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Administrative Reform in the Kingdom of Poland after the January Uprising – Process and Consequences

Reforma administracyjna w Królestwie Polskim po powstaniu styczniowym – przebieg
i konsekwencje

The failure of Aleksander Wielopolski's reforms of 1861–1862, aimed at rebuilding the pre-insurrection autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, and the failure of the January Uprising, determined the centralisation and unification of the territory of the Kingdom with the Russian Empire¹. In the capital, St. Petersburg, there was sufficient realisation that now, at last, on the occasion of the last uprising, as well as the state of the Polish cause on the international arena, the time had come for Russia's decisive dealings with the Kingdom².

In 1864, the Kingdom of Poland still had limited autonomy and an administration separate from the Empire³. It was in the hands of the Viceroy that executive, civil and military power was concentrated, who exercised the administration of the country in the place of the Emperor. In St. Petersburg, there was the State Secretariat of the Kingdom of Poland (*Stats-siekrietariat Carstwa Polskogo*), in which the Secretary of State acted as an intermediary between the central authorities of the Kingdom of Poland and the monarch, permanently residing in his entourage. His duties included coordinating all legislative work concerning the Kingdom, carried out in St. Petersburg in accordance with the Emperor's

¹ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna Królestwa Polskiego*, Lublin 2011, p. 231.

² J.K. Targowski, *Komitet rządzący i jego ludzie*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1937–1938, vol. 34(1), p. 168.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 232.

directives. The Secretary of State presented the sovereign with matters referred to him by the Governor of the Kingdom and informed the Governor of decisions taken by the monarch. The State also had a Council of State, reinstated in 1861, which was the body that drafted legislation, considered the Kingdom's budgets and the reports of government commissions⁴. The Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland, still established under the Constitution of 1815, supervised the functioning of government commissions and the implementation of policies set by the governor. The Council was also responsible for giving opinions on draft legislation and making decisions on economic, social, and organisational matters. The Post Office and the Board of Communication⁵ also remained independent of the imperial bodies. Polish was the official language in the country, on a par with Russian, the administrative staff was largely composed of Poles, and in the central offices, contrary to the model operating in the Empire, decisions were taken collegially⁶. Such a separate state of affairs, especially after the national uprising of Poles against the Russians, could not be sustained.

One of the first Russians to present his views to the Emperor on changes to the system of governance of the territory was the *deistvitelny statski sawietnik* (actual state councilor – an official of the fourth class according to the Table of Ranks) Ponomarev⁷, who believed that the existence of government commissions in the Kingdom was of no benefit and even hindered the efficient operation of the administration⁸. The commissions took over the tasks of issuing decisions and transmitting guidelines, which formally belonged to the competence of the governors, which in practice reduced their role to that of intermediaries. As a result, the governors, deprived of real powers, referred most matters to the district offices. In Ponomarev's view, real power was concentrated in the commissions, leading to the conclusion that either the commissions should be abolished or the posts of governors abolished. As a better solution, he proposed dissolving the government commissions, transferring some of their powers to the governors, and giving the remaining responsibilities to the Administrative Council. In addition, he called for the abolition of the Council of State and the creation of a department for the affairs of the Kingdom of Poland in the Empire State Council⁹. The Russian believed that the Emperor's management of the Kingdom of Poland should have a provincial character, as was the case in the other partitions: Galicia and the Grand Duchy of

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 234.

⁷ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna 1866 roku w Królestwie Polskim*, [in:] *Dzieje biurokracji w Polsce*, ed. A. Górak, vol. 4, part 1, Lublin 2011, p. 457.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 457–458.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 458.

Poznań¹⁰. The Secretary of State for the Kingdom of Poland, Nikolai Alekseyevich Milutin¹¹, gave the Emperor his view of the situation in the Kingdom of Poland and the need for thorough reforms¹² in a two-hour conversation on 31 August 1863. He considered it necessary in the first place to increase the powers of the governors¹³. Milutin, incidentally, comes across as a perceptive man who accurately read reality. "The lower-level officials [in the Kingdom], most of whom are maces, rule almost unlimitedly, covering this with an image of humility and even slavery. (...) One may be surprised that, under such conditions, the bureaucratic character of the administration has developed to a hitherto unknown degree and its activities have turned into a purely mechanical"¹⁴.

Milutin expressed concern that the filling of most official positions by Polish officials who would be hostile to the Russian government could completely undermine the intentions of the administrative reforms being implemented. In his view, these individuals, because of their political and national convictions, could sabotage administrative activities, which would make it impossible to achieve the key objectives of these reforms. The Russian felt that in such a situation, the administration, instead of improving governance and strengthening imperial control, would become a tool of resistance against Russian rule¹⁵. Consequently, this could undermine the effectiveness of government and undermine the efficiency of the entire system of governance at the local and regional level.

The reform of the administration of the Kingdom of Poland, carried out between 1866 and 1876, was aimed at abolishing the legal and organisational separateness of the Kingdom and its fusion with the administrative system of the Empire¹⁶, increasing the influence of the gubernial boards, as well as reducing the

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 458–459.

¹¹ Nikolai Milutin (1818–1872) was a Russian civil servant and reformer who played a significant role in the modernisation processes in Russia. After completing his education in Moscow, he began his career in state administration, earning praise from Minister Alexander Strogonov for his famine analyses and railway construction projects. In the 1840s, he initiated urban reforms that were introduced in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Odesa, based on the principles of self-government. His statistical and economic interests were reflected in his activities in the Russian Geographical Society. As Deputy Minister of the Interior (1859), he led the preparations for the peasant reform, promoting communal self-government, which met with resistance from conservative circles. After the reform was introduced in 1861, he was removed from his post, but in 1866, he was appointed Minister-Secretary of State for the Kingdom of Poland. Illness forced him to withdraw from public life later that year. Milutin died in 1872, leaving behind a significant contribution to Russian administrative and social reforms.

¹² J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 459.

¹⁴ Milutin's note of 27 March / 8 April 1865. See *ibidem*.

¹⁵ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna...*, p. 461.

¹⁶ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 231.

number of Poles in key positions, replacing them with Russians, if only due to their unfamiliarity with the Russian language¹⁷.

The administrative reform in the Kingdom of Poland after the collapse of the January Uprising was a comprehensive process that included the reorganisation of governance structures and the integration of the Kingdom into the Russian Empire, and three key bodies were responsible for its implementation: the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, and the Arrangement Committee.

The Russians, faced with the task of reforming the administration in the Kingdom, used a body created for the enfranchisement reform of 1861 – the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland. The Committee, with its seat in St. Petersburg as its permanent residence, was established as a result of the Supreme Order of 25 February 1864¹⁸. The Committee was, until December 1866, an unknown body in the Kingdom – it operated secretly until then, in direct dependence on the Emperor himself, and was the place of origin of all projects aimed at reforming the Kingdom¹⁹.

The members of the Committee were trusted men of Emperor Alexander II, namely: *deistvitelnyy tajnyy sawietnik* (actual secret councillor, official of the second class according to the Table of Ranks) Prince Pavel Gagarin, as chairman in the absence of the Emperor, Nikolai Milutin, Count Victor Panin, former chairman of the Editorial Commissariat for peasant affairs in St. Petersburg, Konstantin Chevkin, General-Adjutant, member of the State Council and of the Main Peasant Committee, Valuyev, Minister of the Interior, and General-Adjutant Zielonyi. The post of secretary of the Committee and manager of its work was taken by Stefan Mikhailovich Zhukovsky²⁰. A chancellery was also established at the Committee²¹.

The Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, established in St. Petersburg, had a key supervisory and coordinating function in the process of integration of the Kingdom of Poland into the Russian Empire. The Committee's main task was to analyse in detail and verify the drafts of legal acts and administrative reforms that were being drawn up by the Arranging Committee operating in Warsaw²². An important aspect of the Committee's work was the harmonisation

¹⁷ J. Kozłowski, *Realizacja reformy administracyjnej w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1867–1875*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1998, vol. 89(2), p. 236.

¹⁸ See, Zbiórpostanowień Komitetu Urządzącego w Królestwie Polskim, Warszawa 1864, p. 5.

¹⁹ J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 169–170.

²¹ A. Okolski, *Wykład prawa administracyjnego oraz prawa administracyjnego obowiązującego w Królestwie Polskim*, Warszawa 1880, p. 207.

²² J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

of the local legislation of the Kingdom with the legal system of the Empire. This process required careful examination of the compatibility of proposed amendments with the legal and administrative norms in force in the Empire. The Committee acted as a body to ensure consistency between local reforms and the Empire's broader unification policy. In a broader historical context, the Committee's activities were part of the Russian government's long-term strategy towards the systematic administrative and legal unification of the Kingdom with the Empire. The Committee played the role of a controlling institution which was to guarantee that all changes introduced would consistently lead to the complete integration of the Kingdom of Poland into the Russian Empire, both administratively and in terms of the system²³. In practice, this meant that every significant reform or legal change introduced in the Kingdom of Poland had to go through a detailed review by the Committee, which assessed its compliance with unification objectives and ensured that a consistent direction of integration transformations was maintained.

The second of the bodies responsible for changes in the administration of the Kingdom was His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland. As a result of the unification policy, the Secretariat of State for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, which had existed continuously since the beginning of the Kingdom, and had its origins still in the Duchy of Warsaw, was abolished²⁴. The Secretariat was replaced, established on 19 May 1866²⁵, by His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland²⁶, aimed at accelerating reforms in the Kingdom²⁷. At the same time, the already last Minister-Secretary of State of the Kingdom of Poland, Valerian Platonov, was dismissed, and the newly established Chancellery for Kingdom Affairs was headed by Nikolai Milutin. He was granted all the powers previously held by the Minister-Secretary of State, making him the central figure in the management of the affairs of the Kingdom of Poland²⁸. From then on, all administrative authorities, including the governor, ministers and other bodies, were obliged to cooperate with Milutin and carry out his orders. Also, all imperial orders concerning the Kingdom of Poland were to be communicated directly to him, emphasising his key role as an intermediary between the emperor and the local administrative structures.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 237.

²⁵ The establishment of His Imperial Majesty's own Chancellery for the affairs of the Kingdom of Poland was notified to the Governor through the Minister Secretary of State by letter dated 19 (31) May 1866, No. 9699, Order of the Organising Committee, vol. VII, 138, point 651, p. 302. Decree on the abolition of the Chancellery of 19 / 31 May 1866 (Z.P. 1876, no. 770). See J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

²⁶ G. Smyk, *Likwidacja odrębności administracyjnej Królestwa Polskiego po powstaniu styczniowym*, "Zamojskie Studia i Materiały" 1999, no. 2, p. 208.

²⁷ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–206.

²⁸ J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

His Imperial Majesty's own Chancellery for the affairs of the Kingdom of Poland survived until 1876²⁹, when it was abolished, and its duties were distributed among the other bodies³⁰.

The third of the bodies working on changes in the Kingdom was the Arrangement Committee. As in the case of the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, the Arrangement Committee was set up to carry out the enfranchisement reform³¹ and to put in order all matters related to it, such as establishing new boundaries and sizes of the land allocated to peasants or preserving the right of servitude³². The body was created on 19 February 1864³³, thus during the January Uprising. As the needs related to the reform of the administration and the dismissal of the higher central authorities of the Kingdom grew, the tasks of the Arranging Committee increased, and its activity covered the whole higher administration of the country³⁴.

The Arrangement Committee consisted of the Governor of the Kingdom, with the participation of persons appointed by the Emperor and summoned by the Chairman whenever a matter concerned their ministries³⁵, the General-Police-Mayor of the Kingdom, the directors of the Government Commissions, the President, and the members of the Liquidation Commission and the chairmen of the peasants' commissions³⁶. There was also a chancellery attached to the Appointing Committee³⁷. The activity of the Arrangement Committee has been documented through a series of meetings, 379 in total. The inaugural meeting took place on 26 March 1864, and was composed of key representatives of the Kingdom administration: Governor Count Fyodor Berg³⁸, Nikolai Milutin, Viktor

²⁹ Order of 26 August 1876 (Z.P. 1876, no. 770).

³⁰ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 194–195.

³² J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

³³ Order of 19 February (2 March) 1864 (D.P.T. LXII 135).

³⁴ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 196; J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

³⁵ Collection of the Decrees of the Committee of Arrangement, vol. I, Decree of 19 November (2.111) 1864 on the manner of implementation of the new provisions on the landowners (DPKP, vol. LX11), Article 3.

³⁶ Collection of Ordinances of the Organising Committee vol. 1, pp. 51–54, Article 22.

³⁷ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

³⁸ Fyodor (Friedrich Wilhelm Rembert) Berg (1793–1874) was a Russian field marshal and the last governor of the Kingdom of Poland (1863–1874). Coming from a German-Baltic noble family, he received his military education in St. Petersburg and began his career during the Napoleonic Wars. His military experience included participation in the Russo-Turkish War (1828–1829) and the suppression of the November Uprising (1830–1831). He gained recognition as a military cartographer, leading the work of mapping the western territories of the Empire. As governor of the Kingdom of Poland, appointed in 1863 during the January Uprising, Berg pursued a policy of Russification and repression. Under his supervision, administrative reforms were carried out to fully integrate the Kingdom with Russia, including enfranchisement reform. His rule, which lasted until

Arcimovich and Vladimir Cherkasskiy. General-policeman Fyodor Trepov was also specially invited to this first historic meeting. The last session of the Organising Committee, closing the seven-year period of its functioning, was held on 31 March 1871. This final meeting was again attended by Governor Berg, who was accompanied by high-ranking government officials and a group of senators and secret councillors³⁹.

The Appointing Committee was endowed with wide-ranging powers that covered three main spheres of activity: peasant reform, administrative reorganisation and social control. Within the first sphere, the body supervised the comprehensive process of peasant enfranchisement: its tasks included regulating the issue of servitudes, settling disputes between landowners and peasants and organising the new structure of rural communes. The Committee also controlled the process of transferring land to the peasants and determining the amount of compensation due⁴⁰. In the administrative sphere, the Arranging Committee prepared and implemented changes in the functioning of government institutions, coordinated cooperation between local and central authorities in St. Petersburg, and drafted new legal regulations aimed at adapting the law in force in the Kingdom to Russian law⁴¹. The Committee's third major area of activity was control, which included overseeing the implementation of the Russification policy and coordinating administrative activities with the military authorities during the period of martial law. The Committee also oversaw the process of educational reorganisation, which was one of the key elements of the Russification policy. The Appointing Committee took the place of the Administrative Council in relation to administration in the country⁴². The Committee of Arrangement made its decisions public by publishing them in the Journal of Laws and the General Gazette.

In the functioning of the work of the Organising Committee, certain decision-making mechanisms and the executive structure played an important role. The voting system was based on the principle of simple majority, with the position of chairman being decisive in situations where votes were evenly distributed⁴³. A designated permanent member was responsible for coordinating and supervising the day-to-day work. The implementation of the decisions of the

his death in 1874, was characterised by the systematic dismantling of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland.

³⁹ J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁴⁰ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁴¹ Still under the supervision and direction of the Organising Committee was a special legal commission, set up in 1864 by a decree of Emperor Alexander II, to work out the main foundations of the future judicial reform and to issue a set of administrative regulations.

⁴² A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

⁴³ J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

Arrangement Committee followed a two-pronged approach, depending on the nature of the issues. In matters relating to peasant issues, implementation was the responsibility of specially appointed committees for peasant issues. Other issues, on the other hand, were within the competence of the Government Commissions. During the period of martial law in the Kingdom, a special position was held by the war chiefs, who also exercised supervision over the activities of the police authorities, which was an extension of their original powers.

The Appointment Committee functioned until the key tasks set by the Emperor were fulfilled. The main reason for the dissolution of this institution was to finalise the implementation of fundamental changes related to the enfranchisement of peasants⁴⁴. On 23 March 1871, Emperor Alexander II signed an order to close the Arrangement Committee⁴⁵. The powers of the Appointing Committee were taken over by the Governor, the relevant ministries, and the Committee for the Kingdom of Poland in St. Petersburg⁴⁶.

The project of administrative reform, created by Nikolai Milutin, was considered on 3 April 1865 by the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland⁴⁷, which, at its meeting on 22 May 1865, laid down the principles for drawing up individual projects for the reorganisation of gubernial and district institutions in the Kingdom. However, the reform of Milutin's project found an unexpected enemy in the person of Governor Berg. The latter sought to preserve the separateness and partial autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, against Milutin's wishes⁴⁸. The governor, on his own initiative, abolished the military detachments and several branches of the Warsaw police. By the end of 1865, 18 war-judicial commissions and 27 war-investigative commissions had been dissolved, as well as a permanent investigative commission situated at the Governor of the Kingdom⁴⁹. Subsequently, the Governor intended to increase the number of governorates in the Kingdom to eight or ten, but Milutin openly opposed this proposal. The two Russians also clashed over Berg's proposal to place all police units and institutions, independent of the civil administration, under the control of the Governor-General⁵⁰. The impasse in the Committee's work was only broken by Alexander II's order explicitly to support the reform of Milutin's project⁵¹.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 172.

⁴⁵ Order of 23 March 1871 to dissolve the Committee from 1 April (DPKP, vol. 71).

⁴⁶ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–199.

⁴⁷ A. Korobowicz, W. Witkowski, *Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego*, Warszawa 2017, p. 95.

⁴⁸ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna...*, p. 463.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 463–464.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 465.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

In the more than ten-year period of the reforms, three stages can be distinguished⁵². In the first, which lasted from 1864 to 1865, Russian officials were introduced into the most important organs of the Kingdom: the post of Minister of State Secretary Adam Leski was replaced by Valerian Platonov, and the chief director at the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, Alexander Ostrovsky, was replaced by Prince Vladimir Cherskaski⁵³. At the same time, the liquidation of “redundant” state organs began. The first was the Government Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, whose competence to supervise religions in the country was taken over by the Government Commission for Internal Affairs and Clergy⁵⁴. The Government Commission for Religious Denominations itself was abolished three years later⁵⁵, and its remaining tasks were taken over by the newly established Warsaw Scientific District, which was subordinate to the Imperial Ministry of Public Enlightenment. A new special Provisional Department was created at the Government Commission of Revenue and Treasury⁵⁶, responsible for preparing the reform of the tax system in the country⁵⁷. In addition, the Russian Excise Act⁵⁸ was introduced in the Kingdom, and a new Department for Treasury in the Kingdom of Poland was established under the Ministry of Finance⁵⁹, to ensure control over the Kingdom’s finances. In addition, the budget of the Empire was incorporated into the budget of the Kingdom, but as a separate, distinct part of it⁶⁰. In addition, in June 1865, a Provisional Committee was formed to carry out work on the reorganisation of gubernial and district institutions, under the chairmanship of Milutin⁶¹.

The second stage of unification, falling between 1866 and 1869, was marked by the most profound reforms in the country. In 1866, the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland was abolished, and in its place the Imperial Own Chancellery for the Kingdom of Poland was created⁶². In the same year, the Board of Posts in the Kingdom of Poland was fully subordinated to the Ministry of Posts

⁵² G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 234.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

⁵⁴ Order of 27 October (8 November) 1864 on the transfer of the Board of Religion to the Government Commission for Internal Affairs (DPKP, vol. 63, p. 53).

⁵⁵ Order of 15/27 May 1867 on the abolition of the Government Commission for Public Enlightenment and the creation of the Warsaw Scientific District (DPKP, vol. 67, p. 67).

⁵⁶ Order of the Ordinance Committee of 28 March (9 April) 1865 to establish a Provisional Government Revenue and Treasury Commission (DPKP, vol. 63, p. 63).

⁵⁷ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵⁸ Act of 7 (19) December 1866 on the Administration of Excise Revenue (DPKP, vol. 65, pp. 13–52).

⁵⁹ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 236; A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁶⁰ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 236.

⁶¹ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna...*, p. 470.

⁶² G. Smyk, *Likwidacja odrębności administracyjnej...*, p. 208.

and Telegraph in the Empire⁶³. The following year, 1867, came the abolition of the Council of State of the Kingdom⁶⁴. The Council of State was abolished, due to the separation of its de facto powers between the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland and the Ordinance Committee, and due to the incorporation of the national budget into the budget of the Empire⁶⁵. On 15 June 1867, the Administrative Council of the Kingdom⁶⁶ was abolished, and the Arrangement Committee and the Governor temporarily took over its powers⁶⁷. It also proceeded to abolish the Government Commission for Internal and Clerical Affairs⁶⁸, which, after being gradually extinguished and its powers transferred to new bodies, was closed in 1868⁶⁹. The Government Commission of Revenue and Treasury was also abolished, surrendering to the Ministry of Finance of the Empire all departments of the Treasury Board of the Kingdom⁷⁰, and the Board of Land and Water Communications of the Kingdom of Poland was abolished, surrendering the Board of Communications directly to the Ministry of Communications in St. Petersburg⁷¹. The Main Council of Construction, Surveying, Roads and Floats and the Industrial Council were abolished⁷². Finally, the Supreme Audit Chamber was abolished, and in its place the Audit Chambers in Warsaw, Lublin and Łomża were established⁷³.

With regard to the changes concerning gubernias and districts, the Provisional Committee for carrying out work on gubernial and district institutions, meeting

⁶³ Order of 19 (31) December 1866 to place the postal administration in the Kingdom of Poland under the direct control of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs in the Empire and to establish in the governorates of the Kingdom of Poland the Western Postal District (DPKP, vol. 66, pp. 275–277).

⁶⁴ Decree of 10 (22) March 1867 on the abolition of the Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 67, p. 35).

⁶⁵ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 238.

⁶⁶ Decree of 3 (15) June 1867 on the abolition of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 67, p. 89).

⁶⁷ A. Okolski, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁶⁸ Order of 20 July (1 August) 1867 on the abolition of the Government Home Affairs Commission (DPKP vol. 67, p. 227).

⁶⁹ Decree of 29 February (12 March) 1868 on the definitive abolition of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs and the submission of the boards remaining under it to the authority of the competent authorities in the Empire (DPKP, vol. 68, p. 19).

⁷⁰ Order of 28 March (9 April) 1867 on the abolition of the Government Commission of Revenue and Treasury in the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 67, pp. 53–45).

⁷¹ Decree of 25 February (9 March) 1867 on the abolition of the separate Board of Land and Water Communications in the Kingdom of Poland and the submission of communications in the Kingdom to the Ministry of Communications in the Empire (DPKP, vol. 66, p. 455).

⁷² G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 240.

⁷³ Decree of 28 December 1866 (9 January 1867) on the abolition of the Supreme Audit Chamber of the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 66, pp. 365–371).

under the chairmanship of Milutin⁷⁴, made a draft law on gubernial and district institutions, which introduced into the Kingdom the principles that operated in the Empire⁷⁵. The new law⁷⁶ divided the Kingdom of Poland into 10 gubernias, increasing their number from the previous five. In addition, the number of districts was increased from 39 to 85. Governors, as the highest-ranking officials in the gubernias, exercised comprehensive supervision over the administration, judiciary and police in the subordinate territory. Their main powers included the management of administrative and economic affairs, control over municipal government and educational and religious institutions. They also had significant powers over public security and personnel policy. Reporting directly to the Warsaw Governor-General, they retained considerable independence in administrative matters, which enabled them to effectively implement the unification policy of the Tsarist authorities.

Regarding the competences of the county chiefs, these exercised comprehensive supervision of security and administration at the local level. Their main competences included control over the land guards, inspections of subordinate administrative units and influence over the staffing of municipal posts, in particular the mayors. In emergency situations, they had the power to call in military support. They acted both as a single person and as part of a county board, which included their assistants and county specialists. They also presided ex officio over other county administrative bodies, such as benevolence councils and military duty offices.

The third and final stage of unification took place between 1870 and 1876. In 1870, the General Welfare Council was abolished⁷⁷. In 1871, the budget of the Kingdom was fully merged with that of the whole Empire⁷⁸. The last and longest-lasting body remained the Government Commission of Justice of the Kingdom. Due to differences in legislation between the Kingdom and the Empire, it was only after the judicial reform of 1876 that the Commission was abolished⁷⁹. In documents from the 1880s onwards, the name *Prywislinski Krai* (Vistula Country) began to appear, which was intended to marginalise the importance of the Kingdom in the Romanov state⁸⁰. The only institution that was not abolished

⁷⁴ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna...*, p. 470.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 472.

⁷⁶ Order of 19 (31 December) 1866 introducing a law on gubernial and district administration in the gubernias of the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 66, p. 115).

⁷⁷ Decree of 19 June (1 July) 1870 on the introduction of a law on the management of public charity establishments in the gubernias of the Kingdom of Poland (DPKP, vol. 67, pp. 195–197).

⁷⁸ G. Smyk, *Likwidacja odrębności administracyjnej...*, p. 207.

⁷⁹ Resolution of the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland of 30 June (12 July) 1876 on the liquidation of the Government Commission of Justice of the Kingdom of Poland (ZPKP, vol. 8, pp. 389–391).

⁸⁰ A. Korobowicz, W. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

remained the Procuratorate of the Kingdom, responsible for the property of the Treasury⁸¹.

After 1864, a new social order was introduced, which aimed to completely transform the existing social structures in the Kingdom of Poland. A key element of this change was the systematic weakening and marginalisation of the Polish intelligentsia, which had played an important role in nurturing independence traditions and inspiring patriotic movements. These measures were aimed not only at limiting the influence of the intellectual elite but also at eliminating them as potential opponents of Russian domination⁸². A thorough administrative transformation was a fundamental element of the measures whose overriding goal was the full unification of the Kingdom with the structures of the Russian Empire. The Russian authorities carried out a comprehensive reorganisation of the administrative apparatus, which included not only a structural modification, but also a redefinition of the competences and rules of operation of individual offices. This process was aimed at making the administrative institutions of the Kingdom as similar as possible to their counterparts functioning in the Empire.

The changes introduced were characterised by a significant fragmentation of administrative units through the creation of more gubernias and districts. This was accompanied by an expansion of police structures, which in practice meant a tightening of control over society in the Kingdom. This territorial and administrative reorganisation served not only managerial purposes, but above all as an instrument of political and national oppression.

The administrative reform went beyond mere bureaucratic reorganisation – it was an instrument for the gradual elimination of the institutional separateness of the Kingdom of Poland. Through the introduction of Russian administrative patterns, official procedures and official hierarchies, the Russian authorities aimed to create a unified system of governance to facilitate tighter control over Polish society. Administrative transformation was thus a key element of a broader unification policy aimed at blurring the differences between the Kingdom and the other parts of the Russian Empire⁸³. However, it should be pointed out that it was not only the rebellious Kingdom of Poland that met the above fate: the Grand Duchy of Finland, which had no independence tendencies, was also subjected to a broad policy of unification with the Empire⁸⁴.

⁸¹ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 241.

⁸² J.K. Targowski, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁸³ J. Kozłowski, *Reforma administracyjna...*, p. 481.

⁸⁴ G. Smyk, *Administracja publiczna...*, p. 232.

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ABSTRACT

Administrative reform in the Kingdom of Poland after the January Uprising (1863–1864) aimed to fully integrate the region into the Russian Empire. Following the failure of Polish efforts for autonomy, the Russian authorities systematically centralised governance, dissolving Polish institutions and replacing officials with Russians. Key reforms included the abolition of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland, the Council of State, and various government commissions. New administrative bodies such as the Committee for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland and the Appointing Committee were established to oversee governance and legal unification. The country was divided into new gubernias and districts, increasing Russian control over local administration. The reforms also affected Polish society, weakening the intelligentsia and increasing police oversight. By 1876, the administrative reform was almost complete, and the Kingdom was increasingly referred to as the Vistula Country, symbolising its reduced autonomy. This process paralleled similar Russian actions in Finland, reflecting a broader imperial policy of unification.

Keywords: Kingdom of Poland; January Uprising; administration

ABSTRAKT

Reforma administracyjna w Królestwie Polskim po powstaniu styczniowym (1863–1864) miała na celu pełną integrację regionu z Imperium Rosyjskim. Po niepowodzeniu polskich starań o autonomię władze rosyjskie systematycznie centralizowały zarządzanie, rozwiązując polskie instytucje i zastępując urzędników Rosjanami. Kluczowe reformy obejmowały zniesienie Sekretariatu Stanu Królestwa Polskiego, Rady Stanu i różnych komisji rządowych. Powołano nowe organy administracyjne, takie jak Komitet do Spraw Królestwa Polskiego i Komitet Urządzający, które miały nadzorować zarządzanie i unifikację prawną. Kraj został podzielony na nowe gubernie i powiaty, zwiększając rosyjską kontrolę nad lokalną administracją. Reformy dotyczyły również polskiego społeczeństwa, osłabiając inteligencję i zwiększając nadzór policyjny. Do 1876 r. reforma administracji była prawie zakończona, a Królestwo było coraz częściej nazywane Krajem Nadwiślańskim, co symbolizowało jego zmniejszoną autonomię. Proces ten był zbieżny z podobnymi rosyjskimi działaniami w Finlandii, odzwierciedlając szerszą imperialną politykę unifikacji.

Słowa kluczowe: Królestwo Polskie; powstanie styczniowe; administracja

