

Description for the general public

Customs administration of the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1851-1914 has not been the subject of separate research so far. The lack of even basic knowledge on this topic has resulted in undertaking research in this field. This type of Russian special financial administration appeared as one of the first on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. The removal of the customs border between the Kingdom of Poland and the Romanov empire meant entrusting the customs supervision to the administration acting according to the Russian model. However, the Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland, Prince Ivan Paskevich, did not agree to giving full control over the structures of the customs administration to the External Trade Department of the Ministry of Finance in St. Petersburg. He forced the central authorities to agree on establishing the Customs Department at the Chancellery of the Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland. It was an intermediary body between the administration acting on the state border on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland and the said department in St. Petersburg. Such a situation lasted until 1864. After the liquidation of the Customs Department, the entire administration was subordinated directly to the central authorities. The collapse of the January Uprising had a clear influence on the change in personnel policy. A greater number of Russian officials took positions at the expense of their Polish colleagues. After 1868, i.e. when the special customs act was replaced with a Russian act, the Kingdom of Poland has ceased to be regarded as an exceptional area. From then on, any change in the Russian customs policy on the western border affected customs offices in the Kingdom of Poland in the same way as in other borderland provinces.

The research team intends to prepare and publish a monograph (in Polish and English) on the customs administration in the Kingdom of Poland which operated in the years 1851-1914. The authors will address the following issues: the image of the Polish customs administration before 1851, the reasons for the introduction of the Russian customs administration model, the structure of customs administration and its evolution until the outbreak of World War I, the duties and responsibilities of customs authorities, the practical activity of customs offices, personnel policy and the image of the clerical staff. The monograph will be supplemented with appendixes containing the sources which will illustrate the operation of customs offices and the implementation of customs policy in the Kingdom of Poland. Another result of the research project will be a monography (in Polish and English) officials of customs administration in the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1851-1914 with biographical dictionary. The results project will be announced in the form of articles in English in reputable international journals.

All activities to be performed in the research project fall within the scope of basic research. The research team's goal is to gather information on the operation of customs administration and, based on this, to develop a picture of the functioning of this particular form of managing public funds. In the future, it will facilitate further research on other structures of financial administration, which will allow to present a complete picture of the tsarist government's fiscal policy in the Kingdom of Poland in the second half of the 19th century and in the early 20th century. Furthermore, the analysis of the personnel policy in customs bodies will help initiate research on the clerical intelligentsia of special administration functioning in the Kingdom of Poland in the period between the uprisings and in the era of unification.

The research team intends to achieve its goals by performing scientific queries in foreign archives and libraries (in Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia). Some research has already been carried out in the national archives, which yielded only information about the functioning of the Polish customs administration before 1851. It is essential to conduct a survey in foreign centers as they contain sources which are the legacy of customs offices in the Kingdom of Poland and of the central authorities of customs administration. The realization of the research project is possible only on the basis of these sources.