

Lecture 4

From the Third Partition to the Treaty of Vienna 1795-1815

I. Policies of the Partitioning Powers

1. Political assimilation

All three of the partitioning powers aimed at making impossible the recreation of the Polish state. Attempts to centralise administration. These most vigorously pursued in Prussia and Austria

1. Prussia

Areas incorporated divided into 3 provinces, West Prussia, South Prussia and New East Prussia. German settlers introduced into these areas. German used as official language and imposed as compulsory medium of instruction in the schools. Cooperation with Catholic church

Large estates of people who had taken part in Kościuszko uprising sequestered

2. Austria

Provinces of Old and New Galicia created some attempts at centralization – but not very strong

3. Russia

Area divided into a number of Russian *guberniye* (provinces). Russians sympathetic towards Polish aristocracy. Favour this group against peasantry – Ukrainians and Belarussians.

Similarly Catholic church favoured

This policy particularly evident under tsar Paul I – succeeded Catherine in 1796. Numerous Polish prisoners, including Kościuszko released. Polish gentry again given privilege of appointing minor administrative and judicial offices.

2. Economic effects of partition

These not uniform. In first years following partition, many industrial establishments – particularly around Warsaw fail. Taxes also increase

a. Austria

Economic effects worst here. Area incorporated divided from rest of Habsburg lands by natural barrier of Carpathians and by tariff boundaries from former economic outlets. It was this which prevented development of agriculture and meant that the application of Joseph II's reforms in relation to the peasantry had relatively little effect. These, through a series of patents issued between 1780 and 1790, had assured the peasant security of tenure and laid down that the maximum labour due was to be fixed at 3 days a week. In addition, manorial administration to be supervised by the district commissioner. Further change intended to cause labour dues to be converted into rents not implemented.

b. Prussia

This area benefited from partition. No major change was introduced in the agrarian system. Rents introduced on state lands, but on private estates state only appoints justices to settle disputes between peasants. Since 1795 Prussia had withdrawn from war against Napoleon, it carried on a vigorous trade with both belligerents. High grain prices a major incentive to enterprising landlords to modernize their estates, expand their manors and employ more hired labour. Credit relatively cheap. These referred to by many landowners as the 'golden years.'

c. Russian partition

This area too did not suffer greatly from partition. Legislation of Four Year Sejm relative to peasants repealed. Their status more and more approximated to that of Russian serfs. New canal building makes it possible to export grain on rafts through rapidly growing port of Odessa particularly from Podolia and Volynia.

II. Reaction of Poles to Partition

1. Magnates and more prosperous nobility

In these conditions, magnates and more prosperous nobility not seriously affected. Resented loss of political power, but believed that Poland might re-emerge as a result of a war between partitioning powers. This had, indeed, seemed fairly likely in 1795-1796. Thus content to

wait on events

2. Lesser nobility, townspeople, professional intelligentsia and army officers

These more disaffected, particularly last two groups. Immediately after failure of Kościuszko rebellion, pseudo-Masonic patriotic organization formed including Poles from all partitions.

Hope to gain help from revolution in France. Group of Galician conspirators send delegate to Directory in Paris.

Main political act of this period attempted by 1,000 soldiers who had served under Kościuszko and who were led by a Colonel Joachim Denisko to spark off an uprising from Turkish Moldavia, where they had assembled. Hope for help from French. However in 1797 Bonaparte signed an armistice with Austrians. Rising fails, most other conspirational organizations discovered. Some groups remain, most notably Society of Polish Republicans in Prussian Poland. But these groups weak and isolated.

III. The Poles in France

With collapse of Kościuszko rebellion, a few thousand officers and politicians emigrated to France. Divided into groups here, the semi-official Agency, headed by a Warsaw lawyer, Franciszek Barss, which was supported by more moderate wing among émigrés and the Deputation, headed by Józef Kalasanty Szaniawski (1764-1843), which was sympathetic to Jacobins. The Deputation favoured sponsoring of a national uprising in Poland, while Agency wanted to organize military units to serve under French.

At first, both totally unsuccessful. Most of Poland in Prussian hands – any action to regain Polish independence bound to be seen as anti-Prussian. France had made peace with Prussia in the treaty of Basel and was unwilling to undermine this. France was at war with Austria. But this a war for France's natural frontiers and not for revolutionizing the world. Directors used Polish question to put pressure on Austria, but not really interested in raising Polish issues by creating Polish forces in French service.

Situation changes with French victories in Italy in first Italian campaign in 1796. Many Poles among prisoners taken from Austrians. Napoleon at this stage was having difficulty in obtaining recruits. As a consequence, in January 1797 he agreed to formation of Polish force under General Jan Henryk Dąbrowski (1755-1818)

This force grows rapidly. At Armistice of Loeben (April 1797) it embodied 3,600 men. A year later it comprised 10,000. After the peace of Campo Formio (October 1797), legions transferred to service of Cisalpine Republic formed by Napoleon out of Lombardy, Bologna and Modena. They suffered heavy losses in second Italian campaign. One legion interned by Austrians after capitulation of Mantua, while the second severely mauled at Trebbia. New legion formed on northern front, the 'Danube Legion.'

Peace came with Treaty of Lunéville. This specifies that neither France or Austria should aid the internal enemies of the other. Legions disaffected. Napoleon decides to send most to crush slave rebellion of Toussaint L'Ouverture in San Domingo (today's Haiti) in 1802-1803. Majority die here.

On the face of it, legions had achieved little. But nearly 20,000 men had received military training. This to provide the nucleus for army of French-sponsored Duchy of Warsaw.

IV. The Situation in Russia

New tsar, Alexander I friendly with young Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861)
(Important book on Czartoryski by Hubert Zawadzki, A Man of Honour. Adam Czartoryski as a Statesman of Russia and Poland. 1795-1831, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Czartoryski becomes deputy Foreign Minister. Reforms educational system of Russia's Polish possessions. Polish University established at Vilna.

Russia seeks to expand Central Europe against both Prussia and Austria. Aim of attracting not only Poles, but other Slavs. Czartoryski works out scheme for restoration of united Poland in union with Russia. Seeks war with Prussia in conjunction with Austria

1805 Alexander visits Puławy, seat of the Czartoryskis (then in Austria), where he was enthusiastically greeted by Polish aristocrats. But his aim essentially to force Prussia into a coalition with him. He succeeds in this.

V. Creation of Duchy of Warsaw

1. Military situation and the establishment of Duchy of Warsaw

1805 campaign against Austria ends with brilliant French victory, but French forces remain only on Prussian borders. War with Prussia in following year reopens Polish question. After battles of Jena and Auerstadt road to Poland open. Napoleon still trying to negotiate with King of Prussia, but at same time calls on Poles to rise. November 1806 Manifesto issued by

Dąbrowski and Józef Wybicki (1747-1822).

French thus able to enter Warsaw and Poznań without firing a shot. Dąbrowski organizes a provisional Polish administration. Calls on gentry to rise and join army; demands that landlords send peasants to the army. Lesser gentry and petty-bourgeois enthusiastic; magnates rather reserved. Many had property in Russia or Austria, many disapproved of the 'usurper' Napoleon. 'Jacobins,' headed by General Józef Zająček (1752-1826) call on Napoleon to implement radical reforms.

Napoleon believed it was more important to win over magnates. Gets Prince Jozef Poniatowski (1763-1813) to accept post of Minister of War. January 1807 Napoleon transfers temporary administration of Poland's occupied territories to a government commission of seven men. Most of its members aristocrats, former leaders of Four Year Sejm. Principal men: Stanisław Małachowski (1736-1808), Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1752-1821).

Main task to ensure *Grande Armée* got supplies. Campaign against Prussia continues – nearly 20,000 Polish soldiers under Dąbrowski take part in battle of Eylau, but no decisive victory achieved. After the French victory in the battle of Friedland, Polish question becomes an aspect of negotiations between Napoleon and Alexander I

Napoleon wants to hand Poles over to tsar. Alexander wants Jerome Bonaparte to be enthroned in Warsaw. Eventually King of Saxony, Frederick August, appointed to rule in Warsaw. Russia receives Białystok district in compensation.

2. Grand Duchy of Warsaw

Political Developments

New state created out of most of Prussian Poland. Covered rather small area (104,000 square km) with a population of 2.6 million. Its constitution was dictated by Napoleon in July 1807. An adaptation of the constitution of the French Empire. (Constitution of the Year VIII) and similar in character to those granted to the other French states in Germany and Italy. Some allowance made for conditions in Poland.

King – Given greatest power.

Administration – This followed French pattern. Area divided into six departments headed by a prefect. These subdivided into subprefectures.

No mention of civil rights, but 'slavery' (i.e., serfdom) abolished, all citizens to be equal before the law and Code Napoleon introduced

There was also a legislative body, the Sejm which had right to vote on bills relating to charter and law. Its composition more or less followed earlier lines. It was bicameral, with a Senate made up of Bishops, Castellans, Wojewodowie and a Chamber of Deputies, of which the majority were to be representatives of local diets elected by gentry. A new feature was that 40% of the deputies were to be elected in communal assemblies in which landowners, merchants, master craftsmen officers and a part of intelligentsia. Jews excluded from these rights - ostensibly for period of 10 years. In addition, all offices reserved for citizens of the country.

'National' language introduced in administration

In practice the constitution worked very differently. Frederick August resided permanently in Saxony and country ruled by State Council closely supervised by French Resident. Polish army under the order of Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout, Commander of the

French occupation corps.

The Duchy was, moreover ruthlessly exploited by Napoleon. He levied contributions from the area, took over Prussian state assets, debited the Treasury for Armaments furnished to Polish army and granted large estates to about a dozen French generals. Moreover, Duchy supported large army – ultimately 60,000 men under arms

Economic developments under Duchy of Warsaw

Middle nobility suffer in these years. Continental blockade cause sharp reduction in price of grain. Few landowners thus able to take advantage of conditions created by abolition of serfdom. This achieved by royal decree of December 1807. Follows demands of landowners, whose main spokesmen was Minister of Justice, Felix Lubieński Scheme did not, as some had hoped, introduce rent. Confirmed right of peasant to leave his land, but reserved right of landlord to keep the land with its buildings and inventory. Implicitly gave landowner right to evict peasant – who was thus forced to continue to renew labour dues. In some areas, however, peasants expecting further help from French, start refusing labour dues.

Not all people in difficulties. Some magnates do well. Weaving industry and other trades prosper. Warsaw recovers. Emergence here from money lenders of a close-knit group of largely Jewish group of financiers and bankers. To be of importance later.

Regime and church. Relations uneasy particularly following dispute between Pope and Napoleon. Problem of divorces resulting from civil marriages under Napoleonic code. Some argument also over payment for confiscated church estates But no open conflict

Emergence of New Social Groups

1. Administrative machinery

By end of Duchy, number of civil servants 9,000. Law and civil service school established in Warsaw. This an important development in emergence of intelligentsia

2. Army

The chief raison d'être of the Duchy. Enjoys great prestige and popularity. Recruits levied by lot – though wealthy could get substitutes. Officer corps came partly from legions; others came from gentry and some from ranks. High Morale

Development of Duchy between 1809-1812

Sejm meets for first time in 1809. Opposition both from conservative gentry and from ex-Jacobin leftists. Gentry in clear majority. In fact, Sejm only to meet for two weeks so little opportunity for debate.

Enlargement of Duchy. Napoleon at war with Austria in 1809. Poles under Poniatowski play an important part in this campaign. By treaty of Schönbrunn, Duchy enlarged to include four new Departments (Kraków, Radom, Lublin, Siedlce) but only part of Galician taken over to prevent alienation of Russia.

Some friction created by incorporation of new areas. Gentry here more conservative – many opposed complete incorporation in Grand Duchy.

Conflicts within government between more liberal group led by Lubieński and conservatives headed by Tadeusz Matuszewicz (1763-1819) – Ministry of Treasury, linked with Czartoryskis.

Weakness of former Jacobins increasingly evident

VI. International Situation and Fall of Grand Duchy

From 1807 internal situation favourable to Poles because of antagonism between France and Russia. Both sides treated Polish question as a bargaining counters. Both as a consequences, made approaches to Poles. This takes place against the background of the breakup of the ‘Tilsit system’, the establishment of a *modus vivendi* between the French and the Russians.

1810 saw the last effort to save the Tilsit system. French propose marriage between Napoleon and Grand Duchess Anna. In return, France to pledge Poland would never be restored. These negotiations fail. As a consequence, Alexander begins to approach Poles. Through Czartoryski, he approached Poniatowski and offered to restore Poland under his sceptre within frontiers of 1772. He also approached the Lithuanian aristocrats and proposed granting Grand Duchy the Constitution of 3 May.

Napoleon only embarks on Russian campaign with hesitation. By-passes Warsaw, hopes to avoid having to tie his hands in relation to the Poles. He did however call on Sejm to convene a confederation and proclaims reestablishment of union with Lithuania. But when leaders of confederation meet Napoleon at Vilna, he issues only vague statements.

Poles play large part in 1812. 100,000 troops; 40,000 in Polish army

With defeat of Grande Armée, obvious that Napoleon will have to abandon line on Vistula.

Already in Autumn 1812 Warsaw ministers negotiating with Alexander through Czartoryski.

Early 1813 Russians enter Warsaw

Conclusion – Napoleonic myth in Poland. Achievements of Grand Duchy

VII. Settlement of Polish Question at Vienna

Finale of Napoleonic wars

In 1813 almost whole of Poland, including Warsaw – Danzig, Poznan and Kraków under Russian occupation. Seemed that Alexander would be able to carry out earlier promise. But Napoleon not defeated. In order to induce Austria and Prussia to join coalition, Alexander refrains from raising Polish question. Only in 1814 that he regains freedom of action. It was now that he accepted remnants of Polish forces into his service and allows them to return to Poland and that he declared he was ready to ‘work for the happiness’ of the Poles. He aroused the enthusiastic support of Polish aristocracy and also some of Napoleonic generals.

Situation at Vienna

Powers opposed too great an expansion of Russia. In particular they opposed his Polish plans. Tsar wins support of Prussia by supporting its claims to Saxony. England, France and Austria were threatened to resort to military action. Attitude of powers to Polish question reflects

attitude to Russia. In public, Metternich, Castlereagh and Talleyrand favour establishment of pre-partition Poland; in private want to return to 1795.

Issue settled in February 1815. Russia cedes to Prussia western part of Duchy of Warsaw. Tiny neutral state formed of Kraków and surrounding district. Rest of Duchy left to Russia and 'Kingdom of Poland'. Influence of Napoleon's flight from Elba.

Final act of Congress declares that Kingdom of Poland forever united with Russia 'in virtue of its constitution'. Alexander reserves to himself right to enlarge its internal boundaries. Other provinces of Poland were also to obtain 'national institutions'. Scope of these left to monarchs. Novelty of 1815 settlement that Poles obtain international recognition of their subjection. This leads them to claim after 1831 that if partitioning powers fail to recognize Polish rights powers should intervene.