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