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### Remnants of Russian bureaucracy in the public administration of the restored Polish state

#### Pozostałości biurokracji rosyjskiej w administracji publicznej odrodzonego państwa polskiego

**Abstract:** This article marks an attempt to draw the attention of researchers to the consequences of the existence of the Russian imperial bureaucracy on the territory of the later Republic of Poland. Bureaucracy is understood here as an objective management tool (law, structure, officials and documents). The Russian bureaucratic model was introduced in the administration of the Kingdom of Poland in 1867. The major assumption of the article is that the elements of this system were in operation also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Russian Empire, Republic of Poland, administration, office system, bureaucratic culture, official customs

**Streszczenie:** Niniejszy artykuł jest próbą zwrócenia uwagi badaczy na konsekwencje istnienia rosyjskiej biurokracji imperialnej na terytorium późniejszej Rzeczypospolitej. Biurokracja jest tu rozumiana obiektywnie jako narzędzie zarządzania (prawo, struktura, urzędnicy i dokumenty). Rosyjski model biurokratyczny został wprowadzony w ad-

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ministracji Królestwa Polskiego w 1867 r. Główną tezę artykułu jest to, że elementy tego systemu funkcjonowały również w XX w.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Imperium Rosyjskie, Rzeczpospolita Polska, administracja, system kancelaryjny, kultura biurokratyczna, urzędnicy

### Preliminary remarks

This article marks an attempt to draw researchers' attention to the consequences of activities of the Russian imperial bureaucracy of 1915 in what would later become the Republic of Poland. Bureaucracy is understood here as an objective management tool (laws, structures, officials and documents).<sup>1</sup> In particular, the analysis will concern the system of documentation of administrative procedures (the office system) and the structure of the rural local government.

The Russian model of administrative structure – including laws, structures, officials and documentation system – was gradually implemented in the Kingdom of Poland from the late 1830s until the mid-1870s.<sup>2</sup> The key date here is 19/31 December 1866, when the Russian model of local general administration (governor, governorate government, powiat management) and the Russian chancellery system were implemented, which triggered a mass influx of Russian officials.<sup>3</sup> The existing literature (related to archive studies, history of chancelleries and administration) reports that the elements of the Russian chancellery system might have existed in the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Weber, *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej*, Warszawa 2002.

<sup>2</sup> A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *Russian governors in Kingdom of Poland (1867–1918)*, trans. J. Krajka, Lublin 2016. Gradual implementation of units of different departments of the Russian administration is covered in the following works: eidem, *Rosyjska administracja specjalna: 1839–1918*, Lublin 2015; K. Latawiec et al., *Naczelnicy organów rosyjskiej administracji specjalnej w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1839–1918*, vol. 1–4, Lublin 2015–2020.

<sup>3</sup> A. Gorak, *Vvedenie rossijskoj sistemy deloproizvodstva v gubernskoy administratsii Tsarstva Pol'skogo* [Введение российской системы делопроизводства в губернской администрации Царства Польского], "Vestnik RGGU" [Вестник РГГУ], seria: *Dokumentalistika. Dokumentovedenie. Arkhivovedenie* [Документалистика. Документоведение. Архивоведение], no. 2 (124) / 2014, p. 78–86.

administration of the newly born Poland as late as in 1931.<sup>4</sup> However, this topic is rather neglected in relation to the structure of state administration, local government and officials.<sup>5</sup> The aim of this article is to prove that the elements of that system were also in operation later.

## 1. Bureaucracy as a research model

Bureaucracy as a research model brings together history and administrative science in the form of administrative policy together with administrative law and sociological studies of clerical elites. As a result, administration systems can be investigated in detail through systemic analysis, legal exegesis, diplomacy studies (chancellery system, document culture) and prosopography. This methodology came from research into documents<sup>6</sup> and chancellery systems for the purpose of historical sciences and archival sciences (together with the rule of origin). Polish historiography has developed a wide (theoretical) understanding of the notion of a chancellery as a documentation system existing alongside the narrow concept of an organisational unit. The former meaning (functional) denotes chancellery as all features of organisation that have impact on the form of documents and their archival structure. This includes documentation organisation (direction of the flow of registered information, protection of documents and their contents, editing of the form of documents and the structure of the archive), document flow, systems of registration and coding of documents and cases, the forms of documents chosen and the system of arranging the files in the archive. In this respect, there exist some variations of the system,

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<sup>4</sup> A. Gorak, M. Konstankiewicz, *Rossijskaâ imperiâ i formirovanie soznaniâ i modeli byurokratii v Polshë* [Российская империя и формирование сознания и модели бюрократии в Польше], in: *Slavyanskie dialogi na granitse Yevropy i Azii* [Славянские народы на границе Европы и Азии], ed. Yu. S. Kiryakov, Yekaterinburg, UFU 2013, p. 9–24.

<sup>5</sup> P. Cichoń, *Concepts of local government in the Polish constitutions of the interwar period (1918–1939)*, “Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego” 2022, vol. 25, p. 139–158.

<sup>6</sup> A. Górak, *Dokument – konstytutywne narzędzie biurokracji*, in: *Dzieje biurokracji*, vol. 5, eds. A. Gaca, A. Górak, Z. Naworski, Lublin–Toruń–Włocławek 2014, p. 41–50.

such as the Russian chancellery of case files or the Austrian chronological-numerical chancellery.<sup>7</sup>

It is assumed here that a chancellery system is a collection of purposefully selected, organised and interconnected elements used to document office work and build a systematic information resource of the office. This system is configured in a specific manner in terms of how documents are and circulated and cases (case files, files) are registered, and regarding the system of chancellery aids (*registratura*). However, finally, it is all about a systematic formation of a collection of files created over the course of an organisation's (filemaker) current work.<sup>8</sup> During the investigated period, formal-chancellery work is present in all units and all positions of the organisation. Thus, a "chancellery" or "chancellery system" cannot be examined without reference to the whole organisation and the office in question. This is not a new conclusion since Heinrich O. Meisner already assumed that files as records of office work performed by particular units and officials can be analysed by researching their creators, hence the significance of the study of files for administrative law and its history. Indirectly, the research purpose should be to examine the administration unit, its officials, organisational structure and the mode of operation of the institution that produced the files.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, one should bear in mind that the production of files was not the reason for the existence of a chancellery, but rather the tool for exercising its authority.<sup>10</sup>

If we assume that "documenting" is one of the decisive elements for effective "governing", the choice regarding the configuration of the chancellery system should be viewed as a conscious decision made by the governing body and exercised by the officials in power. This is another link between the "chancellery" and the organisation and its employees. One can assume,

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<sup>7</sup> Idem, *Dawne formy dyplomatyczne w kancelariach na ziemiach polskich XIX w.*, in: *Dyplomatyka staropolska*, ed. T. Jurek, Warszawa 2015, p. 529–546, 552–553.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *Kancelaria administracji zbiurokratyzowanej. Przedmiot – zakres – model badawczy*, "Res Historica" 2023, no. 55, p. 335–350.

<sup>9</sup> H. O. Meisner, *Urkunden und Aktenlehre der Neuzeit*, Leipzig 1952, p. 52–96.

<sup>10</sup> K. Skupieński, *Biurokracja w średniowiecznej kancelarii?*, in: *Drogą historii. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Józefowi Szymańskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, eds. P. Dymmel, K. Skupieński, B. Trelińska, Lublin 2001, p. 206.

then, that the characteristics of a chancellery system reflect the structure of the state – the relation of those governing to those governed (citizens).

At first sight, one might think that a chancellery system can be implemented ad hoc as a reform through normative acts, or revolution. Its connection with change of statehood is often underlined. However, both assumptions are superficial and lead to reasoning and research errors. The role of officials in transmitting the elements of the organisational culture across different state systems is not to be underestimated, as is their resistance to the implemented reforms and the danger of periodical loss of effectivity. The primacy of law in the investigation of such phenomena leads to an examination of administration, or perhaps just the chancellery system as a separate entity from the whole in which it functions and which it serves, or the decision-making systems and the officials who put it into work. After all, the chancellery system is only a sub-system.

## **2. The Russian chancellery system**

The Russian chancellery system introduced in the Polish lands was shaped at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century together with ministerial reform. Its fundamental ethos was to put documents together into case files, register them within a particular year in case registers and put these annual series of files into the files of the referring unit and departmental files. It should be stressed that the end product of a chancellery is an organised collection of knowledge (archive). Thus, when characterising the chancellery system, the most important role is to be played by the regulations on how to make a file structure – in other words, a systematic increase in functional information resources. Quite importantly, a file structure is not established as a one-time arrangement, but it accumulates as a result of careful implementation of a planned chancellery system in all units and all positions of office. This is why chancellery systems are classified according to the characteristic features of their file structure. Work directly connected with the formation of a planned file structure includes gathering documents into bigger units (cases, collections of normatives), registering file units, and petrifying the structure with reference symbols. Thus, we can distin-

guish both subject-matter systems (joining documents and files based on contents) and formal systems (arranging documents – e.g., according to the date or registration number).<sup>11</sup>

The Russian chancellery system was, first of all, a topic-based system, in that it put documents into file units called *dielo* (case) based on their content. This was, most of all, documentation of the decision-making process happening in a particular case. Because the Prussian nomenclature of cases (*aktenplan*)<sup>12</sup> had not been introduced in Russian offices, case files were attached to a given referring unit and later a given department at the higher level of this information structure. This is obviously a structural criterion. However, since both referring units and departments had particular competences, to some extent this is also a subject-matter criterion. One characteristic feature of the Russian system was the order of case files within the referring unit. This was determined by the register (*opis diel*) kept for a particular year. Thus, regardless of how many years a given case lasted, eventually this file would find its place in the collection of cases started in a given year. Obviously, the date of its commencement would decide what number the case would be allocated.<sup>13</sup> This system was effective with a certain (not excessively large) amount of chancellery documentation. Once the

<sup>11</sup> A. Gorak, *Effektivnost' i evolutsia deloproizvodstvennykh sistem gubernskoy administratsii XIX veka* [Эффективность и эволюция делопроизводственных систем губернской администрации XIX века], in: *Dokument. Arkhiv. Istoria. Sovremennost'* [Документ. Архив. История. Современность], vol. 11, Yekaterinburg 2010, p. 336–351.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *Między strukturalnym a planowym grupowaniem dokumentów. Geneza wykazu akt w Imperium Rosyjskim*, in: *Belliculum Diplomaticum V Lublinense. Dokumenty, kancelarie i archiwa między Wschodem i Zachodem*, eds. A. Górak, M. Szabaciuk, Lublin 2014, p. 147–160.

<sup>13</sup> T. Manteuffel, *Registratura Okręgu Naukowego Warszawskiego*, part 1, "Archeion" 1935, vol. 13, p. 11–29; part 2, "Archeion" 1936, vol. 14, p. 11–22; K. Konarski, *Podstawowe pojęcia archiwistyki*, "Archeion" 1951, vol. 19–20, p. 30; N. V. Varadinov, *Deloproizvodstvo ili teoreticheskoe i prakticheskoye rukovodstvo k grazhdanskomu i ugovnomu, kollegialnomu i odnolichnomu pismovodstvu k sostavleniu vsek pravitelstvennykh i chastnykh delovykh bumag i k vedeniu samykh del* [Делопроизводство, или Теоретическое и практическое руководство к гражданскому и уголовному, коллегиальному и одноличному письмоводству, к составлению всех правительственных и частных деловых бумаг и к ведению самих дел], Sankt Peterburg 1857, p. 6; A. Górak, *Rosyjska kancelaria akt spraw w urzędach lubelskiej gubernialnej administracji ogólnej w latach 1867–1918*, Lublin 2008, p. 186–252.

number of cases grew together with changes in the office structure, finding files on a given topic became more and more difficult.

### 3. Traditions of Polish democracy vs. absolute Russian monarchy

The formation of the Polish model of the modern society and the state started relatively early, although it did not proceed in a continuous and linear manner. First of all, the Polish state tradition was founded on an awareness of the democratic self-determination of a nation (all citizens in the political sense) through elections and with parliament and local government as its guarantee, an idea which originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, these were the ideas of the Enlightenment (the Constitution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1791 was the second in the world) and the Napoleonic era (the implementation of equality and personal freedom of citizens in the Duchy of Warsaw in the years 1807–1815). The first professional and completely bureaucratic administration was founded in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, and it continued to develop, with slight changes, in the Kingdom of Poland. However, after the fall of the November Uprising (1831), the Russian Empire abolished the constitution and the parliament. Next, the whole state system (laws, structures, officials, document culture) was eliminated, mostly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and replaced by “Russian bureaucracy”. Much has been written about the Polish administration of the Kingdom of Poland<sup>14</sup> or the specific nature of management

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<sup>14</sup> See: L. Gorizontow, *System zarządzania Królestwem Polskim w latach trzydziestych–pięćdziesiątych XIX wieku*, “Przegląd Historyczny” 1985, vol. 76, no. 4, p. 711–731; idem, *Aparat urzędniczy Królestwa Polskiego w okresie rządów Paskiewicza*, “Przegląd Historyczny” 1994, vol. 85, no. 1–2, p. 45–58; idem, *Paradoksy imperskiej polityki: polaki w Rosji i ruskie w Pol’she (XIX–nachalo XX veka)* [Парадоксы имперской политики: поляки в России и русские в Польше (XIX–начало XX в.)], Moskva 1999; A. Kulecka, *Wapno i alabaster. Biurokratyczna wizja rzeczywistości w raportach urzędowych Królestwa Polskiego (1815–1867)*, Warszawa 2005; W. Rostocki, *Kancelaria i dokumentacja aktowa urzędów administracji w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim (do 1867 r.)*, Wrocław 1964; idem, *Korpus w gęsie pióra uzbrojony. Urzędnicy warszawscy, ich życie i praca w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim do roku 1831*, Warszawa 1972; W. Sobociński, *Historia*

of the territories of the First Commonwealth directly incorporated into the Russian Empire.<sup>15</sup> Even though in recent years we have even seen a whole movement of research into the Russian administration in the Kingdom of Poland of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>16</sup> there is almost no mention of the continued operation of Russian bureaucracy in Poland.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire adopted a nationalist direction, which was most visible on the conquered lands, including those of the Commonwealth of Two Nations. The bureaucratic apparatus was entrusted with the task of Russification, which, on the one hand, would divert the officials' attention (and the perception by the society) from the effective management and modernisation of the country while, on the other, forcing them into a hopeless task – Russification. As a result, a paradoxical situation occurred – without renouncing their nationality, Poles could be appointed to high positions in administration, army and economy

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*ustroju i prawa Księstwa Warszawskiego*, Toruń 1964; T. R. Weeks, *Nation and state in late imperial Russia. Nationalism and russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914*, DeKalb 1996; W. Witkowski, *Sądownictwo administracyjne w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim (1807–1867)*, Warszawa 1984.

<sup>15</sup> See: *Zapadnye okrainy Rossijskoj imperii* [Западные окраины Российской империи], eds. M. Dolbilov, A. Miller, Moskva 2007; A. Miller, *Ukrainskij vopros v politike vlastej i russkom obsčstvennom mnenii (vtoraja polovina XIX v.)*, Kiev 2013; *Nacional'nye okrainy Rossijskoj imperii; stanovlenie i razvitie sistemy upravlenija* [Национальные окраины Российской империи: становление и развитие системы управления], eds. S. G. Agadžanov, V. V. Trepavlov, Moskva 1997; W. Rodkiewicz, *Russian nationality policy in the Western provinces of the empire (1863–1905)*, Lublin 1998; V. S. Šandra, *General-gubernatorstva v Ukraïni: XIX–pochatok XX st.* [Генерал-губернаторства в Україні: XIX–початок XX см.], Kiyv 2005; S. Wiech, *Depolonizacja Ziem Zabrzanych (1864–1914). Koncepcje – mechanizmy decyzyjne – realizacja*, Kielce 2021.

<sup>16</sup> See: A. Chwalba, *Polacy w służbie Moskali*, Warszawa 1999; idem, *Imperium korupcji w Rosji i w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1861–1917*, Warszawa 2001; A. Górak, *Kancelaria Gubernatora i Rząd Gubernialny Lubelski (1867–1918). Studium administracyjne i prozopograficzne*, Lublin–Radzyń Podlaski 2006; K. Latawiec et al., op. cit.; K. Latawiec, *W służbie imperium... Struktura społeczno-zawodowa ludności rosyjskiej na terenie guberni lubelskiej w latach 1864–1915*, Lublin 2007; G. Smyk, *Korpus urzędników cywilnych w guberniach Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1867–1915*, Lublin 2004; idem, *Administracja publiczna Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1864–1915*, Lublin 2011.



in the mainland Empire but not in their own land.<sup>17</sup> Poles who had gained experienced in the Russian service would largely populate the administration of the reborn Poland after 1918.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, a largely negative opinion about the Russian bureaucratic culture developed in Poland.

The drawbacks of the Russian political reality and administrative science meant that Polish academics would neither use or research it even though they were fully aware of the Russian theory. At the same time, research institutions in Cracow and Lviv, with fully re-Polonised universities at the forefront, won considerable prestige. Administrative science was fully independent and had its separate directions of research.<sup>19</sup> Works written by Polish scientists would often underline the obsolescence and anachronism of not only Russian, but also German and Austrian administrative law. Frequently specific suggestions for change were put forward.<sup>20</sup> At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these directions of research were revisited by academics, whose studies and ideas paved the way for a new synthesis of administrative law drawn up in the independent Second Republic.<sup>21</sup>

The Republic of Poland, reborn in 1918, wished to become a modern parliamentary republic. So, women's suffrage was immediately granted (the second country in the world to do so), while the state was run by applying the latest achievements of the theory of organisation and management, e.g., by Henri Fayol, who also had Polish followers. The latter's influence was exercised through academic research and university teaching, but also through journalism and translations of the management theory founder's works. It should also be emphasised that Fayol himself did notice the achievements of

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<sup>17</sup> L. Gorizotov, *Paradoksy imperskoj polityki: polaki w Rossii i ruskie w Pol'she (XIX–nachalo XX veka)* [Парадоксы имперской политики: поляки в России и русские в Польше (XIX–начало XX в.)], Moskva 1999, passim.

<sup>18</sup> A. Chwalba, *Polacy w służbie Moskali*, p. 103; L. Jaśkiewicz, *Carat i kwestia polska na początku XX wieku*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1995, vol. 86/1, p. 37; L. Gorizotov, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>19</sup> M. Gromadzka-Grzegorzewska, *Narodziny polskich nauk administracyjnych*, Warszawa 1985, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup> W. Witkowski, *Historia administracji w Polsce, 1764–1989*, Warszawa 2019, p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> See: K. Kumaniecki, *Zarys prawa administracyjnego na ziemiach polskich*, Kraków–Warszawa 1920; K. Kumaniecki, J. Langrod, S. Wachholz, *Zarys ustroju, postępowania i prawa administracyjnego w Polsce*, Kraków–Warszawa 1939.

Poland and Poles – for instance, those at the Institute of Scientific Organisation in Warsaw or the Polish theorist of management, Karol Adamiecki.<sup>22</sup>

In legislation practice, Poland generally rejected the Russian theoretical acquis. Administrative procedural law of the Second Republic was shaped on the basis of the experiences of Austrian administrative procedure.<sup>23</sup> As regards administrative legislation, new Polish laws were implemented on the post-Russian lands almost immediately, as early as in 1919.

#### 4. Rural local government system – a collective commune

A relatively permanent remnant of the Russian administrative system was the concept of a collective commune as a form of rural local government, which was the smallest unit of territorial division composed of a few localities – towns, settlements, villages, rural settlements and farms. This was a completely different approach when compared to a single-village commune (comprising one village or settlement), which was inherited by Poland on relevant territories as a remnant of the Prussian and Austrian administrative system.

Three years after the manumission in Russia, under the influence of the January Uprising, the Tsar would also introduce the reform in the Kingdom of Poland: peasants would get for their ownership those lands that were cultivated by them but that belonged to landowners and the state. On 3(15) April 1864, all duties of peasants served in exchange for cultivating the land were abolished.<sup>24</sup> The status of the commune as a unit of territorial local government in the Kingdom of Poland was regulated

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<sup>22</sup> J. A. Teslar, *Henryk Fayol i jego teoria administracji*, in: H. Fayol, *Administracja przemysłowa i ogólna*, trans. J. A. Teslar, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Warszawa 1947, p. 26 and next; R. Kania, *Dyrektwy sprawnego zarządzania państwem i administracją publiczną w poglądach Henry Fayola*, “*Studia z Zakresu Prawa, Administracji i Zarządzania*” 2013, vol. 4 (24), p. 102; P. Górski, *Profesjonalizacja administracji państwowej w Polsce 1918–1939. Uwarunkowania społeczne i kulturowe*, Kraków 2011, p. 61–164.

<sup>23</sup> H. Izdebski, *Historia administracji*, Warszawa 2001, p. 234–235.

<sup>24</sup> *Ukaz ob ustrojstve krest'ân v Carstve Pol'skom ot 19 II (2 III) 1864 goda* [Указ об устройстве крестьян в Царстве Польском], “*Dziennik Praw Królestwa Polskiego*” (DPKP) 1864, vol. 62, p. 4–35.

by the decree of 19 February (2 March) 1864 on the structure of rural communes in the Kingdom of Poland. The landowners were deprived of patrimonial power joined with the office of the commune chief (*wójt*). Initially, the borders of communes, as established on 3(15) March 1859, were also kept unchanged as the new administrative division was to be prepared by the temporary Russian body in charge of the reforms – the Managing Committee. As Article 4 of the relevant *ukaz* reads, “each rural commune is supposed to be composed of villages and rural colonies inhabited by peasants, granges and manor houses as well as other lands owned”. Auxiliary units for communes were supposed to be assemblies (*gromadas*) made up of inhabitants of particular villages and rural colonies. Both in the very commune and in *gromadas*, power was entrusted to communal and *gromada* assemblies, while permanent administration was to be performed by people elected by the latter. Article 11 reads that “the administration of the commune is composed of the commune assembly, *wójt*, village head (*sotys*), communal court with jury members (*ławnik*), if necessary, communal writing clerks, tax collectors, school and hospital inspectors, communal lands rangers and other economic officials”.<sup>25</sup> This communal local government was strictly controlled by the Russian authorities who would appoint communal writing clerks. Additionally, one can clearly see the clergy’s exclusion from the commune and a clear limitation of influence of landowners and intelligentsia. Despite all these factors, the functioning of rural local government in the Kingdom of Poland was surely an important lesson of responsibility for public affairs for peasants. One could clearly see the increase in their national awareness and political activity. At the same time, relations with the Russian state administration regime clearly convinced villagers of the need for and benefits of independent state. Afterwards, for more than 50 years communes would expand their role while essentially maintaining the same structure.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ukaz ob ustrojstwie sel'skih gmin ot 19 II (2 III) 1864 goda* [Указ об устройстве сельских гмин от 19 II (2 III) 1864 года], *ibidem*, p. 36–93, art. 4, 6, 11.

<sup>26</sup> J. Kozłowski, *Gminy wiejskie w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1864–1875 i ocena ich działalności przez władze carskie*, in: *Dzieje biurokracji*, vol. 11, Lublin 2020, p. 255–282.

The symbolic date of Poland's regained independence is 11 November 1918. However, the wars that lasted a few years afterwards were not conducive to implementing deep reforms, which is why for some time the system of communes inherited after the partitioning powers was kept in operation.<sup>27</sup> The fact that different systems functioned in different communes convinced legislators of the advantages of a collective commune and this very model was extended over the whole state territory by the act of 23 March 1933 on *partial reform of the territorial local government system*. The act unified local government throughout Poland,<sup>28</sup> and this time the commune would consist of all its inhabitants.

Communes existed until 1950 when Communist authorities decided to replace them with a smaller administrative unit – *gromada*.<sup>29</sup> The reform assumed that a *gromada* would be at the same time a state farm and the operation headquarters of the Communist party unit. Since in Poland collectivisation had not been completed, Communist authorities would return to the concept of collective commune, comprising a few localities (termed as a socio-economic micro-region), during the 1972 reform. Until now, the commune has remained the unit of administrative division and territorial local government in Poland.<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Officials

Officials were an important element in sharing experience of how the Russian administration worked. On the whole, the Polish state would acknowledge the experience gained under the Russian administration. The pub-

<sup>27</sup> J. Przygodzki, *Komisje dla usprawnienia administracji publicznej w II Rzeczypospolitej. Studium historycznoprawne*, Wrocław 2019, p. 37.

<sup>28</sup> Ustawa z 23 marca 1933 r. o częściowej zmianie ustroju samorządu terytorialnego, Dz.U.R.P. 1933, no. 35, item 294; A. J. Mielcarek, *Podziały terytorialno-administracyjne II Rzeczypospolitej w zakresie administracji zespolonej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 57–58; J. Behr, *Ewolucja gminy w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – zarys problematyki*, "Folia Iuridica Universitatis Wratislaviensis" 2015, vol. 4 (1), p. 285–301.

<sup>29</sup> Ustawa z dnia 20 marca 1950 r. o terenowych organach jednolitej władzy państwowej, Dz.U. 1950, no. 14, item 130.

<sup>30</sup> W. Witkowski, *Historia administracji w Polsce...*, p. 409–411.

lished register of state employees conducted in 1923 enables preliminary conclusions to be drawn in this highly complicated matter.<sup>31</sup> This problem can be best illustrated by data on the place of work before the outbreak of the First World War and the country where the officials had gained their higher education.

Out of all officials of the whole administration, 28.5% of clerks had worked in Russian offices previously (for comparison: 65.3% had been in Austrian offices and 5.0% in German ones). Former officials of the Russian offices predominated in central institutions (62.8%) at the medium level, while they constituted 100% of staff in the lowest-level offices: categories I–IV – 32.5%, category V – 38.8%, categories VI–VII – 65.6%, category VIII – 79.1%, categories IX–X – 84.0%, categories XI–XII – 100%. It is worth noting that those lowest categories were in charge of chancellery work. Moreover, the choice of chancellery system in the first years after the end of the First World War was mainly decided by the central institutions.<sup>32</sup>

The institutions of central voivodeships (to a large extent compatible with the area of the former Kingdom of Poland) contained as many as 78.5% officials with Russian experience, while in eastern voivodeships (lands of the former Russian partition) this figure amounted to 88.7%. Even though only 19.1% (for chancellery staff 18%) of officials employed in voivodeship offices and poviats had worked in the Russian administration before, they dominated offices in central (65.3%) and eastern voivodeships (84.2%). The prevalence of this category of officials is particularly visible in local administration institutions of central and eastern voivodeships of the department of justice (97.6% and 98.2%, respectively), industry and trade (87.8% and 100%, respectively) and railways (Warsaw directorate 98.4%, Radom directorate 96.3%, Vilna directorate 96.3%), as well as in tax administration (69.8% and 79.8%) and education (87.0% and 95.0%).<sup>33</sup>

As regards officials with higher education gained in the Russian Empire, fewer were employed in general administration (33% in central voivode-

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<sup>31</sup> *Funkcjonariusze państwowej służby cywilnej. Wynik spisu ze stycznia 1923 r.*, ed. S. Pszczółowski, "Statystyka Polski", vol. 6, Warszawa 1925.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, tabl. XLIV.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, tabl. XLIV–XLVII.

ships and 66% in eastern ones), while more worked in other analysed areas (48–64% in central voivodeships and 72–86% in eastern ones). Taking the whole country into account, 42% of officials with higher education employed in agricultural administration and 28% in public works administration had graduated from Russian universities.<sup>34</sup>

The data on places where officials worked in 1914 enable a rough approximation of the extent to which particular departments of the Polish administration inherited staff from similar institutions of the previous states. On the whole, in the years 1914 and 1923, particular departments of administration in the post-Russian lands were staffed mainly by officials continuing work rather than being transferred to other departments. The first group of exceptions to this rule were general administration of central voivodeships and agricultural administration of eastern voivodeships where the numbers for both groups were similar. At the same time, the administration of central and eastern voivodeships employed many more officials who had worked in other departments of the Russian administration in the Polish lands than in other institutions of the same department.<sup>35</sup>

Overall, it can be stated that the newly created administrative structures of the Polish state would rely on officials from Galicia to the greatest extent. This should not be surprising since the administration there had been Polonised thanks to autonomy gained within Austria-Hungary. What can be surprising, though, is the very high percentage of former officials with experience gained in Russian bureaucracy, or even their dominance in some departments, especially in local administration. Moreover, former officials of Russian administration would largely outnumber those who had worked previously for the German administration.<sup>36</sup> This indicates, first of all, how aggressive the German personal policy was towards Poles and, secondly, it indicates a lack of prejudice towards former Russian officials, who, after all, conveyed a particular bureaucratic culture. This was caused, to a large extent, by the lack of qualified administrative staff in the first years when the modern Polish state was built.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, tabl. XLIV.

<sup>35</sup> See: P. Górski, *op. cit.*, p. 17–60.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.

## 6. Remnants of the Russian chancellery system – case register

The newly created offices continued post-partition chancellery systems, which proved to be quite resilient to any change. This resilience was due to habits adopted and shared by officials. This is why in practice Austrian (educational authorities, schools, Presidium of the Council of Ministers), Russian (chiefly the department of justice) and Prussian chancellery systems were still in use.<sup>37</sup>

Attempts were made to prepare new chancellery regulations, although they were not fully implemented and did not put an end to elements of Austrian and Russian chancelleries due to, *inter alia*, an overstretched system of registration and chancellery assistance. Undoubtedly, it was feared that officials accustomed to familiar habits of office work would be less effective. The responsibility for further administrative reform was taken by the Commission for the Improvement of State Administration, presided over by Maurycy Jaroszyński and established in 1928 under the patronage of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. The preparatory activities for reforms were far reaching – first of all, foreign experiences from implementation of reforms in Czechoslovakia, Germany and England were collected by delegated representatives, who would observe the reform processes and results on site. As preparation, American, Belgian, French and German publications were also reviewed, making a total of 5,000 items (together with Polish ones). Most attention was devoted to German and French authors – most importantly, Polish translations of H. Haussmann<sup>38</sup> and Henri Fayol.<sup>39</sup> Different people were invited to cooperate and surveys were conducted.<sup>40</sup> The final outcome of the bureaucratic reform was the publication

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<sup>37</sup> T. Manteuffel, *Początki współczesnej biurowości polskiej jako materiał do organizacji rejestratur w urzędach państwowych (1917–1920)*, „Archeion” 1929, p. 45–46; A. Robaczewski, *Biurowość w Polsce*, „Gazeta Administracji i Policji Państwowej” 1930, no. 19, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> See: H. Haussmann, *Reforma biurowości jako część reformy administracji*, trans. M. Łach, St. Twardo, Warszawa 1926.

<sup>39</sup> H. Fayol, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> H. Robótka, *Archiwa państwowe i reforma biurowości w Polsce międzywojennej*, „Archeion” 1994, vol. 93; M. Smoczyński, *Wkład Stefana Stosyka w proces uspraw-*



of new general chancellery regulations for state administration on 24 August 1931.<sup>41</sup> These general regulations were complemented by more specific “Chancellery regulations for state administration”. All this meant unifying office work throughout the whole state. The newly adopted chancellery system was not only modern but also proved to be very durable, to such an extent that it has been functioning until the present day with only minor changes. Obviously, case registers were maintained as basic units. Moreover, it was decided that documents would no longer be registered in a logbook, which is why the colloquial name of this system was “non-journal”. This change increased the significance of case registration even more. However, a key element was the introduction of a topic-based system of file collection, which would mean putting case files into higher-level file units.<sup>42</sup>

Forms for case registers were identical to Russian ones. The Russian template consisted of four columns: case number, its start date, its subject matter and its end date.<sup>43</sup> The form for case register in the new regulations was similar: case order number, date of document (starting the case), its subject matter, its conclusion (date and address).<sup>44</sup>

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*niania polskiej administracji*, “Archiwa – Kancelarie – Zbiory” 2019, vol. 10 (12), p. 169–195.

<sup>41</sup> Uchwała Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 sierpnia 1931 r. o przepisach kancelaryjnych w administracji publicznej, *Monitor Polski*, 1931, no. 196, item 273.

<sup>42</sup> H. Robótka, *Kancelaria urzędów administracji (procesy aktotwórcze)*, Toruń 1993; A. G. Dąbrowski, *Kancelaria Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych w Warszawie w latach 1918–1939*, Warszawa 2015; idem, *Reforma metod pracy biurowej resortu spraw wewnętrznych w latach 1931–1932. Przyczynek do zagadnienia usprawnienia funkcjonowania rządów administracji państwowej Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, “Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny” 2018, vol. 15, no. 3: *Belliculum Diplomaticum VII Lublinense. Od pergaminu i papieru do e-Government*, p. 87–102; R. Degen, *Ramowe przepisy kancelaryjne. Co jest ich istotą i czy współcześnie warto z nich korzystać w administracji?*, in: *Współczesna dokumentacja – współczesne archiwa*, eds. I. Mamczak-Gadkowska, K. Strykowski, Poznań 2018, p. 71–75.

<sup>43</sup> A. Górak, *Rosyjska kancelaria akt spraw...*, p. 255–267.

<sup>44</sup> Zarządzenie wewnętrzne Wojewody Lubelskiego Nr 29 z dnia 18 grudnia 1935 r. w sprawie przepisów kancelaryjnych i wykazu akt dla Urzędu Wojewódzkiego Lubelskiego, “Lubelski Dziennik Wojewódzki” [R. 16], nr 33 (28 grudnia 1935), p. 661.



Therefore, introducing case register as a means of putting cases in order was also adopted by the modern system implemented in the administration of the Republic of Poland in 1931. Gradually, the structural file lists were replaced, office by office, with new, uniform and purely subject-related versions. However, these were still based on case lists, which in the new system was no longer for one unit of the office, but for one subject entry, because the entire office had one list of entries, structured hierarchically (a uniform subject-related file list).

## Conclusions

In Poland a negative image of Russian clerks still persists, as does the assumption that corruption in administration is the manifestation of legacy of Russian and Soviet bureaucracy. At the same time, it is widely believed that the Second Republic clearly detached itself from the state traditions of the Russian Empire. The current analysis does not fully confirm this view. On the contrary, a rational approach prevailed, and the newly born state would not discriminate officials with prior experience in the Russian administration. On the contrary, they, even Russians, were eagerly accepted into service as long as they had not occupied top positions responsible for Russification. At the same, however, the Polish State would completely reject both system ideas and the output of the Russian administrative science. This was not for emotional reasons – on the contrary, the quality and usefulness of particular solutions were subjected to scrutiny and only those considered functional in the new state context were adopted. One such example was the system of rural local government with the commune as its form. Another was the case register as a key element of the chancellery system used to record cases.

Even if the bureaucratic culture of the Polish inter-war state did not display the features of the Russian bureaucracy, unfortunately, after the Second World War, this culture was brutally invaded in Poland. Moreover, after 1989, there was no total and conscious break-up with former bureaucratic traditions, which results in continued existence of the obsolete chancellery system in an electronic format, as well as slow and gradual disappearance of the “Russian” and “Soviet” bureaucratic culture in Poland.