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VIKTORIIA DOBROVOLSKA

CHERSONSKA PAŃSTWOWA AKADEMIA MORSKA /

KHERSON STATE MARITIME ACADEMY

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5262-7425>

## Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society: foundation and beginning of practical activity

STRESZCZENIE

### Odeski Oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego: powstanie i początki działalności

Publiczne Towarzystwa Naukowo-Techniczne w Imperium Rosyjskim w drugiej połowie XIX w. stały się przełomowym fenomenem historii społeczno-gospodarczej, odzwierciedlającym procesy ważne dla ówczesnego społeczeństwa. Reformy lat sześćdziesiątych i siedemdziesiątych XIX w. zrodziły potrzebę zjednoczenia kompetentnych sił w celu rozwiązania palących problemów naukowych i technicznych. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie roli Odeskiego Stowarzyszenia Inżynierów i Architektów w rozwoju przemysłowym wybrzeża Morza Czarnego w latach sześćdziesiątych XIX w. i wyjaśnienie procesu przekształcania tej organizacji w Odeski Oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego w latach 1868–1871. W badaniu wykorzystano metody historyczno-genetyczne i historyczno-systemowe. Problem ten nie był podejmowany przez historyków ukraińskich. Udowodniono, że to właśnie w Odessie, na długo przed utworzeniem Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego, ogłoszono pierwsze inicjatywy zjednoczenia specjalistów z dziedzin technicznych w celu wspólnego rozwiązywania problemów regionu. Wskazano przesłanki powstania Odeskiego Stowarzyszenia Inżynierów, Techników i Architektów i główne kierunki jego działalności. To Stowarzyszenie było niezależną organizacją, która zachowała tę niezależność przez całe swoje istnienie. Wyjaśniony został proces przekształcania towarzystwa w Odeski Oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego w latach 1868–1871 oraz kształtowania się jego struktury organizacyjnej. Przedstawiono chronologię powstania tego oddziału, a także rolę władz centralnych i lokalnych w jego organizacji.



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Zwraca się uwagę na wiodącą rolę pełnoprawnego członka Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego, odeskiego inżyniera wojskowego, podpułkownika M. Deppa w organizacji Oddziału Odeskiego. Stwierdzono, że oddział ten działał zgodnie z „Instrukcją dla odeskiego oddziału Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego”, która uwzględniała specyfikę lokalną i została zatwierdzona przez walne zgromadzenie Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego w Sankt Petersburgu. Rosyjskiemu Towarzystwu Technicznemu w Sankt Petersburgu urzędnicy z Odessy przekazywali jedynie plany działań i raporty z ich wyników. Dzięki organizacji Odeskiego Stowarzyszenia Inżynierów, Techników i Architektów, które później przekształciło się w Odeski Oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego, naukowcom w praktyce zostały stworzone realne możliwości owocnej współpracy i efektywnej pracy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** towarzystwa naukowo-techniczne, społeczność inżynierów, Odeskie Towarzystwo Inżynierów, Techników i Architektów, Odeska Oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego, proces organizacyjny

#### ABSTRACT

Public scientific and technical societies in the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century became an iconic phenomenon of socio-economic history, which reflected the important processes of society. Reforms of 1860–1870s gave rise to a public need to unite competent social forces to solve urgent important scientific and technical problems. The purpose of the article is to study the role of the Odesa Society of Engineers and Architects in the industrial development of the Black Sea in the 1860s, and to clarify the process of transforming this organization into the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society between 1868–1871. Historical-genetic and historical-systemic methods were used in the study. This issue has hardly been studied by Ukrainian historians. It has been proved that it was in Odesa, long before the founding of the Russian Technical Society, that the first initiatives were announced to unite specialists in technical fields for the collective solution of the problems of the region. The prerequisites for the creation of the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects, and the main directions of its activities have been revealed. The above-mentioned society was an independent organization maintaining this independence during its entire existence. For the first time, the transformation of the society into the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society between 1868–1871, and the formation of its organizational structure has been clarified in detail. The chronology of the creation of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, as well as the role of both central and local authorities in its establishment, have been highlighted. The level of support for public initiatives by central and local authorities has been shown. Attention has been drawn in the article to the leading role in the organization of the Odesa branch of a full member of the Russian Technical Society, Odesa military engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Depp. It has been found out that the Odesa Society acted in accordance with the “Instructions for the Odesa Branch of the Russian Technical Society”, that took into account local peculiarities and was approved by the general meeting of the Russian Technical Society in St. Petersburg. The charter of the created society preserved the autonomy of the Odesa branch from the central society. Odesa activists provided only plans

of their activities and reports on the results to the St. Petersburg Society. Thanks to the foundation and organization of activity of the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects, which was later transformed into the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, real opportunities for fruitful cooperation and effective work were created for scientists and practitioners.

**Keywords:** scientific and technical societies, engineering community, Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects, Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, organizational process

The history of public scientific and technical organizations should be attributed to the number of research problems that modern Ukrainian historians face. The need to study the preconditions for their emergence, operation and contribution to the development of scientific and technical knowledge is caused not only by scientific but also by the practical need for a deeper study of the entire system of organization of the society. Public scientific and technical organizations became an important component of the post-reform period of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The development of modern Ukrainian statehood and the democratization of managerial processes determine the growth of the role of public organizations in all fields of society.

The key purpose of this article is to study the role of the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects (OSETA) in consolidating the engineering community of the southern region of Ukraine in the 1860s, to reveal the process of transforming the above-mentioned society into the Odesa branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society (OB IRTS) between 1868–1871, and to represent the peculiarities of this organization and its conditions of membership. The subject of the study is the establishment and disclosure of the sequence of events that lead to the transformation of the OSETA into the OBRTS.

This topic is practically unstudied by historians. Back in the mid-1980's, only certain aspects of the topic were studied by Tamara Demchenko<sup>1</sup>. Varfolomyi Savchuk<sup>2</sup> was one of the first

<sup>1</sup> T. Demchenko, *Merezha osvitnih zakladiv, utvorenih na Ukraini viddilennyam Rosijskogo tekhnichnogo tovaristva*, "Istorichni doslidzhennya" 1982, issue 8, pp. 99–107 (in Ukrainian).

<sup>2</sup> V.S. Savchuk, *K istorii izucheniya deyatelnosti nauchnyh obshchestv Pridneprovya*, "Istoriya obshchestvennoj mysli v Rossii i Ukraine. XVII – nachalo XX v."

in independent Ukraine to raise the issue of the formation and activity of scientific and technical societies during the post-reform period of the Russian Empire. Historians Inna Demuz<sup>3</sup>, Varfolomiy Savchuk and Nadia Kushlakova<sup>4</sup>, and Oksana Pylypchuk<sup>5</sup> studied the socio-economic conditions of the origin, organization and activities of a number of the RTS branches in Ukraine, analyzing their historiography. However, we should state the absence of a separate study on the creation and operation of the Odesa branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society. The source of the research comprised the materials from the fonds of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society and the Office of the Odesa Mayor, which are kept by the State Archives of the Odesa Region<sup>6</sup>.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the rapid development of global productive forces, resulting in an increase in global industrial production. Quantitative changes contributed to the sweeping development of technology, of which innovations covered various industries, transportation and modes of life. Such a breakthrough in global industrial production development was associated with the second wave of the scientific and technological revolution. The course of these processes pushed the politicians of the Russian Empire to keep up with the times and to modernize the state, the economy and its social sector. Reforms of the 60's and 70's during the 19<sup>th</sup> century created the perfect conditions for the modernization and industrialization of the Russian Empire's economy, which was characterized by uneven development of

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[Dnepropetrovsk] 1992, pp. 105–111; idem, *Pervye inzhenernye sobraniya i obshchestva v Rossijskoj imperii*, “Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniya i tekhniki” 1992, No. 1, pp. 51–55.

<sup>3</sup> I.O. Demuz, *Naukovo-tekhnichni tovaristva Ukraini kincya XIX – pochatku XX st.: istoriografiya dorevoljucijnogo periodu*, “Visnik Harkivskogo nacionalnogo universitetu imeni V.N. Karazina” 2013, No. 1055, pp. 23–28.

<sup>4</sup> V.S. Savchuk, N.M. Kushlakova, *Stvorenniya ta pochatok diyal'nosti Katerynoslavs'kogo viddilennya Rosijskogo texnichnogo tovarystva*, “Naukovyj shhochnyk. Istorija i kul'tura Prydniprov'ya: nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky” [Dnipropetrovsk] 2009, issue 6, pp. 130–138.

<sup>5</sup> O.O. Pylypchuk, *Istorija Kyivskogo viddilennya Rosijskogo tekhnichnogo tovaristva (1871–1919)*, Avtoref. dis. na zdobuttja nauk. stupenya k.i.n. K.: 2006, 20 p.

<sup>6</sup> Derzhavnyj arhiv Odeskoi oblasti (State Archive of the Odesa Region) [hereinafter: DAOO], f. 2, in. 1, s. 645a; f. 333, in. 1, s. 1; f. 333, in. 1, s. 3; f. 333, in. 1, s. 132; f. 333, in. 1, s. 309, p. 21 (in Russian).

industries and regions. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Specific regions of national importance were formed on Ukrainian lands and became centers of development of its industry. The history of Southern Ukraine's industrial and economic rise was associated with the development of science and its close interconnection with technology. This process led to the gradual transformation of science into a direct productive force of society. The emergence of private initiatives and the creation of public organizations of scientific and technical orientation contributed to this.

Public scientific and technical societies in the Russian Empire of that time became an iconic phenomenon of socio-economic history, where the important processes of society were reflected. The reforms of the 1860s and 1870s gave rise to a public need to unite the competent forces to solve pressing important scientific and technical tasks. Conditions were created for the consolidation and organizational formation first of the elite noble community, and later of a wider social representation to solve the problems set during the reforms. In parallel, with the emergence of public societies and their organizational strengthening, the formation of a network of their provincial branches, the process of their democratization and their coverage of an increasing number of areas and spheres of society's life was carried out. The acceleration of the development of science, technology and industry was intensified thanks to such societies. One of them was the Russian Technical Society (hereinafter: RTS), which was created in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and quickly achieved significant success in its activities.

During the entire period of the RTS' existence, (1866–1929) it managed to unite more than 10 thousand people, create 16 departments, about 40 local branches across the country, and about 60 schools and colleges which were covered by its protectorate. The decree on the establishment of the RTS was signed on April 22, 1866 by Emperor Alexander II<sup>7</sup>. The RTS considered its main goal to be “the development of technology and technical industry in Russia”<sup>8</sup>. Soon enough, the society managed to properly organize its activities and achieve its targets. Soon thereafter, in 1874

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<sup>7</sup> N.G. Filippov, *Nauchno-tehnicheskie obshchestva Rossii (1866–1917)*, Ucheb. posobie. M.: 1976, [B.i].

<sup>8</sup> *Osnovaniya dlya otkrytiya otdelenij Russkogo tekhnicheskogo obshchestva v guberniyah*, “Zapiski Russkogo tekhnicheskogo obshchestva” 1867, issue 1, pp. 51–53.

the Society was awarded the high title of “Imperial”, and personal patronage of the tsar, for services rendered to Russian industry and assistance in the development of technical education.

Lines of individual effect on the processes of development of public initiatives were built not only in the direction from the center to the periphery; cases of reverse influence are also known in the history of public organizations. Of the 9 branches of the Imperial RTS, which operated in the largest cities of Ukraine (Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Ekaterinoslav, Sevastopol, Zhytomyr, Kremenchuk and Poltava), it is necessary to describe the process of creating and organizing its Odesa branch as one of the most important in the history of scientific and technical associations of Ukraine. Odesa was the city where the first initiatives to unite specialists in technical fields for the collective solution of the region’s problems took place, even before the opening of the RTS. According to archival documents, on January 29, 1864, 17 engineers, technicians and architects held their first meeting in Odesa, at which they expressed a desire to make such meetings regular and ask local authorities for permission to further organize and hold them<sup>9</sup>. On February 17, 1864, in his letter to the mayor of Odesa, Baron Ivan Velio, Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia, Pavlo Kotzebue, reported that groups of people had asked him for permission to organize private assemblies. They pointed to the purpose of their organization being the desire of representatives of miners, architects, mechanics, and artistic circles to exchange knowledge, ideas and plans for further technical and industrial development, both in the city of Odesa and the Southern region in general<sup>10</sup>. As the governor-general’s office did not see any negative consequences in the results of these private initiatives, the mayor of Odesa was recommended to allow the organization of such meetings in compliance with certain rules: “A private assembly of engineers, technicians and architects in Odesa is organized for the purposes of:

1. Facilitating the exchange of opinions on issues of construction, mechanical arts and mining.
2. Promoting the acquisition and renewal of knowledge in the arts of construction, mechanics and mining.

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<sup>9</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 35–38.

<sup>10</sup> DAOO, f. 2, in. 1, s. 1.

3. Directing the acquired knowledge to ensure the public and private interests of the population of the southern region of the Russian Empire, on the issues of construction and industrial development, are considered”<sup>11</sup>.

The Charter of the Odesa Assembly of engineers, technicians and architects was formed and signed by barons: Fedir Rosen, Longin Korsakov, Nikolai Lishin, and Mykhailo Ozmindov. The latter was elected First Secretary of the Meeting and his functions were defined by the Charter: keeping minutes of meetings, keeping library and cash books, coordinating the discussion process during meetings, informing members of the convocation of the day, time and place of meetings. The Secretary was elected from among the members of the Assembly for a one-year term<sup>12</sup>.

On February 29, 1864, after a correspondence between the Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia, the Mayor of Odesa, and the Odesa Gendarmerie, the final permission was obtained to establish a Private Assembly of Engineers and Architects in Odesa, and on March 1 of the same year a request has been made to the Governor-General and the Mayor of Odesa for permission to publish the Charter of the Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects in the local press<sup>13</sup>. It was in these letters that the term “Society” was first used instead of “Assembly”, and in the response of the Governor-General on March 28, 1864, permission was granted to publish the Charter of the Private Assembly of Engineers, Technicians and Architects in Odesa<sup>14</sup>. After the approval and publication of the Charter, the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects (OSETA) began its activities<sup>15</sup>. According to Varfolomiy Savchuk’s opinion, the Society practically became the first scientific and technical society in Ukraine and one of the first in the Russian Empire; its foundation preceded the creation of the RTS<sup>16</sup>. Our research confirms this point of view.

According to the constituent documents, the members of the Society could not only be technical specialists, but also everyone who was interested or involved in the region’s technical and

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 132.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> N.G. Filippov, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> V.S. Savchuk, *Pervye inzhenernye sobraniya...*, p. 54.

industrial development. However, only specialists in the field of construction and technology had the right to vote at such meetings. The condition for participation in societies of this kind was the mandatory payment of membership fees. For engineers, technicians and architects, the fee was 10 silver rubles per year. All other members had to contribute 20 silver rubles per year. One could become a member of such a society on the recommendation of two of its full members.

Meetings of the OSETA used to be held once a month. Decisions on urgent issues could be made at rare emergency meetings at the request of at least one third of its members. As a rule, at regular meetings, current technical issues were considered. The procedure for their preparation was as follows. All scientific and technical issues that came to the Society were recorded in a special book and transferred for study to individual members of the Society who were specialists in this field. They also prepared a report on the submitted issues, projects or estimates for the general meeting of the Society and acted as member-rapporteurs<sup>17</sup>. The minutes of such meetings are of great importance for modern researchers as they display their composition, a list of questions, discussions that arise between the participants and information about the decisions taken<sup>18</sup>.

The organization of the OSETA's activities shows the origins of the union of technical and scientific forces in the technological development of southern Ukraine, as well as their joint attempts to respond to industrial and technological challenges of the time, which will later become notable. Personal channels of influence were quite effective. The activities of the association of professionals in these fields played a significant role in the formation of the state on the system of its industrial development. The participants of such meetings were experts in their fields and interested in searching for new information about technical discoveries and inventions, both among domestic and, especially, international scientists.

The OSETA was involved in the consideration and discussion of projects, the development of proposals and estimates for the construction of buildings, machinery, equipment, *etc.* They inspected the technical condition of existing buildings, machinery, technical

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<sup>17</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 18.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

equipment and materials<sup>19</sup>. Such requests were made by either public or private enterprises. Incidentally, this was a way to form the Society's budget, since its constituent documents indicated the possibility of cooperation with private enterprises or individuals with a commission of 0.5% of the cost of the project. The funds received in this way were distributed as follows: half of the amount was divided among the rapporteur members as a reward for their detailed study or consideration of the project and the formation of a report to the general meeting of participants; the remaining amounts received were directed to the expansion and replenishment of the library fund of the Society. Besides this, customers also paid funds for sending a request. The cost of the request was 1 silver rouble per one appeal, which covered postage and was also used for the needs of the technical library<sup>20</sup>.

To achieve the goals set by the OSETA, a scientific library was planned to be established in Odesa with the support of local authorities. It was planned to compensate for the lack of funding by collecting a sufficient amount of scientific professional literature via subscribing to a significant number of the best foreign technical journals at that time, in which the latest research and discoveries in the field of construction, technology and mining were published.

Over time, the activities of the OSETA slowed down sharply for various reasons. As it was noted on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society: "After the first two years in which the company showed its energy, it was a year of apathy. There was no meeting of the society in 1866, and there were only two meetings in 1867". At the first of them, engineer Nikolai Lishin, to energize the members and affairs of the society, proposed to join the newly opened RTS by establishing its Novorossiysk branch. At another meeting, it was decided to ask the RTS to open a branch in Odesa<sup>21</sup>.

The case of joining the RTS, the only technical society in the Ukrainian Black Sea region at that time, could hope for a quick positive decision, given the situation in the south of the Russian Empire to meet the needs of industry. As Nikolai Filippov noted in his work: "The urgent need to meet the demands of industry, due to local production conditions and the lack of special institutions

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<sup>19</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

<sup>21</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 1.

where such problems could be fully resolved, led to the opening of several branches in the south of the Russian Empire”<sup>22</sup>.

Thus, Nikolai Lishin’s proposal to join the RTS as its Novorossiysk branch<sup>23</sup>, was supported. The active phase of the application for the OSETA’s approval, from the Novorossiysk and Bessarabia Governor-General Pavlo Kotzebue, has begun.

However, these actions by the Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects have caused concern among local authorities. In this regard, in January 1868, the First Department of the Office of the Novorossiysk and Bessarabsk Governor-General sent a letter to the OSETA, in which the society was asked to provide the Charter of the RTS. The letter said that “this information is necessary for the approval of the society’s application to join the RTS in St. Petersburg as the Novorossiysk branch”<sup>24</sup>. The next letter from this department explained that this need was caused by the fact that in 1864 the Governor-General allowed the establishment in Odesa of the Private Assembly of engineers, technicians and architects, which did not grant the status of Societies, and therefore did not provide for special council. The letter contained an explicit request for an explanation of when, and by whose permission, the Private Assembly turned into the Odesa Society of Engineers and Architects, having a special council, and whom exactly this council consisted of<sup>25</sup>. That is, the Society of Engineers and Architects in Odesa had existed and operated for more than a year, when the authorities began to doubt its legitimacy.

In response to the local authorities, the society sent the RTS Charter, which contained the organizational structure that had been used by the OSETA for several years. The copy of “Zapiski Russkogo tekhnicheskogo obshchestva” (“Notes of the Russian Technical Society”) with information on the conditions and grounds for opening RTS branches in the provinces and the draft Instruction of the Novorossiysk Technical Society as a branch of St. Petersburg were also sent. The same was sent to the RTS.

We can suppose that this bureaucratic procedure slowed down the process of turning into a branch of the RTS, at the first stage, for almost 10 months. Only in October 1868 did Adjutant General

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<sup>22</sup> N.G. Filippov, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

P. Kotzebue give a positive answer to the request of the OSETA to the Governor-General. However, in 1869 and 1870 there was no progress in the process of transformation for reasons yet unknown. The Odesa engineering community returned to active work in 1871.

In the same year, the following constituent documents were submitted to the RTS Council by the OSETA “1) List of persons who have expressed a desire to be founding members of the Novorossiysk branch of the RTS. 2) Instruction prepared by the Commission, and signed by its members. 3) Complete data of persons who signed the application for permission to establish the Novorossiysk branch. 4) Response of the mayor of Odesa from June 25 of this year, № 5612, about the absence of objections from local authorities to the opening of a branch of the RTS in Odesa”<sup>26</sup>. The letter ended with a request “1) Recognize the persons listed as members of the Novorossiysk branch of the RTS. 2) Apply to allow the opening of the Novorossiysk Branch of the RTS in Odesa. 3) After considering this, please, honor me with a letter returning the attached papers”<sup>27</sup>. Lieutenant Colonel, Military Engineer M. Depp, signed the letter on behalf of the OSETA.

The procedure for opening regional branches was streamlined by the instruction “Osnovi otkritija otdelenij Russkogo tekhnicheskogo obshchestva v gubenijakh” (“Fundamentals for Opening Branches of the Russian Technical Society in the Provinces”) approved at the meeting of the RTS on March 1, 1867<sup>28</sup>. Such a possibility was provided for in paragraph 3 of the RTS Charter. In some cases, due to local peculiarities, deviations from the provisions of the Charter were allowed, but special instructions were issued for this purpose, which were subject to approval by the General Meeting of Members of the RTS in St. Petersburg<sup>29</sup>.

The engineering community of Odesa tried to take into account its local peculiarities. It should be emphasized that the OSETA was an independent organization that maintained this independence throughout all of its existence. And it did not want to lose its independence even in the conditions of its legitimization as the Novorossiysk branch of the RTS. This is evidenced by the correspondence of this company with the RTS.

<sup>26</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 67.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 333, in. 1, s. 76.

<sup>29</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj imperii*, Sobranie vtoroe, vol. XLI, Otdelenie pervoe. SPb., 1868, otd-nie 1, No. 43219, p. 397.

Thus, the secretary of the RTS, in a letter dated April 29, 1871, announcing the consideration of the application of the Odesa Society at a meeting of the RTS Council on April 14, 1871, answered some questions raised by the OSETA, as a department of the RTS, as to its further activities: “1. Based on the instructions, the branches of the Society are not subordinate or beholden to the Central Society and can freely execute activities in accordance with their special tasks.

The mutual connection between the Central Society and the branches was determined only by the commonality of their interests, through which the branch turns to the Central Society for assistance or request on any issue and vice versa.

2. It is not obligatory for the branches to transfer any part of the monetary contributions of their members to the Central Society, but if they wish to receive the “Zapysky Tsentralnoho Tovarystva” (“Notes of the Central Society”) free of charge, which are on sale for 5 rubles per year, to enjoy the right to free references and, in general, such rights that cause expenses for the Society, then they shall contribute at least 2 rubles 50 kopecks per year from each full member and 5 rubles from pretendents...”<sup>30</sup>. To prove this, the first issue of “Zapiski Tsentralnoho Tovarystva” (“Notes of the Central Society”) was enclosed in the letter<sup>31</sup>. It contained instructions for branches already established in some cities. The above-mentioned “Zapiski Russkogo Tekhnicheskogo Obshchestva” (“Notes of the Russian Technical Society”) contained information that the RTS branches are governed by the generally approved Charter and do not have separate statutes (charters). Necessary deviations from the Charter related to local particulars of the region must be subject to special instructions which are to be approved by the general meeting of members of the Society in St. Petersburg<sup>32</sup>. He was also invited to submit the Charter of the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects to the Central Body of the Technical Society in St. Petersburg.

However, the question of membership fees “that could be an obstacle to such a merger” and that consists of “sending part of the membership fees to the Central Society” still remained. Therefore, in a letter to Nikolai Depp (representative of OSETA) dated May 15,

<sup>30</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 65.

<sup>31</sup> O.O. Pylypchuk, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> V.S. Savchuk, N.M. Kushlakova, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

1871, V. Shatsky (Deputy Secretary of the RITS) raised it again. He reports that “contributions from the branch are currently not required. Branches the members of which wish to receive the ‘Zapysky Tovarystva’ (‘Notes of Society’) free of charge shall pay one fourth of their membership fees, but most branches have now refused to pay this fee”<sup>33</sup>.

In addition, during the process of correspondence, a number of other issues were also agreed upon that worried the engineering community of Odesa: the possibility of approving local features of the branch’s activities in the instruction, the possibility of printing the minutes of the council meetings and the general meeting of the branch in newspapers, *etc.*

On November 25, 1871, the Economic Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire informed the council of the Odesa Society of its permission to establish a branch of the RTS in Odesa. The Ministry proposed to name it the Odesa branch, not Novorossiysk, as in the Novorossiysk region there was already a similar branch in Mykolaiv which was reported to the Novorossiysk and Bessarabian Governor-General<sup>34</sup>. The “Instruktsiia dlia Odeskoho viddilennia Rosiiskoho Tekhnichnoho Tovarystva” (“Instructions for the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society”) were approved by a General Meeting of the RTS in St. Petersburg, and the chairman of the RTS, Pavlo Kochubey, was invited to address a full member of the RTS, military engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Depp, “to convene members of the Odesa branch and invite them to begin the selection of officials, and then to ask the elected chairman, to provide a notice of the election results and the opening of the Office”<sup>35</sup>. This actually meant the involvement in the organization of the Odesa branch of the RTS.

Major General Oleksandr Podymov, Chief of Engineers of the Odesa Military District, was elected the first chairman of the Odesa branch of the RTS. The Society established the general meeting as the main governing body, and the general meeting formed the Society’s council and departments. The general meeting of the Society elected the chairman, his deputy, heads of departments and secretary to the board. RTS branches operated completely autonomously within the limits set by the Charter. Only plans of activities

<sup>33</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 64.

<sup>34</sup> DAOO, f. 333, in. 1, s. 3, p. 78.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

and reports on their results were to be submitted to the Central Society in St. Petersburg<sup>36</sup>.

Consequently, the organizational formation of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society was quite long, one of the reasons for this being a complex bureaucratic procedure. The stages of this process can be seen in the table below<sup>37</sup>:

Table

**Stages of the organizational formation of the Odesa branch  
of the Russian Technical Society**

Date	The content of the stages of the Society branch registration
18.01.1868	Request from the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects to get permission from the Novorossiysk and Bessarabian Governor-General, P. Kotzebue, to join the Russian Technical Society as the Novorossiysk branch
27.01.1868	Receipt of a request from the Odesa Society by the First Department of the Office of the Novorossiysk and Bessarabia Governor-General
28.10.1868	Adjutant General P. Kotzebue responded positively to the request from OSETA
14.04.1871	Consideration of the application of the Odesa Society at a meeting of the Russian Technical Society Council
19.04.1871	Request from the Office of the Novorossiysk and Bessarabia Governor-General to the Odesa Society of Engineers, Technicians and Architects regarding the result of joining the RTS
25.06.1871	Positive response of the Odesa mayor to the idea of opening an RTS branch in Odesa
02.08.1871	Receipt by the RTS secretary of a request from “Odesa engineers and technicians” for the establishment of the Novorossiysk branch of the Russian Technical Society

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 333, in. 1, s. 1, p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 5–81.

15.10.1871	Petition of the Chairman's assistant from the RTS to the Minister of Internal Affairs for permission to open a "Novorossiysk branch" in Odesa
19.11.1871	The Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs informed the RTS Council that the Minister of the Internal Affairs, Adjutant General O. Tymashov, allowed the opening of not the Novorossiysk, but the Odesa branch of the RTS, having previously received the decision of the Ministry of Finance, the permission of the Novorossiysk and Bessarabia Governor-General, P. Kotzebue, and the decision of the RTS Council in St. Petersburg
25.11.1871	A full member of the RTS, M. Depp, was informed by the Chairman of the RTS, P. Kochubey, of a request from the Minister of Internal Affairs to convene members of the Odesa Society, elect the chairman and officials, and announce the branch opening
06.12.1871	Message from the Governor-General, P. Kotzebue, on the decision of the Minister of Internal Affairs to the Odesa mayor M. Bukharin
10.12.1871	A notification from The Office of the Odesa Mayor of obtaining permission to open a branch to a military engineer, and full member of the RTS, Lieutenant Colonel M. Depp

Source: created by the author on the basis of the materials of the State Archive of the Odesa Region, f. 333, in. 1, s. 1, p. 5; f. 333, in. 1, s. 3, pp. 63–81.

Thus, the process of transforming the OSETA into the Odesa branch of the RTS took almost three years, from 1868 to 1871.

An interesting aspect of the process of establishing the Odesa branch of the RTS was the issue of membership. The reason for opening a regional branch could be the request of at least 20 prospective members, permanently residing in the territory and expressing a desire to be active participants<sup>38</sup>. The way out of this situation was:

1. Members of the OSETA have expressed a desire to become RTS members.
2. After receiving permission from the Minister of Internal Affairs to open the Odesa branch of the RTS, they were enrolled as its members.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 76.

This idea was suggested by the assistant secretary of the RTS, V. Shatsky. A similar scenario was previously implemented during the creation of the 6<sup>th</sup> branch of the RTS in the Kiev province<sup>39</sup>.

Members of the Odesa branch of the RTS quickly began active and diverse activities. Commissions were created to study the technical condition of equipment, buildings, and transport. Cooperation was established with the Odesa City Administration on: the improvement of Odesa, participation in the competition of architectural projects, the strengthening of the sea coast, discussion of the construction of the Odesa-Dniester water supply system. In general, the annual reports, which had been regularly compiled since 1885, eloquently testify to the active and productive activities of the Odesa branch of the RTS.

Thus, we should emphasize that the Odesa branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society has made a significant contribution to the technical, technological and industrial development of the southern region of Ukraine, in the development of industry and further industrialization of the whole country.

Public-scientific societies played a significant role in the history of Southern Ukraine in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An important part of this history is the activity of the OSETA, founded in 1864. This organization was the first scientific and technical society in the Black Sea region, which contributed to its technical and industrial development. Its transformation into the Odesa branch of the RTS took place between 1868–1871. The transformation was complicated by a number of bureaucratic obstacles arising from the political system of public life in the Russian Empire. Features of this process have been revealed in this research. In its new status, the Odesa branch of the RTS has retained its independent character. Thanks to the formation of the Odesa branch of the RTS, the engineering and scientific-technical community of Odesa was united into a single center of scientific-technical and engineering thought. The latter opened a variety of real opportunities for fruitful cooperation and effective activities for the benefit of industrial and technical development of Odesa and the entire Black Sea region. The first projects of the renewed society were aimed at the diverse (technical, technological and utility) development of Southern Ukraine. In this context, further research on the development and contribution of the RTS is considered promising.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 61–62.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**Ph.D Viktoriia Dobrovolska** – Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities and Innovative Pedagogy of Kherson State Maritime Academy, Ukraine. Candidate of Historical Sciences (Ph.D) (2006), Associate Professor (2011). Author of 75 publications, four monographs. Member of the National Union of Local Historians of Ukraine.

**Research interests:** history of science and technology, history of education, women’s education of the South of Ukraine in the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



viado@ukr.net