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## УсЕАГУЛЬНАЯ ІСТОРЫЯ

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## WORLD HISTORY

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### ИЗ ОПЫТА РАБОТЫ ВЫСШИХ УЧЕБНЫХ ЗАВЕДЕНИЙ ЗАРУБЕЖНОЙ РОССИИ В 1920–30-х гг.

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**Аннотация.** Исследуется деятельность высших учебных заведений, которые были созданы русскими эмигрантами за рубежом для молодых людей, уехавших из России после событий 1917 г. Данные учреждения позволили эмигрантской молодежи получить профессию. Кроме того, они сыграли значимую роль в социализации и адаптации молодых людей

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в европейских странах. Подчеркивается, что в этих учебных заведениях сохранялись дореволюционные принципы организации учебного процесса. Отмечается, что центром формирования системы вузов для российской эмигрантской молодежи стала Чехословакия. На основе анализа современных исследований по рассматриваемой теме формулируются основные тенденции в образовательной среде зарубежной России. С помощью историко-типологического метода выявляются особенности функционирования и типология образовательных учреждений в разных странах. С использованием историко-сравнительного метода сравниваются процессы, происходившие в европейском образовательном пространстве. С помощью биографического метода устанавливается роль эмигрировавших из России ученых и общественных деятелей в организации обучения русской молодежи за рубежом. В работе используются материалы Государственного архива Российской Федерации и Национального архива Чешской Республики.

**Ключевые слова:** история России; высшее образование; русская эмиграция; университет; образовательная среда.

## З ВОПЫТУ ПРАЦЫ ВЫШЭЙШЫХ НАВУЧАЛЬНЫХ УСТАНОЎ ЗАМЕЖНАЙ РАСІЇ Ў 1920–30-я гг.

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**Анотацыя.** Даследуецца дзейнасць вышэйшых навучальных устаноў, створаных рускімі эмігрантамі за мяжой для маладых людзей, якія пакінулі Расію пасля падзей 1917 г. Гэтыя ўстановы дазволілі эмігранцкай моладзі атрымаць прафесію. Акрамя таго, яны сыгралі значную ролю ў сацыялізацыі і адаптацыі маладых людзей у еўрапейскіх краінах. Падкрэсліваецца, што ў названых установах захоўваліся дарэвалюцыйныя прынцыпы арганізацыі працэсу навучання. Адзначаецца, што цэнтрам фарміравання сістэмы вышэйшых навучальных устаноў для расійскай эмігранцкай моладзі стала Чэхаславакія. На аснове аналізу сучасных даследаванняў па ўказанай тэме фармулююцца асноўныя тэндэнцыі ў адукацыйным асяроддзі замежнай Расіі. З дапамогай гісторыка-тыпалагічнага метаду выяўляюцца заканамернасці функцыянавання і тыпалогія адукацыйных устаноў у розных краінах. З выкарыстаннем гісторыка-параўнальнага метаду параўноўваюцца працэсы, якія адбываліся ў еўрапейскай адукацыйнай прасторы. З дапамогай біяграфічнага метаду ўстанаўліваецца роля пакінуўшых Расію навукоўцаў і грамадскіх дзеячаў у арганізацыі навучання для рускай моладзі за мяжой. У артыкуле выкарыстоўваюцца матэрыялы Дзяржаўнага архіва Расійскай Федэрацыі і Нацыянальнага архіва Чэшскай Рэспублікі.

**Ключавыя словы:** гісторыя Расіі; вышэйшая адукацыя; руская эміграцыя; універсітэт; адукацыйнае асяроддзе.

## THE WORK OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OF FOREIGN RUSSIA IN 1920–30s

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**Abstract.** The article examines the activities of higher education institutions that were established by Russian emigrants abroad for young people who left Russia after the events of 1917. These institutions allowed emigrant youth to gain a profession. In addition, they played a significant role in the socialisation and adaptation of young people in European countries. It is emphasised that the pre-revolutionary principles of the educational process organisation were preserved in these educational institutions. It is noted that Czechoslovakia has become the center of the formation of the university system for Russian emigrant youth. Based on the analysis of modern research on the topic under consideration, the main trends in the educational environment of foreign Russia are formulated. Using the historical and typological method, the peculiarities of the functioning and typology of educational institutions in different countries are revealed. Using the historical and comparative method, the processes that took place in the European educational space are compared. The biographical method is used to establish the role of scientists and public figures who emigrated from Russia in organising the education of Russian youth abroad. The work uses materials from the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the National Archive of the Czech Republic.

**Keywords:** history of Russia; higher education; Russian emigration; university; educational environment.

## Introduction

Education is the main human capital. The quality of training and the chosen profession determines a person's life path. A person gets higher education at a young age, when he still looking for life guidelines. For many Russian citizens, the process of obtaining higher education was artificially changed as a result of the events of 1917 and the Civil War in Russia. The article focuses on the process of obtaining higher education by young people from Russia who found themselves in emigration. The article considers the unique higher educational institutions created by emigrants specifically for the Russian youth in the period of the 1920–30s. Russian educational institutions allowed educating the largest number of Russian youth. It also contributed to the socialisation of emigrant youth in a new host-country and the preservation of the continuity of Russian science traditions. While Russian secondary schools were established for Russian children in almost all countries of the Russian diaspora, higher education institutions were opened only in Paris, Prague,

Sofia and Harbin. Thanks to the Czechoslovak government support, a number of Russian higher institutions were opened in this country to educate emigrant youth. The main goal of the higher school of that time for emigrants was to train personnel for future Russia without the Bolsheviks. Therefore, the main attention was paid to those areas that were completely closed under the Bolsheviks or changed their content, such as legal, theological, pedagogical, and agrarian education. Far from their homeland, emigrant scientists were able to create educational institutions and research centers that allowed them to engage in science, raise scientific and pedagogical personnel, thereby contributing to the intellectual environment of the countries in which they settled. Emigrants paid special attention to preserving the historical memory of the younger generation, celebrating memorable dates and holidays. For example, there celebrated the day of Russian students Tatiana's Day, the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding Moscow State University [1].

## Theoretical foundations of the study

The article is based on the documents from the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the National Archive of the Czech Republic. The analysis of modern researches on the topic allowed the authors to state the main trends in the educational environment of foreign Russia. The historical and typological method made it possible to identify the patterns of the formation of

educational institutions in different countries, to show their typology. The historical-comparative method was the basis for comparing the processes that took place in the educational environment of different countries. The biographical method helped to identify the role of scientists and public figures in the development of higher education for emigrant youth.

## Main part

Not all European countries provided equally favorable conditions for emigrant youth to receive education. Against this background, Czechoslovakia stood out, which generally favored Russian emigrants. Despite the fact that Czechoslovakia was a young state and initially did not attract emigrants from Russia, in a short time Prague became a centre for training specialists with higher education among Russian emigrants, competing with such European cities as Paris, Berlin, Belgrade. This was due to the personal position of the president of the Czech Republic T. Masaryk, former prime minister K. Kramarz and deputy minister of foreign affairs V. Girsas, who proposed the project «Russian action».

The programme of assistance to emigrants from Russia was started by Czechoslovakia in 1921 and was called the «Russian action». The programme was presented by the president of the Czech Republic E. Beneš in 1921 and provided the assistance for children, women, disabled people, farmers and scientists. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Office of the President of the Czech Republic were involved in the implementation of this programme. According to the calculations of re-

searchers, from 1921 to 1937 the government spent more than 561 mln Czech crowns that were 5 % of the country's budget during this period [2, p. 39]. Researchers emphasise that the actions of Czechoslovakia's leaders pursued not only humanitarian goals, but also political ones. They tend to train and prepare personnel for the revival of the future Russia. This policy was associated with Czechoslovakia's claims to leadership in the Slavic world in a situation where other Slavic countries were weakened by the World War I. Old Russia did not exist anymore. So, «Czechoslovakia could save the national and cultural power of Russia, without which the European balance would have been disturbed» [3, p. 155].

The implementation of the project «Russian action» attracted emigrant youth to study and work in Czechoslovakia, thereby integrating emigrants into the host socio-cultural community. Pursuing, among other things, practical goals, the Czechoslovak government invited Russian emigrants to get a profession at universities in Czechoslovakia. Since October 1921, when the Czechoslovak government decided to allocate subsidies for the education of Russian students, about 2000 people from different countries of settlement came to Prague in four

months<sup>1</sup>. The total number of Russian students numbered up to 12 000 people. This number included people who did not have time to graduate from universities in Russia. There were so many people willing to come to Prague for education that already in February 1922, the Czechoslovak government closed the mass entry of students, issuing only individual visas by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Therefore, there were facts of illegal border crossing. The fate of illegal immigrants was quite lucky: «Having stayed somewhere in student barracks in hospitals, “illegal aliens” eventually invariably turned out to be arranged at the expense of the Czechoslovak government in higher educational institutions in Prague or Brno»<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted that the living conditions for students were poor with a limited diet. All this contributed to the spread of diseases among young people, the most dangerous was tuberculosis, which had to be fought at the highest level of educational institutions [4].

The doors of Czechoslovak universities were opened to students, but if they were not suitable for Russian-speaking students (because of the language barriers or other reasons), students could change the university keeping the scholarship. Students could choose among Russian or Ukrainian universities, specially created for them, «where they can take a course in their native language»<sup>3</sup>. Russian professors and scientists supported the idea of creating a network of Russian higher education institutions, which was proposed by the Czechoslovak government.

A wide network of specialised emigrant educational institutions was presented in Prague. The Russian Institute of Agricultural Cooperation was engaged in the training of specialists in the field of agricultural cooperation for the future Russia: «...there is no doubt that cooperation, and in particular agricultural and economic cooperation, means to play a big role in the process of economic revival of Russia»<sup>4</sup>. The first students started their training in October 1921 at special cooperative courses funded by Russian cooperative organisations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. In April 1922, these temporary courses were reorganised into the Russian Institute of Agricultural Cooperation, the charter of which was approved by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic<sup>5</sup>. The director of the institute was S. V. Marakuev. In Russia he was a member of the Don Food Committee in 1917, the chairman of the Board of the South-Eastern Union of Credit Cooperatives in 1919, the representative in the

Council of the Southern Management of the All-Russian Purchasing Union of Agricultural Cooperatives before emigrating in 1920.

The training lasted two years, during which it was necessary to master a set of disciplines: cooperative, economic and legal sciences. According to the sources, at the end of 1923, 137 people were studying at the Russian Institute of Agricultural Cooperation, 120 students of them received a scholarship from the Czechoslovak government. In order to support academic activities, an extensive thematic library was opened at the institute, textbooks on cooperation were published, a quarterly periodical printing body «Notes of the Russian Institute of Agricultural Cooperation» was created<sup>6</sup>. In 1923, the Czechoslovak government appropriated 1 200 000 korunas for the activities of the institute and lower agricultural courses. However, over time, the demand for this institute, as well as other similar educational institutions, decreased, and in 1930 it was closed [2, p. 187].

Russian Railway Technical School was opened in January 1923 by the Association of Zemstvo and City Leaders Abroad with the support of the Society of Russian Engineers and Technicians. In the very first academic year, it became clear that more in-depth and extensive training of specialists was required, so the school, with the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic and the Ministry of Education of Czech Republic, was transformed into the Russian Higher School of Railway Technicians with a two-year training period. The school was designed for 40 students, but there were more willing to study. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic paid 40 000 korunas monthly for the functioning of the school. In addition to theoretical training, excursions were made to factories, museums, and construction works «for practical acquaintance of students with the work and production of materials»<sup>7</sup>. But not all students were satisfied with the organisation of the educational process. In the autumn of 1923, the students appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic with a request to reorganise the educational process in the school and «establish a regime that guarantees us serious technical training in the future»<sup>8</sup>.

This situation was resolved by the dismissal of the director from his post and taken measures against students' interference into educational management, but at the same time it was necessary to eliminate the possible breaking he «correct course of training»<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>State Arch. of the Russ. Fed. (SARF). Fund 10003. Inv. 12. Case 24. Russian.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Natl. Arch. of the Czech Repub. (NACR). Fund 908. Box 51. Inv. 4852.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. Inv. 4861.



In January 1923, commercial accounting courses were opened abroad under the Board of the Union of Russian Academic Organisations Abroad to train economists and accountants. They were a higher educational institution formed after the type of commercial institutes in Russia. To be enrolled one had to have a secondary education. It is worth noting that the curriculum of the courses was focused on preparing for work not only in Russia, but also in Czechoslovakia in the field of trade and industrial relations. This fact allowed new specialists to find a job in their specialty after graduation. In addition to studying general subjects, «special attention is paid at the Czech language training, the economic geography of the Czech Republic»<sup>10</sup>. The director of the courses was full professor U. D. Zhilyaev. While the courses were ranked among the government educational institutions of Czechoslovakia, the professor of the Czech Commercial Academy, Dr. Fiala, supervised the educational activities. To perform these functions, he was appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. In the first half of the year, 60 students attended the courses, 50 of them received a scholarship from the Czechoslovak government, which granted 9000 korunas monthly for the courses. Already in the first academic year, it became clear that the originally planned training period of one year was not enough to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to become a qualified specialist. Then the Board of the Union of Russian Academic Organisations Abroad claimed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic to transform the courses into an Institute of Commercial Knowledge with a two-year training period<sup>11</sup>.

There were various fields in which Russian specialists were trained, for example, the automobile and tractor school. In 1921, the Association of Zemstvo and City Leaders Abroad organised three-month driving courses in order to give Russian refugees the opportunity to earn money. Since the spring of 1922, the content and the format of the courses changed, they were transformed into an automobile and tractor school, where students could get the profession of a driver in 6 months, the profession of a mechanic – in 12 months. The Czechoslovak government funded the school monthly with 95 000 korunas and supported 100 students with a scholarship. It is worth noting that the Czech industrial establishments were interested in the school. Such large enterprises as Skoda, the Czech-Industrial Plant, the Czech-Moravian Plant provided material support to the school:

«...equipped its workshops with the necessary machines, tools, as well as tractors and plows»<sup>12</sup>.

Russian higher secondary courses were organised in 1921 to prepare for enrollment in higher educational institutions: lectures were given in Russian, but the students also studied Czech. In the winter semester of 1921, lectures were given by N. N. Alekseev, A. A. Vil'kov, S. G. Gogel', U. D. Zhilyaev, V. A. Kosinskii, I. I. Lappo, A. V. Makletsov, V. A. Frantsev, N. V. Yastrebov<sup>13</sup>. Classes were held in the premises of the faculty of philosophy of Charles University. In 1922, the department of humanities was divided into legal-economic and historical-philological sections. The Russian law faculty was formed from this legal and economic section later. The faculty was founded by the Board of the Union of Russian Academic Organisations Abroad, a private higher education institution.

At the opening of the law faculty on 18 May 1922, the head, full professor P. I. Novgorodtsev, highlighted the goal and strategy of the faculty: «...the task of Russian lawyers at the present time is to carefully study the history of their law, compare its foundations with foreign models, deepen its capabilities and prospects to educate legal thought to new creativity and development on native Russian traditions»<sup>14</sup>. Full professor A. S. Lomshakov (the chairman of the Union of Russian Academic Organisations Abroad) made a speech: «The termination of teaching at law faculties in Russia interrupted the training of persons with a legal education who were supposed to introduce ideas of law and justice into the country, establish and strengthen their traditions and preserve them from attempts of any violations»<sup>15</sup>.

The charter of the Russian law faculty was made from revised charters of Russian universities, and was approved by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic<sup>16</sup>. P. I. Novgorodtsev (a former professor at the Moscow University and the director of the Moscow Commercial Institute) was elected as the dean. Later he became a professor at the Tauride University<sup>17</sup>. In the summer of 1922, the faculty of law came under the protectorate of Charles University. This decision was made on 7 July at the University Senate of Charles University<sup>18</sup>.

Russian law faculty in Prague worked according to the programmes of the universities of pre-revolutionary Russia, which were based on the courses on Russian national and international law [5, p. 287]. So, 50 students were enrolled on the first course. Some of them came from the law faculty of Charles University (they were allowed to continue parallel studying at two faculties),

<sup>10</sup>SARF. Fund 10003. Inv. 12. Case 24. Russian.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>NACR. Fund 908. Box 39. Inv. 4708.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

some from the Czech Commercial Institute<sup>19</sup>. In 1923, 488 people studied at the law faculty [5, p. 288]. A total of 289 people received education there from 1923 to 1927. Since 1925, there were less people willing to study, as the flow of refugees from Russia lowered in general. Moreover, they realised that it would be impossible to get a lawyer's job in European countries with knowledge of Russian pre-revolutionary legislation, which at that time no longer existed.

The Russian law faculty trained lawyers so that they could apply this knowledge in Russia, obviously, the training programme was based on pre-revolutionary law. There was no demand for such specialists in the Europe. The problem of employment of law graduates was the main one for the association of Russians who graduated from higher educational institutions in Czechoslovakia [6, p. 65–66]. Only obtaining additional vocational professions allowed them to earn a living.

The training at the faculty was of a high level, the classes were conducted by outstanding Russian scientists: privat-docent G. V. Florovskii, full professor A. N. Fateev, privat-docent M. A. Zimmerman, privat-docent K. I. Zaitsev, full professor G. V. Vernandskii, privat-docent M. V. Shakhmatov, full professor A. A. Kizevvetter, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences P. B. Struve, privat-docent P. N. Savitskii [2, p. 191]. It should be noted that at the faculty it was possible not only to get a higher education, but also to engage in scientific activity in the future. The faculty was granted the right to award academic degrees and titles. At the opening of the faculty in 1922, eight scientists were represented for the academic title of full professor, five students received a master's degree in 1922–1923. After the last graduation of students in 1929, the faculty continued scientific work for some time: public lectures, preparation for gaining academic titles and degrees, the work of the library.

The Russian Pedagogical Institute named after J. A. Komensky was opened in Prague in 1923. It was meant to solve the problem with the lack of teachers in Soviet Russia due to the shortage of teaching staff. The initiators of the opening explained the decision: «...the peasant population is sinking into the darkness of illiteracy and ignorance, which it has just begun to escape for the last decade before the war»<sup>20</sup>.

But, as it is known, these specialists could not work in Soviet Russia and therefore graduates joined the teaching staff of Russian emigrant establishments for children. The institute was named after J. A. Komensky, the Czech educator and fighter for the independence of the Czech people of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The training was conducted entirely in Russian and was free of charge. The Czechoslovak government granted 50 scholarships of 600 korunas per month and 55 000 korunas per month

for the maintenance of the institute. Any Russian under the age of 30 with secondary education and teaching experience could be enrolled there. All students were divided into regular and irregular students [5, p. 290]. In order to become a regular student and receive a scholarship, it was necessary to obtain the approval of the board of trustees and the pedagogical council of the institute, as well as the approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic<sup>21</sup>. Despite the official requirements, there are facts contradicting them from the archival sources. For example, in the application for a scholarship for M. I. Kolchinskaya, who had been a teacher for 14 years up to that time, her age was 36 years old. Thus, we see that for Russian refugees who have already worked as a teacher, the requirements for the age limitation were not fundamental.

During the course of studies, students had to learn the history of pedagogy, pedagogical physiology, as well as the psychology of school age and the problems of school education management. To accommodate such a large volume of disciplines, classes were conducted until the evening: practical classes in the morning, then lectures, seminars in the evening [5, p. 293]. The training lasted only two years and gave the right to teach in primary classes. The director of the institute was full professor S. A. Ostrogorskii, former director of the Higher courses named after full professor P. F. Lesgaft (Saint Petersburg).

The Russian Pedagogical Institute named after J. A. Komensky could work until 1925, then the amount of new emigrants decreased, as did the support of the Czechoslovak government. During this time, 100 people got the profession of a teacher-instructor [5, p. 295].

The Russian People's University in Prague showed the greatest stability. In 1923, he began his activity with public lectures and was under the jurisdiction of the Association of Zemstvo and City Leaders Abroad. Since 1925, it was supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, changing its name to the Russian Free University in Prague. University positioned itself as a Czech-Russian educational institution. It was headed by full professor M. M. Novikov, and the management included both Russian figures and representatives of Czech science (full professor B. Nemec, and full professor I. Polivka). The main activity of the university was focused on educational work: conducting popular scientific lectures, functioning of clubs, such as Psychology of creativity, Socio-economic club, Club of zealots of the Russian word [7, p. 183]. Lectures were given not only in Prague, but also in the provinces [2, p. 206].

Nevertheless, we cannot consider this educational establishment to real higher educational institutions, since the main result – obtaining a diploma for emp-

<sup>19</sup>NACR. Fund 908. Box 39. Inv. 4708.

<sup>20</sup>SARF. Fund 10003. Inv. 12. Case 24. Russian.

<sup>21</sup>NACR. Fund 908. Box 52. Inv. 51.

loyment – could not be achieved. But the goal of the Russian Free University was broader, namely to give knowledge to everyone. It was based on the principles of autonomy, used more democratic enrollment rules.

Like other educational institutions, the Russian Free University by the end of the 1920s faced a period of

crisis: the popularity of lectures began to fall, as well as the amount of funding. This led to the conversion of the Russian Free University into a purely scientific body in 1933. Its activity was limited with publishing scientific papers, conducting scientific researches and participating in scientific events.

## Conclusions

In a situation when returning to their homeland became impossible and they had to integrate into the social life of the host community, young people had to have a competitive education in order to get a job.

Emigrant youth tended to graduate from higher educational institutions. It would allow them both to improve their social status, and get a work. Thanks to active figures of the Russian emigration and the support of the governments of the host countries, some Russian higher educational institutions were opened and successfully functioned. Young people could receive an education and listen to lectures on topics of interest in Russian.

Higher educational institutions for Russian emigrants worked in the 1920s. Their funding gradually decreased, as did the amount of students. The strengthening

of the Bolsheviks' power and the recognition of their government by European countries forced the emigrants to determine further life trends taking into account the political situation. Gradually, everyone graduated who failed to do it in Russia. In the early 1930s the problem of professional education arose for the children of emigrants, who graduated from school in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, emigrant higher education institutions stopped their work, or changed its format.

Higher educational institutions of foreign Russia were meant to provide a profession for further employment, adaptation in a foreign country. On the other hand, higher educational institutions had in their basis the pre-revolutionary order. It contributed to the preservation of ties among youth with the motherland, history and culture of Russia.

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