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Mieczysław Szystowski

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SUMMARY

This article shows the life of a Polish engineer, Mieczysław Szystowski in the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. His biography is quite typical for thousands of Poles, who before the 1st World War lived and worked in Russia. Because he lived there, archival materials connected with his life and work are scattered around the archives of several countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as in Western Europe. They were collected for several years. Their analysis and confrontation with memories and knowledge of the Szystowski family living in Poland made it possible to reconstruct the complex fate of the engineer. The basis of the study were the materials collected at the State Archives of Latvia in Riga, publications of the Communication Engineers Institute in St. Petersburg, and only few coming from the State Archives in Mińsk. Source materials were supplemented by the information of the Szystowski family and also his (Szystowski's) publications kept in the Polish Library in Paris.

The work contains unknown before details and circumstances of the construction of Windawa harbour (Latvia) and a failed project of constructing a Windawa-Wisła waterway at the beginning of 20th century, thereby regulation (adaptation to sailing) of Wisła river, which has not been accomplished until today.

Another aspect of the presented subject are social relations and social life of Russian middle-upper class during the revolutionary turmoil in 1905. The article is also an attempt to include this outstanding engineer in the history of Polish technology, where he was absent until now.

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