



Politics and culture. Political hegemony in the university:  
The professoriate and the university council in Odessa, 1865—1917

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*При використанні матеріалів статті обов'язковим є посилання на її автора з повним бібліографічним описом видання, у якому опубліковано статтю. Дана електронна копія статті може бути скопійована, роздрукована і передана будь-якій особі без обмежень права користування за обов'язкової наявності першої (даної) сторінки з повним бібліографічним описом статті. При повторному розміщенні статті у мережі Інтернет обов'язковим є посилання на сайт Східного інституту українознавства імені Ковальських.*

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## **POLITICS AND CULTURE. POLITICAL HEGEMONY IN THE UNIVERSITY: THE PROFESSORIAL AND THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL IN ODESSA, 1865—1917**

The dominant tradition in western research concerning the czarist universities in their last decades looks at the student movement as one of the principal social movements in the last decades of czarist Russia, that means it looks at the direct political role of the students or the universities in the political system of autocratic Russia.<sup>1</sup> Another quite strong tradition examines the institutions of higher learning as agencies of state controlled social change.<sup>2</sup> A third, minor tradition deals with the scientific role of the universities and with individual scholars.<sup>3</sup>

A closer look at the history of the different universities in the czarist empire shows, that its hardly possible to oversee the political implications in their history. It seems that in czarist Russia as in the Soviet Union the spheres of politics and culture were less separated than in the west. The state intermingled in the universities, and vice versa the universities, the students and parts of the professoriate, actively forced the representatives of the autocratic system. One of the basic reasons for the close relationship between state and universities was of course that the universities in czarist Russia were state institutions, founded only in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, without older traditions of independence and self-government. Especially at the periphery they should enforce the cultural integration of a city or a region in the state and encourage the professionalization of the bureaucratic apparatus. But the intention of the state and the intention of students and professors were not identical, the gap between state and society widened more and more. Professors began to integrate in the international community of researchers as in national, regional and local communities instead of being pure state servants. Professors and students played a key role in delegitimizing the czarist power, their social role was based on knowledge and culture and not on *soslovie*.

The present article looks at this relationship in analysing the university council of the New Russian university of Odessa, the third university concerning age in the Russian Ukraine (founded in 1864). The university council was the general body of the professoriate which organized the university and elected from 1863 to 1884 and from 1905 to 1917 the deans and the rector of the university.<sup>4</sup> This approach gives the possibility to look at the professoriate at whole, at their different fractions and to interpretate the elections of the rectors of the university and of the deans of the faculties as a result of struggles between different informal

groups, which tried to increase their influence and which had — explicitly or implicitly — different cultural and political concepts and world views.<sup>5</sup>

From 1865 up to 1871 the minister of culture appointed, according to a special statute, the deans and the rector of the new university.<sup>6</sup> In their first years the university was led by some generally respected and well-experienced professors: the Kharkiv professor for mechanics Ivan Dmitrievič Sokolov was appointed rector of the university from 1865 to 1869, dean of the historical-philological faculty was the well known professor for Slavic philology Victor Ivanovič Grigorovič (1865-1868) and of the physical-mathematical faculty the professor for chemistry Nikolaj Nikolaevič Sokolov. Because the law faculty at the beginning had no ordinary professor, the rector had to organize the faculty by himself. Only in 1866 the longtime Kharkiv professor for civil law Aleksej Vasilevič Kunicyn (1866-1873) was appointed to the post of dean of the faculty, although he lacked an academic degree.

At the top positions of the university in their first years there was no professor of the former institution of higher learning in Odessa, the Richelieu Lycée. The rector and the deans were professors from other universities and their academic career was basically formed in the thirties and forties.

In 1871 the university got the full privileges of the university statute of 1863 and could elect themselves their rector and their deans. At this time two basic informal groups had formed in the professoriate: one group consisted mainly of professors from the former lycee and 'served' in the historical-philological and in the law faculty. The other group consisted mainly of professors from the capitals St. Petersburg and Moscow in the physical-mathematical faculty, they had a gentry and russian-polish background. The physical-mathematical faculty developed in these years to one of the best faculties in Russia. Some famous scholars found here good colleagues and conditions for their work. The later professor for chemistry P.G.Melikišvili wrote in his memoirs that the first group got the name 'novorossijskaja partija' and that both groups stood in quite a hostile relationship to each other.<sup>7</sup> From 1871 on up to 1877 the professor for state law Fedir Ivanovyč Leontovyč stood at the top position of the university as rector. He was a representative of the younger generation and of the first of the two above mentioned groups. He had 'served' after his study at the St. Vladimir university in Kiev at the Richelieu Lycée in Odessa. At the beginning of the seventies heavy struggles occurred in the historical-philological and the physical-mathematical faculty. In the first faculty the German minority lost their up to that time large influence (the professors J.T. Struwe and A.Brückner left the university, the german-finnish professor Ph.K.Bruun was marginalized), N.P. Kondakov from Moscow was elected docent to the chair of history of art

instead of the Riga 'en Eduard Dobner.<sup>8</sup> This single incident was part of a broader and longer struggle between russian and german scholars in the academic institutions all over Russia in the mid of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> In the physical-mathematical faculty the struggle took place on the back of the polish minority. The conflict clearly became evident during the election process of the polish scholar A.A.Weryho who lacked the formal qualification for a professorship but had earned a good scientific reputation. The 'local group' twice refused to vote for him and so he twice failed through. Weryho had the support of the new professors from the two capitals and he had like them a gentry and russian-polish background (f.e. like I.M.Sečenov and L.S.Cienkowski). Protesting against this refusal the well known polish professor for botanics L.S.Cienkowski and the russian professor for chemistry N.N.Sokolov left the university. They assumed an antipolish intrigue of the 'local group'. The main representatives of the 'local group' at this time were the dean of the faculty, the mathematician K.I.Karastelev (1870—1873), and his deputy E.F.Sabinin, another mathematician. They saw themselves social and cultural dominated by the professors from the capitals whith their gentry and russian-polish background and their new ideology: darwinism.<sup>10</sup>

Since the seventies the german and the small croation minority (I.V.Jagić and V.V.Bogišić) got marginalized (professors like M.B.Blauberg or E. von Stern were just exceptions) but the polish minority could hold their position in the next decades, especially in the physical-mathematical faculty. The struggle between the two groups focussed on the physical-mathematical faculty which was the largest and most prestigious in the university. The professors of the former Lycée responded to their successful academic career with strict loyalty to the autocratic state, they got the epithet 'conservative' or 'reactionares'. Their colleagues from the capitals got the epithet 'liberal', they adressed more sympathetic f.e. to the student movement of the seventies. Both groups clashed together in a dispute between P.P.Citovyč and A.S.Posnikov over the role of the peasant community<sup>11</sup> and in 1881 over the dissertation of the Jewish student M.Ja.Gercenstein, later a well known Kadett who became shot in 1906.<sup>12</sup> In 1881 the local, more conservative and slightly Ukrainian group seized the rectorship with the election of the mathematician S.P.Jarošenko.<sup>13</sup> Jarošenko is rarely mentioned in the historical literature on the New Russian University. But he clearly deserves more attention and his career exemplifies the growing influence of this group: he was one of the first absolvents of the university, of non-gentry origin and was elected in 1874 to the post of professor, as one of the first alumns of the university.<sup>14</sup> Representatives of this group were also elected to the post of deans in the historical-philological (I.S.Nekrasov from 1874-1890),

the physical-mathematical (F.N.Švedov since 1877) and the law faculty (I.J.Patlaevskij, 1881—1883). The opposite, 'liberal' group lost their influence and important representatives were forced to leave the university (I.I.Mečnikov, A.S.Posnikov).<sup>15</sup>

Both opposite fractions in principle proceeded to exist up to 1917. But in the last two decades of the 19th century they changed fundamentally their profile. The stricter state regulations of the 1880ies were backed by two groups of the professoriate: firstly those professors with a local or regional background in the physical-mathematical faculty and secondly professors of the historical-philosophical faculty with a pope background, often from Moscow and with a feeling of having made a good career becoming professor. Their representative I.S.Nekrasov followed S.P.Jarošenko in 1890 up to his death in 1895 as rector of the university. Than, from 1895 up to 1903, again a professor of the physical-mathematical faculty was appointed rector — F.N.Švedov.

The opening of the faculty for medicine brought a remarkable change into the professoriate. As first dean of the faculty was appointed the famous and experienced Kievan professor V.V.Pidvysockyj. After some years the new faculty took over the leadership in the university, as concerned to the number of the enrolled students. A good part of the new professors in the faculty for medicine had come from Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan' to Odessa, and a part of them reacted with an extremely pro-autocratic and russian-nationalistic position to the polyethnic composition of the population of the city and of the student body (ukrainian, polish, jewish, georgian, armenian, romanian-bessarabian). And another important change in the professoriate had occured in the years before: many non-russian professors with local or regional background (ukrainians, poles, georgians and others), which had belonged to the 'conservative' camp in the seventies and eighties, had switched now to the opposite camp. The most well known person of this group inside and outside the university was the former rector S.P.Jarošenko. He moved to the 'liberal' camp after he was forced to leave the post of rector of the university in 1890. In 1905 he was even elected city mayor of Odessa as a representative of the 'liberal' fraction in the city дума.<sup>16</sup> It seems that the weakening of local and regional traditions and rising national affiliations was essential in this change which took place in the beginning of the 20th century. The appointment of professor A.N.Derevickij, a professor for classical philology, went still along the tradition of the eighties and nineties. But the first free elections of deans and of the rector after 1884, which took place in autumn 1905, made visible the results of these profound changes in the political attitudes of a part of the professors. The elections themselves became a public and political event, broadly discussed and commented in the local press.<sup>17</sup> The

students tried to influence the elections, showing open sympathy or antipathy to the candidates. In between the professoriate a local fraction of the 'academic union' had formed since the beginning of the year, which could in autumn 1905 integrate about two third of all the professors. As new rector was elected the professor for mechanics Ivan M.Zančevskij. He was the dean of the physical-mathematical faculty since 1904 and an active member of the local branch of the Imperial Technical Society. New prorector was the polish professor for civil law E.Waškowski, an active member of the local juridical society, dean of the historical-philosophical faculty the german professor for classical philology E. von Stern, dean of the physical-mathematical faculty the georgian professor for technical chemistry V.M.Petriašvili, dean of the faculty for medicine the russian professor A.K.Medvedev and dean of the law faculty (the russian or ukrainian) professor A.V.Kosinskij. So the elections reacted to the social and national protests of the students before and during the year 1905. The new professors at the top of the university had started with their academic career in the late eighties and nineties (with the exception of Petriašvili).

The university was led once again by a representative of the physical-mathematical faculty, this time a man with local background but 'liberal' political views. But as in the country in general the "spring" of 1905 came to an end soon. In 1907 I.M.Zančevskij and E.Waškowski had to leave the university (as E.N.Ščepkin), professors with a strong pro-autocratic and russian-nationalistic orientation took over the power positions in the university.<sup>18</sup> As new dean of the faculty for medicine and rector (1908—1912) was elected S.V.Levašov, later Odessaen deputy in the fourth state дума, as dean of the historical-philological faculty the church historian A.P.Dobroklonskij and as dean of the faculty for law P.E.Kazanskij, professor for international law.<sup>19</sup> The university was at this time led for the first time by a member of the faculty for medicine, and it was once again led by professors without a local-regional background. Because of the dominant aggressive russian-nationalistic outlook of the university not only some professors were forced to leave, some other decided by themselves to leave Odessa, f.e. professor A.V.Klossovs'kij (1907), the polish professor for biology W.Rothert (1908), the polish mathematician J. Śleszyński and the polish botanic F.Kamienski, the german professor for classical philology E.v.Stern (1912) and the the polish (?) professor for physiology B.F.Weryho (1914).

In 1913 another professor of the faculty for medicine, with similar political views followed Levašov as rector: D.P.Kišenskij. The strict separation of the professors in two political 'camps' had to some degree weakened, and he tried to form a more moderate group although he was a 'right' man too.<sup>20</sup> 'Opposite' or more 'liberal' professors were elected as deans of the faculty for medicine

and in the physical-mathematical faculty. The year 1917 saw than the return of I.M.Zančevskij, E. Waškowski and E.N.Ščepkin. I.M.Zančevskij once again was elected rector of the university.<sup>21</sup>

This last change at the top of the university had a symbolic note. But it should be clear from the shown facts that the university was shaken bitterly by the different social and national processes in the country generally. The professoriate had not developed a strong sense of collegiality (as has shown the events of the years 1907-1908), instead the professoriate broke along different lines: faculty, age, ethnicity-nationality, local or non-local background, political views in two opposite camps. The article showed, *which* categories played at what time a decisive role - and so tells a history of dynamic and not ahistorically strictly fixed social identities: the university was too young to recruit their professors from their own student body; there professoriate was ethnically not only heterogenous, so that no ethnic group could dominate the professoriate, not the great Russians, not the Ukrainians not the non-Russians as a group. It was shaken by national frictions and aspirations which were connected to generation processes and political views.

This opens new possibilities to look at the relationship of the students to the professors or to see the role of the university in local public life.

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<sup>2</sup> Alston, P., *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia*, Stanford 1969; Sinel, A., *The Classroom and the Chancellery: State Educational Reform in Russia under Count Dmitry Tolstoy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973; McClelland, J., *Autocrats and Academics: Education, Culture, and Society in Tsarist Russia*, Chicago 1979; Flynn, J.T., *The University Reform of Tsar Alexander I, 1802-1835*, Washington D.C. 1988.

<sup>3</sup> See f.e. Hecker, H., *Russische Universalgeschichtsschreibung. Von den „Vierziger Jahren“ des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur sowjetischen „Weltgeschichte“ (1955-1965)*, München-Wien 1983; Josephson, P.R., *Physics and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*, Berkeley et al. 1991; Th.M. Prymak, Mykhailo Hrushevsky. *The Politics of National Culture*, Toronto et al. 1987.

<sup>4</sup> *Obščij ustav Imperatorskich Rossijskich Universitetov*, in: ZMNP (235) 1884 No.9, S.27—75.

<sup>5</sup> I summarize in this article results of chapter five of my book *Universität und städtische Gesellschaft in Odessa, 1865-1917. Soziale und nationale Selbstorganisation an der*

Peripherie des Zarenreiches, Stuttgart 1998, p.252-342, especially p.322—335 and Appendix B with biographical sketches of the professors, p. 514—620. My approach is inspired by the book of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, which analyzes the professoriate of the Paris universities in 1968. On the professoriate in czarist Russia as a social group see Maurer, T., *Universitätsprofessoren im Russischen Reich*, in: Ch. McClelland, St. Merl, H. Siegrist (eds.), *Professionen im modernen Osteuropa. Professions in Modern Eastern Europe*, Berlin 1995, p.280—310.

<sup>6</sup> For valuable biographical informations see of course A.I. Markevič, *Dvadcatipjatiletie Imperatorskago Novorossijskago Universiteta. Istoričeskaja zapiska*, Odessa 1890, p.148-561; Zolotarev, A.E., Il'in, I.I., L.G.Lukin (izd.), *Biografičeskij slovar' profesorov Odesskogo medicinskogo instituta im. N.I.Pirogova (1900—1990)*, Odessa 1992.

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<sup>10</sup> For a short characteristic of the group see the letter from Mečnikov to Kovalevskij on 18.12.1872: *Bor'ba za nauku v carskoj Rossii. Neizdannye pis'ma I.M.Sečenova, I.I.Mečnikova,...* Moskva 1931, S.212.

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<sup>12</sup> GAOO in Odessa f.5, op.1, d.278, 1881 g. 1.220. To the 'liberal' or 'progressiv' camp belonged f.e. A.S.Posnikov, I.I.Mečnikov, A.S.Tračevskij, P.A.Spiro, N.A.Urnov, N.L.Djuvernua, V.V.Preobraženskij, V.N.Ligin, N.A.Golovkinskij, partly also F.N.Švedov, M.M.Spilevskij, N.P.Kondakov and A.A.Weryho. On Gercenstejn see Gercenstejn, M.Ja., *Biografija. Recj. Pochorony. Ubijstvo. M.Ja.Gercenstejn v Dume*, S.-Peterburg, 1906.

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<sup>14</sup> RGIA in St. Petersburg f.733, op.150, d.1495, 1895 g., 11.87-98; Jarošenko, S.P. (Nekrolog), in: *Istoričeskij Vestnik T.CL 1917 g.*, S.303.

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<sup>16</sup> *Izvestija Odesskoj gorodskoj dumy No.12 (ijun' 1905)*, p.1517-1522.

<sup>17</sup> *Južnoe obozrenie No.2919 (10.9.1905)*, p.3, *No.2921 (13.9.1905)*, p.3, *No.2923 (15.9.1905)*, p.3.



<sup>18</sup> RGIA in St. Petersburg f.1405 op.530 d.1049 1907 g. 11.1—57; Revoljucionnoe gnezdo. Iz istorii Novorossijskago Universiteta. Delo rektora Zančevskago i prorektora Vas'kovskago, S.-Peterburg, 1909.

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<sup>21</sup> GAOO in Odessa f.45, op.11, d.40, 1917 g. 11.8-15; f.45, op.12, d.148, 1917 g. 11.12-55.