

Original article

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Specifics of Training Female Prison Staff in the Russian Empire (Historical and Legal Aspect)

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Abstract

Introduction: a retrospective analysis of the processes related to changes in the prison administration in the pre-revolutionary period is of theoretical and practical significance, as it helps extrapolate historical experience into activities of the modern penitentiary system. The study of the stated topic is determined by the need to restore a historically objective picture of activities of the penal system in the XIX – early XX century. The article describes activities of the Russian state to staff the prison department in the given historical period. The choice of topic is also related to the 110th anniversary of the first graduation from the Moscow School of Prison Wardens, which can rightfully be considered the first official educational institution for training female prison staff. *Purpose:* to study historical experience of training female prison officers using the example of the Moscow School of Prison Wardens. *Tasks:* to systematize empirical data on the work of the Moscow School of Prison Wardens; to determine the purpose of its opening, sources of funding; to characterize approaches to the selection of candidates for training; to analyze the content of educational programs and teaching methods. *Methods:* the dialectical method made it possible to trace the dynamics of changes in activities of the Russian state to staff the prison department during the historical period under study. The logical method was used to analyze requirements for the professional competence of prison staff, identify criteria for selecting candidates for admission to wardens' schools, evaluate educational programs for female prison officers, etc. The formal legal method was applied for the analysis of legislative and other regulatory legal documents on the topic; the logical-semantic method – for the determination of the essence and significance of forms and methods of training female students; the structural method – for the identification of features of training female prison officers. *Results:* the article devoted to the description of educational traditions of the late XIX – early XX century can be used as a substantial basis for courses in theory and history of personnel training for the penal system, taking into account the genesis of penitentiary education. *Conclusion:* the foundations for staff training for penitentiary institutions were laid during the period under review. It is shown that the main attention was paid to the formation of professional competence of female prison officers through a combination of theoretical and practical training. Despite the fact that the attempts described in the article to create an effective staff training system failed to fully address the personnel issue in the penitentiary sector, they can rightfully be recognized as a positive experience.

Keywords: Main Prison Department; Moscow School of Prison Wardens; prison staff; penal system; prison studies; law studies; Moscow Women's Charity and Prison Committee; professional competence.

5.1.1. Theoretical and historical legal sciences.

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In the late XIX – early XX century, the internal migration of peasants to cities increased sharply, and the patriarchal-communal system of relations collapsed as a result of rapid industrial development in the Russian Empire. Isolation from the usual socio-cultural space often led numerous groups of peasants to marginalization and deviant behavior, which negatively affected the criminal situation and increased the crime rate and the prison population as a whole. At the same time, the places of execution of criminal penalties experienced serious difficulties with staffing due to low salaries and a lack of a unified legal regulation system for all institutions. The prison staff was trained on the job. At that time, the structure of the staff and requirements for their professional competence reflected only the needs of a particular prison institution for a certain period of time. On their own initiative, local authorities opened police schools, where they trained prison staff. At the same time, training was limited to practical mastering of the basics of prison service in places of detention.

The presented article complements the existing experience of scientific analysis and generalization of activities of the Russian state to staff the prison department in the XIX – early XX century. D.V. Voloshin discussed problems of professional training of personnel, considered scientific, theoretical, organizational, pedagogical and educational ideas of N.F. Luchinskii, B.S. Utevsckii, S.V. Poznyshev and other scientists [1–3]. M.V. Vol'skii [5] and L.Yu. Zabrovskaya [5] also studied personnel policy, organizational and managerial features of the Russian prison department in the late XIX – early XX century. Organizational and pedagogical

issues of activities of the first state schools for training penitentiary personnel in Russia were reflected in the publications of D.Yu. Stepanova [6] and P.P. Pirogov [7]. A series of articles of the journal "Prison Bulletin" is devoted to various aspects of the functioning of the Moscow School of Prison Wardens, including material on the founding documents, the financing system, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of students, participation of the Moscow Women's Charity and Prison Committee, etc. [8–16].

When working on the article, we studied documents of Archive 625 "Moscow female prison" of the Central State Archive of the city of Moscow (CSA of Moscow), containing information on applicant selection procedures, application forms, official transcripts, gradebooks, etc. The archive contains a section about daily routine of students, regulations of the School Council, remuneration of teaching staff, in particular, there is an indication of a rate of 2 rubles per hour for all categories of teachers. In addition, the archive materials describe a procedure for choosing premises for a school and contain information about the lease agreement with merchants Proshins, the amount of rent and the location of the first building (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103).

As noted above, the problem of staffing the penitentiary system was acute in the late XIX – early XX century. Establishment of specialized educational institutions was discussed. Paradoxically, in pre-revolutionary Russia, women were ready to work in the prison department. At that time, the penitentiary system was one of the few institutions where women could obtain the status of a civil servant. The highly approved opinion of the State Council of June 15,

1887 “On the management of separate places of detention of the civil department and prison guards” [17] introduced positions of assistant prison governors or wardens, as well as senior and junior wardens, in certain institutions executing criminal penalties against women. They could include “literate persons of any rank”, who took an oath to serve according to the rites of their religion. In addition, applicants for these positions pledged in writing to serve honestly. Disciplinary measures (reprimand, fine, extra duty, dismissal) were applied to them in the case of a misdemeanor, in the case of a crime, they were handed over to the court [17]. In 1892, female prison officers received pension benefits that extended not only to the employee herself, but also to their minor children if they became orphans after losing their father and mother [18]. However, women were restricted to bear arms [19, pp. 37–38]. Despite the fact that service in the prison department was fraught with high responsibility, it belonged to a public service that provided certain social guarantees, including pension provision. This was a definite incentive for women from poor families to receive financial support in old age. Thus, the existence of a number of state preferences motivated women from taxable estates to serve in the penitentiary system.

Considering the need for full-time staff, the Moscow Women’s Charity and Prison Committee founded the first school for training wardens in 1899. It is worth mentioning that after the reorganization of the Moscow Provincial Committee of the Prison Trustee Society in 1895, which had broad powers to manage activities of places of detention in Moscow, its successors, the Moscow Provincial Women’s and Men’s Prison Charity Committees, had very limited opportunities to participate in activities of correctional institutions. They were mainly responsible for charitable activities and religious education of convicts. In fact, the establishment of the school for training wardens was a private initiative of the committee, which maintained the school at its own expense. There was no state funding for

the school and no coordination of its activities by the Main Prison Department (MPD).

The purpose of the school was defined as “training skilled wardens for female prisons in Russia who will not only serve conscientiously, but also exert a moral influence on prisoners” (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Pages 96–98).

The school accepted young women and single widows aged 21–35. When applying for admission to the educational institution, applicants had to submit a medical certificate, a loyalty certificate, recommendations and photographs (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 25).

To verify the authenticity of trustworthiness certificates, the head of the school could send inquiries to the detective police, the security department, and the mayor about candidates’ moral qualities and loyalty (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 83).

It should be mentioned that the preference was given to girls from families of provincial clergy. On the one hand, they were brought up in strict Christian traditions. On the other, due to remote residence from educational centers of Russia and a relative poverty of their parents, they did not have the opportunity to get a good education and therefore to succeed in life. However, according to archival sources, students at the school belonged to different social groups. So, among the 1906 graduates were T.I. Baranovskaya (daughter of a nobleman), P.M. Bukareva (daughter of a collegiate assessor), E.L. Kuz’mina (daughter of a philistine), A.M. Mikhailova (peasant), E.F. Nikol’skaya (daughter of a deacon), E.S. Orlova (peasant), M.S. Skvortsova (daughter of a psalmist), O.G. Solov’eva (widow of the titular adviser) (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 389).

The term of study at the school lasted one year and consisted of two stages.

Bible chairs, Russian language, arithmetic, Russian history, geography of Russia, prison studies, law studies, and medical patient care were studied for six months during the first stage

of theoretical training. Persons who passed exams in the theoretical course were admitted to the second, practical, stage of training, which consisted in serving in Moscow places of detention (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Pages 96–98).

Provided that a student performed her duties in good faith, after six months of training, she received a certificate with the seal of the Moscow Women's Charity and Prison Committee and a badge of the established pattern confirming her right to fill the position of warden. The Committee was actively involved in the distribution of school graduates to places of detention not only in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, but also in provincial cities. After school, women could serve as wardens and as nurses at prison hospitals, heads of nurseries, etc.

The importance of this school increased significantly with the opening of the Moscow female prison for 250 people in October 1907. It was built on the site of former penal battalions [14].

Taking into account the positive experience of this school in staffing institutions, the Main Prison Administration began to take certain steps to set up departmental educational institutions for training prison staff. It planned to organize "prison courses and the institute of candidates for positions in the prison department" [20, p. 18]. However, these plans were not implemented. Another attempt (also unsuccessful) was made in 1912, when a draft law No. 16,270 "On conducting prison courses at the MPD" was submitted to the State Duma through the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Empire [21]. A more successful project aimed at training personnel for the prison system was the conduct of systematic readings on prison studies in March 1912 [22]. It was assumed that the composition of the listeners of systematic readings was to be approved annually by the head of the Main Prison Department. Groups of trainees were preferably to consist of persons holding full-time positions in the prison department, however, other persons who met general requirements for admission to the civil service

could also be accepted. There were no gender restrictions on the admission of students. Systematic readings on prison studies were primarily aimed at studying provisions of the General prison regulations [22; 23]. According to the fair remark of D.V. Voloshin, these readings were the first successful attempt at the practical implementation of the state model of training penitentiary personnel [2, pp. 7–13].

Centralized training of prison staff in educational institutions began in 1913. A school for training candidates for the position of senior prison wardens in Saint Petersburg and a school for training candidates for the position of prison female wardens in Moscow were opened in connection with the Law of July 13, 1913 "On the establishment of a school in Saint Petersburg for training candidates for the position of senior prison wardens and a school in Moscow for training candidates for the position of prison female wardens" approved by the State Council and the State Duma [19, pp. 899–901].

In our opinion, the creation of two educational institutions for training prison staff at the same time could be dictated by several circumstances. First, there was a difference in the categories of students: the school in Saint Petersburg trained active prison officers to improve their qualifications for appointment to a higher position; in Moscow – people who were recruited for the first time. Second, the creation of separate educational institutions for men and women fully corresponded to the concept of Russian education in the early XX century, which provided for separate education for people of different sexes. According to D.Yu. Stepanova, at that historical moment, separate group education in Russia was the most widespread organizational and pedagogical model implemented in various educational institutions [6, p. 116], which was reflected in the organization of educational institutions for the training of prison wardens.

The organizational and legal status of the female warden school established by the MPD was fixed in the Regulations on the school ap-

proved by the aforementioned law of July 13, 1913. The location of the school for training prison female wardens was chosen to use previous experience of the Moscow school. In September 1913, the head of the Moscow female prison S.I. Brodovskii and Moscow merchants Nikolai Proshin and Aleksandr Proshin concluded an agreement on the lease of a two-story wooden house for a school in the Presnya area (along Panfilovsky Lane, 1) with sheds, cellar and water supply for 500 rubles per year (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 20). On the day set for the start of classes, two female students did not arrive and during the course four more students were expelled for various reasons (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 82).

The library fund of the school consisted of books by S.V. Poznyshev "Essays on prison studies", "Doctrine of punishment", de N.I. Rochefor "Code of conduct", A.V. Kenigson "Misconduct and crimes in the service and the procedure for the responsibility of officials" (collection of legal provisions with explanation), L.E. Vladimirova "Doctrine of criminal evidence", "Law studies" and others reasons (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 337).

The school's program included a two-stage training system: the first stage was theoretical and the second was an internship in prison. In the morning, students attended a prison school, where, under the guidance of teachers, they revised the elementary school course they had completed before entering school in order to consolidate their knowledge of the Russian language and arithmetic. Theoretical classes according to the program approved by the MPD head were held daily from 15.00 to 19.00. In total, 325 hours of classes were held during the 1913/1914 academic year (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 330). The program included academic disciplines, such as prison studies, prison administration and supervision, hygiene, accounting, Bible chairs, history of the Fatherland, and a short course in law. Theoretical classes were conducted in the form of lectures, as well as conversations with

female students. The degree of students' mastery of the educational material was determined by the method of oral questioning and written work.

S.V. Poznyshev tried to reveal in a concise and popular form key ideas underlying the organization of prison activities, "believing that a person with energy and love can only do a thing whose meaning is clear to him so that he can understand his actions as part of a larger cause consisting of a mass of individual actions" [25, p. 143]. In his lectures, the professor revealed:

- the purpose of punishment, in particular prisons, comparing the pre-reform and current state of prisons in the Russian Empire;
- features of prison systems (solitary confinement, general confinement, progressive prison system);
- features of various means of correction of convicts;
- organization of prison labor, foster care, etc

He also told the audience about the works and activities of J. Howard and F.P. Haase [24].

Practical exercises under the guidance and supervision of administration officials were conducted on the territory of female and transit prisons, as well as in the prison hospital. In the female prison, classes were held from 8.00 to 12.00. Students got acquainted with various aspects of prison life and performed some work, for example, food distribution, chamber search, reception of prisoners, etc. (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 158).

All issues of the institution's functioning were discussed at meetings of the school board. During the 1913/1914 academic year, meetings were held 12 times, where issues related to general supervision of administrative, economic and educational units, supply of furniture, admission and graduation of female students, establishment of a dormitory and expenditure of funds allocated to the school were considered. In 1913, 2,616 rubles were allocated for the maintenance of the school, in 1914 – 1,120

rubles (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 334).

In March 1914, 8 students graduated from the school (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 82). The second enrollment was in September 1914; 14 students were accepted according to the results of admission tests. The training program compared to the first one was changed by the decision of the school board. From September 12 to October 20, there were only practical classes for students to go through all the stages of the internal service of wardens. According to the school board, it would help female students to master the theoretical material. In the following months of training, students acquired theoretical knowledge; the hours allotted for practical classes were reduced. Students were not on full duty in prison as part of their practical training, but only got acquainted with the prison management and work service, as well as helped full-time wardens. The list of theoretical disciplines also underwent some changes, Bible chairs, domestic history, jurisprudence, theoretical and applied prison stud-

ies were preserved (CSA of Moscow. Archive 625. List 1. Case 103. Page 407).

Thus, at the beginning of the XX century, a centralized prison management system, represented by the Main Prison Department, was established in the Russian penitentiary practice. The penitentiary ideas, innovative for that time, were successfully implemented. At the same time, the problem of staffing the penitentiary system was very acute. It was during this period that the foundations for staff training for penitentiary institutions were laid. The educational process of prison officials was optimized and the training was focused on practice. Despite the fact that the attempts described in the article to create an effective staff training system failed to fully address the personnel issue in the penitentiary sector, they can rightfully be recognized as a positive experience. The foundations laid down by the Moscow School of Prison Wardens contributed to the formation of a current system of departmental educational organizations that successfully train personnel for the penal system today.

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