

ON THE VERGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

When Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, was assassinated on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist, it set the ball rolling and led to the outbreak of a world war. European empires had competed with each other for several decades and sought an armed conflict. After many years of peace, armies and nations started preparing themselves for a war.

In the summer of 1914, just a few days later, Europe was on fire. Military staffs started executing plans that had been prepared a long time before. Great empires rose against each other. France, Great Britain and Russia waged a war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Poles, torn between the three partitioning powers, had to put up a fratricidal fight. Polish lands were supposed to serve as the main theatre of war in the East. The Kingdom of Poland and Przasnysz, which was located near the border with Prussia, soon became the battlefield for the war between the Russian Empire and the German Empire.

Poles! The hour has come when the dream passed on to you by your fathers and grandfathers can come true. (...) Let the Polish nation become one body under the sceptre of the Emperor of All Russia. Under his rule, Poland will be reborn, free in its religion, language and autonomy.

an excerpt from the Manifesto to the Polish Nation by Grand Duke Nicholas (a relative of Tsar Nicholas II) of 14 August 1914



The Russian plan
To avoid an attack on the flanks from two sides (from the north from East Prussia and from the South from Galicia), the Russian mobilization plan envisaged the evacuation of troops from the Vistula Land and the concentration of the army under cover of Grodno-Brest-Kovel fortresses. This is why Polish legionaries who entered Kielce in the beginning of August did not meet any significant Russian forces.



In 1900, the Orthodox Church of the Nativity of Mary was built at Blonie Street (today's Józefa Piłsudskiego Street). Icons for the iconostasis were painted at the workshop of the Moscow painter Denisov.

The Orthodox Church of Saint Alexander Nevsky was built in 1903 on the premises of military barracks at Makowska Street.

PRZASNYSZ IN THE RUSSIAN PARTITION

Garrison

Just before the outbreak of the war, about **230 thousand Russian soldiers** were stationed in the Vistula Land. They were deployed to at least **46 garrison locations**, one of which was Przasnysz.



30TH POLTAVA INFANTRY REGIMENT
was stationed in Przasnysz until **1910**; the barracks in Przasnysz were built for this regiment



6TH DON COSSACK REGIMENT
before the war, it consisted of 933 Cossacks, including 36 officers; **Novocherkassk**, the capital of the Province of the Don Cossack Host, is **1,500 km** away from Przasnysz as the crow flies



6TH KLYASTITSY HUSSAR REGIMENT
replaced the infantry division in accordance with the plan to **deploy cavalry units to the border area**; the Russian army had **67 regular cavalry units**: 18 hussar units, 17 uhlan units, 21 dragoon units, 10 guardian units and 1 Crimean Horse Regiment

Residents

In 1914, Przasnysz was a poviats capital in **Płock Governorate**. The town had **10,500 residents** and consisted of **2,209 buildings**.

The revenue of the town treasury in 1900 was **12,320 silver rubles**, whereas expenses amounted to **8,270**. It was 30% of the budget of the nearby Mława.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS
2,1%

PROTESTANTS
0,1%

JEWS
49,4%

CATHOLICS
48,3%