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The Study of Warsaw : A Study of the Opposition to Its Existence by Russia, Prussia and Austria

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**THE DUCHY OF WARSAW:
A STUDY OF THE OPPOSITION TO ITS EXISTENCE
BY RUSSIA, PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA**

by

Bernadine Florence Pietraszek

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

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1952

LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the motives behind the opposition of Russia, Prussia and Austria, to the creation of an independent Polish state from 1795 to the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The opposition of the above-mentioned Powers was centered against the Duchy of Warsaw which Napoleon created in 1807 and which in the eyes of these Powers was the nucleus of a restored and independent Poland. The Polish people themselves considered the Duchy of Warsaw a step toward the complete re-establishment of the Polish Kingdom as it existed before the three Partitions of 1772, 1793 and 1795. The writer of this thesis also believed that the Duchy of Warsaw was the beginning of eventual Polish restoration in 1918 and for this reason undertook the study of Partitioned Poland during the Napoleonic era.

It is impossible to comprehend fully the Polish struggle for independence during the era of the Duchy of Warsaw without the sketchy background of what preceded it. The Poland for which the people hoped was not the nation as it exists in the present day but as it existed during the days of its most famous kings. The Polish people dreamed of a Poland which was a united nation when other European nations were only a conglomeration of small states, a Poland which in the sixteenth century was the most spacious Empire in Europe, extending from the Baltic to the Black Seas. The Polish Empire was

begun by Queen Jadwiga and continued to expand under the rule of the Jagellonian dynasty which began in 1400. The first Jagiello, husband of Queen Jadwiga, reigned for forty-eight years, the longest rule in Polish history. All of the Polish Kings of the Jagellonian dynasty were Catholics and foes of Protestantism, and through their cooperation the Protestant Revolt in Poland failed to reach the masses of the people and touched only the nobility. The Jagellonian Kings aided the Jesuits in preserving the Catholicism of the Polish people. While the Jagellonian dynasty was engaged in wars with the Tartars, Prussia, Hungary and Muscovy, which was driven back from the Baltic, the territory of the Polish Kingdom expanded to the north, south, east and west. Another accomplishment of the Jagellons was the union of Lithuania and Poland and the subsequent conversion of the Lithuanians to Catholicism and westernization of their culture, all of which tended to strengthen the bond of unity between the two nations. The rule of the Jagellons began the "Golden Age" of Poland during which Polish literature, art, music, sculpture fell under the influence of the Renaissance. During the reign of Sigismund August, the last of the Jagellon dynasty, Poland was at her zenith.

In 1576, Stephan Batory became the elected King of Poland. It was under his reign that Poland occupied the largest amount of territory. Batory was a disappointment for the nobility which espoused the cause of Protestantism and hoped that the new King would favor their religious views. Batory, however, proved to be a fervent Catholic and continued the fight of

the Jagellons against the heretical doctrines. During his rule, Batory saw the initial rise of Moscow from a weak undeveloped neighbor toward the powerful Eastern European nation which finally emerged and engulfed most of the Polish Kingdom.

After the death of Batory, Sigismund III began the Vasa dynasty in 1586. Sigismund III was the heir to the Swedish throne but the nobility urged him to accept the Polish throne. The acceptance of the Polish crown did not deter Sigismund from coveting the Swedish throne and his loss of the Swedish crown was the cause of many wars with Sweden which eventually culminated with the Polish loss of Livonia. Sigismund's marriage to an Austrian caused the Polish nobility considerable grief because even at this early date the Austrians presented a menace for Poland. Although the Austrian monarchy was Catholic and, therefore, a natural ally of Poland against the encroachments of Protestant Sweden and Brandenburg, the territorial expansionist views of the Austrians evoked resentment against any such alliance. In addition to the wars with Sweden, the Vasa dynasty engaged in wars with Muscovy (Russia), Turkey, the Tartars and the Cossacks who continually plagued the Polish borders. During the Vasa dynasty, Poland suffered considerable territorial losses which included East Prussia to Brandenburg and a broad belt of White Russia to the Czar. Russia acquired Smolensk, Kiev, Pultava, and part of the Ukraine. The Vasas, Sigismund III, Wladyslaw IV and Jan Casimir, all continued the fight against Protestantism but in many instances practiced tolerance toward the Dissidents.

After Jan Casimir, the next elected King of Poland was Jan Sobieski,

who accepted the Polish throne in 1674. This Polish King was famous for his unrelenting wars against the Cossacks and Tartars, but even more immortal for the defeat of the Turks at Vienna. The defeat at Vienna banished the Turk forever from Poland and Europe and saved the whole of Europe for Christianity. As King of Poland, Sobieski attempted to preserve the independence of Poland in spite of the inroads which Russia and Prussia made into Polish territory during the 17th century. Sobieski tried to unite former lost provinces to Poland but was unsuccessful in his attempts. His reign, as those of his predecessors was hampered not only from without but also from within the Polish Kingdom. The main cause of dissension in Poland was the extensive power which the nobility continually proceeded to exercise over the King and the government of the Kingdom. The nobles believed themselves to be equal to the King in power and through the Liberum Veto and the Pacta Conventa limited the rights of the Polish monarch and paved the way for the downfall of the Kingdom. In the 17th century Poland became ripe for her ultimate destruction in the 18th.

Sobieski's death ushered in the "Dark Age" of Poland and brought her in the sight of the dismemberment. For the first time in Polish history, the Polish crown sat upon the head of a German, Frederick August (Augustus II.) Augustus II began the Saxon dynasty which directly contributed to the destruction of the Kingdom of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria. The Saxon Kings of Poland did not wish to rebuild the nation but continued to deplete Polish resources in struggles with Sweden. The Saxon dynasty differed in religion and culture from the Polish people and actually coveted

Polish territory as the German possessions, e.g., Silesia. After Swedish victory, Augustus II was forced to leave the throne to Stanisław Leszczyński whom the Pope and the Poles refused to support. Eventually the Russian Czar interfered and Augustus II was placed back on the throne, although the Polish nobility objected to such a move. Russian power placed Augustus II back on the throne and from that point on the Czar continued to exercise his influence over the Polish Kingdom, through the Saxon dynasty which was loyal to him. The Saxons were loyal to the Czar to the extent that they invited the dismemberment of Poland. Russia and Prussia united for future action against Poland but did not take any active steps to carry out the dismemberment. The Poles began to realize the "loss" of their independence but failed to agree on how to save it now that Russia gained influence over their country.

All during the Saxon reign, the Prussians continued to exercise their influence upon Russia to partition Poland. The Czars were reluctant at first to openly make any aggressive act but were content to wield their power over the Polish Kings. In addition, Turkey wanted the status quo of Poland, France favored the Poles, as did Austria, who considered herself the natural ally of a Catholic Poland. However, during the reign of the Russian puppet King Stanislaus Augustus, 1764 to 1795, Poland's allies failed to support her cause of independence. England was not concerned with Poland, France was reluctant to give full support, and the Czarina Catherine of Russia and Frederick of Prussia looked toward the dismemberment. Catherine and Frederick not only wanted territorial expansion but also wished to protect and restore

the Dissidents who were not influential in Poland.

The Baltic Confederation and the Accusation of attempted regicide was an excuse for the Partition of Poland in 1772 by the three Powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria. Russia received the greatest section of land on Poland's east, including White Ruthenia. Prussia took the northern section of Poland, West Prussia, except Dansig and Torun (Thorn.) Austria took almost as much as Russia with twice the population. The territory taken by Austria constituted almost all of Little Poland and was renamed Galicia. Cracow, however, remained in Polish hands. The Poles had to accept the Partition and the Polish Diet in 1775 was forced to ratify it. The Polish population was decimated and many of the members of the Diet were bribed to pass the ratification.

In 1791 the famous Polish Constitution of May 3 was promulgated which stated that the power to govern came from the people; divided the government into three separate bodies, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial; granted privileges to the peasants and provided for religious tolerance. These were a few major points which the constitution embodied. This constitution was a bright and reassuring incident in the lives of the Polish people after the dark days of the First Partition. However, the Partitioning Powers believed that the Poles were incapable of independence despite eight centuries of history as a great nation and in 1793 Russia and Prussia executed the Second Partition of Poland. On the pretext that Poland disturbed the peace of Europe, Russian troops entered Poland and occupied Warsaw. Prince Joseph Poniatowski and Thaddeus Kosciuszko fought the in-

vading armies but were unsuccessful and failed to repel the attack. Prussia took Posen, Danzig and Torun, with the surrounding area, and Russia occupied the Ukraine, the rest of White Ruthenia and the Pripet. As in the First Partition, the Polish Diet was forced to accept that of 1793.

The two Partitions aroused the intense nationalism of the Poles which resulted in a Polish insurrection led by Kosciuszko. The insurrection was suppressed and the Third and final Partition was accomplished in 1795 which completely abolished the Kingdom of Poland. All three Powers participated in the Partition but the largest share of territory fell under Russian domination. Austria took Cracow and the surrounding territory while Prussia occupied the northwestern area which included Warsaw. The Poles could not rely on aid from the other Western European Powers which were involved in persistent struggles among themselves and thus accepted the "accomplished fact" of the annihilation of Poland. After the last Partition, the Polish patriots were exiled and turned their attention toward any Power which would aid them in the future. One group looked to Turkey, which never recognized the Partitions. Another looked toward France which was an ally in the past but who in 1772 to 1795 was determined to remain aloof for her own safety. Napoleon's rise to power kindled the Polish hopes which focused their attention upon the French ruler as the ultimate source of Polish deliverance from under the yoke of the Partitioning Powers.

CHAPTER II

THE PRELUDE, 1796-1805

From the moment of his appearance on the European scene, Napoleon considered Russia, Prussia and Austria a constant threat to his political ambitions for the domination of Europe, and the maintenance of his power in France itself. Napoleon was acutely aware of his position as a usurper in the eyes of the legitimate rulers of Europe. Furthermore, it was also essential that he maintain his military successes to cope with the possibility of dissatisfaction among the French people. Napoleon expressed his uneasiness to Metternich when he said that while the sovereigns born on the throne could suffer defeat and still return to their capitals as rulers, he could not do so. He stated that he was a soldier of fortune and that his power would end when he ceased to be strong and fail to captivate the imagination of the people.¹

Napoleon also indicated that because of the revolution in France and the existence of a new type of government, there would be an antipathy between the young republic and the old monarchies of Europe. Napoleon further stated that a spirit of hostility would always exist between two such distinct forms of government and remarked that he intended to safeguard the position of

¹ Leonid I. Strakhovsky, Alexander I of Russia, The Man Who Defeated Napoleon, New York, 1947, 62.

France as a leading state even though it meant taking up arms to do so. Napoleon added that because of the above situation every treaty of peace would be but a brief armistice and while he remained in his present office his destiny was one of continued fighting.² Napoleon's attitude definitely pointed to the fact that he perceived that the legitimate rulers of Europe would not tolerate his political maneuvers with respect to the enlargement of the French Empire and would continue to interfere in his foreign affairs.

Driven by the necessity of protecting himself and his interests, Napoleon resorted to the formation of a barrier between himself and his potential enemies. The barrier which Napoleon intended to create was a partially restored Poland, whose territory, since the last partition in 1795, was divided among his enemies, Russia, Prussia and Austria. Poland's strategic position between Prussia and Russia made it an ideal buffer state between Napoleon and his strongest continental enemy, Russia. Napoleon's plans, however, had to take into account the defeat of Prussia before such a barrier could be effectively executed. The active cooperation of the Poles was also a necessity before the buffer state could be established and fulfill the purpose for which it was intended.

The partition of Poland left the population in a state of discontent which, if effectively utilized was a dangerous weapon, particularly against the Russian Czar, Alexander I. Napoleon knew that if he could win the Polish patriots over to his cause by promising them the restoration of their former

2 Lord Acton, (ed.), The Cambridge Modern History, Cambridge, England, 1934, IX, 79.

kingdom, he would not only gain military aid from the Poles but would also create unrest among his enemies. With this end in view, Napoleon immediately proceeded to align the Poles into his camp, and deliberately and methodically aroused their nationalistic spirit and intensified the desire for restoration of Poland as an independent state. The magic and the great image of Napoleon aroused the Poles to rally to Napoleon's side.

It would be unfair to state that Napoleon had no sympathy with the Polish cause and that the sole purpose throughout his career was to use Poland as a tool for the achievement of his ultimate objective. Early in his life he became influenced by Rousseau's treatise on Poland, written shortly before the First Partition of 1772.³ However, unfulfilled promises which Napoleon made to the Poles seemed to indicate that their welfare was far from being the real motivation behind his desire to re-establish the Kingdom of Poland.

Napoleon courted the Polish patriots with promises designed to bring the most active leaders into his sphere of influence. These promises, however, definitely brought out the fact that his first duty was to France and that he would not give aid to the Poles at the expense of his own country. Napoleon expressed this idea when he said that he loved the Poles and would like to make them independent but his first duty was to France which he could not sacrifice in order to benefit Poland. He indicated that since Russia, Prussia and Austria all had a slice of Poland, any attempt to regain lost

³ W. F. Reddaway, et al., eds., The Cambridge History of Poland, Cambridge, England, 1941, 208.

territory might start a conflagration which he would be unable to suppress.⁴ All the assurances which Napoleon made to the Poles were ambiguous and did not actually guarantee the future status of Poland. While on the one hand Napoleon considered the partitions a disgrace, he also suggested that it would be impossible for him to accomplish what the Poles desired unless they themselves took up the sword and joined him, in what he told them was a Polish campaign. He aroused to fanaticism the national feeling of the Poles and encouraged them to believe that he would come as their liberator.

The vague promises which Napoleon made only tended to bring forth new Polish demands for more concrete guarantees that their cause would not be forgotten. Upon receipt of a letter from a Polish patriot, Count Oginski, Napoleon told Suikowski, his aid-de-camp that he loved and esteemed the Poles and that the Partition of Poland was an act of iniquity which could not be defended. Napoleon said that after the war in Italy was finished, he would demand that the Russians return Polish provinces to the Poles. However, Napoleon added that the Poles should not depend upon foreign assistance but prepare to defend themselves, annoy the Russians and organize their forces because a nation which was crushed by its neighbors could only be restored by the sword.⁵ The above remark made by Napoleon in 1796, while he was at the head of the French army in Italy, was characteristic of his future promises made to the Polish people. Napoleon refrained from openly appealing in his

⁴ Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte, ed. R. W. Phipps, New York, 1889, III, 93.

⁵ James Fletcher, Esq., The History of Poland, New York, 1831, 278-279.

own person to the Poles as a nation, but he did not hesitate to permit others to do so in his behalf. Many of the Polish soldiers who joined the French army were sent back into Poland with the specific purpose of arousing the Poles to revolt in the Russian, Prussian and Austrian sectors of Poland.⁶ Napoleon's constant efforts to win the Poles to his cause bore fruit and by 1797 the Polish Legions in the French army amounted to 8,000 and by 1801 the figure had risen to 15,000 men.⁷ The Polish imagination was drawn toward the magnetic personality of Napoleon and hope in his pledges grew despite his failure to give concrete proof of his intentions with respect to Poland. The three Partitions left the population in all sectors of Poland stunned and in a state of bitter resentment, and when a glimmer of hope arose, which promised fruition of their most fervent desires, the Polish people eagerly accepted what Napoleon had to offer even if that only meant the restoration of Poland and its subsequent relegation to a barrier state.

Polish hope continued to rise until the signing of the treaties of Campo Formio in 1797 with Austria, and Lunéville in 1801 with Russia, which completely disregarded Polish aspirations and military aid given to Napoleon during the campaigns. The Lunéville treaty was especially irritating to the Polish people since it stated that no help would be given them by France

6 The History of Napoleon Buonaparte, London, n.d., I, 351.

7 Władysław Smoleński, Naród Polski w Walce O Byt, Zarys Historyczny, Warsaw, 1919, 40.

toward the restoration of the former Polish Kingdom.⁸ After 1801 the Polish soldiers either remained with Napoleon on the basis that he would change his mind or else returned home. Polish ambitions also received a setback immediately after Luneville when Napoleon sent the majority of the Polish soldiers to San Domingo to assist the French in a futile effort to recover the island from the revolting negroes, with the result that almost all of the men were killed by yellow fever.⁹

The cynical attitude shown by Napoleon--his love and admiration for the Polish people on the one side and his total indifference of their desires for independence on the other--convinced the Polish patriots that the promises made by Napoleon would not be easily fulfilled and that their country would be used as a camp for further activity against the enemies of France.¹⁰ Despite such an unpromising future, most of the Poles were aware that even though Napoleon did not accomplish what he had pledged, he was still the only one to whom they could turn to and, therefore, continued to be his allies against his enemies who were their own as well. The Poles who followed Napoleon knew that none of the Partitioning Powers, Russia, Prussia, or Austria, would become their benefactor as each had a great section of their country under its domination and, therefore, only a military upset for one of these powers could mean eventual restoration of independence.

⁸ Bolesław Limanowski, Studwuździestoletnia Walka Narodu Polskiego o Niepodległość, Cracow, 1916, 37.

⁹ Cambridge History of Poland, 210.

¹⁰ Earl of Kerry, ed., The First Napoleon, Boston, 1925, 15.

In the meantime, the extent of Napoleon's promises fluctuated with the degree of friendliness between himself and Russia, Prussia and Austria. When it appeared that a breach was inevitable, he wooed the Poles, and when he no longer feared or needed any of these powers, his attitude toward the Polish cause chilled. It is doubtful whether Napoleon gave serious thought to Polish restoration on the basis desired by the Poles, that is complete autonomy and recovery of former territory. Even though his sympathies might have been with the people, it still meant that he would alienate either one of the Partitioning Powers or all three if he planned to execute promises made to the Poles.

Napoleon realized that any definite commitment to the Poles meant that he would have to provoke Austria to regain the Polish provinces under Habsburg domination. These were rich provinces which would deprive Austria of considerable wealth. It would be necessary to provoke Prussia which also held Polish territory, and would be most reluctant to part with her possessions. Opposition to such a plan was even greater on the part of Russia, which already held the largest share of Polish territory and would, therefore, be the most vociferous objector to any such scheme. Napoleon was aware that if he attempted to provoke either Austria or Prussia he would necessarily have to contend with Russia as their ally. The French Emperor's entire attitude of being noncommittal gave the impression that he considered Russian, Prussian and Austrian friendship more valuable at this time and that Polish gratitude would not compensate for a rupture of amicable relations between France and the Partitioning Powers.

After disappointment in Napoleon, the eyes of many Poles turned eastward toward Russia as the source of their deliverance with more than mild reciprocity. In 1803, all of continental Europe feared France, and Russia, while she assumed a pacific and inoffensive position, was also conscious of the threat to her own security. Alexander was genuinely concerned lest Napoleon wrest Galicia from Austria and prepare the way for the restoration of the whole kingdom. Prince Adam Czartoryski, a Polish nobleman and St. Petersburg Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Alexander and reminded him that Russia had a vulnerable point in Poland and, therefore, should take some steps to safeguard it from possible invasion by Napoleon.¹¹ The plan Czartoryski urged was for Alexander to proclaim himself King of Poland, by some means acquire both Prussian and Austrian Poland, and unite the three under his sceptre.¹² The plan found great favor with Alexander whose fears of Napoleon increased rapidly. Alexander, however, was reticent to embark on a policy which would alienate both Prussia and Austria at this time. Around 1800 Alexander might have been willing to reconstitute Poland under a Russian protectorate but the strongest opposition to such a plan came from the Russian oligarchy and he would have to contend with them as did his father, Paul I.¹³ Paul, however, did not consider Napoleon a menace, but on the contrary held a

11 Alfred Rambaud, Russia, trans. by Leonora D. Lang, New York, 1902, 152.

12 Smolenski, Naród Polski, 41.

13 Michał Bobrzyński, Dzieje Polski w Zarysie, Warsaw, 1931, III, 32.

real infatuation for him, and did not concern himself with the fact whether the ruler of France was legitimate or not, so long as he could make himself obeyed.¹⁴ Alexander, did not hold the same opinion as his father and was faced with the necessity of protecting himself and his dynastic interests.

Czartoryski continued to urge Alexander to proclaim himself King of Poland, even more strongly after Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor of the French on May 20, 1804. By April 1805, a coalition consisting of England, Austria, Sweden and Russia was formed against Napoleon, and Czartoryski suggested that when France was defeated:

The Emperor of Russia, taking the title of King of Poland, will have all the territories that belonged to Poland before the first partition together with the country called the Kingdom of Prussia, so that his new frontier would extend from Dantzig to the sources of the Vistula, and thence along the Carpathians as far as the source of the Dniester.¹⁵

The plan advocated by Czartoryski was received rather halfheartedly by Alexander who did not wish to alienate his ally Prussia, which was not a member of the coalition. At the same time, Alexander was reluctant to lose Czartoryski's friendship because he considered him a valuable means by which to induce the Poles away from Napoleon's sphere of influence. In addition to appeasing Czartoryski Alexander also made promises to the Polish people, which increased with his anxiety over Napoleon's steadily rising military successes. Alexander's constant refusal to accept his plan discouraged Czartoryski who wrote that the only reasons which detained him in

¹⁴ Adam Ogielgud, ed., Memoirs of Prince Adam Czartoryski, London, 1888, I, 271.

¹⁵ Ibid., II, 53.

St. Petersburg were his personal attachment to the Russian Emperor and the wish to serve Poland through his influence with Alexander. Czartoryski indicated that Alexander spoke of Poland at more and prolonged intervals and returned to the subject only when he felt that the Pole was discouraged. The consolation which the Czar offered was vague and Czartoryski admitted that Alexander's increasing difficulty to deal with the Polish problem weakened the only real bond of friendship between the two men.¹⁶

Czartoryski's strong personal attachment to Alexander was severely tried during 1801 and 1804, a period during which Alexander promised much but did little to carry out his plans for Poland's restoration. In his early association Czartoryski firmly believed in Alexander and this belief cost him most of his friends in Poland, who considered him a traitor to his country. The warnings of his friends did not deter Czartoryski from allegiance to Alexander, who made a reciprocal agreement with France not to protect political refugees nor help them in their efforts against the established order in their respective countries. This reciprocal agreement was aimed by France against the Legitimists and by Russia against the Poles who sought refuge from Russian domination.¹⁷ Czartoryski considered Alexander's first public act an abandonment of the sentiments which united the Polish noble and the Russian Czar. However, Czartoryski still believed that Alexander had not forgotten the Polish cause and hoped that when Napoleon no longer needed Russian friendship, Alexander would change his mind. Czartoryski's friends

16 Ibid., I, 269.

17 Ibid., 274.

and family told him that he had nothing to gain from one of Poland's enemies and that actually Alexander was as imperialistically inclined as all the Russian Czars had been. Still, Czartoryski maintained that Alexander did not pursue his imperialistic policy at the beginning but was forced into it by the situation at home.¹⁸ By 1804, however, Czartoryski held the opinion that while the internal difficulties in Russia might have retarded her advance for more extensive domination of Europe, the spirit of Peter the Great still hovered over his empire and his pitiless ambition lay at the bottom of every Russian heart.¹⁹

In his Memoirs Czartoryski referred to Alexander's motivation for his present foreign policy and its likeness to that of all the Russian Czars when he wrote:

The Czars of Moscow had had the instinct of conquest since the reign of Ivan the Cruel It was under Peter the Great, however, that Russian policy first assumed that decided the stable character which it has maintained to this day. All the objects which Russia increasingly pursues with indefatigable perseverance—amounting to nothing less than the subjugation of the greater part of Europe and Asia—were clearly conceived and designated to his successors by Peter the Great.²⁰

The above opinion expressed by Czartoryski, clearly illustrated one held by the Poles who turned their attentions toward Napoleon as the potential liberator, but it was even more important to note that it was held by such a man as Czartoryski, who had continually offered his services to Alexander in

18 Ibid., II, 8.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 7-8.

the hopes that the Russian Czar would look with favor upon the Polish cause. Many historians claimed that Czartoryski was completely duped by Alexander and because of his complete faith in the Czar continued in his service. However, this was not the case. Actually, as his Memoirs indicated, he realized that Alexander was driven by the same dynastic interests as the former Csars. In 1804, Czartoryski also wrote that he did not pronounce the name of Poland as it raised many difficulties. The Polish nobleman added that no Russian was ever on his own initiative or will favorable toward Poland and that he himself eventually became convinced that there was no exception to the rule.²¹ Despite such a firm conviction that Alexander was an imperialist at heart, Czartoryski remained loyal to him and at many future opportunities continued to urge Alexander to proclaim himself the King of Poland and restore all of the former territories under his rule. As previously indicated, Alexander refused to consider such a step in 1804, because he knew that it would necessitate an act of aggression on either one of his allies, Prussia or Austria.

While Alexander refrained from any outward act of aggression against Prussia, at the very beginning of the formation of the coalition of England, Austria, Russia and Sweden against France, he did proceed to incite the population of Prussian Poland to revolt and to accept him as their King.²² Alexander did not, however, accept Czartoryski's plan whereby Prussian Poland would be confiscated by Russia and included into the proposed restored

21 Ibid., 11-12.

22 Capt. L. F. de Suchorzewski, The History of Poland and Russia, London, 1855, 8.

Polish Kingdom. Alexander's reluctance to perform any overt act against his potential ally, Prussia, was based upon many factors. As early as the spring of 1802, Alexander had met the Prussian King, Frederick William III at Memel, and formed a personal liking for Frederick William to which the latter afterwards owed the preservation of his monarchy. In his Memoirs, Czartoryski indicated that the relations between Russia and Prussia were purely personal between the two monarchs and that there was no real sympathy between their respective Cabinets, armies or the people themselves.²³ Czartoryski stated that Prussia's equivocal conduct, her willingness to submit to French influence and the profit which she obtained through such a relationship, greatly irritated the Russians.²⁴

Evidence of the lack of harmony between officials of the two monarchs was exemplified by the mission of M. de Wintzingerode, who was sent by Alexander to Berlin in 1804 to learn of the political situation with respect to the possible rupture of relations with France. Czartoryski stated that de Wintzingerode was not amicably disposed to Prussia and informed Alexander of the extent of Prussian military resources and did not conceal the uncertain policy of the Prussian statesmen. In addition, de Wintzingerode gave little hope of effective cooperation between Russia and Prussia in the event of a rupture with France.²⁵

23 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, I, 281.

24 Ibid., 318.

25 Ibid., II, 6.

The Prussians themselves were very suspicious of Alexander's motives, especially after they learned of his intrigues with the Poles to revolt in the Prussian Polish sector. The Prussians were also aware that Alexander was urged by Czartoryski to confiscate Prussian Poland and include it in the restored Polish Kingdom. Baron von Stein, one of Frederick William's ministers wrote of the possible Polish restoration and union with Russia, and expressed his fears of Russian motives. Stein inquired:

But how is the restoration of Poland and its union with Russia related to the broad interest of England, Austria, Germany? The question is easy to answer when we consider that in that case the Weichsel and the Oder almost from Custrin would be Russia's boundary, and that the most important harbours and the rivermouths of the Baltic would come into her possession, that the Polish frontier encircles Hungary, Silesia, Pomerania, Neumark, and threatens the heart of Germany—it is unnecessary to linger on the development of such ideas and their monstrous consequences they [Russians] . . . desire the Weichsel for a frontier.²⁶

The preceding excerpt definitely pointed to the fact that Prussia was aware of Russian motives, very suspicious of them, feared their consequences and considered her Polish provinces a safeguard against possible Russian advance further into Western Europe, to the detriment of Prussia herself. Thus, Prussia was not only in the unfortunate position of danger from Napoleon's military aggression but was also eager to maintain her Polish provinces as a protection from possible aggression from the east.

Alexander attempted to suppress Prussian suspicions and assured Frederick William of his personal loyalty. Especially after the Peace of

26 J. R. Seeley, Life and Times of Stein, London, 1878, III, 15-16.

Amiens in 1802 Alexander decided to espouse the cause of Prussia in order to help Prussia regain territories on the Rhine.²⁷ Prior to 1805, Frederick William refused to permit the Russian army to cross through his territory but after October 25, 1805, granted his permission for such action. Alexander and Czartoryski promptly arrived in Berlin and preparations were made for the attack upon France.²⁸

The Austrians, who also had a great deal to lose by Napoleon's victory over the coalition, joined in the plans to defeat the French Emperor. Metternich indicated that the present status of Poland was directly menaced by all the measures of Napoleon and would most assuredly affect the Polish provinces under Austrian rule, which were already considered part of the Austrian dynasty. In a letter to Hardenberg, Metternich wrote that the head of the French Government proclaimed his desire to incite the Polish people under Russian, Prussian and Austrian domination and to reject the authority of the respective sovereigns who brought them into submission to preserve them from the misfortunes which the French Revolution brought forth. Metternich added that Napoleon did not confine himself solely to the above activity but showed a complete disregard for the laws which the German Empire prescribed for its members and was a frightful presage of what could be expected from the French Emperor's views with respect to Continental Europe.

27 Strakhovsky, Alexander I, 63-64, After Napoleon's war with England ended with the Peace of Amiens in 1802, Napoleon no longer relied on Russian friendliness to the same extent.

28 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 100.

The Austrian also stated that no one could calculate the effectiveness of his pains respecting what was once Poland.²⁹ It is evident that Austria too feared the possible restoration of the Polish Kingdom at the hands of Napoleon, and was aware of the use to which Napoleon would relegate a new Polish state. As early as his first state paper in 1801, Metternich expressed the Austrian viewpoint toward the Polish provinces which were incorporated by Austria after the three Partitions. In the state paper Metternich stated that:

the existence of Poland was equally important for us, for the interests of the adjacent states, and for the general peace of Europe. Situated between three great states, Poland prevented the frequent collisions which always occur if there is immediate contact, and for that reason alone it had a decided value for each of the three powers; this value was, however, doubled for Prussia and ourselves.³⁰

Metternich added that:

the advantage to Prussia of an increased population and extended frontier is counter-balanced by the disadvantage of having these frontiers in common with Russia and with us. We are in a similar position; no country but Russia could, in spite of her enormous extension towards East, still nourish the desire of approaching the centre of European politics; but it remains to be seen whether the partition of Poland has promoted this object.³¹

The attitude taken by Metternich indicated that Austria, the same as the other two Powers, Russia and Prussia, considered her Polish provinces

29 Prince Richard Metternich, ed., Memoirs of Prince Metternich, trans. by Mrs. Alexander Napier, New York, 1880, II, 103-104.

30 Ibid., 9.

31 Ibid., 9-10.

a barrier against possible aggression from the others. There was a great degree of mutual suspicion present in the relations between these countries. It was also evident that both Austria and Prussia had a mutual fear not only of Napoleon but also of Russia who they believed was thinking in terms of expansion to the Rhine.

In 1805, Napoleon presented an immediate threat and so the three Powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria, joined by England and Sweden, decided to end the Napoleonic menace. The plans of the coalition were thwarted when Napoleon defeated his enemies at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805.³² However, the defeat at Austerlitz was not a final one for the coalition in its war against Napoleon. The French victory provoked Alexander who went back to St. Petersburg breathing revenge.

32 Bobrzyński, Dzieje Polski, 33.

CHAPTER III
GROWING OPPOSITION OF THE PARTITIONING
POWERS 1806-1807

Prussian defeat at Austerlitz in 1805 resulted in the formation of another coalition which consisted of England, Prussia, Sweden and Russia. The purpose of this coalition was the same as that of the previous one, the defeat of Napoleon and his plans for the domination of the continent. Napoleon considered Russia the greatest threat, and was especially provoked at attempts made by Alexander to guide the Polish people away from himself and directly into the Russian sphere of influence. To offset the plans of Russia and the coalition, Napoleon decided to continue to play off Poland against his enemies as a precautionary measure.

Napoleon continued to appeal to the Poles and was directly responsible for the formation of an insurrectionary committee at Warsaw whose purpose it was to distract the Partitioning Powers and create dissension in the ranks of the Poles who looked to Russia as the potential liberator. The French Emperor assured many deputations of Poles who came to him that he never recognized the Partition of Poland and that he had the deepest interest in seeing Poland restored to her rightful place among the European nations.¹

In order to incite the Poles, Napoleon ordered the printing and

¹ August Fournier, Napoleon I, trans. by Annie E. Adams, London, 1914, I, 432.

distribution of Rulhiere's Histoire de l'anarchie de Pologne which showed Russian initiative behind the partitions of Poland, and Pistor's Memoires sur la revolution de la Pologne which was concerned with the Kosciuszko uprising.² Napoleon also continued to pronounce the same ambiguous promises which he made to the Poles during the previous years. Polish disillusionment in Alexander during the preceding year, 1805, gave Napoleon the advantage in winning the Polish people to his side. Napoleon continued to dangle the prospect of independence before the eyes of the Poles because he wanted to reconstitute Poland not only as a buttress but also as a vast reservoir of manpower for his future wars with the coalition.

After the Prussian defeat in 1805, Napoleon knew that Poland would become the theatre of war and further turned the patriotism of the Poles to his own account. He received a delegation from Prussian Poland and said that when he saw 30,000 to 40,000 armed men he would declare Polish independence at Warsaw and when it came from him it would be secure. However, Napoleon said that he was far away from home and could not shed the blood of his French soldiers but would have to depend on Polish manpower to fight shoulder to shoulder with his troops.³ Napoleon added that the enormous power which always demonstrated to be the greatest enemy of the Poles could be destroyed only by a miracle. The French Emperor also stated that Austria, Prussia and Russia often demanded France to acknowledge the partitions but France refused

2 Władysław Smoleński, Dzieje Narodu Polskiego, Warsaw, 1904, 385.

3 Szymon Askenazy, Między Jeną a Tyłzą, Monografie w Zakresie Dziejów Nowożytnych, II, Warsaw, 1902, 104.

because it was to the interest of Europe and to the interest of France that Poland should exist. Napoleon then told the Poles to cease their internal differences, unite, and take advantage of the only chance to regain their nationality.⁴ In subsequent proclamations to the Polish people, Napoleon consistently indicated that it was necessary for the Poles to arm themselves and join his ranks if they expected him to restore their independence. In one meeting with a deputation from Warsaw, Napoleon stated that only when the Poles raised an army of 40,000 men would they have the right of being a nation and subsequently have the right to his protection.⁵

Although Napoleon was successful in drawing Polish manpower to his aid, his vague promises with respect to future Poland tended to create suspicion of his intentions. Together with promises that Poland would be restored, Napoleon also gave indication that not all of the territory would be given independence. On December 1, 1806, Napoleon wrote to Cambacères about the enthusiasm of the Poles and stated that the nobility, the clergy and the peasantry were all of one mind.⁶ The very same day Napoleon wrote a letter to General Andreossy, his ambassador at Vienna, which stated that while he favored insurrection in Russian and Prussian Polish provinces, he would not encourage any such movement in Austrian Poland.⁷ Napoleon further

4 Ibid.

5 The Duc de Broglie, ed., Memoirs of the Prince De Talleyrand, trans. by Mrs. Angus Hall, London, 1891, I, 233-234.

6 Cambridge History of Poland, 212.

7 Ibid.

instructed Andreóssy to inform the Austrian Emperor, Francis I, that he would give him a portion of Silesia as an indemnity. This, however, was not a real offer but one merely to test reaction since Silesia was still under Prussian domination and Napoleon had not yet completely defeated Prussia. Giving Austria Silesia would have been equivalent to a rupture with Prussia, Russia and England.⁸ The above offer also indicated that Napoleon was eager to receive passive Austrian assistance in his campaigns against the coalition, much to the annoyance of the coalition powers.

If Napoleon had proclaimed the independence of all sections of former Poland, he would have gained a devoted ally who would completely do his bidding, but as it was, Napoleon was more anxious not to exasperate at least one of the Partitioning Powers on whom he could rely to passively support him while he was engaged in conflict with either one or both of the other powers. Due to his desire not to alienate all three of the Partitioning Powers at one time, his promises to the Poles never bound him formally to any agreement or promise which he made. For example, he would end his promise to the Poles with the statement that God alone held in His hands the course of all future events and would, therefore, be the arbiter of this great political problem.⁹ In his relations with the Polish people, Napoleon further indicated his reluctance to commit himself by stating that it would be necessary for the Poles to show a firm resolution to become independent, prepare to support a King who should be given to them and then he would see what he could do.¹⁰

8 P. Lanfrey, The History of Napoleon The First, 2nd. ed., London, 1886, III, 196.

9 Ibid., 197.

10 Ibid., 198.

In 1806 Napoleon also remarked that he was not in a position to involve France in any new quarrels with her enemies nor was he desirous of begging a throne for his family.¹¹

Napoleon's refusal to commit himself to any action, despite renewed Polish pleas, resulted in discouragement among the Polish population, which in turn was evidenced by the lack of manpower which joined the French army. The answer to the Polish lack of cooperation was a stern admonition from Napoleon to the effect that if the French army did not obtain everything it needed, he would burn the country and leave it to the revenge of its enemies.¹² Even after such a threat, upon his entrance into Warsaw in January of 1807, the people received Napoleon joyously and fulfilled his requests for manpower, horses and foodstuffs.

Behind the apparent revalry upon Napoleon's entrance into Warsaw lay strong undercurrents which indicated the disunity of the Polish people. There were visible signs of distrust of Napoleon's intentions, especially among the more enlightened Polish leaders who realized that in order to re-establish an independent country, it would be necessary for the liberator to possess liberal views and the Poles were aware that this quality was not compatible with Napoleon's eagerness to conquer. Some groups believed that if Napoleon and Alexander could have compromised, Napoleon would have sacrificed the Poles to more important interests. The intellectuals who

¹¹ John S. C. Abbott, History of Napoleon Bonaparte, New York, 1904, I, 526.

¹² Smoleński, Dzieje Narodu, 386.

distrusted Napoleon questioned the validity of his excuse for not giving the Poles more positive evidence of his intentions to restore Poland. Napoleon claimed that he would not make engagements which he would be unable to fulfill, but the intellectuals contended that he had no fears of provoking all of Europe for any reason, personal or otherwise, and therefore, his claim that he would antagonize his enemies was without justification.

Among the group that did not believe either in Napoleon or in Alexander was Thaddeus Kosciuszko. When Napoleon first entertained the idea of using Poland as the center of operations against the coalition, he contacted Kosciuszko and urged him to accept a high position in the French army and use his influence in Poland to arouse all the people to join the Napoleonic cause. Napoleon realized the enormous influence that Kosciuszko exercised over the people and also that a lack of it would throw discredit on all of his protestations. Kosciuszko refused to accept Napoleon's offer unless it was accompanied by a guarantee for the independence and liberty of his country. The Polish patriot pointed to the nations which Napoleon had befriended and later betrayed, e.g., the Venetian Republic and Spain. In regard to Napoleon's intentions, Kosciuszko told the Polish people that Napoleon would not restore Poland because he thought only of his own selfish interests. He added that Napoleon hated every great nationality and still more emphatically the spirit of independence because he was a tyrant and his only aim was the satisfaction of his ambition. The Polish patriot also remarked that Napoleon's primary interests did not permit him to create

anything which would be durable.¹³

When Kosciuszko refused to accept the offer, Napoleon sent Fouché with an offer of money in return for affiliation with the French Emperor. Napoleon also urged Kosciuszko to issue a proclamation to the Polish nation to call the people to join in the fight for their independence. After Napoleon made the offer, the Polish patriot stated that he would not exchange despotism for despotism since the Poles had enough of it at home without purchasing more at the price of their blood.¹⁴ From the preceding statements, it is obvious that Kosciuszko believed that Napoleon did not possess the necessary liberal views which were a prime requisite for anyone who intended to restore the independence of a country.

Unlike Kosciuszko, who refused to follow either Napoleon or Alexander, and Poniatowski, who was wholeheartedly behind Napoleon, Czartoryski continued to remain in Alexander's service and to press the Russian Czar to proclaim the restoration of Poland under his sceptre. Czartoryski was positively opposed to the mutual understanding between Napoleon and Alexander because he knew that such an agreement meant a negative settlement of Polish problems and the Polish cause was the sole reason for his political attachment to Alexander.¹⁵ Czartoryski coolly accepted Alexander's promises and feared the possibility of a civil war

13 Cambridge History of Poland, 212-213.

14 Fletcher, History of Poland, 288.

15 Marcell Handelsman, Adam Czartoryski, Warsaw, 1948, II, 63.

between the group that favored Napoleon and the group that attached itself to Alexander, a fear which rose with the conviction that it was difficult to count on Alexander for help.¹⁶

While still the Russian Foreign Minister, Czartoryski urged Alexander to proclaim himself King of Poland, not only to undo the wrong that had been done to Poland, but also to insure his own defenses against Napoleon. In a memorandum of December 6, 1806, Czartoryski pointed out the necessity of restoring Poland. He said that in the struggle which was to decide upon the fate of Europe and of Russia, Poland was the principle object of consideration between France and Russia. The memorandum added that the two empires, which were about to come into immediate collision with each other, looked upon Poland from different points of view. For the French, Poland was a source of safety and a standpoint for fighting Russia and ultimately penetrating within her frontiers.¹⁷ Czartoryski then indicated the Russian point of view toward Poland and the necessity for Polish support of the Russian security measures. He stated that:

For Russia, on the other hand, the Poles are a motive of continual anxieties and suspicions; they have frequently been used by Buonaparte as a bugbear to the Partitioning Powers. Though Poland afford all the resources capable of supporting the war and powerfully contributing to the defense of the throne, the Russian Government fears to make use of the Poles lest they should turn against it Under these circumstances Poland diminishes the

16 Stanisław Smolka, Polityka Lubeckiego Przed Powstaniem Listopadowym, Cracow, 1907, I, 33-34.

17 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 165-166.

power of Russia in the same proportion as she augments that of France.¹⁸

Alexander was approached many times to reconstitute Poland and through negotiations with Austria and Prussia obtain the other portions of dismembered Poland. The Czar was informed that if any of his ministers opposed his plans with regard to Poland, they should be changed, but Alexander refused to consider such a plan. It was difficult for Czartoryski to understand why Alexander refused to proclaim himself the King of Poland because if Alexander ever dreamed of the restoration of Poland, he saw the crown of the Jagellons upon his own head.¹⁹ Alexander's refusal to commit himself on the question of Poland resulted in a joyous reception for Napoleon when he eventually entered Poland on December 18, 1806.

There were several reasons why Alexander refused to proclaim Polish independence during 1806 and 1807. Two of these reasons were that he would necessarily have to alienate both Austria and Prussia, who were his allies. Alexander refused to provoke these two powers despite the fact that he considered Austria a passive ally of Napoleon and Prussia a mere puppet of the French Emperor. All Russian political moves, and eventually Prussian diplomacy, were directed toward forcing Austria to take part in the 1806 and 1807 campaigns against Napoleon but the memory of recent defeat together with the picture of Napoleonic successes prevented the almost willing Austrians to

18 Ibid., 166.

19 Heinrich Gotthard von Treitschke, History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century, trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul, New York, 1914, p. 256.

join Prussia and Russia. Since the time of Austerlitz Austria had lost some of her provinces, was in a critical economic state, suffered exhaustion of her financial and military resources, and because of these reasons took side with no power, encouraged all but did not commit herself to any policy which might endanger her position. The Austrians feared Napoleon, and when rumors came to Vienna from Paris that Napoleon intended to indemnify Prussia for taking Silesia and other sections of Poland, Metternich was worried about Austria's Polish provinces lest these be the ones designated for that purpose. Metternich feared that such action might result in the downfall of the Austrian monarchy. He also considered the possibility that Napoleon might offer Galicia to Russia for her inactive aid to Prussia in the war. Napoleon, however, quieted the fears of Metternich by stating that while he did not consider the Polish partition by Prussia valid, he did accept the status quo of Austrian Polish possessions.²⁰

In a letter to Andreossy in 1806, Napoleon stated that:

I have never acknowledged the partition of Poland, But as a faithful observer of treaties, through helping revolutions in Russian and Prussian Poland, I will not interfere in Austrian Poland. If Austria is having some difficulties in the center of these movements to retain Galicia and would wish to exchange [for peace] to cede part of Silesia, you may state, that you are ready to begin negotiations. My behavior cannot be peaceful. Does Austria wish to retain Galicia? I won't interfere. Does she desire secret or public negotiations? I am ready to do what she desires.²¹

Although Napoleon indicated his desire to begin negotiations for the exchange of Galicia for Silesia, Stadion indicated that the French Cabinet

20 Askenazy, Między Jeną a Tyłzą, 13.

21 Ibid., 93.

never formally proposed to execute such an agreement between the two countries. Therefore, while Napoleon was defeating Prussia, he had Austria constantly at his elbow, Austria which was looking at the war not far from her borders between France and the Russian-Prussian coalition. Austria eagerly awaited the possible defeat of Napoleon and desired to take revenge for her losses at Morengo and Austerlitz and the treaties of Lunéville and Pressburg. While Austria refused to give active aid to either Napoleon or the coalition, she hoped for Napoleonic defeat and continued her position of neutrality.

Alexander's other motive for not declaring Polish independence was his relationship with Prussia, which was regarded as a puppet of Napoleon. The basis for the alliance between Russia and Prussia during 1807 was nothing more than a friendship between Frederick William III and Alexander I, initiated by Alexander and considered rather sudden by many observers. The friendship between the two monarchs was especially interesting because there was evidence that Frederick William entertained the idea of proclaiming himself King of Poland. Frederick William was urged to such action by Prince Antoni Radziwill, but the Prussian was reluctant to take this bold step and was afraid of the consequences to his regime from the other Partitioning Powers. When Dombrowski raised a revolt in the Prussian provinces, which extended to territory gained from both partitions, Frederick William sought Russian help to suppress the action which was encouraged by Napoleon.²²

Despite the bond of friendship between the two monarchs, the

22 Ibid., 24.

Russians were suspicious of Prussia and her alleged conspiracy with Napoleon, and because of this held an arrogant contempt for Prussia. Czartoryski was a member of the group which believed that Prussia did not resist Napoleon's advances strongly enough and in reality favored Napoleon and pardoned his encroachments. He also indicated that Prussia could never be a sincere ally of Russia. In a memorandum to Alexander on January 17, 1806, Czartoryski stated that:

Between France and Russia, which, when Europe was in its normal condition, could hardly come in contact with each other, is Prussia: timid by system and by necessity of economising her resources, she can do nothing alone either against Russia or against France. If these two Powers were in equal influence and in activity, Prussia would be entirely justified in keeping on good terms with both of them. But one is constantly encroaching on its neighbors, while the other seeks only to protect them against such encroachment; and it is therefore both the duty and the interest of Prussia to join Russia in forming a barrier against France.²³

Czartoryski's attitude not only indicated a distrust of Prussia's foreign policy but was important from the standpoint that it was an expression of the suspicions of Prussia which circulated among many Russians in Alexander's court. Alexander's friendship for the Prussian King, and his subsequent military aid, therefore, evoked a great deal of surprise and convinced Czartoryski that his own efforts were useless.

The burden of the war of 1806 fell upon Russia when the Prussians were defeated by Napoleon at Jena and Auerstadt. The war of 1806 was attributed to Prussia which learned that Napoleon intended to negotiate with

23 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 113.

England in regard to Hanover. The Prussians were provoked by Napoleon's diplomacy, refused to tolerate the condition, and war followed. The Prussians carried the burden of the war with Napoleon by themselves until the occupation of Berlin and the French entrance into Poznan and Warsaw. Only then did Alexander give the Prussians military assistance. The Czar sent two divisions of 100,000 men to the Russian borders to unite with Bannigsen's Prussian division and together the armies were successful in repelling French advances at Pultusk during December of 1806.²⁴ Alliance with Russia gave the Prussians confidence of ultimate victory but after the battle of Friedland on June 24, 1807, Alexander decided that his resources were being wasted in behalf of the Prussians and communicated with them to the effect that he was withdrawing. Friedland was the decisive battle for the Prussians and the war with France resulted in the Kingdom of Frederick William II becoming practically a province of the French Empire.

After Friedland, the power of Prussia was crushed and Napoleon deprived her of all her possessions between the Rhine and Elbe, dethroned her allies of Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel, and on the east confiscated all of Poland, and thus broke the two wings of the Prussian eagle. Napoleon consented to restore Frederick William to the Prussian throne solely on the basis of his respect for the Russian Emperor whose friendship he desired against the menace of England.

Victory also brought Napoleon the acknowledgement of his title by Russia, who till then was the only recussant on the continent. Historians

²⁴ Askensay, Miedzy Jena a Tylsa, 8.

indicate that it was at this peace negotiation at Tilsit that Alexander gave Napoleon the title of Emperor and Majesty for the first time. Prior to that time, the Russian Czar did not officially recognize Napoleon as the legitimate ruler of the French people.²⁵ Napoleon's triumph at Friedland not only brought him the recognition of Emperor of the French by the legitimate ruler of Russia, but it also gave him a powerful ally in Alexander whom he forced to join the continental system against England. England was Russia's best customer and the agreement with Napoleon proved a real hardship for her. At the moment, the English presented an immediate threat to Napoleon and he proceeded to impress Russia favorably and gain her cooperation in his plans to defeat England.

The means which Napoleon used to acquire Russian alliance was the offer of the Polish crown to Alexander. Such an offer was contrary to the promises which Napoleon made to the Poles to gain their aid but it was more important for him to gain Russian assistance and, therefore, the Polish cause was secondary to him. Napoleon had several reasons for offering the Polish provinces to Alexander. As mentioned above, he would gain a strong ally to help him carry out his plans in Europe and defeat the English. Secondly, he knew that the present condition of the Poles in Warsaw would be dangerous to Alexander's plans. The Polish people had tasted or at least hoped for restoration and thus would be continually engaged in plotting insurrection and focus Russian attention upon themselves, away from Napoleon.

²⁵ Madame La Comtesse De Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs of the Emperor Alexander I and the Court of Russia, trans. by Mary Berenice Patterson, 2nd. ed., Chicago, 1901, 58.

perhaps the most important reason why Napoleon made the offer to Alexander was that he knew that such action would immediately antagonize Alexander's allies, Austria and Prussia; Prussia because she would immediately lose the land and Austria because of possible future territorial losses. This last factor became the decisive one for Alexander's refusal of the Polish crown. Alexander was bound by treaty with Frederick William and so refused to accept any territory from his ally. He also realized that acceptance of the crown would have given indication of his desire to possess the other Polish provinces for his own and openly give confirmation to existing suspicions in both Prussia and Austria.

When Alexander refused to accept the Polish crown, he immediately offered the Polish throne to Napoleon's brother, Jerome. Napoleon would not be led into the trap which would have made him dependent upon the good will of Alexander and refused. Napoleon realized that he would face difficulties over the customs at Niemen, changes of trade and political discussions, and the placement of Jerome on the throne would have only added to his difficulties and would have created new ones of greater complexity than those which already existed. While Napoleon realized that Alexander would refuse his offer, he did not seem anxious to acquire the throne for himself or his family, but at the same time realized that the Prussian Polish province was already in his hands.²⁶ In regard to Alexander's acceptance of the crown, Napoleon later asked Prince Kurakinow why the Russian Czar rejected the first plan he presented at Tilsit. Napoleon indicated that Alexander's acceptance

26 Askenazy, Miedzy Jena a Tylna, 145-146.

would have eliminated the disturbances which the Duchy of Warsaw presented immediately after its creation.²⁷

Alexander's refusal of the Polish throne and the unsuitability of Jerome forced Napoleon to present a third alternative. Napoleon urged that the Prussian Polish provinces should be erected into a Duchy of Warsaw under the rule of Frederick Augustus I, the King of Saxony. Saxony was a member of the Confederation of the Rhine and, therefore, Napoleon could exercise his authority over the newly-created Duchy which he actually intended to use as a barrier against Russia. Napoleon promised Alexander at Tilsit that under no circumstances would the Duchy be used as a weapon against Russia and that the names Polak and Polski would be omitted in official records. It was partly on this basis that Alexander agreed to the formation of the Duchy of

Warsaw.²⁸ The promise which Napoleon made to Alexander was not kept once the Duchy was erected and, as mentioned previously, continued to present disturbing influences for the Russian Czar.

The Treaty of Tilsit was signed on July 7, 1807 and Article V of the treaty provided for the formation of the Duchy of Warsaw from Polish provinces acquired since the 1772 Partition by Prussia. According to the treaty, Danzig became a free city and a military road across Silesia was provided for communication between Saxony and the Duchy.²⁹ Although

27 Ibid., 70.

28 Alexander Rembowski, Z Życia Konstytucyjnego w Księstwie Warszawskim, Warsaw, 1905, 16.

29 Czesław Nanke, Wypisy Do Nauki Historji Nowożytnej, Od Pierwszego Rozbioru Polski i Wybuchu Rewolucji Francuskiej do Czasów Najnowszych, Lwów, 1927, 68-69.

Alexander refused the Polish crown, he was interested in the Memel district which was confiscated from Prussia and destined to become part of the Duchy of Warsaw. To pacify Alexander, Russia was given the Bialystock (Bialystock) region in the east.

To separate the czar for ever from his Prussian friend, Napoleon counselled him to enrich himself at the cost of his unhappy ally, and to unite the district of Bialystock to the Russian empire. The detestable exaction thus urged by Napoleon was followed by Alexander as accommodatingly as had been the corresponding advice by Frederick Augustus of Saxony; he consoled his conscience with the consideration that if he refused, this territory would certainly have been united to Warsaw.³⁰

The peace at Tilsit completely forgot the existence of Austria, which during the war between France and Russia-Prussia refused to align herself with either adversary and continued to maintain her neutrality during the struggle. As previously indicated, Napoleon told Metternich that he would not sanction any insurrection in Austrian Poland and that he would permit the status quo, thereby assuring himself of Austria's passive assistance. The passive assistance given to Napoleon created suspicion in Russia and when it came to settlement of the peace negotiations at Tilsit, Russia's former ally was completely ignored.³¹

Austria considered three eventual occurrences which might result from the Tilsit coalition of Russia and France. She considered the confirmation of the Pressburg peace as the first step. Secondly, a future

30 Treitschke, History of Germany, 308.

31 Askenazy, Miedzy Jena, a Tylna, 87-88.

peace negotiation which would exclude Austria and leave her at the mercy of France. The third and most unbearable occurrence was the indemnification of Austria by taking away her present provinces and giving her others instead which she did not want.³² The Tilsit peace created panic in Austria, which in the alliance between Alexander and Napoleon saw herself crushed politically and monarchically by these two powers.

To safeguard Austria's interests, Emperor Francis I decided to send Stutterheim to plead her cause, and on June 25, 1807, gave him the following instructions:

In preparing the future peace the fate of the so-called Poland is of the greatest interest for the Viennese court. It may seem that we have very little interest if the Russian and Prussian parts of this ancient kingdom become the provinces of a new sovereign who, far away from France and encircled by powers larger than his own, is at least in the near future, not strong enough to bring any fear to his neighbors. But it must be foreseen with certitude that a new Polish kingdom cannot be formed without including, if not all, the great part of Galicia. Whenever the French cabinet would wish to conserve its attitude toward us not asking us for this sacrifice, it is probable, that this point will be the constant theme of discussions and claims that it will make impossible our possession of this province. It must be counted on, that the restoration of the Polish kingdom will certainly be the source of constant troubles and internal disquietudes in Galicia and it must be clear, that the apparent French temperance toward us will result in revolution and in loss of this land after an internal war instead of a voluntary agreement.³³

The above memorandum from Francis I to Stutterheim is ample evidence that Austria was uneasy as to the Tilsit peace settlement and the

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 149-150.

future status of her Polish provinces. Stutterheim, however, arrived after the peace treaty was signed and was too late to plead his cause effectively. Alexander refused to grant Stutterheim an audience because he was preparing to leave Tilsit on the following day, but Napoleon, since he won his peace, was very willing to do so. Napoleon was very polite to the Austrian emissary, and in every way tried to sweeten the bitterness of the new alliance for Austria and gave his assurances that he would consider the neutral position which she maintained during the war.³⁴

The most bitter opposition to the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw came from Prussia which lost the territory out of which the Duchy was erected. The fact that she was the defeated did not alleviate the feeling of hatred for both the newly-created Duchy and its creator, Napoleon. The provinces which Prussia lost were very valuable possessions of the Prussian monarch and even after the Treaty of Tilsit, Frederick William did not resign himself to the status quo but hoped for the return of these provinces. Determination to regain the lost territory was, therefore, a very powerful motive for opposition to the Duchy of Warsaw.

The Duchy of Warsaw, however, was far from what the Polish people had expected. It was sufficient for the purpose to which Napoleon had relegated the new Duchy, that of a buffer state between himself and Russia, now that he had subjugated Prussia. Napoleon's attitude was one of strategy. He utilised Poland to secure his own ambitions and to satisfy the

34 Ibid., 84-85.

French people, whose representative he was. His purpose was to preserve France and if possible add to her glory. In this project he was opposed by the other Great Powers on the European continent, especially Russia, Prussia and Austria. These powers feared Napoleon's interference in their own domestic affairs and Napoleon created the Duchy to prevent any opposition to his plans.

The creation of the Duchy satisfied probably no one except Napoleon himself. The Polish people were happy at the partial restoration but a question remained in their mind. Why did Napoleon fail to reconstruct all of Poland when he had the opportunity to do so? There were several reasons that possibly motivated Napoleon. There were diverse influences at work upon the Polish leaders which tended to disunite the country. Another reason might have been that the people themselves were not ready for such a move on Napoleon's part. When Napoleon came into Poland, there was no type of governing body into whose hands he could have placed the necessary authority. It was suggested that Prince Joseph Poniatowski would be the logical candidate but historians failed to realize that Poniatowski was not yet the great national hero who could sway all the people to his side. While the years of the Partitions had intensified the desire for independence, they also tended to break down close cooperation between the various sections of Polish lands under three masters. There was also Napoleon's immediate need of the assistance of Russia and the desire to keep either Prussia or Austria neutral while he engaged in conflict with the other. After the Duchy of Warsaw was created, Russia, Prussia and Austria

were all eventually compelled to oppose its existence because it presented a constant threat to their security, the exact purpose for which Napoleon had created it.

CHAPTER IV

THE DUCHY OF WARSAW

The Treaty of Tilsit ended hostilities between France and the Russo-Prussian coalition, and at the same time, provided for the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw under the rule of Frederick Augustus, King of Saxony. Frederick Augustus, whose dynasty was stated to have been declared by the reformed Polish constitution of May 3, 1791, as entitled by inheritance to the Polish throne, became the puppet ruler of 2,300,000 inhabitants, nearly all of whom were Poles.

After his forces entered Warsaw, Napoleon issued a proclamation which instituted a Government Commission whose objective it was to take over general administration, represent Poland in relations with Frederick William, exercise legislative powers, and above all, raise an army. The first members of the Commission were Indwik Gutakowski, Stanisław Potocki, Józef Wybicki, Ksawery Działyński, Piotr Bielński and Walenty Sobolewski, with Stanisław Małachowski as head of this group.¹ In addition to the Government Commission, five directors were chosen to aid in the reorganization of the government. Felix Lubieński became the head of the justice depart-

1 Askenazy, Wiedzy Jena a Tyła, 31.

ment, Tadeusz Dembowski had charge of the treasury, Prince Józef Poniatowski, the war and military, Stanisław Breza, internal affairs, and Alexander Potocki, the police department. Potocki also became the official representative between the government at Warsaw and Napoleon.² After Napoleon instituted the Government Commission, he sent Tallyrand into Warsaw to act as his emissary. Only France had an envoy or resident at Warsaw, who had complete power to exercise control over the government of the Duchy. The French representatives ultimately connected with the Duchy as intermediaries between the Duchy and Napoleon were Vincent, Serra, Bignon and de Pradt. The objective of all French representatives to the Duchy was clearly to make it the eastern buffer state of the Napoleonic system. The real powers of government were in the hands of the French resident, or more directly in Napoleon's hands. Napoleon alone could direct the Duchy's foreign affairs, a power prohibited for Frederick Augustus. In addition, the King could not name a viceroy to act in his behalf if he was forced to be absent from any government proceedings at Warsaw.

Under Napoleon's direction, military affairs received the greatest attention. Napoleon gave the Duchy no formal pledges for the eventual reconstitution of all Polish territory, but demanded voluntary Polish military collaboration to integrate his own plans for the domination of Russia, Prussia and Austria. The army of the Duchy of Warsaw was divided into three groups and placed under the leadership of Poniatowski, General

2 Ibid., 31-32.

Zajacsek, and the third under General Dąbrowski.³

For eight months after French occupation of Warsaw, the Duchy was administered by the Government Commission. On July 22, 1807, Napoleon gave the Duchy a constitution patterned after French law, which despite its apparent democratic ideals, left the final decision in the hands of the French Emperor. The constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw declared that the Roman Catholic religion was the religion of the state and that all beliefs were granted freedom of expression. Article IV made all citizens equal before the law and abolished serfdom.⁴ The government rested in the person of the King of Saxony, who had complete authority over all matters except foreign affairs. Article VI of the constitution declared that all laws had to be initiated by Frederick Augustus, which was very significant from the point of view that the Polish officials were powerless to pass any legislation they deemed necessary unless the ruler first presented such legislation.⁵ The King was also empowered to delegate some of his duties to the vice-King if he so desired or else he could delegate the duties to the president of the Council of State. According to the constitution, the King called, prolonged or recalled the Senate, which was the highest legislative body in the Duchy. The King also presided at the Senate if he so desired.⁶

³ Klemens Kołaczkowski, Wspomnienia Jenerała Klemensa Kołaczkowskiego, Cracow, 1898, 27.

⁴ Nankę, Wypisy do Nauki Historji, 71.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The King was paid from the public treasury and in part from his estates in both Warsaw and Saxony.⁷

Directly under the King was the Council of State which was composed of the Ministers of the Duchy, and the referendaries (councillors) nominated by the sovereign in accordance with the constitution. There were six Ministers: Secretary of State, Justice, Internal Affairs and Religious Worship, War, Treasury and Police. Each of the Ministers was responsible to the King but enjoyed supreme authority in his own sphere. The King, vice-King or a delegate of the King presided at the meeting of the Ministers. However, since the King of Saxony resided abroad most of the time, there was no real unity in action between the departments of the various Ministers. The Secretary of State acted as the intermediary between the authorities of the Duchy and the King of Saxony. The politics of Warsaw were subordinated to those of Saxony, which in turn were under the complete domination of France. After 1808, the King appointed six State Councillors to aid the Ministers. Together, the Ministers and the Councillors acted as an advisory body which prepared administrative enactments and decisions, served as a court of appeal, a Supreme Administrative Tribunal, which decided questions of competence and the impeachment of officials.⁸ The Council of State also studied details of bills presented before the legislative bodies.

The main legislative body of the Duchy was the Diet (Parliament)

⁷ Marceł Handelsman, Konstytucje Polskie, 1791-1921, 4th ed., Warsaw, 1926, 64.

⁸ Nanke, Wypisy Do Nauki Historji, 72.

which consisted of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The King called the Diet into assembly every two years in Warsaw which lasted no longer than fifteen days as prescribed by the constitution of the Duchy. The Diet had charge of the fiscal budget, currency issues, and criminal and civil legislation.⁹ The Diet did not concern itself with the constitution of the state; did not have the power to initiate or modify bills presented to it; and could not discuss current affairs in corpore. As mentioned previously, the right to initiate legislation remained in the hands of the King.

The Senate was composed of eighteen members, six bishops and twelve lay nobles appointed by the King for life. A member of the Senate was appointed by the King to preside in his name. In legislative matters, the Senate acted as a court control, saw to the observance of legislative prescriptions and that the constitution of the Duchy was respected and not violated. After the Chamber of Deputies had deliberated on a law initiated by the King, it sent its recommendations to the Senate for sanction. The Senate in turn could give or refuse to give the sanction on the grounds that the law was contrary to the formality in which it was passed; if coercion was used; if the law was not passed by a majority vote, or if it threatened the security of the country or the constitution.¹⁰ If either of the first two conditions existed, the King directed the Deputies to revise the law or methods, but if they refused, the King could disband the Chamber and new

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

elections would be held.¹¹ If the Senate refused to sanction a law which the King considered right and proper, the King could dismiss the Senate and appoint new members to whom he would again present his bill for sanction.¹²

The second legislative body was the Chamber of Deputies, which was composed of sixty deputies from the various districts and forty deputies from the villages in the Duchy. The first sixty deputies were elected in urban-rural areas by electors who possessed franchise, either by degree of instruction, fortune or function. Suffrage to the Chamber of Deputies was based on property qualification, rural or urban real estate, commercial or industrial capital or members of free professions—officers and clergy. The Deputies were elected for a period of nine years, one third to be elected every three years.¹³ A marshal, chosen from among the Deputies by the King, presided at the assembly. The Chamber of Deputies, by secret ballot, chose three commissions (each consisting of five members) of treasury, civil law and criminal law. When the Council of State presented the King's wishes with respect to a particular law, the commissions of Deputies met with the Council or a Minister if there was any controversial matter to be discussed. Members of the Council of State were members of the Chamber of Deputies and possessed the final decisive vote in any discussion.¹⁴ After discussion, the Deputies voted secretly with a majority deciding the issue. The law passed by the Deputies was then sent to the Senate for its sanction.

11 Handelsman, Konstytucje Polskie, 66-67.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 67-68.

14 Ibid., 68.

With respect to the smaller Diets which met at intervals in the various districts and villages, the King notified the nobles and the officials as to the date upon which they were to convene. No two assemblies could be held at the same time. Membership in the dietines was given to men who reached twenty-one and were of sound mind. All serfs who reached twenty-one were automatically freed and thus eligible for membership. A delegate of the King presided at all meetings of the dietines, which consisted of representatives from all the villages.¹⁵ As previously mentioned, membership in the village assemblies was granted to all citizens who were not of noble lineage, all clergy, talented artists, officers of all ranks and businessmen. These members chose the Deputies who were sent to the Chamber. The village dietines were prohibited from discussing problems of any nature but were directed exclusively to elect Deputies and candidates. The Senate had the power to prohibit any elected Deputy from the dietines to hold office if there was sufficient reason to do so, and thus forced another election.¹⁶

The Duchy of Warsaw was divided into six departments under the jurisdiction of a prefect, assisted by a council for questionable matters and a general council. The departments were subdivided into sixty counties (powiaty) and were governed by a subprefect who was assisted by a council. Smaller municipalities were administered by burgomasters and mayors. The

15 Ibid., 69.

16 Ibid., 70-71.

prefects, subprefects and burgomasters were appointed by the King together with the council which assisted in the administration.¹⁷ Villages had mayors appointed by prefects from amongst inhabitants who could read or write. The councils were chiefly consultive bodies and did not possess the power to enforce their deliberations.

The Napoleonic Code served as the basis for all civil procedure, commerce, criminal and penal law, and all civil laws, and acted as a potent levelling force in the newly-constituted Duchy. Under the Napoleonic Code the people received a homogeneous and efficient system of courts which were under the supervision of the Minister of Justice. The judges were appointed by the King, in whose name all decisions were made and announced. Only the King could forgive and exempt from penalty.¹⁸

The constitution also provided for an army of 30,000 men, not counting the National Guard. The King was empowered to send a portion of the Army to Saxony if he replaced the same number with a Saxon army.¹⁹ According to the constitution, only citizens of the Duchy of Warsaw could hold positions in the government and all government laws were to be printed in the national language of the people.

The constitution which Napoleon drew up and gave to the Duchy did not satisfy the aspirations of the Polish people who hoped for complete autonomy in the partially restored country. It became obvious to the Polish

17 Ibid., 71-72.

18 Ibid., 72-73.

19 Ibid., 73.

people that Napoleon intended to rule the Duchy by his own will after he gave them a dictated constitution which departed from Polish traditions and was geared for the economic and military exploitation of the newly-created Duchy. The constitution, despite pretense at liberal principles, gave concessions to the nobility. Although the constitution granted the peasants personal freedom and equality before the law, it did not eliminate class distinctions nor did it discuss property rights of the peasants. The new laws did not guarantee the Poles personal and property rights or freedom of speech. Only a small percentage of the peasantry availed itself of the privileges of leaving the lord's land but the lord in turn could also evict a tenant farmer who tilled the soil for many generations.²⁰ The authoritative Napoleonic system virtually excluded the idea of local government for the freed peasantry, since all executive officers were appointed by the King and less important officials were not permitted to discuss politics among their own assemblies. In addition, the assemblies of the dietines were held only for fifteen days after called into existence by the King and no two dietines could meet at the same time. This resulted in a lack of coordination among the various villages and districts and eventual inability to act in unison on matters of national importance. In spite of such hindrances, the Polish authorities endowed the Duchy with juridical bases for the development of provincial local government in the spirit of the old traditions of the people.

20 Smoleński, Naród Polski, 44.

The economic burdens which plagued the Duchy did not prevent the rebuilding of the educational system neglected by the Prussians during the occupation. The refurbishing of the old schools and the building of new ones was under the supervision of the Chamber of Education, which was responsible to the Minister of Interior. In 1810 the Chamber of Education became the Directorate of National Education, whose chief project was the foundation of folk schools and the development of the secondary school system. The Directorate was under the management of Stanislaw Potocki, who became the President of the Council of State and Prime Minister of the Duchy.²¹ The Chamber of Education restored Polish lectures at the University of Cracow in 1809, established a school of medicine at Warsaw, and opened more than 1,600 secondary and, especially, primary schools throughout the Duchy. The Chamber of Education also established schools for law, artillery and engineering, and made a serious attempt to institute free public education.²²

There were diverse opinions among the Polish leaders and the people themselves with respect to the newly-created Duchy and its constitution. Czartoryski still preferred to give allegiance to the Russian Czar although he was cautioned to abandon his false hopes. His friends informed him that Russia would not grant Polish restoration without reservations because of incorporated Polish territory in the Russian Empire. On July 21, 1807,

21 Ibid., 45.

22 A Brief Outline of Polish History, Publication of the National Polish Committee of America, Polish Encyclopaedic Publications II, 2nd ed., Switzerland, 1920, 60.

Ludwik Plater, a friend of Czartoryski wrote to him about the Treaty of Tilsit and said:

Your retirement must be voluntary and complete. Your part is done. Your descendants will be your judges. You cannot change anything. But you owe to your contemporaries and to yourself, that you release yourself of all responsibility toward the Emperor and toward Russia. It seemed certain that Poland would be reestablished, but because of Russia, it will not; and this is in her disfavor. This change must be made with your knowledge but it must find you no more attached to Russia and in consequence on the opposite side. Retirement and absolute withdrawal, I think, must become your palladium for every situation possible.²³

Another group led by Kosciuszko held aloof from both the Russian influence and that of Napoleon. This group was heartily dissatisfied with the newly-created Duchy of Warsaw and the constitution which Napoleon drew up, signed, and gave to the Polish people. This same group also believed that the Poles had gained nothing in the transfer from the Prussian crown to that of Saxony but the sentimental gratification of calling themselves members of a semi-independent Duchy with a constitution. Napoleon's opposition also contended that while the French Emperor was entreated to re-establish the independence of Poland, he came to no decision, and preferred to submit to events so that he would appear to command them.²⁴ The Treaty of Tilsit was regarded as the tomb of all Polish aspirations and irrevocably weakened the Poles' confidence in Napoleon's promises. The people believed that the constitution was only calculated to satisfy to some

23 Smolka, Polityka Lubieckiego, 63.

24 Bourrienne, Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte, 100.

degree the wish for restoration of Polish nationality and still remain in accord with the despotic views of the French and Russian Emperors. However, in this half-conciliatory policy toward the Poles and the Russian Czar lay the greatest peril to the newly-formed alliance between Napoleon and Alexander.

There were many additional reasons which cooled the faith of the Poles in Napoleon. The fact that part of Poland still remained in Prussian hands was one reason, and the granting of the Bialystock region to Russia was another. Eventually, the Polish people realized that the Duchy of Warsaw was created only to satisfy the ambitions of the French Emperor—to weaken Prussia and create a buffer state on the Vistula as a precautionary measure against Austria, and more explicitly Russia. Napoleon bestowed many estates in Poland upon his Marshall, and this further added to the dissension and distrust. The constitution for the small Duchy, hastily drawn up by the Emperor did not have in it national representation; the widespread bureaucracy created by it was very expensive; the use of the Napoleonic Code as the sole basis for law was frowned upon; a large army was maintained by a poor people and used only for French purposes; the value of large sums of money deposited in Berlin banks was either cut in half or completely devalued, land was sold cheaply, mortgaged property confiscated for the Emperor's treasury; government property to a large extent divided among French Marshalls and taken from under the national government's jurisdiction, all this increased the sorrows and sadness of the people and

became the grounds for discontent.²⁵ In addition, the Duchy was in a critical state of affairs because of financial difficulties. There was a scarcity of finished products, food and money, all of which went to support the French army and the Polish troops in it. The Polish officials turned to Napoleon, who through his Minister Serra, promised to defray the expenses of part of the Polish troops, finance the French troops stationed in the Duchy, allow military equipment left in the Duchy by the Prussians to become property of the Poles, and finally, all expenses incurred by the Prussian King would be paid to the Duchy. Much to the dismay of the Polish people, Napoleon fulfilled only his first promise.²⁶

In contrast to the group that deserted Napoleon's cause, the people who continued to believe in him considered the Duchy of Warsaw a promise of better things to come. The people felt that

The first news about the treaty Tilsit irritated and incited the mind. Time and observation later showed that although not as much was received as was promised, even for the sacrifices made . . . the partial restoration of the country from Prussian hands, the restoration of the language, a monarch known for his virtues . . . a national army, officials from among fellow-countrymen, the beloved Polish name, though prohibited by treaty yet existing in fact, the heraldry, the national eagles flying again, all this sweetened present suffering and permitted hope.²⁷

While the creation of the Duchy was, in some ways, a sad disappointment, it was also a beginning of the complete restoration of Poland,

25 Jan Konstanty Zupanski, ed., Pamiętniki Kajetana Koźmiana, obejmujące Wspomnienia od Roku 1780 do Roku 1815, Poznań, 1858, II, 3.

26 Alexander Kraushar, Pamiętnik Juljana Ursyna Niemcewicza o Czasach Księstwa Warszawskiego (1807-1809), Warsaw, 1902, 118.

27 Ibid., 13.

and gave the people hope. Warsaw was regarded as the nucleus of a restored Poland and hope fastened itself upon Napoleon even more firmly because he not only had the power to restore but also the wish to re-establish the ancient Kingdom of Poland. Although the Poles were mistaken with regard to Napoleon's intentions, they continued to believe that he was the instrument of their deliverance. The Poles regained some freedom through local administration, court justice and were permitted to participate in political life, which under Prussian domination was not possible. The Polish people also had the use of the Polish tongue in the schools. While Polish aspirations were not completely satisfied, they accorded temporary relief and satisfied the spiritual and national needs of the people. It was because of this that the people tried to accept the rule of the Duchy and the constitution and preserved their faith in the French Emperor and in the future of Poland.²⁸ The restoration of the national flag, language, institutions, and army under Poniatowski seemed to be evidence of Napoleon's sincerity and intentions. Napoleon allowed the Poles to hope for better things in the future, and thus ensured himself of partisans against the potential Russian, Prussian and Austrian menace. The people accepted the King of Saxony as their ruler and considered him a sovereign of rare goodness. They were aware that another ruler could have been inflicted upon them, whose reign they would find intolerable. The people also realized that he was only a figurehead and that Napoleon retained the power over the Duchy in his own hands.

28 Smolenski, Narod Polski, 44-45.

Although Napoleon did not fulfill his promises to the Poles, the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw accomplished several things. In the first place, the application of the Napoleonic Code tended to unify the people. The existence of some form of autonomy or independence intensified the unity of mind and national spirit. Perhaps most important of all was the growing hope in the future of the Polish people in their cause of eventual restoration of the Polish Kingdom. The realization of Polish aspirations necessitated the return of all Polish provinces and, therefore, Napoleon continued to encourage the Poles to hope and thereby alienate the Partitioning Powers which continued to oppose the existence and any further extension of the Duchy of Warsaw.

CHAPTER V

STRAINED RELATIONS 1808-1809

Losses suffered by the Treaty of Tilsit reduced Prussia once more to a mainly agricultural country. Polish provinces under Prussian domination were a source of considerable wealth, and their loss at Tilsit, and subsequent creation into the Duchy of Warsaw aroused intense anger. The Prussian hatred was directed at the creator of the Duchy, who failed to enthral the Teutonic imagination in the same manner in which he influenced the Poles. In seeking revenge upon the French Emperor, the Prussians turned toward Russia whose friendship with France was already undergoing severe strain. Napoleon's most bitter Prussian opponent was Baron Stein, who carried on negotiations with Alexander whereby the lost Polish provinces would be returned to their pre-Duchy of Warsaw status. Stein declared that:

It being impossible to establish firmly the complete security and independence of Prussia but by restoring to that Power the substantial strength which it had before the war of 1806, that is by guaranteeing to it all that it possessed and still possesses between the Weichsel and the Elbe, including Danzig, as well as its possessions in Poland and the Duchy of Warsaw, excepting always that part of them which it has already ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Tilsit, His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias solemnly engaged to guarantee to Prussia the above named provinces, for which, considering the geographical situation of Prussia, there cannot exist an equivalent.¹

1 Seeley, Life and Times of Stein, 84.

Although there was no actual evidence of a formal treaty or agreement between Prussia and Russia for the return of Polish provinces, Frederick William did benefit by Alexander's intercession at Erfurt, where he obtained a decrease of the Prussian war debt and military contributions to France.² Napoleon was actively engaged in Spanish affairs at this time and made attempts to conciliate Franco-Russian relations.

Prior to 1809, the Franco-Russian alliance was in a very unstable condition, not only due to Russian intercession for Prussia but also because of swift realization of what the establishment of the Duchy of Warsaw signified for Russia's future. Immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit, there was a constant exchange of notes between Napoleon and Alexander as to the status of the newly-created Duchy, which gave the impression of being insignificant from the Russian point of view, but in reality was very important for the peace and safety of the Russian Empire. In the very beginning when the Duchy was constituted, Alexander considered himself unable to do anything to prevent the possibility of the Duchy being used as a stepping stone to the full restoration of Poland. Napoleon had completely subjugated Prussia and there was evidence that he attempted to exchange Silesia for Galicia with the Austrians, and thus reconstitute the Kingdom of Poland with the exception of Russian provinces.³ Alexander considered it inevitable that Napoleon would decide to encroach upon the

2 Kraushar, Pamiętnik Niemcewicza, 185.

3 Baron Claude-Francois De Meneval, Memoirs Illustrating the History of Napoleon I, ed. Baron Napoleon De Meneval, New York, 1894, II, 96.

Russian provinces if he was successful in his relations with Austria.

Alexander was aware that Napoleon had placated him only to obtain the requisite power in Prussia and that he later followed his own plans without regard to promises made to Russia. Although the Russian Czar agreed to the establishment of the Duchy, he considered its mere existence a source of uneasiness, since in the event of a war with France, Russia could not only be separated from her Polish provinces, but would also suffer expulsion from European politics by virtue of loss of Western European territory. Alexander, moreover, was also cognizant of the fact that he was unable to face his foe in open warfare and needed time and, therefore, was ready to do anything and everything in order not to arouse any suspicion in Napoleon's mind even if it meant humiliation. The above attitude, did not in the least lessen Alexander's hatred for Napoleon but, on the contrary, gave new incentive to his desire for revenge.

The Russian Czar was faced with the necessity of explaining to his officials and subjects the reasons for permitting the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw. The people felt that Alexander had deserted their cause and joined that of Napoleon to the detriment of Russia. The Duchy aggravated St. Petersburg statesmen and generals, who considered it an embryo of Poland behind their frontiers. They looked upon their own Polish provinces as lost either in the present or the near future unless Russia herself absorbed the Duchy.⁴ It was obvious that the French alliance weighed heavily upon Alexander's mind because it did not bring him any profits and, at the same

⁴ Smolka, Polityka Lubieckiego, II, 51.

time, aggravated the Russian nobility because of the break of a more beneficial English alliance. From the moment of the creation of the Duchy, it was easily foreseen that while Russia immediately acquiesced in respect to the existence of the dangerous neighbor, such an attitude would soon be withdrawn and replaced by impatience and irritation.

Alexander regarded Napoleon's friendly attitude towards the Duchy of Warsaw with a jealous eye. Such a state of mind, together with fear that in the event of a complete restoration of Poland he would be forced to cede Polish provinces, prompted the Russian Czar to make new overtures to the Polish people with the hope of drawing them away from the Napoleonic sphere of influence. Alexander discussed the situation with Czartoryski and told him that there was no other means of solving the Polish problem except by using the old plan by which the Poles would be given a constitution, and a separate existence as the Kingdom of Poland with the Polish crown attached to the Russian crown.⁵ Czartoryski was informed that such a move would have to depend upon Austrian provocation of a new rupture with France, which would then permit an understanding with Napoleon about compensating the King of Saxony for the Duchy and obtaining of Galicia from the Austrians.⁶ The Czar's proposals did not convince Czartoryski, who referred to Erfurt as an example of Russian insincerity. The Czar admitted that no mention of Polish

5 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 198.

6 Ibid.

restoration was made at the meeting between the two Emperors but added that there was too much to do to touch upon that subject.⁷ Therefore, in reply to Alexander's proposal for Polish restoration, Czartoryski stated that:

If your Imperial Majesty will give a written command, so that in His name I could guarantee His desire to restore the Kingdom of Poland, if you declare yourself in it—I will willingly hurry to fulfill his orders. My fellow-countrymen will not wish to believe insignificant, indifferent, verbal promises; even I, circulating them, do not want to make them on the thrust of my fame and for that reason be ashamed later.⁸

Czartoryski's reply offended Alexander, who refused to commit himself in writing but continued to issue verbal promises with respect to Poland's future status under the Russian sceptre. Alexander's reference to the possibility of Austrian blunder and provocation of a war with France, reached Vienna with the result that it created doubt as to Russia's position in the eventuality of such a war. Although it was true that Alexander made such a statement, it did not necessarily follow that he welcomed a breach in the Franco-Austrian relations. Alexander realized that in the event of Austrian defeat, he would have to stand alone against the French Emperor, suffer defeat, and possibly see the restoration of the entire Polish Kingdom. He, therefore, proceeded to cement relations with Austria and gave assurances of his aid in the event of a war.

Since the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw, Austria was faced with the prospect of having Poland as an enemy in any future hostilities with France. The partial restoration of Poland created the desire for a complete

7 Ibid., 189.

8 Kraushar, Pamiętnik Niemcewicza, 151.

rebirth of the Kingdom and threatened the loss of Austrian Galicia to the Habsburg Inheritance. Metternich, however, believed that the manner in which Napoleon dealt with Prussia and the Duchy of Warsaw contributed to its lack of strength and solidarity and would ultimately result in the Duchy's downfall. Metternich indicated that if Napoleon had limited his ambition to the weakening of Prussia, annexed her to the Confederation of the Rhine, and strengthened the Duchy of Warsaw, he would have succeeded in erecting an enormous edifice with a permanent foundation.⁹ In 1808 Napoleon did not desire to offend Austria and Russia, whose passive assistance he needed while engaged in Spain and, therefore, refrained from mentioning the Polish problem in any discussion between himself and the other two monarchs.

After Erfurt, Napoleon no longer placated the Austrians but turned his attention toward the Poles upon whom he again called for military assistance to fill in the gaps in his army after losses in Spain. Napoleon realized that as long as the eastern European monarchy existed, the Duchy of Warsaw had to remain in his hands as a buttress, especially after Alexander's proposals circulated among officials in the Duchy. To offset any possible Russian influence, Napoleon raised Polish hopes, which was not a difficult project in view of the intense love of national culture among the Polish people and their strong desire for independence. There was no stability in Napoleon's attitude toward Poland even after the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw. While he encouraged hope on one hand, Napoleon did not wish to render the rupture between himself and Alexander irremediable, as he

9 Metternich, Memoirs of Metternich, 68-69.

would have done if he proceeded to restore all of Poland. Therefore, while Poles received unguaranteed promises, the French resident in Warsaw was instructed to maintain harmony with the Russians and make certain that any visible signs of anti-Russian demonstrations appeared to come from the Poles themselves not from French instigation.¹⁰ Napoleon also informed the Poles that they should not depend on him to keep his promise if he concluded a permanent peace with Alexander.¹¹ The above-mentioned diverse political policy toward the Poles inevitably brought dissension and disbelief in the Napoleonic star among a portion of the French Emperor's followers. A Polish clergyman, Bishop Cieciszewski, stated that he once believed in Napoleon but that he was convinced that he would not live to see the restoration of Poland.¹² One contemporary of the Napoleonic era wrote that the Polish spirit was surprised, saddened and discouraged with Napoleon's duplicity and insincerity.¹³ Another visitor to Warsaw in 1809 indicated that there were undeniable traces of 1794 in the Duchy—crumbling walls, empty houses, deserted palaces, and a sad and poor townspeople.¹⁴ However, the creation of the Duchy seemed to have obliterated all the sufferings and created enough satisfaction to encourage considerable increase of volunteers into the Polish

10 Marcei Handelsman, Napoleon a Polska, Warsaw, n.d., 160.

11 Friedrich M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, trans. by Henry St. Lawrence, London, 1931, 561.

12 Zupański, Pamiętniki Koźmiana, I, 321.

13 Ibid., II, 3.

14 Jan Duklan Ochocki, Pamiętniki Jana Duklana Ochockiego, Warsaw, N.D., VI, 20.

army. Napoleon welcomed the new troops and sent three of his most able officers to organize the military strength of the Duchy. General Palletier was in charge of the artillery and engineering, Colonel Mallet became the director of engineering and Bontemps took the office of the director of the Warsaw arsenal.¹⁵ By the middle of 1808, Napoleon fervently proceeded to train the Polish troops in anticipation of an attack by Austria, whose preparations for war were evident everywhere. Napoleon immediately called Marshall Davoust to Paris to discuss the defense of the Duchy, which would undoubtedly be the first point of attack.

In the meantime, the Austrians believed that Napoleon was sufficiently involved in the suppression of Spain so as not to present a menace to their plans, and therefore, started war preparations. Austria informed the Poles in Galicia that they were to furnish 51,000 of their manpower and Hungary was ordered to arm its militia. All this was accomplished by means of decrees, commands and even threats of punishment if Austrian demands were not carried out.¹⁶ Officials methodically proceeded to undermine the people's faith in Napoleon in all Austrian provinces and strengthen the faith in the Habsburgs. The Austrian Emperor informed residents of the Duchy of Warsaw that he intended to come into Poland not as an enemy but as a liberator of the Poles from under the French yoke, and thus attempted to

15 Kołaczowski, Wspomnienia, 22.

16 Kraushar, Pamiętnik Niemcewicza, 134.

gain Polish sympathies and a possible surrender without Polish resistance. Polish officials refused to believe such a statement and indicated that a war against Napoleon was also a war against the Duchy of Warsaw, whose very existence was a constant threat to Austria's possession of Galicia.

In April of 1809, Austria finally attacked the Duchy of Warsaw, but without any active aid from Russia, with which she had a secret treaty. The Russians were in reality pledged to aid Napoleon and sent an army into Galicia not so much to help Napoleon as to observe the progress of the war. There was an indication that Alexander was afraid of Polish successes over the Austrians and decided to remain in Galicia to command the situation.¹⁷

A Polish contemporary of the Franco-Austrian war in 1809 wrote of a conversation between himself and a Russian general, about Alexander's assistance to Napoleon. The Pole stated that even the Russian Czar must believe in the Napoleonic star if he aided him in the Spanish campaign and the suppression of the Austrians, to which the Russian general replied that:

thus temporary circumstances governed, our armies will occupy Galicia and maybe they will not leave her, it is more probable that we will be with him who will be the victor. At this moment, the Austrian arch-duke Ferdinand enters the Duchy of Warsaw, the arch-duke Karol prepared well and undoubtedly his plans will destroy Napoleon's designs. . . .¹⁸

It is obvious from the above quotation that Alexander could not have been a sincere ally of Napoleon nor of the Austrians with whom he had

17 Smoleński, Naród Polski, 46.

18 Zupański, Pamiętniki Kozmiana, I, 309.

entered into a secret treaty. The Russian Czar was more concerned with his own welfare and decided to remain on the side of the victor to assure himself of his empire's safety. Alexander knew that as an ally of Napoleon, he was in a better position to negotiate with the French against more extensive Polish restoration in the event of Austrian defeat. However, the Czar was also prepared to abandon Napoleon if the Austrians were victorious and thus be assured that Poland was not restored. Actually, the Russian troops did not fight any decisive battles, but allowed Polish and French troops to win military success.

Polish forces were under the direction of Poniatowski, who in the initial Austrian attack upon the Duchy was forced to withdraw to Galicia. Poniatowski occupied Lublin, Zamość, Sandomierz, and by the end of May in 1809, Cracow and Warsaw.¹⁹ Once the Polish troops occupied Galicia, Poniatowski instituted the Temporary War Government under the leadership of Stanisław Zamoycki, whose duty it was to bring law and order to the former Austrian dominated province.²⁰

After Austria was defeated, a committee of Polish delegates, Potocki, Matuszewicz and Miaczynski, went to Napoleon to ask for the inclusion of all of Galicia into the Duchy. Although defeated, Austria was only willing to include that portion of Galicia which was occupied by Polish

¹⁹ Karol Landmann, Napoleon I, trans. by Jan Klecayński, Warsaw, 1905, 88-89.

²⁰ Szymon Askenazy, Sto Lat Zarządu w Królestwie Polskiem, 1800-1900, Lwów, 1903, 24-25.

troops. Through Maret, Matuszewicz told Napoleon that all of the territory should be included as it would not only benefit the Duchy but also France. Napoleon was very much impressed with Matuszewicz and at an audience with the Pole, drew a line on a map whereby all of Galicia would be incorporated into the Duchy.²¹ Actually, Napoleon was undecided as to whether to include all or only part of Galicia into the Duchy because he did not want to completely antagonize Alexander who protested such action. The French Emperor was also wary of provoking Austria, as he would have done if he satisfied Polish demands.

While the loss of Galicia was disastrous for Austria, the greatest opposition to its incorporation into the Duchy came from Russia which was determined at all costs to prevent any enlargement of the Duchy. In a letter to Caulaincourt on April 16, 1809, Alexander wrote that the destruction of the Austrian monarchy would be a disaster for Europe, and misfortune for his ally. He admitted that while Austria was in need of a severe lesson, it was no excuse for destroying her completely. Alexander added that as far as Russia was concerned, she could not agree to any partition of Austria whereby all of Galicia or part of it would be given into other hands, e.g. the Duchy of Warsaw. The Czar declared that this would be a step toward the full restoration of Poland and, therefore, opposed to Russia's primary interests.²²

Napoleon was anxious to preserve peace with Alexander and attempted to quiet his fears regarding the restoration of Poland. One of Napoleon's

21 Zupański, Pamiętniki Kosziana, II, 38-39.

22 Marcełi Handelsman, Pod Znakami Napoleona, Studya Historyczne, Warsaw, n.d., 76.

measures to pacify Alexander was to extract an oath of allegiance to France and himself from the Polish army which had entered Galicia and whose zeal might have encouraged further activity against the Russians.²³ Alexander, however, demanded more concrete evidence that Napoleon did not intend to increase the size of the Duchy by annexing all of Galicia and insisted that when the new treaty was drawn up, provision be made to eliminate forever the word "Poland" and "Poles" from all political diplomacy and, if necessary, from history.²⁴ The Czar further demanded that Napoleon formally declare himself to the effect that he would never restore the Kingdom of Poland. There was evidence that Napoleon gave verbal assent to such a request but refused to commit himself in the form of a treaty because such a matter was beyond his control and solely in the hands of destiny.²⁵ Alexander considered Napoleon's refusal a threat that the French Emperor would at some future date try to completely restore the independence of Poland and ultimately use the Poles against Russia. The Czar was just as determined that the Russian Empire would not be placed in the same position as Prussia in 1807 and Austria in 1809. Alexander was secretly urged by England to resist Napoleon's plans for the enlargement of the Duchy. England feared both France and Russia and attempted to provoke a battle between her two

23 Rembowski, 2 Zycia Konstytucyjnego, 18-19.

24 Jacques Bainville, Napoleon, trans. by Hamish Miles, Boston, 1933, 258.

25 Suchorzewski, History of Poland and Russia, 11.

enemies to exhaust their power and at the same time increase her own.²⁶

In order to placate Alexander, Napoleon finally agreed to annex only a portion of Galicia to the Duchy of Warsaw and offered Tarnopol and several other districts to Russia for her aid in the war. The Treaty of Schönbrunn, which was signed on October 14, 1809, increased the size of the Duchy from 30,000 to 45,000 square miles, and the population from approximately 2,050,000 to 4,335,000.²⁷ According to the treaty, the Duchy acquired the Palatinates of Lublin, Sandomierz, Radom, Siedlice and Cracow, together with joint Austrian ownership of the salt mines of Wieliczka. The terms of the treaty were much more agreeable than Alexander had anticipated and he stated that he was not so unreasonable as to oppose addition of only a section of Galicia to the Duchy. Alexander was even more willing to sign the treaty when the French Legislative body stated that Napoleon had no real intention of restoring Poland and that the addition of a few districts was prompted more by honor than by policy. The French indicated that Napoleon could not abandon the Polish population after it had shown so much ardour in the cause of France.²⁸

The treaty of peace signed at Vienna was followed by a decree of February 24, 1810, which formally annexed the new acquisitions to the Duchy and placed this territory under the jurisdiction of the constitution. The annexed territory was granted twelve seats in the Senate and twenty-six in

26 Thomas E. Watson, Napoleon, A Sketch of His Life, Character, Struggles, And Achievements, New York, 1902, 472.

27 Suchorzewski, History of Poland and Russia, 10.

28 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 196.

the Chamber of Deputies, and was divided into four departments, forty districts and twenty-six municipalities. In addition, the new territory was granted two referendaries to become part of the Council of State.²⁹

The addition of Galicia to the Duchy gave the Poles land, people, an army and an uplift of the spirit but did not increase the wealth of the Duchy. The Austrian defeat elated the Polish spirit which anticipated an early realization of Polish restoration. The Poles thought that with the new addition they would acquire more defensible frontiers for the Duchy. Napoleon was more interested in preserving peace with Alexander and, therefore, only partially satisfied Polish hopes. The Polish people were told that the war with Austria was terminated because of more pressing needs in Spain and the necessity for Russian cooperation in the campaign. Napoleon's sincerity was questioned by the Poles who pointed to the granting of Tarnopol to the Russians as a breach of faith. The fact that Napoleon permitted Austria to retain the 1772 acquisitions and joint ownership of the salt mines of Wieliczka was another source of grievance for the Poles. Probably, the greatest source of irritation was Napoleon's willingness to listen to Alexander's overtures for the non-restoration of Poland by French hands. Although Napoleon did not sign a treaty with Alexander on this issue, nevertheless, rumors that he even considered such a move dimmed the spirit of the Polish people.

Immediately after signing the treaty, Alexander regretted his concessions to Napoleon and publicly denounced the disloyalty and faith-

29 Handelsman, Konstytucje Polskie, 74-75.

lessness of his ally. Alexander also indicated to Czartoryski that he should have taken his advice in 1805 and restored the Polish Kingdom under his sceptre instead of following the road to Austerlitz.³⁰ The Czar realized that the breach between Russia and France was widening and a rupture was inevitable. As a solution to the problem, Alexander resorted to a dual diplomacy, whereby he attempted to regain Polish sympathies and at the same time carried on diplomatic correspondence with Napoleon which revolved around the French Emperor's agreement never to restore the Kingdom of Poland.³¹ Alexander's diplomacy failed to achieve its purpose and it rapidly became obvious that the result of the war of 1809 would precipitate a new war between France and Russia.

30 Smolka, Polityka Lubeckiego, II, 56-57.

31 Wilhelm Feldman, Dzieje Polskiej Myśli Politycznej w Okresie Porozbiorowym, Próba Zarysu, Cracow, 1913, I, 39.

CHAPTER VI

ASCENDANCY OF THE PARTITIONING POWERS

1810-1811

Napoleon was well aware of the widening breach between himself and the Russian Emperor and attempted to ease the strain by asking for the hand of Alexander's sister, the Grand Duchess Anna. The Empress Dowager, Maria Feodorovna, considered Napoleon a Corsican usurper and opposed the marriage. Offended at Alexander's refusal of his sister's hand Napoleon turned to the Imperial House of Habsburg where he obtained the hand of the daughter of the Austrian Emperor, the Archduchess Marie Louise. Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise was prompted not only by the motive of obtaining an ally in Austria, and thereby antagonizing Russia, but was also an attempt to legitimize his usurper's throne in the eyes of European monarchs, who still did not fully accept him as the true ruler of the French. Napoleon retaliated against Alexander's rebuff with a refusal to ratify a convention whereby Napoleon would pledge himself never to restore Poland. Amicable Franco-Russian relations declined even more rapidly and it was almost a certainty that Poland was one of the most important reasons for the approaching conflict. It was just as certain that in the event of a war between France and Russia, the behavior of the people in the Russian Polish provinces

would be similar to that of the Poles in Galicia in 1809.¹ After Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise, it was reported that Alexander said he could foresee the fate of Russia and the moment was fast approaching when he would have to bid farewell to Europe and welcome the steppes of Asia.²

Napoleon's marriage to an Austrian was not the only source of irritation which gave impetus to the eventual rupture of peaceful relations between the two Emperors. As previously discussed, the enlargement of the Duchy of Warsaw; Napoleonic encroachments in northern Germany; French re-armament and the growth of the Warsaw army, which was always a source of disquietude; all tended to add fire to an already explosive situation. In addition, the increasing rivalry of the two states at Constantinople and the Danube, and fruitlessness of the Continental Blockade could not be overlooked as contributing factors toward the cessation of amicable relations between Napoleon and Alexander.³ Alexander was alarmed at an expedition sent by Napoleon to Persia, ostensibly for scientific purposes but in reality to discover the best overland route to India. The correspondence between the leader of the expedition, M. Gardonne and Napoleon passed via Russia but it was some time before the Russians suspected the real objective of the Mission. All maps and papers dealing with this mission accidentally fell into the hands of the Czar, who engaged the expedition for his own service.⁴

1 When Poniatowski entered Galicia the Poles did not resist but aided him to defeat the Austrians.

2 Suchorzewski, History of Poland and Russia, 11.

3 Rambaud, Russia, 170-172 passim.

4 Suchorzewski, History of Poland and Russia, 13.

Once Alexander believed that Napoleon had no intention of agreeing to the non-restoration of Poland, he again appealed to the Poles and renewed his promises of 1805 in which he promised to restore Poland and accept the Polish crown for himself. Alexander first turned his attention to Poniatowski, who was in charge of the Polish army and with whom he would have to reckon in a Franco-Russian war. In 1811, Alexander urged Czartoryski to convince the Polish general that he should permit the Russian army to enter the Duchy and from there take a stand against Napoleon. Poniatowski did not trust Alexander and despite Czartoryski's request that knowledge of the imminent Russian attack upon France remain a secret, informed Napoleon who did not take the message seriously.⁵ When Poniatowski refused to accept Alexander's offer, he said that he could not agree to Russian encroachment upon the Duchy's territory because it would only bring destruction and degradation. He added that if a coalition was formed against France, it was best for Polish welfare to help the nation which by concrete example had shown interest in Poland's restoration without regard to the hazard which such a conflict would present.⁶

After Poniatowski refused to join Alexander against Napoleon, the Czar renewed his attempts to gain Polish sympathy and summoned Polish delegates to whom he outlined his plans for unity with Russia and plans for the organization of a Polish national army under his direction. Alexander

5 Handelsman, Czartoryski, 75.

6 Ibid., 75-76.

also made inquiries of Czartoryski as to whether or not it was too late to carry out his original plans of 1805. From 1810 to Napoleon's final defeat there was a continuous stream of diplomatic correspondence between the Russian Emperor and the Polish nobleman which dealt exclusively with proposed Russian restoration of the Kingdom of Poland.

On April 5, 1810, Alexander proposed to Czartoryski that he would form the Kingdom of Poland out of the Duchy of Warsaw and Galicia, and allow the inhabitants of the Polish provinces of Russia to participate in this Kingdom as if it were their own country. Czartoryski was surprised at this proposal but Alexander explained that such action would satisfy the Poles, who would have no further reason to oppose Russia and friendly relations between France and Russia would be resumed.⁷ Thus, the tense situation would be alleviated not by a cure but by amputation. Alexander submitted another proposal to Czartoryski on December 25, 1810. In this letter, the Czar stated that:

It seems to me that the time has arrived to prove to the Poles that Russia is not their enemy, but their true and natural friend; that although Russia is represented to them as the sole obstacle to the restoration of Poland, it is not improbable that Russia will be the Power to bring about that event This has always been my favourite idea; circumstances have twice compelled me to postpone its realisation, but it none the less remained in my mind. There has never been a more propitious moment for realising it than the present⁸

7 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 203-204.

8 Ibid., 213-214.

In the same letter, Alexander also asked Czartoryski several questions as to Polish opinion with respect to Russia. The Czar asked such questions as would the Poles seize any offer of certainty which would insure their regeneration? Would they accept it from any Power which would promise that certainty and give wholehearted support? Were there any diverse parties which would prevent unanimous resolution to take the opportunity of the first offer made for the regeneration of Poland, and if they existed, what was the extent of their importance and who were their leaders? Did these parties exist in the army and who was the officer who had the greatest influence upon opinion in the army?⁹ Alexander then requested that his plans remain a secret between the two men as the effectiveness of his plans depended upon the element of surprise. The Czar further added that if Polish opinion was unanimously in favor of restoration from any source, then it was not a matter of counter-balancing the genius of Napoleon, but one of decreasing his power through the secession of the Duchy of Warsaw and turning Prussian opinion solidly against him.¹⁰ Alexander concluded his letter to Czartoryski with a statement that appeared to take the form of a threat. He said:

Such a moment presents itself only once; any other combination will only bring about a war to the death between Russia and France, with your country as the battlefield. The support on which the poles can rely is limited to the person of Napoleon, who cannot live for ever. Should he disappear from the scene, the consequences to Poland would be disastrous; while if by joining Russia and the other

9 Ibid., 214-215.

10 Ibid., 215-216.

Powers which would certainly follow her, the moral strength of France should be overthrown, and Europe delivered from her yoke, the existence of your country would be established with unshakeable solidity.¹¹

Czartoryski sent a reply to Alexander in which he stated that the sole object of the Polish people was the restoration of their Kingdom with all parts united into a single national body under a constitutional and national regime. He added that any difference of opinion which existed among the people would disappear or have a subordinate influence if the higher interests of the country were at stake. However, it was necessary to convince everybody that the salvation of the country demanded a total change of policy and the abandonment of the only supporter that the Duchy had.¹² Czartoryski spoke of the Polish gratitude to Napoleon in the light of what he had already done for them and insisted that it would be necessary for Alexander to convince the people that their real salvation lay in an alliance with Russia. The Polish nobleman then asked Alexander to indicate clearly whether the Power which would restore Poland was meant to be Russia. In answer to Alexander's statement that 100,000 Russians were prepared to fight for the restoration of Poland, Czartoryski asked if this was only on paper because actually the figure was closer to 65,000.¹³

Alexander's letter of January 31, 1811, answered Czartoryski's questions but at the same time was an indication that the Czar was not as willing to restore Polish independence as he tried to impress upon the Pole.

11 Ibid., 216.

12 Ibid., 218-219.

13 Ibid., 221.

The conditions under which Alexander would restore Poland were distasteful even to Czartoryski, who by 1811 had little faith in the Czar's intentions. In the above letter, Alexander stated that it was Russia which would take in hand the regeneration of Poland, and the restoration meant the union of everything that formerly constituted Poland, including the Russian provinces, so as to make the rivers Dvina, Berezina and Dnieper the frontiers. Alexander promised that the government officials and army authorities would be of Polish nationality, a liberal constitution would be "offered," and a proclamation of Polish restoration would precede everything else in order to convince the Poles of the sincerity of the offer.¹⁴ However, the sine qua non conditions on which the Czar offered the restoration were:

1st. That the kingdom of Poland shall for ever be united to Russia, whose Emperor shall in future bear the title Emperor of Russia and King of Poland.

2nd. That a formal and positive assurance shall be given of a unanimity of disposition and feeling in favour of such a result among the inhabitants of the Duchy, to be guaranteed by the signature of the most prominent persons among them.¹⁵

The first condition was almost intolerable for the Poles who wanted restoration and, as a result, the second condition could hardly be forthcoming. However, the remainder of the letter clearly illustrated Alexander's treacherous nature and the insincerity of his proposals while he attempted to entice formal Polish assurance. This same letter also stated that there were two initial difficulties which presented themselves

14 Ibid., 222-223.

15 Ibid., 223-224.

and would hamper the Czar's plans for Poland. The first difficulty encountered was the problem of Austria which would not suffer the annexation of all Galicia and, therefore, would have to be treated with consideration and not provoked to attack Russia. Alexander stated that he decided to offer Wallachia and Moldavia in exchange for Galicia but that it would be wiser to postpone the reunion of Galicia until Austria gave her consent and, as a result, the initial Kingdom of Poland would be formed only of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Russian provinces.¹⁶ The above plan was a contradiction to what Alexander promised in the first part of the letter and his sincerity was further questioned because it was obvious that Austria would never voluntarily part with Galicia, which was a part of the Habsburg Inheritance. The second difficulty to which Alexander referred was the compensation to be given to the King of Saxony, but the Czar added that he would not be bound to do so unless Frederick Augustus joined Russia against France.¹⁷ Alexander concluded the letter with the statement that he would not begin a war with France unless he first received Polish assurances, as stipulated, and insisted that this correspondence remain a secret because rumors that he intended to proclaim himself King of Poland would at present be more injurious than useful. The Czar indicated that he endeavored to put an end to such rumors by declaring that such action was impossible and could not occur.¹⁸

16 Ibid., 224-225.

17 Ibid., 225.

18 Ibid., 227-228.

Czartoryski replied to Alexander with the statement that while the Poles desired a restored Poland with a national government and constitution, at the moment, the people were unconvinced that this plan could materialize by deserting France and espousing Russia.¹⁹ Alexander sent a reply which pointed out that he was powerless to act unless the Poles made the first open declaration of their loyalty to him. He indicated that a rupture with France was inevitable and Napoleon was determined to destroy the last power in Europe which was not dependent upon him. Napoleon's demand that Russia cease all trade with neutrals--the only trade left for Russia--and import French luxuries which the Russians could not afford, was very distressing for Alexander who refused to agree to such conditions of trade. The Czar added that war with France was imminent, notwithstanding all that Russia did to avoid it and, therefore, freed her from all obligations to consider the interests of France and permitted her to regenerate Poland.²⁰

The further development of the plans referred to in the preceding correspondence was interrupted by the Russian campaign of 1812. On June 15, 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen. The Polish Diet assembled at Warsaw under the presidency of Prince Adam Czartoryski, Sr., and proclaimed the restoration of the whole of ancient Poland as an independent state. Alexander appeared not to take notice of letters which referred to the above matter. The Czar's correspondence with Czartoryski did not resume until after the campaign was over.

The Russian Czar again approached the problem of Polish restoration

19 Handelsman, Czartoryski, 76.

20 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 229-230.

in a letter of January 1, 1813, in which he expressed his desire to fulfill Polish hopes but at the same time stressed the fact that such action would antagonize the Russians who suffered defeat at Smolensk and Moscow at the hands of the Poles, and would also have alienated Austria and Prussia, who already showed their most favorable dispositions to Russia.²¹ This statement was significant in that it completely overrode Alexander's promises that he would restore Poland if he could do so. However, as the above opinion indicated, he inferred that he was not in a position to do so and never would be because of his fear of losing Austria and Prussia as allies. In the very same letter, Alexander stated that he would welcome a formal Polish declaration of their allegiance to him and added that anyone who allied himself with the Czar would never be deceived.²²

On January 13, 1813, Alexander again wrote to Czartoryski and explained that any proclamation of Polish independence at this time was out of the question because public opinion in Russia was opposed to such a move. The Russian Czar added that the development of military events would prove how dear the interests of Poland were to him and how faithful he was to his old ideas, which were always liberal. Yet, Alexander insisted that the Poles give proof of their sincerity by withdrawing their troops from the Duchy in the event that the Russian army reached Warsaw. The Czar stated that he would give orders for the Russian army not to occupy the Duchy if

21 Edward Bignon, Polska w.r. 1811, Wspomnienia Dyplomaty Edwarda Bignona, Wilno, 1913, II, 71-72.

22 Ibid., 74.

the foreign troops--least of all Polish ones--did not remain, as their presence would cause Alexander anxiety if a foreign garrison remained behind Russian lines.²³

Alexander's excuses greatly annoyed Czartoryski, who issued a reply to the effect that the Prussian King was not opposed to the existence of Poland, which he deemed just and reasonable. Czartoryski further pointed out that the Prussian King was astonished that Alexander did not do anything definite for the Poles and complained that whenever he wished to discuss the situation with the Czar, Alexander seemed embarrassed and talked of something else.²⁴ While it was quite true that the Prussian King was not opposed to the restoration of Poland, it would be naïve to assume that he desired the restoration under any other control than his own. Frederick William already suffered a loss of territory in 1807 when the Duchy was created and it was more than unlikely that he would consent to any further loss of his territory or would renounce his claim to the territory lost in 1807. There was evidence that the Prussian King sent Prince Anthony Radziwill to Warsaw to sound out public opinion with regard to Polish restoration under Prussian rule.²⁵ It was quite possible that Czartoryski referred to Prussian willingness to restore Poland only to influence Alexander to do so under the conditions which the people wanted.

Czartoryski further stated that since Austria permitted Napoleon to

23 Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 236.

24 Ibid., 237-238.

25 Ibid.

rebuild a part of Poland, her feelings should not be considered but she must be made to give silent acquiescence to Russia's plans. As far as public opinion in Russia was concerned, Czartoryski added that once Alexander had an understanding with Prussia and Austria, the protests of St. Petersburg statesmen would cease.²⁶ The replies to his letters proved discouraging and the Czar finally became convinced that if he entered Warsaw, he could not count on Polish assistance. All Polish national aspirations turned to Napoleon when it became obvious that Alexander was not sincere in his promises, and did not have any genuine intentions of rebuilding Poland. There was intense opposition to Polish restoration from the nationalistic groups in Russia, which was stimulated by Tilsit and further aggravated by Schoonbrunn. If Alexander reconstituted Poland, he feared a revolution and his father's tragic reign was a reminder of the power which the Russian aristocracy and statesmen wielded. However, if Alexander had any real intentions of restoring Poland, he could have done so just before Napoleon entered Poland in 1807 and thus would have gained Polish support for himself and weakened the magnatism of the French Emperor. Alexander failed to execute his plans and only revived them when it became evident that a breach with Napoleon was inevitable. Contemporaries attributed Alexander's unwillingness to fulfill his plans to the fact that he never had any intention of restoring the Kingdom of Poland.

Immediately after Alexander began to woo Polish sympathies with

²⁶ Pamiętniki Ks. Adama Czartoryskiego, i korespondencya jego z cesarzem Aleksandrem I, trans. by K. Scipio, Cracow, 1904, II, 180.

his plans, Napoleon proceeded to counteract the Czar's designs and showed more interest in the Poles and repeated his oft-made promises. The French Emperor still refrained from any formal declaration of Polish independence as he did not wish a break in Franco-Russian relations in 1810. He was, however, aware that the Russian court was in favor of an immediate rupture if he did not proceed cautiously. It was difficult for Napoleon to appease Russia and the Poles at the same time but despatches of Russian overtures to Czartoryski prompted more liberal promises to the Poles despite Russian annoyance. Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise excited the Poles who felt that the French Emperor would not restore the rest of Galicia to the proposed new independent state. Yet, though the Poles regretted the necessity of their attachment to Napoleon's fortunes, they knew that the benefits which they already received came from his hands while the Partitioning Powers made no effort to restore their independence. The existence of the Duchy of Warsaw was concrete proof that Napoleon was the best benefactor.

In June of 1812, Napoleon sent Archbishop Dominic de Pradt as ambassador to the court of Saxony and the Duchy of Warsaw. The purpose of de Pradt's visit was to incite the Poles to arm and fight with the Napoleonic legions in the inevitable war against Russia, yet to make it appear that the Poles acted on their own initiative rather than from Napoleon's will. De Pradt's mission was successful and when Napoleon marched against Russia in 1812, 100,000 Poles went with him.²⁷ Napoleon called the

²⁷ Some sources said 70,000 while others indicated the figure was closer to 120,000.

1812 campaign the Second Polish Campaign, and in a proclamation to the people stated that if he had reigned during the First, Second or Third Partition of Poland, he would have given his entire support to the Polish cause. He added that as soon as victory permitted him to do so, he restored a portion of the Polish provinces. In the same paragraph, Napoleon pronounced that he had guaranteed Austria the integrity of her states and could not authorize anything which would create a disturbance between himself and that country, and thus continued to wrap his promises in "ifs" and "buts," reservations and conditions, as he had done since since his ascension into power. After the start of the 1812 campaign and French entrance into Warsaw, Frederick Augustus turned the power of authority over to the Council of Ministers, which decided to call together the Diet. The Diet in turn disbanded and handed authority over to the General Council of the Confederated Polish Kingdom, composed of Czartoryski as president, together with ten members of the Diet. Tadeusz Matuszewicz, the Minister of the Treasury, urged by de Pradt, spoke before the General Council and said that Poland was restored and suggested that all parts of old Poland should join the Confederation. All this transpired with de Pradt's assistance but without proper sanction of Napoleon and the King of Saxony. The General Council then sent a deputation to Napoleon to ask for protection for the new "nation" but was met with an answer full of doubt and indecision. Napoleon was anxious not to provoke Austria and Prussia, or to make peace with Russia impossible, and refused to give his sanction to the decisions of the General Council and, thereby,

committed a serious error in his regulation of Polish affairs.²⁸ His lack of a definite Polish policy not only cost Napoleon considerable Polish sympathies but failed to conciliate Russia, Prussia and Austria.

In the event of a war with Russia, Napoleon depended upon active or passive assistance from Austria and Prussia. While it was quite true that the Treaty of Schönbrunn was unpleasant for the Austrians, they were even more chagrined at the attitude of their "ally" Russia, who refused to come to their aid in 1809 and was content to pursue a policy of watchful waiting. Because of Russia's attitude, Austria was more inclined toward Napoleon's influence and her acquiescence toward French schemes was comparatively goodwill.²⁹ When Napoleon began to give the Poles assurances of his sincerity in 1810, to counteract Russian overtures, he proceeded to inquire of Austria the possibility of an exchange of Galicia for other provinces. Napoleon believed that by this measure he would give the Poles outward evidence of his intentions to re-establish the whole of Poland and at the same time compensate Austria with other provinces which would be more desirable. On January 17, 1810, in a despatch on the results of the Mission of Paris, Metternich informed the Emperor Francis, that Napoleon referred to the Polish question and it was Metternich's firmest conviction that Poland was the palladium of the future French war against Russia. Metternich indicated that if Napoleon was successful in the war and restored Poland from its ashes, it would undoubtedly be to the disadvantage of Austria unless she

28 Smoleński, Dzieju Narodu, 396-397.

29 Pamiętniki hr. de Segur, Adjutanta Cesarza Napoleona I, trans. by E. Leszczyńska, Warsaw, n.d., 22.

decided to accept compensation for Galicia at the present time.³⁰ Metternich also made the statement that Napoleon did not need any cooperation from Austria to secure the success of his undertaking and there was no doubt that the restoration of Poland would be the first important object when the war with Russia was brought to a victorious conclusion.³¹

While the Austrian statesman was of the opinion that it would be most difficult to find an equivalent for Galicia, as far as population and revenue was concerned, he proposed a sketch of Austria's future political course in which Galicia would be exchanged for other provinces more suitable in political and commercial respects. The sketch proposed the following provinces as compensation for Galicia:

- (a) Illyria, including Dalmatia, the Quarnero Islands, and Venetian Istria as far as the Isonzo frontier;
- (b) Upper Austria, at least the ceded portion of the Hans-ruck district, and if possible the former Inn frontier;
- (c) A portion of Silesia; this compensation, however, only to be conditional, and in the event of the dismemberment of Prussia—to my mind [Metternich's] a certain result of the impending war.³²

Metternich's proposal indicated Austria's awareness of the inevitability of a war between France and Russia and mentioned Prussian destruction as a result of this war. With respect to the latter point, Metternich mentioned it casually and did not give any visible signs of distress at such a consequence but rather was prepared to accept Prussian

30 Metternich, Memoirs of Metternich, II, 486-487.

31 Ibid., 487-489 passim.

32 Ibid., 490.

territory as compensation for Galicia. Emperor Francis was also told that Austria had to proceed cautiously with respect to France, and give no indication of expanding the present monarchy and, remove all hope of a practical union with Russia.³³

After Metternich presented his plans, Napoleon sent the Austrian Emperor his own proposal for Austrian compensation for Galicia. Napoleon told Francis that the Illyrian provinces—which once belonged to Austria—and Dalmatia were very important for Austrian security. Napoleon also made the statement that French possession of these provinces precipitated ever-increasing jealousy and ill feeling between Austria and France, a condition which he hoped to remedy. However, Napoleon concluded his proposal with the statement that if he deemed it necessary to make war with Russia, he would have a great and powerful ally in a King of Poland and would not need Austrian assistance or provinces.³⁴

In answer to Napoleon's proposal, Metternich sent an answer which stated that:

A kingdom of Poland is nothing more than the Duchy of Warsaw with another name and with new boundaries for which it has striven ever since it was made. Whenever our Galicia provinces are reduced in size more than they now are, our interest in the Polish question must surely diminish in the same proportion.³⁵

Metternich further added:

The Illyrian provinces are most important to us from twenty points of view. Galicia has advantages on its

33 Ibid., 489-490.

34 Ibid., I, 136-137.

35 Ibid., 137.

side for which it would be difficult to compensate. The revenue offered by Illyria is trifling, and hardly comes up to that of Galicia; it has fewer men and less means of subsistence. Galicia has important boundary points for the common monarchy. . . .³⁶

The Austrian reluctance to part with Galicia, because of more abundant resources, brought forth another reply from Napoleon who stated that in the case of a successful war against Russia, which would lead to the incorporation of Polish-Russian provinces into the Duchy of Warsaw, Austria's possession of Galicia would be in constant danger. Napoleon also made the comment that if Austria inclined toward Russia, Galicia stood in the first rank politically for it served as a connecting link. With regard to loss of revenue if Galicia were exchanged for another province, Napoleon suggested that Austria buy all the estates in Galicia for that purpose.³⁷

However, Napoleon's refusal to ratify the Russian treaty which guaranteed that France would never restore the independence of Poland, created suspicion in the Viennese court and added further evidence of the belief that if the French Emperor followed such a course, Austria would suffer considerable territorial loss. The Austrians were also disheartened by Napoleon's statement that he would not contribute toward the re-establishment of Poland, but that if Lithuania would arise and espouse the interest of Poland, or if the Warsaw population would seek to aggrandize itself at the expense of Russia—at a time when the Russians were in conflict

36 Ibid., 138.

37 Ibid., 138-139.

with France—he would not present any opposition.³⁸ To insure themselves of no unfavorable loss of territory, the Austrians decided upon a policy of acquiescence to Napoleon's plans. Emperor Francis informed Metternich that the utmost care should be taken to avoid and prevent all political complications, but that if such complications arose, Austria would follow the observance of strict neutrality from which she would attain the greatest possible advantage. The Austrian Emperor, Francis, indicated that if it were necessary to consent to an exchange of Galicia to avoid a greater evil, such a measure would have to be carried out without detriment to the Austrian monarchy.³⁹

Napoleon effectively impressed upon the Austrians the necessity of friendly relations between the two powers by dangling the insecurity of Austrian possession of Galicia after the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Poland, to which he added even further persuasion. In a letter to Francis, Metternich stated that the Austrian Ambassador to France, Prince Schwarzenberg, was given even more important arguments for Austrian alliance with France. According to Schwarzenberg, Napoleon represented the possibility, that in the course of the war, internal insurrections might break out even in Galicia, which in the interests of his Polish allies he would be obliged to support and thus eventually engage in a war with Austria.⁴⁰ Napoleon's obvious threat was considered proof that he intended

38 Ibid., II, 430.

39 Ibid., 491.

40 Ibid., 496-497.

to re-establish Poland as the next step in his war against Russia. The Austrians realized that if Napoleon was successful in his campaigns, all Russian Poland was gone--the remainder of Russia's only Western European possession--together with the disappearance of Prussia.⁴¹

The enormous power which Napoleon wielded in Europe convinced the Austrians that their own security lay in compliance with French schemes. To calm any Austrian fears, Napoleon painted a bright future for Austria as a reward for her alliance with him. In an audience with Schwarzenberg, Napoleon promised that Wallachia, Moldavia, Servia would be given to Austria, together with the mouth of the Danube, whether or not the Turks ceded the said provinces to Russia. In addition, Napoleon promised to guarantee Austria's possession of Galicia unless Austria was willing to exchange this province for an equivalent elsewhere. Illyria and the port of Trieste were mentioned as possible provinces for the exchange of Galicia. Napoleon made no promise as to Austria's Prussian frontier but stated that such an issue would have to be decided after the war was terminated. The most interesting French concession to Austria stated that the slightest fault committed by Prussia would decide the question of Silesia and that Napoleon would very willingly dispose of Silesia in Austrian favor if the Prussians continued to oppose the French.⁴² On March 14, 1812, Napoleon concluded a treaty with Austria which embodied the above concessions and allied Austrian fortunes

⁴¹ Ibid., 504.

⁴² Ibid., 517-518.

with those of France. Austrian ratification of the treaty showed a lack of genuine concern over possible Prussian destruction, and a willingness to benefit at the expense of a former ally. There were some groups in Austria which favored a support of Prussia and the eventual restoration of the Duchy of Warsaw territory to the pre-1807 status, but such ideas were subordinated to the more important ones of safeguarding the Austrian monarchy and a possible addition to the Habsburg Inheritance.

While Austrian acquiescence for an alliance with France proceeded along a more favorable line, Prussian alliance was almost compulsory. The Prussian King and statesmen found it impossible to forget the humiliation of 1807, and the loss of territory which was subsequently created into the Duchy of Warsaw. Moreover, the Prussians looked suspiciously upon the Franco-Austrian alliance and Alexander's overtures for the restoration of Poland under the Russian sceptre. Frederick William's ally, Austria, was willing to benefit territorially at Prussian expense and, fulfillment of Alexander's Polish plans meant a loss of the Duchy of Warsaw territory to Prussia. However, in a letter to Alexander, Frederick William stated that the restoration of Poland by Russian hands would have been a great achievement, but he added

You will pardon my frankness since it is a sacred duty of mine; if you will ever undertake this worthwhile step, you will have to show your complete disinterest. Your Majesty has to leave to the Poles complete liberty in choosing the king of their own nation if they so prefer, and has to declare their independence. But if you will join Poland to your own Empire, what will be the form of this union

The Prussians who have to calculate on their interest and not on the present moment, cannot look at this acquisition without great disquietude.⁴³

The above quoted letter was sent at the same time that Czartoryski and Alexander corresponded about the restoration of Poland under Russian rule. Czartoryski wrote to Alexander that Prince Anthony Radziwill was sent to Warsaw to discover the sentiments of the population in regard to Alexander's plan. It would be more accurate to state that Frederick William was interested in Polish restoration under his own rule, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, would be very reluctant to allow Russia to do so because it was inevitable that the kingdom thus restored would be included in the Russian Empire.

Prussian distrust of Alexander's proposals gave Napoleon the opportunity to conciliate his relations with Frederick William and, thereby receive permission to cross Prussian territory in his campaign against Russia. Although Prussia was dependent upon France, after subjugation in 1807, Napoleon faced a difficult problem in arranging a Franco-Prussian alliance. In order to quiet Prussian fears of a complete Polish restoration by France, Napoleon sent a letter to Frederick William on April 2, 1811, in which he stated that if he had desired to establish Poland, he could have done so at Tilsit and again at Schönbrunn but refrained from such action because he did not wish the restoration. Napoleon further wrote that he was building up his resources and making alliances with his neighbors because he

⁴³ Szymon Askanazy, Książę Józef Poniatowski, 1763-1813, Poznań, 1913, Przepisy LXIX, 245.

was suspicious of Russian war tendencies. The letter added that a conservation of French resources and finances was not merely a whim but a necessity. In conclusion, Napoleon said that if Russia remained true to her alliance with France, he would not prepare for war, but he believed that once Russia ended a war with Turkey, she would break the alliance and make peace with England.⁴⁴ Napoleon's conciliatory measures bore no permanent fruit and by the close of 1813, Prussia became the ally of Alexander.

Russian troops occupied the Duchy of Warsaw in February of 1813 and in April, Alexander instituted the Temporary Supreme Council of the Duchy of Warsaw under the presidency of Lanakoy and vice-presidency of Nowosilcow.⁴⁵ The Duchy of Warsaw ceased to exist after Russian occupation and was in Russian custody until final disposition at the Congress of Vienna. The fate of the Duchy was taken out of the realm of Franco-Russian relations and placed in the hands of nations which met at Vienna to restore the balance of power in Europe.

⁴⁴ Dr. August von Schlossberger, Politische und Militärische Correspondenz, König Friedrichs Von Württemberg mit Kaiser Napoleon I, 1805-1813, Stuttgart, 1889, 233.

⁴⁵ Askenazy, Sto Lat Zarzadu, 29.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

All three of the Partitioning Powers came to the Congress of Vienna with proposals for a peace settlement, but the most determined of these powers was Russia, which had a very definite plan as to what she was to receive as a reward for her actions in safeguarding and liberating Europe. Russian demands came into conflict with those of Prussia and Austria, who were more than anxious to see the return of their 1807 and 1809 losses. To insure himself of the territory he wanted, Alexander was willing to give his allies a free hand. Alexander wanted Poland and he planned to compensate Austria and Prussia for their Polish lands by territorial acquisitions in Italy and Saxony. The questions of Poland and Saxony met with a great deal of opposition and Alexander was forced to use all of his persuasion to reach a favorable compromise. When Alexander arrived at Vienna, he instructed Nesselrode to declare that he demanded a just indemnity for his sacrifices. The just indemnity to which Alexander referred was the possession of the Duchy of Warsaw and the power of regulating its position and future constitution according to his convenience. Nesselrode's proposal stated:

The Czar regards the Duchy of Warsaw as his personal spoil, refuses Europe the right to interfere in the disposition of this territory, rejects Prussian partitioning proposals, acknowledges, that the surrender of the Duchy's territory is indemnity, belonging to Russia for her war inconvenience;

yet she is prepared to grant Poznan and Chelm to Prussia, and the foothill district and Wieliczka with the Vistula as Austrian frontiers. With regard to the disposition of Polish land under his sceptre, it is a matter upon which it does not permit Russia's honor to answer Europe. In any event Alexander does not refrain from guaranteeing Prussia and Austria their Polish activities.¹

The above declaration was regarded as Russia's first attempt, and was received with indifference by the other nations at the Congress. Future events, however, illustrated that Alexander made only small concessions to Austria and Prussia on the question of Poland. While the Czar was willing to permit the Congress to discuss the territorial disposition of other European countries, he reserved the right to dispose of Polish territory in any manner he deemed favorable to the Russian Empire. Alexander's reluctance to permit dismemberment of the Duchy of Warsaw, at any other hands than his own, was concrete evidence that he desired this territory as his personal possession and disproved the sincerity of his promises to the Poles that he would restore their independence. The opposition which Alexander showed to the Duchy of Warsaw since its creation continued to exist at the Congress, where it took the form of preventing the territory from returning to Austrian and Prussian rule.

When Austria and Prussia objected to Russian demands, Alexander informed the Congress in a most positive manner that Russia would abandon none of her pretensions on Poland. Alexander added that Russian troops occupied the Duchy of Warsaw and they would have to be driven out by force if the Congress refused to accede to Russian demands.² The Russian ministers

1 Handelsman, Czartoryski, 105-106.

2 De Broglie, Memoire of Talleyrand, III, 225.

who attended the Congress refused to allow any discussion on the Polish question and gave rise to the fear that Alexander was bent on territorial aggrandizement which would extend the Russian Empire to the banks of the Vistula, if not further. The language employed by the Russians lacked reason and moderation as evidenced by a remark that while the nations of Western Europe wanted to make an Asiatic power of Russia, Poland would make it a European power.³

Alexander's greatest problem was that of compensating Austria and Prussia for the loss of the Duchy of Warsaw territory he planned to incorporate into the Russian Empire. An awareness that Castlereagh intended to espouse Austrian and Prussian proposals, prompted Alexander to present more liberal terms for his former allies. In addition to Poznan and Chełm, Alexander proposed to give Prussia the land under the Warta, without Kalisz, together with compensation in Saxony for territory which remained in Alexander's possession. Austria was provoked at Alexander's offer of Saxony to Prussia and refused to consider the problem of Poland and Saxony as one, in which she was backed by Castlereagh, who also did not want to see Prussia enlarged. To conciliate the Austrians, Alexander proposed to give Emperor Francis the foothill district, Wieliczka, the Circle of Tarnopol, freedom of trade on the Vistula, and guaranteed the neutrality of Cracow and Torun.⁴ Eventually, however, Alexander promised Torun to Prussia as

3 Ibid., 220.

4 Handelsman, Czartoryski, 107-109 passim.

indemnification for Lipsk. The settlement of Austro-Prussian compensation weakened Castlereagh's attempt to use these two powers as a threat against Russian expansion into Western Europe. The proposed settlement also decreased French insistence that Austria and Prussia receive their just compensation. It was true that France was willing to see the restoration of Poland but very reluctant to see all of Polish territory in Russian hands.

During the initial stages of the Congress of Vienna, Alexander completely disregarded Polish feelings and made no attempt to consider their demands as to the future status of Poland. However, after Napoleon landed in France, Alexander was anxious to suppress any effect that his coming might have had in Polish minds. Although Czartoryski accompanied Alexander when he came to Vienna, the Czar showed no pronounced interest in the Pole's advice as to the restoration of Poland, until the figure of Napoleon loomed once again before his eyes. Alexander did make some attempts to alleviate Polish unrest immediately after the entrance of Russian troops into Warsaw when he granted an amnesty to all the Poles who fought against him under Napoleon in the campaign of 1812.⁵ The Napoleonic threat in 1815 reverted Alexander's policy to the 1810 status when he made overtures to the Poles for independent political life tied to Russia by either Alexander or Prince Michael as King of Poland. In a memorandum, Czartoryski stated that he was in accord with Alexander's proposal for Poland and the reorganization of Russian provinces in such a manner as to secure peace to his neighbors and

⁵ Gielgud, Memoirs of Czartoryski, II, 282.

Europe. Czartoryski added that even if the name of the Kingdom of Poland was restored and part of the Duchy of Warsaw united to Russia, such a move would not in any sense be dangerous to Austria or Prussia, because Alexander would guarantee to them the possession of their parts of Poland. It was also mentioned that the slightest attempt to recover these provinces would be opposed by Austria, Prussia, France and England, and leave Russia entirely isolated.⁶

The chief objections to the Czar's proposal to restore Poland did not come from Austria and Prussia, whose Polish possessions would have been united to the new Polish Kingdom, nor did they come from France, who was willing to concede to Polish restoration if she could preserve the Kingdom of Saxony.⁷ The most strenuous objection to Polish restoration came from Lord Castlereagh, who feared that a restored Poland under a dynastic union with Russia would considerably increase Russia's strength and upset the balance of power in Europe. Sources indicated that Alexander's own subjects grumbled at the idea of what they considered old Russian lands included in a regenerated Poland. Alexander expressed the Russian sympathies when he said that Poland had three enemies, Prussia, Austria and Russia--and one friend, Alexander.⁸

Even after a settlement with Austria and Prussia, Alexander's proposals were coldly received by the other members of the Congress. The

6 Ibid., 287-288.

7 De Broglie, Memoirs of Talleyrand, III, 276.

8 Strakhovsky, Alexander I, 163-164.

opposition continued until Napoleon returned from Elba, when the Congress needed Russia's support and thus sacrificed Poland to gain Alexander's favor and aid. Once Alexander was certain that his opposition no longer existed, he discontinued his promises to re-establish Poland and even wavered in his decision to give the Poles a liberal constitution. Tallyrand noticed Alexander's change of heart and commented that the Czar would probably eliminate Polish objections by parting coldly with Czartoryski and avoid all explanations.⁹

After Napoleon's second defeat at Waterloo, Austria and Prussia manifested renewed dissatisfaction with the proposals submitted by Alexander. The Austrian attitude was expressed by Metternich, who was determined to regain lost Polish provinces for the Habsburgs. At the very first meeting in Vienna, Metternich forcefully stated that the power which did not spare Napoleon when he was at his zenith, would not permit itself to be dictated to by Alexander. Alexander's nomination of Archduke Constantine as the head of the Polish army in the Duchy of Warsaw provoked severe criticism and presented serious consequences for the Austrians. The Austrian statesmen indicated that it was no longer necessary to aid Russia in order to safeguard their own future.¹⁰ Metternich judged the opinion of his country well and saw that an Austria, encircled by Prussia, Russia, and a Poland entirely in the hands of the latter, would be a constant menace to the Habsburg monarchy.

9 De Broglie, Memoirs of Tallyrand, III, 64.

10 Emil Kipa, Frederyk Gencz a Polska, Monografie w Zakresie Dziejow Nowożytnych, Cracow, 1911, 75.

To protect Austrian interests, Metternich turned to France as the logical power to help him defeat Alexander's schemes. The Austrian statesman was most desirous to obtain assistance on two vital issues which concerned the safety of his country—the Polish question and the Saxon issue. Talleyrand stated that in a conversation with Metternich, the Austrian told him he would never abandon Saxony and as far as Poland was concerned, he signified that he would sacrifice everything if Alexander refused to yield an inch.¹¹ Later on Metternich admitted that he would give Saxony to Prussia on two conditions. One condition was that Prussia should abandon support of Russian proposals on the Polish question, and second, that on the side of the Rhine, the Main on one side and Moselle on the other would be the boundaries between the Northern states and Southern Germany, an arrangement by which Prussia was compelled to give up Mayence.¹² The conditions which Metternich proposed were very difficult for Russia and Prussia to accept since Frederick William and Alexander were very closely united on the matter of Polish disposition and Prussia coveted Mayence. However, the first and most important question which blocked the progress of negotiations at Vienna was Poland.

In a letter to Hardenberg on December 10, 1814, Metternich expressed the importance of the Polish question both for Austria and for Prussia. In his opinion, the question of fixing the fate of the Duchy of

11 De Broglie, Memoirs of Talleyrand, III, 314.

12 Ibid.

Warsaw was of great concern to Austria. Metternich stated that while Francis was anxious to preserve friendly relations with Alexander, the dictates of private interest prevented him from agreeing to a settlement whereby this interest was jeopardized. In addition, Metternich pointed out that the city of Cracow, with a suitable radius, should be incorporated into Austrian territory. The letter further asked Hardenberg to state more explicitly Prussian opinion on the constitutional question of Poland and the union of the ancient Russian Polish provinces to the new acquisitions of Russia. In conclusion, Metternich declared that Austria had the right to compensation for Alexander's pretensions to new territorial acquisitions and that it appeared impossible not to make mention of this issue in the progress of negotiations.¹³ Eventually, however, Austria accepted Alexander's offer of Wieliczka—with the salt mines—small territory on the right bank of the Vistula, freedom of trade on the Vistula and the Circle of Tarnopol, as compensation for her losses and in this manner Alexander disposed of one of his former allies and silenced her protests of Russian incorporation of the Duchy of Warsaw.

The solution to the problem of Prussian compensation was to some extent much simpler than that of Austria, who was the "silent" ally of Napoleon. The Russian Caesar and the Prussian King were in complete agreement on the issue of Polish territorial disposition since the latter joined the Russians in 1813 with the understanding that Russia would indemnify Prussia

13 Metternich, Memoirs of Metternich III, 586-588 passim.

out of future-conquests for the loss of her former Polish possession. Prussia was also informed that Alexander had not the slightest intention of giving up any part of Poland which he occupied.¹⁴ As a result of this previous mutual understanding, the two powers acted in unanimity on the Polish issue with the exception of a few minor changes in policy. Prussian accession to Russian demands did not necessarily indicate that Prussia willingly parted with her Polish provinces and was ready to renounce all claim to former possessions. While Alexander called the restoration of Poland a solemn atonement for the crimes of Empress Catherine, the Prussians indicated that it was a plan for getting possession of those parts of Polish territory which Catherine was forced to abandon to her accomplices in the partition, and thus in reality the crime was not one of commission but omission.¹⁵

In return for ceding her rights to Poland, Prussia asked compensation for lost provinces for those which she coveted in Germany and on the banks of the Rhine, most important of all, the Kingdom of Saxony. Prussian request of Saxony brought forth strenuous objections from Austria, England and France which considered the question of Saxony more important in European balance of power than a Poland in her present condition. The three objecting powers protested that a destroyed Saxony would not add to Prussian equilibrium. The Saxon problem was forgotten by the rise of another, Prussian demand for a portion of Polish territory, e.g. Torun. In a formal

14 Seeley, Life and Times of Stein, 85.

15 Ibid., 250-251.

proposal to Alexander, Frederick William expressed his desire for a frontier in Poland and mentioned Torun as a source of disquietude if it remained in other than Prussian hands. The letter also indicated that Cracow was of equal importance to Austria and, therefore, demanded that these two territories be ceded to the respective countries.¹⁶ The next portion of the Prussian proposal was even more interesting in that it openly discussed the evils which would result from a Russian restoration of Poland and a constitution which would be given to it. The proposal stated that:

An administration which would constitute all Russian Poland into a political whole under the name of a Kingdom, divide it from Russia, and alter it into a State united with that Empire, would destroy the internal unity of the Government, impede its course, foster among Russian Poles a desire to restore their independence, and in those Poles who will be left to the other Powers, a germ of fermentation and tendency to separation.¹⁷

The proposal further added that:

Such a condition of things would involve elements of discord between despotic Russia and constitutional Poland; the former will have a motive for jealousy in the distinction; it will be always ready to turn the union into incorporation; the latter will be restless about the maintenance of its rights, and its restlessness will take the lawless and revolutionary stamp of the nation, and the union will be followed either by separation or subjugation, which changes however will only be brought about through new convulsions.¹⁸

16 Ibid., 252-253.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 253.

The preceding quotation clearly indicated that Prussian views were less liberal than those of Alexander, who contemplated a constitution for the Polish provinces under his rule. The excerpt also voiced Prussian fears that a too liberal administration of these provinces would be a source of inspiration to Polish provinces under Prussian and Austrian rule and thereby provoke a revolution which might lead to a loss of territory for the two countries. In a discussion with Baron Stein, with respect to the cities of Toruń and Cracow, Alexander stated that it would be humiliating for him to evacuate Cracow after having occupied it but agreed to consider the disposition of Toruń in Prussian favor. To settle the above issue, Alexander resorted to appeasement, and informed Austria and Prussia that Cracow and Toruń would exist as neutral cities. The Czar also abandoned his original plan of joining Lithuania to the Duchy of Warsaw to form the new Kingdom of Poland.¹⁹

The settlement of Austrian and Prussian issues eliminated most of the French opposition to Alexander's proposals on the Polish question. Mutual interest was the strongest link in French support of Austrian and Prussian pretensions. The restoration of Poland and the disposition of Saxony formed a close bond between France and Prussia but an even closer one between France and Austria, which was unwilling to allow Prussian occupation of Saxony or see most of Poland under Russian rule. France agreed that a Poland almost entirely in the possession of Russia would be a cause of continual anxiety for Alexander's neighbors and Europe. Tallyrand

19 Ibid., 292.

firmly supported the Polish right to restoration of independence until it became evident that France would not receive additional support from Castlereagh. Continued French demand for Polish restoration, in the face of overwhelming opposition, would have irritated Alexander without gaining any merit in the eyes of others and also would have wounded Austria which in the first session of the Congress did not wish for this restoration.²⁰

The fact that England failed to insist upon Polish restoration, prompted France to abandon the Polish cause after Austria and Prussia were satisfied with Alexander's offer. While Castlereagh considered the entire restoration of Poland as an independent state a worthwhile principle, he did not subscribe to only a partial restoration because:

to create a kingdom out of a fourth of Poland, would be but to create regrets for the three other fourths, and just cause for anxiety for those who might be possessed of any portion of it whatever, and who, from the moment that there existed a kingdom of Poland, could no longer count for a single moment on the fidelity of their subjects; and thus, instead of a focus of civilisation, they [European powers] would only have established one of insurrection and trouble, whereas peace and tranquillity are the wish, as they are the need, of all.²¹

However:

While admitting that conquest has given certain rights to the emperor [Alexander], it maintains that the limits of those rights is that line that cannot be passed without trespassing on the security of his neighbors.²²

20 De Broglie, Memoirs of Talleyrand, III, 340.

21 Ibid., 260-261.

22 Ibid.

The above quotation is ample evidence that although England did not wish to see Poland restored on present conditions, she was just as unwilling to allow Alexander to dispose of Poland as he wished. As a means of curbing Russian power, Castlereagh espoused Austrian and Prussian demands and advised them that the only manner by which they could preserve the Polish territory still in their possession was to give the Poles a degree of autonomy to keep them satisfied.²³ Napoleon's return in 1815 forced England to make concessions to Alexander in exchange for further military support against the former French Emperor.

English opposition was not the only motive for French gradual disinterest in the Polish question. Future events indicated that French interests dictated the policy. On August 14, 1814, Louis XVIII sent instructions to his Ambassadors at Vienna, which stated that the reestablishment of the Polish Kingdom would be a good and very great improvement but only under three conditions. The instructions demanded that the new Kingdom be independent; have a strong constitution; and that it not be necessary to compensate Austria and Prussia for territory that had fallen to them. The instructions stated that all the conditions were impossible and the second more so than the others. In the first place, Russia would not wish to restore Poland in order to lose what she already possessed, but actually desired to acquire what she did not possess. The granting of Russian demands would mean creation of a great and imminent danger for Europe. Talleyrand was instructed that Prussian pretensions to Saxony would end if Poland was

²³ Handelsman, Caartoryaki, 109-110 passim.

not restored, because it was only as a compensation for what she did not recover that Prussia dared to ask for Saxony.²⁴ The French instructions indicated that Austria would undoubtedly demand compensation in Italy for the loss of the two Galicias, to the detriment of French interests. As a solution to the problem, France proposed that, with the exception of the case in which Poland would be restored in complete independence of each of the three Partitioning Powers, the only workable proposition which the French King could consent to would be to restore everything in Poland to the status of the last division.²⁵ French suggestion of return to the "old order" provoked bitter resentment in the Poles who saw their years of service in the French cause as a total loss. Polish resentment was aggravated to an even greater extent by a statement in the instructions which declared that:

By remaining divided, Poland will not be annihilated for ever; the Poles no longer forming a political society, will continue to form a family. They will no longer have the same country, but they will have the same language, they will thus remain united by the strongest and most durable of all links. They will arrive, under foreign dominations, at the virile age which they have not been able to reach during nine centuries of independence, and the moment when they attain it will not be far from that of their emancipation, when they will all converge to the same centre.²⁶

The French interest in the preservation of the Kingdom of Saxony compelled Louis XVIII to sacrifice the Polish question if Prussia continued to seek compensation in Saxony for the losses of Polish territory.

24 De Broglie, Memoirs of Tallyrand, III, 179-180.

25 Ibid., 180-181.

26 Ibid., 181.

Tallyrand, however, was anxious to support Saxony and Poland, both of which he considered vital to French interests. Eventually, Tallyrand abandoned all effort when it became obvious that the Polish question ceased to interest the powers most directly concerned.

Concessions were made on both sides and the result of the Congress of Vienna was a series of treaties which disposed of the Polish question between Russia, Prussia and Austria. The Duchy of Warsaw, except for the territory ceded to Austria and Prussia, was irrevocably attached to the Russian Empire with the Czar as its King. The section of the Duchy of Warsaw, called the Grand Duchy of Posen (Posen), was granted to the Prussian King who was to have full sovereign rights over this territory for himself and his descendants. Prussia also received Torun and Danzig. Galicia and the salt mines of Wieliczka were returned to Austria, while Cracow became a neutral city under the jurisdiction of the Partitioning Powers. The Poles transferred under Russian sovereign rule were promised a liberal constitution and, together with the Poles under Austrian and Prussian control, guaranteed representation and national institutions.²⁷ The section of the Duchy of Warsaw joined to the Russian Empire consisted of three-fourths of the 1809 Duchy and increased the size of Russian Polish possessions to the extent that the greatest amount of Polish territory was now in the hands of the Russian Czar.

The Poles patiently awaited the results of the Congress of Vienna and in the event that they were transferred to Russia, hoped that Alexander

27 Nanke, Wpisy Do Nauki Historji, 90-91 passim.

would fulfill the promises he made from the time of the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw. Alexander's victories at the Congress, gave him the power to decide Poland's fate, which he promptly announced to the Poles in a letter to Count Ostrowski, the president of the Senate. In the letter, Alexander stated that:

It is with great satisfaction that I announce to you . . . that the fate of your country is at last decided by the unanimous voice of all the Powers united in this Congress. In accepting the title of King, I shall endeavor to satisfy the wishes of the nation. The kingdom of Poland will be united to the empire by the bonds of its own constitution, upon which I shall endeavor to found the welfare of the nation. If the great interest of universal peace has not permitted the whole of Poland to remain united under the same sceptre, I will at least try to soften as much as possible the rigor of their separation and to obtain for them everywhere the peaceable enjoyment of their national liberties.²⁸

A first glance at the above letter, without knowledge of the background which preceded it, gave the impression that the Poles offered the Polish crown to Alexander and that he in turn would grant a very liberal constitution patterned after that of May 3, 1791. Any such impression was deceiving because as preceding events indicated, the Poles only aligned themselves with Alexander when all other hope vanished and would have preferred a king of their own nationality. In addition, the constitution which Alexander gave to the Poles failed to embrace all the liberal views hoped for by the people. The solution of the Polish problem at the Congress of Vienna was not a permanent one, and the Polish question became a center of dispute between the Partitioning Powers for the next hundred years.

²⁸ Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs of Alexander I, 196-197.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

For the Poles, the Duchy of Warsaw was a bright interlude in the dark and sad days which were theirs during the nineteenth century. It is for this reason that the Poles remember Napoleon not because the French Emperor promised to restore the independence of Poland. The Napoleonic era was a bitter disappointment for the Polish people who believed that their former Kingdom would be restored and with that purpose in mind joined the French Legions immediately after the last Partition. Polish hopes remained tied to the fate of Napoleon although he failed to comply with his promises that he would reconstitute the pre-Partition Polish Kingdom. The Treaty of Tilsit, which brought the Duchy of Warsaw into existence in 1807, did not satisfy the Poles who expected much more. The subsequent addition to the Duchy in 1809 still did not come close toward Polish realization of independence. However, the Duchy was considered a nucleus of a Poland which would be independent in the near future. The existence of the Duchy of Warsaw served the purpose for which Napoleon created it.

There were several motives behind Napoleon's creation of the Duchy of Warsaw. The most important reason was Napoleon's desire to establish his power and dynasty in France, and this he could only accomplish by bringing glory to France and strengthening French domination in Europe. Napoleon's

motives were based upon personal interests and ambitions which guided his action from his appearance on the European scene to his final defeat at Waterloo. In the case of Partitioned Poland, Napoleon's actions were not influenced by sympathy or righteousness of Polish independence but by selfish reasons of personal glory. The fortune of an artificial state such as Napoleon created in the Duchy of Warsaw owed its existence to the fact that Napoleon was unable to insure the safety of the French Empire unless he could dominate Prussia and erect a buffer state between himself and Russia, the chief opponent to the extension of Napoleonic power in Europe. Napoleon realized that in the eyes of the legitimate European monarchs he was a usurper and illegitimately occupied the French throne. Napoleon also was aware that the legitimate monarchs would not tolerate his political maneuvers to dominate Europe and would continue to interfere in his plans. To protect himself, Napoleon resorted to the formation of a barrier between France and her enemies. Poland's strategic position proved to be the ideal location of a buffer state once Napoleon subjugated Prussia. With this end in view, Napoleon courted Polish aspirations, told the Poles that the only other choice was to live under the yoke of foreign domination, and after Prussian defeat erected the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807. Although Napoleon promised the Poles independence, future events indicated that the Duchy of Warsaw was completely in his power and ruled by his will alone. The concessions which Napoleon made to the Partitioning Powers did not erase the memory of Prussian and Austrian defeat nor calm the fears of Russia. All these powers realized the purpose for which Napoleon created the Duchy and opposed its existence from

the moment that the idea of its creation was conceived.

The strongest opposition to the Duchy of Warsaw came from Russia which considered the Duchy a nucleus of a restored Poland which would eventually culminate in the loss of all Russian Polish territory acquired by the Three Partitions. Moreover, Russia was in constant fear of the extension of French domination into her sphere of influence in Central Eastern Europe and jealously guarded her prerogatives. In Alexander's eyes, French successes in Italy and Prussia seemed to be a precursor of Russian defeat by Napoleon. The Treaty of Tilsit was considered a beginning of Napoleon's military plans to engulf all of Russia under French supremacy. The offer of the Polish crown made by Napoleon to Alexander was rejected because Alexander believed that such a move would place him in the position of gratefulness to the French Emperor. Napoleon wondered why Alexander refused the magnanimous offer but knew that the Russian Czar would not accept. Napoleon placated Russia in 1807 and 1809 with territorial concessions at the expense of Alexander's allies, Prussia and Austria, but refused to formally agree to Alexander's proposal that France would ever undertake to establish the full independence of Poland. However, once the Duchy of Warsaw was established, Russia opposed its existence and suspected Napoleon of plotting to re-establish all of the former Kingdom of Poland. The enlargement of the Duchy in 1809 added fuel to a dangerous situation and Alexander attempted to eliminate the Polish problem by proposing to restore Poland with the Russian Czar as the King of Poland. Alexander's plans to rebuild Poland under his sceptre failed to attract Polish support and ended in the same manner as his

overtures before Tilsit. The Poles believed that it was not in the nature of the Russian Czar to be a liberator of the Polish people but that he coveted the Polish territory for Russia and planned to gain even those lands which Catherine permitted to become Prussian and Austrian possessions. The Polish leaders believed that Alexander's first consideration lay in the expansion of the Russian Empire which looked toward the West as well as the East. Napoleon's Russian campaign ended in disaster and Russia emerged a powerful nation with definite plans for the destruction of the Duchy of Warsaw and acquisitions of additional Polish provinces.

Opposition to the Duchy of Warsaw also came from Prussia, at whose territorial expense Napoleon created the artificial Polish state. The Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 ended Napoleon's war with Prussia in which Napoleon emerged the victor and subjugated Prussia. The loss of Prussian Polish provinces was a severe blow to the Prussians who looked with greed upon the northwestern Polish territory for many centuries. The Prussians wished to unite East Prussia and Silesia to their own monarchy and were especially desirous of obtaining the key cities of Danzig and Torun. The Partitions of Poland fulfilled their wishes but Napoleon's interest in Poland proved a menace to Prussian retention of acquired territory. Prussian antagonism to Napoleon's schemes resulted in an alliance with Russia and the war of 1806. The burden of the war fell upon Russia which eventually decided to refrain from further depletion of her resources after the battle of Friedland. Russian alliance with Prussia was interesting in the light of the fact that Frederick William III entertained the idea of proclaiming himself King of Poland and made an

effort to inquire of Polish sympathies to such a move. The alliance was not between Prussia and Russia, but between Frederick William II and Alexander I, since Russia was suspicious of Prussian attempts to re-establish Poland. After the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw, Prussia turned her attention to Russia, which was experiencing strained relations with Napoleon. Prussia urged Alexander to aid her in the struggle to regain the lost Polish provinces to the pre-1807 status. The most bitter opponent of Napoleon was Baron Stein who guaranteed Russia her provinces if she would aid Prussia in regaining territory which was vital to her complete security and independence. Russia proved to be a false ally and Alexander consoled his conscience with acquisitions of Prussian territory in the former Polish Kingdom. Prussian opposition continued against Napoleon despite proximity to the French Empire and in the Russian campaign of 1812, Prussia joined Russia to defeat the French usurper. Prussia's prime reason for opposing the Duchy was based on the loss of territory in 1807, provinces which she considered most valuable.

The third power which strenuously opposed the existence of the Duchy of Warsaw was Austria. The basic reason for Austrian opposition stemmed from the loss of part of Galicia in 1809 which was subsequently added to the Duchy. The opposition, however, existed prior to 1809 and in fact began with the awareness of Napoleon's plans to dominate Europe and create a buffer state for his protection. With the creation of the Duchy in 1807, the Austrians saw their Polish provinces in jeopardy and feared the loss of Galicia in the event that Napoleon reconstituted the ancient Kingdom of Poland. Loss of Galicia meant a decrease in the Habsburg inheritance and

thereby aroused intense opposition to the Duchy, a constant reminder of the insecurity of Austrian Polish provinces. Napoleon's remarks that if Austria did not cooperate with France he would be forced to support a Polish revolt which might occur, was construed as a serious threat. Especially after Erfurt, Napoleon turned his attention toward the Poles and did not please the Austrians. Austria prepared for war with France which ended in the Treaty of Schoonbrunn in 1809 by which Austria was forced to cede a large part of Galicia to the Duchy of Warsaw. From that time on, Austria grieved the losses and planned to take revenge for her humiliation. The enlargement of the Duchy provoked Russia but territorial concessions at Austrian expense placated Alexander who showed himself as unfaithful an ally of Austria as of Prussia. When it became obvious that he would have to fight Russia, Napoleon courted Austrian passive assistance with remarkable success. He proposed the exchange of Galicia for another province in the event that the Austrians would agree to such a change. Metternich discussed the plan with Emperor Francis and prepared a list of possible territories as a base of exchange. Metternich was even quite willing to gain territory at the expense of Prussia. Napoleon's offer of the Illyrian Provinces and Dalmatia found favor with Austria, an offer which together with the possible insecurity of Austrian possession of Galicia convinced Emperor Francis that the best political course lay in an alliance with France. During the Franco-Russian campaign, Austria remained the passive ally of Napoleon. The loss of Galicia was forgotten when the threat of still further losses was imminent but this did not prevent Austria from showing her continued opposition to the

Duchy of Warsaw.

The Congress of Vienna was the culmination of Russian, Prussian and Austrian opposition toward the Duchy of Warsaw. Each Partitioning Power wanted to regain lost territory and, if possible, and add to it. However, Russia opposed both Prussia and Austria and showed a disposition to engulf even more Polish territory than she possessed after the Three Partitions. The Partitioning Powers disagreed among themselves and each was willing to profit at the expense of the other. In the final settlement, Russia made several small concessions to her allies but was staunch in her determination to acquire the Duchy as her personal prize for winning the war. The above concessions to the allies, Prussia and Austria, plus the need of Russian assistance in defeating Napoleon's reappearance in Europe, gave Russia a free hand to dispose of the Duchy in any manner she desired. The Duchy was given almost in its entirety to Russia and ceased to function as an autonomous state. Lack of English and French support of Polish aspirations gave tacit approval to Alexander's method of disposing of Poland which ceased to exist as an independent state until the conclusion of World War I in 1918.

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seems to deal with the latter part of Polish history. It is one of the very few good primary source materials in the English language which concerns itself specifically with Poland.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Bernadine Florence Pietraszek has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Feb. 26, 1952
Date

Joseph Roubellif
Signature of Adviser