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## The Problem of Poland in Napoleon's Politics in 1807-1809

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**Abstract:** Specific of political development of Poland territories in 1807-1809 is analyzed in the article. In 1807 after defeat of Prussia and signing of Tilsit peace Warsaw dukedom had been established. Polish territories occupied by Prussia in second and third allotment of Rzeczpospolita were included in dukedom. Political system of dukedom was defined by the Constitution granted by Napoleon. Dukedom turned into the center of Poles national self-determination. 1809 year was a year of great importance for Poles because after defeating Austria by Napoleon Polish territories occupied by Austria as a result of allotment of Rzeczpospolita were included into dukedom.

**Key words:** The history of Poland • Warsaw Dukedom • Napoleon • The Wars of Napoleon • International relations in Napoleon era

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### INTRODUCTION

Napoleon's success in wars with Austria and Prussia in 1805-1806 dramatically changed political situation in Europe. After Jena and Auerstedt battles Prussia was completely defeated. The war moved close to Poland territories. To engage Poles again Napoleon declared the campaign of 1807 "the Poland war" [1]. It revived the hopes of Poles to reunion of Poland with the help of Napoleon.

In November 1806 the army of Napoleon entered Poland territories of Prussia. On November, 4 French forces entered Poznan, on November, 26 Prussia army surrendered and left Warsaw and next day French forces entered it. To the beginning of December 1806 all Poland territories occupied by Prussia were under the control of French army. Poles greeted them with ecstasy. Napoleon himself who arrived to Poznan on November, 27 and in December triumphantly entered Warsaw was greeted as national hero [2].

Governmental Committee for governing Poland territories was established on January 14, 1807. S.Malakhovskiy, St.Pototskiy, F.Belinskiy, L.Gusakovskiy, K.Dzylalynskiy, V. Sobolevskiy i Yu.Vybitskiy were the members of the Committee. Vincennes was assigned to be the French representative on Governmental Committee

and it carried out its activity under supervision of the State Secretary of France Maret [3]. The Committee was authorized to settle the problems of justice, internal administration and finance. But its main tasks as Napoleon saw them were setting up army and provisioning of French forces located in Poland territories.

**Main Body:** On June 7, 1807 Russia and France signed Tilsit treaty of peace. Article 5 of this treaty provided for establishing of the Warsaw dukedom. Poland territories occupied by Prussia in second and third allotment of Rzeczpospolita (central regions with Warsaw and part of western Polish territories) were included in this new state. The treaty stated that "provinces that on January 1, 1772 had been the part of former Poland kingdom and after that had been occupied in different times by Prussia goes under ... the absolute dominion of Saxon king under the name of the Warsaw dukedom" [4]. The territory of the Warsaw dukedom was 104 square kilometers with the population of M2.6 [2]. Gdansk with the district was declared free city. "The city of Danzig ... is to be restored in its independence" [4]. Practically both dukedom and Gdansk were in full subjection of Napoleon.

On July 17, 1807 Napoleon arrived to Dresden and called the members of the Governmental Committee there. On June 22 also in Dresden he dictated the Constitution

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of the Warsaw dukedom to Poles. The dukedom became the limited monarchy headed by Saxon king who was entitled the full authority. "The King has the full authority. He conducts the full executive power... He has the right of legislative initiative". There was established the Council of Ministers of the King that consisted of six ministers and the State Committee that worked over the bills and conducted the functions of executive tribunal [5]. Legislature was transferred to Saym that gathered once in two years and considered bills prepared by the State Committee. Saym consisted of the Senate and *Izba Poselska*. 18 senators were the members of the Senate assigned by the King for term of life. They were the bishop, *voevode* and *Kasztelan* from each of the six departments [6]. Local Sayms of Polish gentry (*szlachta*) were restored on sites. An army of forty thousand was formed headed by nephew of the last Polish king Uzef Ponyatovskiy (1763-1813). Modern civil code was introduced on the dukedom. Article four of the Constitution declared elimination of serfdom. "Slavery is abolished. All citizens are equal in law" [5], but acre remained the property of landlords. Elimination of serfdom was greeted with contemporaries with ecstasy. H. Koll'taj, one of the leading public figure, Polish thinker and publicist, wrote that "justice in regard to our commons that we had been unable to fulfill by ourselves was granted by the lawmaker of the whole Europe (meaning Napoleon- Tumanin V.E.)" [7].

The progress of educational system was also significant. Public education Committee was established. It worked over the restoration of Polish national education that was eliminated the Prussia authorities. Secular education was introduced in schools, education became more affordable and girls were allowed to study in schools. The prototype university was established in Warsaw. Scientific process started.

Poles imagined that revival of Poland had started. Dukedom became the center of self-determination of Poles. In 1808 H. Koll'taj wrote brochure with discriminative epigraph "Nothing has been lost". He spoke about the revival of Rzeczpospolita on the base of the Warsaw dukedom. "This small principedom accidentally on purpose created among the great powers is the beginning of the great deed. It is not in vain that Napoleon takes so much care of it; it is not in vain that it is protected by the French forces. Poland should rebirth to its former grandeur" [8].

Napoleon himself privately supported the idea of Poland revival. It should become the stronghold of the French influence in Eastern Europe. The note on Poland

situation was written by his order in March 1809. It stated the desirability of Poland restoration in former boundaries [9]. In the beginning if 1809 Count Mongoyar wrote that the interests of France in Europe required restoration of Poland and deprivation of Russian influence in these sides of Dvina and Dnieper [10].

Next Franco-Austrian war started in April 1809. The dukedom had to play important role in this war on the East of Europe. On April 14, 1809 Austrian forces entered the territory of the dukedom. Archduke Ferdinand who was in command of the army in Western Galicia issued proclamation declaring that he entered the Warsaw dukedom not as invader but liberator from French yoke. He hoped to defeat Poles easily (there were less that 15000 Poles soldiers in the dukedom, all French and Saxon forces were withdrawn). But in the very first battle on April 19 near Raszyn (not far from Warsaw) the army under the command of Ponyatovskiy demonstrated heroism and managed to withstand Austrian troops. But there was obviously not enough power, Uzef Ponyatovskiy made decision to withdraw from Warsaw, pass across the Vistula and go along the righth side of the river to Western Galicia that was under the Austrians. In May 1809 the army of dukedom defeated Austrians and relatively quickly overran Sandomierz, Lublin and Kielce. On July 15 the army overrun Krakow and in a short time Lvov and the most of Calicia. Citizens met Polish forces with enthusiasm and army grew due to local population.

After signing Schönbrunn peace treaty on October 14, 1809 territories occupied by Austria in third allotment of Rzeczpospolita (Western Galicia, Zamoyski district and small strip on right side of Vistula opposite Krakow) were included into the dukedom. Now the territory of the dukedom was more than 151,000 square kilometers with 1,433,400 of population. From national point of view the dukedom was more compact than Rzeczpospolita. According to the data of 1810 79% of population were Poles, about 7% - Jews, about 6% - Germans, 4% - Lithuanians and 4% - Belarusan [3].

## CONCLUSION

The dukedom remained in this state until 1813. The territory had been defined artificially without considering national interests. Significant part of Polish territories with Polish population had been left beyond its boundaries. Even in the name there was no mentioning of Polish. The main function of the dukedom was creation of military-political bridgehead in the East of Europe. Napoleon uses the dukedom only in his interests. As early as 1807

Tadeusz Kościuszko wrote to Dezydery Chłapowski “I don't think that Napoleon will restore Poland. He does not think of anybody but himself. He hates all national self-consciousness and even more – the spirit of independence. He is tyrant and his only aim is to gratify his ambitions. I am sure that he does not create anything that will last” [11]. Still the fact of establishing of the state with Polish administration and army with natives of different Polish territories played important role in spread and deepening of national self-consciousness of Poles.

**Resume:** Trying to enforce his positions in Eastern Europe Napoleon after defeating Prussia in 1807 established the Warsaw dukedom of Poland territories occupied by Hohenzollerns as a result of allotment of Rzeczpospolita. The Constitution granted by Napoleon restored many traditional Polish institutions and appeared to be even more radical than the Constitution dated May 3, 1791. The army of the Warsaw dukedom played important role in Franco-Austrian war of 1809 and after it Western Galicia and Krakow were annexed.

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