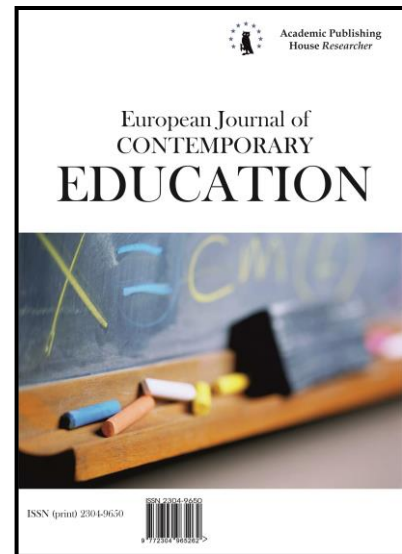




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Family and School in Russia at the Beginning of the 20th century: Attempts to Bridge the Gap

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Abstract

Having made an attempt to study the interaction level of the family and school in the late imperial Russia, the author has focused on parent organizations, as the latest and most fruitful way to carry out such contacts, by using publicistic writings on teaching science, school records and periodicals, as well as reference documentation for this task. The issue is revealed through the theory of modernization, theory of bureaucracy, sociocultural and gender approaches. By the beginning of the 20th century, due to the almost complete nationalization of the Russian secondary school, the family's interaction with the educational institution their child was studying at was quite indirect and sporadic. During the Russian Revolution of 1905, the state was forced to legitimize parent organizations that had already become reality, considering them as a mechanism for appeasing students. The post-revolutionary decline of the social movement also led to the decline of the parent organizations' activity, in particular, lowering the number of parents attending the school meetings. This was used by the government as it introduced a quorum for the establishment of parent committees, justifying that by the need for a broad representational scope; as a result such committees were kept only in 1/5 of all the secondary schools. Parents' absenteeism was the result of the disappointment in the effectiveness of these bodies as they obviously lacked any rights as well as the change in the way of life of the townspeople whose pace of life significantly increased during that period. However, privately run commercial schools, usually being more liberal, had started interaction with parents before the revolution, continued and developed it afterwards, especially thanks to students' mothers, who mitigated possible contradictions between parent organizations and schools. As a result, in commercial schools, the family representation managed to actively expand its activities, gradually becoming one of the actors of the school environment. These positions were enhanced during the re-establishment of parent organizations

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in state school, thus turning the commercial schools parent committees into one of the real forces of in-school management.

Keywords: Russian Empire, educational reforms, family, high school, commercial school, parental committee.

1. Introduction

The state-oriented nature of the Russian secondary school, concentration of public education in the hands of the state (Milyukov, 1897: 364) had in the 19th century already turned educational institutions into a part of the bureaucratic machine serving the interests of the state. It is due to this that the church became one of the mechanisms of the educational policy, while both society and the family were virtually made “out of school”. Interaction between the family and school in the post-reform Russia was limited to a small number of ways as follows.

First, parents got in contact with the school at the stage of the submission of the admission application along with accompanying documents followed by exchanging letters or meeting face-to-face after the introductory tests. It was due to the fact that there was a certain selection process of those who had passed the exam since the competition was tough because of a limited number of vacancies. In this situation, parents would “jump over” the school authorities, referring directly to the more senior ranks. Thus, “in view of the terrible competition” upon admission to the Technological Institute in St. Petersburg, requests and pleas for admission went directly to N.P. Bogolepov, the Minister of Education. Those were from parents as well as people directly involved in the applicant’s life, such as the former St. Petersburg mayor V.A. Rat’kov-Romanov, later a senator, and even certain members of the Royal House (RGIA, F. 741, Op. 1, D. 2, L. 165, 190). The school also was to inform parents or guardians should the student be expelled.

While the student was studying, the school was to inform their parents or guardians on the student’s behavior and assessment marks. A commonly used means of such notification was the so-called “ball’nik”, i.e. a sheet or booklet, in which one could see the assessment marks for the behavior and studies indicated in numbers according to the scoring system adopted by the school (usually one to five points), and sometimes, a brief note was made if need be. The ball’nik was handed to the student to give that to their parents who were to sign it, which testified that they had read it; then the student was to show the document to the school authorities. Parents of commercial schools students were informed by using diaries or information sheets issued weekly, twice a month, three and four times a year. Special information was sent mainly to the parents of low-performing students (Glagolev, 1904: 50).

Direct contacts between the family and school were carried out provided the student had committed a serious violation of discipline or because of their poor progress (Materialy, 1901: 58).

Payment for school education was, perhaps, the final aspect of the family’s connection with the state-run school. That included purchasing books and school uniform. In the state-run school, whose funding came from the government, its tuition fees became the special funds of the educational institution that were allowed to be used at its discretion within the limits of the law. In a privately operated school, these funds became a part of the main budget and at the peak of the development of an educational institution could account for over a half of its revenues and even cover almost all of its expenses (Godovoi otchet, 1915a: 42-43).

Out-of-school supervision of students was a part of the duties of the inspector and the staff supervisors (educators) of educational institutions. However, as P. Strakhov, a teacher working at that time, noted, the practice was somewhat different: “while focusing all their attention on the first [low-performing students and students sharing apartments - T.M.], the teacher has to involuntarily ignore the rest (of the students) [“exemplary students as well as students staying with their parents” – T.M.] both in class and during the extracurricular time” (Strakhov, 1899:63). This conclusion is confirmed by M.I. Fisher, “Headmasters and teachers usually know well only the parents and relatives of those students, who are fail to meet the behavior or assessment standards” (Fisher, 1912: 18). The Teacher Committee of the Saratovskoye Commercial College (SarCC) even explicitly made parents responsible for “observing the out-of-school behavior of their children” and “the due school attendance of their children” (Godovoi otchet, 1907: 69). This was another step to further reduction of already limited opportunity for communication and rapprochement between the family and school.

Formalized contacts were carried out through the general participation of parents and school

staff in ceremonial events at educational institutions, exhibitions and matinees organized by those institutions, though it seems that the main parents' role as of passive spectators as well as the very solemnity of the moment prevented from discussing the burning issues of educational.

It was only at the beginning of the 20th century that the Ministry of Education (ME) realized the necessity to enhance work with the students' families. The reason for this was the growth of the student movement. However, even during that already troubled time the ME's activities were limited to issuing recommendations to teachers and the educational authorities that they should provide more information to the family on the student's misbehavior, as the family "could become the most influential ally of the school contributing to the student's correction" (RGIA, F. 741, Op. 2, D. 243. L. 16).

A narrow range of usually indirect and very limited contacts could not always satisfy society and the parents themselves. The parents' urge for self-organization and coordination was expressed in the activity of family-and-pedagogical circles. With the start of the Russian Revolution of 1905, at the Kazan family-and-pedagogical circle, a circle of parents of secondary schools students was established, which operated until February 1906, when parent committees were finally formed in all secondary schools (Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk, 1914: 33-34).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Due to its conservatism and traditionalism, school management records that represent aspects of regulation of the relationship between the school and family at the local level and statistics on parents' financial assistance contain little information on the way parents took part in the life of educational institutions. Pedagogical journalism, represented by articles in all-Russian journals and popular essays, contains consistent information on the development, problems and contradictions in the development of parent organizations, their place in the Russian education. The local press makes it possible to identify the organization and issues discussed at parents meetings. Reference documentation is a source for tracing the policy transformation as well as determining the legal basis for the interaction of the family and school.

2.2. The formation of parent committees is seen as a complex and questionable element of modernization, being in contradictory relations and sporadic conflicts with the state-run school, viewed in the context of the bureaucratic theory as an organization that long lost its flexibility in interacting with the environment. This discord was also seen in the context of the sociocultural approach, which, along with attention to the gender factor in parent organizations, presented them as actors in changing school life.

3. Discussion of the issue

As the relations between the family and school were quite a burning issue, pre-revolutionary historical and pedagogical literature paid much attention to that. In a large number of works written by Russian teachers, the need for a more complete unity of the family and school was seen as an important factor in solving the problems of the Russian school (Kapterev, 1914: 120-143). A smaller number of works expressed a more balanced approach, aimed at protecting the autonomy of the education system from the family intervention but allowing mutual contact of parents and teaching staff at the individual level (Charnoluskii, 1909: 47-49).

Soviet historians considered the parent committees issues mainly in the context of the events of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the political history of education, focusing on the stiffening of the post-revolutionary reactionary regime (Konstantinov, 1956).

It was the modern historiography that brought up a significant issue on the effectiveness and necessity of parent committees in secondary schools. Thus, I.V. Zubkov explains a more active administrative interference in the activities of parent committees by referring to particular cases of conflicts between headmasters and parent organizations and the opinions of administration members of individual schools who talked about an unsystematic way of work, poor attendance of meeting by parents, their evasion of "their direct duties, i.e. prevention of skipping classes by students ..., as well as helping to supervise students' behavior outside the school, and in their apartments". Of course, such facts used to take place, and for the state-run school they may have been the reason to put an end to the activities of parent organizations. However, references to the position of school headmasters, their authority that the parent organizations were undermining by their mere existence, are considered insufficient. The unsystematic way of work could be explained

by the lack of experience of the social force being formed and, along with the poor attendance, the activities of the school administrations themselves that would create obstacles by using vague formulations of the laws that regulated the functioning of parent organizations.

It seems to us, that not only the family, but also the school itself should be concerned about skipping classes by students as well as their behavior in and out of school. With deep regret, one of the contemporaries commented on that mutual sidestepping of the responsibilities, "There used to be times when parents, in a loving manner, reprimanded the student for a bad assessment mark that he, with tears in his eyes, brought home, while telling him, "you were lazy, you were inattentive, you did not try". Now, in such cases we sometimes hear that the teacher is to blame, as he has failed to understand the child's individuality, he does not know how to teach, he gives too much homework. Thus, to a certain extent, the former unity of the family and school has been lost" (Fisher, 1912: 17-18).

While analyzing the results of the consideration of the issue I.V. Zubkov notes that "the impeccable ... idea of parent organizations in schools failed to find support from a significant part of parents; the procedure established by the ME for the formation of parent committees was not the main reason for their insignificant spread" (Dmitriev, 2012: 198-203). But to make this conclusion, clear statistics should be obtained on how many parent committees there were initially and how many of them still operated after the introduction of the new rules, while according to other sources it is after this decree that the number of parent organizations was reduced (N.A., 1915: 2; Fisher, 1912: 13). While responding to attacks by the right press, the author of the article in *The Russian School* magazine argues, "If we are about to conclude that the parent committees are not needed only based on the fact that the meeting was not attended by required 2/3 of the parents, then the same could be said about any public organization, even the State Duma, as in fact, far fewer than two-thirds of voters as often as not took part in the additional elections. But is it possible to conclude after all that the State Duma is also not needed?" (N.A., 1915: 2-3).

With the exception of pre-revolutionary works by Russian authors, almost all the rest of the historiography focused on state-run schools, thus excluding public and privately run ones since there were just a few of them. However, it is the last two kinds of schools, as represented by commercial schools, that had a longer and more effective experience of interaction with the family.

An attempt to fill gaps in the discussion on the role, degree of participation in school life and need for the parent organizations that had been established by the beginning of the XX century is the purpose of this article.

4. Results

Officially, parent organizations in the Russian secondary school were allowed since November 1905 (Sovet Ministrov, 1990: 62-64). The reason for this was stated in the memorial itself, "The extremely difficult position of the secondary educational institutions due to the lack of authority of the pedagogical councils, inability of public institutions to participate in secondary education process and the lack of interaction between parents and the school" (Sovet Ministrov, 1990: 63). According to the decree, every school was allowed to establish school and class councils of parents, who were entitled to elect a parent committee and its chairperson. Considering the school's teacher and economic councils, the elected chairperson received the rights, being equal to those of the curator of the educational institution.

Teacher councils were obliged to discuss, in case of submitting for consideration, the decisions of the general parent council and parent committee. The rather vague wording of the document and unclear regulation, being not typical of the ME, were explained by the "unsettling situation of the time" (N.A., 1915: 3), with the possibility of an expanded interpretation in accordance with the local conditions. However, upon the decline of the secondary school movement, the way the memorial was written allowed to narrow the scope of its application by introducing various regulations in 1907, 1908 and 1911 (Dmitriev, 2012: 199, 202), when L.A. Casso, the Minister of Education, introduced quotas for the validity of parent councils of 2/3 of the number of students' parents living in the city, which resulted in the fact that "parent organizations survived only in rare cases" (N.A., 1915: 2).

In this regard, it is necessary to dwell on the causes of parents' absenteeism after the recession of the revolution, which was used by the ME to increase the quorum for the establishment of parent organizations. Having studied the materials of the periodical press of

various political orientation, G.V. Agraev, the contemporary of the events, concluded that “a complex set of reasons that has made parents feel indifferent to an important cause is the antagonism of the bureaucracy and society, educational administration and parents, students and teachers, discord between fathers and children, parents’ insecurity concerning their own strengths, heterogeneity of their political, pedagogical and worldly views, philistinism, leading to inertia, inactivity, negligent attitude to their duties, narrowness of views, leading to demagoguery on two sides, i.e. the one of the administration and the one of the parents, general unpreparedness for the use of their rights and excessive development of criticism, being a result of the recent lack of rights, narrowness of the framework of activities outlined by the ministerial circular” (Agraev, 1908: 72-73). However, the text of the work shows that the author considers the main factor to be the school system’s counteraction to parent organizations and the gap between the bureaucracy and society. M.I. Fisher develops the idea of the reasons for absenteeism, arguing about the pace of life acceleration and changing the benchmarks of public and private life, “Parents are now less concerned about the upbringing of their children, as they just have no time” (Fisher, 1912: 5).

Commercial schools, as considered quite liberal, went the other way. Some of such schools initially had started to convene parent meetings as well as establish parent councils. Certain commercial schools held joint meetings of parents, board of trustees and teacher committees (Glagolev, 1904: 207). It was not just the liberalism of the commercial school, but the fact that funds coming from the parents in the form of student fees for teaching were a very significant source of revenue for the school’s budget. In addition, as there were no board of trustees councils in privately run commercial schools, it was the parent organizations that could exercise the functions of public control and assistance to the school. The commercial school initially supported the idea of closer interaction with the family. At the First Congress of Headmasters and Members of the Board of Trustees of Commercial Schools in 1901, the subcommission on education spoke up in favor of enhancing such contacts so that parents would be able to know and accept the goals and overall structure of the school as an organization, whereas the school would be able to be aware of life conditions of its students” (Materialy, 1901: 58).

Among other ways to contribute to this process, the subcommission suggested holding routine joint meetings of parents and teaching staff. In this aspect, the issue of the need for a serious family and school unity from the parents’ point of view should be brought up. It can be seen quite clearly and precisely as the upbringing paragon by the intellectual history of teaching science of this period. However, it was not regarded as being that obvious as a necessity of the parents’ everyday life. Indirect evidence might prove that the parents’ willingness to cooperate with the school was also limited by objective conditions as well as their readiness. It’s not even the absence or weakness of civil society or lack of the experience of meetings participation. E.I. Stratonov criticized the negative aspects of the Russian school in his book, noting, “At the parent meetings, many of them [the parents – T.M.], though without denying the positive consequences of the unity of the family and school, still openly and loudly repeated, whereas the overwhelming majority of parents immediately agreed, that: a) the parents did not feel competent enough in the important educational sphere, that required commitment, knowledge and expertise, to take responsibility for the measures that might one way or another influence the inner life of the school; b) they were totally unaware of the complicated, though if mere economic, matters of the school and did not have enough time to spare to deal with managing or reorganizing these affairs or even at least assisting them; c) they ... had absolutely no power over their children (especially senior students) ... In their opinion, the teacher council could influence the students in a better way, and the parents “were humbly asking” the council and each of its members for that, thus forgetting that it was the council and the authorities that had invited them and waited for their assistance” (Stratonov, 1910: 7-8).

Even when discussing school lunches, being increasingly popular, especially in commercial schools, students’ parents were at first quite inert, though it was them who were supposed to be especially interested in such novelty. Thus, at a meeting on October 12, 1908 in the Vyatskoye Commercial College, the parents expressed a collective opinion that “the administration should be solely in charge of this matter” (Hronika, 1908: 3).

Parent meetings were held in almost all commercial schools of the Kazan Academic District (KAD): in the city of Vyatka (constantly since 1908), the city of Samara (mentioned in 1904), the city of Kazan (private meetings of parents with teaching staff were held in 1913-1914) (Obshchestvo sodeistviya, 1915: 52; Glagolev, 1904: 209; Godovoi otchet, 1915b: 88-90).

The absence of parent committees in commercial schools created a number of significant problems, among which, for example, the board of trustees of the Kazanskoye Commercial College called certain difficulties with organization of contacts with parents, taking into consideration a large number of students. Meanwhile, the teacher committee regarded the necessity for establishment of a parent organization as a way of both legalizing the activity of parents who were already taking part in the life of the school and considering their opinions and advice as given by “people of commonsense knowledge” (Godovoi otchet, 1914: 11, 20).

Due to the existing restrictions, some parents sought to strengthen the status of the parent organization. In the Vyatskoye Commercial College (VCC), this was expressed in an attempt to establish “a parent society to promote commercial education”, its charter being also actively developed by the chairpersons of the parent commissions (Otchet Vjatskogo, 1912: 5-7; Obshchestvo sodeistviya, 1915: 52-53). The parents’ activity faced only organizational obstacles as represented by ministerial provisions, but was artificially “lowered” by the supervisory authorities. This is how a correspondent of *The Vyatskaya rech’* newspaper described the parent general meeting held in the VCC on September 27, 1910, attended by a police representative, “The headmaster, Mr. Manokhin, read a brief account of the educational aspect of the school’s activity. The public listened to the report in silence. No one answered the chairperson’s proposal to speak up about the students’ upbringing” (Hronika, 1910: 3).

In order to learn more about the students, their living conditions as well as home environment the VCC administration would distribute questionnaires for the students’ parents to fill in. To avoid any possible inconveniences, the questionnaires were allowed to be handed over to the chairperson of the parent commission, and yet not all the data was obtained (Otchet Vjatskogo, 1912: 14-15). Questionnaires were the most effective way to receive feedback from parents to be able to solve topical issues. Thus, after a series of publications in the local press about the educational difficulties at the Kazanskoye Commercial College (KCC), the teacher council conducted a questioning of the parents “for more accurate clarification of the parents’ requests and the elimination of possible misunderstandings” along with a discussion of its results at the parent meeting (Godovoi otchet, 1914: 21-23). The questionnaires were also distributed for preliminary clarification of topical issues of the school life, such as readiness to establish parent committees, introduction of optional subjects, and so on (Godovoi otchet, 1914: 21-22).

At the Commercial Education section of the III Congress of Russian community on technical and vocational education, there was a fierce dispute on the issue of the school unconditional attendance by parents. The majority spoke in favor of such admission to the classes by parents, but in the end, it was resolved that it was up to the teacher committees to grant the admission or not. It was the opinion of Prof. K.A. Andreev, the headmaster of the Aleksandrovskoye Commercial College and chairperson of the Moscow Teacher Society, that was of great significance. Prof. K.A. Andreev recommended “caution in using the right to attend classes, i.e. caution dictated by the interests of both the teacher and students,” explaining that “even a headmaster, a person being really close to the school, would sometimes stop at the class door thinking, whether he might interrupt, sever the thread that connects both the teacher and class” (Glagolev, 1904: 212-213). Certain commercial schools of the KAD introduced parents’ unconditional attendance of classes (Obshchestvo sodeistviya, 1915: 53) and schools in general during the work hours, seeing in as “the most effective way (for the parents) to get acquainted with the school’s activities” (Otchet o dejatel'nosti, 1909: 10-11). While discussing the issues of direct contacts with parents, the SarCC Teacher Committee put forward a rule for the teaching staff “to firmly and strictly adhere to the principles of law and tact” (Godovoi otchet, 1910: 56).

In order to understand the scope of the activities of the parent committees, we need to dwell on the activities of the Samarskoye Commercial College (SamCC) in the 1911-1912 academic year. It took 10 meetings to discuss nine groups of issues, with the financial ones being reported directly in the seven groups. The total expenditure amount of the committee over the year amounted to 3,432 rubles. Two groups of issues were considered in detail, i.e. students’ excursions, requests submitted by the parents of underprivileged students for the school fees payment, as well as a group issues on providing breakfasts for underprivileged students, organization of a charity evening, organization of “the Christmas Tree celebration”, the committee treasurer reports, the amount of homework and its correct distribution (Otchet o sostoyanii, 1913: 162-164).

Parents provided a significant help to commercial schools in organizing the students’

collective leisure in school. Thus, in the VCC, during the first year the parents arranged a skating rink, took part in the organization of the Christmas celebration and purchased a grand piano (*Otchet o dejatel'nosti, 1909: 11*). When organizing a one-month excursion of the SamCC students to Finland in June 1914, the parent committee covered the expenses for 20 % of the students in full and partially for the other 20 % (half the cost or more), thus reimbursing almost one-third of the total cost of the excursion (*CGASO, F. 190, Op. 1, D. 43, L. 2*). In general, parent organizations' financial assistance to students was quite significant, for this reason, in 1914, the VIII All-Russian Congress of Representatives of Exchange Trade and Agriculture recognized the need for their mutual activity with the Aid Societies (*O nuzhdakh, 1915: 386*).

There were quite a few women among the chairpersons of parent organizations of commercial schools (*Obshchestvo sodeistviya, 1915: 52; Otchet o sostoyanii, 1913: 163*). It was the women's initiative to provide breakfasts in schools. The fact that a great number of parents were involved in that cause is confirmed, for example, by a list of 47 mothers of the KCC students who were engaged in breakfast provision in the 1912-1913 academic year (*Godovoi otchet, 1914: 134-135*). Thanks to the financial support of the parent organizations, underprivileged students were given breakfasts free of charge.

Parent councils often became the initiators of the introduction of additional school subjects, i.e., music, singing and dancing (*Hronika, 1910: 3*). Naturally, parents tried to have classical languages included in the curriculum of commercial schools, but this was due to the hope that commercial school students would be granted the right to enter the universities, the one being equal to the right the gymnasium students already had.

Parent organizations of commercial schools gradually became an important link in the system of public control over the school. Along with the official control authorities, they were capable of having a significant impact on the school life, even a greater one than any other public organization operating in that sphere. This happened, for example, during the conflict of the board of the trustees and the headmaster at the Balakovskoye Commercial College. The latter was about to be dismissed, but the support of the parent council (*Balakovskaja hronika, 1914: 2; Hronika, 1914: 2*) helped him retain the post. Similar processes of parent organizations stepping up were also taking place in the United States, but, unlike Russia, their activities were less constrained by interference from outside and were fully controlled by civil society (*Krupskaya, 1957: 164*).

All the discussion about the uselessness of parent organizations, harm they caused to the school, as well as their poor representation of the parent community were debunked by the authorities as it was them who greatly changed the position of parent committees as one of the results of the school reform started by P.N. Ignatyev during the First World War. As they were used to resorting to half-measures in a critical situation, the authorities considered the fifth part of the parent committees left (after the circular by L.A. Casso) as an effective measure.

Later, the Ministry of Trade and Industry on November 19, 1915 introduced "The rules on the organization and activities of parent meetings parent committees in commercial schools" (*Pravila ob organizatsii, 1916: 1-6; CGASO, F. 190, Op. 1, D. 62, L. 4-5ob*). Parent meetings were allowed to be convened by the headmaster or chairperson of the parent committee. To establish a parent committee, one still had to have this issue discussed and finalized by both the teacher committee and board of the trustees and then approved of the Ministry's Department of Education. More important for the parent organizations was the establishment of a quorum of 1/3 of the number of parents residing in the place where the school was situated (*CGASO, F. 190, Op. 1, D. 62, L. 4ob*). Priority in the interaction organization was given by the ministry to "parent councils in view of the fact that these meetings represented the family element to a greater than parent committees, as well as because direct contact of parents with the school will bring them closer to it" (*Pravila ob organizatsii, 1916: 13*).

In 1917-1918, in the context of frequent administrative vacuum in the education system and political instability, parent councils further enhanced their role in school life, helping the school administration and teacher councils to solve various issues of school life, including those related to teaching and upbringing (*CGASO, F. 190, Op. 1, D. 62, L. 14-14ob*).

5. Conclusion

5.1. Strengthening ties between the family and school became a new stage of the educational policy of Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. This was due to the growth of the social

movement and, at the same time, the need to reduce the intensity of the secondary school movement during the Russian Revolution of 1905. During this period, the idea to involve parents in solving school issues contributed to appeasing students.

5.2. After this, there was a gradual decline in the activity level of parent organizations, which the authorities took advantage of, as they introduced new restraining regulations and conditions. That policy was due to the lack of mass participation of the parent community in the activities of parent organizations. However, the real reasons were the authorities' willingness to weaken the citizens' participation degree in public life, public control over the educational sphere and, in general, the contradictions of the bureaucratic nature of the education system and the school with the ongoing social and civil activity of the urban middle-class strata. Parents' absenteeism did take place in the history of parent meetings, and it was caused not only by the fact that the rights of the parent committees were limited, but also by the conditions of modernization, which had led to the acceleration of the pace of life and employment growth, resulting in the inertia of the parent committees.

5.3. The commercial school, unlike the state-run school, initially had opted for closer contacts with the family, thus establishing relations with parents in a more effective way. A longer history of such relations turned parent organizations in commercial colleges into an important advisory body, as well as diversified and intensified their activities.

5.4. Students' mothers were among the most active participants, sometimes holding the posts of chairpersons of the parent committees. Perhaps, it was the women who made parent organizations of the commercial school avoid both the politicization of their activities and conflicts with school administrations as parent committees concentrated on the charitable support of the school and underprivileged students. In this aspect, they complemented the activities of the Aid Societies.

5.5. The need for unity of the regime and society during the First World War made the government get back to the reestablishment of the parent organizations, whose role increased since that time.

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