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## Functioning of the Customs Administration of the Kingdom of Poland in Russia in 1914–1917 (until the Fall of the Romanov Monarchy)\*

STRESZCZENIE

### Funkcjonowanie administracji celnej z Królestwa Polskiego w Rosji w latach 1914–1917 (do upadku monarchii Romanowów)

Na przełomie lipca i sierpnia 1914 r. w głąb Rosji ewakuowano struktury administracji celnej z terenu Królestwa Polskiego z powodu groźby wybuchu wojny. Do wewnętrznych guberni Imperium Rosyjskiego wywieziono personel administracyjny wraz z rodzinami oraz majątek urzędów celnych. Władze rosyjskie zakładały, że przymusowy pobyt poza Królestwem Polskim będzie krótkotrwały licząc na sukcesy militarne armii carskiej. Jednak z powodu utracenia inicjatywy strategicznej przez armię rosyjską urzędy te nigdy nie powróciły do Królestwa Polskiego. Na podstawie zachowanych materiałów źródłowych przedstawiono proces ewakuacji w 1914 r. i zjawisko funkcjonowania rosyjskich struktur administracji celnej przebywającej na ewakuacji do chwili upadku monarchii Romanowów w marcu 1917 r.

**Słowa kluczowe:** urząd celny, Królestwo Polskie, ewakuacja, dekompozycja, urzędnik, Rosja

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## ABSTRACT

**I**n late July and early August 1914, with the rising threat of war, customs administration structures of the Kingdom of Poland were evacuated to Russia. The administrative personnel and their families, as well as the assets of the customs offices were removed to the interior governorates of the Russian Empire. Russian authorities assumed that the forced stay outside the Kingdom of Poland would be short-lived, counting on the military successes of the tsarist army. However, due to the Russian army's loss of strategic initiative, these offices never returned to the Kingdom of Poland. Based on surviving source materials, the article presents the process of the evacuation in 1914, and the operation of the evacuated Russian customs administration structures until the fall of the Romanov monarchy in March 1917.

**Keywords:** customs office, Kingdom of Poland, evacuation, decomposition, official, Russia, World War I

**T**he operation of the customs administration as one of the branches of the Russian special administration in the Kingdom of Poland in the first years of the Great War has so far received little attention among researchers in Poland and abroad. An exception is the study by Artur Górak and Krzysztof Latawiec devoted to the process of evacuation of those structures from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland<sup>1</sup>.

There are a number of interesting aspects of the Russian customs administration activity during that period. One of them is the slow decomposition of structures evacuated from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland far into Russia. Its gradual dismantling was caused by various external factors catalyzed by the political events of the time. In this article, based primarily on source material that is a product of the activities of customs administration structures, I will address a number of questions related to: the preparation of customs offices to operate under extraordinary conditions of an ongoing armed conflict, and their activities in the Russian hinterland until the collapse of the Romanov monarchy and the constitution of the so-called “dual power” in the Russian republic.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation of the Customs Administration from the Kingdom of Poland to Russia in 1914*, “Quaestio Rossica” 2022, vol. X, no. 2, pp. 423–439. <https://doi.org/10.15826/qr.2022.2.679>

Before we move on to issues related to the evacuation and operation of customs offices from the Kingdom of Poland deep into Russia, it is vital to note their organization just before the outbreak of World War I. The Kingdom of Poland (General-Governorate of Warsaw) on the eve of the Great War consisted of nine governorates and the Chełm Governorate, separated as of September 14, 1913<sup>2</sup>. The latter, at the outbreak of the war, was under the jurisdiction of the Warsaw Governor General. It should also be added that the Suwałki Governorate also had a unique position in terms of the organization of the Russian armed forces. The Russian army units stationed on the territory of Suwałki Governorate were not under the command of the Warsaw Military District, but under the command of the Vilna Military District, which had consequences for the process of preparing evacuation plans, as well as the course of the customs evacuation itself in 1914<sup>3</sup>.

What was the organization of customs administration in the Kingdom of Poland on the eve of the outbreak of war? The area of the then Warsaw General-Governorate was under the jurisdiction, as of January 14, 1913, of three area customs inspectors, under the authority of the Department of Customs Dues of the Ministry of Finance (DCDMF) in Sankt Peterburg<sup>4</sup>. There were customs offices in each territory, represented by: four categories of first-class customs chambers, second-class customs chambers, customs subchambers and customs posts. The rank of the customs institutions depended on the extent of authority held over the throughput of goods, the valuation and duty on those goods, as well as on appointed members of staff. At the beginning of the

<sup>2</sup> More: A. Wrzyszczyk, *Gubernia chełmska. Zarys ustrojowy*, Lublin 1997, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas [hereinafter: LVIA], fondas [f.] 551, apyrašas [ap.] 1, bylos [b.] 295, sheet 87.

<sup>4</sup> Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs [hereinafter: LVVA], fonds [f.] 545, apraksts [ap.] 2, lieta [l.] 26b, sheet 244; Derzhavnyy arkhiv Khmel'nyts'koyi oblasti [hereinafter: DAKhmO], fond [f.] 309, opys [op.] 1, sprava [spr.] 1233, sheet 4; "Ukazatel' Pravitel'stvennykh Rasporyazheniy po Ministerstvu Finansov" [hereinafter: UPRMF] 1912, no. 25, p. 447; *Perechen' zakononiy i rasporyazheniy, izdannyykh posle sostavleniya obshchago sbornika zakononiy i rasporyazheniy na kotorykh osnovany smetnyya naznacheniya raskhodov po Departamentu Tamozhennykh Sborov*, [in:] *Smeta dokhodov, raskhodov i spetsial'nykh sredstv Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov na 1914 god*, Sankt Peterburg 1913, p. 7; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *Rosyjska administracja specjalna w Królestwie Polskim 1839–1918*, Lublin 2015, p. 163.

summer of 1914, there were 84 customs authorities in the examined territory (not counting the offices of customs areas in Warsaw, Vilna and Radziwiłłów) – see Table 1.

Table 1

**Customs offices operating in the Kingdom of Poland  
before the outbreak of World War I in 1914<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Rank of office</b>	<b>Vilna Customs Area (VCA)</b>	<b>Warsaw Customs Area (WCA)</b>	<b>Southwest Customs Area (SCA)</b>	<b>Number of customs offices</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> class 2 <sup>nd</sup> category customs chamber	Wierzbołów	Aleksandrów Szczypiorno Sosnowiec	Granica	5
1 <sup>st</sup> class 3 <sup>rd</sup> category customs chamber	Grajewo	Herby Mława	–	3
1 <sup>st</sup> class 4 <sup>th</sup> category customs chamber	–	Wieruszów Nieszawa Słupca	–	3
Second-class customs chamber	Wincenta Władysławów Raczki Filipów	Wilczyn Gola Dobrzyń Zieluń Lubicz Modrzejów Osiek Pyzdry Piotrków Podłęże Praszka Radziejów	Baran Dołhobyczów Zawichost Igołomia Korczyn Michałowice Sandomierz Tomaszów	24
Customs subchamber	Bakałarzewo Bogusze Wysztyniec Dąbrowa Kibarty	Bolesławiec Borzyków Gniazdów Gostyńczyk Grodzisk	Krzeszów Łązek Zaklikowski Niesułowice Opatowiec	36

<sup>5</sup> There was also a 1<sup>st</sup> class 1<sup>st</sup> category customs chamber in the Kingdom of Poland – Warsaw CC, which was directly subordinated to the director of DCDMF.

	Kirkiły Rakówek Romaniszki Tworki Upidamiszki Czarnówek	Zakrzewo Karw Łęczec Niezdara Podgrabów Skulsk Chorzele Czołnochów Czeladź Szczypiorno Janowo	Podbełżec Podmajdan Rataje Sierosławice Szyce	
Customs post	Reszki Pełty	Bobrowniki Herby Gnojno Żychcice Czerwony Krzyż Mława Peplówek Połajewek Służewo Czołów	–	12

Source: *Lichnyy sostav Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov i uchrezhdeniy tamozhennogo vedomstva (krome zastav i postov). Po svedeniyam do 21 Yanvaryaya 1914 goda*, Sankt Peterburg 1914, *passim*; *Lichnyy sostav uchrezhdeniy tamozhennogo vedomstva. Po svedeniyam Departamenta do 6 Marta 1914 goda*, Sankt Peterburg 1914, *passim*; *Kholm'skaya guberniya 1914 g.*, Kholm 1914, pp. 176, 272; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation of the Customs Administration from the Kingdom of Poland to Russia in 1914*, "Quaestio Rossica" 2022, vol. X, no. 2, p. 426.

This begs the question of how large the staff of the above-mentioned customs offices was. These institutions were characterized by having positions in their structure that, by virtue of their scope of authority and decision-making power, had to be divided into three groups. The first included posts filled by appointment granted by the DCDMF director with the approval of the Minister of Finance. Another was the posts of clerks, the selection of whom depended on the inspector of the customs area and the director of the customs chamber (or the decision of the board of the customs chamber in the case of the highest-ranking offices of this type). The third group consisted of customs custodians, whose employment depended on the decision of the customs chamber director. Based on the budget for the DCDMF for 1914, approved in late autumn 1913, and on the distribution of posts of lower customs officials,

one can attempt to estimate the approximate number of people employed in the discussed structures. Based on the assumption that the Russian administrative apparatus took care to maintain full-time staffing, and sometimes even employed supernumerary officials, all customs offices operating in the Kingdom of Poland (including the VCA offices in Vilna and the SCA in Radziwiłłów) may have employed between 1865 and 1950 people<sup>6</sup>.

Given the nature of their work, customs offices were located in the immediate vicinity of the state borders, with the exception of the WCA and VCA offices and Warsaw Customs Chamber. Faced with the possible outbreak of an armed conflict with the German Empire or the dualist Habsburg monarchy, they were primarily exposed to the effects of ongoing hostilities, for example, the loss of their financial resources or goods held in customs warehouses. There was also always the risk of losing qualified customs administration personnel employed in offices operating in the border strip. Therefore, as early as the early 1890s, the Ministry of War drew attention to this problem by initiating cooperation with various ministries in preparing regulations governing the evacuation and security of state property located in areas threatened by armed conflict<sup>7</sup>. It is interesting to note that the problem of evacuation regulations stalled for well over ten years. It was probably revisited at the end of 1908, due to the tensions emerging internationally in the Balkan area. This awakening with regard to the preparation of evacuation regulations resulted in the an order of the Council of Ministers dated April 27, 1909 regarding the transfer at the expense of the treasury of: administrative offices, officials and their families, and state property. This piece of legislation also gave impetus to the development of evacuation plans in all military districts that adjoined the western border of the Russian state (Vilna Military District, Warsaw Military District and Kiev Military District).

<sup>6</sup> LVVA, f. 545, ap. 2, l. 27, sheets 37v–44; UPRMF 1913, no. 2, pp. 72–74, 76, 81–83, 85; *Smeta dokhodov, raskhodov i spetsial'nykh sredstv Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov na 1914 god*, pp. 83, 81–110, 148; A. Górak, K. Latawicz, *The Evacuation...*, p. 426.

<sup>7</sup> Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii [hereinafter: GARF], fond [f.] 1263, opis [op.] 1, delo [d.] 1, *passim*; K. Lyatavets, *Administrativnyye uchrezhdeniya v Tsarstve Pol'skom i voyennyye deystviya 1914 g.*, [in:] *Pervaya mirovaya vojna: vzglyad spustya stoletie. 1914 god: ot mira k voyne: materialy IV Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii (27–28 noyabrya 2014 goda, g. Moskva)*, eds S.S. Stepanov, G.D. Shkundin, Moskva 2015, pp. 326–327.

As a result, by the end of 1912, state administration offices in the General-Governorate of Warsaw, the North-Western Krai (Vilna, Kaunas and Grodno governorates) and the South-Western Krai (Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia governorates) had evacuation instructions regulating the rules and indicating the routes for the transport of state property, documentation and officials and their families far into Russia<sup>8</sup>. In addition, a draft order approved by Tsar Nicholas II on March 2, 1913, was drafted in ministerial-military circles, which was crucial in determining the conduct of state structures operating in the border strip on the eve of the outbreak of armed conflict. Very important for the implementation of this order was its appendix explaining in detail the rules of conduct of the various organs of the state apparatus<sup>9</sup>.

The assassination of the Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne, Prince Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, raised tensions in international relations in Europe. It ended with Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia on July 28, 1914. On the same day, the Austro-Hungarian army entered the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia. Russia, tied by a military alliance with Serbia and faced with Vienna's unyielding stance toward its ally, took preparatory steps to initiate a military action against Austria-Hungary and the German Empire. Russia's ruler, Nicholas II, recommended that starting July 26 preparations for mobilization be carried out

<sup>8</sup> LVIA, f. 551, ap. 1, b. 295, sheet 87; f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheet 5; Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv [hereinafter: RGIA], f. 1282, op. 1, d. 1148, *passim*; Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (State Archive in Lublin) [hereinafter: APL], Rząd Gubernialny Lubelski / Lublin Governorate Government (1867–1918), Wydział Ogólny / General Department, ref. 1602, sheet 73v; Ścisłe tajny okólnik Kancelarii General-Gubernatora Warszawskiego do gubernatora lubelskiego, 3 XI 1912, *ibidem*, Kancelaria Gubernatora Lubelskiego / Office of the Lublin Governor, ref. 13393, sheets not numbered; N.N. Minyaylenko, A.Ye. Shnyrov, *Pravookhranitel'nyye organy tsarskoy Rossii v nachale XX veka*, "Leningradskiy yuridicheskiy zhurnal" 2017, no. 2(48), pp. 59–60; A.Yu. Bakhturina, *Evakuirannoye chinonichestvo Tsarstva Pol'skogo v gody Pervoy mirovoy voyny (1915–1917 gg.): sluzhebnyye privilegii i natsional'naya samoidentifikatsiya*, "Dzieje Biurokracji" 2019, vol. IX, pp. 344–345; K. Latawiec, *Ewakuacja organów administracji ogólnej wyższego i niższego szczebla guberni lubelskiej w sierpniu 1914 roku*, "Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny" 2002, vol. II, pp. 43–44; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, pp. 427–428.

<sup>9</sup> Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Voenno-Istoricheskiy Arkhiv, f. 493, op. 2, d. 102, sheets 206–206v; Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota, f. 716, op. 2, d. 2, sheets 55–56; GARF, f. 110, op. 4, d. 3617, sheets 31–33; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, pp. 428–429.

in the four military districts of Kiev, Odessa, Moscow and Kazan, as well as in the Baltic Fleet and the Black Sea Fleet. This also meant implementing the aforementioned March 2, 1913 legislation<sup>10</sup>.

It is puzzling that the information about the necessity of the March 2, 1913 act was communicated rather late by DCDMF field structures on the western border of the Romanov Empire. The notification was sent by telegraph on the night of July 27–28, 1914, instructing the immediate application of the said legislation<sup>11</sup>. Several hours earlier, regardless of the steps taken by the central authorities in Sankt Peterburg, the military commanders of the Warsaw Military District and the Vilna Military District, implementing their internal regulations, also recommended that civilian offices and border guard structures prepare for the transport of their property, as well as members of the immediate families of state functionaries<sup>12</sup>. As a result of these special measures, issuing documents that allowed Russian citizens to cross Russia's borders was suspended indefinitely on July 28. This, however, did not directly translate into a complete cessation of border traffic, which forced customs officials to continue to carry out their work<sup>13</sup>. After several hours, the atmosphere of danger given the potential outbreak of war led to a reduction of work-related duties of the examined officials. Therefore, some of them were already engaged in preparations for the transport of state property on July 29. Due to the state of emergency, the protection of customs offices was reinforced with gendarmes (tsarist political police officers)<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> *Osobyie zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiyskoy imperii 1909–1917 gg. 1914 god*, Moskva 2006, p. 200; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 430.

<sup>11</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheets 7–8, 23; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 430.

<sup>12</sup> APL, Janowski Zarząd Powiatowy / Janovsky District Administration [hereinafter: JZP], ref. 5, sheet 1; B.M. Shaposhnikov, *Vospominaniya o sluzhbe*, Moskva 2013, p. 250.

<sup>13</sup> Derzhavnyy arkhiv Odes'koyi oblasti [hereinafter: DAOO], f. 201, op. 2, spr. 61, sheet 125; LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheet 38a; "Kuryer Śląski" 1914, no. 171, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheet 14; APL, JZP, ref. 5, sheets 10–11; "Kuryer Śląski" 1914, no. 171, p. 3; "Gazeta Toruńska" 1914, no. 173, p. 1; B.M. Shaposhnikov, *op. cit.*, p. 248; "Goniec Częstochowski" 1914, no. 208, p. 2; "Czas" 1914, no. 309 (afternoon edition), p. 3; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 430.



Customs officials and their families were ready to leave their previous place of work, although – to a rather limited extent – they continued to perform their duties. Their work activity was particularly focused on the selection of documentation, some of which, according to evacuation orders, was to be destroyed, while the rest had to be properly secured, packed in crates and prepared for transport<sup>15</sup>. It is important to note here the availability of transportation means. The largest customs offices operating on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland, such as Wierzbołów Customs Chamber (CC), Aleksandrów CC, Mława CC, Sosnowiec CC, Herby CC, Grajewo CC and Granica CC were in a relatively best situation. The evacuation of these offices and their employees could take place very quickly as a result of having direct access to a means of transportation in the form of railroads. Dozens of remaining offices, in order to transport officials, their families and private property, as well as state assets to the nearest railroad station designated as the place of loading, had to use means of transportation requisitioned for administrative authorities from the local population (mainly wagons, less often cars)<sup>16</sup>.

The final evacuation of customs administration offices from the border areas was ordered by the commander of the Warsaw Military District on July 31, 1914<sup>17</sup>. Such a decision was dictated by incoming information about the concentration of large numbers of German and Austro-Hungarian military troops near the Russian border. Therefore, all customs officials were required to leave their place of employment after taking care to expedite state property. The officials who – according to orders – were to be the last to leave the customs offices were the heads of those offices and their closest associates. It is noteworthy that the evacuation plans that were drawn up included the possibility of providing officials and their families with financial resources for the duration of their journey

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<sup>15</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheet 10a; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 431.

<sup>16</sup> APL, JZP, ref. 5, sheets 5–5v; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 431.

<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that the evacuation at the end of July 1914 did not include the pastors, deacons and psalmists of the so-called customs churches, operating in the border belt, maintained with DCDMF funds. Cf. K. Latawiec, *Duchowieństwo cerkwi prawosławnych resortu celnego i straży granicznej w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1851–1914*, “Res Historica” 2014, no. 37, p. 211.

far into Russia<sup>18</sup>. It should be noted that a similar solution was applied in the Suwałki Governorate, under the jurisdiction of the Vilna Military District commander on August, 1<sup>19</sup>.

The destinations for the evacuation of customs authorities were the localities designated as the temporary headquarters of the described authorities during the development of the customs transport plans. Besides, when the evacuation plans were made, no one assumed that the customs offices would stay outside the border strip for a long time, based on the experience of past armed conflicts, hoping that the war would last no longer than a few months. The extent of the authority of the customs offices made their evacuation deep into Russia undoubtedly correct. Indeed, the restoration of normal work of the offices was possible only after the international situation had calmed down. It should also be noted that the destination of the customs offices' evacuation did not always coincide with the place indicated by the official as the place of temporary residence (with his family). Unfortunately, no sources have survived to provide an accurate account of the circumstances of the transport of customs officials and their families from the border strip to the final place of evacuation from the Warsaw Military District.

On August 1, 1914, the German Empire declared war on Russia. According to evacuation plans, the offices in question were in the process of being evacuated. However, fateful events for some customs officials occurred just hours after the German invasion of the Russian border areas began. For unknown reasons, some of the officials chose to remain at their place of employment and were subsequently taken prisoner by the Germans. Such a situation occurred, for example, in Lubicz. There, the director of the Lubicz CC Piotr Puchnarewicz, along with Ivan Kociubko-Kociubukov (supervisor of the customs warehouse of the Dobrzyń CC), were taken to a prisoner of war camp<sup>20</sup>. It should be noted that it was a unique event in the entire Kingdom of Poland because at the time when the armed conflict began, customs officials, in accordance with procedures in force, were in principle away from the area of hostilities.

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<sup>18</sup> GARF, f. 1459, op. 1, d. 86, *passim*; f. 1777, op. 1, d. 94, *passim*; d. 99, *passim*; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 431.

<sup>19</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheets 25, 41v–42; b. 2, sheet 50.

<sup>20</sup> DAOO, f. 201, op. 2, spr. 61, sheets 69–69v; “Gazeta Toruńska” 1914, no. 175, p. 1; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 433.

In carrying out the evacuation order, officials had to act in accordance with approved plans that defined its route. What did it entail in practice? Surviving sources on one of the largest customs chambers from the Kingdom of Poland (Wierzbołów CC) indicate the decision-making and course of evacuation. After the officials and their families, as well as the property of the customs authority, were prepared for departure, the latter, escorted by lower-ranking personnel (customs custodians) delegated to this task, was evacuated by railway far into Russia to the customs offices that existed there (in the case of Wierzbołów CC, it was Kiev CC). In addition, just prior to their departure, customs officials were informed by the heads of customs chambers, customs subchambers and customs posts that they had to report their readiness for further duty upon arrival at the designated evacuation site. If they failed to comply with the order, they would be dismissed from work<sup>21</sup>.

This begs the question: was it expedient to make officials carry out such an obligation? Forced departure from their place of employment, due to the threat of warfare, to destinations indicated in the evacuation questionnaires resulted in the dispersion of customs officials virtually all over the European territory of Russia. Officials were most often guided by personal considerations when choosing their evacuation destination. Thus, they stated that they would go to the place of residence of their closest family or friends. Also noticeable was the popular choice of large urban centers with governorate, rarely county status. Since the vast majority of officials came from the hinterland of the Romanov Empire, customs administration employees went to the central Russian governorates. Surviving sources indicate that officials went far into Russia, for example to: Petrograd (director of the Chorzele customs subchamber [CS] Ivan Alfimov, bookkeeper of the Herby CC Włodzimierz Mieczysław Grassman; freelance scribe of the Aleksandrów CC Eugenia Pigulewska); Moscow (Gnojno Customs Post [CP] clerk Nikolai Makar); Sosnowiec CP freelance scribe Nadezhda Kukherenko); Riga (Sosnowiec CP treasurer Herman von Knaut); Kaluga (Sosnowiec CP clerk Jan Nielepiec); Yuryev (assistant to WCA

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<sup>21</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheet 44; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 434; These consequences affected, for example, some customs custodians. Having evacuated from their previous place of employment, they did not report their readiness to continue working before November 14, 1914. This resulted in their dismissal from their positions. GARF, f. 1459, op. 1, d. 14, sheet 4; d. 15, sheet 10; d. 16, sheet 15; d. 17, sheet 6.

inspector Nikolai Geldner); Bila Tserkva (assistant to Sosnowiec CP bookkeeper Nikolai Piontkovskiy); Pryluk (clerk of the WCA inspector's office Mikhail Kovalenko-Denisenko); Kamenskoye (clerk of the WCA inspector's office Lucjan Siewierski); Yaroslavl (assistant to Sosnowiec CP customs warehouse supervisor Alexei Serebrjakov), *etc.*<sup>22</sup> In few cases officials chose an evacuation destination relatively close to the Kingdom of Poland. Ignacy Kłockowski, the director of the Podgrabów SC, left for Bielsk [Podlaski] in the Grodno Governorate, his hometown. Kłockowski probably hoped that the evacuation would last a very short time, having faith in Russia's military might. However, already in the spring of 1915 he had to go further into Russia<sup>23</sup>. It should be added that the only customs offices that continued to operate in the Kingdom of Poland in 1914 were the WCA and CC Warsaw. They left the territory of the General-Governorate of Warsaw in the late spring of 1915. (WCA to Odessa, Warsaw CC to Moscow), at the time when all offices of the Russian state administration were leaving Warsaw<sup>24</sup>.

Analyzing the surviving sources produced by customs administrations from the Kingdom of Poland, it should be noted that the first days of the war saw the initial decomposition of the staffing of those offices. Those in the lowest positions (customs custodians, clerks, freelance scribes) were dismissed from their posts. In addition, they were subject to general mobilization or enlisted voluntarily in military units, fulfilling their patriotic duty to the tsar and Russia. Sometimes they tried to use their skills related to their acquired experience in clerical work and ended up in the offices of various branches and military institutions<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> GARF, f. 1459, op. 1, d. 86; f. 1777, op. 1, d. 74, d. 83, d. 94, d. 99, d. 107; DAOO, f. 201, op. 2, spr. 61, sheets 299–299v, 357; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 434.

<sup>23</sup> DAOO, f. 201, op. 2, spr. 61, sheet 54; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 435.

<sup>24</sup> The administrations of the VCA (Vilna) and the SCA (Radziwiłłów) also operated in their previous locations until the end of the summer of 1915. They were then evacuated to Sankt Peterburg and Berdyansk (Taurida Governorate), respectively. DAKhMO, f. 378, op. 1, spr. 34, sheet 3; "Wiedeński Kuryer Polski" 1915, no. 326, p. 4; *Pamyatanaya knizhka Kovenskoj gubernii. 1915*, Kovna 1915, p. 50; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 435.

<sup>25</sup> GARF, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 14, sheets 31v–33; d. 59, *passim*; f. 1459, op. 1, d. 12, sheet 41; d. 28, sheet 44; d. 203, sheet 13; d. 291, *passim*; f. 1777,

It was clear that it would take at least several days, if not several weeks, before the customs offices would be reactivated in exile. Besides, it was also taken into account that these offices would not operate as normal. Thus, their employees were given the necessary time to reach the designated evacuation sites safely with their families. The clerical staff, as well as their families, were provided with adequate financial resources for their travels deep into Russia – as already mentioned<sup>26</sup>. This put government employees in a much better situation than the civilian population living in the war zones, forced to flee to save their lives and at least some of their movable material possessions<sup>27</sup>.

The DCDMF, coordinating the preparation of evacuation plans with representatives of the general administration and military district headquarters, arranged for a new location of the various customs offices to be established for the duration of the armed conflict. Relatively large urban centers were selected. These plans were implemented in early August 1914 and the offices were set up in: Sankt Peterburg (Petrograd) – Aleksandrów CC, Radziejów CC, Herby CC, Sosnowiec CC, Wierzbołów CC, Władysławów CC, Raczyki CC, Filipów CC, Bakalarzewo CS, Wysztyniec CS, Kibarty CS, Kirkiły CS, Rakówek CS, Romaniszki CS, Upidamiszki CS, Piotrków CC, Czerwony Krzyż CP, Służewo CP; Moscow – Nieszawa CC, Mława CC, Dobrzyn CC, Lubicz CC, Osiek CC, Zieluń CC, Chorzele CS, Karw CS, Janowo CS, Peplówek CP, Mława CP, and Gnojno CP; Taganrog – Szczypiorno CC, Granica CC, Modrzejów CC, Podłęże CC, Gniazdów CS, Czeladź CS, Niezdara CS, Herby CP, Bobrowniki CP and Żychcice CP; Odessa – Wieruszow CC, Wilczyn CC, Gola CC, Pyzdry CC, Praszka CC, Gostyńczyk CS, Zakrzewo CS and Połajewek CP; Yaroslavl – Grajewo CC, Wincenta CC, Bogusze CS, Tworki CS, Czarnówek CS, Dąbrowa CS, Pełty CP and Reszki CP; Voronezh – Sandomierz CC, Zawichost CC, Baran CC, Igołomia CC, Korczyn CC, Michałowice CC, Niesułowice CS, Opatowiec CS, Rataje CS, Sierosławice CS and Szyce CS; Pskov – Słupca CC; Penza

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op. 1, d. 5, *passim*; d. 112, sheets 3–4; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 436.

<sup>26</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheets 31–33, 36; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 435.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. A. Głaz, *Ewakuacja ludności cywilnej z Lubelszczyzny latem 1915 r.*, “Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska UMCS, section F – Historia” 2001, vol. LVI, pp. 113–131.

Governorate – Tomaszów CC, Dołhobyczów CC, Krzeszów CS, Łązek Zaklikowski CS, Podbełżec CS and Podmajdan CS; Nizhnovgorod county – Grodzisk CS<sup>28</sup>.

The evacuation of the offices meant the suspension of their typical activities. In accordance with the authorities' evacuation recommendations, in addition to administrative personnel, the following were taken out of the customs offices from the Kingdom of Poland: complex letters and documents that had not yet been dealt with; documents of particular importance to the interests of the state treasury, in the form of files relating to ongoing investigations into violations of the Customs Act (smuggling, illegal border traffic); documents relating to property matters (purchase of real estate for the customs department, lease agreements for real estate used by the customs department); accounting documentation (ledgers, correspondence); personnel files of officials; secret correspondence. It should be added that an analysis of the documentation preserved from the customs offices confirms the realization of the DCDMF's guidelines in July/August 1914 regarding the extent of protection of files needed for the continued operation of the evacuated offices<sup>29</sup>.

The DCDMF adopted a rather interesting strategy towards the evacuated customs offices from the Kingdom of Poland. It was pointless to keep them fully staffed at their temporary location. Thus, a decision was made to temporarily terminate the activities of the administrative bodies of the lower ranks. This affected second class customs chambers, customs subchambers and customs posts. The evacuated documentation of those institutions

<sup>28</sup> GARF, f. R-1041, op. 1, d. 852, *passim*; d. 854, *passim*; *Spravochnik ob evakuirovannykh pravitel'stvennykh, obshchestvennykh i chastnykh uchrezhdeniyakh i zavedeniyakh i o dolzhnostnykh litsakh*, Petrograd 1916, *passim*; *Spisok adresov evakuirovannykh pravitel'stvennykh i obshchestvennykh uchrezhdeniy i dolzhnostnykh litsakh*, Moskva 1916, pp. 104–110; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 435.

<sup>29</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 1, sheets 1–1v; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 436; *cf.* also: RGIA, f. 128, op. 1, d.: 1105, 1116, 1284, 1329, 1561; f. 133, op. 1, d.: 208, 214, 217, 226, 252; GARF, f. 1263, op. 1, d.: 51–53, 64, 67, 68, 71, 98–102, 149, 181–182; f. 1459, op. 1, d.: 7, 86, 115, 123, 241; f. 1777, op. 1, d.: 1, 38, 51, 53, 115, 119; DAOO, f. 200, op. 1, spr.: 3, 5; f. 202, op. 1, spr.: 10, 12; f. 203, op. 1, spr. 19; f. 204, op. 1, spr. 5; f. 205, op. 1, spr. 27; f. 207, op. 1, spr. 89; f. 222, op. 1, spr. 4, 12; f. 236, op. 1, spr.: 6, 7; f. 238, op. 1, spr.: 1, 35; f. 239, op. 1, spr.: 7, 11; f. 242, op. 1, spr. 11; f. 243, op. 1, spr. 6; LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b.: 4, 5.

was deposited in the archives of the WCA, VCA and SCA administrations. Such steps were meant to economize financial resources, which in the realities of the ongoing war were needed for more important purposes than maintaining a large number of offices with very limited activities<sup>30</sup>.

DCDMF took a completely different approach to the first-class class (four categories) customs chambers and the offices of customs revue inspectors themselves. Taking into account the scope of the competencies of these administrative bodies, it was decided to maintain the continued operation of the aforementioned offices in a rather narrow scope. These institutions, being in a peculiar position, had limited staffing. It was necessary to preserve at least a minimum number of active positions (the director of the customs chamber, his deputy and a few clerical officers) due to the need to maintain contacts with the DCDMF and other state administrative institutions. This begs the question, what matters were handled by the customs institutions that operated in a limited capacity?

The answer to this question can be found in the surviving documentation of the examined offices, created after July 31, 1914. A particularly valuable source that allows us to look at the issue of the functioning of customs offices under evacuation conditions are the clerical aids from those institutions in the form of logs of incoming and outgoing letters. At the same time, it should be noted that very little of them survived. Matters addressed by the offices in question included, first and foremost, the implementation of all legal acts (orders, recommendations, instructions, *etc.*) issued by the central bodies of state administration (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Finance, DCDMF)<sup>31</sup>. Despite the ongoing warfare, in 1914–1916, offices operating along the land border with the Second German Empire and on a section of the border with Austria-Hungary (in the Kingdom of Poland and Volhynia Governorate) were excluded from the Russian customs system. On the remaining sections of the Russian Empire's border, customs administrations performed their tasks without hindrance. DCDMF pursued an active policy of introducing new regulations relating

<sup>30</sup> GARF, f. R-1041, op. 1, d. 852, *passim*; d. 854, *passim*; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *The Evacuation...*, p. 437.

<sup>31</sup> LVIA, f. 551, ap. 1, b. 309, *passim*; b. 310, *passim*; RGIA, f. 128, op. 1, d. 1568, *passim*; d. 1569, *passim*; GARF, f. 1459, op. 1, d. 341, *passim*; d. 342, *passim*.

to the imposition and enforcement of customs duties on goods imported or exported from Russia. Any such change required circulars or recommendations to be sent to field structures for implementation<sup>32</sup>.

Another sphere of activity of a certain group of evacuated customs offices was the preparation of draft budgets for 1915–1917. These were used by DCDMF authorities to prepare a general plan of financial income and expenditures for all customs administration structures within the empire. It is noteworthy that the DCDMF, as a result of the departure of customs offices from the Kingdom of Poland, Kaunas Governorate, Kurland Governorate and Volhynia Governorate, made some savings in the maintenance of subordinate field structures. Expenditures for the maintenance of the infrastructure of customs offices (funds related to the payment of rental contracts for buildings housing customs offices) were significantly reduced. This meant transferring certain sums to cover the basic salary and service allowances of officials (food, business travel, education allowance for children, allowance for Russian origin for those employed in the Kingdom of Poland) and to meet the needs of the day-to-day work of customs offices (rental of temporary premises, office expenses, *etc.*)<sup>33</sup>.

However, most attention was focused on issues related to the personnel employed in the offices. Upon reaching their destination, employees evacuated with their families to their chosen places of temporary residence were obliged to notify their superiors (inspectors of customs revisions or directors of first-class customs chambers) that they were ready to begin work. They also provided their superiors with detailed information about the address of their temporary residence. By declaring their readiness to wait for further instructions to perform their duty, they were guaranteed to continue receiving their salaries.

As early as mid-August 1914, it fell on customs inspectors to pay allowances and part of salaries (three months' wages for August, September and October 1914) under conditions of mobilization and

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<sup>32</sup> GARF, f. 1263, op. 1, d.: 121, 146; f. 1459, op. 1, d.: 312, 319.

<sup>33</sup> GARF, f. 1777, op. 1, d.: 15, 24, 35; f. 1459, op. 1, d.: 352, 354; LVIA, f. 551, ap. 1, b. 260, sheet 80; *Smeta dokhodov, raskhodov i spetsial'nykh sredstv Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov na 1915 god*, Petrograd 1914, *passim*; *Smeta dokhodov, raskhodov i spetsial'nykh sredstv Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov na 1916 god*, Petrograd 1915, *passim*; *Smeta dokhodov, raskhodov i spetsial'nykh sredstv Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov na 1917 god*, Petrograd 1916, *passim*.



temporary closure of customs offices. The management of DCDMF was even inundated with requests for funds from officials evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland. Therefore, the DCDMF director asked the WCA inspector that all such cases, as stated in the circular of August 8, 1914, be directed to him through the administration of customs areas<sup>34</sup>.

The operating administrations of customs area inspectors and directors of first-class customs chambers were also responsible for implementing the Council of Ministers' resolutions of July 25 (August 7) and August 3(16), 1914. These concerned the need to extend care to family members of customs officials (lower-ranking) called up to the army<sup>35</sup>.

Customs officials from the Kingdom of Poland who had not been entrusted with tasks related to the further operation of the administrative body evacuated far into Russia were very quickly assigned new tasks. It turned out that in the first weeks of the war the Russian war machine had absorbed into its cogs a considerable number of people employed in customs structures, operating on various sections of the border of the vast Romanov monarchy. Staff of offices from the Kingdom of Poland were temporarily sent to fill vacant posts. This process began as early as the second half of August 1914. As an aside, it should be added that the exodus of officials from customs institutions to military structures intensified quite alarmingly in August 1914, and it was even recommended that steps be taken to limit the effects thereof<sup>36</sup>.

At this point, a question arises, to what offices and during what period were employees of customs institutions evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland sent? It should be noted at once that the process of temporary delegation continued until the customs administration organs were closed down in the Congress Kingdom in late 1918. It is worth noting that this process was not disrupted in any way by the change in the political situation in Russia (the February Revolution, the Bolshevik coup in November 1917).

Several weeks after their evacuation from the Kingdom of Poland, customs officials (with the exception of those still in managerial positions) were directed to customs administrations that did not

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<sup>34</sup> DAOO, f. 201, op. 2, spr. 61, sheets 68–68v; LVVA, f. 4935, ap. 4, l. 101, sheet 233.

<sup>35</sup> LVVA, f. 4935, ap. 4, l. 101, sheet 246.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 257.

cease their activities despite the outbreak of the Great War. Most often, their temporary place of employment was the highest-ranking customs offices: Moscow CC, Petrograd Port CC, Riga CC, Reval CC, Kiev CC, Odessa CC, Kharkov CC, Novorossiysk CC, Sevastopol CC, Vladivostok CC, *etc.* A dozen or so officials were also sent to the DCDMF itself in Petrograd<sup>37</sup>. It should also be added that a similar group were directed to customs institutions operating on the Barents and White Seas (including the Arkhangelsk CC)<sup>38</sup>.

DCDMF authorities spent the first months of the war waiting for the situation on the Russian Western Front to improve. While the military operation in East Prussia failed, and the western part of the Kingdom of Poland was overrun by German and Austro-Hungarian troops, the successes achieved in Galicia were cause for optimism. However, the collapse of the front near Gorlice in the spring of 1915 and the German offensive toward the Lithuanian governorates and Courland resulted in the defensive of the Russian army and the loss of the Kingdom of Poland. Finally, in October 1915 the front stabilized on the Riga–Dvinsk–Baranovichi–Pinsk–Dubno–Ternopil line.

The aforementioned string of military setbacks for the Russian army affected the operation of the customs offices evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland. The spring-summer campaign of 1915 quite significantly harmed the foundations of the Romanov Empire's economy, and on top of that weakened public morale. DCDMF authorities were aware of the state's economic condition and rather doubted that customs administration structures would be restored in the Kingdom of Poland in their pre-war state. It is from the beginning of the summer of 1915 that there is a marked change in the policy towards the offices in question. It was decided to make more intensive use of the administrative personnel in the evacuated structures. At the same time, the trend of delegating officials to the largest customs institutions continued<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 2, sheet 50; GARF, f. 1777, op. 1, d. 94, sheets 6v–7; d. 99, sheets 3v–4; K. Latawiec, *Inteligencja urzędnicza Królestwa Polskiego i Imperium Rosyjskiego wobec nowej rzeczywistości. Wybory byłych urzędników carskich po 1917 roku*, [in:] *Rok 1918. Odrodzona Polska i Sowiecka Rosja w nowej Europie*, vol. II, eds L. Zasztowt, J. Szumski, Warszawa 2019, p. 246.

<sup>38</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 2, sheets 21–22.

<sup>39</sup> GARF, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 33, sheets 3v–4; d. 67, sheets 4v–5; f. 1459, op. 1, d. 286, sheets 7v–9; d. 360, sheets 9–11; f. 1777, op. 1, d. 107, sheets 2–13v; f. R-1041, op. 1, d. 852, *passim*; d. 854, *passim*.

Also, the officials themselves, realizing the difficult military situation in Russia and seeing the lack of prospects for a quick return to the Kingdom of Poland, decided to apply for administrative positions outside the structures evacuated from Congress Kingdom. As can be seen in the table below, 19 officials managed to change their place of employment in 1915 alone. In addition, another seven died in the line of duty. DCDMF chose not to appoint new officials for the vacant posts<sup>40</sup>. This undoubtedly meant striving to maintain vacancies, which translated into not having to allocate funds for basic salaries and various service allowances or benefits.

At that time DCDMF made its first structural decisions. The inexpediency of maintaining certain posts was noted, since employees were unable to perform their official duties. A decision was made to liquidate, as of July 14, 1915, four posts of the Szczypior-no CC inspectors who supervised garment factories in and around Kalisz, to treat the employed officials as if they lost their positions for reasons beyond their control, and provide them with half of their basic salary for two years or until they took up full-time positions. Those employees did indeed receive the aforementioned part of their salary. As late as 1915, three of them found full-time employment (Maximilian Arnold became category four inspector of the Rostov (on the Don) Central Committee, Vladimir Bernikov became category four inspector of the Moscow Central Committee, and Jakub Monastyrski became category five inspector of the Blagoveshchensk Central Committee (in the Amur oblast). Only Alexander Simonovich had not found new employment by July 14, 1917, and was dismissed from service<sup>41</sup>.

Russia in 1915 was experiencing an internal crisis caused by protracted hostilities. This also translated into the operation of evacuated customs administration structures. DCDMF, constantly delegating officials from those structures, tried to fill vacancies in administrative bodies on many sections of the national border

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<sup>40</sup> DCDMF assumed that in the event of the return of customs offices to the Kingdom of Poland, it would easily find people who could successfully fill vacant posts.

<sup>41</sup> LVVA, f. 4935, ap. 4, l. 108, sheet 8; l. 112, sheets 4v, 12v; Derzhavnyy arkhiv Kyivskoyi oblasti [hereinafter: DAKO], f. 292, op. 2, spr. 359, sheet 8; *Lichnyy sostav Departamenta Tamozhennykh Sborov i uchrezhdeniy tamozhenno-go vedomstva (krome zastav i postov). Po svedeniyam do 21 Yanvarya 1914 goda*, p. 266; *Spisok lichnogo sostava Ministerstva Finansov na 1917 god*, Petrograd 1917, col. 595, 639–641, 671–672.

caused by various factors (e.g., departures from service, deaths of officials). Within three years (from August 1914 to August 1917), the admission of new officials to full-time positions in DCDMF field structures was significantly reduced<sup>42</sup>. Evacuated officials, having been assigned to a specific temporary place of employment, were, according to the instructions of their superiors, expected to appear there immediately and undertake official duties. However, factors such as postal and telegraph workloads, communication problems or the tardiness of the officials themselves adversely affected the operation of other customs offices. These problems must have become more acute in the second half of 1915 because the then DCDMF head, Sergei Shatelen, issued a circular on January 20, 1916, instructing inspectors of customs areas and heads of first-class customs chambers to follow the recommendations of the superior authorities regarding the posting of officials to temporary places of employment. He threatened representatives of the clerical staff with serious consequences if they showed up late at their place of posting<sup>43</sup>.

The activities of customs inspectors and their administrations, as well as the directors of the first-class customs chambers, were limited only to, among other things, the preparation of budget plans and annual reports on their activities, as well as continuation of cases started before July 31, 1914. Still the most important occupation of those bodies was to coordinate activities related to securing the financial sphere of officials still on staff. However, it should be noted that at times there were rather odd situations. DCDMF received information that a considerable number of evacuees employed in the lowest-ranking positions, such as watchmen, assistants, customs custodians, received salaries although they did not perform any duties. On December 5, 1915, S. Shatelen decided to solve this problem by directing the aforementioned persons to appropriate positions in operating customs administrations. Those who refused were to be dismissed from service as of January 14, 1916<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> DAKO, f. 292, op. 2, spr. 152, *passim*; LVVA, f. 4935, ap. 4, l. 110, *passim*; RGIA, f. 21, op. 2, d. 2033, *passim*.

<sup>43</sup> DAKhmO, f. 378, op. 1, spr. 34, sheet 1.

<sup>44</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 2, sheet 111.

Table 2

**Personnel movement in the evacuated customs administration  
from the Kingdom of Poland between August 1, 1914  
and December 31, 1916<sup>45</sup>**

Year	Appointments within the evacuated customs administration of the Kingdom of Poland	Appointments from evacuated offices to customs offices operating outside the Kingdom of Poland	Appointments from customs administrations outside the Kingdom of Poland to evacuated customs offices	Dismissals of officials from their positions on retirement	Deaths of officials in the line of duty
From August 1 to December 31, 1914	1	2	–	2	3
1915	–	19	–	–	7
1916	13	10	3	2	8

Source: Derzhavnyy arkhiv Kyiv'skoyi oblasti, fond 292, opys 2, sprava: 152, 256; Eesti Rahvusarhiiv Tartus, EAA.644.1.2062, *passim*; EAA.644.1.2142, *passim*; Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas, fondas 1051, apyrašas 1, bylos 2; Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs, fonds 4935, apraksts 4, lieta: 110, 112; Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv, fond 21, opis 2, delo 2033; “Ukazatel’ Pravitel’stvennykh Rasporyazheniy po Ministerstvu Finansov” 1914–1916.

The year 1916 was to be a watershed year for the Romanov Empire. Members of the Russian military staff envisioned a counteroffensive that would help recapture areas occupied by German and Austro-Hungarian troops, and intended to seize the strategic initiative on the entire front. The result of several months of preparation was the so-called offensive of General Aleksei Brusilov.

<sup>45</sup> The data in the table does not include appointments to the lowest-ranking positions of registry clerks and customs custodians, which were at the discretion of customs chamber directors. Such appointments did not occur during the period presented.

Its result, however, was only a slight change in the course of the front line in the Volhynia and Galicia governorates. Thus, Russia did not regain most of the lost territory and did not take the strategic initiative. In the face of such a military situation, no ground-breaking decisions were made on the issues of interest. The clerical staff continued to be used to maintain the smooth operation of the structure of customs offices operating normally<sup>46</sup>. As can be seen from the data included in the table above, there was another exodus of officials from the evacuated customs administration structures. DCDMF itself, in an effort to offset the gaps in these structures, began to make transfers between or within some offices (e.g., in Wierzbolów CC)<sup>47</sup>. It also made the first appointments of officials from positions held in offices operating before August 1, 1914 outside the area of General-Governorate of Warsaw.

The lack of military successes, as well as the deepening internal crisis, manifested in the impoverishment of society, led to protests that resulted in the overthrow of the autocracy in Russia. The end of the Romanovs' rule came unexpectedly and without warning, which probably shocked certain sections of society. By mid-March 1917, central power was placed in the hands of the Provisional Government, limited in its actions, however, by the Petrograd Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates<sup>48</sup>.

The seizure of power by the Provisional Government did not at all improve the general living conditions of Russian society. In terms of foreign policy, the new government continued the previous course set during the old regime. This meant continuing the war with the hope of success in the late spring or summer of 1917. The Provisional Government wanted to fulfill the international agreements made with the Entente states. It realized that only a continued alliance with France and Britain could guarantee final victory in the war and the preservation, or even expansion, of Russia's borders as of late July 1914. In domestic politics,

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<sup>46</sup> GARF, f. 1459, op. 1, d. 39, sheets 7v–8; d. 40, sheets 5v–6; d. 360, sheets 9–11; f. 1777, op. 1, d. 106, sheets 8v–10; d. 132, sheet 82; f. R-1041, op. 1, d. 852, *passim*; d. 854, *passim*; LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 2, sheets 389–395.

<sup>47</sup> LVIA, f. 1051, ap. 1, b. 2, sheets 639–640.

<sup>48</sup> In more detail: M. Heller, A. Niekricz, *Utopia u władzy. Historia Związku Sowieckiego*, t. I (*Od narodzin do wielkości*), transl. A. Mietkowski, Warszawa 2016, *passim*; R. Pipes, *Rewolucja rosyjska*, transl. T. Szafar, Warszawa 2006, *passim*.

however, a clear breakthrough was noticeable. A process of broad democratization at various levels of public life began to progress, with respect for civil liberties<sup>49</sup>.

Evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland, the customs administration and its employees found themselves in a completely new political reality. With regard to this group, the first steps were taken as early as the beginning of April 1917, marking the preparation of plans for its liquidation in the near future<sup>50</sup>. These plans were to be implemented within the framework of the Inter-Ministerial Conference set up in order to determine further fate of the organs of various ministries evacuated from the governorates of the Kingdom of Poland and develop the principles of their dissolution once an agreement was reached with the Liquidation Commission for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland<sup>51</sup>. However, the analysis of the preparation and eventual dissolution of customs offices in 1917–1918 deserves a separate study.

The process of decomposition of the Russian customs administration evacuated from the Kingdom of Poland in late July and early August 1914 had already begun upon leaving previous area of activity. Due to evacuation preparations made many months before the outbreak of World War I, it was possible to save almost all officials, not to mention the movable assets of customs offices, from the negative impact of military action. The activity of the lowest-ranking offices was completely suspended. Employees were delegated, in a support capacity, to customs offices operating far within Russia. This continued at least until the spring of 1917. The lowest-ranking officials were then dismissed and, in most cases, absorbed into the structures of the Russian war machine.

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<sup>49</sup> On the internal policies of the Provisional Government in Russia: *ibidem*.

<sup>50</sup> *Zhurnaly zasedaniy Vremennogo Pravitel'stva*, vol. I (*Mart – april' 1917 goda*), compiled Ye.D. Grin'ko, O.V. Lavinskaya, ed. B.F. Dodonov, Moskva 2001, pp. 140, 150.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

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EAA.644.1.2062; EAA.644.1.2142

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