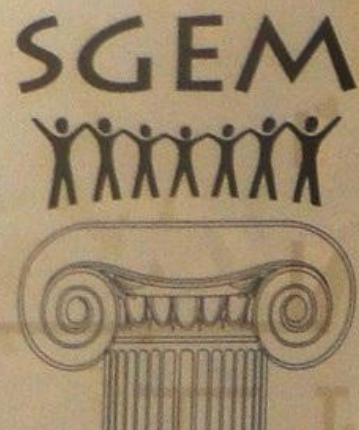


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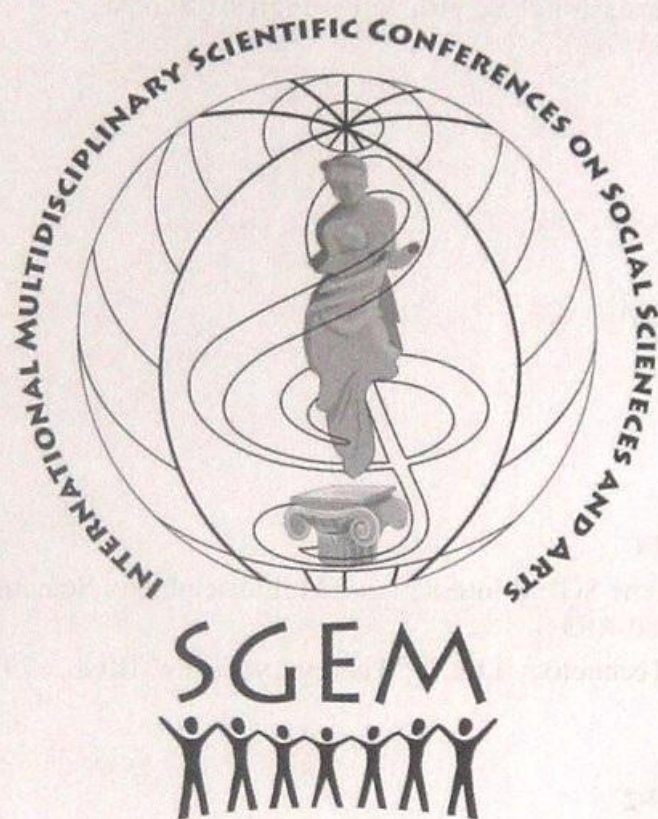
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UNIVERSITY TEACHING COMMUNITY OF RUSSIA LATE XIX – EARLY
XX CENTURIES: FORMS OF MANIFESTATION
OF CORPORATE IDENTITY¹

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the university teaching community of Russia at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries as a particular social category of Russian society. Despite being a relatively sparse group, even from the XIX century, it played a significant part in the life of the country and often was a marker of the social and political processes occurring in Russia. Appeal to the specified object allows us to fill one of the gaps in the comprehensive analysis of the social history of Russia in the late XIX – early XX century. The authors make an attempt to reveal the basic manifestations of corporate identity by representatives of university teaching community. It is the author's opinion that representatives of the university community corporate identity manifested in the late XIX – early XXI in the participation of professors and teachers to discuss "the issue of the university", attempts to self-organization, the presence of some characteristic elements of outlook. Hundreds of professors and lecturers took public participation (in press) in a permanent discussion of topical problems of university life. Belonging to the University forced them to speak out on the most controversial issues of their professional activities, offering a perfect image of the University. Political cataclysm – the first Russian revolution – was the catalyst for the self-organization of university teachers. A variety of "union" to protect the interests of teachers began to take hold during revolutionary period. Analysis value orientations of university professors leads to the conclusion that despite the obvious individual differences representatives of the teaching community had a certain "set" of corporate worldview features concentrated around the notions of honor, duty, professional mission, etc.

Keywords: universities, professors and lecturers corps, identity.

INTRODUCTION

The article discusses the university community of the Russian Empire in the 19th – 20th centuries as a special social category of the Russian society. Despite the relative paucity, this group played a prominent role in the country since the early 19th century and was often a marker of social and political processes taking place in Russia. As far as the university academic community can be viewed as a part of Russian intellectuals, it is of a particular interest to specify the main forms of its corporate identity.

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Materials and Methods. Determination of corporate identity forms relies much on personal sources. However, since professors often publicly expressed their views on the university question, their ideas are reflected in periodicals, public addresses, protocols, transcripts of meetings, etc. The required materials can be found in both published sources and archive funds. This paper employs the funds of the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NART), the State Archives of Odessa Region (GAOO), the State Archive of Kharkiv Region (GAKhO), Kyiv State Archive of (GAK).

The research is performed within the framework of social history, the theory of identity being of great importance. The article uses the comparative-historical method as well as historical and sociological analysis.

Historiography. There are many works on history devoted to Russian universities and university community in the 19th – early 20th centuries. Among them are classic works by A.E. Ivanov (*Higher Education in Russia in the Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries*, Moscow, 1991) and T. Maurer (*Hochschullehrer im Zarenreich. Ein Beitrag zur Sozial- und Bildungsgeschichte*, Koln; Weimar; Wien, 1998). Meanwhile, the corporate identity of Russian pre-revolutionary university professors has seldom been a subject of special research. However, this issue has been widely discussed in modern Russian historiography within socio-historical research. Among these works are *Russian Professors. University Corporate Identity or Professional Solidarity* by E.A. Vishlenkova, B.C. Galiullina, K.A. Ilina (Moscow, 2012) dedicated to the Russian corporate culture of professors in the first half of the 19th century; *Intellectuals and Freedom. The Experience of Scientific Community in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* by D.G. Gorin (Moscow, 2012) that discusses the phenomenon of “professorial culture”.

Research. The Russian university “learned class” had formed relatively late, by the beginning of the 19th century. Despite its paucity, it was a relatively coherent group due to a number of factors. The university community obviously stood out against the rest of the Russian public. The paucity of universities and elitism of higher education gave professors an aura of exceptionalism. An important factor in the formation of universities’ self-identity was the mechanism of professorial corporation replenishment: in the 19th – early 20th centuries there existed the principle of “self-replenishment”, i.e. electivity of professors.

Thus, we assume that the university professorial community in the late 19th – early 20th centuries was a well-formed professional corporation. The present research dwells on the forms of corporate identity of the university academic community. In our opinion, this identity manifested itself in active discussion of the “university question”, in attempts of self-organization and in some characteristic elements of the outlook.

The “university question” through the eyes of professors. Since the middle of the 19th century the “university question” has been in the focus of Russian social thought. The idea of a special role of university corporation representatives was clearly expressed by Professor Sergei Troubetskoy from Moscow University: “Being a social category or a teaching corporation, the University is the most competent to judge about its own research interests, benefits and needs in what concerns planning the syllabus and teaching” [1]. Obviously guided by similar considerations, hundreds of professors and lecturers participated in discussing topical problems of the university life. Their belonging to the university made them speak on the most controversial issues of their

professional activities, offering a “perfect image” of the university. In most cases university professors expressed their opinion through periodicals. However, in the early 20th century, in 1902 and in 1906, the university community managed to convey their ideas to the public authorities by participating in meetings convened at the initiative of the Ministry of Education.

It is impossible to provide the full range of views on the “university question” expressed by the members of the university community in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. The review will focus on those judgments that best characterize the ideas of professors and lecturers about the university and university academic corporation.

Many professors considered the university as a highest social phenomenon. Iosiph Mikhailovskiy, Professor of Tomsk University, wrote, “There is nothing like the atmosphere of the university, and it is of great value just to be here” [2]. S. Troubetsky asserted, “The University can just be the University, and, staying true to itself, it does something great for the public, state and culture that no one else can do. [...] The mission of the university is self-sufficient, it is independent in the full sense of the word. Its autonomy is the natural right it cannot prosper without” [3].

The aforesaid problem of university autonomy often was the leitmotif of publicistic works on the “university question”. Most of the university corporation representatives felt bitter about the limited university autonomy that followed the University Charter of 1884 and demanded expanded academic freedoms. It can be judged on by numerous journalism works devoted to the subject discussed as well as by the materials of the above-mentioned meetings.

Due to the professorial journalism, we can make interesting observations concerning the ideas expressed by the university community about its outer boundaries. I.V. Mikhailovskiy wrote, “The word *professor* derives from the Latin word *profiteri* that means ‘free to reproduce one’s beliefs’. Professors are not equal to teachers of secondary schools. As the goals of high school and university are essentially different, so different are the activities of a school teacher and a university professor. The professor’s activity is focused on independent development of a certain area of knowledge. The professor is primarily a scientist, and then a teacher”. Having defined the difference between the university professor and the school teacher in this way, I.V. Mikhailovskiy continues his reasoning about peculiarities of professorial activities and assigns a special identity to it. He points at “the risk for the professor to become an *official*” and states that “usual service standards are inapplicable to professors; that it is inadmissible to rigorously schedule professorial activities; that professors need sufficient financial support not to get distracted from their research, which could affect adversely its quality” [4].

Taking an active part in discussions of the university question, professors determined their role in public life, which constituted an important element of their identity.

Professorial self-organization. Professor I.A. Linnichenko from Novorossiysk University wrote, “Certainly we have neither initiation rites as in the ancient chivalry, old orders or student corporations nor written statutes of our order. But besides formal meetings – both faculty and Soviet – there were formal unions (as the Academic Union, no longer functioning) and meetings of the groups that formed our Collegium” [5]. According to I.A. Linnichenko, the Academic Union was the largest independent organization of university professors in pre-revolutionary Russia. The history of the

Academic Union and the work of its three Congresses are thoroughly described by E.A. Ivanov [6], which frees us from the need to dwell on the matter.

It is important to emphasize that in addition to the well-known Academic Union, the universities in the early 20th century housed a variety of other “unions” and “societies” aimed at protecting professors’ rights. “Junior professors” who did not belong to the full-time staff were especially active. As they had no legal opportunity to be full members of the university corporation, “junior professors” in the early 20th century went the way of self-organization and formed associations to secure their rights. One of the first associations of the kind was St. Petersburg Mutual Association of Assistant Professors and Research Assistants of Higher Education Institutions founded in 1903. [7]

The First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907 was a catalyst for self-organization of university professors. The revolution brought about an increase in civic engagement of the subjects of the Russian Empire. The Manifesto adopted in October 17, 1905 allowed people to hope for legalization of professorial unions.

In February 1905, senior lecturers of Kazan University turned to the trustee of the school district with a request to approve the Charter of the Mutual Aid Society of Junior Faculty of the Imperial University of Kazan [8]. When the consent of the trustee was obtained, the Society was legalized.

The Kharkiv Group of Junior High School Professors was founded at the same time. This association was a local branch of the Academic Union. In the archives of Kharkiv Region there is a draft of its Charter. Article 2 of the Charter says, “The Group aims at improving the academic life of all parties on the basis of full autonomy and academic freedom. To accomplish this goal in a variety of forms of its activity expression (in general meetings, special commissions, collective statements in the press, articles, lectures, readings, etc.), the Group participates in the development and implementation of a new Charter of higher educational institutions, discussion of current events of the academic life and their role for the social life, and actively responds to these events in accordance with the objectives of the Union”. The Group included freelance university lecturers (private-docents), research assistants, technicians, interns, postgraduates (those who were preparing for professorship) from any higher educational institutions of Kharkiv, both acting and former. Professors were also invited to join the Group. The Union members paid an annual contribution of five rubles, of which two were paid for the central office, and three – for the needs of the local one. At the beginning of 1906 the Kharkiv group numbered 103 people [9].

During the revolutionary events in Russia, academic unions became highly politicized. Their members raised topical social and political issues at sessions and meetings. Union activists usually shared antimonarchic views.

In 1905 St. Vladimir University housed Assemblies of junior faculty who demanded autonomy and political freedoms [10]. The Kharkiv Group, inter alia, supported Privat-Docent L.N. Yasnopolskiy who was dismissed for a lecture condemning the governmental policy in the Far East.

The school district trustee Count Musin-Pushkin wrote to the Ministry of National Education in 1906 about the Junior Faculty Union of Novorossiysk University of Odessa, “This illegal political Junior Faculty Union is a revolutionary organization

closely connected with the radical student parties and other radical elements of the University Council". The trustee described the activities of the Head of the Junior Faculty Union, Privat-Docent Tarasevich, and Privat-Docent Orzhenskiy, who was a prominent figure in the organization, "Tarasevich and Orzhenskiy represent the Junior Faculty Union at almost all meetings of the Council, due to which the information that is supposed to be kept in secret, immediately comes out to the Junior Faculty Union members who openly debate it in their meetings and report about it to the local Jewish press. There is a constant pressure on the decisions of the Councils through this close organic contact of the Union with radical student organizations" [11].

Closer to the end of the First Russian Revolution academic Unions ceased their work as well. In April 1909, Minister of Internal Affairs P.A. Stolypin wrote to Minister of Education A.N. Schwartz, "There is no Academic Union of professors at Kharkiv University. Neither is there The Junior Faculty Union as a separate organization, yet there is The Union of University Employees that aims at economic and political union of the junior employees. The Union is headed by Assistant Professor (Privat-Docent) Vorobyov, who belongs to the left" [12]. A new surge of academic self-organization happened on the eve of the new Revolution of 1917.

Academic self-organizations of the early 20th century are, no doubt, a form of academic self-identification.

Worldview as a marker of professional identity. Although worldview is a sign of personality, representatives of professional corporation can develop some basic elements of the system of values, a similar attitude to life. It is rather difficult to reconstruct the "collective thinking" of professors. However, there are available historical sources that can shed light on this problem.

Professorial public statements and private judgment allow reconstructing the system of values of university professors. The most significant element of this system belongs to "the service to science". S.N. Troubetskoy wrote, "The first duty of [professor] is selfless and honest devotion to their profession, to the science they teach. By serving it they serve both the university and students" [13]. According to Professor of Law at Tomsk University I.A. Malinowski, service to science meant service to the spiritual essence, "Pursuing science, one should not ignore other types of intellectual activity. The university people should not be alien to religion, art, literature, social life [...]. It is not enough for faculty members to have one scientific specialty. They should be engaged in other intellectual activities".

To support this idea Malinowski cites Yartsev, a character from A.P. Chekov's "Three Years", who graduated the Philological Faculty, then entered the Natural Science Faculty, got the Master's degree in Chemistry, studied Sociology and Russian History. "The University is the temple of science. Hence, the academic people, i.e. those who teach, learn, and went to university are the apostles and champions of truth." And then, "If science encompasses the search for truth and meaning in life, the study of science should bring in a man love of truth and aversion to lies" [14].

The priority service to the science and spiritual principle implied selflessness and renunciation of human avarice. K. Sapezhko, Professor at the Medical Faculty of Novorossiysk University, responded to a commercial offer, "I told them that I consider incompatible with the dignity of the professor to become a spa-physician either in commercial or personal interests" [15].

The analysis of university academic values leads to a conclusion that, in spite of obvious differences among individual representatives of the university public, there was a certain "set" of corporate ideological features centered around the concepts of honor, duty, professional mission, etc.

Through professorial public statements we see the professor as a person with ideal traits. However, sharing ideas about virtues, professors were forming their self-image, setting the bar high for those who wanted to join the academic circle.

Conclusion. The above-analyzed forms of corporate identity of Russian university professors at the turn of the 20th century demonstrate that the university community was a special corporation the study of which was of a considerable scientific interest due to its impact on the political development of Russia.

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