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## **The Institution of the Rectorship within the Higher Education System of the 19th and Early 20th Century Russian Empire: The Case of Imperial Novorossiia University**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the key milestones in the development of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odessa in the context of the development of the institution of the rectorship within the higher education system of the 19th and early 20th century Russian Empire.

The study's findings revealed that the mission of Imperial Novorossiia University was both centered on influencing intellectual, cultural, and social life in the region and aimed at expanding Russian imperial influence in the Balkans.

The paper mentions that thanks to the universities there developed in the cities where they were opened a special intellectual, conceptual, and axiological space. As a consequence, each such city received the status of a university city.

The study's findings revealed that, despite being young, Imperial Novorossiia University became a powerful academic and educational center in Ukraine alongside the already running universities in Kiev and Kharkov. In large part, this became possible thanks to the progressive educational policy implemented by the university's rectors for the purposes of closing education gaps, meeting students' special educational needs, and providing students with comprehensive support, including financial assistance for their education.

In part, this was possible through improvements in education quality via an effective staffing policy from the university's rectors, which included enlisting prominent scholars and pedagogues to work at it. In addition, the rectors contributed to the development of the university's own "talent foundry", helping get university graduates and talented gymnasium teachers hooked into science and teaching. All these measures contributed to the development of a special education model to help ensure sustainable development at the level of the university, the region, and the country as a whole.

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The paper also examines the distinctive characteristics of the institution of the rectorship at Imperial Novorossiia University vis-à-vis Imperial Kharkov University and the Imperial University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev.

**Keywords:** education, higher education, rector, education quality, financial aid for education, education gap, sustainable development in education, education policy, education reform.

### **1. Introduction**

The university as a social phenomenon is among humanity's most significant assets from the standpoint of sociocultural, axiological-ideological, and research-to-practice influence. The Russian university tradition, which originates from the second half of the 17th century, is no exception either. In addition to the statuses it already had, every city becoming home to such an educational institution would receive that of a university city. From there on out, the university would be an integral part of the city's image. At the same time, the university would also imbibe the local intellectual tradition accumulated before its emergence.

The institution that stood at the origins of Imperial Novorossiia University was Richelieu Lyceum (established in 1817), whose graduates officially were considered equivalent to university graduates. The discussions amongst the local elite on transforming the lyceum into a university began in the mid-19th century – more specifically, at the time when the Trustee of the Odessa Educational District was the eminent surgeon N.I. Pirogov.

The authorities, both local and central, were always favorable toward the university – the government and the state changed, but the idea of the university was always there. This, however, does not mean that the university itself did not change. Today, the archetype of the perception of the university in Odessa in a historical context is a composition of three chronologically successive images: a prerevolutionary-type university, a Soviet-type educational institution of higher learning, and a modern European university actively integrating into world science.

The emergence of the first university in the south of Ukraine had a significant effect on intellectual, cultural, and social life not only in that region itself but in neighboring regions and countries as well. The imperial government regarded it not only as an educational institution of higher learning for local needs but also as a factor in its influence in the Balkans in the context of the Pan-Slavic ideological doctrine.

During the first decades of its operation, the educational institution engaged a galaxy of brilliant scholars and instructors. The young university's calling card was the names of the professors M.D. Zelinsky, A.A. Kovalevsky, N.P. Kondakov, I.M. Sechenov, I.I. Mechnikov, and others. It is owing to the activity of these selflessly devoted individuals that the university met the standards of global science and consistently upheld that tradition.

Imperial Novorossiia University has an outstanding academic history. Here are just some of the revolutionary accomplishments achieved by the university's scholars in the first 50 years of its existence:

1) in 1886, Professor I.I. Mechnikov, a Nobel laureate, established in Odessa the Russian Empire's first and the world's second bacteriological station;

2) in 1892, V.A. Khavkin, a Novorossiia University graduate and disciple of I.I. Mechnikov, developed the first cholera vaccine; in 1897, he administered the world's first inoculations against plague;

3) in 1893, J.A. Timchenko, a mechanic at Novorossiia University, beat the Lumière brothers by three years as the creator of the first movie camera, which he demonstrated in action to Odessa residents;

4) in 1903, the ophthalmologist V.P. Filatov performed at the university's clinic the world's first corneal transplantation surgery.

Imperial Novorossiia University, founded in 1865 on the basis of Richelieu Lyceum, was the fourth (after Lvov University, Imperial Kharkov University, and the University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev) educational institution of higher learning in modern Ukraine. Its historical continuity is directly associated with the process of institutionalization of education and science in the country.

### **2. Materials and methods**

In putting this work together, analysis was conducted of various sources and documents associated with the development of the university space in the south of Ukraine in the 19<sup>th</sup> and

early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This includes ministerial ordinances and other statutory documents regulating the operation of the institution of the rectorship in the Russian Empire ([Tablitsa ustavov, 1901](#); [Dneprov, 2017](#)).

In addition, analysis was conducted of certain materials of a bibliographical nature containing information about professors and instructors at Imperial Novorossiia University, including its rectors ([Odeski istoryky, 2009](#); [Profesory, 2020](#); [Vcheni, 2003](#); [Zolotarev, 1992](#)).

A key source on the history of Imperial Novorossiia University is the Memorandum Book for the Borough of Odessa ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869-1916](#)), which contains lists of public officers and includes specific data on the Trustees of the Odessa Educational District and the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University.

The digitized holdings and archival collections of the academic library of Mechnikov Odessa National University helped access relevant early-printed and rare books, book collections, and periodical collections, including the personal archives of some of the university's professors and instructors, including A.G. Gotalov-Gotlib and N.N. Lange ([Arkhiv, 2022](#)).

A key source on the history of Imperial Novorossiia University is 'The Transactions of Imperial Novorossiia University', the university's academic-information publication issued in 1867–1913. It carried the findings from research studies spanning across a spectrum of disciplines, research and translations by the university's professors and instructors, and the proceedings of the Academic Board of Imperial Novorossiia University. 'The Transactions of Imperial Novorossiia University' was published in several volumes annually – a total of 113 ([Zapiski, 1867–1913](#)).

These and some other sources and documents helped explore the institution of the rectorship at Imperial Novorossiia University through the lens of its legal, social, social-estate, and organizational characteristics.

Methodologically, the study is grounded in the principles of objectivity, historicism, and analysis and verification of historical sources. Use was made of a number of general and special research methods. In terms of special research methods, use was made of the historical-analytical, classification, biographical, and comparative analysis methods. The last method was employed to explore the institution of the rectorship within the higher education system of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ukraine through the example of the University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev ([Lebid, Lobko, 2022](#)) and Imperial Kharkov University ([Lebid, 2022a](#); [Lebid, 2022b](#); [Lebid, Shevchenko, 2021a](#)).

In terms of general research methods, use was made of the historical, logical, chronological, and structural-systems analysis methods.

### **3. Discussion**

There are a fairly large number of research works devoted to the history and activity of Imperial Novorossiia University. The research reported in the present paper makes it possible to view the university's history through the prism of the work of its rectors.

It is to be noted that the existing multiple works released in conjunction with the anniversaries of the university and its rectors do not provide a sufficient insight into the institution of the rectorship at Imperial Novorossiia University ([Odeski istoryky, 2009](#); [Popruzhenko, 1915](#); [Domin, Khmarskyi, 2010](#); [Yurzhenko, et al., 1965](#); [Odesskiy unyversytet, 1991](#); [Istoriia Odeskoho, 2000](#); [Odesskiy universitet, 1940](#)) – the insight they offer is only partial.

The corpus of research works on the history of Imperial Novorossiia University that can provide an insight into the development of the institution of the rectorship at it can be classified into several thematic areas.

Firstly, there is the literature of a bibliographical and reference nature that offers information on the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University as representatives of the scholarly estate, members of the academic corporation, and representatives of the bureaucratic system of the Russian Empire ([Odeski istoryky, 2009](#); [Profesory, 2020](#); [Vcheni, 2003](#); [Zolotarev, 1992](#)).

Secondly, there are the works covering general issues and trends relating to the development of university education in Ukraine and the Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries ([Andreev, 2009](#); [Andreev, Lebid, Shevchenko, 2021b](#); [Posohov, 2012](#); [Posohov, 2014](#); [Posohov, 2017](#); [Siropolko, 2001](#); [Ursu, 2014](#)). These and some other works analyze general issues relating to the development of the institution of the rectorship in the context of the operation of the bureaucratic system of the Russian Empire, issues relating to the sociocultural influence of the

universities and the development of the corresponding intellectual space in the region, and legal and some other aspects of the operation of the institution of the rectorship.

The third thematic block includes the research works covering the key milestones in the life and career of the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University (e.g., Bondaruk, 1995; Tsiganova, 1959; Esipov, 1914; Kiro, 1955; Nepomnyashchiĭ, 2016; Popelyanskiĭ, 1991; Zalenskiĭ, 1909).

Worthy of separate mention are the reminiscences of the rectors' contemporaries and the obituaries. These materials contain valuable facts from the life of the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University, which give an idea of their contribution to the university's development (Golovkinskiĭ, 1897; Kirpichnikov, 1897; Lagorio, 1897; Modestov, 1884; Pamyati, 1906; Vasil'ev, 2019; Volyarovich, 1956; Zolotarev, 2002).

Of certain interest are the scholarly works by the actual rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University as representatives of the scholarly estate, which provide information of both a scholarly and biographical nature (Derevickij et al., 1898; Golovkinskiĭ, 1872).

#### **4. Results**

The Rector was the icon of the educational institution of higher learning they worked for. The historiographical experience indicates that the figure of the first person – the Rector – always was of major significance to and had a great influence on the life of the university and the city that was home to it, where a unique space was being built as a “city-planning phenomenon” (Posohov, 2014: 254). On one hand, it was a state-run institution providing educational services and offering an academic product. On the other hand, it was a powerful creative workshop of ambitious individuals with a high intellectual level and a corresponding creative atmosphere.

The rector, like any human being, was a product of their era. Their personal qualities and work influenced the fate of the university by determining the strategy for its future development. When assuming the post of Rector, each of those individuals, essentially, became a public official and a major figure in the social life of the city and the region (Posohov, 2017).

The appointment of a new head of the university was always a procedure. This mechanism was engendered by a certain era. The Statute of 1863, which was adopted right before Imperial Novorossiia University was established, came out during the Era of Great Reforms in the Russian Empire and was a liberal document that augmented the electiveness principle – the Rector was elected by the Academic Board (Tablitsa ustavov, 1901). Whereas the first rector – the mathematician I.D. Sokolov – was *appointed* to the post, the next one – the law historian F.I. Leontovich – was *elected* by the university's Board. It was during the latter's rectorship and later that of his successor, the geologist N.A. Golovinsky, that the young university, which had already become known throughout the country, engaged prominent scholars such as M.A. Umov, I.M. Sechenov, I.I. Mechnikov, and A.A. Kovalevsky.

The Statute of 1884 restricted the autonomy of universities in the Russian Empire – the Rector was now appointed by the Minister of Public Education from among ordinary professors of the university (Tablitsa ustavov, 1901). The first rectors under the new conditions were the mathematician S.P. Yaroshenko, a Novorossiia University graduate, and the philologist I.S. Nekrasov. On the cusp of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Imperial Novorossiia University became home to its Faculty of Medicine. This was a time when the school witnessed grandiose construction projects with Rector F.N. Shvedov in charge.

The revolutionary events that took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had an effect on both the atmosphere at the university and the work of its administration. For instance, the conservatism of the philologist A.M. Derevitsky did not find support with either the majority of the student body or most of the teaching staff.

Following the passage of the edict on the autonomy of universities in the Russian Empire, the university's Board elected to the post of Rector the mathematician I.M. Zanchevsky. This rector's adamant position regarding the protection of the university's autonomy and democratic freedoms during the revolution cost him his post. In the complicated atmosphere of the post-revolutionary years, World War I, and the new revolutions, the university was headed by the rectors S.V. Levashov, D.P. Kishensky, A.P. Dobroklonsky, V.M. Petriashvili, once more I.M. Zanchevsky, and A.D. Bilimovich. Some of them had a tragic fate.

The revolutionary events and the armed struggle for power resulted in the exodus of a large portion of the Odessa intelligentsia and professoriate abroad. Some of them were able to continue

their academic career in emigration – the universities in Bulgaria, France, and other countries. Among the university's instructors and scholars scattered across the world were individuals whose work would leave a major mark on the foreign land (e.g., the former rector D.P. Kishensky).

**Table 1.** Rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University (1865–1917)

	<b>Rector</b>	<b>Specialization</b>	<b>Term</b>
1	I.D. Sokolov	Mathematics	1865–1869
2	F.I. Leontovich	History of law	1869–1872; 1872–1877
3	N.A. Golovkinsky	Geology	1877–1881
4	S.P. Yaroshenko	Mathematics	1881–1890
5	I.S. Nekrasov	History of literature	1890–1895
6	F.N. Shvedov	Physics	1895–1903
7	A.N. Derevitsky	Philology	1903–1905
8	I.M. Zanchevsky	Mathematics	1905–1907; 1917–1918
9	S.V. Levashov	Medicine	1907–1912
10	D.P. Kishensky	Medicine	1913–1917

The first rector of Imperial Novorossiia University – I.D. Sokolov – was a native of Pskov Governorate and came from the ecclesiastical estate. He was a disciple and follower of Academician M.V. Ostrogradsky, a prominent mathematician. In 1839, he was appointed to the post of Adjunct Professor in the Department of Applied Mathematics at Imperial Kharkov University. In 1841 he became Extraordinary Professor, and in 1843 he took up the post of Ordinary Professor, in that department. Along with his ample academic and educational work, I.D. Sokolov shouldered a fair amount of organizational work at Imperial Kharkov University (1840–1843 – Secretary in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics; 1845–1858 – Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics).

In May 1865, Professor I.D. Sokolov was appointed to the post of Rector at Imperial Novorossiia University, newly established in Odessa, where he lectured on theoretical mechanics, algebra, and applied mechanics (Tsiganova, 1959: 20-213). In 1866–1867, he served as Trustee of the Odessa Educational District, the post previously held by N.I. Pirogov, who in his own time contributed to the establishment of a university in Odessa. In 1869, the first rector of Novorossiia University, I.D. Sokolov, was transferred to the city of Kazan to fill the position of Aide to the Trustee of the Kazan Educational District (Profesory, 2020: 12-15).

The second rector – F.I. Leontovich – was a native of Chernigov Governorate. He attended Bezborodko Nezhin Lyceum. He later graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev. Much of his pedagogical career was associated with Imperial Novorossiia University (Esipov, 1914). He progressed from being Extraordinary Professor to being Distinguished Professor in the Department of the History of Russian Law. F.I. Leontovich is credited with having laid the foundations of teaching the history of law in the country (Bondaruk, 1995). He took active part in the development of university self-governance in the south of Ukraine. He held the elected office of Rector at Imperial Novorossiia University for two terms (1869–1872 and 1872–1877) and served as Dean of the Faculty of Law (1877–1881) and later as Prorector (1881–1884). Thus, he was the university's first elected, as opposed to appointed, rector, which was in harmony with the University Statute of 1863.

F.I. Leontovich put in a considerable effort to help enhance the university's infrastructure. He initiated the organization of permanent professor apartments, helped enlarge the stock of the university's library, petitioned the Minister of Public Education for the allocation of funding toward the establishment of the observatory, the printing house, the Faculty of Medicine, and the history archive.

F.I. Leontovich played a major role in building the university's teaching workforce. It is through his efforts that Imperial Novorossiia University engaged eminent scholars such as I.I. Mechnikov, I.M. Sechenov, and A.A. Kovalevsky and lawyers such as M.L. Duvernois and

P.P. Tsitovich. F.I. Leontovich was a member of the commission set up by the Minister of Public Education in Saint Petersburg to develop the University Statute of 1884 (Muzychko, 2005).

The third rector – N.A. Golovinsky – was a native of Kazan Governorate. He was descended from the family of a judicial officer (investigator). He graduated from Imperial Kazan University with a candidate's degree. Owing to his brilliance, he was asked to stay at the university and engage in academic work. He prepared there for teaching work (Romanovskii, 1979). In 1871, N.A. Golovinsky was invited to Imperial Novorossiia University, where he became Ordinary Professor in the Faculty of Mineralogy (Lagorio, 1897).

In 1875, N.A. Golovinsky was elected to the post of Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. In 1877, he was asked to head up the Faculty again, but he refused. Subsequently, at one of its sittings the university's Board unanimously elected Professor N.A. Golovinsky as Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University, the post he held until 1881, when he retired of his own accord (Golovkinskii, 1897; Kirpichnikov, 1897).

The fourth rector – S.P. Yaroshenko – was a native of Kherson Governorate. He went to Richelieu Lyceum, and later attended the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at the University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev. He was among the first graduates of the Department of Mathematics in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at Imperial Novorossiia University.

In 1870, S.P. Yaroshenko was elected to the post of Associate Professor in the Faculty of Pure Mathematics at Imperial Novorossiia University and also appointed Secretary in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. In 1871, he was the first instructor at the young university to defend a doctoral dissertation. In 1881, S.P. Yaroshenko was elected Rector at a sitting of the university's Board by a vote of 30 to 11. He soon received the title of Court Councilor, In 1875, he was granted the title of State Councilor. In 1887, he received the title of Active State Councilor. S.P. Yaroshenko was awarded the Order of Saint Stanislaus (2nd class), the Order of Saint Anna (2nd class), and a silver medal in commemoration of the reign of Emperor Alexander III (Kiro, 1955; Profesory, 2020: 30-34).

The fifth rector – I.S. Nekrasov – was a native of Moscow Governorate. He was a graduate of the Faculty of History and Philology at Imperial Moscow University. Over a period beginning in 1869 and continuing up until his death, his administrative, pedagogical, and academic work was associated with Odessa and Imperial Novorossiia University. He was Dean of the Faculty of History and Philology (1874–1890), the post he held longer than anyone else in the university's history. He held the post of Rector in 1890–1895. He served as Trustee of the Odessa Educational District. He was awarded the Order of Saint Anna (1st class and 2nd class), the Order of Saint Vladimir (3rd class), and the Order of Saint Stanislaus (1st class) (Budde, 1896: 112-118).

The sixth rector – F.N. Shvedov – came from Bessarabia Governorate. He received his secondary education at Richelieu Lyceum and his higher education at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at Saint Petersburg Imperial University, from which he graduated in 1862 with a candidate's degree and where he stayed to pursue a course of study in pedagogy.

In 1894, F.N. Shvedov received the title of Distinguished Ordinary Professor. Along with academic-pedagogical work, he engaged in administrative work as well – he served as Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics (1877–1880 and 1889–1895) and Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University (1895–1903).

F.N. Shvedov went down in the history of Imperial Novorossiia University as a builder rector (Volyarovich, 1956). It is through his efforts that the building of the university's Physics and Chemistry Institute was erected. It was one of the first physics institutes at educational institutions of higher learning in the Russian Empire. After leaving the office of Rector for health reasons in 1903, F.N. Shvedov, keen to complete the engineering-construction project he had initiated, retained the title of Chairman of the Construction Commission (Pamyati, 1906).

The seventh rector – A.N. Derevitsky – was a native of Kharkov. He received his higher education via the Faculty of History and Philology at Imperial Kharkov University. After graduating from that university, he stayed there to pursue his professorial title.

In 1893, A.N. Derevitsky was transferred to Imperial Novorossiia University to fill the post of Ordinary Professor. In 1894 he became Dean of the Faculty of History and Philology, and in 1903–1905 he served as Rector. In addition, A.N. Derevitsky was in charge of the Odessa Educational District in 1903.

As a consequence of a wave of student unrest, he had to leave the office of Rector and was moved to the post of Trustee of the Kazan Educational District (fall of 1905). In late 1911, he took up the office of Trustee of the Kiev Educational District. He would go on to receive the rank of Privy Councilor. In 1916–1917, A.N. Derevitsky served as Trustee of the Orenburg Educational District ([Nepomnyashchii, 2016](#); [Netushil, 1908](#)).

The eighth rector – I.M. Zanchevsky – was born in Odessa into the family of a military person. He graduated from Richelieu Lyceum, and in 1879 he entered the Department of Mathematics in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at Imperial Novorossiia University.

In 1892 I.M. Zanchevsky was appointed to the post of Extraordinary Professor in the Faculty of Mechanics, and in 1896 he became Ordinary Professor. In December 1904, I.M. Zanchevsky was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. In September 1905, he was elected Rector by the university's Board.

His term as Rector overlapped with the First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907 ([Revolucionnoe, 1909](#)). During that period, I.M. Zanchevsky supported the student revolution movement, gave the green light to the activity of student unions within the university, petitioned for the release of students detained by the police, and saw to it that the university's hospital provided medical help to the wounded ([Zalenskii, 1909](#)).

Despite being the holder of a set of awards for his accomplishments in the development of public education and science in Russia (Order of Saint Vladimir (4th class), Order of Saint Stanislaus (2nd class), and Order of Saint Anna (3rd class)), I.M. Zanchevsky opposed the government during the Revolution of 1905–1907. Consequently, legal action was taken against him, resulting in his dismissal as Rector in 1907 ([Golotyuk, 1999](#)).

The ninth rector – S.V. Levashov – was a descendant of a noble family in Tula Governorate. He was a graduate of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Medicine and Surgery. He stayed at the academy to pursue his professorial title and was later appointed to the post of Institute Physician at the Botkin Clinic.

In 1886, S.V. Levashov was appointed Professor in the Department of Intermediate-Level Therapy in the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial Kazan University. In 1903, he took up the post of Professor at Imperial Novorossiia University. During the Odessa period, S.V. Levashov combined teaching with academic work and medical practice. In 1907, he was elected Dean by the Board of the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial Novorossiia University. S.V. Levashov was actively involved in social work. He served as a councilor in the Odessa City Duma and was an honorary justice of the peace.

In late 1907, Professor S.V. Levashov assumed the duties of Rector via an ordinance of the Minister of Public Education. In 1911, he was reelected for a second term. In 1912, in conjunction with the reelection of S.V. Levashov as a deputy from the city of Odessa to the 4th State Duma of the Russian Empire, he left the office of Rector and would go on to become one of the more active deputies and a member of the Council of Elders of the State Duma. S.V. Levashov was murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1919 ([Popelyanskiĭ, 1991](#); [Zolotarev, 2002](#)).

The last rector of Imperial Novorossiia University – D.P. Kishensky – came from Tver Governorate. He was a graduate of Imperial Moscow University. In 1902, he took up the post of Extraordinary Professor in the Faculty of Pathological Anatomy at Imperial Novorossiia University, in which he worked until 1919.

Concurrently with being in charge of the Faculty, D.P. Kishensky worked as a prosector at Staraya City Hospital (1908–1912). He took part in eradicating the epidemics of plague and cholera in Odessa ([Vasil'ev, 2019: 213-233](#)). In 1913, Professor D.P. Kishensky became Rector of Imperial Novorossiia University. In 1916, he was reelected Rector for three years. He happened to serve his term during the tough times of World War I.

D.P. Kishensky belonged to a group of professors who stood up for academism at the university. Arguing that the university's academic life had been injected with partisanship and political struggle, D.P. Kishensky requested that the Ministry relieve him of his duties as Rector. In April 1917, his request was satisfied. In 1919, fearing for his life following the Bolsheviks' entry into Odessa, he had to emigrate and move his family to the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, where he would continue his pedagogical, academic, and medical work ([Profesory, 2020: 68-74](#)).

In terms of academic specialization, most of the university's 10 rectors specialized in mathematics and medicine. Most had entered the post with some administrative experience under

their belt. This trend was common to the rest of the Ukrainian universities operating in the period under review – Imperial Kharkov University (Lebid, 2022a: 1314) and the Imperial University of Saint Vladimir (Lebid, Lobko, 2022: 977).

The administrative component was the determining factor in selecting a candidate for the position. Once again, most of the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University had some executive experience at the time of taking up the post, like having worked as a faculty dean or a university prorector (e.g., I.D. Sokolov, F.I. Leontovich, and F.N. Shvedov).

Combining the administrative post of Rector with the academic activity of a professor at Imperial Novorossiia University contributed to one's further career growth. Specifically, Rector S.V. Levashov was elected a deputy from Odessa to the 4th State Duma. Rector S.P. Yaroshenko was elected Mayor of Odessa in 1905. However, he later was exiled to Vologda Governorate for anti-government activity. Rector A.N. Derevitsky served as Trustee of the Odessa, Kazan, Kiev, and Orenburg Educational Districts.

Of interest is the age of the university's rectors at the time of taking up the post. The university's youngest rectors were F.I. Leontovich and S.P. Yaroshenko (36 and 34 years, respectively). The oldest were I.S. Nekrasov and D.P. Kishensky (55 years each). The average age of rectors at Imperial Novorossiia University was 47 years. By comparison, the average age of rectors was 41 years at Imperial Kharkov University (Lebid, 2022a: 1314) and 44 years at the University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev (Lebid, Lobko, 2022: 977).

Just two of the university's rectors (S.P. Yaroshenko and I.M. Zanchevsky) were graduates of Imperial Novorossiia University – both attended its Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. Another three were graduates of Saint Petersburg's higher education sector and two – graduates of Moscow University. The University of Saint Vladimir in Kiev, Imperial Kharkov University, and Kazan University had produced one graduate among the university's rectors each.

In terms of the ethnic background of rectors at Imperial Novorossiia University, six of them were Ukrainians and four were Russians. No such diversity was there in terms of social background. Four of the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University were from a noble background, three from an ecclesiastical background, and three from a military background.

According to researcher S.I. Posokhov, in the Russian Empire, "the average length of service as Rector was 6 years" (Posokhov, 2017: 127). In the case of Imperial Novorossiia University, the average length of service as Rector was 5.2 years, which was a little less than at the University of Saint Vladimir – 5.5 years (Lebid, Lobko, 2022: 978), but more than at Imperial Kharkov University – 4.5 years (Lebid, 2022a: 1315). The way in this respect was led by S.P. Yaroshenko (9 years in the post of Rector), F.I. Leontovich (8 years), and F.N. Shvedov (8 years).

Not all of the university's rectors served out their term to the end. There were different reasons for that. For instance, I.S. Nekrasov passed away (the only such case in the history of Imperial Novorossiia University), A.N. Derevitsky stepped down due to social resistance, and I.M. Zanchevsky was dismissed for his anti-government position.

Of particular note is the pedagogical activity and staffing policy of rectors at Imperial Novorossiia University. In addition to conducting academic and administrative work, most of its rectors were well-respected pedagogues keen on implementing innovation in the educational process. In particular, as an instructor Rector I.D. Sokolov always strived to combine theory and practice, which reflected the general trend in the development of universities in the Russian Empire at the time (this trend led to the overhaul of their charters).

A factor considered as determining in recruiting a scholar was their academic potential. Rector F.I. Leontovich believed that talented youth ought to engage as soon as possible in activity at a university "not to be lost for science". The major components in the administrative activity of Rector F.I. Leontovich was ensuring guardianship over student affairs, exempting poor students from tuition fees, setting up a fund for needy students, engaging them in learning, and boosting their interest in science.

Some of the professorial posts went unfilled during the events of 1905–1907. Sometimes, instruction was even entrusted to non-specialists. For the purposes of training future scholars, the Rectorate would keep at the university most of its more gifted graduates with a view to appointing them to a professorial rank. However, the Ministry made only a limited number of scholarships available. Then Rector S.V. Levashov provided this funding from the university's own budget,

sought funding from private investors, and held special sponsorial events intended to help raise funds for disadvantaged students and young scholars.

Looking after poor students was a matter of honor for Rector D.P. Kishensky as well. It is he who appealed through the press to the public in the city of Odessa seeking donations for the Fund for Needy Students at Imperial Novorossiia University. As a result, this charitable organization received significant funding. In addition, in November 1914 D.P. Kishensky authorized the launch of the Employment Bureau for Students within the Fund.

Worthy of mention are also a few other achievements from the rectors of Imperial Novorossiia University. Specifically, Rector I.D. Sokolov read public lectures on mechanics on an annual basis. At the initiative of Rector N.A. Golovinsky, in addition to lectures at the university, the Novorossiia Society of Nature Explorers, which he was Vice-President of, offered between 1872 and 1897 a public class that included popular-science lectures for the public.

A small club was also set up in Odessa by the university's professors (Rector N.A. Golovinsky, Professor I.M. Sechenov, Professor I.I. Mechnikov, Professor N.A. Umov, Professor A.A. Kovalevsky, and others); its motto was 'Science in the Loftiest Sense'. In addition to academic disputes, the club was also used for literary and music events.

The time of the appointment of F.N. Shvedov as Rector overlapped with the time of the election of V.M. Ligin, a math professor at Imperial Novorossiia University, as Mayor of Odessa. Through concerted efforts by the two, funding was obtained toward construction work for the Faculty of Medicine. Rector F.N. Shvedov was appointed Chairman of the Construction Commission. He personally designed the development plan and looked for building materials. F.N. Shvedov also made possible the construction work relating to the library, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Philology at the university.

## 6. Conclusion

There were several objectives behind the establishment of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odessa. On one hand, the university was a vanguard for Russian imperial influence in the region from the standpoint of its expansion into the Balkans, with the Rector acting in this respect as a crucial link in the hierarchical bureaucratic system. On the other hand, its emergence reinforced the government's intention to continue the policy of building the system of Russian universities.

During the relatively short time it was in operation (50 years), Imperial Novorossiia University established itself as a powerful intellectual center with a well-developed research and educational infrastructure, which employed such world-famous luminaries of science as I.I. Mechnikov, I.M. Sechenov, and V.A. Khavkin. And although there were a number of tough periods in the university's history (Revolution of 1905–1907; World War I; February Revolution of 1917; October Coup of 1917), the university managed to get through these trials. A significant role in this process was played by the university's rectors. Many of them were selflessly devoted to their cause and were committed pursuers of a lofty mission.

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