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"SHOW THE HIGHEST CONDITION TO EMIGRATE":

EXODUS OF JEWS FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

MICROHISTORY OF SELECTED DETTLES IN PODLASIA

Abstract: In 1881–1914 from the Empire Russia, 2 million Jews emigrated, of which 78 percent settled in the States United. The article focuses on local dimension of the great migration. As a student case study, two places were selected most of them in Podlasie (Bielsk and Orla) inhabited by Jews. An attempt was made estimating the level of Jewish migration and to show her anatomy, including the issue related to obtaining a passport, legally crossing the border and authorities for the exodus of Jews.

Keywords: emigration, Jews, Imperial Russian, Podlasie, Grodno province ska.

Abstract: In 1881–1914, two million Jews emigrated from the Russian Empire, with 78 per cent of them settling in the United States of America. The article focuses on the local dimension of the great migration. Two towns in Podlasie (Bielsk and Orle), mostly inhabited by Jews, serve as the case study. An attempt is made to estimate the size of the Jewish migration and to reveal its anatomy, including questions related to getting passports, illegal border crossing, and the attitude of the authorities to the Jewish exodus.

Keywords: emigration, Jews, Russian Empire, Podlasie, Grodno Gubernia.

Migration is one of the most important formative chapters in history the Jewish people. It is of particular importance in recent history the period between 1881 and 1914 when from Central and Eastern Europe 3 million Jews emigrated, including 2 million from the lands of the Russian Empire. Russia was then the country with the largest number of Jews in the world, estimated at 4 million people in 1880. and 5.2 million people in 1897,

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which means that half of all Jews lived there. Almost 80% Jewish migrants from Russia left for the United States people who were perceived by those seeking better living conditions gane almost like "the promised land." Only in the years 1881–1914 to the Rican ports arrived 22 million migrants, including 2.05 million Jews (9.4%), of which three out of four were from Russia (1.56 million) 1 . In the same period, nearly half a million Jewish migrants from there country went to the countries of Western Europe, South America and Palestine.

The end of the great migration brought the outbreak of World War I and after it Completed, it no longer reached a similar scale, mainly due to restrictions introduced by the United States. The period before 1914 it was therefore crucial for the formation of new diasporas in both countries Americas and Western Europe, which are now - next to Israel - the largest the largest centers of the Jewish population in the world. The migration of Jews from the Russian Empire remains one of the important research topics, although much more often undertaken by foreign historians ². In Poland, original works that constitute would make a significant contribution to the problem, there is still little ³. Already more than two decades ago, this was pointed out by Piotr Wróbel, who wrote that "research on migration of the Jewish population, they seem neglected not only in Poland" ⁴.

¹ S. Kuznets, *Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States. Background and Structure*, in: *East European Jews in America 1880–1920. Immigration and Adaptation*, edited by JS Gurock, New York – London 1998, pp. 38–42. Kuznets article, originally published in 1975. in *Perspectives in America History*, remains the most comprehensive statistical with a study of the topic of Jewish emigration from Russia. The author, born in Pinsk, was winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics.

² The classic of Jewish historiography was one of the first to deal with the topic of migration Szymon Dubnow in incl. *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. From the Earliest Times Until the Present Day*, vol. 1-3, Philadelphia 1916-1920. Later literature on the subject it is very extensive. The latest publications include: Y. Spitzer, *Pogroms, Networks, and Migration. The Jewish Migration from the Russian Empire to the United States 1881–1914*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2016; HR Diner, *Roads Taken. The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*, New Haven 2015; G. Alroey, *An Unpromising Land. Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century*, Stanford 2014.

³ More recent works include: A. Żukowski, *Consequences of anti-Jewish policy in tsarist Russia. Emigration of Jews to South Africa at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries*, "History Modern" 27, 2014; M. Starczewski, *From the history of economic emigration. Agents in exile on in the Polish lands before 1914*, PH 103, 2012, 1; GM Kowalski, *Legal regulation of exits- in the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1815–1914*, CPH 55, 2003, 2; K. Zieliński, *Jewish Emigration ska from Russia and the Kingdom of Poland to the United States of America (1881–1918). Outline issues*, "Jewish History Quarterly" 2002, No. 1.

⁴ P. Wróbel, *Migrations of Polish Jews. An attempt at synthesis*, "Biuletyn ŻIH" 1998, 1-2, p. 3.

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While since then, foreign historiography has done a lot to shed new ones light on the issue of the great Jewish migration at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, among Polish historians, the subject still requires in-depth studies the dees. In recent years, port statistics have been made available America, which offers unprecedented opportunities to explore the scale migration in particular years, origin of migrants, their structure age, etc. The availability of archives in countries is also important Eastern Europe, which are still insufficiently used by Polish researchers.

This article has several goals. First, showing the local dimension of the great emigration from the Russian Empire. She is known absolute number of Jewish migrants, but we have no data for individual cities and towns. In this text, using analysis of data from American ports and archives of compatriots, stored at YIVO in New York, an attempt was made to estimate the number of migrants from selected shtetls of Podlasie, then entering in the Grodno governorate. Second, the article examines the anatomy legal and illegal migrations (approx. 20-25% and 75-80, respectively percent departures), including issues related to obtaining documents

travelers and their costs, travel to ports, ways of crossing border with Germany, through which most Jews left. Shown also the system of transferring emigrants across the "green border", operating on agents commissioned by large shipbuilding companies out. Thirdly, the policy of the Russian government towards the emissary grace that was forbidden under applicable law. For this purpose documents from the Russian State Archives were used Of St. Petersburg and the National Historical Archives Belarus in Grodno.

The scale and directions of Jewish migration from Russia In 1854. he came to the port of New Orleans by cruise from Hamburg thirty-six-year-old Mosze Tannenbaum, an emigrant from Bielsko⁵, a district town in the Grodno governorate, with approx.

3 thousand inhabitants⁶. It was probably the first time that

⁵ Since 1919, the city has been officially called Bielsk Podlaski, it was previously used first segment.

⁶ *New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1813–1963*, data from Ancestry.com based on *Selected Passenger and Crew Lists and Manifests*, National Archives, Washington, DC

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a resident of this Podlasie shtetl went on a journey through the tick It is not known what this artist was, because such a profession was included in his migration form, he was looking for the third largest city at that time the Americans, or whether he settled there permanently. But he belonged to a very small group of inhabitants of the Russian Empire who at that time she decided to travel so far. In the years 1850–1859 only 542 citizens came to the United States

Russian⁷. The number of Jews in the United States was still relatively low big, but it started to grow and in 1880 was about 250 thousand. people, incl about 40 thousand are migrants from the lands that used to be part of the spolitej⁸. About half of them were Russian citizens, of whom about 15 thousand arrived in the years 1871–1880. It was, however, a prelude mass migration⁹.

The real exodus began only in the 1880s.

and with varying intensity it lasted until 1914. In 34 years with the Russian Empire- 2 million Jews emigrated, of which 1.56 million (78%) settled itself, as we mentioned in the introduction, in the United States, incl as many as one million in the years 1903–1914¹⁰. If we assume that in the years 1881–1914 3.2 million people emigrated from the lands of the Russian Empire, which is a percentage Among all emigrants, the number of Jews amounted to 61.7%, and as much as 48.5%. citizens of Russia who settled in the United States at that time were followers of the Mosaic religion. In the course of the last In the two decades of the 19th century, their participation in Russian migration to the USA reached

71 percent, which shows that there is readiness among the Jewish population to emigrate, it developed the earliest.

Although the tsarist administration wrote about the Jews that "they were leaving whole families and show the highest propensity to emigrate", this is massive the departures were not only a Jewish phenomenon¹¹. They decided on them also, among others Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns and Germans Łżańskis, whose total share in the total of non-Jewish emigration in

7 Russian State Historical Archives (hereinafter: RGIA), f. 1276, op. 2, 114, k. 138.

8 *Jewish Hometown Associations and Family Circles in New York. The WPA Yiddish Writers' Group Study*, ed. H. Kliger, Bloomington 1992, p. 46. The first synagogue of Polish Jews was established in 1819 in Charleston. And Walaszek, "Crying at the beginning of the journey can bring only a misfortune" - the departure of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe before the Great nA, in *Amerykomania. Jubilee book offered to professor Andrzej Mania*, vol. 2, ed. W. Bernacki, A. Walaszek, Krakow 2012, p. 925.

9 S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 43.

10 Ibid, p. 43; VV Obolensky-Ossinsky, *Emigration From and Immigration into Russia*, in: *International Migrations. Interpretations*, vol. 2, ed. WF Willcox, New York 1931, pp. 521–522.

11 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheets 26, 68.

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1899–1914 was 85.1 percent. Ethnic Russians did not show so much migration tendencies and their percentage in this group reached 13.3 percent. ¹²

During the same period, nearly half a million Russian Jews chose directions of emigration other than the United States, including 10 percent in general Jewish immigrants in European countries, 8 percent North America (excluding the US) and South, 2.3 percent. Africa and almost 2 percent. Palestine.

The size of departures broken down by the most important countries was as follows as follows: United Kingdom (120,000), Argentina (75,000), Canada (65,000) thousand), Palestine (43 thousand), France (40 thousand), South Africa (36 thousand), Germany (21,000), Egypt (12,000) and Belgium (8,000) ¹³.

In the countries of Western Europe, Russian Jews most often settled in large cities: London, Paris, Berlin and the Rhineland ¹⁴.

We don't have detailed data to show what it looked like dynamics of migration to these countries, broken down into individual years.

It is worth noting, however, that it was actually lower, because some of the migrants settling in, among others in Great Britain and Argentina after at some time she traveled to the United States. A comprehensive estimate this phenomenon is impossible, but it can be assumed that it was the case

¹² S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 44.

¹³ *Краткая еврейская энциклопедия*, vol. 7, Иерусалим 1994, p. 384.

¹⁴ D. Feldman, *Mr. Lewinstein Goes to Parliament. Rethinking the History and Historiography of Jewish Immigration*, "East European Jewish Affairs" 2017, 2-3, p. 134.

Table 1. Migration of Jews to the USA against the background of total migration from Russia in 1881–1914

Period

Migration of Jews from Russia to the USA

Complete migration from Russia

Size

(thousand)

Average number

migrants

annually (thousand)

Size

(thousand)

The participation of Jews

migrants

to the USA (per cent)

1881–1889

139.5

15.5

194.5

71.5

1890–1898

279.1

31

389.1
71.7
1899–1902
136.8
39.2
344.3
39.7
1903–1907
482
96.4
940.7
51.2
1908–1910
186.2
62.1
464.3
40.1
1911–1914
333.5
83.4
873.1
38.2
1881–1914
1,557.1
45.8
3 206
48.5

Source: S. Kuznets, *Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States. Background and Structure*, in: *East European Jews in America 1880–1920. Immigration and Adaptation*, edited by JS Gurock, New York-London 1998, pp. 39,43; RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheet 138.

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tens of thousands of Jews who, according to the American statistics, were classified as residents of the countries where they lived directly before going to the USA ¹⁵.

Jews chose countries that experienced a period of rapid development, where there was a shortage of manpower, which made it an attractive place for departures. A particularly popular destination outside Europe (except USA) was Argentina, whose economy grew incredibly fast and in the years 1857–1914 4.6 million emigrants settled there ¹⁶. Emigration of Jews to this country were supported by the Anglo-Jewish Association in London via the financier Maurice Hirsch, the Jewish Colonization Society, which a year later obtained the right to operate in Russia. The organization dealt with, inter alia, purchase of land for settlement and in the first decade of its activity, it facilitated the emigration of 6,000 Russian Jews to Argentina. It also pursued a liberal migration policy to Canada, although trips to this country began only in the years of the nineties of the 19th century and their level has never come close to that valid for the USA. The number of Jews in Canada increased from 500 in 1851 up to approx. 100 thousand in 1914, more than half of them emigrated from the Russian Empire ¹⁷. However, it is not very popular among Jews was Brazil, where until 1914, during the "Brazilian fever", about 110 thousand Poles ¹⁸. This was mainly due to the fact that migration to this country was of an agricultural nature and they mainly left Polish peasants.

Another direction of emigration was South Africa, which it became especially popular with Jews from the Kaunas governorate after its discovery there of diamonds and gold ¹⁹. In 1869. Samuel Marx came to Cape Town

from the Lithuanian town of Władysławów, considered a Jewish priest niera in this country. Over the next four decades, they followed suit

¹⁵ Until 1906, US statistics classified a migrant based on the country they were from he came from, and in the following years on the basis of his last whereabouts. S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 37. The data of Walerian Obolenski show that in the years 1900–1910 as many as 30 thousand Russian Jews residing in Great Britain and 8,000. in Canada to the USA. ВВ Оболенский, *Международные и межконтинентальные миграции в довоенной России и СССР*, Москва 1928, p. 13.

¹⁶ A. Walaszek, *Migration of Europeans 1650–1914*, Kraków 2007, p. 240.

¹⁷ G. Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews. A People's Journey*, Toronto 2008, pp. 109, 134; R. Margolis, *Jewish Roots, Canadian Soil. Yiddish Culture in Montreal, 1905-1945*, Montreal 2011, p. 18.

¹⁸ M. Michalik-Sztumska, *Polish Emigration in Brazil. The state of research on the issue*, "Scientific Works of the Jan Długosz in Częstochowa" 2010, 11, p. 323.

¹⁹ HR Diner, *Roads Taken*, pp. 34-36. On the migration of Polish Jews to the South day of Africa: A. Żukowski, *Jews from Polish lands in South Africa at the turn of the 19th century and the 20th century*, "Biuletyn ŻIH" 1994/1995, 4–2.

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thousands of other migrants from Lithuania. According to the census of 1911

47 thousand people lived in South Africa Jews, many of whom

Most of them were Lithuanians, although there were also Jews from Podlasie

hay. An example is Nachum Mendel Skaryszewski from Orla, who

first he emigrated to Palestine, from where in 1911 He moved to

South Africa. After a few years, he was joined by his brother, sister and

several other residents of his native shtetl ²⁰. Migration level

Jews was so significant that already in 1895. there were voices calling

until the border is closed to them, and South Africa playfully

was called the "colony of Lithuania" ²¹.

Relatively little popularity before the outbreak of World War I

Palestine, which was part of the Ottoman Empire, enjoyed this

manski, where in the first (1882-1903) and second (1904-1914)

aliji came over 40 thousand. Russian Jews, including 23,000 in years

1905–1914 ²². They came mainly from the Ukrainian lands, in the most

more affected by pogroms at the beginning of the 20th century. Funds

numerous Zionist organizations gathered to buy land in Palestine,

and one of the largest was founded in 1912. Białystok Society

Land purchase, supporting the departures of Białystok Jews ²³. As it follows

according to the findings of Gur Alroey, emigration to Palestine was caused by no

only the idea of Zionism, but this area was also seen as a potential

an attractive place to live, and thus the reasons for emigration

tions did not differ from those related to going to the USA ²⁴. Interesting

there is also the level of returns from Palestine, possibly emigration

from there to the US or another country was very high and in the period before

at the outbreak of World War I, it ranged from 50 to 75 percent. ²⁵ It was

it is from a difficult climate, poverty, limited possibilities of finding

work, relative proximity to the migrants' place of origin, but also

disenchantment with Zionism ²⁶.

²⁰ E. Rabinowitz, *Personal Journeys. From One Photograph to Journeys of Research and Discovery*, Avotayline Online, August 31, 2016, <http://avotaynuonline.com/2016/08/from-one-photograph-to-journeys-of-research-and-discovery> (access: February 17, 2020).

²¹ A. Żukowski, *Konsekwencje*, p. 128; HR Diner, *Roads Taken*, p. 36.

²² G. Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*, p. 110.

²³ R. Kobrin, *Żydowski Białystok and its diaspora*, Sejny – Białystok 2014, pp. 67–68.

²⁴ G. Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*, pp. 61, 233.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 211-217, 236.

²⁶ In the case of emigration to the USA, the rate of Jewish returns was around 5% and was many times lower than in the case of, for example, returns of Poles or Lithuanians, JD Sarana, *The Myth of No Return. Jewish Return Migration to Eastern Europe, 1881–1914*, *American Jewish History* 71, 1981, 2, p. 256.

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How many shtetl residents emigrated:
the case of Bielsko and Orla

Migration researchers from the Russian Empire do not have sources that would allow for a detailed determination of the level of departures from individual general governorates. In Russia, unlike Austria-Hungary, there is no statistical data on the size of migration, grants and their place of residence. Also state officials target groups did not collect information about the provinces they came from arriving. This means that we will probably never know the details data on the volume of migration from Russia, broken down by province. I am not aware of any research that would attempt its exact calculations for selected shtetls, while the estimates concern particular regions of Russia can only be a contribution to topic ²⁷.

Researchers agree, however, that emigration is the greatest included Jews living in the so-called North-West country, i.e. the governorate not Lithuanian and Belarusian ²⁸. According to the census data from 1897. 1.42 million Jews lived there, which constituted 27.3% of the total number of Jews in the city. their Russian of the population and 14.1 percent. inhabitants of this region. It was the highest of the Jewish population throughout the country (apart from the Kingdom of Poland, where 1.31 million followers of the Mosaic religion lived). Including this one In the part of Russia, the share of Jews in the urban population was the highest, reaching 52.6 percent in cities and 58.2 percent. in towns ²⁹. These lands belonged to the poorest in the entire settlement zone and beyond a few islands (including Białystok), developed more slowly than, for example, the Ukrainian lands. According to

estimates of Joel Perlmann as much as 53 percent. Jews emigrating from the Empire Russian around 1900 came from the governorates of Vilnius, Kaunas, of the day and the neighboring Suwałki and Łomża provinces, although 15 percent lived in this area. Jewish population of the zone

²⁷ In the case of the Kingdom of Poland, he made an attempt to estimate the emigration of Jews Konrad Zieliński, however, his calculations were based on collected data from 1909–1913 by the International Labor Office and the National Bureau of Economic Research from Nowe York. The obtained number (16.7 thousand people) can only be related to legal migration, which is it constituted a small part of the total migration, K. Zieliński, op. cit., pp. 28-33.

²⁸ S. Kuznets, op. cit., pp. 117-119; J. Perlmann, *The Local Geographic Origins of Russian-Jewish Immigrants, Circa 1900*, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, August 2006, p. 12, <http://www.levyinstitute.org/publications/the-local-geographic-origins-of-russian-jewish-immigrants-circa-1900> (accessed: 12 February 2020).

²⁹ S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 116. Interestingly, the ratio was the highest in this region Jewish men to women, which amounted to 1.08 (for comparison, in the provinces of southern 1.02, in the Kingdom of Poland 1.06).

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settlement ³⁰ . At the same time, 13 percent. migrants came from the rest seven provinces of the Kingdom of Poland, 4 percent from the Vitebsk governorate and Mogilevskaya, 8 percent. Mińsk and Płock, 15 percent from Wołyńska, Podolska, Kiev and 7 percent. from the south-eastern governorates. With the so-called The Northwestern country not only came from the most migrants, but these areas - next to the Płock and Suwałki Governorate - remained the earliest, because from the beginning of the 1880s, travel ³¹ . Only in the next decade did migration on a larger scale took over the southern governorates ³² . The pioneering role of Jewish immigrants The chronology also indicates skis from this part of the Russian Empire the formation of compatriots in the USA. Although in 1855 by Jews from Poland Kowa was established Krakauer Society, but already in 1865. Jews from Biala gostoku founded Bialystoker Unterstutzungs Verein, the first of many then the landsmanshafts of Białystok. In the future it turned out to be one of the most powerful of all landsmanship, i.e. organizations created by former inhabitants of a given place in Europe ³³ . Before 1882, and therefore on the threshold of great emigration, 87 counties of Jews from Eastern Europe were already operating. The landsmanship of Podlasie shtetls was built quite earlier. In 1888. 18 Jews from Bielsko established Bielsker Bruderlicher Unterstutzungs Verein, whose first president was 23 year-old Mike Rubin, staying in the USA since 1882. ³⁴ In the following years counties were established, incl. Siemiatycz (1890), Narewki (1890), Krynek (1890) and Orla (1892) ³⁵ . Before Jewish migrants from a given locality could set up an organization, at least two conditions had to be met: presence of at least a few people who know each other, coming from shtetl, and several years of stay in the USA, sufficient for fuel teaching language and ensuring a minimum material base ³⁶ .

³⁰ J. Perlmann, op. cit., p. 12. The author defined the provinces from which the migrants came those, based on the analysis of 8897 randomly selected migration forms, in which the place of their last stay was entered. It should be emphasized that this is only statistical sample.

³¹ Y. Spitzer, op. cit., p. 4.

³² HR Diner, *Roads Taken* , p. 30.

³³ D. Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880–1939* , Cambridge 1997, p. 47; R. Kobrin, op. cit., p. 93.

³⁴ YIVO, RG 1046, Bielsker Bruderlicher Unterstutzungs Verein, Secretary's Report, May 1st , 1938, b.pag. ; *US Naturalization Records Indexes, 1791–1992* , available at Ancestry.com.

³⁵ YIVO, RG 1023, box 2/10, 40th Anniversary of the Independent Orler Benevolent Society 1892-1932, f. Pag.

³⁶ More: W. Konończuk, *Polish Jews' Association in the United States. Hundred case study of landsmanschafts Bielsk Podlaski and Orla (1888–1993)* , "Kwartalnik Historii Of the Jews "2019, 1.

Let us now look at the size of emigration on the example of two tli, located in the western part of the Grodno governorate: district Bielsko and the small-town Orla ³⁷ located 10 km away . Both localities were typical examples of Jewish settlements in this part the settlement zone which showed the highest migration dynamics. Both were of a commercial and agricultural character, with developed crafts, without industry, but in the case of the former with administrative functions tions. According to the census of 1897. Bielsk was inhabited

7,464 people, including 4,062 Jews (54.4%), and Orla, 3,003 inhabitants, including 2,310 Jews (76.9%)³⁸. In the whole Ujazd (district) Bielsko there were 24,000 Jews, which constituted 14.9 percent. all residents. Detailed specification of how many Jewish inhabitants of Bielsko and Orla emigrated, it is impossible, because there is no precise and comprehensive statistics. However, it is possible to estimate the scale of their trips to the States United States thanks to databases of American ports. Most importantly- the first of them was New York, where people were arriving at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries about 80 percent migrants, and Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore. Available Passenger lists contain information about the town from which date, age and nationality.

In order to determine the size of migration from Bielsko and Orla, the letters were analyzed passengers of all US ports receiving migrants from Europe³⁹. Tedious calculations allowed to determine how it seems the quite exact scale of departures of the inhabitants of both towns (Jews and Christians) in the years 1885–1914, that is, in the period when there was emigration the highest. However, the obtained data are incomplete due to the imperfect the objection of the American Migration Statistics. In particular, it concerns this is the period before 1892 when the main reception center was built expatriates on the island of Ellis. Not with the names of some passengers

³⁷ It was decided to choose these two places because of ... their short duration and simple names, which reduced the possibility of mistakes when spelling them by Rican migration officials. Other places in the region have the names na so complex (e.g. Ciechanowiec, Drohiczyn, Kleszczele or Siemiatycze) that - after their skewed enrollment in migration forms - are often impossible to do to be identified.

³⁸ *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской Империи 1897 г. : Гродненская губерния*, Санкт Петербург 1904.

³⁹ Passenger lists are available on the following websites: www.libertyellisfoundation.org, operated by the Ellis Island Foundation and containing data the port in New York from 1892–1924; The National Archives aad.archives.gov/aad; Castle Garden <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/ny-castle-garden-ellis-island/>, covering the port of New York until 1890; and the Ancestry.com portal, which enables provides access to data from all US ports.

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data about the place of residence are provided or they are impossible to obtain read from the original document. Moreover, migrants from the Empire In Russian, they sometimes gave not so much the place of last residence, what to stay, even if it was only temporary. Finally, the spelling the names of both places were often distorted as a result of misspellings the record by migration officials, which required various variants (e.g. as "Bilsk" and "Orle", i.e. the names of both in Yiddish, as well as, inter alia, "Byelsk", "Gielsk", "Orlja", "Orlya")⁴⁰.

Despite these reservations, the obtained data allow us to establish a fairly faithful one a picture of the emigration of the inhabitants of both towns. So what is the result of them?

Between 1885⁴¹ and in 1914 emigrated to the United States

There were 1,639 inhabitants of Bielsko, including 1,173 Jews (71.5%), and 731 Orla residents, including 563 Jews (77%). Every year

So 40 Jewish inhabitants of Bielsko and 20 Orla lived. Summit

dies fell in the years 1901–1914, when 85 percent of them left the country. all Jewish emigrants from Bielsko and 91 percent. from Orla. For a huge

six emigrants from both Podlasie shtetls with the destination port on the other side of the ocean was New York, where 90.5 percent sailed. Bielskie Jews and 93.1 percent. Orłański.

Comparing the level of migration of Jews and Christians in relation to proportions of both denominations, it can be concluded that Jewish migration was significant not bigger in Bielsko and similar in Orła. At the same time, it should be noted that emigration of Bielsko Jews to the USA was proportionally higher than foreign grace of Jews from the Russian Empire. Until 1914 across the ocean 28.9 percent emigrated Jewish population of Bielsko according to its number from 1897. For Jewish emigrants throughout Russia the percentage of migrants to all countries was 28.4%. population (in 1897 there were 5.2 million Jews, of whom emigrated 1.48 million)⁴². In the case of Orła, this percentage was slightly lower than for of the entire country and amounted to 24.4 percent.

⁴⁰ Other variants of the spelling of the names Bielsko and Orła were taken into account provided that that the data in the document made it possible to indisputably identify these places.

A certain difficulty is the presence of a town called Bielsk in the Płock province kiej and Orła in the Lidzki powiat (both much smaller than Bielsk and Orła in Podlasie). Wow-time, other data (e.g.

surname that allows you to associate a given person with a family member who emigrated earlier). When there was no information about the nationality of an emigrant, practically in everyone case, it was possible to establish it by name and surname.

⁴¹ Previous data do not show the presence of migrants from Bielsko and Orła, though it is known that six people emigrated among the founders of Bielsko-Biała before 1885

⁴² Data from: S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 38.

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Table 2. Emigration of inhabitants of Bielsko and Orła to the USA in the years 1885–1914

1885–1891	1885–1891	1892–1900
1892-1900	1901-1905	
1901-1905	1906-1910	
1906–1910	1911–1914	
1911–1914		
Together		
BIELSK		
The Jews		
48		
123		
354		
429		
219		
1173		
Christians		
0		
19		
90		
220		
137		
466		
Together		
48		
142		
444		
649		
356		
1639		
ORLA		
The Jews		
4		

46
153
192
168
563
Christians
0
8
19
61
80
168
Together
4
54
172
253
248
731

Source: Own calculations based on US ports statistics.

It should be emphasized that the above calculations do not give the full picture Jewish emigration from both localities, and only provide information information about confirmed newcomers to the United States. Uses-the scanned numbers are certainly far from complete for several reasons. Firstly, as already mentioned, in relation to some of the migration documents, However, the record of a person's place of origin is unclear or it was written distorted. Thus, it made it impossible it is the identification of all emigrants from both places. Secondly, the data included in the table do not include migration from Bielsko and Orla to other countries, which - if data for departures of Jews from the Empire are accepted Russian - was 22 percent. all migrants. In case of We have source confirmation of emigration in both surveyed towns Jews living there to Argentina, South Africa and Palestine ⁴³ . Third, many Jews from smaller towns were leaving the most first to larger cities, then emigrate from there abroad nothing. As a result, American migration statistics often show their whereabouts, not of origin, appeared. In case of Bielsko and Orla, such a natural center was Białystok ⁴⁴, 50 km away .

⁴³ For example: in 1905, Aryeh Levin from Orla (1885-1969) emigrated to Palestine, in later years a famous rabbi and teacher; in 1907, Bielski left for Argentina Jew Dawid Abraham Gail (R. Gail, *The Gail Family. From Bielsko to Argentina and the USA* , "Bielski Hostineć" 2019, 2, pp. 63–64); in 1911 the above-mentioned Nachum Mendel Skaryszewski, and shortly after him, several other Orla residents emigrated to South Africa (E. Rabinowitz, op. Cit.).

⁴⁴ An example may be Pinchas Chrabołowski from Bielsko, who settled first in Białystok to emigrate from there to New York in 1889, M. Gordon, *Biel-ska family Chrabołowski* , "Bielski Hostineć" 2010, 1, pp. 31–32.

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Fourth, estimating the migration from individual localities it is also possible thanks to the data on the number of individual members counties in the United States. Researchers believe that on average what the third or fourth Jewish immigrant belonged to the landsmanszaft ⁴⁵ . All the Bielsko counties in the 1930s were members about 570 people born in Bielsko, and about 440 people born in Orla in Orla (membership in the landsmanszafta was also possible through a marriage with a person from a given shtetl) ⁴⁶ . And the numbers

these apply only to the compatriots in New York, and it is known that the brave organization of Orla Jews was also active in Chicago. Summarizing, the data presented in the table above confirm the mass character of the emigration of Jews from Bielsko and Orla, but at the same time allow for a comprehensive assessment of them. Taking into account all the reservations it seems that the numbers of migrants presented in the above table those who left Bielsk and Orla in the years 1885–1914 can be picked up by 30-35 percent This can be a confirmation that the level of departures Jews from the village in the so-called The Northwest country was much higher than the level of Jewish migration from other regions in the choking. The data of the then authorities also provide a basis for such a thesis Bielsko County. We have an interesting report from March 1910, prepared by Bielsko and a *lawyer* (police chief) on request administration of the Grodno governorate. He reported that emigration abroad from the poviat under his responsibility began "20-25 years ago due to the sufficient financial resources [of residents] and lack of work " and that those who departed choose "mostly America" ⁴⁷ . In the document There were also reports of the land chief of the Bielska, who wrote that emigration had taken on a mass scale, because "now annually leaves up to 2 percent. the population of the region ". The report also states that "one can expect further development of emigration due to the lack of enough jobs in the country " ⁴⁸ .

⁴⁵ *Jewish Hometown Associations* , p. 30; S. Sorkin, *Bridges to an American City. A Guide to Chicago's Landsmanshaften 1870–1990* , New York 1993, pp. Xiii.

⁴⁶ The number of members was determined on the basis of the archives of valid in YIVO: RG 1046 (Bielsker Bruderlicher Unterstutzungs Verein); RG 1023 (Independent Orla Benevolent Society); RG 1400 (Orla Branch of Workmen's Circle) and WPA Yiddish Writer's Group Study of 1938, available on the Jewish Genealogical Society: <https://jgsny.org/index.php/searchable-databases/indexes-to-jewish-organizations/wpa-yiddish-writer-s-group-study-1938-39/yiddish-directory-search> (access: 19 XII 2019). More on this subject: W. Konończuk, op. cit., pp. 183-185.

⁴⁷ National Historical Archives of Belarus in Grodno (hereinafter: NHAB), f. 103, op. 1, 4, pp. 25–26, Об эмиграционном движении в уездах Гродненской губернии.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 77v – 78.

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Collected data of emigrants, provided upon entry to the USA, they also allow to determine their age structure. Let's follow her thus in the case of Bielsko Jews who emigrated in the years 1885–1914. The vast majority of them were young people, as much as 59 percent. of them did from 16 to 30 years old. Children up to 7 years old constituted 11% of emigrants, adults over 50 only 4 percent Age structure distribution Jewish emigrants from Bielsko are presented in the table below. Almost it corresponded exactly to the age structure of Jews emigrating from Russia to the United States - people under the age of 13 accounted for 25.3%, aged 14–46 - 69.6%, and over 45 - 5.1%. ⁴⁹

Table 3. Age of Jewish immigrants from Bielsko to the USA in 1885–1914

Age of the emigrant (in years)
0–7
8-15
16-20
21-30
31–40
41–50

Above
50
Percentage of all
emigrants
11
11
31.5
27.5
11
4
4

Source: Own calculations based on US ports statistics.

Besides the paradigm of pogroms—
reasons for migration

In April 1881 in Jelizawietgrad in the Kherson Governorate there was pogrom, the first in a series of similar events that followed the next three years took place mainly in the territories of skis. The result was a wave of Jewish refugees to Austria-Hungary.

The border town of Brody has become the main concentration of refugees, where approx. 3 thousand people gathered this summer. From August to December 1881, with the help of the Alliance Israel Universelle, approx. 1.8 thousand of them managed to emigrate to the USA ⁵⁰. However, this did not solve the problem and already in June 1882, 14.5 thousand people were registered in this city. Jews from Russia, and in the whole of Galicia, 24 thousand. ⁵¹ Brody, which also in later years were an important stop for Russian Jews, they became one from the symbols of their exodus.

⁴⁹ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheet 139v.; M. Weisser, *A Brotherhood of Memory. Jewish Landsmanshaftn in the New World*, Ithaca-London 1989, p. 26.

⁵⁰ B. Kuzmany, *Brody. A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth*, Leiden – Boston 2017, pp. 235-236.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 237; Z. Szajkowski, *How the Mass Migration to America Began*, "Jewish Social Studies" 4, 1942, p. 299.

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In earlier studies on Jewish migration from the Russian Empire, ski school, it was assumed that pogroms were its main cause. Nowadays most researchers consider economic issues to be the more important determinants population and demographic (overpopulation) ⁵². The crowning argument is the fact that the first wave of pogroms (1881–1884) did not affect the territories of chodnich ⁵³, where - as mentioned - the migration started first

and took the greatest size. It is also worth noting that the phenomenon mass departures of Jews did not concern only the Russian Empire,

but also neighboring Austria-Hungary and Romania. From the Habsburgs, where 2.2 million Jewish people lived, only to the USA in 1881–18

In 1914, 380 thousand emigrated. ⁵⁴ Level of migration in relation to the whole the country's Jewish population was 1/3 lower than in Russia, but

it should be noted that Jews enjoyed civil rights there incomparably larger and that it was a country free from pogroms ⁵⁵.

On the other hand, the second wave of pogroms in 1903–1906, when it took place 657 such events, in which over 3,000 people died Jews,

had an impact on the increase in emigration from Russia ⁵⁶. As is clear from recent research by Yannay Spitzer, in the areas covered by the pogrom at the beginning of the 20th century

mami, the level of migration to the US in 1906–1914 was 23 percent. high-

compared to areas where there were no pogroms⁵⁷. No
by chance, the number of departures in this period was the highest (in

⁵² One of the first to draw attention to this was Simon Kuznets (cited above). With the most more recent works, including: G. Alroey, *Patterns of Jewish Emigration from the Russian Empire from the 1870s to 1914*, "Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe" 2006, 2; LP Boustan, *Were Jews Political Refugees or Economic Migrants? Assessing the Persecution Theory of Jewish Emigration, 1881-1914*, in: *The New Comparative Economic History. Essays in Honor of Jeffrey G. Williamson*, ed. TJ Hatton, KH O'Rourke, AM Taylor, Cambridge 2007; Y. Spitzer, op. cit.; K. Zieliński, op. cit., p. 17.

⁵³ See including: JD Klier, *The Pogrom Paradigm in Russian History*, in: *Pogroms. Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. JD Klier, S. Lamroza, Cambridge 1992, p. 14; C. Le Foll, *The Missing Pogroms of Belorussia*, in *Anti-Jewish Violence. Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, eds. J. Dekel-Chen, D. Gaunt, NM Meir, I. Bartal, Bloomington 2010, pp. 159–160. Research by Darius Staliunas showed that in the early 1980s

In the nineteenth century, there were "Christian-Jewish confrontations in the region," but "no they developed into mass pogroms as in the case of southern Russia", D. Staliunas, *Anti-Jewish Disturbances in the North-Western Provinces in the Early 1880s*, "East European Jewish Affairs 2004, 2, p. 131.

⁵⁴ S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁵ For example: A. Eisenbach, *Emancipation of Jews in Polish lands 1785-1870 against the background of the Europejskim*, Warsaw 1988, pp. 436–443; M. Sobon, *Poles towards Jews in Galicia in the days of autonomiczna in the years 1868–1914*, Kraków 2011, pp. 60–64.

⁵⁶ *Pogroms. Anti-Jewish Violence*, p. 227; G. Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Y. Spitzer, op. cit., p. 4. According to Spitzer's calculations, the pogroms of 1903–1906 took place 89 percent counties in southern Ukrainian governorates, 70 percent in the south-west them, 55 percent. in Lithuanian and Belarusian and 22 percent. Kingdom of Poland, *ibid.*, P. 25.

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1903–1907, almost half a million Jews emigrated). They felt fear also Jews in Podlasie, although - apart from Białystok in 1906 - there were no pogroms there. This is well illustrated by the fragment of memories Beryl Stern, an activist of the Polish Socialist Party from Bielsko, who wrote that in 1905 "There was fear of a pogrom [- -] Bielsk was there a district town, all *prizivniks* [conscripts] came here, they got drunk, marched through the streets, and sang and accosted shopkeepers and cubs Girls. The police did not bother them" ⁵⁸.

The explanation for the mass migration of Jews can be found in many other factors of an internal and external nature. From this in the first group, the four seem to be the most important. First, poverty Jewish masses, which was deepened by the change of traditional economic relations *darczych*, undermining the economic and social foundations of the *shtetl*.

In 1897. the number of Russian Jews without any specific occupation reached 50 percent ⁵⁹ In the abovementioned report of the chief of the Bielsko Police Department of 1910 whether-

we say that the emigration of Jews is caused by "the lack of permanent work and everything livelihood, and partly also the desire to avoid military service" ⁶⁰.

In the "Book of Remembrance" in Bielsko there are many descriptions of poverty in the period before the outbreak of World War I. One of the emigrants recalled:

"Bielsk was mostly a poor city. They were, of course, poorer and less poor as well as richer. But all the trouble of the city, all its local activity was limited to poverty. It was a city with no industry and without livelihoods [- -] was unable to maintain the next rooms

lazy" ⁶¹. Another Jewish immigrant, who settled in New York, wrote in 1893, that the cause of emigration are "primarily unfavorable environmental conditions. Concentration of Jews in the cities and towns of the settlement zone, competition, huge advantage of supply over demand - this is what

it does not induce the mass of the poor Jewish population to leave the place residence and departure to distant countries across the Atlantic ” 62 .

⁵⁸ B. Stern, *Zichroynes fun assault jorn. Bielsk 1898–1907* , Newark 1954, pp. 63–64. Half-
The skeleton version of Stern's memoirs will be published in 2021, translated by Anna Szyba and in mine
development.

⁵⁹ С.М. Дубнов, *Евреи в России и в западной Европе в эпоху антисемитской еакции* ,
Москва 1923, p. 14. According to other data, the number of the so-called luftemenczn (from Yiddish literally live
out of thin air), that is, people without any trade or capital, was taken together with the members
their families up to 40 percent Jewish Population, G. Sorin, *A Time for Building. The Third Migration. 1880–1920* ,
Baltimore-London 1992, pp. 23.

⁶⁰ NHAB, f. 103, op. 1, 4, sheet 25v.

⁶¹ F. Grinberg, *Extraordinary Bielsk* , in: *Memorial Book of Jews from Bielsko Podlaski* , ed.
W. Konończuk, D. Fionik, Bielsk Podlaski 2017, p. 83.

⁶² Г.М. Прайс, *Русские евреи в Америке Очерки из истории, жизни и быта русско-еврейских эмигрантов в Соединенных Штатах Северной Америки. С 1881 по 1891 гг.* ,

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Second, after ascending the throne in 1881. Tsar Alexander III came to tighten anti-Jewish policy, which resulted in adoption discriminatory legislation which, inter alia, imposed restrictions on economic and social activity of Jews and took away some of them - previously and so limited - rights ⁶³ . In particular, it is about the so-called the May laws of 1882, which forbade Jews to settle outside the city land and suburbs, land acquisition and lease, and running commercial activities on orthodox holidays. In 1887. reduced the number of Jews admitted to universities, and in 1890 and 1892. they were given active and passive voting rights in elections to city councils. Third, the unprecedented demographic boom of the Jewish community in the Russian Empire, the number of which increased from about 1 million people in 1800. to 5.2 million in 1897. Although the trial concerned the entire population Russia, which grew from 74 million in 1860. to 164 million in 1913, it in the case of Jews, the increase was higher and amounted to approx. 1.8%. annually ⁶⁴ . As a result, despite the enormous level of migration, the number of Jews in Russia continued to grow.

Table 4. Natural increase in the Jewish population of Russia in relation to their level emigration in the years 1881–1914 (per cent)

Period	Increase natural	Level migration	Population growth Jewish
1881–1890	17	5	12
1891–1900	18	8	10
1901–1910	18	19	-1
1911–1914	16	21	-5

Source: *Краткая еврейская энциклопедия* , vol. 7, Иерусалим 1994, p. 285.

Fourth, the disintegration process of the traditional model was observed Jewish social life, the emergence of industry in large cities and migration of shtetl residents to them, departing from the religious orthodoxy. The overlapping of these processes in a relatively short period August had a shock effect on conservative communities and at the same time it increased the readiness of its representatives to migrate abroad.

Перебувр 1893, p. 1. On this subject in detail: HD Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia, 1772–1917* , Chur – Langhorne 1993.

⁶³ A. Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia* , vol. 2: 1881 to 1914 , Oxford 2012, pp. 13–15; D. Grinberg, *Migrations and emigration of East European Jews in the years 1795–1939* , "Biuletyn Jewish Historical Institute "1993, 1-2, p. 98.

⁶⁴ S. Kuznets, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

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At the end of the 19th century, there were rapid changes not only inside Jewish communities in Russia, but also around them. Unprecedented the scale of migration would not be possible without rapid economic growth in the United States, Argentina and other countries that need millions of new hands to work. The emigration was favored by the fall in costs travel across the Atlantic thanks to an improvement in the second half of the 19th century. steamships, which revolutionized intercontinental travel ⁶⁵ . If the journey by the sailing ship lasted 40–45 days and was dangerous due to the regular catastrophes are the spread of a new drive to reduce its costs were significantly sewn and its length was up to 10-14 days ⁶⁶ . It started it a new era of ocean voyages that have begun to be massive, and theirs costs dropped significantly. It was still such a significant expense that whole families (in the case of 61% of emigrants the costs were paid by relatives) ⁶⁷ . The big maritime companies emerged interested in the influx of passengers who have developed a network of agents and promotion. However, the construction of railway lines made it possible efficient access to the ports of Hamburg, Bremen and Rotterdam. In 1862. the first railway connecting Russia with Prussia was built, and Within a dozen or so years, the network of connections developed, in 1873 completed the Grajewo-Białystok-Bielsk-Brest line, which made it possible to connect many shtetls from this part of the Russian Empire with large cities in Western Europe.

It should also be mentioned that one of the most important factors which increased migration was the creation of migration networks, that is, interpersonal relationships between migrants and the environment, from which they came. Departure of a certain number of inhabitants of a given localities ("pioneers") who were in touch with the place origin, after some time it influenced the taking of an analogous decision by members of their families, neighbors, friends, etc. ⁶⁸ It caused is a specific "snowball" effect, leading to a rapid increase in migrations. The emergence of migration networks made it possible to reduce travel costs and migration risk, and at the same time increased the probability of the similarity of the departure of people from the same shtetl, contributing of

⁶⁵ W. Nugent, *Crossings. The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* , Bloomington 1995, p. 29.

⁶⁶ A. Walaszek, *migration* , pp. 228-229. The first steamer sailed from Europe to the USA in 1838. In the years 1836–1853, the death rate was 1.5%. all travelers across the Atlantic.

⁶⁷ S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 113.

⁶⁸ D. Praszalowicz, KA Makowski, AA Zięba, *Mechanisms of overseas in the nineteenth century. Poles, Germans, Jews, Ruthenians. An outline of the problem*, Kraków 2004, p. 31.

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further increase in migration ⁶⁹. In 1908–1914, when the migration networks were already produced, as much as 94.3 percent. she declared leaving Jews joining the family, 4 percent and to friends ⁷⁰.

In conclusion, it can be said that the great migration of Jews from the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century would not have been possible without the combining a complex of internal causes with a favorable one economic situation, based on the ongoing logical and foreign labor markets ready to receive the masses migrants.

Anatomy of emigration

Emigration from Russia, however, was not an easy matter, even when it was wanted to leave legally. Legal departure was possible only on the basis of a passport issued by the provincial office, but to receive it, it was necessary to meet complicated conditions.

So let's take a look at this multi-step procedure. It was necessary first submit an application to the authorities of *Volostia* (administrative and territorial unit, equivalent of a commune) or municipal, depending on the place of residence kania, and receive a certificate of no fiscal and administrative obstacles constraints. The next step was to receive a certificate from the *pristaw* (of an officer performing police functions) that there is no opposition to indications of a judicial nature and of regulated military service.

The future emigrant went to the county district with such documents *and a lawyer* who granted permission to leave on this basis. The last one the action was to officially request a passport from the provincial office, payment of a fee of 15.5 rubles, as well as placing information about the planned departure in the official newspaper abroad ⁷¹. The receipt of the document was preceded by the payment of a few taxes in the total amount of 17.75 rubles. The whole procedure took time at least three to six months, and often required a long journey to the city - the seat of the governor's office, which was associated with additional costs ⁷². A foreign passport, known in Russia since 1649, was a must

⁶⁹ DS Massey, J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino and, JE Taylor, *Theories of International Migration. A Review and Appraisal*, "Population and Development Review" 1993, 3, pp. 448–449; J. Arango, *Explaining Migration. A Critical View*, "International Social Science Journal" 2000, 52, pp. 291–292; Y. Spitzer, op. cit., p. 38.

⁷⁰ S. Kuznets, op. cit., p. 113.

⁷¹ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheet 15.

⁷² П.Д. Тизенко, *Эмиграционный вопрос в России, 1820–1910*, Либава 1909, pp. 19–21.

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be returned at the border during the return trip, which meant that this was primarily an exit visa ⁷³.

It was also necessary to have an internal passport (the so-called *tearful*), which made it possible to move around the country at a distance from the place of residence. Complete all formalities often

required paying a bribe to an official. Most often it was *ispraw-Nik*, who, after appropriate "conviction", most often took it upon himself all formalities were completed, or you had to pay for each the next step in the process of obtaining a passport. Standard high the bribe's bone was 10 rubles, but it did not have to document number 74 . Corruption in obtaining passports was widespread widespread. In 1886. general-governor of Vilnius, Kaunas and Grodno wrote to Tsar Alexander III that "municipal self-governments were constantly abuse the right to issue passports " 75 . Only a multitude of In these cases, the problem was of a systemic nature.

In 1901 Orla's staroste and city writer were accused of extortion additional money from three Orla Jews for issuing documents ments to travel abroad 76 . Similar things happened in others in the towns of Podlasie, incl. in Bielsko, Boćki and Ciechanowiec 77 .

The inconvenience of the multi-stage procedure meant that some of the emitters the grujers ordered to deal with the formalities related to obtaining foreign passport to agents-intermediaries, which, however, cost at least twice as many 78 . He summed up their activities well Internal document of the Ministry of Trade and Industry from 1906:

Agents obtain for the emigrant all documents necessary for the trip abroad, and due to the fact that it is not always easy to obtain them, have all kinds of connections. And if it doesn't, they start out differently kind of scam. The most used way to work around the difficulties is to register an emigrant in another poviat. [- -] Very widespread

It is also necessary to provide emigrants with counterfeit passports 79 .

73 E. Lohr, *Russian Citizenship. From Empire to Soviet Union*, Cambridge 2012, p. 24.

74 A. Chwalba, *The Empire of Corruption in Russia and the Kingdom of Poland 1861-1917*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 68–69.

75 NHAB, f. 2, op. 19, 173, sheet 2.

76 NHAB, f. 17, op. 1, 227, sheets 5-6, О вымогательстве денег Орляским мещанским старостой Бельского уезда при выдаче паспортов мещанам мест. Orla.

77 NHAB, f. 2, op. 19, 169, sheet 6v, О подкупе членом бельской мещанской управы Мазьи Кельманом мещан для избрания его в мещанскую управу; *ibid.*, f. 2, op. 19, 173, sheet 14, О сокращении полномочий мещанских управлений губернии.

78 П.Д. Tizenko, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

79 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheet 16.

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If you managed to obtain a foreign passport, departure could take place through one of the five ports: Liepaja, Hanko, Ventspils, Riga and Odessa or by rail to Western European ports. These were of the greatest importance the first two, through which they left in 1900–1909 respectively 241 thous. and 187 thous. migrants. It left Russia through the remaining three ports during this time, only 14 thousand. people 80 . That is, in the first decade In the 1980s, the share of Liepaja and Hanko in total migration from Russia was 29.6%. This number can be treated as legal trips.

Table 5. Emigration through the port of Liepaja in total migration from Russia in 1900–19 1909

1900 1901 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1908 1909

Port of Liepaja
(thousand)

8

7.5

13.2

11.3

21.6
22.1
50.5
59
20.7
27.5

Percentage of the total
migration (percent)

8.8
8.8
12.3
8.3
14.8
12
23.4
22.7
13.2
22.8

Source: Own calculations based on RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheets 138, 153v.

In principle, every trip abroad was temporary, because it was the law
Russia did not plan to emigrate permanently (see more below).

The Draconian law diverged from his selective practice, however
application, which only confirms the old Russian adage that "raw
the unity of the law mitigates its non-application". It was much faster and cheaper
because to emigrate illegally, which was enjoyed by the vast majority
leaving.

In the aforementioned document, the Ministry of Trade and Industry
reported: "Along our border, a special industry of
transportation. Currently, a minimum of 75 percent. of our emigration is leaving
secretly without a passport across the border with Germany" ⁸¹. Four years later
Bielsko powiat and *lawyer* wrote to the provincial office: "Insignificant
some [emigrants] leave under foreign passports via
Lipavian port, and most cross the land border without passports
through Grajewo, Augustów, Aleksandrowo, Mława, Ostrołęka and Kolno, where

⁸⁰ Attention is drawn to the small role of Odessa, which made the journey longer and more costly
towna. Therefore, Jews from South Ukrainian governorates crossed the border with Austria
stro-Węgrami, from where they then traveled by rail to the North German ports, I. Howe,
*World of Our Fathers. The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found
and Made*, New York 2005, p. 28.

⁸¹ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, pp. 39. In another internal Russian report, it is mentioned
is that 80 percent. emigration are illegal trips. As cited in: E. Lohr, op. cit., p. 9.

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they secretly cross the border and find their way to the central emigration offices
in Prostki, Iłów and Ostrów" ⁸².

It seems that in the case of Podlasie, there was a legal share of emigrants
even lower than the all-Russian average. It illustrates well
is an example of Białystok, which at the beginning of the 20th century had 50
a thousand Jewish population. In 1939 in the USA, there were approx. 40-50 thousand.
Jews from Białystok, 15–20 thousand. in Palestine, 10-20 thousand in Argentina,
3 thousand in Australia (the vast majority of them emigrated before 1914) ⁸³.
Meanwhile, in the years 1903–1906 Jews from Białystok were issued
not only about a hundred foreign passports, and in the next three
years this number has increased to approx. 200-400 ⁸⁴. In the case of a city that
was famous for its extremely thriving diaspora, these numbers should be considered very
slight ⁸⁵. Especially that only in the years 1904–1907 from Białystok
5.4 thousand people left Jews, most of whom emigrated to

thread ⁸⁶ . The share of legal departures in the total emigration of Jews from Białystok the slope probably did not exceed approx. 10 percent. Border with Germany was located several dozen kilometers from the city, which it had a doubtful influence on decisions about illegal emigration. The proximity of the border was the factor which - apart from those already discussed - made interest Jews emigrating from the so-called The Northwest country was the highest throughout the Russian Empire.

During a relatively short period of time, a working not informally, the system of transferring emigrants by the Russian-German one "Green border", in particular on the section with East Prussia.

The scheme was based on agents, an important element of the migration who recruited people to leave, acting usually commissioned by major shipping companies. Some of them agitated for the money of the governments of Argentina and Brazil, interested in influx of labor ⁸⁷ . This is how he described agents at the beginning of the 20th century

⁸² NHAB, f. 103, op. 1, 4, sheet 25v.

⁸³ R. Kobrin, op. cit., p. 23.

⁸⁴ A. Markowski, *Anti-Jewish Violence and Social Perceptions. The Białystok pogrom in 1906 roku* , Warszawa 2018, p. 416. My query at NHAB in Grodno showed that the document you regarding the number of passports issued in the Bielsko powiat have not survived.

⁸⁵ R. Kobrin, op. cit., p. 23.

⁸⁶ Z. Romaniuk, *Jews in Białystok in the years 1807–1914* , in: *Białystok - mayn heym* , ed. D. Boćkowski, Białystok 2014, p. 49. Probably some of these trips concern it was Jews who were not entered in the registers of Białystok's population, but who came from from numerous towns in the region.

⁸⁷ *Заработки крестьян и эмиграция в Америку в губерниях Царства Польского. Сравнительная статистика заработков сельского населения в сувальской губернии и эмиграции в Америку* , Варшава 1891, p. III.

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Białystok Police Chief: "Pioneers of departures from this region abroad there were only Jews. [- -] [While already in the US] they initially persuaded to emigration of their relatives and friends, and with the development of they started to set up various offices and companies and organize them for their trips the entire network of immigration agents" ⁸⁸ . Agents were divided into two groups: open, acting as registered representatives of societies ships, and secret ones, who, as a rule, maintained a dense network of sub-agents in smaller towns and served as suppliers services consisting in crossing the border and then reaching one of the ports ⁸⁹ . It is known that in 1910 it worked in the Bielsko powiat five undercover agents that authorities usually knew and which "no." once held accountable for administrative responsibility" ⁹⁰ . On their activities however, this did not affect, and presumably they also had their soby to "reward" the official for closing his eyes to their activity. When a group of at least a dozen people willing to emigrate, the agent's guide led them through the night border. The service cost 3 rubles per person, which was a very cost-effective available (especially compared to the cost of obtaining a passport). It also served to encourage more people to leave. also the risk of being caught at the border was low. It was important that the authorities did not make any difference between Russian foreign passports and internal (*tearful ones*), which significantly facilitated emigration ⁹¹ . After when crossing the border, intermediaries supplied emigrants with tickets

train to one of the German ports and a code card, i.e. a ticket to travel by ocean ship. For transport from the border to Nowe York agents charged 120–140 rubles (for comparison, the annual budget of several of a Jewish family from a small town at that time approx. 300 rubles ⁹²). They also knew that such an illegal immigrant no longer existed return, knows no country or language and is at their mercy or disfavor, which often resulted in an unanimous necessity earlier, an additional fee for their services ⁹³ .

As mentioned above, from grants traveled mainly to the ports of Hamburg and Bremen by rail, not less frequently in Rotterdam, Antwerp or Amsterdam, from where they set off

⁸⁸ NHAB, f. 103, op. 1, 4, sheet 37.

⁸⁹ M. Starczewski, op. cit., p. 52.

⁹⁰ NHAB, f. 103, op. 1, 4, sheets 26, 38.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 75.

⁹² H. Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* , Berkeley 1986, p. 183.

⁹³ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, sheet 19.

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on a trip to another continent. Especially the first port had a key important in the migration of Russian Jews, since between 1890 and 1910. about 70 percent emigrants from the Russian Empire left for America just via Hamburg ⁹⁴ . On the transport of millions of emigrants from Europe Companies such as Hamburg built their power in Eastern Europe America Line and the Bremen Norddeutscher Lloyd. Way of transporting people often, however, it did not meet any standards. In 1906 Ministry Trade and Industry of Russia reported that the trip "takes place under the conditions completely unacceptable skews. The expatriates are transported in too old steamers in large numbers, completely unsuitable for mass use transport of passengers " ⁹⁵ . To avoid diseases that they could transmit *Ostjuden* , each emigrant was disinfected three times: right after crossing the border, in Ruhleben near Berlin and in the port. After poppy- the steamer arrived in Nowe during a two-week trip York or any other American port, and emigrants, more than half arrived without any money, they could start a new one stage of your life ⁹⁶ .

Authorities in the face of migration

Until the end of its existence, the Russian Empire was the only state in Europe, whose law did not allow emigration and resignation from my nationality. Valid from 1835. *The Fear of the Laws* predicted only the possibility of temporary stay up to five years, and the trip to he considered permanent and accepting a foreign passport a crime. Stay outside Russia above this deadline and ineffective return call even threatened with sequestration of assets ⁹⁷ . In practice, however, so draconian most often the law was not enforced and could not keep millions emigrants.

The beginning of the great wave of departures coincided with the liberalization of politics in this respect, which, however, resulted not from a change in the law, but from closing through the eyes of the eyes of emigration or even informal encouragement to her. In January 1882. Minister of the Interior, Nikolai Igna-

tiew (Nikolaj Ignat'ev), said that “the western border is open for Jews. Jews already make extensive use of this right and their emigration

⁹⁴ *Migration from the Russian Empire. Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York*, Vol. 1: *January 1875 - September 1882*, ed. IA Glazer, Baltimore 1995, p. IX.

⁹⁵ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁶ H. Rogger, op. cit., p. 183.

⁹⁷ GM Kowalski, op. cit., pp. 240-241.

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it is not hindered in any way” ⁹⁸. It is true that after three months

each was to withdraw from this statement, considering that it would be

rebuke to rebellion”, but the Jews managed to perceive it as a political signal that emigration is allowed ⁹⁹.

New Minister of the Interior, Dmitry Tolstoy (Dmitry Tolstoy),

in June 1882 issued a circular aimed at Jewish migration,

with responsibility for encouraging departure. However, no

this translated into no real action by the authorities on this issue, about which

can be testified by, for example, the report of the US consulate from 1886. directed

to the State Department that the Russian government is “glad to get rid of

the Jews themselves”. However, in 1888. the governor of Podolia reported that

a call for the poorest Jews to emigrate would be desirable, a suggestion

this was praised by Tsar Alexander III ¹⁰⁰.

While in the 1880s, the departures of Jews were unfor-

tolerated, a large number of them departed in the following decades

began to be seen as one of the ways of addressing the swollen-

problem ¹⁰¹. This does not mean, however, that the authorities were throwing them out

Jews from the country, but "only", did not hinder them from leaving. Konstantin

Pobedonossev (Konstantin Pobedonoscev), an influential tsarist adviser

and obedient obedience to the Holy Governing Synod was to state that

“Authorities expect one third of Jews to emigrate, one third to

it will assimilate, and a third will die out” ¹⁰². These types of words never, however

they did not turn into a political agenda. Hans Rogger pointed out

that none of the many governmental committees to deal with the issue

Jewish, "she never proposed expulsion as an eventual

solution or emigration as something more than a temporary remedy” ¹⁰³.

I. Michael Aronson is of a similar opinion, according to whom

many, if any of the Russian politicians saw Jews at all

as completely impossible to assimilate, and Jewish emigration

as a way to get rid of them in Russia” ¹⁰⁴.

It is striking how much repressive law has spread from

a reality in which — *de jure* illegal — trips plummeted. Only

⁹⁸ S. Dubnow, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 285; IM Aronson, *The Attitudes of Russian Officials in the 1880s Toward Jewish Assimilation and Emigration*, "Slavic Review" 34, 1975, pp. 5–6.

⁹⁹ H. Rogger, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁰⁰ S. Dubnow, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 415.

¹⁰¹ IM Aronson, op. cit., p. 7; S. Dubnow, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 377.

¹⁰² S. Dubnow, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 10. Some researchers question the truth of this he will say.

¹⁰³ H. Rogger, op. cit., p. 176.

¹⁰⁴ IM Aronson, op. cit., p. 13.

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the possibility of legal emigration was provided by the aforementioned Colonization creation, whose statute in May 1892. approved by Tsar Aleksander III. The activity of this organization was limited to issuing paid "exit certificates" instead of passports, which simplified the departure procedure and significantly reduced its cost. Moreover, she provided practical information on emigration via fast a developed network of own offices in the area of the settlement zone. Their number increased from 160 in 1906. until 517 in 1913, including in the Grodno governorate 13, the work ¹⁰⁵ . In 1910. to the Jewish Colonization Society 27,475 people asked for help in emigration, of which later 72.8 percent left for the USA, 9.7 percent. to Argentina, 2.8 percent. to Canada, 2.5 percent to Western European countries, 1.9 percent. to Palestine and 0.8 percent. to South Africa ¹⁰⁶ . Emigrants who left thanks to this help organization, were no longer able to return to their country of birth. The authorities' approach to Jewish emigration is well reflected in the events from 1890–1893, when in Argentina and Brazil many deceived emigrants people from Russia, including Jews, turned to Russian consulates asking help for help in returning to the country. After long discussions, the Ministry Internal Affairs agreed to help everyone except for Jews ¹⁰⁷ .

The Russian authorities were rather passive observers, tolerating trips and without trying to prevent them on a larger scale ¹⁰⁸ . With good prefers to at least significantly limit such a huge stream of illegal new expatriates was no problem at all. For actual acceptance for departures also indicates the fact that the western border was quite poorly guarded, as hundreds of people crossed it every day ¹⁰⁹ . Put-day during the "Brazilian fever", there were mass stops man and turning the departing back, and the police even shot the emigrants however, in fact, the authorities rarely counteracted emigration ¹¹⁰ .

Sometimes a group of immigrants was stopped and turned back, but most often it did not have legal consequences, and the unlucky ones

¹⁰⁵ G. Alroey, *Information, Decision, and Migration. Jewish Emigration from Eastern Europe in the Early Twentieth Century* , "Immigrants and Minorities" 2011, 1, pp. 38, 42.

¹⁰⁶ *Еврейская энциклопедия* , vol. 16, Петербург 1913, p. 265.

¹⁰⁷ E. Lohr, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ I. Howe, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁰⁹ See more on the protection of the Russian border: K. Latawiec, *The Russian in the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1851–1914* , Lublin 2014, pp. 348–357.

¹¹⁰ K. Groniowski, *Emigration from the lands annexed by Russia (1864-1918)*, in: *Emigration from Polish in modern and newer times (18th-20th centuries)* , edited by A. Pilch, Warsaw 1984, p. 230.

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the next day they crossed the border elsewhere. The standard was that migrant agents corrupted officials and border guards. Practically, the police undertook actions aimed at

others, incl. in 1891, over 200 people were arrested in the Kingdom of Poland accused of agitation, but most often it ended with a financial penalty of ¹¹¹ .

The lack of real obstacles to emigration can be considered a factor contributing to making for its development. Indifferent or even positive attitude mass departures can be traced in numerous reports

central institutions and regional authorities. In 1909 document inter-a sub-departmental commission to develop migration legislation, he admitted that “emigration turned into a theater of mass violation law”, but at the same time stated that “about the damage allegedly caused Russia through emigration, there is no way. It is more beneficial than harmful to the country”¹¹². This was explained by the fact that the increase in emigration is accompanied by an increase in births, which is complemented by the decline in population, Grants are usually people who do not find a job in Russia, abroad “Elements unnecessary for the country” are often accompanied by improvements working conditions of those who stay and that emigrants send approx. 100 million rubles a year.

The diagnosis of the head of the Białystok police in 1910 was very similar, who reported to the provincial office in Grodno: “There is no emigration no impact on the interests of the population and takes place completely unnoticed sorry. It remains without any effect on the workforce, and more often improves the material situation of other family members who most of them receive help from emigrants, especially Jews material”¹¹³. In the same year, Bielsko's *lawyer* informed the governor nator of Grodno that emigration does not cause a deficit of more, and even has a positive effect on the region, as each emigrant comes annually a minimum of 300-400 rubles¹¹⁴.

The cited documents prove that mass emigration was accepted it was not seen as a threat to Russia's interests¹¹⁵.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 231; E. Lohr, op. cit., p. 95.

¹¹² RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, pp. 13–14.

¹¹³ NHAB, f. 103, op. 1, 4, sheet 38.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, k. 26. The document also states that they return from emigration “almost all Christians and a small percentage of Jews” and that he has “no undoubtedly a beneficial effect, as [emigrants] return with firm conviction about the advantages of honest work and, apart from rare cases, they are sober, saints, with a developed sense of their own dignity and self-confidence”, *ibidem*, p. 84.

¹¹⁵ Another confirmation of this is the situation in 1903, when the authorities issued consent to the founding of “Der Frajnd”, the first Russian daily in Yiddish, his

This approach, however, was completely different from anachronistic records laws that had nothing to do with the Great Exodus. Only in 1906 the Russian administration made an attempt to address this issue and carried out reform of the emigration system, for which an inter-ministerial section, coordinated by the Ministry of Trade and mind. This body, operating intermittently in the years 1906–1910 (sat in it four Poles from the Kingdom of Poland), realistically diagnosing he solved the problem, considering that it was necessary to introduce the principle of free legally permitted emigration, easing the conditions for surrender foreign passports and the introduction of a cheap immigrant passport who¹¹⁶. The commission's goal was also to regulate the activities of government and shipping companies, protecting emigrants from abuses on their part and diverting the main stream of migration from German ports to Russian ports. It was about her business also for the protection of Russia's economic interests, because - as it was written: “Every 100,000 emigrants are 2 million rubles of profit for railways and 7-8 million for shipping companies. [- -] Millions of Russian money serve to enrich

protecting German railways and German shipping companies flourished mainly in the transport of emigrants from Russia”¹¹⁷. So the goal was leading to a situation in which legal emigrants will have this money spend in the Russian Empire.

Another important reason for the commission was the belief of the authorities that in the following years, emigration from Russia to the USA may increase from 200,000 up to 400–500 thousand people a year and cover tens of thousands for the first time ethnic Russians. Ongoing from the 1880s on a mass scale the trips concerned mainly Jews and other minorities national, which also contributed to the fact that they were not perceived as something negative¹¹⁸.

Already at the beginning of its work, the commission formulated its key tasks no: "The only way out of this [present] abnormal situation is not a special law on emigration", which would become" the basis national emigration policy”¹¹⁹. It was only on February 20, 1914. design the law on leaving to work abroad was approved by the council publisher Saul Ginzburg was suggested that the newspaper could contribute to encouraging Jews to emigrate, J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, *Speak on Your Own Name. Great-sa Yiddish and the creation of Jewish national identity (until 1918)*, Warsaw 2016, pp. 51–52.

¹¹⁶ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, pp. 20–26.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 38–39.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 26, 68.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

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"They show the highest tendency to emigrate" ministers and prepared to bring¹²⁰ to the State Duma. Though the document spoke not so much about emigrants as about abroad", which excluded the right to emigrate permanently, saw many needed changes¹²¹. It was impossible to accept the project however, the outbreak of World War I. The war made Atlantic travel almost impossible liw, which actually stopped the emigration of Jews from the Russian Empire. Despite this, 62 came to the United States during the conflict thousand Jewish migrants, a significant number of whom were citizens Russia (some of them got to the American West Coast via Yokohama)¹²². To American ports between 1915 and 1918. tide-it also harassed at least 30 Jews from Bielsko and 23 from Orla. Emigration to the United States resumed after the end of warfare in Europe and reached its level for a short time prewar. This was favored, on the one hand, by the impoverishment of the population as a result of a conflict of several years, and on the other, active Rican Jewish compatriots to attract their families, blood-people or other residents of their towns. Let's serve again the example of two Podlasie shtetls. In the years 1920–1924 from Bielsko At least 275 people emigrated to the USA, including 250 Jews, and from Orla 125 people, including 124 Jews¹²³. In just five years across the Atlantic 11.1 percent moved Bielsko Jews and 10.6 percent. Orlański (in 100 in relation to the number of Jews in both towns in 1921)¹²⁴. In fact, migration was greater as these data do not include departures to other countries.

Soon, the liberal migration policy of the United States

fever was tightened. The first signal was the introduction in 1921 by the Johnson Quota Act, which limited the number of new migrants from a given country to 3% of its citizens who were in the USA in 1910. In May 1924.

¹²⁰ Е.Г. Путьцова, *Обсуждение вопроса об урегулировании трудовой эмиграции в IV-ой Государственной Думе*, "Евразийский Союз Ученых" 2014, 4, p. 146. Text of the bill: RGIA, f. 1276, op. 2, 114, pp. 244–247.

¹²¹ *Draft of the Russian Act on Emigration*, "Polish Emigration Review" 1912, 7, p. 262.

¹²² G. Alroey, "Between the straits". *Jewish Immigration to the United States and Palestine, 1915-1925*, "East European Jewish Affairs" 2017, 2-3, pp. 153.

¹²³ Own calculations based on data from American ports.

¹²⁴ According to the results of the 1921 census, the number of inhabitants of Bielsko was 4,759 people, including 2,239 Jews (47.1% of all inhabitants), while Orla 1,518 people, including 1,167 Jews (76.9%).

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Congress passed the Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act), which still has never tightened the migration law, reducing the amount to 2%, as the base year was 1890, which meant that the USA could annually accept 5,982 Polish citizens ¹²⁵. It was the end of the mass migration of Jews from Polish lands to this country, and the main destinations were Palestine, Western Europe, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa, but their scale has not even come close to the level from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

summary

The main aim of the article is to show the local dimension of the great emigration from the Russian Empire in the years 1881–1914. As long as the absolute number is known Jewish migrants (2 million people, 78% of whom settled in the USA), this we do not have data for individual cities and towns. Using analysis of American ports and archives of compatriots, stored in New York's YIVO, an attempt was made to estimate the number of migrants selected Podlasie shtetl, then part of the Grodno governorate. Such research microhistoric are to be a case study showing the extent of emigration Jews from towns in Lithuanian and Belarusian governorates. The text analyzes the volume of legal and illegal migrations (approx. 20-25% and 75-80%, respectively). departures), including issues related to obtaining travel documents and their costs, travel to ports. The emigrant transfer system is also shown across the "green border", in particular on the section with East Prussia, through which most of the Jews left. The scheme was based on agents who they recruited people to leave, acting on behalf of the great shipping companies. The last part of the article presents the policy Russian authorities in the face of mass departures. For this purpose, they were used documents from the Russian State Historical Archives in St. Petersburg and the National Historical Archives of Belarus in Grodno. According to the obligation governing law, only temporary trips abroad were allowed, and emigration as such it was forbidden. Paradoxically, though, the vast majority of trips did illegal, in fact the authorities have done virtually nothing to prevent them work. Emigration was accepted and not seen as a threat Russia's interests.

¹²⁵ L. Garland, *After they Closed the Gates. Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965*, Chicago 2014, p. 15; HR Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*, Berkeley 2004, pp. 78–79.

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'They Show a Strong Inclination for Emigration': the Exodus of Jews from the Russian Empire.

A Microhistory of Selected Shtetls in Podlasie

The main purpose of the article is to demonstrate the local dimension of the great emigration from the Russian Empire in 1881–1914. While the total number of Jewish migrants is known (two million people, of whom 78 per cent settled in the United States of America), we do not have data for individual cities and towns. Thus, an attempt has been made to estimate the number of Jewish migrants from the selected towns in Podlasie (which as at that time was in the territory of Grodno Guberniia) through an analysis of data from American port towns and archives of the Jewish associations (*landsmanshaftn*) kept in the New York YIVO archives. Such microhistorical research is a case study illustrating the size of Jewish emigration from Lithuanian and Belarusian guberniias. The text analyzes the anatomy of legal and illegal migrations (respectively about 20–25 and 75–80 per cent of departures), including questions related to getting travel documents and their costs, and the journey to ports. It also presents the system of illegal transfer of migrants across the 'green border', especially the section with East Prussia, crossed by a majority of Jews. The scheme was based on agents who, acting on behalf of large shipping companies, recruited people who wanted to migrate. The final part of the article presents the policy of Russian authorities towards this mass emigration, based on documents from the Russian State Historical Archive in St Petersburg and the National Historical Archives of Belarus in Hrodna. According to contemporary legal regulations, only temporary trips abroad were allowed, while emigration as such was prohibited. Paradoxically, although the huge majority of departures were illegal, the authorities did practically nothing to counteract them. Emigration you accepted and was not seen as a threat to Russian interests.

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