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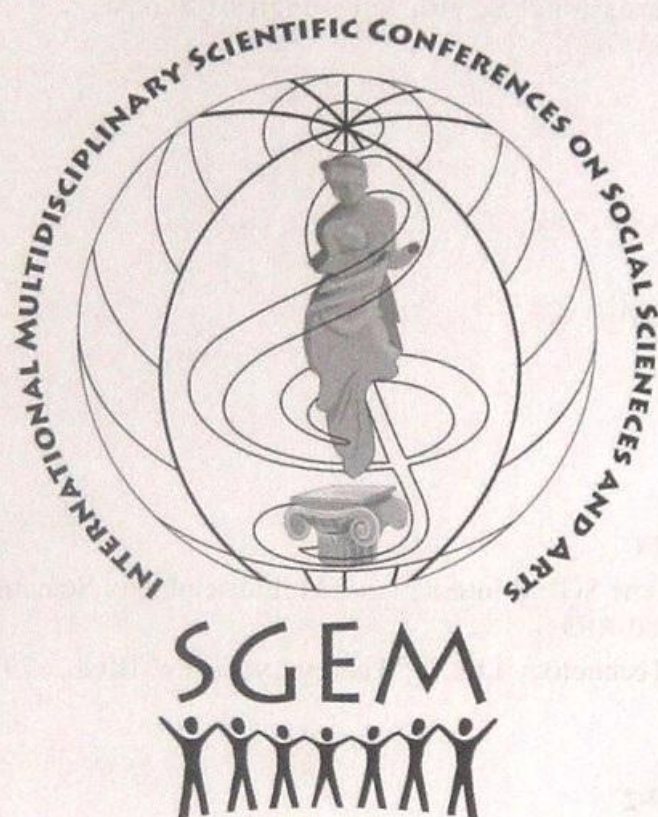
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THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND RUSSIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHING COMMUNITY: EVERYDAY LIFE OF WARTIME¹

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of man and corporate communities in war attracts the attention of historians and anthropologists because accessing to it allows us to see how our ancestors and public institutions acted in atypical, extraordinary, boundary conditions. The article is devoted to the problem of life-sustaining of teaching corporation of Russian universities in the course of the First World War. The representatives of the university teaching staff entered a difficult period in its history in 1914, connected with the reevaluation of values, some modifications in professional activity, deterioration of material and living conditions. The article attempts to reconstruct the life-sustaining activity of the university teaching corporation in the changing conditions of the 1914 – on the eve of much greater changes in 1917. University professors, being divided for political reasons at the beginning of the XX century, consolidated. The beginning of the First World War led to an outburst of quite sincere patriotic feelings among university professors and lecturers that united yesterday's political opponents for some time. A surge of patriotism provoked as positive initiatives (charity for example), and not quite constructive but explainable phenomena (anti-German sentiment). Evacuation deep into Russia had a major impact on everyday life of Russian universities, located in the western part of the empire (Warsaw, Kiev, Tartu University). Worsened housing conditions had an effect on the life and professional activity of professors, as evidenced by the numerous historical sources. The political consolidation and anti-German sentiment were more characteristic for the first years of the war. The military defeats of Russia in 1915–1916, internal political processes, lack of content, material and living complexities formed criticism towards the authorities in the teaching environment that would welcome the February Revolution, held under the anti-war slogans.

Keywords: The First World War, universities, professors and lecturers corps, everyday life, social and political attitudes, charity, evacuation.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of man and corporate communities during war attracts attention of historians and anthropologists as it allows seeing how our ancestors and public institutions acted in atypical, extraordinary, boundary conditions. Representatives of the university academic staff in 1914 lived through a difficult period of development connected with the revaluation of values, modifications of professional activity and deprivation of financials and living conditions. The paper attempts to reconstruct the

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university academic community livelihoods in a changing environment in 1914, on the eve of sweeping changes of 1917.

Materials and methods. The source base of the research comprises archival documents of the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine (TsGIAU), the Central State Historical Archive of Moscow (TsGIAM), the State Archives of Odessa region (GAOO). The funds of universities, school district trustees, and the Ministry of Education accumulate a variety of documents (reports, official correspondence, and private letters) to shed light on the problem under study. Much valuable information about the history of Warsaw University evacuation is contained in the memoirs of Professor I.A. Malinowski. The study also use published sources, such as legislation acts ("General Charter and Temporary Staff of Imperial Russian Universities", "Collection of Laws and Government Regulations published under the Government of the Senate"), annual Reports and Bulletins of universities, and periodicals (e.g. Yearbook "Rech", "Novoe Vremya").

The study is performed within the social history frame. The authors are interested in certain cases that reflect typical circumstances of university life. This paper employs methods of comparative history and historical-sociological analysis.

Historiography. Until the end of the 20th century the problem of universities and university communities during the World War I was discussed only in works on the history of higher education. The first who made a successful attempt to generalize the material and introduce previously unknown archival sources for scientific use was A.E. Ivanov. In 1999 he published a fundamental article devoted to "civil psychology and patriotic activities" of representatives of Russian university and academic science during wartime [1]. The influence of war on professors' social and political attitudes was analyzed by Trude Maurer, a German scholar, and E.A. Rostovtsev (on the example of Petrograd University) [3]. There is also a thematic collection written by the international research team and edited by the above-mentioned Professor T. Maurer [4]. The research of how war influenced the history of certain universities is also of interest for this paper [5].

Research. On the eve of World War I the Russian university academic corporation was very clearly divided into the "left" and "right" according to the social and political preferences. This split can be illustrated by the fragment of Professor B.V. Warnecke's letter from Odessa dated by January 1, 1914: "Last year Professor Kishenskiy, an extreme "right", yet a very stupid man, was elected Rector of Novorossiysk University. He was supported by the "left". Some of those who shared the "right" ideas were happy to see it as a sign of reconciliation, but I could not agree with them. Alas, I was right. He immediately changed his views and was used by the "left". He has already appointed two "left" deans" [6]. The same kind of split is described in historical sources of University of Yuriev (Tartu). In 1914 Rector M.N. Krasheninnikov wrote to the trustee of Riga school district about K.D. Pokrovskiy elected Vice-Rector of the University: "Professor Pokrovskiy, as a board member, has always voted with the "left" against the "right", and I do not remember a single occasion when he voted with the "right" against the "left" [...]. The very fact of his being elected Vice-Rector by the Council is a living proof of his affiliation to the party of the "left"" [7]. A similar pattern of internal split was characteristic of other universities. Apart from ideological differences, the university corporation suffered from tension between "older" (tenured) professors and

"younger" staff (freelance senior lecturers) [8].

Russia's entry into World War I temporarily consolidated the Russian society in the face of an external enemy. In the research literature, it has already been noted that the university professorial corporations demonstrated reconciliation of different camps in 1914–1915. [1], [3].

The temporary abatement of internal disputes among members of different ideological movements within the academic corporation can be explained by the fact that most of the professors sympathized with the Cadet Party, which at the beginning of the war encouraged to postpone internal disputes.

"German question". Wars are often accompanied by an increase in xenophobic sentiment against peoples of opponent countries. During World War I Russia saw the anti-German campaign which resulted in protests against professors and teachers of German origin. For instance, students of Petrograd University protested against Professor V.F. von Zeler in October 1914. When Professor von Zeler returned to Russia from Germany, where he spent his vacation, the student audience were hostile towards him. This attitude was caused by the rumors that Zeler had German citizenship. Some students booed von Zeler shouting: "Down with the German citizen, down with the Prussian". A similar situation happened with F.I. Knauer, Honorary Full Professor at the St. Vladimir University who returned, as well as von Zeler, from Germany to Russia in the autumn of 1914. Shortly before the war his sons got German citizenship and Knauer sent them to his mother to Jena. That made many of his colleagues hostile towards him. In the report to the Ministry of Education the trustee of Kiev school district wrote: "Most of the professors kept unfriendly with him, many of them no longer shake his hand, and Prof [essor] S.T. Golubev even openly opposed him in the meeting of History and Philology Faculty accusing him of treason and demanding his expulsion". Forced by the trustee of the school district P.E. Sokolovskiy, F.I. Knauer had to request temporary exemption from the service due to illness in November 24, 1914. The report was satisfied in November 25. F.I. Knauer was exiled to Tomsk province. Later he was transferred to Tomsk, where he died shortly thereafter [9].

Professorial charity. However, the war caused positive initiatives in the academic environment as well. On the wave of patriotic enthusiasm the professorial community of universities showed charitable impulse. In comparison with the pre-war period, much more people participated in charity events in 1914. So, on August 4, 1914 the meeting of the Saratov University Board decided to pay a monthly 3% of professorial salary to the military assistance fund [10]. A similar decision was taken by Councils of most universities. The universities held numerous fundraising activities in favor of the soldiers, refugees, and wounded. The professors of St. Petersburg University joined the committee "Petrograd to refugees" that organized fundraising activities. Many professors of medical faculties assisted the front through their professional activities, working gratuitously in university hospitals or Red Cross institutions.

Professors found an opportunity to participate in charity, though they suffered from serious trials of life caused by wartime. The most difficult was the situation for the teaching corps of those universities which were located close to the western borders of Russia due to their direct contact with war. The life of teachers in 1914–1915 near the front line is described in the memories of Professor I.A. Malinowski who was

transferred to Warsaw University from Tomsk shortly before the war. Living conditions in Warsaw in the early months of the war were quite satisfactory. I.A. Malinowski recalled: "I hardly ever had dinner at diners or restaurants [...]. I preferred to do with my own means. It was delicious and satisfying. Cooked scrambled eggs with ham, sausage and potatoes with sour cream, noodles with cottage cheese and butter, boiled peas with butter, grilled Ukrainian sausage. This was the first course. For the second I had prostokvasha (sour milk, like yoghurt) with sugar and cinnamon. The third course was coffee or tea and cakes. The pastry shop on the corner of Marshalkovskaya and Koszykowa Streets sold a box of small cakes (about 20 pieces) for 15 kopecks". Meanwhile, the front was close, "during all academic year the front was 30–35 miles from Warsaw. When the city turned silent, people could hear cannonade from afar. German "taube" were barraging over the city shooting sharpnel. Once it was a "zeppelin". A bomb fell on one of the central streets. It was night, so there were no human casualties, but all window glasses in all huge 5-and 6-storeyed buildings in the block were smashed. There signs on stores were also damaged [...]" In the mid-summer of 1915 the situation at the front changed for the worse, and the city was abandoned to the enemy.

Professor I.A. Malinowski, who was spending his vacation with his family in Ostrog (Rovno province), lost his property in Warsaw ("We had to abandon our apartment with furniture, all furnishings, dishes, chest with fur things, dresses, carpets, all table linen, library [...], photographs, letters, some of my manuscripts and so on". In August, Moscow hosted an emergency meeting of the Council to discuss the future of the University of Warsaw. The meeting weighed options for evacuation to Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don. The Council decided to accept the proposal from Rostov municipal government that promised to provide the University with necessary facilities, to allocate a certain sum of money for costs connected with the relocation of the University and give one million rubles to construct new University premises.

I.A. Malinowski recalled: "We found [...] an apartment in the house of Aslanova in Pushkin Street [...]. A gorgeous apartment in all respects: [...] located in the city center, very close to the University [...], central heating, electricity, water, ground floor, six rooms". I.A. Malinowski's family was lucky: "Soon people suffered from the housing crisis, and it was difficult to find any apartment. Collie (the family of Professor A.R. Collie, a physicist. – M.G.) acquired their apartment a year later and had to pay for everything twice or three times as much" [11].

The evacuation to the inland due to the threat of occupation affected four universities. First, in the autumn of 1915 the University of Warsaw and St. Vladimir University were evacuated. Professors, students and equipment from Warsaw, as it has already been noted, were moved to Rostov-on-Don, while the University of Kiev with more than 60 professors moved to Saratov at the beginning of October (in the autumn of 1916 the University returned to Kiev). Partially due to the wartime conditions Petrograd University opened its branch in Perm in 1916 (which was supposed to become the basis for the University in case of evacuation). The academic staff of the branch consisted mainly from the representatives of the head university. The evacuation of Yuriev (Tartu) University was long discussed, as the front line was constantly changing, and the threat of losing the Baltic region was recurrent. The University relocated to Voronezh only in 1918.

In the wartime the material and living conditions of the university academic corporation members deteriorated. There were quite few people in academic circles who could boast of large fortunes. According to A.E. Ivanov's estimates, before the revolution only 12.6% of full-time university professors possessed landed property and houses [12]. The main source of income for many professors was their salary paid by the Ministry of National Education together with the income from other professional activities. During the described period, a fixed salary of professors and lecturers of Russian universities was as follows: the full professor received 3000 rubles, the assistant professor – 2000 rubles, the lecturer – 1000 rubles per year. Professors and lecturers of Tomsk and Warsaw universities enjoyed benefits that increase their salaries by 20–50%. The revenues of professors and lecturers replenished through the "honorarium system". Summing up permanent (salary) and other incomes (for administrative positions, honorarium, regional allowances, order pension benefits) earned by professors and lecturers, we can conclude about a large range of final numbers: from the amounts barely exceeding 1,000 rubles per year for Assistant Professors to 7,000–8,000 for Professors of Law in metropolitan universities [13]. This was enough to keep up the professor's family in the early 20th century, but World War I rapidly devalued the ruble. The financial position of junior academic staff is described in a letter written by the mother of an assistant professor at Moscow University to the Minister of Education in the summer of 1916.

The woman described the situation with her son who had previously been sent by the Ministry of Public Education abroad to work on his thesis: "After staying there for a year and a half, he was caught by the German war and forced to flee losing all his belongings: books for 500 roubles, all the luggage and train tickets. It required him 18 days and 350 rubles to return them. On his arrival to Russia he ceased to receive the scholarship from the Ministry, but in spite of such difficult financial situation, he continued working on his thesis and delivered lectures at the university without any particular reward, as his lectures were considered optional. The listeners paid him 22 rubles for six months [14]".

Due to high cost of living the Russian authorities decided to increase the faculty salaries. In December 1915 the Minister P.N. Ignatiev distributed the letter in which he asked university rectors "due to high cost of living and exceptional circumstances of wartime" to discuss the amount of "one-time benefits that could be paid to the academic staff". The first real fringe benefits were paid only in the spring of 1916. Those whose salary did not exceed 2,400 rubles per year were paid the interest bonus to the salary "due to the rise in prices caused by the war". Depending on the location and size of the salary it made from 12.5 to 30%. In the summer of 1916 the remuneration for professors and lecturers was finally increased. According to the law "On the temporary improvement in the material conditions of the Imperial Russian university professors ..." new salaries were as follows: the full professor was paid 4,500 rubles, the associate professor – 3,000 rubles, the assistant professor (in Warsaw and Tartu Universities) – 2,400 rubles, the lecturer – 1,500 rubles [15]. However, the increase could hardly cover all the costs that were growing steadily due to the inflation.

Conclusion. World War I led to an outburst of sincere patriotic feelings among university professors and lecturers, which could unite former political opponents. A surge of patriotism provoked both positive initiatives (charity) and not quite constructive, yet explainable phenomena (anti-German sentiment). However, these

phenomena were more characteristic of the first years of the war. The military defeat of Russia in 1915–1916, internal political processes, low wages, material and living difficulties evoked criticism against authorities among professors, who would later welcome the February Revolution with its anti-war slogans.

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