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Poland in the Period of Partitions 1795–1914

1. The Polish cause during Napoleonic wars (1797–1815)

After the third partition of Poland in 1795, the Polish state had been erased from the political map of Europe for more than 120 years (see: the map “The Partitions of the Polish – Lithuania Commonwealth 1772–1795”). Nevertheless, the nation itself did not cease to exist. The collapse of the state resulted in the emigration that although small in number was still important for political and military reasons. Two organisations were created in exile in France: the right wing of emigration was united in the **Agency** (*Agencja*), while the left wing was organised under the name of **Deputation** (*Deputacja*). Both of them hoped that revolutionary France would be able to help Poland to regain her independence. It was the Agency that was allowed by the French government to organise Polish troops to fight side by side with the French revolutionary army. Soon, in 1797, the Polish Legion under the command of General *Jan Henryk Dąbrowski* was formed in Italy in the service of the Republic of Lombardy. It was incorporated as auxiliary forces into the French army in Italy led by General Napoleon Bonaparte. For that Legion, a patriotic song known as “Dąbrowski’s Mazurka” (that later became the Polish national anthem) was composed by *Józef Wybicki*, a Polish patriot and poet, one of the members of the Agency. Another Polish legion was organised by General *Karol Kniaźiewicz*. It was formed

in the direct service of the French Republic to fight in Germany and was named the Danube's Legion. Both legions took part in all French military campaigns of those times fighting against Austrian and Russian troops in Italy, Switzerland and Germany until the armistice of Lunéville (1801) that ended the war between France and Austria. After the peace had been secured, the French government got rid of no more needed Polish legionnaires and in 1802 sent some of them to San Domingo (Haiti). The Poles were forced to fight the Negro's rebel in that remote island situated in the Caribbean Archipelago. Most of them died there infected with tropical diseases. In spite of that bitter end, the Polish legions played a very important role maintaining the idea of independence of the country. Legionnaires wore Polish uniforms in traditional Polish colours; they served under Polish command and Polish standards. More than 25 000 soldiers served in the legions during the five years of their history. This Polish army in exile was a true symbol of the independence of the country. Although its members were actually soldiers without the state, they sang the first words of "Dąbrowski's Mazurka" – "Poland has not succumbed yet, as long as we remain".

There was a short break in the Napoleonic wars following the peace treaty of Amiens. The dreams of the Poles hoping to liberate their homeland with the help of the French Republic did not come true. In 1804 France ceased to be a republic and became an empire. Napoleon Bonaparte, who as the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army of Italy had helped the Poles to organise the legions, became emperor. He defeated Austrian and Russian army in the battle of Austerlitz in 1805 and in 1806 Napoleonic troops marched across Germany and crushed two Prussian armies at Jena and Auerstädt. Soon the French entered the Prussian part of the former Polish state. Within two years Napoleon defeated the armies of all the states that had participated in the partitions of Poland and in this way became almost a Polish national hero. While French troops were approaching the former Polish borders, Polish uprising broke out in Great Poland (or Major – Poland *Wielkopolska*) – that is in the Prussian part of the country. Although a military power of the Kingdom of Prussia had been crushed in 1806, the Tsar of Russia, Alexander I, decided to intervene in favour of Prussia, hence the war proclaimed by Napoleon as "the Polish War" lasted until 1807. New Polish detachments were organised under the protection

of Napoleon. The army of 30 000 soldiers grouped in the national forces ready to fight for the liberation of the entire country had been formed by the end of the war. Eventually, Napoleon signed a peace treaty with Alexander I in Tilsit (*Tylża*) in 1807. According to that agreement a so-called **Duchy of Warsaw** was created (see: the map “Poland 1807–1813”). It was a vassal state to the French empire and consisted merely of the territory that had been taken away from Poland by Prussia in the second and third partitions (1793 and 1795). This was augmented by a narrow strip of land north of the *Noteć* River captured by Prussia in the first partition (1772) but without the so called district of *Białystok* that was given by Napoleon to Alexander I and thus became part of the Russian Empire then. *Gdańsk* was also lost by Prussia and proclaimed a free city under French protection. The king of Saxony became a duke of the Duchy of Warsaw. Although the new state was merely a small scrap of the former Poland, it had its own constitution, parliament (*Sejm*) and national army. Half of its troops (circa 15 000) was organised by Napoleon under the name of Vistula Legion and sent to fight Spaniards. The Legion took part in some bloody campaigns in Spain during the siege of Saragossa and covered themselves with glory during the victorious charge in Somosierra ravine where Polish cavalierly opened the way to Madrid for the French army. The glory was bitter though, as the Poles knew very well that the Spaniards were fighting for their own liberty too. Still there was hope that Napoleon would reciprocate the effort and help rebuild a whole and independent Poland.

As soon as the new war with Austria broke out (1809) the Polish army that remained in the Duchy of Warsaw under the command of Prince *Józef Poniatowski* (a nephew of the last king of Poland) faced an Austrian invasion. After the battle of Raszyn the Poles had to give up Warsaw, but then they managed to reconquer the entire territory of former Poland that had been taken by Austria in the third partition, the so called “New Galicia”. Soon Napoleon defeated the main Austrian army in the battle of Wagram and the war ended. It was the only victorious Polish war in the 19th century. The Duchy of Warsaw was aggrandised as regards its territory and the number of inhabitants. All the formerly Polish territory occupied by Russia, however, and the districts that had been taken by Austria and Prussia in the first partition were under foreign rule. It was clear that without a new

war with the Russian Empire the resurrection of Poland would be impossible. The war the Poles hoped for broke out in 1812. Napoleon proclaimed it to be “the Second Polish War”. About 100 000 Polish soldiers marched in the ranks of the “Grand Armée” towards Moscow. Fighting both the Russian troops and Russian winter they were finally defeated. After the disaster at the banks of the Berezyna River (near Studzianka village), only several thousands of survivors, still carrying all their cannons and their standards, came back to the Duchy of Warsaw at the beginning of 1813 followed by the victorious Russians. Prince *Poniatowski* – Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army – refused the Russian proposal to join the anti-Napoleonic coalition. Instead he decided to withdraw the Polish troops to Saxony where he fell in action on the battlefield near Leipzig, shortly after Napoleon nominated him Marshal of France. The Poles proved to be the most faithful ally of France – both revolutionary and Napoleonic one. Some Polish troops took part in the spring campaign of 1814 in France, went together with Napoleon to Elba, and even fought in the last battle of the Napoleonic campaign, Waterloo. Although they were often betrayed and exploited as a tool of the French policy, they knew very well that only the destabilisation of the political order in Europe could bring them a chance for independence. It was France and her emperor who fought Austria, Prussia and Russia – the three states that had partitioned and enslaved Poland, so there was no other way but to join the French and fight side by side against the common enemies.

2. Constitutional Kingdom of Poland as part of the Russian Empire (1815–1830)

The outcomes of the period of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars fell short of Polish expectations, although they resulted in some important profits. After the third partition of Poland in 1795, there was no Polish territory under Polish administration at all and even the name of Poland itself was forbidden. In 1814, when the Congress of Vienna started to discuss a new shape of the map of Europe, the Duchy of Warsaw still existed, occupied by Russian troops but under Polish administration. Polish army was not dismissed when it returned from France to Poland. So once

again it was difficult to erase the Polish state entirely. The Tsar, Alexander I, wanted to maintain the Duchy of Warsaw under his sceptre. That territory (created from former Prussian and Austrian parts of Poland) had never belonged to the Russian state before. Facing the opposition of Britain, Austria and France he could not simply incorporate the entire Duchy into Russia. Such a step would break the European balance of power, so according to the decision of the Congress of Vienna, the Duchy of Warsaw was partitioned. Great Poland, with its capital *Poznań*, was cut out and given back to the Kingdom of Prussia; *Kraków* and a small territory around the city were turned into a newly created Republic of *Kraków*, called also the Free Town of *Kraków*; the rest under the name of the **Kingdom of Poland** was given to the Tsar¹ (see: the map “The former Polish territories after the Congress of Vienna in 1815”). Alexander I decided to give a liberal constitution of his own to that new state and became King of Poland himself. Polish administration, Polish Diet (parliament), and army were maintained. He also promised to reunite with the Kingdom those former Polish provinces that had been annexed by Russia during the partitions, but it was never to be done. In this way the liberal, constitutional Kingdom of Poland became an autonomous part of the despotic Russian Empire. One can say that it was a forced marriage between “the Beauty and the Beast”.

Soon it appeared that the Tsar was not going to observe the constitution. He used to be an autocratic ruler in Russia and he could hardly stand any opposition in the Polish Diet. He appointed his brother, Grand Duke Constantin, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish army and thus made him the real governor of the country. The wild and cruel personality of the Grand Duke was hardly acceptable to the Poles who really hated him. In 1819, Major *Walerian Łukasiński* organised a conspiracy called the **National Freemasonry** (*Wolnomularstwo Narodowe*) and, in 1821, another even more secret one known as the **Patriotic Society** (*Towarzystwo Patriotyczne*). The main aim of those conspiracies was to unite again the whole country, as it existed in 1772 and regain its independence. Illegal student

¹ It was not as an integral part of the Russian Empire, but a separate state in personal union with Russia often called the Congress Kingdom to distinguish it from the former Kingdom of Poland that existed before the partitions.

organisations came into being at the universities in Vilnius (*Wilno*) in Lithuania and in Warsaw. Some of them were similar to the German *Burshenshaften*. Soon the Russians arrested their members and after cruel investigation deported them to the interior part of Russia. The failure of the December 1825 rebel in St. Petersburg of the Russian liberal officers who were in touch with the Polish plot resulted in the imprisonment of the leaders of the Patriotic Society. The new Tsar, Nicolas I, chose to prosecute them according to the constitution before the so-called **Diet Court** (*Sąd Sejmowy*). Members of the Polish Senate became judges of their compatriots. No Polish patriot would accept the fact that the will of reunification of the whole country and the dream of rebuilding an independent Polish state were a “state criminal offence” as the Tsar expected to hear in the final sentence of the Diet Court. Hence the actual sentences were not very severe. The common interpretation of the motives of the decision of the Court resulted in an important misunderstanding. The senators were merely not able to punish the members of the plot, but the public opinion considered them ready to support the uprising against Russia should it happen. While the underground conspiracy was developing its activities, a group of deputies from the *Kalisz* voivodeship formed a legal liberal opposition in the House of Deputies (*Izba Poselska*) appealing to the Tsar to observe the constitution and to be a constitutional monarch in Poland. It ended once again with imprisonment of the oppositionists, suspension of the Parliament sessions for years, censorship of the press, and despotic personal rule of Grand Duke Constantin.

From another perspective, the epoch of the constitutional Kingdom of Poland was a period of intensive development of country's economy. The process of industrialisation made a great progress due to the policy of the Polish government of the Kingdom, especially thanks to the efforts of the minister of treasury, Prince *Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki*. In the Russian provinces of the former Poland, national life blossomed as well from the beginning of the century when Prince *Adam Jerzy Czartoryski* became school superintendent of the Vilnius Educational District. In Lithuania and the formerly Polish Ukraine, the whole system of Polish schools was well developed. Vilnius with its University became the main centre of Polish culture and science. The Lithuanian Military District consisting mostly of the former Polish territory captured by Russia was also subordinated

to the command of Grand Duke Constantin just as the Polish Army in the Kingdom. A kind of local autonomy still existed in the former Polish provinces of Russia not so wide, however, as in the Kingdom. As regards the Prussian part of Poland, there was also a kind of autonomy in existence in Great Poland. It was organised under the name of **Grand Duchy of Posen** (*Poznań*) with *Antoni Radziwiłł* as Polish governor. The *Gdańsk* Pomeranian district, called West Prussia by the Germans, remained strictly under Prussian rule. The **Republic of Cracow** was under protectorate of all three neighbouring powers but enjoyed its own Polish administration. Galicia, the Austrian part of former Poland, had no autonomy except for the local Diet of noblemen in Lviv (*Lwów*) without any serious importance.

The greatest part of the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was under Russian rule so it was clear that the fate of the entire nation would be determined by the developments in the “Russian Poland”. A new military plot was organised by Lieutenant *Piotr Wysocki* at the Infantry Cadet School in Warsaw in 1828. Members of that conspiracy were mostly very young officers, cadet officers and students of Warsaw University. They had no political programme but to fight for independence of the country. No highrank officers were involved in the plot. After the sentence of the Diet Court the cadets believed that the senators and other politicians, the so-called “elder in the nation”, would join the revolution at once and without any hesitation proclaim the war for independence against Russia. But the generals and senators remembered well the tragedy of 600 000 soldiers of Napoleon’s *Grand Armée* and did not believe that the small army of the Kingdom of Poland, no more than 30 000, men could successfully fight against the entire Russian Empire. European events of 1830 appeared to be decisive for further development of the situation in Warsaw.

3. November Uprising and the Polish-Russian war (1830–1831)

A revolution broke out in France in July 1830, next month Belgians revolted against the Orange dynasty of the Netherlands. In spite of censorship the press in the Kingdom wrote about those events and the facts

were well known in Poland. The revolutions in Paris and in Brussels undermined the political order of Europe established at the Congress of Vienna. Tsar Nicolas I considered himself personally responsible for the defence of the continent against the revolutions. He felt obliged to intervene according to the rules of the so-called Holy Alliance – a treaty signed in 1815 in Paris by Russia, Austria and Prussia. For this reason, he ordered a mobilisation of some Russian corps in the Empire and of Polish Army in the Kingdom with intention of waging a war against France and Belgium. At the same time, Russian police learned about the plot in the Polish Army. Most officers were former Napoleonic soldiers; they used to be brethren in arms with the French army for more than 20 years and it was the Russians, and not the French or the Belgians, who were considered to be true enemies of Polish independence. There was little choice of what to do in such a situation. To do nothing meant to let the Russian police crush the plot and allow the Tsar to lead Polish troops against the revolutions in Western Europe. In the eyes of Poles, the French and Belgians were fighting for the cause of liberty for the whole Continent. This was why the conspiracy of *Piotr Wysocki* in the Infantry Cadet School decided to “postpone the step of the giant who wants to fetter the world” as the French poet Casimir Delavigne wrote in his *La Varsoviennne* dedicated to the Polish uprising.

A revolution broke out in Warsaw in the night of **29/30 November 1830**. Most units of the Polish Army as well as the inhabitants of Warsaw joined the revolt. Grand Duke Constantin and Russian troops were forced to leave the Polish capital and withdraw from the Kingdom of Poland. A new government was formed by conservative politicians who did not want to break down with the Tsar and did not dare to wage a war against Russia. The young officers who started the revolt lost political influence at once. Soon, General *Józef Chłopicki* proclaimed himself dictator, sent all of the conspirators as the officers to the detachments outside Warsaw and started negotiations with the Tsar. The talks lasted for more than two months, the time that Nicolas I needed to mobilise his army against the insurgents. It appeared that no agreement was possible. The Poles wanted the Tsar to observe the constitution and to reunite the Russian provinces of the former Poland with the Kingdom; Nicolas I demanded unconditional subordination of the Polish Army and was ready to promise nothing. On

25 January 1831, the Polish Diet proclaimed dethronement of the Romanovs, the dynastic family of the Russian Empire. A war was inevitable (see: the map “The November Uprising 1830–1831”).

Russian troops, more than 127 000 men under the command of Field Marshal Count Ivan Dybicz (Diebitsch), crossed the borders of the Kingdom of Poland at the beginning of February 1831. The disparity of strength was apparent. The Poles could face them only with an army of 53 000 soldiers. Still the first battle of cavalierly at *Stoczek* was a Polish success. The most decisive battle of that part of war took place on 25 February at *Grochów* near Warsaw (today the city district). The struggle was hard and bloody but in fact without winners. The Poles had to withdraw beyond the Vistula River back to Warsaw, but Dybicz did not dare to attack Polish capital. He decided to break the campaign and wait for the spring to continue the war. Instead, that were the Poles who started an unexpected offensive against the Russian army on 31 March. There was a whole series of brilliant Polish victories in the battles of *Wawer*, *Dębe Wielkie* and *Iganie*. At the end of March an uprising broke out in Lithuania. It was not a regular war like in the Kingdom but guerrilla warfare. All communications of the Russian army that was fighting in the Kingdom leading through the territory of Lithuania and western Belarus were cut off. In April the corps of General *Józef Dwernicki* crossed the Bug River and entered the province of Volyn (*Wołyń*) in the Ukraine, but soon was forced to withdraw to Galicia where Austrians disarmed it. In spite of that, in May the uprising broke out in the Ukrainian provinces of former Poland on the right bank of the Dniepr River. It was not so strong as the one in Lithuania, but at that time (April and May 1831) the whole former Poland that was incorporated into the territory of the Russian Empire took arms against her oppressor. The spring Polish offensive cost the Russians a lot. Dybicz army suffered heavy loses but it did not change the strategic situation of the war. The revolt in Ukraine was crushed at the beginning of June and the period of Polish initiative in the war ended with the battle of *Ostrolęka* on 26 May. Soon after that battle Field Marshal Ivan Paskiewicz replaced Dybicz who died because of cholera. In July, while the new Russian commander in chief managed to cross Vistula River without any counteraction of the Poles, the insurrection in Lithuania ended with a disaster,

as Polish troops were forced to cross the Prussian frontiers. The Russian corpses fighting until then the Lithuanian insurgents were now able to invade the Kingdom of Poland. The situation became critical, when Paszkiewicz ordered to attack Warsaw and, after two days of bloody battle on 6 and 7 September, conquered the capital city of Poland. The agony of the insurrection lasted until the first days of October, when the main Polish army crossed the Prussian border. The last fortresses of *Modlin* and *Zamość* capitulated at the end of that month.

The defeat of the Insurrection meant the end of the constitutional period in the existence of the Kingdom of Poland. The constitution was abolished, and so was the Polish Diet. Polish soldiers were forcefully included into the Russian army and sent to fight Chechen and Circassian highlanders in the Caucasian Mountains to conquer them for the Russian Empire. The universities in Warsaw and Vilnius were closed. Autonomic institutions in the former Polish provinces of Lithuania and Ukraine were destroyed and the territories were proclaimed true and old Russian provinces. The Kingdom of Poland became a country under martial law that lasted until the end of Crimean War and was abolished only in 1857. Administration of the Kingdom of Poland was partly Russified and the economic autonomy limited.

Polish November Uprising enjoyed respect and support of the whole liberal public opinion in Europe, mainly in France, Belgium, Great Britain and in western German states. The National Government in Warsaw tried to exploit that situation asking for diplomatic support from the great liberal powers, France and Great Britain. It was clear, however, that without a war against Russia no European government could help Poland to regain her independence. But there was no state in Europe ready to fight the Russians to reach that goal. European diplomacy was occupied with the causes of Greek and Belgian independence. English public opinion was first of all interested in the Parliamentary reform and home affairs. Each government in Europe was still afraid of the new French regime under Louis Philippe, expecting a prompt outbreak of a Jacobinic revolution in France and considering the Russian army a useful tool in the fight against it. When French troops entered Belgium to defend it against the invasion of the Dutch army in August 1831, British government considered it a prelude to the incor-

poration of the country with France. In such situation, any collaboration between London and Paris concerning Polish cause was impossible. In spite of indifference of the cabinets towards the Polish uprising the public opinion demonstrated its warm support for the Insurrection.

4. Poland exiled – the history of the so called “Great Emigration” – culture and diplomacy

Although the war ended no act of capitulation of the army or government had ever been signed. On the contrary, the members of the Polish Diet, National Government, a lot of officers and soldiers and numerous politicians, journalists, writers and other public persons went into exile. They did not want to live under Russian rule any more. In the hope that they would be able once again to fight for the independence of their country soon; they chose exile rather than slavery. The emigration after the downfall of the November Uprising was not so numerous as regards the number of the exiled (less than 10 000), yet still it was called **Great Emigration** because of the political and cultural importance of the people that it was constituted with. They were true elites of the nation. Most of them chose France as the country of their new sojourn. While “Paskiewicz’s night”, as the Poles called the period of Russian persecutions and atrocities against the patriots, began in their home country, they were able to develop their national culture and maintain quite a wide paradiplomatic activity in exile. They were also very specific guests for the nations who received them as the unhappy soldiers of the right and common cause of freedom. However, various German governments showed their reserve to the rebels and Prussian authorities even ordered the army to attack them and push back beyond the Russian frontier under the rule of the Tsar. Still the enthusiasm and hospitality of the ordinary Germans the exiles met during their way through Germany to France were enormous. It was probably the period of the best German-Polish relations in the entire 19th century. A lot of poems and songs dedicated to the Poles and Polish cause known in German romantic literature as *Polenlieder* were written during that time. The inhabitants of France and Hungary demonstrated the same

enthusiasm and support for the Poles. It is worth saying that the Polish Great Emigration was also a visible proof of the fact that the nation is a quite separate being than the state itself, and even when deprived of its own political organisations it had still the right to live and fight for them no matter what political order is convenient for the existing powers and considered by them as the legal one.

The Great Emigration was divided into several separate political camps. On its right wing there were liberal-constitutionalists under the leadership of prince *Adam Jerzy Czartoryski* – former prime minister of the National Government during the Insurrection. According to them Poland should be the constitutional, liberal monarchy. That camp used to be called **Hôtel Lambert** – because of the name of the main residence of the prince in Paris at st. Luis Isle. They expected to rebuild the independent Polish state as the result of the combination of the favourable European events (a war of any European power, most likely France in alliance with Great Britain against Russia) together with another uprising in Poland. As a former friend of Tsar Alexander I and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19th century, Prince Czartoryski was a very well known person in the diplomatic circles of Europe of those times. This helped him to maintain unofficial but intensive contacts with various European cabinets. He tried to exploit any conflict in Europe to provoke a great European war between the powers in belief that only the destabilisation of the continent could bring a favourable political conjuncture for the restoration of the Polish state. This was a common conviction of all political camps of Polish emigration. While prince Czartoryski tried to gain support for his action from different Europeans cabinets, some left-oriented emigrants called usually the democrats, e.g. members of the **Polish Democratic Society** or another organisation led by *Joachim Lelewel* (a historian, former professor of the University of Vilnius and Member of the National Government during the Insurrection) and known as the **Polish National Committee** counted upon a European revolution of the peoples against the tyranny of the monarchs. They believed in the brotherhood of all European nations and expected to rebuild Poland as a republic. To achieve that goal the democrats started to send their emissaries back to the country to prepare a new uprising, this time simultaneously in all three parts of former

Poland (Russian, Prussian and Austrian) and developed their relations with other revolutionary movements in Europe especially with Italian and German democrats. The most left-oriented emigrants, united in the so-called Communities of the Polish People, dreamed about formation of a completely new Polish society without any social differences. They propagated a mixed programme consisting of elements of early Christianity and communism.

Apart from the political activity, the Great Emigration developed cultural and artistic life of the exiled Poland. All political circles of the emigrants issued a lot of newspapers in Polish, French, and English. By 1848 they managed to publish more books in exile than were printed in the same time in Poland under foreign rule. Cultural and scientific institutions were organised mainly under protection of Prince Czartoryski. The most important were *la Société Littéraire* (later: *Société Historique et Littéraire Polonaise*) and *la Bibliothèque Polonaise* in Paris as well as *The Litterary Association of the Friends of Poland* in London. Polish emigration had its own Polish schools and created a system of scholarships for young Poles to study at foreign universities. Thanks to Prince Czartoryski the Chair of Slavonic Languages and Literature was created at the *Collège de France* in Paris with the great Polish romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz as a professor. Many other Polish poets, composers, writers, painters etc. Conducted their artistic activity in exile. The most famous among them were the poets *Juliusz Słowacki*, *Cyprian Norwid*, and *Zygmunt Krasiński* and the genial composer of piano music, *Fryderyk Chopin*.

5. Polish participation in European revolutions (1833–1871)

However, the main field of activity for Polish emigrants remained the political one. In the years 1832–1849 the Poles participated in almost all the revolutions and wars in Europe and nearby. There were at least two reasons for that. They considered the wars and the revolutions to be the only way to change the political situation that was still unfavourable for Poland. Military action was rightfully seen to be indispensable to crush the domination

of the three absolutist powers that had partitioned the country and to rebuild its independence. Last but not least, they believed in their mission to fight as the knights of the cause of liberty. Their slogan that had been written in the insurrectional standards waved during the November Uprising proclaimed their fight to be “For your freedom and ours”. They still believed the fight was going on.

Just after the collapse of the Insurrection, many Polish officers joined the Belgian army and helped to organise it. For this reason, Tsar Nicolas I refused to recognise Belgian government and Russia did not maintain political relations with Belgium until 1852. Waiting for a European great war the emigrants tried to organise Polish legions in every possible place. In 1832, French government allowed formation of some Polish battalions in Algeria as part of the French *Legion Étrangère*, another Polish legion was formed in Portugal to support the Queen Doña Maria and the constitutionalists during the civil war in this country. While Prince Czartoryski promoted the idea of the organisation of Polish legions with the support of different European cabinets, the democrats tried another Polish revolt in 1833, but after a short guerrilla war they failed. Still they participated in other revolutionary attempts in Europe. Polish volunteers organised into separate Polish detachments took part in the revolution in Frankfurt on main in 1833 and in Savoy in 1834. Meanwhile, the Poles were preparing a new uprising in Poland. It broke out in February 1846 (see: the map “The former Polish Territories during “The Spring Time of Nations” 1846–1848”). The attack on the *Poznań* citadel in Great Poland that was under Prussian rule failed and so did the attempts to conquer *Siedlce* and *Miechów* in the Kingdom of Poland. The insurgents managed to liberate the Republic of *Kraków* where the National Government was proclaimed on 22 February. Unfortunately the uprising lasted for only several days. Although the Austrian troops had left the town, the Habsburg authorities provoked peasants’ rebellion in Galicia against the noblemen and landowners who were considered by Austrians to be the social base of the Polish patriotic movement. In this way the Polish peasants massacred some of the insurrectional detachments. The insurgents who had expected to meet Austrians troops did not want to fight Polish peasants instead, whom they

regarded as their compatriots. The disaster of the **Kraków Revolution** was a terrible experience for the Polish insurrectional movement. It proved that a foreign government could use Polish peasants as a force to fight against Polish national uprising. Since then the first task of Polish patriots was to include the lower classes of society in the national movement. The *Kraków* Revolution having been smashed the Republic of *Kraków* ceased to exist and was incorporated into the Austrian Empire.

Two years later the democrats had their second chance. The Spring Time of Nations spread all over Europe. The revolution that broke out in Paris in February 1848, was followed by similar developments in Vienna and Berlin, in March. Prussian authorities were afraid of the Russian intervention and expecting a highly probable war with Russia allowed the Poles to organise Polish troops in the Grand Duchy of Posen. Nevertheless, the situation in Berlin was soon again under the control of the King and the conservative Prussian government. In such circumstances, they did not need Polish troops any more and started to be afraid that the Poles could provoke a conflict with Russia. Polish military camps were attacked by Prussian army and after a short, ten-day war of 29 April – 9 May the **Great Poland Uprising** of 1848 ended. There were conflicts in *Kraków* and Galicia as well. Although, in March, Austrian authorities allowed organisation of the Polish National Guard and Polonised the administration of the country, the Polish detachments were disarmed and martial law was proclaimed in the entire Austrian part of Poland in November. The Spring Time of Nations on Polish territories ended without any important achievements except for one respectable result. The pressure of Polish democratic-noblemen movement forced Austrian authorities to proclaim peasants reform in Galicia. By virtue of that reform the peasants became owners of the land that had been cultivated by them so far.

In spite of the unfortunate developments in Poland, Polish emigrants participated in different movements in the European Spring Time of Nations. In Northern Italy a Polish legion was organised by *Adam Mickiewicz* to fight Austrians. In spring 1849, while defending the Republic of Rome, it had to fight French troops that intervened on behalf of the papal government. Another Polish legion, about 3000 soldiers

under the command of general *Józef Wysocki*, took part in the Hungarian war for independence against the Austrians and Russians. General *Józef Bem* who had organised Polish legion in Portugal in 1830s, took part in the 1848 Vienna revolution and then became Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Transylvanian army fighting successfully Habsburg's army until Russian intervention crushed Hungarian revolution in 1849. Another Polish general, *Wojciech Chrzanowski*, was nominated Commander-in-Chief of the Piedmont army in Italy in the war of that state against Austria in 1849. By the end of 1849 it was obvious that the revolutionary movement in Europe failed without any results as regards the cause of Polish independence. The idea of Polish democrats to rebuild Poland with the help of the European peoples fighting the tyranny of their monarchs proved unproductive.

As regards the liberal constitutionalists of the Hôtel Lambert, they obtained as well their own chance to prove their conception of regaining the independent Polish state. In 1853, soon after the collapse of the Spring Time of Nations, the Crimean War broke out. That was the war longed for by Prince Czartoryski – the war of Great Britain and France – two western liberal powers that supported the Ottoman Empire against Russia. Turkey was the only state that had never recognised the partitions of Poland and never admitted the legal domination of foreign powers over her. There was quite numerous Polish emigration in the Ottoman Empire and a paradiplomatic legation of the Hôtel Lambert in Stambul. Turkish authorities organised the so-called Sultan's Cossack regiment that consisted of Poles and some Balkan Slaves under Polish command, while the British and French governments allowed formation of a Polish military division led by General *Władysław Zamojski*, a nephew of Prince Czartoryski. After the war the Polish division was dismissed but some of its soldiers joined the detachment organised by *Teofil Łapiński* and went to the Caucasus Mountains to support Circassian and Chechen rebels against Russia. They fought there until 1858. The Crimean war was practically the end of political activity for the generation of the Great Emigration. The former insurgents became older and older. Their dreams to come back to free Poland did not come true. Forthcoming events were still bringing new hopes to young conspirators and patriots in the country.

6. The January Uprising and the first Polish clandestine state (1861–1865)

In spite of the fact that Russia lost the Crimean War, the Polish question was not discussed at the peace congress in Paris where the peace treaty was signed in 1856. Unofficially, however, the new Tsar, Alexander II, probably promised Napoleon III and the British government liberalisation of the regime in the Kingdom of Poland and agreed to abolish the martial law that had been in force since 1831. The so-called “Post-Sebastopol’s Thaw” set in. The Russians allowed again partial Polonisation of the administration of the country. Many patriots deported to Siberia because of their involvement in conspiracy were then permitted to return home. Soon, in 1859, a war began against Austria for reunification of Italy. Partly with the help of Napoleon III, partly against him, Italy was reunited in 1860. It was a marvellous example for Polish patriots and a proof that independence and unity can possibly be regained. The period of the patriotic and religious demonstrations began first in Warsaw and next in all bigger towns of the Kingdom and of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine as well, i.e. in all former Polish territories within Russian Empire. Two days after a great demonstration to commemorate the anniversary of the *Grochów* battle, Russians decided to shoot at the demonstrators in Warsaw on 27 February. Five people were killed. The Russian government, however, was not ready for confrontation. It decided to restore the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland that had been abolished just after the November Uprising and tried to find a Polish politician ready to co-operate with Russian authorities. The only one who decided to recognise the legality of the Russian domination in Poland was Count *Aleksander Wielopolski*. He managed to introduce some liberal reforms in the Kingdom. Although the Russians allowed him to do that hoping to avoid a revolutionary explosion, no political or social group in Poland supported his policy. Just nobody among the Polish public persons of political importance could admit the legality of partition and agree to resign from independence. Another demonstration that took place on 8 April 1861 resulted in a massacre. Russian soldiers shot more than 100 demonstrators at the Royal Palace Square

in Warsaw. Any agreement with the Russian government became impossible. When demonstrations moved from the streets to churches, Russian General Karl Lambert governor of the Kingdom ordered to attack the Cathedral church in Warsaw during the mass on 15 October. About 1500 men were arrested and martial law was proclaimed again in the Kingdom. Those events started the return of conspiracy in the country. Conspirators were divided into two political camps. The left one, called the **Reds**, started to prepare an uprising combined with a radical peasants reform to obtain peasants' support for the national movement, while the right one, called the **Whites**, not so radical with regard to social questions, was counting on assistance from France and Great Britain but agreed with the Reds as far as the idea of independence was concerned. By the beginning of 1863 the entire Polish clandestine state was built in conspiracy. There were Polish underground authorities under the name of the Central Committee, Polish underground National Gendarmerie, tax collectors and the entire structure of the civil underground administration in the voivodeships on the entire territory of former Poland in the frontiers of 1772, not only in the Russian part, but in Austrian and Prussian as well. An insurrection was to be proclaimed in the spring of 1863. Still there was not enough arms and officers ready to join the revolution. Although the Polish Army had not existed for 30 years then, since the November Uprising, there were many Poles, officers of the Russian army at that time, that were collaborating with the conspirators. Russian authorities decided to proclaim conscription to disarm the political bomb that was about to go off in the Polish provinces of the Russian Empire. People were to be drafted by the Russian army according to the list of about 10 000 names of those suspected to be involved in the Polish national movement. Their fate would be equal to an exile verdict, because the service in the Russian army in those times lasted for 25 years. To avoid such fate, young men started to escape to the forests and form groups hiding from the conscription and ready to fight. There was no choice but to start the uprising. The insurrection began **on 22 January 1863**. The Central Committee proclaimed itself National Government and called to arms all the inhabitants of Poland, Lithuania, Bielarus and Ukraine to fight the Russian domination. Peasants' reform was proclaimed

in the insurrectional Manifesto, but that step proved insufficient to make the peasants join the uprising in mass. Nonetheless, a guerrilla war began in the entire country (see: the map “The January Uprising 1863–1864”).

There were no great battles as during the November Uprising, but many small clashes took place with Russian army in the Kingdom of Poland, Lithuania and Western Belarus. For a short time (in May 1863) some insurrectional detachments were organised also in Ukraine, but because of the inimical attitude of the Ukrainian peasants to the Polish uprising and supremacy of the numerous Russian troops they were crushed within seven weeks. The Uprising lasted in the Kingdom of Poland and in Lithuania until the spring of 1864. The two other parts of former Poland, Prussian and Austrian, supported the insurrection very strongly. While Prussian authorities collaborated with Russian government against the rebels, the Austrians tolerated the organisation of the Polish detachments in Galicia and let them cross the Russian frontiers and join the struggle until February 1864. Thus Polish uprising prepared ground for future Russian neutrality in Bismarck’s wars against Austria (1866) and France (1870–71). The Whites tried to obtain some diplomatic and possibly military support from France and Great Britain. The only result was the three diplomatic interventions of the French, British and Austrian governments in St. Petersburg in favour of Poland that produced nothing at all. Very soon the German-Danish war and the Civil War in the United States of America became more important for Paris and London than the struggle in Poland. Still a lot of volunteers from the different European countries came to fight Russians in the insurrectional ranks. The most numerous ones were Hungarians. In addition, Italians, the French and even Russians were also represented.

In spring of 1864, the Tsar frightened with the possibility of peasant support for Polish uprising decided to proclaim the governmental peasants’ reform giving the peasants ownership of the land cultivated by them. The insurrectional dictatorship of *Romuald Traugutt* could not save the situation. The country was devastated by the war. The hopes for foreign intervention on behalf of the Poles failed. Most insurrectional detachments were defeated. Traugutt was arrested and hanged by Russians on 5 August 1864. The last commander of an insurrectional detachment, Priest

Stanisław Brzóska, was captured in April 1865. It was the end of the fight. Still the **January Uprising** was the longest and greatest Polish uprising in the 19th century. It is worth saying that it was also the last common uprising of all the peoples that inhabited the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as it existed before the partitions, that is not only Poles, but also Lithuanians, Belarussians and Ukrainians. After that, all these nations started to develop their own national identity and consciousness.

After the collapse of the insurrection, a period of terrible persecutions began. More than 33 000 people were deported to Siberia or other Asiatic parts of the Russian Empire. There were so many of them that they organised an “uprising in exile” at the Baykal Lake in 1866. About 700 prisoners had disarmed the guards and tried to escape from Siberia to China but were defeated by Russian troops. In their homeland, the administration of the Kingdom of Poland was Russified on a full scale. The name of the Kingdom of Poland was abolished and changed into the Vistula Country. It was forbidden to use the Polish language at public offices and to teach it at schools. A Pole could not obtain a job in state administration in the former Polish provinces of the Russian Empire. In Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, the Poles could not buy land; they were only permitted to inherit it. Russian authorities began the war with Catholic Church as well. They considered it the main base of Polish national identity and the only institution beyond full control of the state in the Russian Empire. Soon all bishops in their diocese were deported to the interior Russia or forced to escape abroad. The Greek Catholic Church (Uniat) was forbidden in Russia and the members of that Church were forcibly converted to become Russian Orthodox. Any resistance of the believers could lead even to the death casualties. Simultaneously, German authorities in Great Poland, Silesia and *Gdańsk* Pomeranian district took similar steps against Catholic Church. That action was conducted not only in the Prussian provinces of former Poland but in Southern Germany as well (the so-called *Kulturkampf*). The Germans arrested Bishop *Stanisław Halka Ledóchowski*, at that time the Primate of Poland who according to the old Polish tradition was perceived as “deputy king”.² The Poles treated that step as a blow against

² In former Poland, the primate was usually considered the interrex until a new king was elected.

Polish nationality. Soon they had to face a full-scale policy of Germanisation in the Prussian part of Poland. The Poles could not build their houses without permission of the Prussian administration. That policy created serious problems for those that wanted to buy land. The Prussian law just deprived them of a place to live. Moreover, a special German Colonisation Commission was created to help German farmers obtain land in the eastern German provinces, i.e. the ethnically Polish ones). Like in the Russian part of Poland, the Polish language was forbidden to use in German administration and in schools.

Galicia was the only part of former Poland where Polish national life could develop in a free way. Defeated in the war with Prussia in 1866, Habsburg monarchy was forced to reform itself. The Austrian state changed its name to Austria-Hungary and became a dualistic monarchy. Polish Galicia was granted autonomy. The administration of the country as well as the educational system were Polish. The provincial Polish Diet was organised and Polish universities in *Kraków* and *Lviv* were restored.

7. Making the citizens – how the Polish peasants became the Poles

The epoch of national uprisings in 19th century came to its end. The idea of conspiracy and of another insurrection was given up after the dramatic disaster of France in the war with Prussia in 1870–1871. Some Polish emigrants (about 800 men) took part in this war fighting German troops and then joining the Commune of Paris. General *Jarostaw Dąbrowski*, one of the former leaders of the Reds before the January Uprising, became Commander-in-Chief of the Communard troops and was killed in action against the army of Versailles. Since new powerful German state had been created, still inimical to the Polish cause, nobody in Poland could hope that France or Great Britain would be able to help another Polish insurrection against Russia. Moreover, France started soon to look for an alliance not against Russia, but with her against Germany. The Polish cause that had enjoyed great sympathy in France since the period of Napoleonic wars, eventually became a source of trouble in the face of French will to improve relations with Russia.

In such circumstances it was obvious that a successful revolt in Poland against her oppressors is hopeless. In the 1870s and 1880s, ideas of triple loyalty were born in all three parts of the partitioned Poland. In Prussian part of Poland, limited collaboration with the Prussian administration seemed to be a difficult yet useful way of acting. Although there were a lot of juridical acts unfavourable to the Poles still the courts were independent from the governmental administration and one could successfully defend his cause in the court if he was smart enough to find law favourable to him. The Poles had their own Parliamentary Club in the Prussian Parliament that was joined by deputies elected not only in Great Poland and the *Gdańsk* Pomeranian district but also in *Warmia* – the part of East Prussia. What was possible in Prussia was impracticable in Russia. There were neither independent courts nor parliament at all, nothing but brutal power. Nonetheless, with demonstrations of loyalty, some higher circles of Polish society tried to obtain not a national Polish autonomy, which was impossible, but at least the rights equal to that of the Russian subjects of the Tsar. After the disaster of the January Uprising, however, the Russian government felt strong enough to refuse any liberalisation. Loyalty seemed to be quite an acceptable idea in Austrian Part of Poland. There was no sense to organise conspiracy in the autonomic Galicia. Austro-Hungarian state seemed to provide reasonably good protection of Poles against the Russian Empire.

Unable to fight in a military way for the independence of their country the Poles started to develop ideas of positivism and organic work. According to these, the first duty of a Pole was to work for his country, develop its civilisation, and improve its economic and educational level. Social changes that took place after the January Uprising produced quite a new society. Numerous noblemen's families were dramatically pauperised after the peasants' reform and in result of the mass confiscations of Polish estates especially in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, the punishment for participation in the insurrection. They were leaving the countryside for the cities and started to form a new class called intelligentsia, mainly of the noble origin. The development of industry and urbanisation created a growing class of workers. Peasants became owners of land, which fact resulted in their every day contact with state administration that appeared foreign to them, Russian or German. The ideas of basic work inspired the intelligentsia to

consider development of peasant education a most important duty. Teaching compatriots from the lower classes to build their national consciousness was treated as the most urgent patriotic task. Although Polish language was forbidden in the Prussian-German part of Poland, the German educational system was quite effective. It was not the case in the Russian part of Poland where the educational situation was terrible. More than 70 per cent of the population in the Kingdom of Poland was illiterate, while in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine the figures were even higher. Among the 30 per cent of those able to read and write more than 70 per cent learned that skill not at Russian state schools but at Polish underground illegal courses.

The modern mass political organisations came into being at the end of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s. *Zygmunt Miłkowski*, a former participant of the Spring Time of Nations and January Uprising, became founder of the Polish League in exile, in Geneva, in 1887. In 1893, the organisation, while still in conspiracy, changed its name to the **National League** and soon under the leadership of *Roman Dmowski* became one of the most influential political parties in Poland known since 1897 as the National Democratic Party. Dmowski endorsed the programme of modern Polish nationalism. Unlike Miłkowski, he did not believe in the brotherhood of nations. According to Dmowski, all nations were rather rivals than brothers. From that point of view not only the Russians and Germans appeared to be the enemies of the Poles but also the Lithuanians, BelaRussians, Ukrainians and Jews could create a potential danger for Polish national interests. The Jews constituted a numerous Minority especially in the big cities of the Kingdom of Poland and in the little towns of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. Like the Poles, they could not obtain jobs in state administration or buy land. The ways to earn money were limited to the so-called free professions: lawyers, physicians, private teachers etc. In this way, a rivalry began at the economic level between Jewish and Polish intelligentsia. The idea of Zionism developed simultaneously with that of Polish nationalism. Peasants' movement was born as a significant political factor in autonomic Galicia and in 1895 was organised into People's Party, known from 1903 as the **Polish People's Party** (PSL). It contributed a lot to the education of Polish peasants and helped them become true citizens. In addition to that, the socialistic movement gained support

among the working class and left-oriented intelligentsia. The **Polish Socialist Party** (PPS) was organised in 1893, as was the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland later known as **Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania** (SDKPiL). Soon *Józef Piłsudski* started to play one of the most important roles in the PPS. He considered the fight for independence the main task of Polish socialists, and the socialism itself – just a means in this fight. The programme of the SDKPiL was more internationalist. They wanted to co-operate with Russian social democrats while PPS refused to be a part of Russian socialistic movement strongly underlining its independence as the Polish party. Members of the SDKPiL considered Polish independence to be against the interests of the international socialist movement. According to them Polish national goals turned away attention of Polish workers from the cause of world proletarian revolution. The attempts of the Russian police to destroy these organisations proved fruitless. Although some of their members were imprisoned or deported to Siberia, all three parties survived and developed their activities until the Russo-Japanese war that broke out in 1904. Soon, in 1905, the tsarist government had to face not only the defeat in the war with Japan but something an even more dangerous to the autocratic regime of Nicolas II, a revolution at home.

Non-Russian provinces of the empire, Poland, Baltic countries, Caucasus and Ukraine, proved most active in the revolution. More than 45% of workers' strikes in the entire Russian Empire took place in the Kingdom of Poland. The general strike in the schools forced Russian authorities to allow reintroduction of the Polish language into the schools in the Kingdom. For this reason, Polish historians often say that the **Revolution of 1905** was probably not only the first social revolution in Poland but also another great national uprising. Piłsudski created an organisation of fighting squads as a military section of the PPS and started to attack Russian police and army. In June 1905, there were three days of fighting on the barricades in *Łódź*, the second city in the Kingdom of Poland and the main centre of the textile industry in the country. On 15 August 1906, Piłsudski's fighting squads killed more than 70 Russian policemen and soldiers in the streets

of Warsaw. While Piłsudski tried to turn revolution into another national uprising against Russia, Dmowski attempted to exploit the situation politically by legal introduction of Polish deputies into the Russian Duma (newly created first Russian Parliament) and by some efforts to obtain more autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland. However, the revolution ended in 1907 and Russian government withdrew from almost all the promised reforms. Moreover, in 1912 the *Chełm* district was proclaimed a strictly Russian territory, separated from the Kingdom of Poland and added to the general district of Kiev. Nevertheless, Dmowski and his National Democracy believed not Russians but Germans to be the most dangerous among the nations that dominated Poland. He was convinced that Poles having been perceived as the anti-Russian factor in the international politics in Europe in the 19th century had no chance to win the support of France or Great Britain for their cause. It was the powerful German state that the future allied powers were afraid of and not Russia. To the contrary, it was the Russian Empire that the French and British considered the only possible counterbalance for the German threat. Hence Dmowski started to present Poland as an anti-German factor of European policy and kept developing pro-Russian orientation in Polish political life.

Just before World War I, Polish national and anti-Russian oriented movement moved to Austrian Galicia that was treated as the Polish Piedmont. In 1912, the Polish military Treasure and the Temporary Commission of the Confederated Independence Parties came into being. Piłsudski created a semi-legal rifles squad there and a military conspiracy called the Union of the Active Fight (*Związek Walki Czynnej*). Other Polish political groups did the same organising various paramilitary organisations in Galicia and waiting for a great European war that seemed inevitable. That war that was present in all Polish prayers of the

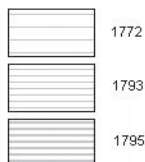
19th century, the war between three powers that had partitioned Poland at the end of the 18th century, the war that was the only chance to crash the domination of foreign powers over Poland and to rebuild an independent Polish state, was longed for and welcomed by all Polish political parties hoping that it would destroy the chains of national slavery.

The Partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1772–1795

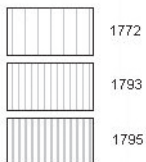


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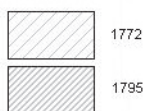
To Russia



To Prussia



To Austria



Poland 1807–1813





The former Polish territories after the Congress of Vienna in 1815






LEGEND




To Russia

-  directly incorporated to Russia before 1815
-  The Kingdom of Poland in personal union with Russia

To Prussia

-  since 1772
-  directly incorporated back in 1815
-  The Grand Duchy of Posen with some limited Polish autonomy

To Austria

-  since 1772
-  directly incorporated back in 1815
-  The Republic of Cracow

The November Uprising 1830–1831



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| ----- | Polish frontiers before 1772 | ----- | The campaigns of the corps of Polish regular army | | Areas of Polish guerilla activity |
| ----- | Frontiers of the Congress Kingdom of Poland | | The routes of the main detachments of Polish irregular forces | | Austrian part of Poland |
| ----- | Other frontiers | ----- | x | | Prussian part of Poland |
| | | | | | The Republic of Craców |

The former Polish territories during the “Spring time of Nations” 1846–1848





LEGEND

▬ Polish frontiers 1772	▬ Russian part of Poland	▬ The territory of the insurrection in Great Poland in 1846
▬ frontiers between the Kingdom of Poland and Russia	▬ The territory of the Cracow Insurrection in 1846	▬ The territory under independent Polish administration in 1846
▬ other frontiers	▬ The peasants' rebel against Polish insurrection in 1846	

The January Uprising 1863–1864



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| ----- | Polish frontiers
1772 |  | Prussian part
of Poland | • | guerilla battles |
| ----- | frontiers between
the Kingdom of
Poland and Russia |  | Austrian part
of Poland | ↗ | the routes of the
reinforcements for
the uprising |
| ----- | other frontiers | | | | |