sharper than these percentage figures indicate and much more extensive than the decline during the last decade and a half of tsardom. Many of the new universities founded after the Revolution contained technical faculties, and, as a result, some of the university students were engaged in technical courses of study rather than in the more traditional university curricula.[26] Furthermore, the traditional faculties in most universities were themselves reformed in an effort to make the curricula more vocationally oriented and more in accordance with the doctrines of Marxism. All law faculties were abolished in December 1918 and, together with the historical departments of the historical-philological faculties, were reconstituted as social science faculties which were in turn replaced a few years later by a number of more specialized faculties such as Soviet law and economics. All but four of the faculties of mathematics and physics were replaced by pedagogical faculties designed to produce teachers of science rather than scientific researchers.[27]

This policy was carried to its ultimate extreme in 1930–31, when universities themselves were abolished as corporate entities. Most of the faculties of the former universities were reconstituted as separate institutes, and their curricula were revamped in a still more narrow, utilitarian direction. Simultaneously, there was a tremendous expansion in higher technical education.[28] As a result, the percentage of higher educational students studying (in medical, pedagogical and fine arts institutes) traditional universitiy or liberal arts subjects dropped to a record low of 27 percent. This trend marked a very sharp divergence with the practice in Germany, where during

---

26. *Narodnoe prosveshchenie: Ezhemesiachnyi sotsialisticheskii organ obshchestvenno-politicheskii, pedagogicheskii i nauchnyi,* No. 18–20 (Moscow, Jan.-March, 1920), 88; *Vysshaia shkola v RSFSR i novoe studenchestvo (Al'bom)* (Moscow, 1923), appendix, 24–25.
27. *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva po narodnomu obrazovaniiu* 2 (Moscow, 1920), 15–16; Sh. Kh. Chanbarisov, *Formirovanie sovetskoi universitetskoi sistemy (1917–1938 gg.)* (Ufa, 1973), 168–73, 273–78.
28. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: Statisticheskii spravochnik 1932* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1932), 512–13; Chanbarisov, 281–85.

Table 3: Comparison of Rates of Increase of Enrollment-to-Population Ratios for Different Educational Sectors in the Russian Empire, 1900–1914

	1900	1914	Rate of Increase
Population (in millions)	133.0	175.1	1.3
Students in all Schools (in thousands)	4,500	9,500	2.1
Students per 10,000 pop.			
All Schools	338	542	1.6
Secondary Schools	19.7	36.0	1.8
Higher Educational Institutions	2.0	7.5	3.8

Note: Includes Poland but not Finland.

Source: Adapted from Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy, 242.

the years between 1921 and 1931 the percentage of students enrolled in university-type programs ranged from 69% to 77% (See Table 2). By the mid-1930s universities had been restored in Soviet Russia as part of a more general pattern of conservative social policies that followed in the wake of the Cultural Revolution of 1928 to 1931 (See Table 4).[29]

The second major trend of the 1920s and early 1930s was a growth rate in primary-secondary enrollments, and, especially in primary-secondary vocational school enrollments, that was considerably faster than the growth rate of the higher educational sector. This trend marked a sharp reversal of the priority that had been given to higher education throughout the entire Tsarist period. Between 1914/15 and 1927/28 enrollments in primary and secondary schools of general education grew by a rate of 1.3, enrollments in primary-secondary vocational schools by a rate of 2.2, while higher education enrollments grew by a factor of only 1.2. This trend was accelerated during the first Five-Year Plan. In the short three-year period of 1927/28 to 1930/31 primary-secondary vocational enrollments increased by a factor of 2.6 (from 628,700 to 1,749,600), whereas higher education enrollments grew at the considerably slower (but still impressive) rate of 1.6 (See Table 5).[30]

29. For this entire period see the essays in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Blomington and London, 1978).
30. For the especially rapid growth of secondary vocational enrollments compared to higher education enrollments, see *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1940), 102.

Table 4: Enrollments in Various Types of Higher Educational Institutions in Soviet Russia for 1920/21, 1927/28, and 1930/31
(In Thousands)

Type	1920/21	1927/28	1930/31
Universities	83.8	53.0	0
Medical Institutes	6.4	10.0	26.8
Pedagogical Insts.	16.0	15.9	41.4
Art-Music Insts.	14.6	6.9	4.7
Total Lib. Arts/ Professions	120.8	85.8	72.9
Tech.-Ind. Insts.	22.7	45.6	140.5
Agricultural Insts.	8.9	22.4	36.0
Social-Econ. Insts.	5.7	6.0	22.8
Total Tech.-Pract.	37.3	74.0	199.3
Total	158.2	159.8	272.2

Note: 1920/21 figures represent the number of students registered, which was larger than the number who were actually pursuing their studies. On the other hand, the 1920/21 figures represent an under-count insofar as data are available only for 210 out of the 246 higher-educational institutions in existence at that time. I suspect that these biases do not evenly cancel themselves out, but that a bias in the direction of inflation remains. We can assume, however, that the data reliably reflect the enrollment ratios among different types of institutions.

Sources: 1920/21, 1927/8 and 1930/31 see note to Table 2.

What can we conclude from this survey of a 70-year period in the history of Russian-Soviet education? Centralized administrative control over the educational system is a constant factor throughout the entire period. But the ends which this central-

Table 5: Comparison of Rates of Increase of Enrollment-to-Population Ratios for Different Educational Sectors in Soviet Russia, 1914/15-1930/31

	1914/15	1927/28	1930/31	RI, 1914/15-1927/28	RI, 1927/28-1930/31	RI, 1914/15-1930/31
Population (in millions)	139.3	150.6	160.6	1.1	1.1	1.2
Students in all Schools (in thousands)	8,192.3	12,144.7	19,791.9	1.5	1.6	2.4
Students per 10,000 pop.						
All Schools	588	806	1,232	1.4	1.5	2.1
Prim.-Sec. General Ed. Schools	560	754	1,106	1.3	1.5	2.0
Prim.-Sec. Vocational Schools	19	42	109	2.2	2.6	5.7
Total Prim.-Sec. Schools	579	796	1,215	1.4	1.5	2.1
Higher Educational Insts.	9.0	10.6	16.9	1.2	1.6	1.9

Note: Territorial unit for 1914/15 data is pre-1939 borders of USSR. This fact explains the discrepancies with Table 3, where territorial unit is the Russian Empire. Population figure in 1914/15 column is actually for 1913/14. RI represents rate of increase. Higher education enrollments do not include workers' faculties or communist party educational institutions.

Sources: Population, 1914/15: Sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo SSSR: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1936), 542, which gives the date January 1, 1914. The same figure is given by Eason (citing Vestnik statistiki, 1963, No. 11, 92-95) in Walter W. Eason,

"Demography," in Ellen Mickiewicz, Handbook of Soviet Social Science Data (New York and London, 1973), 51 and 61, which gives the date as "average for year" of 1913. Narodnoe khoziaistvo 1932, XXII and 401, gives a slightly lower figure of 138.2 for January 1, 1914, but this figure appears to be no longer in use by Soviet statisticians.

Population, 1920/21: Narodnoe khoziaistvo 1932, XXII and 401.

Population 1927/28: Ibid., XXIII. Eason (51) gives the figure 150.5.

Population, 1930/31: Narodnoe khoziaistvo 1932, XXIII, and Eason, 51.

Enrollment figures: Narodnoe khoziaistvo 1932, XXII-XXIII and 507.

Enrollment-to-population ratios: Calculated from data in Ibid.

ized control was used to achieve and the ways in which it interacted with social and economic pressures were sharply different in the Tsarist and early Soviet periods. In the latter half of the 19th century the university-dominated educational structure reflected a probably exaggerated belief in the importance to a developing country of pure research, a failure to grasp the economic importance of widespread literacy and technical skills and a probably realistic fear of the political dangers of mass education. By 1930 the highly vocationalized university-less educational system reflected a now exaggerated *dis*belief in the value of theoretical studies, a zealous effort to expand technical education at all levels and a probably correct assumption that the spread of mass education would enhance popular loyalty to the new government. In the 19th century the Russian educational system was unique among Western nations for the stress placed on universities relative to other higher, secondary and primary educational institutions. In 1930 the Soviet educational system was unique because of its abolition of universities and near-total emphasis on vocational and utilitarian schooling. Concerning the crucial issue of the proper role of universities in the overall educational system, therefore, Russian-Soviet education had during the course of 70 years run the entire gamut from one extreme to its polar opposite.