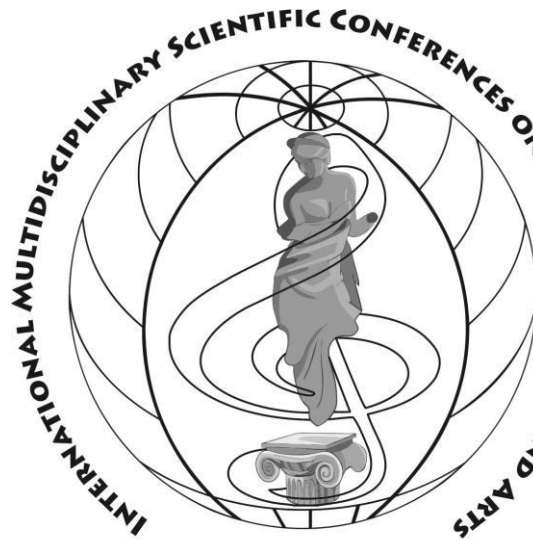


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Published by STEF92 Technology Ltd., 51 “Alexander Malinov” Blvd., 1712 Sofia, Bulgaria

Total print: 5000

**ISBN 978-619-7105-49-0**

**ISSN 2367-5659**

**DOI: 10.5593/sgemsocial2015B3**

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SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ARTS**

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## UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY IN 1920-1930-IES.: FACTORS, MANNERS AND FORMS OF MANIFESTATION OF CORPORATE IDENTITY<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This article represents an attempt to reconstruct the history of scientific and educational community in Tomsk throughout two decades (1920-1930s) on the basis of both published and unpublished sources. For the first time authors have formulated the notion of crisis of university lecturers' corporate identity influenced by shaping of the Soviet state based on regional example. Factors of formation and manifestation of scientific and educational community corporate identity have been discerned and analyzed. Special attention was paid to role of state and party organizations in the process of transformation of university community in 1920-1930s, staff and social rotation of scientific and educational community. Despite radical political and socio-economic changes, that the country had undergone in 1920-1930s the community of higher education lecturers remained a specific social stratum with unique and distinctive characteristics. The article is meant for all interested in Russian history, history and anthropology of higher education and science, and also in Soviet period of Russian history in general.

**Keywords:** University scientific and educational community, corporate identity, Tomsk, history of science, antropology of science

### INTRODUCTION

Studying the problems of identity is one of the most crucial research areas within humanities. The interest of researchers in problems of identity, including various corporate identities, is rapidly rising on the turn of XX and XXI centuries in Russia. This fact is determined by rapidly changing social reality and structural transformations of society which deeply influence the formation of new identities and transform the existing ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Written in the framework of RFH grant "Social forms of science organization in Siberia in the 1941-1991-ies: the meaning and role in social, cultural and economic modernization of the Soviet society", the project "Man in a Changing World. Problems of identity and social adaptation in history and at present" (the RF Government grant No. 14.B25.31.0009).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study of corporate identity of Russian university lecturers lies on the borders between history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and pedagogy. We will use the theory of social construction by P. Berger, T. Luckmann because it encompasses multidimensionality and dialectical character of the process of constructing identity where the subject of its construction is simultaneously the object. For the analysis of processes of formation and transformation of identity we will also use the theory of N. Luhmann, particularly his idea of operational closure as mechanism of autopoietic production and reproduction [1].

Apart from that, for studying the specifics of formation of identity of academic and teaching staff of Russian pre-revolutionary universities we will use the "social" approach and method of biography.

The main sources that were used for this research are published (laws and normative-legal acts of the Ministry of education of RSFSR and Ministry of education of USSR) and unpublished material (archival documents, including documents of management and record keeping), periodicals, ego-documents (diaries, letters and memoirs).

## **RESULTS**

The demolition of the imperial and establishment of the Soviet state was accompanied by the revision of social roles of many members of society and whole communities.

Clergymen, former tsar officials and officers found themselves on the margins of social and class hierarchy. Quests for survival and subsistence were resolved by representatives of each of these groups in different ways.

Academic community also underwent corporate identity crisis. In our view, the abovementioned crisis was caused by the following factors:

- the professordom belonged to elites in the social structure of Russian Empire; in the new "system of coordinates" the professordom had to give its place at "social Olympus" to representatives of "classes-hegemony";
- the majority of members of university corporation had deep ideological cleavages with Soviet authorities;
- the overall political and socio-economic state of affairs in the country did not facilitate necessary conditions for teaching and research activity.

### **The general description of socio-political atmosphere in the country and its impact material and daily life conditions of university community**

Political and socio-economic climate in the country during the years of Civil War was not apt for facilitation of teaching and research activity. Horrible material and living conditions of academic teaching staff is covered in existing historical research in great detail. Material and living conditions of academic teaching staff in Siberia is also illustrative. In the beginning of 1920s salaries amounted to approximately 25% of subsistence minimum. [2]. For the sake of bettering material conditions of scientists in

Tomsk, “The cooperative of research fellows” was established. Due to low hourly pay and shortage in teaching staff, multi-jobholding became widespread. Researchers V.L. Soskin and E.V. Bogdasheva state; “It can be said that the research fellow salary was not even low, it was beggarly”. Furthermore, it was paid not on a regular basis with long delays. In June 1922 the Dean of the medical faculty of Tomsk state university write that “now the March salary is being paid”. In October 1922 the chairman of the Tomsk *CUBU* noted on that matter that “salaries are delayed for 1,5-2 months, an earlier they were delayed even for more 5-6 months”. Furthermore, the inflation was not compensated [3]

Apart from housing and supply problems, the situation with life conditions was exacerbated by the fact that many of them had to undergo numerous migrations. For example, in 1918 Kazan and Perm university professors had to evacuate to Tomsk, escaping from the Red Army offensive

After the end of the Civil War and installment of the Soviet the migration of university lecturers from regions to the center in search of better conditions for life and work was a common phenomenon. Former head of the Siberian department of people’s education D.K. Chudinov wrote: “Already back then (the first half of 1920s) escapements had occurred. We interpreted this fact as a discrepancy between the overall number of universities and that of professors in the country. Consequently we found out that doors were opened easily: center of the country was attractive for professors because of academic ration, booked housing, various sorts of multi-jobholding opportunities, academic trips etc... Margins of the country in their supply policy was more straightforward and equaled professors to all others. This phenomenon made us worried to the extent that we made it a subject of special discussion at Siberian Revolutionary Committee.” [4].

As can be seen from above, in 1917-1920s the conditions of transformation of the socio-political system and reforms of higher education determined deep crisis of the university academic and teaching staff corporate identity. The instability in staff recruitment negatively influenced the research-educational process.

. In our view, the crisis of academic and teaching communal identity was manifested in:

- the social split of community into “old” and “new” professors;
- conflicts between “old” and “new” professors;
- resignation of many university lecturers who gained their professional maturity back in pre-revolutionary times;
- two kinds emigration from the country: forced and voluntary.



### **Resources of corporate identity**

In 1920-1930s the system of training and accreditation of academic and teaching staff was formed. The general guidance of training academic and teaching professionals was carried out by the All-union committee on higher education attached to the Council of People's commissars. This was determined by the fact that universities were subject of management by different governmental bodies and this in turn led to setting up different requirements for PhD students and derailment of training plans for lecturers and researchers. According to the "Statement", postgraduate studies involved theoretical training in one of social or economic disciplines, 2 foreign languages and major. Every PhD student starting from the first year of his studies was supervised by curator from a number of qualified professors and doctors of sciences. One supervisor was allowed to guide not more than 5 PhD students simultaneously.

At the end of 1930s the practice of conferring degrees for publishing works without defense was resumed. The system of teaching positions, that was introduced after the Revolution was practiced until the end of 1930s. However, it turned out that this system did little for stimulation of scientific qualification of teaching staff and gave rise to leveling experienced and young lecturers because there were no proper system of evaluation of real scientific qualification of a university lecturer.

In the end, the standards for academic and teaching were introduced in 1930. These standards involved distinctions between positions of Professor, associate professor and teaching assistant. [5]

On the basis of decrees of the Council of People's Commissars (*SNK*) on academic degrees and titles (1934 and 1937 respectively) and on PhD studentship the degrees of candidate and doctor of sciences were resumed "on a new, totally different from pre-revolutionary, basis". Also academic titles of teaching assistant, associate professor and professor were reintroduced. The decree of the Council of People's Commissars (*SNK*) and Central Committee of *VKP(b)* (the All-union communist party of Bolsheviks) entitled "On the work of higher education institutions and its management" (1936) drastically changed public perception of scientific work at universities. The following point was particularly underscored: "without scientific-research work it is impossible to train specialists whose qualifications are in line with contemporary level of the development of science, and training of academic and teaching staff and its professional development is also unthinkable". One of the factors of the development of research became presentation of research results in dissertations [6]. Thus, the system of training of academic and teaching staff took its ultimate shape only in early 1930-1940s.

Scientific work was acknowledged to be a significant part of university lecturers' duty. The permanent development of research on topical issues became an integral part of university mission. Following the decree of Council of People's Commissars, the university lecturer was not only evaluated as a teacher, but as researcher in the first place. The system of accreditation of higher education institutions staff members encompassed periodic reporting on results of their work. The system of election on an academic position became an antidote against remission of research productivity of a

department. The system of accreditation favored further professional development of lecturers and contributed to engagement of talented youth in scientific-teaching work and thus to growth of potential of universities. The decree also stated that, academic degrees of doctor and candidate of sciences could be conferred on a person without undergoing the dissertation defense procedure, taking into consideration published works and known research findings and inventions [7].

In sum, the Soviet state attached great importance to training and accreditation of academic and teaching staff, that was an important factor of formation and development of its corporate identity.

### **The forms of manifestation of professional identity**

The crucial forms of manifestation of corporate identity of Soviet academic and teaching community were as follows: specific social network; solidarity (mutual assistance); unspoken Code of professional behavior; consciousness of boundaries of their own corporation, its difference from other professional communities and social strata.

Let us illustrate each form of manifestation of academic and teaching staff corporate identity. The main distinctive characteristic of Soviet academic and teaching corporation was specific social network which included primarily colleagues. This goes to prove the presence of close corporate bonds within academic community. For instance, in October 1925 the club called *Kenguru* was opened within the Tomsk city club of scientists. The meaning of the name *Kenguru* was explained by the informer to the Tomsk district office of OGPU (secret service) in the following ways “the club of emotionally unsatisfied citizens, that organize reasonable (various) entertainments” or “the club of like-minded citizens, that organize various entertainments”. According to the same source, the organizers of this club were “a narrow circle of like-minded people with “counter-revolutionary odor” who sincerely hate Soviet power”. Among its members were professors of Tomsk state university V.D. Kuznetsov, N.A. Popova, L.I. Morokov, I.A. Sokolova. V.D. Kuznetsov was elected as “director” of the club.

*Kenguru* constituted an entertainment organization where the parties were regularly held. During these parties professors and members of their families acted out various satirical stages about colleagues, social environment and Soviet undertakings at Tomsk universities. Many stages were made in forms of poetry or songs. Furthermore, the choir directed by Prof. L.I. Morokova was established. Each party was moderated by an elected host, in most cases they were professors, organizers of the club. Singing of the anthem authored by Prof. N.A. Popov was always to be the closing scene. One of these scenes was described by the informer to the Tomsk district office of the OGPU in great detail: “... at the fore of the stage a grimacing, as in circus, professor-host pops up, then goes a choir, consisting of professors and members of their families, the group makes a semi-circle and the host starts to declaim a verse and then the whole choir sings the “anthem”:

*Kenguru* united us all

*Kenguru* inflames us all

At night, at noon and in the morning – at evenings also

*Kenguru*

Sends spleen to hell [8]

Satire making fun of Soviet reality was expressed by *Kenguru* members in various ways. For instance, at one of club meetings, that was declared to be solemn, Prof. Kuznetsov addressed everyone using the word “comrades”, despite that usually addressed colleagues at work situations and beyond as “gentlemen”. The following sentences uttered by V.D. Kuznetsov was characterized as “sharp and at the same time sophisticated irony about Soviet reality” [8].

Later at the meeting the questionnaire was discussed and approved. “Questions were, according to the informer to the *OGPU* – sheer evil irony about questionnaires of our party organizations”. For example, their questionnaires contained the following questions “Your name, patronymic and surname before 1917, before 1920 and after 1920. When your family origin started to be peasant – before 1917 or not, before 1920 or not”. When questions were discussed, A.I. Milyutin said: “I’d like to add, when you family origin started to be that of worker”. Prof. I.A. Sokolov made a reasonable suggestion: “Comrades, let’s merge two questions, say, into one- when did your family origin start to be that of worker-peasant, that’s even shorter”[8]

One of the most crucial forms of manifestation of corporate identity of academic and teaching staff is solidarity in defending its members’ rights. For example, in spring 1921 and 1922, the universities of the USSR were pervaded by the surge of strikes that protested the new university statute. Whereas in the beginning of 1920s, strikes had not prevented authorities from adopting the new statute, in 1930s, under the pressure from corporation of university lecturers and researchers, the Board of People’s Commissariat for education decided to abandon the police of implementing the brigade-laboratory method. The decree of People’s Commissariat read: “To acknowledge the implementation of the brigade-laboratory method to be impractical.” People’s Commissariat for education (*Narkompross*) suggested to organize discussions of training methods in departments and methodic departments “in accordance with peculiarities of material, qualification of students, availability of laboratory and other facilities”. From the end of 1932/1933 academic year the brigade-laboratory method was abandoned.

An illustrative example of mutual support within academia is the foundation of mutual support of professors and lecturers organized in 1919 in Petrograd university. Contributions that were made by members of this foundation were deposited on Prof. S.P. Glazenap’s savings account passbook. Prof. Glazenap chaired the foundation and took care of its finances.[30. P. 22]. The total amount of contributions made to the foundation of mutual support reached 83 625 rubles. 20 000 rubles were loaned to professors for moving to new houses, 38 000 rubles were spent for bettering nourishment. 25 200 were allocated to families of deceased professors as assistance in funding funeral services. Finally, to cover stationery and printing expenses 7 565 rubles

were spent. All in all, the foundation of mutual support gave out 70 765 rubles as loans in 1919. [9].

## CONCLUSION

Despite radical political and socio-economic transformations that the country had undergone in 1920-1930s, the university academic and teaching staff corporation remained a peculiar social stratum with unique characteristics. The corporate identity played an important role not only in social development of academic and teaching community but in the overall development of Soviet science and higher education [10].

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