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Institutionalization of Higher Technical Education in Odesa (the Black Sea Region of Ukraine) during the Civil War: Society and Government

The article offers a thorough analysis of the founding of the Odesa Polytechnic Institute in 1918 during the civil war in Ukraine. The primary historical sources are materials from the State Archive of Odesa Oblast, most of which are introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. The main research methods used include system analysis, synthesis, the historical method, logical and comparative-historical approaches, and generalization.

The article is innovative in that it draws on a comprehensive range of archival sources for the first time. It includes a critical analysis of existing historiography on the subject, identifies and examines all key functional and structural components of the emerging polytechnic institute, and explores the process of their formation. Particular attention is given to the roles of various corporate participants and the influence of individual actors in the institutionalization of higher technical education in Odesa. For the first time, the involvement of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society in this process is not only acknowledged but its leading role in establishing the Institute is substantiated. Amid the turbulent political context of the civil war, this branch effectively assumed the status of an independent Odesa Technical Society. The methods and forms of organizational activity of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society in the process of institutionalizing higher technical education in Odesa have been clarified.

The article also identifies and analyzes the areas and mechanisms of cooperation among various local corporate structures, including the Odesa branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society, the Odesa Union of Engineers and Technicians, student organizations (such as the Union of student-technicians), municipal authorities, professors of Novorossiysk (Odesa) University, public figures, and others.

The leading roles of several individuals instrumental in the founding of the institute are established and explored. The article also highlights the political and organizational characteristics of the institutionalization process under conditions of constant shifts in military and political power, each with differing ideological positions. Odesa Polytechnic Institute became the first higher technical school in the southern Ukrainian lands and remains a leading higher educational institution even today.

Keywords: Ukraine, civil war, higher technical education, Odesa Polytechnic Institute, Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society (Odesa Technical Society), public organizations

Słowa kluczowe: Ukraina, wojna domowa, wyższe szkolnictwo techniczne, Odeski Instytut Politechniczny, Odeski oddział Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego (Odeskie Towarzystwo Techniczne), organizacje społeczne

Introduction

The formation and development of higher technical education in any country exhibit both universal and country-specific characteristics. The study of these processes is the foundation for appropriate comparative analysis. Such studies allow us to find out the basic criteria and principles underlying these processes, to determine the factors of institutionalization of higher technical education in different regions of Ukraine, to form an idea of the attitude of civil society to the development of higher (including technical) education and to identify organizational structures and social factors that truly affected the creation of the appropriate institutions.

Odesa Polytechnic Institute (OPI) was established in 1918 during the tumultuous events of the civil war in Ukraine, which was part of the Russian Empire at that time. Socio-political changes during revolutions have always been an important factor in changes in all areas of public life, including education. Public organizations of various types are also recognized as an important component of civil society in any country. The latter played an important role in social processes during the revolutionary events. The purpose of this study is to clarify the place and role of public engineering associations of Odesa (in particular, the branch of the Russian Technical Society) in the process of establishing a Polytechnic Institute in 1918, based primarily on a detailed study of the State Archive of Odesa Oblast (Deržavnij arhiv Odes'koï oblasti – DAOO).

Analysis of research and publications

Analysis of the historiography of Odesa National Polytechnic University¹ shows that on the eve of its centenary (2018), several studies addressed the process of establishing

1 *Istoriâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo v očerках*, compil. by Ū.S. Denisov, V.I. Bondar, ed. by V.P. Malahov, Odesa 2000; *Odesskij nacional'nij Politehničeskij Institut. 1918–1998*, ed. by V.P. Malahov, Odesa 1998; *Odes'kij nacional'nij politehničnij universitet*, dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/312451 [accessed 27.01.2025]; *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok (1918–1968)*, compil. by E.I. Cymbal, V.V. Nikulin, Kiev 1968; *Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918*, [in:] *Odes'kij politehničnij. Fotolitojis storiččâ*, compil. by O.B. Šolda, V.V. Lebid', ed. by G.O. Obors'kij, Kiiv 2018; G.D. Polizo, *Odesskij politehnikum: Istoriâ roždeniâ: k 85-letiu Odesskogo Nacional'nogo Politehničeskogo Universiteta*, Odesa 2002; D.I. Rabinovič, *45-letie OPI, 1918–1963. Istoriâ vozniknoveniâ i razvitiâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta: kratkij očerok*, Odesa 1963.

the OPI in various ways. Our analysis revealed that historiographical sources fall into three categories: works on the development of higher education in Odesa, biographical studies of individuals related to OPI, and works specifically on the history of this institution.

The first set of such studies includes the works by Valerii Valeriiovych Levchenko,² Levchenko and co-authors,³ Nadiia Petrivna Biliavska, Liudmyla Petrivna Yeromina and Iryna Ivanivna Zinchenko,⁴ Hennadii ěksandrovych Oborskyi,⁵ and others. The history of OPI's creation is only mentioned cursorily in these publications (with the exception of the article by Levchenko). In Levchenko's articles, somewhat more attention is given to the establishment of OPI in 1918; however, some aspects of this process are either omitted or addressed very briefly and inaccurately.

The second group of these historiographical sources on the OPI history can be divided into two subgroups. The first one combines jubilee publications on the OPI history, published both in Soviet times and during the period of Ukraine's independence.⁶

The work of the Soviet period describes only certain stages of the institute formation, making mistakes in the names of leading public figures (for instance, Bratkevych instead of Braikevych, Baloban instead of Balaban).⁷ However, at the same time, it contains several important facts relating to 1918. The work also covers the preparatory stage of the founding of the OPI.⁸ There are also mistakes in the names in this research (Braikovych instead of Braikevych; Mayor Bahrytskyi instead of Bohutskyi), as well as in statistics on the number of participants in the program-educational, organizational, and financial-economic commissions, that carried out all the preparatory work.⁹ There are some more questions for these and other anniversary editions. In particular, Oborskyi, rector of the OPI, in his article *Slovo pro pershogo rektora*,¹⁰ reflects on his own role and, while analyzing works on the history of the Odesa Polytechnic Institute, highlights a certain political bias¹¹ and the insufficient recognition of the first rector's role in the creation and development of the OPI.¹²

2 V.V. Levchenko, *Do 100-riččâ stanovlennâ ta rozvitku višoï osviti vodogospodars'kogo kompleksu v Ukraini: odes'kij vektor*, "Kraěznavstvo" 2018, no. 4, p. 135–146.

3 V.V. Levchenko, G.S. Levchenko, A.B. Lâsenko, *Peripetii sud'by professora Ćarl'za Klarka: k istorii «Odesskogo» perioda žizni, Part 1*, "Visnik Odes'kogo nacional'nogo mors'kogo universitetu: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats" 2020, no. 2 (62), p. 7–28.

4 N.P. Belâvskaâ, L.P. Eremina, I.I. Zinčenko, *Grigorij Vejnštejn. Ličnost'. Gorod. Vremâ*, Herson 2017.

5 G.O. Obors'kij, *Slovo pro peršogo rektora (Postanovka problemi)*, "Inteligenciâ i vlada", Series: History, 2012, no. 25, p. 14–18; idem, *U vitokiv: Īvan Ūrijovič Timčenko (1919–1920). Drugij rektor Odes'kogo nacional'nogo politehničnogo universitetu*, "Inteligenciâ i vlada", Series: History, 2014, no. 30, p. 283–288.

6 *Istoriâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo v očerках*; E.S. Muraško, V.V. Samodurova, *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: predystoriâ otkrytiâ v publikaciâh odesskoj periodičeskoj pečati vtoroj poloviny XIX – načala XX vv.*, "Visnik Odes'kogo nacional'nogo universitetu imeni I. I. Mečnikova. Series: Library science, bibliography" 2013, vol. 18, no 1 (9), p. 62–88; G.O. Obors'kij, *U vitokiv: Īvan Ūrijovič Timčenko*, p. 283–288; G.O. Obors'kyj, V.I. Bondar, V.V. Lebid', *Odes'kij nacional'nij politehničnij universitet. Rodovid*, "Praci Odes'kogo politehničnogo universitetu" 2013, no. 3 (42), p. 323–328; *Odesskij Nacional'nyj Politehničeskij Institut; Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok*; G.D. Polizo, *Odesskij politehnikum: Istoriâ roždeniâ 1874–1918: k 85-letiu Odesskogo Nacional'nogo Politehničeskogo Universiteta*; D.I. Rabinovič, *45-letie OPI, 1918–1963; Roždenie vuza. 1918–1919*, [in:] *Istoriâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo v očerках*, p. 9–19; V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo universiteta v publikaciâh mestnoj periodiki vtoroj poloviny XIX – načala XX st.*, "Biblio-Collegium" 2013, no. 7, minilib.onu.edu.ua/index.php/main/article/view/18 [accessed 24.03.2024].

7 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok*.

8 *Roždenie vuza. 1918–1919*, p. 9–10.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 11.

10 G.O. Obors'kij, *Slovo pro peršogo rektora (Postanovka problemi)*, p. 14–18.

11 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok*.

12 *Ibidem* and *Roždenie vuza*, p. 9–19.

The other subgroup of research works¹³ includes those specially devoted to the prehistory of the Higher Polytechnic School in Odesa, which began in the 1870s. These works focus on the activities of several public figures: Petro Vasylovych Zalesskyi, Valerian Mykolaiovych Lihin, Mykola Petrovych Melnykov, among others. They are based mainly on analyzing local periodicals and some documents from the State Archive of Odesa Oblast. The events of 1918 did not receive focused attention; hence their history has been covered only schematically. A more detailed examination of these events in the context of the Odesa Polytechnic Institute's history is provided in other publications.¹⁴ Those available online are fragmentary and are presented without any reference to sources.

Therefore, the statement once made by H.O. Oborskyi is true till this day: 'the history of our university [OPI – V.D., V.S.] requires more serious study and presentation'.¹⁵ The proposals outlined in this publication and the OPI centenary (2018) may have contributed to the surge in works on OPI's history in recent years, including its first year of existence. We should note that the anniversary edition provides much more complete data (compared to other publications) on the process of creating the OPI in 1918, especially in the initial period (April).¹⁶ The authors of the edition made extensive use of the quotations from the minutes of the first meeting of the initiative group, held on 6 April 1918, which was established by the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society (OBRTS) and the Odesa Union of Engineers and Technicians (OUET). The lack of source references for the cited texts and the uneven use of archival materials can be seen as shortcomings of the publication. As a result, the text tends to present facts without sufficient analysis – particularly regarding the contribution of OBRTS to the development of the OPI, its statutory provisions, and related issues. Despite the availability of valuable materials, none of the research considers in full and analyzes in detail the activities and place of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society at the founding of the OPI in 1918. This leads to controversial conclusions about the process of the Institute's establishment, the driving forces behind it, and the roles of its key participants. For example, one online publication claims that. Thus, one of the online publications states that 'Odesa Polytechnic Institute was founded on 18 September 1918 by the efforts of Odesa engineer and politician Mykhailo Braikevych'.¹⁷ To underscore his role in the creation of the OPI,¹⁸ the article asserts:

The initiative of technical students was supported by the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, and, most importantly, by the mayor and the head of the

13 G.O. Obors'kij, *U vitokiv: Ivan Ūrijovič Timčenko*, p. 283–288; *Odesskij Nacional'nyj Politehničeskij Institut*; D.I. Rabinovič, *45-letie OPI, 1918–1963*; V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo universiteta*; V.I. Sprinsân, *Peredumovi stvorennâ Odes'kogo nacional'nogo politehničeskogo universitetu (na osnovi arhivnih dokumentiv)*, [in:] *Înformacijna osvita ta profesijno-komunikativni tehnologii XXI st.: Materialy XI mižnarodnoi naukovopraktičnoi konferencii, 12–14.09.2018*, Odesa 2018, p. 12–17.

14 V.V. Levčenko, *Do 100-ničâ stanovlennâ*, p. 135–146; O.V. Mel'nik, *Vidkrittâ Odes'kogo politehničeskogo institutu ta osvittnâ situaciâ v Odesi v 1918*, "Inteligenciâ i vlada", Series: History, 2018, no. 38, p. 46–54; *Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918; "Poželaem zvezde politeha imenami vse ârče goret'..."*: temat ukaz lit posviashch 100-letiu ONPU, compil. by T.Ū. Gnatûk, ed. by S.G. Banokina, Odessa 2018.

15 G.O. Obors'kij, *Slovo pro peršogo rektora (Postanovka problemi)*, p. 14–18.

16 *Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918*.

17 *Odes'kij Nacional'nyj Politehničeskij Universitet*.

18 *Mihail Vasil'evič Brajkevič (1917 g., 1918 g.)*, misto.odessa.ua/index.php?u=gorod%2Fgradonach%2Fbraykevich [accessed 31.03.2024].

Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, M.V. Braikevych, who had long been planning to establish a polytechnic institute in Odesa.¹⁹

It seems correct, but at the time of the establishment of the OPI, Braikevych was not the chairman of the city council (mayor). He held this position between 11 March 1917 and 23 August 1917, and from 17 December 1918 to approximately March 1919.²⁰ In some other works, the leading role in the OPI organization is given either to local authorities²¹ or to Professor Ivan Yuriiiovych Tymchenko.

In recent years, opinions have been expressed about rethinking the course of the OPI formation process in 1918. In particular, we are talking about the 'huge role of the Branch in the organization of this institution.'²² However, the authors did not provide any research justification for this statement, leaving it merely declarative.

Thus, the study of the historiography of the OPI's founding in 1918 allows us to conclude that there is no comprehensive analysis of the Institute's formation, nor is there adequate attention given to the role of public engineering associations in its establishment – gaps that define the purpose and objectives of our study.

Results and their analysis. A brief overview of the background leading to the founding of the Polytechnic Institute in Odesa

By the end of the 19th c., southern Ukraine had begun to play a significant role in the economic and political life of the Russian Empire. Odesa occupied the leading place in the Black Sea region, and this port city quickly turned into a major industrial center.

This transformation was facilitated primarily by the reforms of the 1860s and 1870s, which resulted in the growth of goods-money relations, strengthening the economies of Odesa with other regions of the empire and European countries. The rapid development of agriculture and a sharp increase in grain exports have led to the quick growth of trade in the port of Odesa and the expansion of the railway network. In 1893, the port of Odesa ranked second in the country in terms of turnover (128 million rubles) after St. Petersburg.²³

Industrial enterprises that were able to meet the demand of agriculture, rail and sea transport for machinery and equipment rapidly began to emerge in Odesa. The city ever-more-rapidly developed food, machine-building, metalworking and other industries. By the end of the 19th century, 18 large enterprises were established in Odesa, with a significant labour concentration.

The process of transforming Odesa into a major industrial and port center of the country was closely related to the need to train qualified engineers and technicians. The engineering community tried to use the Western European countries' experience of

19 V.V. Levčenko, G.S. Levčenko, A.B. Lășenko, *Peripetii sud'by professora Čarl'za Klarka*, p. 7–28 (all the translations in the article are made by authors).

20 M.V. Brajkevič, *Iz revolūcii nam čto-nibud'*, [in:] *Francuzy v Odesse. Iz belyh memuarov. Gen. A. I. Denikin, A. S. Margulies, M. V. Brajkevič*, ed. by P.E. Šegolev, Leningrad 1928, p. 223–259.

21 "Poželaem zvezde politeha imenami vse ârče goret'...", p. 10.

22 N.P. Belâvskaâ, L.P. Eremina, I.I. Zinčenko, *Grigorij Vejnštejn*, p. 82.

23 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok*, p. 7.

industrialization for the economic and cultural renewal of the country, clearly aware of the role of science in the development of industry. Scientific and technical societies have made substantial contributions to this process. In the Black Sea region, the most powerful of these societies was the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, founded in 1871. In 1897, it had its own building, laboratory and consisted of 9 subdivisions.²⁴ At the beginning of the 20th c. the number of sections increased to 12.²⁵ The Russian Technical Society played the role of an all-imperial public center, uniting enthusiasts of general and vocational education – engineers, public figures, scientists, and teachers. In 1916, the Russian Technical Society had 33 branches in different parts of the country.²⁶ In southern Ukraine, these branches were located in Odesa and Mykolaiv.

Various socio-political, socio-economic and cultural-historical processes influenced the Higher School of Odesa at the beginning of the 20th c. The number of higher schools was inconsiderable. There were five higher education institutions in the city as of the end of 1917: Novorossiysk University (1865–1920), Odesa higher women's courses (1906–1920), Odesa higher women's medical courses (1910–1920), Odesa Conservatory (since 1913) and Novorossiysk Higher International Institute (1916–1920).²⁷ Higher schools trained professionals in four fields within the natural and socio-humanities disciplines.²⁸ No higher education institution would train specialists in the engineering, industrial, economic, or agricultural sectors of the national economy. The nearest city, where Odesa residents who sought technical education went every year, was Kyiv with its Polytechnic Institute (KPI) operating since 1898.

Since the middle of the 19th c., numerous figures from the fields of culture, science, and technology – as well as representatives of the city authorities and the progressive public – actively and persistently appealed to the imperial government to establish a higher educational institution with a technical profile in Odesa.

The idea of establishing a polytechnic institute was first substantiated by Colonel of Artillery, public figure, and publicist P.V. Zalesskyi in his 1874 article *Ob ustrojstve v g. Odesse vy'sshego texnicheskogo uchilishha* (On the organization of a higher technical school in Odesa), published in the newspaper "Odesskyi vestnyk" in 1874.²⁹

From the late 19th c., Odesa's progressive public, along with scientists and engineers, continued to advocate to local authorities and the imperial government for the establishment of a higher technical school in the city. As early as 1895, the mayor – who was also chairman of the OBRTS and a professor in the Department of Mechanics at Novorossiysk University – Lihin, succeeded in securing a city government resolution granting land for the 'future technological institute'.³⁰ This resolution had never been implemented. After Lihin transferred to the position of trustee of the Warsaw Educational District, the struggle for the establishment of the Polytechnic in Odesa was led by Melnykov,

24 *Ènciklopedičeskij slovar'*, vol. 21a, ed. by F.A. Brokgauz I.A. Efron, Sankt-Peterburg 1897, s.v. *Odesa*.

25 V.A. Dobrovol'ska, *Diial'nist' arkhitekturnoho viddilu Odes'koho viddilennia Imperators'koho Rosiis'koho tekhnichnoho tovarystva u druhiu polovynu XIX – na pochatku XX st.*, "Konsensus" 2023, no. 4, p. 109.

26 V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo universiteta*, p. 4.

27 V.V. Levčenko, *Do 100-riččâ stanovlennâ*, 136–137.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 137.

29 V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo universiteta*, p. 3; D.I. Rabinovič, *45-letie OPI*.

30 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerok*, p. 7; V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ Odesskogo politehničeskogo universiteta*, p. 4.

a technological engineer, member of the OBRTS, editor of the “Zapiski Odesskogo otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo texnicheskogo obshhestva”.³¹ His report, “O tekhnicheskome obrazovanii voobshche i neobkhodimosti uchrezhdeniya v Odesse texnicheskogo instituta” (On technical education in general and the need to establish a technical institute in Odesa), presented to the department’s general meeting on 6 November 1897, drew a significant response from the public.³² This issue has not been resolved despite Melnykov’s efforts and broad public support.

The citizens of Odesa explored various ways to establish a higher technical institution in the city. A promising opportunity arose during World War I, when the government was urgently seeking to evacuate the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute from the war zone. Odesa was among several cities in the empire that actively campaigned to have the institute relocated to their territory. In August 1915, the Organizing Committee was established under the leadership of the mayor of Odesa. The committee maintained ongoing contact with representatives of the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Public Education and the Interior, public organizations of St. Petersburg, the Central Military-Industrial Committee, and the Directorate of the Warsaw Polytechnic. The main argument of the committee was that the industrial development of Odesa, and, consequently, the development of technical knowledge, was of great importance both for the economic development of the whole country and for strengthening the political influence of the state in the Middle East.³³ Even though Warsaw Polytechnic Institute was transferred to Nizhny Novgorod, the community of Odesa gained the necessary organizational experience. The Ministry of Trade and Industry initiated a plan to organize a future polytechnic in Odesa. However, reconciling legal and financial issues of the institute’s organization was suspended by the February Revolution of 1917.

It should be noted that the transfer of the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute to Nizhny Novgorod not only renewed efforts to create a higher technical education institution in Odesa but also inspired modelling it after the Warsaw one. A social movement for creating a new type of Warsaw Polytechnic, different from the evacuated Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, was launched in Warsaw. First of all, the teaching was to be conducted in Polish, not Russian. In addition, the teaching staff of the Warsaw Polytechnic, originally composed mainly of persons of Polish origin, was expected to change. In other words, the institution was intended to remain Polish rather than become a russified polytechnic.³⁴

The analysis of the historiography dedicated to the creation of the Warsaw Polytechnic shows that it took place during the period of great political changes and the military occupation of Poland by Germany. This project’s success was determined by certain concessions on the part of the occupation authorities and by the conscious joint efforts of the Warsaw public, city authorities and various public organizations. As is known, the Warsaw Polytechnic opened its first academic year on 15 November 1915.³⁵ The process

31 D.I. Rabinovič, *45-letie OPI*, p. 5.

32 N.P. Belâvskaâ, L.P. Eremina, I.I. Zinčenko, *Grigorij Vejnštejn*, p. 81.

33 V.V. Samodurova, *Istoriâ sozdaniâ*, p. 8–9.

34 *Politechnika Warszawska. (1915–1921)*, www.wz.pw.edu.pl/Wydzial/Tradycja/Historia/Od-kształcenia-technicznego-do-menedżerskiego/Politechnika-Warszawska.-1915-1921 [accessed 22.04.2024]; A. Ulmer, I. Koptoń-Ryniec, *Politechnika Warszawska : historia i tradycja w zarysie*, Warszawa 2023.

35 *Politechnika Warszawska. (1915–1921)*; A. Ulmer, I. Koptoń-Ryniec, *Politechnika Warszawska*; A. Ulmer, *Dzieje Politechniki Warszawskiej w zarysie*, “Maszyny Elektryczne: zeszyty problemowe” 2016, no. 4 (112), p. 193–199.

of the Odesa Polytechnic Institute's emergence in 1918 also took place in difficult political and military conditions. A civil war was raging across Ukraine, accompanied by struggles for Ukrainian independence. The history of the Polytechnic Institute's establishment in Odesa has not always been accurately portrayed, and the process of its creation includes aspects that, as historiographic reviews reveal, have often been misrepresented.

Stage one: Formation and activities of the initiative group

At the beginning of 1918, more than 1,000 students from various technical educational institutions in the empire's frontline areas, occupied by German-Austrian troops, as well as demobilized students, were in Odesa.

The situation in Odesa was extremely unfavorable for them. Until 17 January 1918, the official power in the city belonged to the Central Rada. On 18 January 1918, the Bolsheviks came to power in Odesa and created the 'Odesa Soviet Republic' which existed until 13 March 1918. This political structure did not recognize the authorities of the Central Rada. From mid-March 1918, the dictatorship of the Bolshevik army commander Mykhailo Artemovych Muraviov was established in Odesa. In March 1918, the Bolsheviks left the city. Before that, Muraviov addressed the order to the units 'to retreat in the direction of Odesa–Voznesensk. When the enemy approaches Odesa, open fire with all cannons on the bourgeois and national part of the city and destroy it'.³⁶ Fortunately, this order was not carried out. On 13 March 1918, power was restored to the Central Rada, supported by Austro-Hungarian and German military units that entered the city. Their command played an important role in the management of Odesa at the time. On 29 April 1918, power in Ukraine officially passed to Hetman Pavlo Petrovych Skoropadskiy.³⁷

In the conditions of permanent change of the political power in Odesa, students found themselves in isolation and looked for a way out of a seemingly hopeless situation. Young people joined the Union of students-technicians and tried to establish contacts with those organizations and institutions that, in their opinion, could help solve their problems.

During the period under review, two influential public engineering and technical associations operated in Odesa, namely: the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society and OJET. As Braikevych noted in his memoirs about the Technical Society, it was a society 'in which one of the main nerves of the progressive life of Odesa was pulsating'.³⁸ The Union of Engineers and Technicians is a public and professional association of technical intelligentsia, which was established in 1904 in St. Petersburg. Later, organizations of this kind were found in different cities. The Charter of the All-Russian Union of Engineers and Technicians stated that 'the purpose of the Union is to unite engineers and technicians from all over Russia for joint socio-political activities and protection of their professional interests'.³⁹ It should be noted that until 1906, trade unions and political unions were

36 *Ėnciklopedičeskij slovar'*, dopolnitel'nyj vol. 2a, *Prussii–Foma*, ed. by F.A. Brokgauz, I.A. Efron, Sankt-Peterburg 1907, s.v. *Soúzy professional'nye i političeskie*.

37 A.O. Buravčenkov, *Get'mans'kij perevorot 1918*, [in:] *Ėnciklopediâ istorii Ukraïni*, vol. 2, G-D, ed. by V.A. Smolij et al., Kiïv 2004, p. 688.

38 M.V. Brajkevič, *Iz revolúcii nam čto-nibud'*, p. 259.

39 *Soúzy professional'nye i političeskie*, p. 674.

illegal, and the situation changed after the revolution of 1905–1907. Borys Ivanovych Kondratiev, the future professor at the OPI, was the chairman of the Odessa Union.⁴⁰

On 6 April 1918, the Union of students-technicians sent an official letter to the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society with an appeal to arrange 'classes (courses) for students of higher technical educational institutions and to organize a polytechnic in Odessa.'⁴¹ This appeal was preceded, as the letter to the OBRTS shows, by the oral negotiations of the student union with representatives of public organizations. The main ones were the negotiations of the student representative Solomon Dahylovych Levenson with the representatives of the OBRTS: Mykhailo Vasylovych Braikevych, Hryhorii Markovych Volfenzon and the representatives of the Odessa Union of Engineers and Technicians: Borys Ivanovych Kondratiev and Fedir Samsonovych Bernfeld. These agreements prompted the students to submit an official appeal to the OBRTS (see Fig. 1).

The very next day (7 April 1918), in the "Odesskyi lystok", there was an announcement that the Union of students-technicians invites people wishing to enter Odessa Polytechnic to arrive and register.⁴²

The main proposal of the students was 'to convene such a meeting on behalf of the initiative group of the joint presidiums of the «Odessa branch of Russian Technical Society» and «Odessa Union of Engineers and Technicians» with the desired participation of certain personal candidates' (No attendance list is available in the archives).

The proposal was immediately accepted (which emphasizes the validity and effectiveness of previous oral agreements). The first meeting of the initiative group of the joint presidiums of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society and Odessa Union of Engineers and Technicians [hereinafter referred to as 'initiative group' – V.D., V.S.] was scheduled for 9 April 1918, and conducted the same day. A corresponding invitation was previously sent to each of the meeting participants (see Fig. 2). Representatives of the authorities (City Public Self-Government, Odessa Zemstvo), higher educational institutions (Novorossiysk University), public engineering and technical associations (OBRTS and OUET), the Military-Industrial Committee, and financial and commercial-industrial circles were

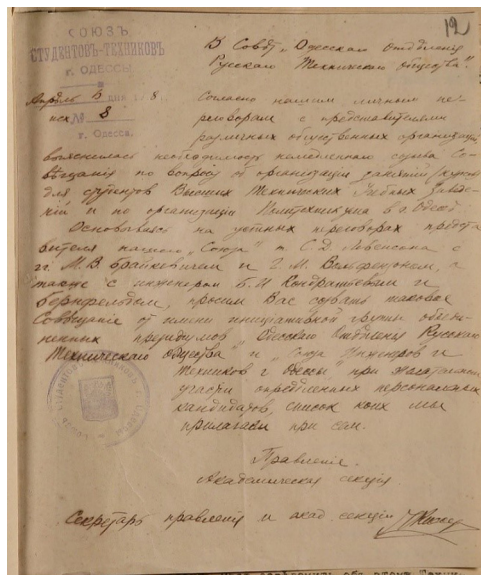


Fig. 1. Appeal of the Union of students-technicians of Odessa to the Board of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society (source: DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622)

40 "Poželaem zvezde politeha imenami vse ârče goret'...", p. 11; *Roždenie vuza, 1918–1919*, p. 9.

41 Deržavnij arhiv Odes'koi oblasti (State Archives of Odessa Oblast) [DAOO], Delo ob učreždenii v Odesse politehničeskogo instituta, 05.03.1917–23.08.1918. f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 12, Pis'mo studentov-tehnikov v Odesskoe otdelenie rossijskogo tehničeskogo obščestva.

42 "Odesskij lystok" 07.04.1918.

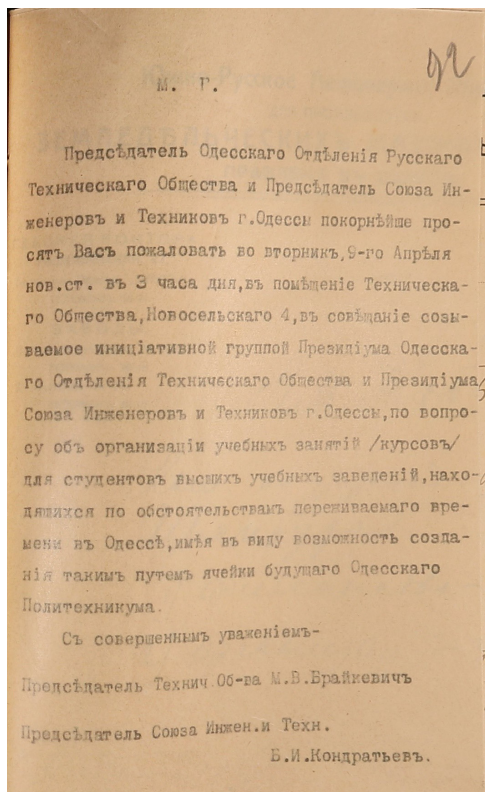


Fig. 2. Invitation to the general meeting (source: DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 92)

time. He noted they could not return to their educational institutions due to current political events. Therefore, the students requested the organization of classes (courses) for them and, on this occasion, discussed the possibility of establishing a polytechnic institute in Odesa.

Then, the representative of the Union of students-technicians revealed the main reasons for the presence of a significant mass of student youth in Odesa, namely, political events and recent demobilization.⁴⁴ It turned out that most students were unable to continue their education in higher schools in other cities. The Odesa Union of Student Technicians carried out detailed registration of students, including their assignment to institutes, specialties, and courses. The Union concluded that the establishment of a polytechnic in Odesa is an urgent issue. Its representative proposed the Union's vision of the institute as a public institution comprising mechanical and civil engineering departments. The proposed plan included the opening of two introductory courses in these departments, corresponding to the parallel courses at the KPI. In the event that the OPI was not established, students would be able to continue their studies in the senior courses in Kyiv.

among those invited. On 9 April 1918, the first meeting of the initiative group of public figures⁴³ took place, at which the issue of establishing a polytechnic institute in Odesa was debated.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following government and public structures: 1. The Presidium members of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, 2. The Presidium members of the Union of Engineers and Technicians, 3. Representatives of other public organizations, 4. Professors of Odesa University, 5. Professor Viacheslav Fedorovich Ivanov of Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, 6. Representatives of students of higher technical educational institutions. The city authorities were represented by the mayor, Vykentyi Mechyslavovych Bohutskiy (Wincenty Bogucki), and the invited members of the city council.

In his introductory speech, Kondratiev reported on the appeal of a group of students from higher technical educational institutions who were in Odesa at the

43 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 63–68, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy po voprosu ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vysših tehničeskih učebnyh zavedenij v g. Odesse Politehničeskogo instituta, 9.04.1918; DAOO, Dopovidna zapiska pro organizaciû OPI. 1919 r. f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 4, p. 1, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskome Institute.

44 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, f. 63v, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 9.04.1918.

It was a lively and constructive discussion. Ivanov, Professor of the KPI, positively assessed the student program and emphasized the need to create a polytechnic school in Odesa. He declared that the teaching staff was not a problem. He planned to open two more branches in the future – shipbuilding and economics. The professor was right in believing that the institute should be founded by organizations independent of political influence or subordination, as this would allow the institute to exist independently. He also ‘offered to make a detailed note on the organization of the Institute and submit it to the Ministry of Public Education in Kyiv for registration’,⁴⁵ thereby seeking to legitimize this process. Representatives of the professorial staff at Novorossiysk University supported the idea of founding the OPI, emphasizing that the university would provide both professorial staff and the necessary teaching aids, laboratories, and classrooms.

Odesa Mayor Bohutskyi assured that the city administration would do everything possible to achieve this goal. He promised to provide the institute with the necessary premises, land, and a financial subsidy.⁴⁶ Finally, Braikeyvych (see Fig. 3), the head of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, emphasized that the creation of educational institutions is the Society’s main task and assured that it ‘will take the most active part’ in establishing the institute.

The first organizational step was taken at the same meeting. According to Braikeyvych’s proposal, three commissions were elected: program and educational (chairman – Ivan Mykhailovych Zanchevskiyi (see Fig. 4); 15 people), organizational (Yakiv Semenovych Balaban; 7 people), and financial and economic (Mykhailo Vasylovych Braikeyvych; 12 people).⁴⁷ There is some factual confusion in existing publications regarding the commissions mentioned above. Some sources claim that three commissions were created, while others assert there were four. Additionally, it is noted that Tymchenko (see Fig. 5) served as chairman of the program-educational commission.⁴⁸ However, this is not the case. The initial chairman of the Program and Educational Commission (PEC) was Professor Zanchevskiyi. This is confirmed by the minutes of the PEC’s first meeting, held on 14 April 1918, which says that:

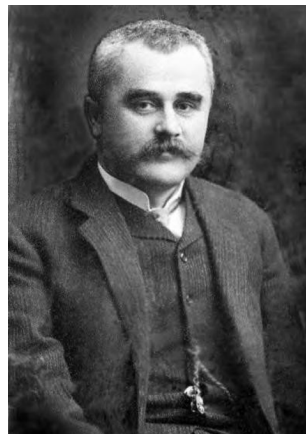


Fig. 3. Mykhailo Vasylovych Braikeyvych (source: A. Dmitrenko. *Gorodskoj golova Odessy, "Deribasovskaya-Rishel'evskaya"* 2017, no. 69, p. 46–62)



Fig. 4. Ivan Mykhailovych Zanchevskiyi (source: *Zančevs'kij Ivan Mihajlovič*, www.esu.com.ua/article-14890 [accessed 29.03.2024])

45 Ibidem, f. 67v, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 9.04.1918.

46 Ibidem.

47 Ibidem, p. 68, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 9.04.1918.

48 V.V. Levčenko, G.S. Levčenko, A.B. Lâšenko, *Peripetii sud'by professora Čarl'za Klarka*, p. 13.

the meeting resolved to elect a permanent presidium of the commission of three people. The following were elected by closed ballot: Professor I. ZANCHEVSKYI as the Chairman, engineer F. BERNFELD – as the Chairman’s lieutenant, and as the Secretary – N. VASYLIEV.⁴⁹

On 8 May 1918, however, Zanchevskiy wrote a letter to Braikevych, in which he stated that ‘he is unable to continue to serve as chairman of the program and educational commission for the organization of the Polytechnic Institute in Odesa.’⁵⁰ On 29 May 1918, according to the instructions appended to this letter, the issue was considered the competence of the Presidium of the Organizing Committee. That was the reason why on 14 May 1918, at the general meeting of the commissions of the Organizing Committee, it was Zanchevskiy who reported on the work of the PEC. Professor Tymchenko, the future vice-rector of the OPI, acted as the head of the PEC later.



Fig. 5. Professor Ivan Yuriiovych Tymchenko (source: O. Polevšikova, *Starodruki z astronomii u biblioteci odes'kogo matematika i astronomia Ivana Timčenka*, www.iapmm.lviv.ua/12/ukr_sky/ukr_sky-2/data/592-607.pdf [accessed 02.05.2024])

In May 1918, due to the Organizing Committee’s activities and the involvement of new members in the commissions, these commissions were renewed, and one more commission was created to develop the program of the economic department. It was at that point that the commissions acquired their finalized composition: the Program and Educational Commission (Chairman: Tymchenko; 35 members); the Organizational Commission (Chairman: Balaban; 22 members); the Financial and Economic Commission (Chairman: Braikevych; 22 members); and the Commission for the Development of the Economic Department’s Program (Chairman: Serhii Ivanovych Solntsev; 12 members). This is confirmed by the growing number of commission members, the emergence of a new commission, and the co-optation of Mayor Oleksandr Serhiiiovych Sannikov into the Organizing Committee (rather than the initial initiative group).

Sannikov, who assumed office on May 26, 1918, could not have been co-opted as mayor prior to that date. Most likely, these changes took place at the General Meeting of all commissions on 29 May 1918.

An established centralized structure to organize the OPI was proposed on 16 April 1918, at the next general meeting of the initiative group and elected commissions. The important decisions regarding the organizational foundations of the OPI founding process were taken at the joint session of the initiative group and commissions. It was deemed necessary

to elect a Presidium of three people in each of the organized Commissions. From among these Presidiums, a General Presidium is to be elected, composed of a Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and two Secretary’s

49 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 87, Protokol zasiedaniâ Učebno-programmnoj komisii Sovešaniâ po organizacii v Odesse politehnikuma, 14(1).04.1918.

50 Ibidem, p. 36, Pis'mo professora I. M. Zančevskogo predsedatelû Odesskogo tehničeskogo občestva M. V Brajkeviču.

Assistants. In addition, the Mayor of Odesa is to serve as Honorary Chairman of the Presidium. This General Presidium, once elected, will constitute the 'Organizing Committee', which will serve as the Institute's first governing body.⁵¹

In June 1918, an important step toward establishing fruitful cooperation with the city government and Odesa's financial circles was the co-optation of two representatives to the Organizing Committee: Mechyslav Ivanovych Ptashytskyi (Mieczysław Ptaszycki), a member of the city council, and A.A. Molotkov, manager of the city bank office.⁵²

However, until May 1918, the initiative group continued to play a leading role. During the transition period in April, the Organizing Committee was formed, four general meetings of all commissions were held, and systemic problems were identified – issues on which the successful establishment, existence, and functioning of the institute depended. These included: determining the institute's name, subordination and legal status; securing premises for the start of its operations and land for future construction; identifying a candidate for the position of rector; drafting and approving the Charter as the legal foundation for the institute's existence; establishing a financial and material base; and developing curricula and training programs.

Organizing Committee and its structure

From the beginning of May 1918, the process of creating the OPI was undertaken by the Organizing Committee. The system was hierarchically built with the necessary functional elements (blocks). The number and composition of commissions could be added as the new tasks arose. In particular, on 30 April 1918, an additional commission was established to develop the Charter of the OPI, demonstrating the flexibility of the structure. Thus, by the end of April 1918, at the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, the initiative group's actions had formed a clear organizational structure focused on establishing an institution for higher technical education in Odesa.

The forms of activity of the Organizing Committee and its commissions were refined during the institutionalization of higher technical education in Odesa. In particular, it was decided to 'establish a uniform procedure for the submission of all commission work to the Organizing Committee.' To support this, regulations on the work of the commissions were to be submitted to the Presidium, which would then forward them to the Committee.⁵³

The expansion of tasks to be addressed led to an increase in the number of additional commissions and units within the main commissions, as well as the involvement of new engineering and technical centers in the process of establishing the OPI.

From the outset of the Organizing Committee's and commissions' activities, there was consistency in the positions of public engineering and technical organizations and the city authorities. The support of mayor Bohutskyi played an important role

51 Ibidem, p. 70, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 9.04.1918.

52 Ibidem, f. 81v, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii razrabatyvauših vopros ob učreždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 26.06.1918

53 Ibidem, f. 74v, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy po voprosu ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vysših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij ob učreždenii v g. Odesse Politehničeskogo instituta, 16.04.1918.



Fig. 6. Vykyntyi Mechyslavovych Bohutskyi (Wincenty Bogucki), Mayor of Odesa (source: *Počety nye doktora "IEM"*, www.iem-spb.ru/institute/honoris-doc-tors; photographer unknown [accessed 30.03.2024])

(see Fig. 6). From the first meeting and throughout the entire organizational period, he actively participated in the sessions of both the Organizing Committee and several commissions. Despite the change in the central government in Kyiv in late April 1918, he continued to serve as mayor of Odesa for some time, ensuring the city's continued support for the project. Bohutskyi had considerable experience in managerial and organizational work (after the February Revolution, he was the Deputy Minister of the Interior in the Provisional Government, responsible for health) and was an honorary member of the Imperial Institute of Experimental Medicine.⁵⁴ He fully comprehended the importance of the Polytechnic Institute for Odesa and supported its foundation throughout its creation.

Gradually, the leading role of the OBRTS in the founding of the OPI was outlined. With the severance of all ties with the central body located in Petrograd, the OBRTS became an independent Odesa Technical Society. Perhaps that is why names such as 'Odesa Technical Society', 'Technical Society', 'Technical Society Branch', etc., are frequently found in the original OBRTS documents. Quoting the original documents preserves their original spelling. The organization assumed the role of OPI's organizer and primarily involved members of the Society in this process.

It should be noted that students also took an active part in the creation of the institute, especially their initiative group, which included A. Levytskyi, L.M. Kisser, S.D. Levenson, Ya.A. Rabinovych, M.M. Pomerantsev and others. Little is known about the lives of many of them. For example, Levenson graduated from the OPI Faculty of Energy in 1921 and worked at the institute until 1930. He then headed the Ukrainian Research Chemical Institute, earned the academic rank of professor in 1935, defended his dissertation, and became a well-known specialist in refrigeration.⁵⁵ In Odesa, he also headed the departments of internal combustion engines and refrigeration (Institute of Water Transport Engineers) and heat engineering (Industrial Institute). Levenson was a pioneer of the Odesa thermodynamic school.

The subsequent development of the OPI establishment process can be traced by examining the systemic issues faced by the institute, which were addressed within the organizational centers created by the aforementioned public organizations. These issues were allocated to specific commissions and, after coordination with the Organizing Committee, were submitted for final approval at the general meeting.

54 A.N Krylov-Tolstikovič, *Russkie vrači XIX – načala XX vv. Novaâ redakciâ: krat. med. biogr. slovar'*, www.proza.ru/2017/06/11/309 [accessed 29.03.2024]. In 1920 he left for Poland and was vice president of Warsaw in 1927–1929.

55 A.A.Vasserman, G.K. Lavrinenko, V.I. Nedostup, *Odesskaâ termodinamičeskaâ škola: ee vozniknovenie, stanovlenie i razvitie*, "Tehničeskie gazy" 2014, no 5, p. 5.

Name, subordination, legitimization, and management of the Institute

Already at the first meeting of the initiative group (9 April 1918), the opinion was expressed that

it is desirable and necessary for the institute founders to remain entirely independent of political influences and organizational subordination; this will allow (the institute) to function autonomously and avoid any disruptions.⁵⁶

At the next meeting of the initiative group (16 April 1918), it was finally decided that the Institute should be founded by public organizations. The Organizing Committee made proposals for the subordination of the institute: 'The institute should be founded by one or more public organizations and be completely apolitical. In this regard, the commission intends it to be established at the Technical Society'.⁵⁷ Amidst the civil war, political instability, the city's frequent change of governments, and the presence of occupying forces in Odesa, the principle of an apolitical institution appeared to be the most acceptable. Consequently, it was proposed to establish the institute as part of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society. The management of the institute was entrusted to the newly created Organizing Committee. It was authorized to involve representatives from various public, scientific, and other organizations.

The name of the Institute was approved at the same time. It was supposed to be called the Odesa City Polytechnic Institute.⁵⁸ However, following correspondence with the Ministry of Public Education, the institute's recognition at the state level significantly elevated its status. Subsequently, the decision was made to change its name to the Odesa Polytechnic Institute.⁵⁹

The final decision on the provision of full engineering education in the OPI was taken at the first meeting of the Organizing Committee (14 May 1918). Zanchevskyi, Chairman of the program-educational commission, proposed preparing a petition to grant first-year students of Odesa Polytechnic the right to enroll directly in senior courses at Kyiv Polytechnic. However, Braikevych, head of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, opposed this proposal. He mentioned that this could harm the OPI activities. Both students and philanthropists would find the institution truly appealing if it were independent, rather than merely a branch or preparatory department for another school. Therefore, in his view, efforts should focus on establishing a full-fledged institute in Odesa. This essential condition offered hope for the institute's growth and success. The majority of those present supported Braikevych's opinion.⁶⁰

The issue of legitimizing the institution and establishing its specific social status followed two paths: recognition by the state and the creation of the institution's Charter. State recognition – granted by the government of Skoropadskyi – was achieved through a formal report on the establishment of the OPI, which ultimately received a positive decision. The creation and approval of the Charter also took place, but not immediately.

56 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, f. 67v, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 09.04.1918,

57 Ibidem, p. 69, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 16.04.1918.

58 Ibidem, p. 70, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 16.04.1918.

59 Ibidem, p. 78, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii razrabatyvauših vopros ob učeždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 29.05.1918.

60 Ibidem, p. 75, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komissii razrabatyvauših vopros ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vyših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij i ob učeždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 14.05.1918.

Search for premises and land for the Institute's building

The city administration's intention to provide the institute with the necessary premises and land proved to be a difficult and lengthy process. This effort was undertaken by the Financial and Economic Commission in collaboration with representatives of the city government. First, this involved searching for a temporary building for the future institute, specifically the 3rd floor of the Saban barracks.⁶¹ Second, the commission sought a plot of land for the institute's future building. During April 1918, this matter was discussed by the city administration and the City Duma.

On 30 April 1918, the following decision was made at an emergency meeting of the City Duma:

In principle, agree to allocate a plot of land up to 15 desiatinas [land measure equivalent to 2.7 acres – V.D., V.S.], instruct the city council together with the Organizing Committee to select the appropriate plot and submit their views for approval by the Duma.⁶²

On 13 May 1918, at a meeting of the Financial and Economic Commission, it was announced that the City Duma, following the report of the city council, decided to allocate a 15-acre plot for the future Polytechnic Institute and to provide temporary facilities on the third floor of the Saban barracks.⁶³ Later, an outbuilding at the Saban barracks was also made available to the OPI.⁶⁴

The construction of the Polytechnic Institute on the allocated site was a matter of the future, but it was time to open the school and start classes. In addition to the Saban barracks, the Organizing Committee also had eyes for the building of the Sergius Artillery School, headed by Honored Professor Andriy Oleksandrovych Nilus. Nilus positively assessed this idea of the Organizing Committee and expressed his support for it. Consequently, in the first half of May 1918, the Organizing Committee decided to continue negotiations with the Main Artillery Department regarding the transfer of the building and equipment of the Sergius Artillery School to the future Polytechnic Institute. The Committee also prepared a Report note on the institute's establishment and decided to send it to the State Government of Ukraine with a request to open it.⁶⁵

The Main Artillery Department agreed in principle to place the building of the Sergius Artillery School at the disposal of the Polytechnic Institute, but put forward the condition that 'a special department for the study of artillery knowledge be opened at the polytechnic.'⁶⁶

However, the civil war led to adjustments in certain agreements. The political situation in the country was precarious and nearly ruined the founding of the OPI. The situation

61 Ibidem, p. 42, Protokol zasedaniâ Finansovo-Hozâjstvennoj Komissii Sovešaniâ po učreždeniû v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 2.04.1918.

62 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerk*, p. 12.

63 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 42, Protokol zasedaniâ Finansovo-Hozâjstvennoj Komissii, 2.04.1918.

64 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 4, p. 1, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom Institute.

65 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 74, Protokol Zasedaniâ Obšego Sobraniâ Komissij, razrabatyvaûših vopros ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vyših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij i ob učreždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 14.05.1918.

66 Ibidem, p. 76, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komissii razrabatyvaûših vopros ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vyših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij i ob učreždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 22.05.1918.

deteriorated to the point that the organization of the OPI became critical. On 12 June 1918, at a regular meeting, Braikevych, head of the Financial and Economic Commission, reported that the Military Department planned to open military courses in the Sergius Artillery School building, making it unavailable for the institute. Additionally, the city government failed to fulfill its obligation to provide a subsidy, and the issue of using the Saban barracks as a training facility was postponed. The only way out of this situation was to revisit the idea of providing the institute first with the third floor of the Saban barracks, and 'later, as the Institute expanded, additional floors of the building would be made available.'⁶⁷

This was probably the most critical moment in the process of founding the institute, as Braikevych officially declared: 'If the City Administration fulfils these conditions positively and effectively, it will be possible to continue the effort to establish the Institute; otherwise it should be set aside.'⁶⁸ At the same time, a request to use the building of the Sergius Artillery School was sent to the Ministry of War. Nilus went to Kyiv to resolve this issue. He had a meeting with the Minister of War, who promised to provide the school building for the institute, but only for one year. But even this promise was not kept. On 29 July 1918, the Main Artillery Department informed that the building of the Sergius Military School could not be provided to the OPI until a decision on the organization of military schools was made. By this time, the acceptance of applications for entrance to the OPI had been completed, so the only alternative left was the Saban barracks.

The decisive actions of the Organizing Committee, which again appealed to the city government with an urgent request to decide the fate of the institute, had a positive effect. The city self-government's resolution (brought to the Organizing Committee's attention on 26 July 1918) placed the institute on the third floor of the Saban barracks. However, it contained a condition stating that if the city required this premise, it would dispose of it at its discretion.⁶⁹ However, even this compromise decision further impeded the founding of the OPI.

Simultaneously with the process of obtaining a temporary building, a search for a plot of land for the future building of the institute was taking place. It was carried out by the Financial and Economic Commission (FEC). On 16 April 1918, at a meeting of the initiative group, the FEC proposed constructing a polytechnic institute next to the city racetrack. Next to this area, the city planned to establish a settlement, 'a Garden City', which could house professors and students.⁷⁰

Over time, the three most likely places for constructing a polytechnic institute were identified. They were discussed on 26 June 1918, at the general meeting of all commissions. Three sites were proposed: Racetrack (Hippodrome), Botanical Garden, and the area in Blizhni Mlini (Mills Nearby) suburbs. Ptashytskyi, the representative of the city council, defended the latter option, citing the large size of the plot. He argued that the area was spacious enough to create a university campus, accommodating not only the Polytechnic but also the Agricultural Institute, the Academy of Arts, and other higher education institutions. Moreover, these institutions could expand within this area if necessary. This proposal provoked discussion. The main argument of the opponents

67 Ibidem, p. 79, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii, 29.05.1918.

68 Ibidem.

69 Ibidem, p. 80, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii, 26.06.1918.

70 Ibidem, p. 69, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy, 16.04.1918.

was that the Blizhni Mlini plot was too far from the center and lacked urban amenities, which would require many years of construction to provide. It was announced that under such conditions, professors would refuse to teach, among other concerns raised. After discussion and voting, the Botanical Garden (Small Fountain area) was selected as the site for the new Polytechnic building.

An important factor in the completion of this process was also the message of the Ministry of Internal Affairs received on 31 August 1918. It stated that 'the Ministry of Internal Affairs does not deny the merits of the issue but requests that an assignment be issued in accordance with current legal provisions.'⁷¹

The final point was set at the general meeting of the OBRTS on 7 August 1918. It was decided

to authorize the Chairman of the Technical Society, engineer Mykhailo Vasylovych Braikevych, to conclude, on behalf of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society, an agreement with the Odesa City Public Self-Government regarding the allocation of a 15-desiatine plot of city land to the Technical Society for *the construction of buildings designated by the Technical Society for the Polytechnic Institute* [emphasis added – V.D., V.S.].⁷²

According to archival data, in 1919, 'Odesa city public self-government donated a plot of land at the 4th station of the V-Fontanska road' for the construction of the OPI buildings.⁷³

Odesa Polytechnic Institute Charter

An important factor in the legitimization of higher engineering education in Odesa was the Charter of the Institute. Its development took a long time, despite its great need.

The urgency of developing the Charter became apparent during the 23 April 1918 meeting of the initiative group, as they discussed the city government's response to the application for financial support for the future polytechnic institute. Although the city government supported the idea, a further report to the City Duma required providing the Charter of the institute and an estimate for its arrangement and maintenance. Initially, the project was undertaken by technical students.⁷⁴ It was also decided that Oleksii Yakovych Shpakov, Professor of Law, would contribute to the development of the Charter.

Despite the Charter being incomplete, the initiative group submitted a draft for the city's consideration. Nevertheless, the city government made a favorable decision to provide financial support, even though only an early version of the Charter had been presented. At the very next meeting of the initiative group, held on 30 April 1918, the task of drafting the Institute's Charter and the Charter of the Board of Trustees was assigned to a specially established commission.

71 *Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918*, p. 15.

72 DAOO, Protokoly obših sobranij. 16.05.1918–03.09.1918, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 630, p. 6, Protokol zasedaniâ Obšego Sobraniâ, 07.08.1918

73 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 4, p. 1, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom Institute.

74 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 71, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy po voprosu ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vysših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij ob učreždenii v g. Odesse Politehničeskogo instituta 23.04.1918.

It was proposed to include two representatives of the Union of Engineers in the commission and to co-opt all members of the Council of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society knowledgeable in this matter. The program-training commission was also involved in the creation of the Charter in the part related to the organization of the educational process.⁷⁵

On 14 May 1918, the organizational and program-educational commissions informed the Organizing Committee regarding the final stage of the Institute's Charter design. However, the process was delayed, and on 12 June 1918, the general meeting asked the statutory commission to 'complete the work on the Charter as soon as possible and submit it to the Ministry of Education for state approval and clarification of alumni rights.'⁷⁶

The OPI Charter was eventually finalized on 3 July 1918 and brought to the Organizing Committee's attention. The Charter was also considered on 7 August 1918, at a general meeting of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society, chaired by Braikevych. Archival evidence indicates that the Charter of the OPI was developed from mid-April to early August 1918. Therefore, we cannot agree with Levčenko's claim that 'in a short time during August 1918, the Organizing Committee developed the Charter of Odessa Polytechnic Institute.'⁷⁷

The main distinguishing feature of this Charter and other similar documents was twofold. First, it granted the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society the right to have representatives on the Institute's Board of Trustees and Technical Committee. Second, it allowed individuals without academic titles, but recognized for their practical expertise in specific technological fields, to serve as instructors.⁷⁸

The Statute of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute defined the status of the founder of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute. In the first paragraph of the 'General resolutions' section, we read that 'the Odessa Polytechnic Institute is a higher education institution established by the Odessa branch of the Technical Society, aiming to provide technical and economic education to those who study there.'⁷⁹ At the same time, the term 'the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society' is also used in the Statute. In our opinion, this duality is caused by the desire to explain the causal relationship between these two names.

As outlined in the Odessa Polytechnic Institute Charter, the management of the institute 'relied on the Board of Trustees, the Board of the Institute, the Faculty Meeting, the Rector of the Institute and the Vice-Rector.'⁸⁰ The role of the OBRTS in the establishment of the institution is reflected in the Charter, where the OBRTS is present in the management system of the Institute's Technical Committee. In accordance with the Charter, it had significant powers:

The Technical Committee of the Institute consists of a joint meeting of the Council of the Institute and the Council of the Odessa branch of the Technical Society.

The following are subject to the jurisdiction of the Technical Committee of the

75 Ibidem, p. 72–73, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj grupy po voprosu ob organizacii kursov dlâ studentov vysših tehničeskikh učebnyh zavedenij ob učreždenii v g. Odesse Politehničeskogo instituta, 30.04.1918.

76 Ibidem, f. 81v, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii, 26.06.1918.

77 V. Levčenko, *Do 100-riččâ stanovlennâ*, p. 140.

78 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 630, f. 8–8v, Protokol zasedaniâ Obšego sobraniâ, 07.08.1918.

79 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 1a, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

80 Ibidem, p. 6, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

Institute: 1/ election of the position of professor or associate professor, 2/ opening of new faculties or departments, 3/ development and approval of plans for summer practical work of students.⁸¹

The Charter also defined the composition of governing bodies, their election procedure and competence.⁸² Representatives of the Odesa branch of the Technical Society played an active role in the institute's management, serving not only as members of its Technical Committee but also on its Board of Trustees.⁸³ The democratic nature of the Statute is reflected in the fact that, following the opening of the OPI, representatives of the Union of students-technicians were delegated to the Board of Trustees (2 people), the Board of Professors (2 people), and the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Mechanical Faculty (2 people to each faculty). The abovementioned student, Levenson, was one of them.⁸⁴

The 'Institute Staff' section stated that full-time and part-time professors were to be elected based on nominations from faculty meetings, the council of the Odesa branch of the Technical Society, or the Institute's Technical Committee. Associate professors were to be elected by the Technical Committee of the Institute based on the proposal from either faculty meetings or the council of the Odesa branch of the Technical Society.⁸⁵

The Institute's Financial and Material Resources

As previously noted, at the first meeting of the initiative group on 9 April 1918, Odesa Mayor Bohutskyi announced the city government's intention to provide the institute not only with the necessary premises and a land plot but also with a monetary subsidy.⁸⁶

On 16 April 1918, at a meeting of the initiative group, the resolution was taken to apply to the city government for the allocation of a subsidy in the amount of one hundred thousand karbovanets. The proposals made by public organizations were discussed by the city council and the financial commission, and on 30 April 1918, the city council considered them at its emergency meeting. The City Duma decided to provide the requested amount for the arrangement of the Polytechnic in Odesa and instructed the city council, together with the Organizing Committee, to choose the appropriate plot of land.⁸⁷

Financial support issues for the future institute remained a constant focus of both the Finance Committee and the Organizing Committee as a whole. Moreover, different approaches were used to solve this problem. Sources of income were diversified: appeals to various organizations and associations; attempts to use the property of organizations that had ceased to exist; use of sums of money to be received by the Organizing Committee; conducting various cultural and entertainment events, the proceeds of which were to go to the financial needs of the institute; involvement of a wide range of engineering and

81 Ibidem, f. 6v, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

82 Ibidem, p. 6–9, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

83 Ibidem, p. 6, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

84 Ibidem, p. 6, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.; DAOO, Organizacionnyj Komitet. Spiski prepodavatelej, povestki, izvešeniâ i t.p. 20.08.1918–8.11.1918, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 9, p. 21.

85 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, f. 2v, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

86 Ibidem, p. 63–68, Protokol zasedaniâ Inicijativnoj Gruppy, 9.04.1918.

87 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerk*, p. 12.

other public organizations to participate in the work of the Organizing Committee, and more. Below are some specific examples of the organization of financial support for the institute's activities.

The Organizing Committee, through the Head of the Odessa Bureau of Self-Taxation Commission, Yosyp Illich Safir, appealed for financial assistance from trade and industrial circles of Odessa 'with a fervent appeal to provide material and moral assistance to the emerging torch of learning.' The Organizing Committee emphasized that 'the amount invested by the trade and industrial community and merchants in the establishment of Odessa Polytechnic Institute will be given a hundredfold to Odessa industry and trade.'⁸⁸

The Organizing Committee instructed the students to prepare and hold various entertainment and cultural events for the benefit of the future institute. Charity performances, concerts, benefit nights, and other events were planned.

A special financial commission was set up 'to work out the procedure for distributing the sums collected by taxing the population during the Bolshevik movement'.

The tuition fee was supposed to ensure a considerable sum. The tuition fee was specified in the rules of admission to the institute and established at the amount of 200 rubles per semester.⁸⁹ In August 1918, the general meeting of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society changed this amount. Tuition fees were set at 300 rubles per year.⁹⁰ There was also hope for the transfer or acquisition of the property of the Sevastopol Military Aviation School, which was inactive, for the needs of the OPI.⁹¹ Some attempts were made to involve the surrounding cities in subsidizing the institute. Other options for strengthening the institute's material base were proposed. In particular, it was decided to submit a petition on the possibility of transferring property from institutions and warehouses of the Union of Cities that are being liquidated to the Polytechnic Institute.⁹² Diversification of sources of funding and material support at the stage of establishment of the OPI provided an opportunity to solve the financial and material problems of the nascent institution.

According to the Charter, the norms of financial support for the activities of the OPI were divided into 'special' and 'staff' categories. The first group included:

- 1/funds provided by Odessa City self-government, other cities/towns self-governments and Zemstvo Administrations, 2/ fees for lectures and practical classes collected from students, 3/ funds received by the Institute from the Society for Promoting the Prosperity of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute, as well from other institutions and individuals, 4/ funds that can be allocated by the State Treasury, 5/ income from the property owned by the Institute, 6/ fee for diplomas and certificates issued by the Institute, 7/ income from the sale of products and for the projects implementation by the Institute educational and auxiliary institutions, 8/ fee for the use of the Institute's premises during extracurricular activities, 9/ other income.⁹³

88 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 44, Gospodinu Predsedatelû Bûro Komissii po Samoobloženîu Osipu Il'îču Safîru [Obrašenie Predsedatelâ Organizacionnogo Komiteta].

89 Ibidem, p. 14, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom institute.

90 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 630, p. 9, Protokol zasedaniâ Obšego Sobraniâ, 07.08.1918.

91 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 78, Protokol Zasedaniâ Komissij razrabatyvaûših vopros ob učeždenii v Odesse Politehničeskogo Instituta, 29.05.1918.

92 Ibidem, f. 78v, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komissij, 29.05.1918.

93 Ibidem, f. 1a-1av, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

Staff funds included 'subsidies and staff amount budgeted by the Ministry of Public Education for the maintenance of the Institute.'⁹⁴ Thus, according to the Charter, funding was supposed to be diversified and hybrid, combining both public funds and local government funds and revenues from other sources, including private ones.

Rector's position



Fig. 7. Andrii Oleksandrovych Nilus (source: *General-lejt. A. A. Nilus - načal'nik Sergievskogo art. učiliša. 1914 g. Odesa*, www.violity.com/ua/109344769-general-lejt-a-a-nilus--nachalnik-sergievskogo-art-uchilicsha-1914-g-odessa) [accessed 02.05.2024]

The rector's position was of considerable importance. It can be assumed that the appeal of the Organizing Committee to the candidacy of Lieutenant General, Head of the Sergius Artillery School, Honored Professor Nilus (see Fig. 7) was motivated by several reasons. Nilus's esteemed scientific and engineering reputation lent weight to his support for transferring the Sergius Artillery School to the OPI. Therefore, on 14 May 1918, at the general meeting, the Organizing Committee proposed his candidacy for the rector's position. The candidacy of Nilus was supported unanimously. In addition, the meeting suggested that this position be referred to as 'rector' rather than 'director'. After his election, Nilus wrote a letter to the Organizing Committee, in which he expressed his gratitude and noted that only 'absolutely exceptional circumstances could compel me to resign from this honourable position ... In the meantime, I place myself at your complete disposal and will do my utmost to provide all possible assistance and support.'⁹⁵

Indeed, his participation in the creation of the OPI was both significant and productive. He played a key role in resolving several important issues and served as the Organizing Committee's liaison with the Ministry of War. The organizational experience he gained during the establishment and operation of the Sergius Artillery School proved invaluable during his tenure as the OPI rector. His authority significantly influenced the early development of the OPI in a positive way.

Curriculum development

The curricula of the future institute were a key factor in ensuring comprehensive engineering training at the polytechnic institute under development. It was no coincidence that well-known scientists and engineers who were in Odesa at that time became a part of the program and educational commission. The commission included not only numerous representatives from Odesa University and the local engineering community, but also prominent scientists and engineers who had found themselves in

94 Ibidem, f. 1av, Ustav Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta.

95 Ibidem, f. 78v, Protokol zasedaniâ Komissii razrabatyvaûših vopros, 29.05.1918.

Odesa due to difficult political circumstances. Student representatives also joined the commission.

It became an accepted practice to send draft curricula developed by the program and educational commission to the Organizing Committee of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society for preliminary consideration.

Following the wishes of the student initiative group, the curricula of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute were adopted as a model.⁹⁶ However, the need to train specialists in technological fields relevant to the region – such as sanitary engineering, shipbuilding, and port construction – was taken into account.⁹⁷

However, the establishment of the OPI as a fully functioning polytechnic institute – along with the rapid advancement of various fields of knowledge and the urgent need for Odesa's economic revival – made the training of relevant specialists essential. For this reason, it was decided to first open the Faculty of Economics, followed later by a Department of Electrical Engineering – then a newly emerging technical field. A commission to develop the economic department curriculum was organized in May 1918. On 22 May 1918, the general meeting of the commissions decided to establish a special commission headed by Professor Solntsev to develop curricula for the Faculty of Economics.⁹⁸

The report by Yevgen Mach, the head of the electrical engineering department of the BRTS, was discussed at the same meeting. It resulted in a proposal to create a new Electromechanical Department. The lively debate sparked by this idea culminated in a resolution affirming the desirability of establishing such a department.⁹⁹ However, its founding depended on the institute's financial and material resources. To remove the uncertainty, the general meeting of commissions, 29 May 1918, decided to set up a subcommittee to open an Electromechanical Department.¹⁰⁰ As a result, it was decided to establish this department. Following these decisions, curricula (training programs) were developed for both the Faculty of Economics and the Electromechanical Department. Another outcome of the program and educational commission's work was the formulation of admission rules for the institute.

In general, everything was thought through in order to implement the principle of study (training): 'From general to particular, from broad to narrow, from subordinate work to independent activity.'¹⁰¹

Addressing these key challenges in the creation and operation of the OPI made it possible to announce the first student admissions in August 1918. The norms of student admission changed over time. Initially, according to the Resolution of 22 May 1918, the Mechanical and Civil Engineering Departments were planned to admit 80 students each, while the Department of Economics was planned to admit 300 students.¹⁰² Later, with the expansion in the number of new departments and faculties, the number of students increased.

96 Ibidem, f. 69v, Protokol zasedaniâ Iniciativnoj gruppy, 16.04.1918; Ibidem, f. 87v, Protokol zasedaniâ Učebno-programmnoj komisii Sovešaniâ.

97 Ibidem, p. 87, Protokol zasedaniâ Učebno-programmnoj komisii Sovešaniâ.

98 Ibidem, f. 76v, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komisii, 22.05.1918.

99 Ibidem.

100 Ibidem, p. 78, Protokol zasedaniâ Komisii, 29.05.1918.

101 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 4, f. 1v, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom Institute.

102 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 76, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komisii, 22.05.1918.

It is also worth mentioning an interesting provision in the institute's Charter, which states that 'children of full-time educational staff members have the right to free education in higher educational institutions and are admitted to the Odesa Polytechnic Institute without competition.'¹⁰³

The final stage: opening of the Odesa Polytechnic Institute

The official opening ceremony of the OPI was held in September 1918. Prior to that, on 8 July 1918, the Polytechnic Institute's secretariat began its activities. Until 1 August 1918, it accepted applications for admission to the Institute.¹⁰⁴ The admission terms were published on 10 July (27 June) 1918 in the newspaper "Odesski lystok".

Newspapers also regularly reported on the statistics of student enrollment. By early July 1918, approximately 2,000 applications had already been submitted.¹⁰⁵ By the deadline, there had already been 2374¹⁰⁶ applications (according to other sources – 2371).¹⁰⁷ According to the rules of admission, three faculties were established, and they were supposed to be divided from the second year of study:

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering [...] into departments: a) Mechanical, b) Electrical, c) Shipbuilding. Faculty of Civil Engineering – into departments: a) Sanitary Engineering, b) Engineering and Hydraulic Engineering, c) Construction. Faculty of Economics – into departments: a) Administrative and Financial, b) Commercial and Industrial.¹⁰⁸

The enrollment procedure was held on 25 August 1918, in the premises of the Odesa Technical Society. Table 1 shows the results of the Institute admission process. They testify that in the first academic year (1918/1919), 1060 people were enrolled in the OPI. However, at the beginning of the second academic year (1919/1920), the number of students increased significantly and amounted to 5024.¹⁰⁹

In the Table, only applications of those pre-qualified for admission were considered.

The Organizing Committee continued to exist for a time (September–October 1918). However, the Institute's management was already regulated by the Charter.

The Institute's Council commenced its work. On 8 September 1918, its first meeting was held at the Military-Industrial Committee building (Pushkinskaya, 11).¹¹⁰ The schedule of the educational process was established – 1st semester: 1 November–15 February (holidays: 1–15 January), 2nd semester: 15 February–1 July (June).¹¹¹

On 14 September 1918, 'a meeting of the Special Commission was held to discuss the issue of organizing the opening ceremony of the Odesa Polytechnic

103 Ibidem, f. 10v, Ustav Odesskogo Politehničeskogo instituta.

104 Ibidem, p. 82, Protokol Obšego Sobraniâ Komissii, 22.05.1918.

105 *Odesskij politehničeskij institut: kratkij istoričeskij očerk*, p. 13.

106 Ibidem.

107 *Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918*, p. 15.

108 DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 14, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom Institute.

109 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 4, p. 2, Ob Odesskom Politehničeskom Institute.

110 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 9, p. 7, Priglašenje na pervoe sobranie Soveta instituta.

111 O.V. Mel'nik, *Vidkrittâ Odes'kogo politehničeskogo institutu*, p. 46–54; [Addition to no 10815] (*K otkrytiû Odesskogo politehničeskogo instituta*), "Odesskie novosti" 12.09.1918, p. 2.

Table 1. OPI admission results in the first year of its existence (1918).

No.	Faculties	Applications for admission allowed		Enrollment plan		Enrolled	
		First year of study	Second year of study	First year of study	Second year of study	First year of study	Second year of study
1	Mechanical Engineering	370	280	100	100	253	179
2	Civil Engineering	544	111	100	100	159	111
3	Faculty of Economics	403	58	300	300	300	58
Total		1317	449	500	500	712	348

Compiled by the authors according to available sources (DAOO, f. 333, op. 1, spr. 622, p. 1–89; V.V. Levčenko, G.S. Levčenko, A.B. Lâsenko, *Peripetii sud'by professora Čarl'za Klarka*, p. 7–28; O.V. Mel'nik, *Vidkrittâ Odes'kogo politehničnogo ìnstytutu*, p. 46–54; G.O. Obors'kij, *U vitokiv: ìvan Ūrijovič Timčenko (1919–1920). Drugij rektor Odes'kogo nacional'nogo politehničnogo universitetu*, p. 283–288; *Odesskij politehničeskij ìnstytut: kratkij istoričeskij očerk; Odes'kij politehnikum – istoriâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918*)

Institute.¹¹² The grand opening took place on 18 September 1918, in the building of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society. Welcoming speeches were made by Braikevych, Chairman of the Odessa branch of the Russian Technical Society, Kondratiev, Chairman of the Odessa Union of Engineers and Technicians, and Nilus, Rector of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute. The press also did not ignore this event. Thus, on 19 September 1918, the newspaper “Odesskyi lystok” reported: ‘Yesterday a significant event – the opening ceremony of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute – took place in the building of the Technical Society’.

The first lectures were delivered on the opening day (at the Faculty of Economics). They were delivered by Professor Kostiantyn Oleksiiovych Kuznietsov (the lecture topic – ‘Law and Economics’) and Professor Volodymyr Mykolaiovych Tverdokhliebov (the lecture topic – ‘Finance’). On 21 September 1918, the ‘General History’ lecture was given by Professor Petro Mykhailovych Bitsylli at the same faculty.¹¹³ Other faculties started their classes on 15 November 1918, after the renovation of the third floor of the Saban barracks, located in vul. Poltavskoi Peremohy (Kanatna)¹¹⁴ (see Fig. 8).

Finally, the institutionalization of higher technical education in Odessa took place.



Fig. 8. Saban barracks: the first building of the Odessa Polytechnic Institute (source: “Poželaem zvezde politeha imenami vse ârče goret...”: temat ukaz lit posviashch 100-letiu ONPU, Odessa 2018)

112 DAOO, f. r 126, op. 1, spr. 9, p. 10, Priglašenje na zasedanie Osoboj Komissii po organizacii prazdnovaniâ otkrytiâ Odesskogo Politehničeskogo Institutu.

113 *Odesskij politehničeskij ìnstytut: kratkij istoričeskij očerk; Odes'kij politehnikum – ìstorîâ narodžennâ. 1874–1918; Roždenie vuza, 1918–1919*, p. 9–19.

114 “Poželaem zvezde politeha imenami vse ârče goret’...”, p. 12.

Conclusions

The process of institutionalization of higher technical education in Odesa ended in 1918 with the establishment of a polytechnic institute, which was of high importance for this region. However, this process was initiated in the 1870s, when active public figures began their struggle to open a higher technical school in the city. In the early 20th c., the port city of Odesa became a powerful industrial center of the empire, highlighting the need to train qualified engineers and technicians.

The year 1918 was a difficult period for Ukrainian territories, including southern Ukraine. This was a period marked by the First World War and the Civil War, during which various political forces – the Central Rada, the Bolshevik dictatorship, German-Austro-Hungarian troops, and the Ukrainian state under Skoropadskyi – rapidly came and went in Odesa. In the conditions of political instability, it was the public of the city that became the catalyst for the formation of a polytechnic higher school.

During this period in Odesa, there were influential public engineering and technical organizations: the Odesa branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society (Chairman: Braikevych) and the Odesa Union of Engineers and Technicians (headed by Kondratiev). These associations supported the initiative of student youth (Union of students-technicians) in April 1918 to organize classes (training) for students at higher technical schools and to establish a polytechnic higher education institution in Odesa.

Active cooperation among student youth, the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society (Odesa Technical Society), the Odesa Union of Engineers and Technicians, the local government, the scientific intelligentsia of Novorossiysk University, and other public organizations enabled this project, thereby turning a dream into reality.

From April to September 1918, experienced scientists, engineers, and technicians worked productively within the initiative group, the Organizing Committee, and various specialized commissions – program and educational, organizational, financial and economic, as well as the commission responsible for developing the economic faculty's curriculum. They addressed the complex challenges of preparing to open a higher technical school. The well-defined organizational structure established by the initiative group facilitated the resolution of key issues, including deciding on the name and subordination of the future polytechnic; securing financial and logistical support; finding premises and land for the new building; selecting the rector's candidate; drafting and approving the Institute's Charter; and developing the curricula and syllabus.

The Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society played a leading role in establishing the Odesa Polytechnic Institute – a fact formally enshrined in the OPI Charter. The Charter detailed the involvement of Society members in the Institute's governing bodies, including the Board of Trustees and the Technical Committee, as well as in the election of teaching staff. The Society's Chairman, Braikevych, was instrumental in securing financial support for the Institute. He actively participated in negotiations with local authorities, the public community, representatives of trade and industry, and the government of the Ukrainian state. The involvement of the vast majority of public associations of engineers, technicians, scientists, industrialists, commercial and financial structures, etc., operating in Odesa at that time became an essential factor in the Institute's creation.

An outstanding contribution to the realization of the idea of opening a polytechnic institute in Odesa in 1918 was made by notable public figures and experts in science and technology. These included: Lieutenant General Nilus, Head of the Sergius Artillery School; local government representatives Bohutskyi, Ptashytskyi, and Bernfeld; Braikevych, Chairman of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society; Kondratiev, Chairman of the Odesa Union of Engineers and Technicians, as well as Professors Zanchevskyi, Tymchenko, Mach, and Solntsev. Together, they played a vital role in uniting scientists, engineers, and students of Odesa to address the specific challenges of founding the OPI.

A distinctive feature of the OPI's establishment was that it occurred amid a period of constant political upheaval, with power frequently shifting among various factions. Despite this turbulent backdrop, the changes in authority did not alter the overall direction pursued by the city's public and local government toward institutionalizing higher technical education in Odesa. Regardless of their differing political views, all participants were united by a shared commitment to the creation of the polytechnic institute, which remained the dominant and unifying idea throughout the process.

Skoropadskyi's successful negotiations with the Ukrainian government marked the final step in the creation of the polytechnic. The institution opened on 18 September 1918, in the building of the Odesa branch of the Russian Technical Society. Over the years, Odesa Polytechnic, the oldest technical higher education institution in southern Ukraine, has made a substantial contribution to training specialists across various economic sectors and to the advancement of both domestic and global science and technology.

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Instytucjonalizacja wyższego szkolnictwa technicznego w Odessie (w regionie czarnomorskim Ukrainy) podczas wojny domowej: społeczeństwo i rząd

Artykuł szczegółowo analizuje proces powstawania Instytutu Politechnicznego w Odessie w 1918 r., w czasie wojny domowej w Ukrainie. Głównymi źródłami historycznymi są materiały Archiwum Państwowego Obwodu Odeskiego, z których większość została wprowadzona do obiegu naukowego po raz pierwszy. Jako główne metody badawcze zastosowano metody analizy systemowej, syntezy, metodę historyczną, metody logiczne i porównawczo-historyczne, metodę uogólniania.

Artykuł ma charakter nowatorski, gdyż po raz pierwszy wykorzystuje pełnowymiarowy zespół źródeł archiwalnych: dokonuje krytycznej analizy istniejącej historiografii przedmiotu badań, określa i uwzględnia wszystkie główne elementy funkcjonalne i konstrukcyjne nowo utworzonego instytutu politechnicznego. Szczegółowo bada proces ich powstawania i miejsce w nim każdego z korporacyjnych uczestników tego procesu, rola i znaczenie czynnika osobowego w instytucjonalizacji wyższego szkolnictwa technicznego w Odessie. Po raz pierwszy odnotowano nie tylko udział odeskiego oddziału Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego w tym procesie, lecz udowodniono jego wiodącą rolę w powstaniu instytutu. W trudnych warunkach politycznych wojny domowej de facto uzyskało status niezależnego Odeskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego. Wyjaśniono metody i formy działalności organizacyjnej odeskiego oddziału Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego w procesie instytucjonalizacji wyższego szkolnictwa technicznego w Odessie.

Artykuł wyjaśnia także kierunki i mechanizmy współdziałania oraz koordynacji wysiłków struktur korporacyjnych społeczności lokalnej, w szczególności odeskiego oddziału Cesarzowskiego Rosyjskiego Towarzystwa Technicznego, Odeskiego Związku Inżynierów i Techników, młodzieży studenckiej (Związek Studentów Techniki), organy samorządu miejskiego, nauczyciele Uniwersytetu Noworosyjskiego (Odessa), osoby publiczne itp.

Ustalono i ujawniono wiodącą rolę szeregu osobistości, które miały wpływ na proces powstawania OPI. Wyjaśnione zostają także cechy polityczne i organizacyjne procesu instytucjonalizacji wyższego szkolnictwa technicznego w Odessie w warunkach ciągłej zmiany sił wojskowo-politycznych o różnych poglądach ideologicznych. Instytut Politechniczny w Odessie stał się pierwszą wyższą uczelnią techniczną na ziemiach południowej Ukrainy i do dziś pozostaje wiodącą instytucją szkolnictwa wyższego.