

Chernivtsi-Odessa Railway Project: Idea and Reality of the 19th century 60s

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Abstract

On November 4, 1861 on the territory of Habsburg monarchy there was finished the construction of the Carl Ludwig railway, which connected Lviv (Ukrainian: Львів/L'viv; Polish: *Lwów*; Russian: *Львов/L'vov*; German: *Lemberg*) with Krakow and Vienna. There then arose the question of Eastern continuation with the prospect of Black Sea outlet. Traditionally, Brody on the Austrian-Russian border and Chernivtsi (Ukrainian: Чернівці; German: *Czernowitz*; Polish: *Czerniowce*; Romanian: *Cernăuți*; Russian: Черновцы/*Chernovtsy*), located close to Russian Empire and the Danube principalities, were considered convenient points for this as early as in the 19th century 40s. In 1863 the decision was taken to construct the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway. The fact that, depending on the circumstances, Chernivtsi could serve the starting point from which the railway construction could go towards the Black Sea in two directions – towards Odessa or Galatz, that is Russian or Rumanian ports, respectively, played the decisive role in choosing Chernivtsi.

On September 1, 1866 the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway construction was finished. It was within the period of construction that Victor von Ofenheim, the director-general of the railway, had intensive talks with the Russian party on connecting Chernivtsi with Odessa via the territory of Bessarabia (Romanian: *Basarabia*; Russian: Бессарабия/*Bessarabiya*, Ukrainian: Бессарабія/*Bessarabiya*) (then Russian province and now the Republic of Moldova). The Bessarabia line project that could connect Chernivtsi with Odessa via Tiraspol in Russian Empire was supported by P. E. Kotsebu, the Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia, the Grand Duke Mikhail and general E. I. Totleben, the Crimea war hero. They were opposed by the group of top officials headed by the Russian minister of railways P. P. Melnikov and A. P. Bezak, Kyiv, Volyn and Podolia Governor-General, who promoted the construction of Podolia railway from Podolia to Odessa. In Austria the group was supported by A. Pototsky, the future minister of agriculture. Austria was interested in Bessarabia project of connecting Chernivtsi with Odessa. In case of its implementation the Chernivtsi-Odessa line could become one of the most important links in the system policy of Austria, directed at this region. Russia was jealous concerning the growing influence of Austria in the Balkans and Rumania. To allow Austria's positions strengthening in Asia and facilitation of its penetration there would have been too much. To allow Austrians to construct this railway, having no reliable communication with the Russian Empire centre would have looked thoughtless both from military and home policy viewpoints. That is why in autumn of 1866 by the decision of the Russian emperor Alexander II the project was declined.

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Introduction: Search of Directions

In the middle of the 19th century at the time of formation of rail network on the European Continent, the question of directions of railways, their earlier or later construction were gaining more and more importance. Different authority and management structures responsible for state security, its economic and transportation, political, administrative and strategic interests, were called for. Due to this the permission for building of this or that railway, its connecting to some foreign one were the questions decided on the highest level, often through signing respective international agreements etc. The question of connection between Austrian and Russian railways in the region of Eastern Galicia (or Galizia, Ukrainian: Галичина/*Halychyna*; Polish: *Galicja*; German: *Galizien*) and Bukovina (Romanian: *Bucovina*; Ukrainian: Буковина/*Bukovyna*; German and Polish: *Bukowina*) in the 60s of 19th century and Chernivtsi-Odessa project, connected with it, because of which a lot of lances were broken, could serve an example.

Chernivtsi-Odessa Bessarabia Project: pro et contra

The idea of railway connection between Vienna and Galicia and Lviv, its capital, with the way to Russian (via Brody) and Moldovan (via Chernivtsi) borders was known since 30-40^s of the 19th century. They approached this idea implementation gradually, at first due to the activity of Rothschild association of the Emperor Ferdinand Northern Railway, that had built lines from Vienna to Krakow, starting with the end of 50s of the 19th century – with Galician Carl Ludwig railways, that connected Krakow with Lviv¹. In 60s there appears one more company – the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway association, the members of which actively participated in the events to be mentioned. The 60s of the 19th century were very contrasting for the Habsburgs dynasty: the defeat of Austria in Italian war of 1859 served as the introduction; the turning down the policy of neoabsolutism; awarding October (1860) Diploma and February (1861) Patent; Pyrrhic victory in the war for Schleswig-Holstein of 1864 and failure in war with Prussia of 1866; economic stagnation of the first half of this decade and the peak of Gründer policy, that started in the second half of 60s of the 19th, just after the agreement with Hungary in 1867 and turning of the empire into Austria-Hungary. It was with this rich historical background the project of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway was initiated. A lot of things happened here for the first time. The draft law on Lviv-Chernivtsi railway was heard and discussed for the first time in the Parliament in autumn of 1863. It was also for the first time concerning railway that another mode of profit was used, i.e. the government gave guarantees taking into account the sum allotted for construction set in advance, and not the capital used, as it used to be. For implementation of this project for the first time there was created a joint-stock Austrian-English enterprise for which the English-Austrian bank was founded. To persuade the British to invest their capital into construction of the railway in some Bukovina to some Chrenivtsy a well known earl-entrepreneur of Galicia Lev (Leon) Sapieha arrived personally in London. Using a shoe-lace he tried to show on the globe, that Lviv was lying on one line with the London-Bombay line, as direct railway communication of England with India was the biggest interest subject for British politicians and capitalists².

The association of “Emperor-royal privileged Lviv-Chernivtsi railway” was constituted on June,3, 1864. It was thanks to the efforts of L. Sapieha and his solicitor Victor von Ofenheim, who later became the director of the railway, that it became possible to get money from English capitalists

¹ Жалоба (2011).

² Zhaloba (2008).

and profitable concession with Austrian government guarantee of net profit. Notwithstanding the difference in interests as to Lviv-Chernivtsi railway both for the British business circles in London and Austrian government circles in Vienna there was a clear and understandable fact the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway will not remain a dead-end siding for long. As nobody practically believed, that transportation of “potatoes and oats” from Chernivtsi could bring 500 thousand fl. silver of net profit, that were guaranteed to the railway by the Austrian state. Lviv-Chernivtsi railway was supposed to run to one of the most important ports – Odessa or Galatz on the Black sea shore. The importance and haste with presentation of the draft law on supporting the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway company to the Austrian parliament in autumn of 1863, was motivated, in particular by the possibility of faster construction of the Odessa – Warsaw railway on the territory of Russian Empire. In this case Odessa as an important Black sea port through communication of Russian railways with Prussian one, could become in direct railway communication with Baltic and North sea ports (Hamburg, Danzig etc.) Then transit flow could be directed via Russia territory and it might be much harder to turn it onto the more convenient and shorter way via Bukovina and Galicia.³ This was stressed by the deputies of the Parliament at the time of discussing the draft law in Reichstag by the finance minister Plener and also the Manager of the Ministry of trade and economy Kalchberg⁴. Thus, even during the preparatory stage of Lviv-Chernivtsi railway its fastest extension towards the Black sea was taken into account.

During 40s and especially 50s, when the question of extension of the drafted Lviv-Chernivtsi railway was touched, for most part it meant its extension up to Moldovan frontier with the prospect of reaching Galatz. These ideas were initiated by the situation that relations with Russia due to closedness of its political system was extremely difficult to sustain. There was no systematized railway construction in the country and one could not rely on the chance to get the permission for construction for a foreign company. In 50s, during aggravation of the East question and the Crimea was connected with it, there was no question of extension of the railway between Odessa and Austrian territory. The situation changed at the start of the 60s: the new government, new course, new requirements – that meant that “the Russian cart” gradually was turning towards the engine. The experience of the Crimean war showed how Russia was lagging behind in questions of modern communications and means of transport if compared to other European countries. That was why the Russian government was ready for substantial sacrifice to build the most important railways of the country as soon as possible. The change of the situation was attractive for London, as a number of English banks recognized that the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway to Odessa was supposed to be more profitable than the Moldovan one to Galatz⁵. They thought that the Russian government had already begun the construction process to connect the Odessa port with Kishineu via Tiraspol and Bendery. These emotions were tuned into the emotions of Victor Ofenheim, the director-general of the stock company of Lviv-Chernivtsi railway inaugurated in summer of 1864. At that time he was probing the ground in the Russian government circles at to the possibility of concession for the Bessarabia railway Chernivtsi-Novoselytsa-Kishineu-Odessa. On September 6, 1864 Ofenheim called for the urgent meeting of the Board of the Management Council of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway, where he spoke in favour for further construction of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway towards Odessa. And it was at the time when the span between Lviv and Chernivtsi was not even touched. But Ofenheim was absorbed with another idea to turn an ordinary railway enterprise of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway into a big enterprise of European level. This could be achieved only with the extension of the railway to the Black sea and under the condition that this construction is done by one company only. He insisted that only on this condition the railway could become extremely profitable. He thought that the right moment for this came and it was as follows. This question had already been

³ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Verkehrsarchiv / Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (from now on: ÖtSA, VA / AVA), III E, Ktn. 3, Z. 1108 / 63; Österreichisches Parlamentsarchiv, AH, II. Sess., 15 d, Fach 81.

⁴ *Stenographische Protokolle* (1864).

⁵ Центральний державний архів України в м. Києві = The central State historical archive of Ukraine, Kyiv (from now on: ЦДІАК України), ф. 428, спр. 99, арк. 33 зв.

raised in the Russian government by one French company. Ofenheim intended to snatch this initiative. According to the data he had had, the Russian government was very much interested in this construction and ready for sacrifice. That is why Ofenheim wanted to use the situation in order to get from the Russian government good conditions for concession. On the other hand, the railway construction industry in Austria was stagnating, though a number of new projects were under discussion before submitting them to the Parliament. That is why it was important to propose an extremely attractive new project of the Lviv-Chernivtsi-Odessa railway, to present it on the money market and raise money practically without any competition for a new grand project. Ofenheim intended to get from the Russian government for further railway at least the following conditions: guarantee of minimum 10% of net profit; during the period of construction import of all necessary equipment tax exempt; guarantee of a certain interest from the capital used for the rest of buildings not connected with the railway, and all sidings; payment of interest by the Russian government during construction by fees; free alienation of state and public land lots; possible free transfer of ready parts of the railway to the company; possible rendering of coal recourses both along the rails and in the South of the Russian Empire into ownership of the company; complete tax exemption during the whole time of concession. Thus, according to Ofenheim, this concession could be obtained “under extremely favorable conditions” and it was promised to him by ‘VIPs’ in the Russian Empire. And really, a year before the conditions, under which the concession for the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway was provided, were considered as very profitable, especially by Austrian standards. But in comparison with the prospects pictured for board members by Ofenheim they looked very modest. They seemed to give the shareholders extraordinary profit. And with this the shares of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway obtained some priorities that raised their price. It was of no surprise that on the basis of everything mentioned Ofenheim called board members to actively invest into the future railway. It was quite natural that the Board authorized Ofenheim with settling the conditions with the construction entrepreneur Thomas Brassy and the Russian government would provide the concession. It was quite clear that the Chernivtsi-Galatz Moldovan project in comparison with the Chernivtsi-Odessa railway it was decided to “slow down for the nearest future”⁶. Further Ofenheim acted brilliantly. Having obtained authorization from the Board at the start of September, in October he got the support of the Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia P. E. Kotsebu, who had contacts with Grand Duke Mikhail and general E.I. Tottleben, the hero of the Crimean war.

Victor Ofenheim made some necessary steps at the Vienna court, where he also had good relations. On November 2, 1864 he sent a letter to the head of the Ministry of trade and economy baron Josef von Kalchberg. It turned out that Ofenheim earlier in a private talk with Kalchberg told that together with other capitalists supposed to extend the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway to Odessa to get the shortest way from the Baltic and the North sea to the Black sea. Ofenheim together with engineers also made a technical-commercial revision of the way via Bessarabia to Odessa and got satisfactory results. It was absolutely clear that Ofenheim considered the prospective line not only profitable for the company but extremely useful for Austrian trade and industry. He considered it as the means that would give Austria the possibility to compete with British goods in the Levant and Pungent, i.e. in the regions of Western Asia, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Balkans etc. He also announced that he had obtained the support of top authorities of the South of the Russian Empire (Kotsebu – I.Z.) in favor of the board of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway. So he planned the trip to St. Petersburg and needed the support of the Austrian government. Ofenheim knew from the Ministry of trade and economy memorandum about planned construction of Austrian railways up to Novoselytsa. Thus, there could be communication between Russian and Austrian railways. Ofenheim wanted to know if the Austrian party had any doubts concerning Novoselytsa for him to have it in mind in his talks with the Russians. But because of the importance of this question Ofenheim wanted to get the support of the

⁶ Державний архів Чернівецької області = State archive of the Chernivtsi region (from now on: ДАЧО), ф. 297, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 63-68 зв.

Austrian envoy at the Russian court⁷. Kalchberg sent the letter of Ofenheim to the headquarters. The feedback came on November 7. It read that the Austrian party would prefer Russian-Moldovan communication with the Austrian ones on the Moldovan border in the Suczawa-Seret region. Though from the military point of view there were no objections whether the Liviv-Chernivtsi railway would go on the left or right bank of the Prut. The military were worried about another question: in case of connecting railways near Chernivtsi (i.e. Chernivtsi-Novoselytsa-Odesa – I. Z.) there would be some doubt as to the term of connection railways on the Moldovan border; railways from Chernivtsi, via Suczawa, to the railway from Marmarosh, via Bukovina and Moldova to Galatz. The latter was considered as desirable both for military strategy and from the viewpoint of Bukovina interests. Both the Chernivtsi-Moldova border railway and Marmory railway were dependent on the possibility of the Moldova railway from Galatz to Suczawa or Seret. The military were worried because it was impossible to build the Bessarabian and Moldovan lines simultaneously as the former offered the shorter way from the Black sea to North-West Europe and the world trade. From the viewpoint of the military, in this case every party – Russian, Moldovan and Austrian – was interested that the railway run on their territory. In case of railway construction first near Chernivtsi, and then near Suczawa, Russia would have more profit than Austria.

The military decided to have the last say in this case to the Ministry of trade and economy, as one could not prevent Russians from building railways where they found it necessary. If Russians built the railway along the Prut on the Bessarabia territory it was rather doubtful to find the pretext to deny them this communication. Having obtained this answer from the military on November 14, Kalchberg applied to the Ministry of foreign affairs to the minister Duke Mensdorff-Pouilly with the request to provide a recommendation letter for Ofenheim. On November 16, the letter for the Austrian envoy Duke Beverter in St. Petersburg was sent to the Ministry of trade and economy, and on November 21 Ofenheim got it and arrived in North Palmyra⁸ immediately. During the same month the proposals of the Lviv-Chernivtsi got to the Central Administration way of communication and public buildings of the Russian Empire for consideration. Sending them through P. E. Kotsebu indicated the necessity of the quickest establishment of the railway from Parkany⁹ via Kishineu to Chernivtsi. The position of P.E.Kotsebu as the governor-general of this region was quite understandable. It also relied on the support of the Bessarabian nobility. At the January 1863 meeting they even took the decision to raise money: 1 kopek from every dessiatina (2.7 acres) for research for railways in Bessarabia¹⁰.

The project offered by the director of the Liviv-Chernivtsi railway Ofenheim pointed out that due to the railway for Russia there would be new market for Bessarabian wheat via Odessa port and directing the Austrian transit transportation via Russian provinces and Odessa to the Black sea. It is clear that these aspects got positive response and understanding with the Russian partners but on the other hand it contained some requirements that not a single foreign company had ever had in Russia¹¹. That was why the Russian government, taking into account the necessity of the railway on the territory of Bessarabia did not turn down the proposition of V. Ofenheim.

At the end of 1864 – start of 1865 the question was discussed at the railways committee¹², after which during the Council of ministers discussion Alexander II ordered to postpone the final

⁷ ÖtSA, VA / AVA, III B, Kart. 30 (Geheim-Acten), Z. 86 / 64.

⁸ ÖtSA, VA / AVA, III B, Kart. 30 (Geheim-Acten), Z. 86 / 64. It was the last trip of Ofenheim to the capital of Russian Empire – only during December 1864 – January 1865 he visited it several times [Ibid, III E, Ktn. 5, Z. 1806 / 64; Ktn. 6, Z. 150 / 65].

⁹ The Odessa-Parkany railway was ready already.

¹⁰ Верховский (1898).

¹¹ ДАЧО, ф. 297, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 1-16, 33-42 end Андреев (1896).

¹² At the time Ofenheim visited the capital of Russian Empire at least twice [ÖtSA, VA / AVA, III E, Ktn. 5, Z. 1806 / 64; Ktn. 6, Z. 150 / 65].

decision until final research on the territory. V. Ofenheim was informed about the decision of the tsar at the same time he was offered to present his engineers for common work.

The matter is that there were different viewpoints in Russian government. Not denying the necessity of the railway connection to Odessa they split into two groups as to the line of communication – via Podolia or Bessarabia. To assess positive and negative characteristics were to be researched on the spot. On May 30, 1865 at the first general meeting of shareholders of the Lviv-Cernivtsy railway V. Ofenheim got authorized to continue negotiations with the Russian government¹³.

The engineers, sent on the basis of this, to work together with Russian colleagues rejected to work and by autumn 1865 prepared their own research works. Two copies of these preliminary works V. Ofenheim sent to P. Kotsebu – one for him and the second one – for Duke Mikhail. Kotsebu informed about the reception of the materials on November 3 (15) 1865, said that he got absolutely sure about the importance of the Bessarabia line and promised to support the project even stronger. The other copy was sent to Grand Duke Mikhail with personal cover letter, where he asked for the strongest possible support of the Cernivtsy-Tyraspil railway company. P.Kotsebu promised Ofenheim to get for him the invitation to St. Petersburg.

At the same time, V. Ofenheim together with Thomas Brassy, W. Drake and M. Rate prepared a draft of concession and in case of acknowledgement of it by the Russian government, promised to create a stock company for building the railway from Novoselytsa to Tiraspol within a year since its issue¹⁴.

At the end of December 1865- January 1866 the question was again discussed at the meetings of railways committee. Seven members of the committee, i.e. Chevkin, Melnikov ((Minister of the ways of communication – I.Z.), Zelenoy, Reitern, Herstfeld, Yazykov, Kebedz were for the Podolia railway from Balta (the Odessa-Balta section of road was launched into use from December (15) 1865 – I.Z.) to Volochysk, six other ones (Stroganov – head of the committee, Valuyev, Vergyin, Totleben, Greig, Abasa) were in favor for the Bessarabian line. The latter put forward such explanation of their position. General-adjutant Totleben explaining strategic side of the situation of construction of the railway from Chernivtsi to Galatz, he wanted to prevent giving concession for building the line to Odessa, as it might provide the enemy with numerous profits. If the conditions of the Danube water communication improved – and this was the object of efforts of the Danube Europe commission – the Galatz port would become very convenient for military warehouse counter Russia. Under the support of the fleet the defense of Galatz might become unconquerable for Russians. The railway from Galatz to Chernivtsi, Lviv and Krakow, running parallel to the Russian south-west border, would provide for the enemy excellent operative area and connect Austria with Danube principalities and its ally on the Black sea. Using this railway the enemy would be able to concentrate his troops for attacking the Russian territory in any desirable direction. According to Totleben's information, the French government openly expressed support of the Lviv-Galatz line, as it assessed its usefulness and difficult situation that Russia could get from the point of defense.

As a result of this, in case of Bessarabia line construction, Austria would be left without convenient communication with the Danube principalities and the Black sea. For Russia the Bessarabia line could become as useful as harmful the Moldovan line might be. It could become irreplaceable help in protection of Bessarabia with the Prut line, and in case of abrupt concentration of troops across Bukovina. So it was necessary to get the permission for Ofenheim to build the Bessarabia line from

¹³ Российский государственный военно-исторический архив = Russian state military-historical archive (from now on: РГВИА), ф. 428, оп. 1, д. 99, л. 33.

¹⁴ ДАЧО, ф. 297, оп.1, спр.3, арк.1-16, 33-42, 55-56 зв.

Novoselytsa to Tyraspil, the construction of the Balta-Volochisk by the Russians would not stop Austrians from construction of the Chernivtsi-Galatz line. Trade and political arguments were also forwarded by the supporters in favour of the Bessarabia line. The construction of the Podolia line would be ready nobody knew when as the segment from Lviv via Ternopil, up to Pidvolochisk on the Austrian territory was not concessional. The Lviv-Cernivtsy railway was already being built and it was to end near the Black sea. That was why the initiative was to be snatched and turned to Odessa instead Galatz. The Galatz port was successfully competing with the Odessa one. And when it was connected with the European network of railways, it might become more prestigious than Odessa. The European commission had already cleared the estuary of the Danube and the sea ships with 18 feet draught could go there. The argument that Galatz was a river port and could not compete with the Odessa one were not correct as Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, Antwerp, Bordeaux, Lisbon, Liverpool and London itself were all river ports, which did not prevent them to be at the head of European ports.

Thus, in case of quick construction of the railway to Galatz it might become an important transit port: there would be no need in reloading because of the difference in the width of the rails; to go transit by sea all foreign vessels would be able to go, while sea transit Odessa – Poti was cabotage and could be done only by Russian vessels. So this made it more useful for the Russian party as it gave the possibility to usurp all transit trade on the Black sea.

Domestic reasons could also have a say in favour of the Bessarabia line. Bessarabia itself is a fertile land that could bring profit to future railway and raise its own workforce, the population had already additionally been taxed to raise money for research works. Taking into account that Bessarabia at the time of aggravation of the Eastern question in the first half of 19th century suffered from great material losses, at the acme of the Crimean war, the railway could become a long awaited prize for the population.

And the last argument was that among the shareholders of the Lviv-Cernivtsy railway there was not a single name whose honesty could be doubted, and the presence among them of the most reliable and decent entrepreneur Mr. Brassy could serve as a credit to the success of the business. In addition to this, Ofenheim was supported in his request of the government guarantee of 1,600,000 rubles.

There often occurred some dissatisfactions as to the conditions that Ofenheim wanted from the government to get the concession, and the behaviors of the engineers sent for research. The plans, submitted often by the Lviv-Cernivtsy railway company often disagreed with the reality.

The emotions that raged in the part of the Russian society was severely characterized by the engineer A. A. Golovachov: “The position of Ofenheim characterizes the attitude of foreign fraudsters upon our business world. These people might believe that due to the need in railways none would be able to assess those favours that they could render to these northern barbers. Their impudence reaches the point when they even do not bother to take exact measure of the road or consider it normal to make it bigger more than by a quarter. And then they do not find it necessary to indicate the sum needed, hoping that we would catch a bait and they would use the money to cover their expenses on equipping the railway from Lviv to our border. But this is not all. These fraudsters demand the right to own the railway for 90 years from launching the movement and rail width be the same as in Austria, free land usage near Odessa port to arrange warehouses and shops; all kinds of tax exemption; special jurisdiction to resolve the problems with the government and public, i.e. arbitration court in one of the embassies. It looks very strange that people decide to

make such offers hoping to succeed, but what is even stranger that these offers are discussed seriously and are submitted for discussion to the Railways committee, though in a changed form”¹⁵. And really, Ofenheim’s propositions were discussed during 1865-1866 at five meetings of the Railways committee and two sittings of the Cabinet of ministers. In support of this project there spoke Bessarabia nobility, south-Russian assembly of agriculture, saying nothing about P.Kotsebu as the governor-general and members of the government.

Thus, the Russian government could not but take into account the opinion of this party, moreover the need to connect Odessa with the European railway network was really strong and the need to improve the ways of Bessarabia. Though it was opposed by so called great-Russian party. As one Russian reporter of the Austrian weekly „Austria“ wrote in January 1866: “Odessa coordination with Austria and Europe as a whole via straight line Odessa-Chernivtsi meets a lot of antagonists. in the North of the Empire among great – Russian party of Moscovans. There they wish, neglecting the interests of the South, to concentrate everything in the North, in Moscow. Because of this they prefer connecting Russian railways in Brody through “Brody via Podolia to Kyiv” line. This plan they tried to promote ¹⁶. So it happened though it did not look as the reporter from “Austria“described.

b) Podolia alternative that was victorious

The Podolia line was the alternative to the Bessarabia line Chernivtsi-Novoselytsa-Kishineu-Odessa, as it was already mentioned. The supporters of it could be found in Austria as they wanted to bring the line from Lviv to the Russian border in East Galicia, i.e. to implement the Lviv-Brody project. As at the dawn of railway construction in Austrian Empire in 30s of 19th century Brody was considered the final point to be reached by the railway in any case¹⁷.

On November 4, 1861 the railway line at last reached from Vienna to Lviv. It seemed that the time had come when Brody would be at last connected to the royal railway and Europe as a whole. But at the start of 60s it became obvious that one should not hope for any profit without extending the line to Kyiv and Odessa on the territory of Russia. And this needed agreement of the Russian party for construction with Austrian or Russian or mixed private capital to build the oncoming line. But the Russian government, according to the information of the Austrian envoy in St. Petersburg, considered construction of the railway to Brody in 1858 as untimely¹⁸. Because of that the concession for extension of the railway from Lviv was authorized by the Austrian government to the company that intended to build it to Chernivtsi. The fact that the authorities in Moldova welcomed the plans of construction from the Bukovina border to Galatz played a decisive role in taking this decision. Still, after the question with the Lviv-Cernivtsy railway was settled in 1863-1864 there appeared consortiums, that started fighting for the right to build the railway to Brody and Ternopil. And again a lot of things depended on the fact whether connection with Russian railway would be possible, and if yes, then in what point. The most successful consortium was the one among the members of which were such outstanding persons of Galicia as Duke Ladislaus Sangushko and Alfred Pototsky. The latter, following suit of the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway director-general Ofenheim started negotiations with the Russian authorities. But while Ofenheim relied only on Bessarabia general P. Kotsebu, A. Pototsky relied on the Kyiv, Volyn and Podolia governor-general A. Bezak. While among Austrian party there were debates about where to direct the railway first – to Brody or Ternopil, the Russians discussed what line should be laid first – the Bessarabia or Podolia. This was also the factor that defined the order of connection between Austrian-Russian railways: whether it would be in Novoselytsa on Bukovina-Bessarabia territory, or near Radyvyliv,

¹⁵ Головачов (1881).

¹⁶ *Austria*, 1866, 19. Febr.

¹⁷ See Жалоба (2004).

¹⁸ ÖtSA, VA / AVA, III B, Kart. 26, Z. 3708/ 58.

Pidvolochisk-Volochisk, Husyatyn on the territory of Galicia-Podolia. On both sides substantial interests were waging – both private and governmental. Both in Austria and in Russia there were strong parties that lobbied their projects and who could not be neglected. That was why nobody was expecting a quick and simple decision. The Austrian government supported both Ofenheim and Pototsky as it was interested in the quickest possible connection to the Russian railways. Though choosing the lines both in East Galicia and Bukovina the main factor was economy of the regions mentioned, the profitability of the railways was not counted on. If take into account the amount of state net profit guarantees, one could understand the desire of the Austrian government to connect its own railways to trade-transportation flows directed from Odessa and Galatz ports. It becomes clear why Austrian authorities were worried: the Russian party could build its railways in such a way that they could be connected with the Prussia ones first and only much later – with the Austrian ones. That was why J. Kalchberg in the first half of 1865 at the time of draft law on the Lviv-Brody-Ternopil railway preparation was probing the intentions of the Russian party through the Austrian foreign affairs ministry. Austrian authorities understood from the answer of the Russian government that expectations of the connecting railways in the region of Brody were not groundless¹⁹. The news coming from Brody was even more promising. The Russian minister of ways communication General P. Melnikov assured M. Kallir, the president of the local chamber of commerce, that he considered Brody as the most suitable station for connecting the Kyiv railway with the Austrian one and very soon he intended to submit the plan of it to his government²⁰. The authorities in Vienna were persuaded that the quickest possible construction of the railway to the Russian border in East Galicia would become that factor that would strengthen the positions of Russian-Austrian railway communication supporters before the railways from Kyiv and Odessa to the Prussia border were built.

As to Russia, still in 1864 there was formed a strong party that supported the Podolia line as the most urgent to build, and the Bessarabia one was considered by them not only untimely but harmful for Russia interests. It was during discussion of outcomes of the construction of the Novoselytsa (Bessarabia) line or the Podolia line at the Railways committee and then at the Council of ministers seating in the personal presence of Alexander II in December 1865 – February 1866, the supporters of the latter – seven members of the committee (Chevkin, Melnikov, Zelenoy, Reitem, Herstfeld, Yazykov, Kebedz) presented several arguments in favour of the line from Balta to Volochysk. They considered that from the technical point of view this railway would be more convenient and shorter, thus making the distance between Odessa and Lviv 38 verst (1 verst = 3500 feet) shorter. The economic conditions of Podolia were much better than the Bessarabian ones and railway revenue could be much bigger. In addition Podolia needed improvement of ways of communication more than Bessarabia that by that time “had a convenient way by the Dniester”. And finally, the Podolia line could have a more reliable connection to the centre of the Empire and Kyiv, that was considered as the most important from political and military point of view, as this line made possible the defence not only for Bessarabia (thanks to Parkany-Tyraspil that was under construction) but all the Podolia border and part of the Volyn one. That was why the Committee members considered this line as the one that could “*more reliably and faster*” (italics were in the text – I.Z.) meet the political and strategic goals and paralyze harmful for Russia role of the Galatz-Chernivtsi-Lemberg (German name of Lviv – I.Z.) railway, considered as dangerous as the line running parallel to the South-West Russian border²¹.

As to the choice of the point of connection – Radyvyliv, Volochysk or Novoselytsa – the best, from the point of view of this party was Volochysk. The Radyvyliv and Novoselytsa customs posts²² overdid the Volochysk one. But to this one there were directed most heavy and bigger cargo, and

¹⁹ ÖtSA, VA / AVA, III E, Kart. 6, Z. 835 / 65; Kart. 7, Z. 1517 / 65.

²⁰ *Bukowina*, 1865, 13. Sept.

²¹ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 4-5.

²² The trade transportation was directed from West to Kyiv, and via Novoselytsa to Odessa.

this was most important as the fee was charged by the weight and not the price of the goods. In addition the supporters of Podolia line were sure that with the new line Volochysk would be more attractive for the cargo transportation previously going via Radyvyliv and Novoselytsa²³. As a result of this argumentation Alexander II approved the Podolia line on February 1866, and a contract for building of Kyiv-Balta railway with the Zhmerinka-Volochysk siding line was signed with a Belgium Devrier company.

The condition for the start of works was readiness of the oncoming construction from the Austrian side. Besides, the government retained the right to dismiss the company from the obligation concerning the Zhmerinka-Volochysk siding line. Thus, the construction of this siding line became dependent on the activity of the Austrian party, the negotiations with which were conducted by A. Bezak²⁴. Under these conditions V. Ofenheim expressed agreement to participate in construction of the Lviv-Ternopil siding. He did not want to turn down his own project, but as the Lviv-Ternopil-Volochysk project did not meet the standard of the Chernivtsi-Kishineu-Tiraspol, he continued probing the ground in Russia looking for the ways to attack. On January 21, 1866 Alfred Pototsky and Meier Kallir sent as letter to A. Bezak with the request to acknowledge the intention of the Russians to build the oncoming line to Volochysk. In case of acknowledgement they expressed their readiness to increase the staff of the company and turn to St. Petersburg for the concession²⁵. Thus, it was all about the agreement with of the Austrian concessioners to build the railway not only on the territory of Austria but Russian Podolia as well. The Russian minister of ways of communication P. Melnikov reported personally to Alexaner II about such desire of Austrian subordinates. The Tsar ordered to tell A. Pototsky that if he would get the permission of the Austrian government to build on their side, then the Russian government would “take measures to build the oncoming line to Volochysk”²⁶. It was rather difficult to get the permission from the Austrian government as a lot of interests intertwined around it, like directions of East Galicia railways and their possible connection to the Russian railway network. In addition to that the fight for concession went far beyond the framework of economic aspirations but more and more acquired political character between two Polish parties headed by L. Sapieha and A. Glukhovsky²⁷. On August 24, 1866 the consortium of Ladislav Sangushko, Duke Alfred Pototsky and Duke Volodymyr Borkovsky, the members of which were some landlords from Galicia, Russian Podolia and some shareholders of the Carl Ludwig railway, appealed to the Austrian government with the request to give them concession for the railways from Lviv to Brody and Ternopil.²⁸ At the start of September 1866, in Medzhybizh there took place the meeting of A. Pototsky and A. Bezak, where they discussed the question of connecting the Russian and Austrian railways near Volochysk. On September 1866 A. Bezak got a telegramme from P. Melnikov that ran: “It is necessary to quicken the question of Lemberg-Ternopil railway. The offer from Ofenheim is insisntently renewed, awaiting answer”²⁹. And it was really so, that with the support of Duke A. Gorchakov, Ofenheim appealed to the Russian government for the concession for the Bessarabia line for the second time. It was the reason for P. Melnikov, A. Bezak and the party that supported the Podolia line to worry. They worried that Ofenheim would get what he wanted and the East Galicia-Podolia version would be put off for a long time. That was why all the aspirations were directed to A. Bezak and his talks with A. Pototsky. The latter was supposed to get the concession from the Austrian government for the Lviv-Brody-Ternopil in the quickest possible way. From his side A. Bezak kept the colleagues from the capital respectively tense. We provide two examples of his appeals to P.Melnikov on

²³ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 4-6, 52-56 зв.

²⁴ Ibid, арк. 52-56 зв. end Верховский (1898).

²⁵ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 28-28 зв.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See: Kieniewicz (1939).

²⁸ *Bukowina*, 1866, 7. Sept. A. Pototsky tried to persuade A. Bezak that the construction was supposed to be transferred T. Brassy, who was confidentially approached on this matter [ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 43].

²⁹ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 40.

September 6 and 9, 1866: “Be kind to lay at the feet of His Majesty that for the safety South-East region the siding for Volochysk is needed at the most”, and “Heavy clouds are accumulating from East and West ... be quick with the business, Pavel Petrovych; if war breaks out and there were no railway to the Austrian border, all Russia would blame this disaster on you; they will say – probably our ministers of ways of communication were either not energetic enough or not foresighted. I am talking about the necessity of the siding to Austria from military point, don’t consider it necessary to mention its political importance... The roads are badly broken by heavy traffic and the railway could be very useful”³⁰.

On September 15, P. Melnikov made a report, where he insisted on the idea of usefulness of communication with Lviv-Ternopil railway. The counteraction of the camps was so strong that Alexander II reacted to this so called report that he ordered A. Bezak to quicken the talks with A. Pototsky and the proposal of Ofenheim submitted for the Committee of railways to discuss³¹. Having obtained these news, A. Bezak immediately sent a letter to A. Pototsky with the request to ‘quicken’ the matter of the Lviv-Ternopil railway. At the same time he sent a letter to P. Melnikov, where expressed his anxiety that the fact of discussing the proposals of Ofenheim in the Committee could hamper in Austria the process for the company that was going to build the Lviv-Volochysk railway. Having once again stressed the importance of the Podolia line for protection of the borders of the Empire, A. Bezak wrote also personally to Alexander II and the Minister of defence D. Milyutin, he asked Alexander II to stop all relations with V. Ofenheim and to inform A. Pototsky straight away in Lviv, “otherwise his (Pototsky’s – I.Z.) proposal would face obstacles, as there is no doubt that Ofenheim’s proposal was more attractive than suggestions of A. Pototsky”³². But only on November 10, after the next “deeply respectful” this time joint report of the Minister of ways of communication and Minister of finance Alexander II gave the order to start works on the Zhmerinka-Volochysk section³³. A. Bezak immediately on November 12, sent a telegramme about this decision of the Tsar to A. Pototsky, who was waiting for the signal from the Russian party³⁴. The directive signal from Russia gave the Austrian government free hand to act and it started acting rather quickly, which was reported by the Russian envoy E. G. Stackelberg in Vienna at the start of January 1867³⁵. Thus, in the end A. Bezak was right, who wrote from Kremenchuk to P. Melnikov on September, 1866: “I wonder why in Russia they doubted the readiness of Austria to join us in Volochysk. It is clear, if Ofenheim got concession for the Bessarabia line he would not need to participate in A. Pototsky’s campaign, which he joined because of the rejection of the line from Chernivtsi via Bessarabia. If our government could stand on this rejection of this way being harmful for us in all respects, the Austrians would be satisfied with connecting us in Volochysk, as it is profitable for them and the distance is so short that it is not worth talking about it”³⁶. So, A. Bezak must have been sedations as on November 9, 1866 Alexander II issued an order to start the works on the Zhmerinka-Volochysk section, and on May 15, 1865, i.e. about six months later the Austrian government simultaneously issued two concessions, one – to the company of Lviv-Chernivtsi line for extension to Suczawa, with which it finally recognized the Galatz direction for further construction of this railway, and the second – to the Carl Ludwig company for the Lviv-Brody railway with the siding for Ternopil, which outlined the further directions of trade movements from Odessa and Kyiv. Adoption of these laws in one package on one and the same day, speaks for itself – the Austrians were for the Russians to make the first step. It is not strange as it was Russia that directed the movement, it was Russia that possessed the main port in the Northblacksea region – Odessa. When Russia came to a decision at last that the movement from

³⁰ Ibid, арк. 43 зб. – 44 зб., 47.

³¹ Ibid, арк. 50-56 зб.

³² Ibid, арк. 62 зб. – 63.

³³ Ibid, арк. 70.

³⁴ Ibid, арк. 71.

³⁵ Ibid, арк. 92-92 зб.

³⁶ Ibid, арк. 44 зб.

Odessa would go not via Kishineu-Novoselytsa-Chernivtsi to Lviv, but via Zhmerinka-Volochysk – Ternopil, the Austrians could correct their actions as to Russia and Moldova, what in the long run took place. Due to different difficulties of both objective (lack of workforce, long winter, bad weather conditions) and subjective (imperfection of work plans, alienation of land for the railway) character led to considerable prolongation of construction works on Brody-Ternopil lines, as a result it was impossible to keep the schedule. Only on July 12, 1869 the Lviv-Krasne-Brody and Krasne-Zolochiv were finally launched for passenger and cargo transportation³⁷. Even later the remaining parts and sections – Zolochiv-Ternopil – were rendered for cargo transportation on December 22, 1870; and for the passenger transportation on August 1, 1871, Ternopil-Pidvolochysk state border on October 4, 1871. Delays on construction of Galicia lines and the Volochysk line in the first run worried the Russian side. In the middle of June 1868 there was a rumor that the Austrian government hampers the construction on purpose to support the Lviv-Chernivtsi railway company, that got from the Romanian government concession for building the line Suczawa-Jassy with sidings for Botoshany and Roman³⁸. To clear up the situation A. Bezak turned to A. Pototsky who took the post of the Minister of agriculture in the Austrian empire. With this A. Bezak stressed that until the Austrians finish the line to Volochysk there would not any word be uttered about the Berdychiv-Brody³⁹. Kyiv governor-general knew where to shoot. The matter was that in 1867 A. Pototsky on behalf of the Austrian-Russian union touched the question of possibility of getting a concession from the Russian government for this railway. Alexander II permitted A. Bezak to have negotiations with A. Pototsky on this, but on condition that possible concession could be granted without state guarantee. It brought the result that A. Pototsky, Ginsburg, Natan Kallir, Alexander Benkers sent an appeal to the Russian Minister of ways of communications P. Melnikov in June 1868 about the permission of research works as to the railway from Berdychiv to Brest-Litovsk with the siding to Brody. N. Kallir and A. Pototsky in June and July 1868 respectively sent letters to A. Bezak, with which they informed about the state of construction on the Brody and Volochysk lines. They assured that the Brody line would be launched before October 1, 1869. As to the Volochysk line, it was found to be very difficult for construction due to the complexity of the territory and it would have to be awaited⁴⁰. It only strengthened the feeling of mistrust and worry of the Russian party. That was why A. Bezak recommended to P. Melnikov: “Until we are not sure that construction of the Volochysk line in Austria is not cancelled but even not slowed, it would be very unwise to give them concession for Brody-Berdychiv and Brest”.

At the same time A. Bezak spoke in favour of giving the permission for research “the more so that it causes no obligations” but concession was supposed to be connected with finishing construction of the Zolochiv-Volochysk line. After P. Melnikov’s report to Alexander II on July 15, 1868, the latter agreed to the suggestion of A. Bezak and gave permission to the A. Pototsky consortium for research works but only on the Brody-Berdychiv line. And the concession for it could be obtained only after finishing the construction of the Zolochiv-Volochysk line⁴¹. And though in the long run the Brody-Berdychiv line was built by the company of the Kyiv-Brest railway, the Russian

³⁷ *Die Eisenbahnen der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie* (1872).

³⁸ The fifth extraordinary meeting of shareholders that took place on October 15, 1868 was unanimous for adoption of concessions, provided by Rumanian government and renaming the company form “ emperor privileged Lviv-Chernivtsy railway” into “Emperor privileged Lviv-Chernivtsy-Jassy” Both on the territory Austria and Rumania the T. Brassy firm was quickly building and after one and a half month after opening the Chernivtsy-Suczawa railway (October 1869), on December 15, 1869, its continuation was opened on the territory of Moldova Suczawa-Roman, on June 1870 – the distance Pashkany-Jassy. Only the siding Vereshty-Botoshany was launched into functioning – November 1871.

³⁹ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 129-129 зв.

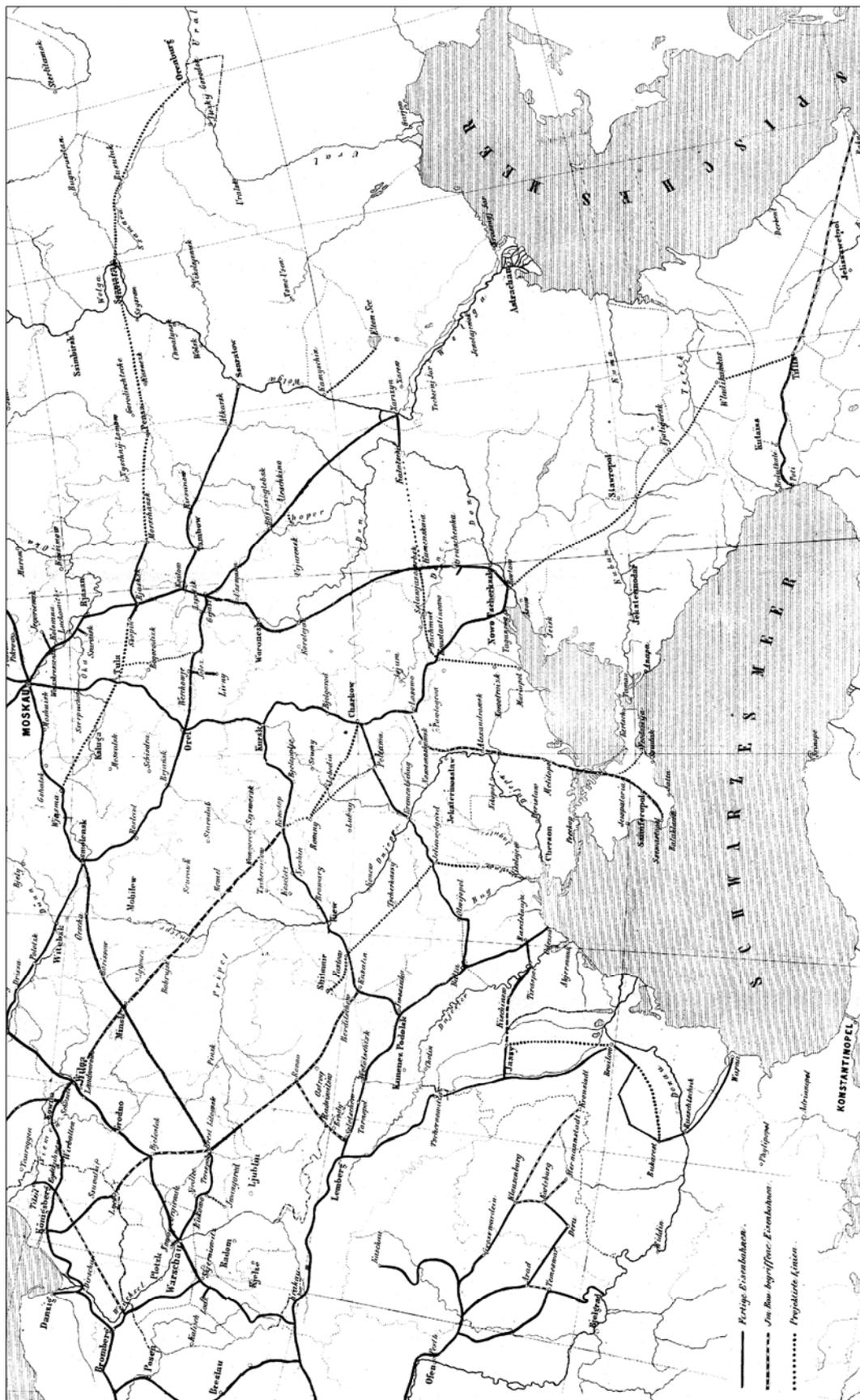
⁴⁰ The Russian party obtained more detailed description of construction works from the Devrier company, that collected it through its own private agents. Though Bankers and Kallir informed about the permission of the Management board of the Carl Ludwig railway to open transportation on Zlochiv-Volochysk in May 1870, the Russian party did not pay to this information much importance.

⁴¹ ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 44, спр. 667, арк. 133, 137-138, 142-142 зв., 149-150, 152, 159.

government suspended connecting of the railways until launching of the Volochysk line. In the summer of 1870 after obtaining the report from the Kyiv-Brest railway that it was to build the line from Radyvyliv to the Austrian border, the managing board of Carl Ludwig railway took the preparatory measures for starting similar construction on the Austrian side. On November 9 and 21 1870, in Kyiv there were achieved the agreements about joining their lines on the border. But as the Russian government slowed the ratification of agreements the Austrians could finish the last 7.3 km line only in the summer of 1872. As a result the final joining of the Austrian and Russian railways near Brody was implemented only on August 27, 1873, i.e. almost two years after their joining near Volochysk (October 4, 1871)⁴².

⁴² Konta (1999) end ЦДІАК України, ф. 442, оп. 51, спр. 17, арк. 2.

Figure 1. Railways in the Northblacksea region in 1870



Source: Perl (1872)

Conclusion

Summing up we would like to say the following. Certainly, both Austria and the English that supported Ofenheim were interested in the Bessarabia project of connecting Chernivtsi with Odessa. In case of its implementation the Chernivtsi –Odessa line could become one of the most important links in a system policy of Austria, directed to this region. It might be difficult to say better about the main priorities of this policy than in the same “Austria” weekly. In the front page article with the promising name “Glance at East” there was a clear definition that all the future of the Central Europe was located in the East. In the West power and might of England and France looked so absolute that one could not even think about successful competition in economic sphere. And it was in the East that there lay the virgin world where Austrians could feel like carriers of culture. That was why the East was considered as “great area or our (Austrian – I.Z.) economic future”, and two seas the Adriatic and the Black seas were considered like Austrian property: “The Adriatic sea with its most important shores and the Black sea with the most important interests belong to Austria. We must save more on the Adriatic sea, and on the Black sea we must gain more... On the Adriatic sea our natural rival is Italy and on the Black sea - Russia”⁴³. Such intentions could not but be noticed in Russia. Russia was somewhat jealous concerning any increase of influence of Austria in the Balkans and Rumania. But it was difficult for Russia to compete with Austria in economic sphere. There was left politics relying on the Orthodox church. To allow strengthening of Austria positions in Asia with helping it to get there would have been too much. If Austria could not compete on the western markets, Russia could not even dare. But Austria had a nice natural sphere of sales, those were Rumania and the Balkans. Russia could not boast of this. The only things that were left were the Asian markets, where Russia could also feel like culture carrier – an industrial, cultural country. This caused the measures of Russia: increase of influence in Trapesund and Erzurum, opening sea communication with Poti, construction of roads from Tiflis, railway communication of the Black and Caspian sea, etc.

Giving no permission to the Austrians for construction of the Bessarabia line to Odessa, Russians could not understand that the Austrians would reach the Black sea by rail – via Galatz. But for the Russians, understanding the advantages of Odessa over Galatz, wanted to gain time and they did it. But for them this communication seemed heavy from political viewpoint. At the time of discussions where to build the lines – Kyiv or Kremenchuk, in December of 1864 at the meetings of ‘Russian geographic society’ there were some opinions about separatism of South-East area.⁴⁴ That P. Kotsebu, though he denied the fact but recommended to build the railway from Odessa to Kyiv before construction of the railway from Kyiv to Moscow.⁴⁵ With the background of such apprehensions, having no reliable communication with the Empire centre would look very frivolous both from military and domestic thinking.

Thus, the material presented illustrates the formation of the European railway network, how its contours were formed, which are still preserved to date and how important were these questions for governmental policy both of Austrian and Russian empires. Both of them were in quite complicated conditions in 60s of 19th century. It was the epoch of Great reforms started by Alexander II that required political-social and psychological courage and substantial finances. Unstable domestic political situation of the Austrian empire, military defeats were complicated by empty state treasury. Because of this governments of neighboring empires were very cautious as to constructing railways so that the money spent were not wasted. Alexander II was courageous and took the decision to build the railway to Volochysk having got tired while waiting for the decision of the Austrian side. One can say that the Russian party that supported connecting Austrian and Russian railways in

⁴³ *Austria*, 1866, 12. Febr.

⁴⁴ About attitudes of Russian society towards Ukrainian movement look: Полещук (1999).

⁴⁵ *Вопрос о Южной железной дороге* (1864).

Volochysk and construction first the Podolia railway and not the Novoselytsa (Bessarabia) turned out to be more influential and insistent than the party of A. Pototsky at the Austrian court. Probably the second definition is more true to fact.

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