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# THE POLISH QUESTION AS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM



PUBLISHED FOR THE POLISH INFORMATION COMMITTEE  
BY  
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD. LONDON  
RUSKIN HOUSE 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.

*Price Sixpence net.*



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## FOREWORD

THE following account of the "Polish Question as an International Problem" forms part of a collective work on Poland, written by a number of distinguished authorities; that book, written in Warsaw, will shortly appear in English. We desire to express our thanks to the Editorial Committee of the book for their kind permission to print the following chapter in advance.

THE POLISH INFORMATION COMMITTEE.



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## THE POLISH QUESTION AS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM

### I

#### THE ATTITUDE OF EUROPE DURING THE THREE PARTITIONS OF POLAND

THE outset of the eighteenth century is marked by a revolution in international relations. The Anglo-French rivalry, which sprang up on a political and economic background throughout the world, took the place of the old feud between the Bourbons and Habsburgs that had been for centuries the pivot of European politics. This change was accompanied by a weakening of the connection between France and the chain of her Eastern allies, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey, and by an increase in the military power of the Muscovite State. Henceforth two sets of events dominated history, viz. the conflict between Great Britain and France and the westward expansion of Muscovite Russia.

The final re-grouping of the Powers occurred about the middle of the century: France and Austria on one side confronted England and



Prussia on the other. Russia oscillated between them, but never swerved from her paths of expansion, which led north-west, west, and south-west, threatening Sweden, Poland, and Turkey.

The helpless condition of Poland, aggravated by the policy of Augustus II, was the basis on which rested the new systematic policy of Russia; henceforth it aimed at first weakening Poland, in order afterwards to absorb the entire State. In 1717 Peter the Great practically imposed his protectorate on Poland. In 1719 he concluded with Prussia, which was already then a military State, an agreement for the perpetuation of anarchy in Poland. Austria, too, was involved, although to a less degree, by Peter's successors in the same line of action (1736). Russia on entering Europe was bound to Prussia by a common hostility to Poland and Sweden; with Austria, Russia shared interests opposed to those of Poland and Turkey.

The struggle between Prussia and Austria for predominance in Germany was developing on the general background of Franco-British rivalry; it touched Russia, yet it did not absorb her forces. Russia attained full liberty of action in the East and in neutral Poland, which she reduced by imposing on her a protectorate that was not even formal. It consisted in a guarantee of the Constitution of the Polish Commonwealth. Henceforward the Polish

**The Position  
of Poland.**

**The Era of  
"Guaran-  
tees."**

Constitution could not be changed except with the consent of Russia; in other words, Russia acquired a legal right to decide Poland's internal development. The Polish revolt against the Russian guarantee, the so-called Confederation of Bar, and Russia's successes in her wars with Turkey, came to threaten Austria's interests. Prussia thereupon imposed herself as mediator, saved Turkey, and put forward a proposal for compensating all the interested parties at the expense of Poland; in other words, she put forward the idea of partitioning Poland between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, a solution which presented for Prussia many favourable sides. The partition of Poland prevented Russia from swallowing the whole country, gave a natural connection to the parts of the Prussian State which were separated by Polish territory (it acquired West Prussia without Dantzic and Thorn), and preserved Turkey in Europe. France was supporting the Confederation of Bar, but her help was ineffective, and was completely withdrawn at the last moment. She had been drawn into England's domestic quarrel, the struggle of the American colonies with the Mother Country, which had at that time absorbed the entire political life of Great Britain. France had now to prepare for the imminent struggle with England, and was afraid of Russia, whose fleet had then for the first time appeared in the Mediterranean, actually under the command of an English admiral.



Shut up within the frontiers which were left to it after the First Partition of 1772, the Polish Commonwealth strained all its forces for the renewal of its internal strength and for the recovery of its position as a Great Power, and at the same time gravitated towards the nascent Entente between Prussia, England, and Turkey. The breach between Prussia and Russia, who had been allies since the First Partition of Poland, permitted the final realization of that Entente. In 1790 the Polish-Prussian Alliance became an accomplished fact. At the same time negotiations were proceeding for a closer understanding between Poland and England and between Poland and Turkey. Such were the international circumstances under which took place the final denunciation of the Russian guarantees by the Constitution of May 3, 1791.

The situation which seemed to favour the Polish plans contained, however, the elements of a great danger. It was at that time that the Revolution was beginning in France. Europe did not understand the true meaning of these events, and wished to utilize them primarily in order to paralyze the strength of France as a Great Power; thus all the enemies of the French Monarchy came forward as enemies of revolutionary France under the watchword of defence of monarchy against revolution. Not only her former enemies, England and Prussia, but also her late ally, Austria, took part in that

**The French Revolution and the Second Partition Poland.**

action, reverting in that way to the earlier Habsburg traditions. Subsequently Russia joined the Coalition, but took no active part in it, guarding all her forces for action against Turkey, and still more against Poland, which Russia now thought of swallowing whole.

Prussia was paralyzed by the fear of Russia in Eastern Europe. She withdrew from the front rank of the enemies of France, which was thus saved from being overwhelmed, and joined Russia, whom she forced to agree to a partition of the Polish spoils; thus Prussia broke her engagement towards the Polish Commonwealth, and joined Russia in aggression against it. The Second Partition of Poland between Russia and Prussia followed in 1793. Only an insignificant part of Poland remained nominally independent, and that was, in fact, ruled by a Russian Consul, and was meant to pass into the hands of Catherine II.

Yet Russia had to admit others to a share even in that remnant. The French Republic, which was meeting with success in war, encouraged the Poles to defend whatever remained of their independence. It well understood that a Polish diversion would finally break up the Coalition, distract Prussia, and restrain even Austria, who had been excluded from a share in the Second Partition. The revolution of Kosciuszko was crushed by the forces of Russia and Prussia; the latter Power was at that time negotiating for a separate peace with France. Under the pretext of

**The Third Partition.**



defending Polish territory from devastation by the Russian armies, Austria carried out a peaceful occupation of part of it, and then kept it for good. At the moment of the final settlement Russia abandoned her ally, and concluded a treaty with Austria. Austria received Cracow, which Prussia had occupied, and which she specially coveted (1795).

Poland ceased to exist as a State, having been partitioned, with the tacit consent of Europe, between the three neighbouring Powers. France, to save herself, had diverted the danger against Poland. Great Britain, as early as the middle of the eighteenth century, when engaged in her struggle with France, had been pushing Prussia towards Poland. The British Government, not possessing sufficient forces of its own, thought only of crushing its rival, and guarded the unity of the Coalition, but at the same time was glad to see checked the excessive growth of Russia, who in her expansion Westwards did not neglect her advance to the East, where she was already becoming, after France, the chief rival of Great Britain.

## II

THE POLISH QUESTION DURING THE  
NAPOLEONIC WARS

Russia occupied about 180,000 square miles of Polish territory, and Prussia and Austria about 53,000 each. Each of these States proceeded to incorporate its Polish lands into its own organism, each creating a different system of government in its conquered provinces. Yet, notwithstanding existing differences, their relations to the Poles were everywhere at bottom the same. The idea of *sujet mixte* was eliminated; the Poles were compelled to make their choice of allegiance to one of the three Powers, to sell their estates, and to wind up their business in the parts belonging to the other Powers, to break off their relations with those other provinces, etc. The partitioning States acknowledged the necessity of removing anything which might have called to mind old Poland; the names of Pole and Poland were not to be used any more. The solidarity between the three States increased still more in that respect after the last Partition. Their rulers



remained in a kind of understanding, supporting one another in the detection of conspiracies and the persecution of the conspirators, and in the exposure of crimes which had not been committed (cf. the Suvoroff-Harnoncourt case; the Prussian police in Warsaw and Repnin; Cobenzl and the Russian Government, etc.). In their mutual readiness to help one another they were even prepared to occupy the part of Poland belonging to the other Power, so as to keep in order the Polish population whilst enabling their neighbour to fight elsewhere. Thus, for instance, in July 1796, Russia, in order to enable Austria to carry on the war with France, offered to occupy Eastern Galicia. Notwithstanding such appearances, there still survived in the three States a mutual dislike which had grown up over territorial conflicts; Austria resented having been passed over in the Second Partition, Prussia having been excluded from Cracow, and Russia having been debarred from Eastern Galicia. Thus, in spite of their solidarity, the Partitioning States were intriguing against the influence of their neighbours, weakening their authority over their subjects, and in the critical moment were prepared to throw over the work of the Partitions and grasp for the share of their neighbours. Each of them was prepared to raise the cry for the unity of Poland, provided that unity was to be effected for its own benefit. (Cf. the Austrian plans in 1794 and 1831, and those of Prussia in 1795, 1805, and 1815.)

After the fall of the Polish Commonwealth, anarchy and an apparently apathetic acceptance of the new conditions seemed to prevail over the whole country. The surviving actors in the last struggles for independence, and the more energetic younger elements did not, however, renounce the idea of continuing the battle; they left the country for Western Europe, and joined those who, like themselves, remained in a state of war with the three Partitioning Powers; thus they betook themselves above all to France.

The attitude of official France towards the Polish Question remained, however, unchanged. The Polish Question was for them a diversion which in a critical moment could draw off eastwards the forces of their enemies, and the Poles were an excellent means for attaining that end. They were, therefore, encouraged, proposals were put forward for a re-constitution of Poland by Prussia, for the transferring of the Bavarian Elector to Galicia, etc. In January 1797, with the consent of the French Government, a Legion was formed under the command of General Dombrowski. In Italy, in 1799, another Polish Corps was formed under the name of "The Danubian Legion." The Poles attained the possibility of organizing their military forces for war against one of the States which had partitioned their country, namely Austria. (With Prussia France had concluded peace in 1795.) The Anglo-French rivalry, that pivot of European politics, had again, after an unsuccessful attempt



at reconciliation, entered on an acute stage. A new war broke out, and it was bound to end in the crushing defeat and humiliation of one side. Being unable to strike at England by land or through her colonies, Napoleon revived the ideas of his predecessors, and decided to cut her off from all intercourse with Europe and to close against her the European Continent. His attempts to realize that aim in a peaceful way, by an alliance with Paul I of Russia, and by coming to terms with Austria, led to no result. Napoleon was faced by the necessity of changing Europe by fire and sword. In the series of wars which followed on one another the conqueror advanced to the east, and beginning in 1805, set out on the road which led through Poland.

Henceforth his fate became closely connected with that of Poland, and the Polish Question assumed a prominent place in his policy.

**The Polish  
Question in  
1806-1807.**

It was not, however, until 1806, when he came to be faced with the necessity of making war on Polish territory, that he was compelled to appeal to the Poles. Whatever there was left of the Legionaries from the wars which they had fought in Europe and beyond the ocean, was organized into a Northern Legion under the command of their old generals. Dombrowski, with the permission of the Emperor, called his countrymen to arms. The country answered. An army gathered round him in Warsaw, and a Provisional Government was formed at the order of Napoleon.

The Emperor, however, did not undertake any engagements towards the Poles, but merely encouraged them to aim at independence and to rely on their own forces. After the battle of Eylau (February-March 1807) he was prepared to return to Prussia the provinces which he had conquered, to renew the proposal which had been made in the time of the Revolution, and to invest Frederick William III of Prussia with the Polish crown in return for his deserting Russia. The King of Prussia did not accept this proposal. The war continued, resulting in the Treaty of Peace concluded in July 1807 at Tilsit, on the frontier of the conquered Polish Kingdom. The territory of Prussia was reduced to one-third of what it had been before the war. Russia closed her frontiers to English imports, and with her consent Napoleon formed the greater part of the Polish territory which he had taken from Prussia into the independent Grand Duchy of Warsaw; it was to be a buffer State separating the three Partitioning Empires, and a French outpost in the East. The King of Saxony, who by the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, had been designated successor to the Polish throne, was summoned to the throne of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

As the result of the war against Austria in 1809 the Grand Duchy of Warsaw almost doubled its territory by the acquisition of provinces which it had conquered by its own forces. In spite of her treaty obligation towards France, Russia was during that campaign the secret ally

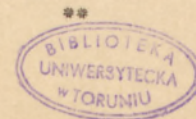


of Austria, and impeded the military activities of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. It was obvious that the Grand Duchy, which, as an independent State, was the centre of all the Polish aspirations, appeared to Russia from the very beginning as a menace. After the war of 1809, the Polish danger, embodied in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, became even more pronounced. It was then decided at Petersburg to profit by the fact that Napoleon wished to marry the Grand Duchess Anne, and to make him commit himself on the Polish Question. He was imposed upon for a long time, and the decision of the marriage question was being delayed, so that his promise might be obtained that Poland should never be reconstituted. Napoleon, who was prepared to give and receive guarantees, at last saw through the Russian game. He refused to be bound in a unilateral way in the Polish Question. He changed his system, entered into a marriage alliance with the Austrian dynasty, and broke off negotiations with Petersburg.

The system which had been created at Tilsit began to totter. The Continental Blockade was leading to more and more economic friction between France and Russia. The political system of the French Empire required stability in Eastern Europe, whereas from that side it was continually threatened by the Russian danger. In order to save his creation from destruction by Russia, who, though checked in her advance, did not abandon her dreams of expansion towards the

West, and was prepared to assume the offensive, Napoleon had to press her back beyond the Dnieper and to constitute Poland as a protective barrier in the East. The conflict between Russia and France was becoming more and more marked. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw now became the main object of Russia's ambitions, and for the price of Poland she was prepared to enter into a close alliance with France.

Both sides were for a long time gradually preparing for the second Polish War. Napoleon secured the co-operation of Prussia and Austria, and obtained, moreover, Austria's consent to an exchange of Galicia against Illyria; thus whilst leading a European coalition against Russia, he reckoned that the development of his mighty forces would result in the preservation of peace, and therefore abstained from proclaiming the independence of Poland. The campaign of 1812 resulted in the defeat of Napoleon. In January 1813 the Russian armies entered the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and a complete reversal took place in the balance of the forces. One after another the Allies of France were dropping out. First Prussia, then Austria, and, finally, the different members of the Rhine Federation were crossing over on the field of battle to join the anti-French coalition, headed by England and Russia. As late as the summer of 1813, under the pressure of his followers, Napoleon consented to accede to the demands of his opponents in the Polish Question; he gave his consent to the dis-





solution of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and to a partition of its territory between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Nevertheless, he kept the Polish forces at his side up to the very end. The Polish regiments stood by the cause of Napoleon to the very fall of Paris. Praised for their fidelity, they returned, with the consent of the Tsar, to their country in order to undertake at home the task of organizing the military forces of the Polish State which was to arise as a result of the European Congress.

In the course of the Napoleonic Wars the idea was repeatedly brought forward of reconstituting Poland under Russia and against France.

**Polish  
Endeavours  
in England.**

(Thus in 1805 and 1806-7; in 1811 a proposal was made for granting autonomy to Lithuania.) The indecision of Tsar Alexander wrecked each of these proposals, but after the fall of Napoleon it seemed that it would be possible to realize the idea, provided the help of England, the main enemy of France, could be obtained. As early as 1813 Prince Adam Czartoryski tried to get into touch with the British Government through Wilson, the English military agent with the Russian army. Wilson, who was friendly to the Poles, recommended them to remain neutral. He said: "Confine yourselves now to playing a passive part, and when the time comes ask for what you ought to ask, that is, independence." Towards the end of 1813 an agent from Prince Czartoryski came to London, but was received coldly by official circles,

which merely recommended a surrender to Russia. Very different was the attitude of the Opposition. Lord Brougham took up the Polish cause in an anonymous pamphlet, "An Appeal to the Allies and the English Nation on behalf of Poland" (1814). In spite of the failure of this mission, Prince Czartoryski did not cease his attempts at securing the help of England. Whilst accompanying the Tsar on his journey to London in January 1814 he tried to gain the support of Lord Castlereagh. Official England assured him that they wished Poland well, but would do nothing, and that Great Britain for a long time to come would not engage in a war on a purely continental question. The parliamentary Opposition again delivered several speeches on the subject of Poland, but the conceptions of neither side in any way approached the idea of Prince Adam, who, after all, only wished to see Poland reconstituted under Russia.



### III

#### THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

IN accordance with Article 32 of the Treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814, a Congress of the representatives of the European States met in the first days of October. The Congress aimed in appearance at reaching a settlement which would have secured the peace of Europe. "It is high time," said the declaration of the Congress of Chatillon, "that monarchs should be able to look after the welfare of their peoples without foreign interference, that nations should mutually respect one another's independence, that social institutions should be guarded against continuous revolutions, that property should be secured and trade should regain its freedom." In fact, the question turned on the division of the enormous spoils taken from Napoleon, and, in spite of the fall of Napoleon, on the limitation of French influence in Europe. In addition to the territories which had belonged to Napoleon, Poland and Saxony were to be subjected to partition; in other words, the land of the nation and the monarch who had remained faithful to Napoleon to the very end had to pay,

the penalty, notwithstanding the high moral principles proclaimed by the Congress. The deliberations and quarrels at the Congress were thus to turn on the question of Poland and Saxony.

In 1813, whilst preparations were made for an anti-Napoleonic coalition, the obligations of victoriously advancing Russia were defined by the Treaties of Kalish and Breslau and in the negotiations of Reichenbach and Teplitz. Tsar Alexander promised Prussia that he would re-establish her power to the level of before 1806, and he came to an understanding with Prussia and Austria concerning the partition of the territories of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. These obligations, however, preceded the victories, and the victories exceeded all expectations. Tsar Alexander now occupied the whole of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, together with Saxony. He now desired to keep to himself as much of the occupied provinces as possible, and is said to have thought of reconstituting Poland under his sceptre. But there were strong opponents of that idea among his neighbours. Foremost among them was King Frederick William III of Prussia, who wished to annex the whole of Saxony, but, at the same time, had no intention of renouncing that which had been promised to him in 1813; the territory which he was to get free from the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was to unite the different parts of his State and to secure its organic character. From the very

Differences  
of Interests  
between the  
Powers.



beginning a silent understanding grew up between Russia and Prussia, an alliance which was closer than that between the four victorious Powers. In the meantime Great Britain, represented by Lord Castlereagh, feared the Russian Tsar, now the most powerful representative of the Continent, and the increase of his power in Europe and of his influence in the East. Castlereagh, largely on his own responsibility, started an anti-Russian diplomatic campaign and directed its development. He considered the first duty of Great Britain to bring about a just balance of power in Europe, hence, to limit the growth of Russia. Secondly, he considered that Great Britain should assist those Powers which had saved Europe in the realization of their just demands; Prussia was therefore to be strengthened in the East and in the West, and Austria was to be supported both against Prussia and against Russia. Only in the third place did he consider the demands of a more abstract justice. In order to realize this programme the political system might have been reversed; a coalition between Austria and Prussia against Russia came within the range of possibility, and even an alliance between Austria and France appeared admissible, though at first it had been intended to reduce the latter State to the position of a negligible quantity. Still, on his way to Vienna, Castlereagh stopped at Paris, and there came to an understanding concerning the fundamental lines of action. As the experienced Talleyrand was chosen to represent France at

Vienna, it was to be expected that in view of the contradictory tendencies of various Powers, he would soon come to govern the Congress. On the most important question Talleyrand was given instructions "completely analogous" with the English point of view. "The reconstitution of Poland," said his instructions, "would be an advantage, and even a great advantage; but to attain this three conditions have to be fulfilled: Poland must be independent, it must be given a strong Constitution, and there shall be no necessity for compensating Russia and Prussia for their shares in Poland." The instructions foresaw that none of these conditions could be realized, and therefore declared in favour of maintaining the division of the Polish territories in the proportions fixed in the Third Partition.

In his interviews with the Tsar and in his memoranda, Lord Castlereagh reminded Alexander I of promises made in 1813 and demanded that Russia should renounce her conquests in favour of an independent Poland. He further assured him in the name of Austria that she was ready to grant similar concessions, and pointed out that the Tsar had no right to be virtuous at the expense of other parties and to the danger of all. Alexander I persisted in his idea of keeping the whole of Poland to himself. Thereupon Lord Castlereagh decided to isolate Russia and to confront her with the two German States; he effected a rapprochement between Austria

**The Action  
of England  
at the  
Congress of  
Vienna.**



and Prussia, and began to act in the sense of their separate understanding. He supported the Prussian claims in regard to Saxony and endeavoured to start an anti-Russian action on the part of Prussia and Austria. Profiting by the absence of Tsar Alexander, who had left Vienna for a short time, Castlereagh drew up a programme of demands and sketched out a plan of action. Prussia and Austria were to demand the reconstitution of Poland within the borders of 1772. If that plan should be rejected, within the borders of 1791, and if Alexander did not consent to real independence and demanded a partition, Prussia and Austria were to protest against a new division and put forward the proposal of a frontier extending along the Vistula; the Austrian share was to reach up to Sandomir, Prussia was to get the left bank of the Vistula and Thorn, Russia was to get the right bank of the river and Warsaw. The Prussian and Austrian Ministers accepted this plan; but it was destined to be wrecked by the opposition of Frederick William III. When on the return of the Tsar on October 2nd Metternich transmitted to Hardenberg the plan of common action, he met with a refusal on the part of Prussia. Prussia demanded for herself only the line of the Warta (Varta) and the town of Thorn; she further pointed out that the frontiers of Austria had not extended beyond the Nida and the district of Zamosc. The subtle intrigue was wrecked in its entirety by the solidarity of Prussia and Russia.

Whilst Lord Castlereagh was proceeding with his plans, Tsar Alexander did not remain inactive. He was attacking the theoretical foundations on which were based the arguments of the British representatives at the Austrian Court; he was gaining over to his side opponents of Metternich, and at the same time he decided to move the Poles in his favour. The Army Committee at Warsaw which, under the direction of the brother of the Tsar, the Grand Duke Constantine, was working on the reorganization of the Polish Army, was, according to Alexander's plan, to declare strongly and unreservedly in favour of Russia. Owing to the bad diplomacy and officiousness of the Grand Duke Constantine, which brought about a split in the Committee and led to the resignation of several of its members, no such declaration was obtained, although the Committee clearly sided with the Tsar. In order to counteract the news of the dissensions which had reached Vienna, the Grand Duke issued on December 11, 1814, a proclamation (not, however, published at Warsaw), in which he declared that others might make promises, but only Tsar Alexander could bring about "the happiness of the Polish nation."

After having through Prussia gained knowledge of the Austrian correspondence and of the negotiations between Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain, Alexander, faced by an increasingly difficult situation, was compelled to give up his original position, and decided finally to cede to Prussia the western



parts of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and to abandon Cracow and Thorn.

The Tsar did not, however, make known his decision, and meantime he wished to gain the assent of all parties to a compromise which was to make the living body of Poland its victim. Austria and Prussia, more and more at odds with one another over Saxony, did not cease to aim at annexing the territories of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Towards the end of November and in December 1814 negotiations were carried on concerning further concessions by Russia. The chief part in those negotiations was played by Prince Adam Czartoryski, who at last succeeded in finding the formula expressing those concessions.

On the eve of New Year's Day, 1815, Russia defined in the Note of Nesselrode the frontier of the territories which she was prepared to cede. This document declared the neutrality of Cracow and Thorn, promised a national Constitution and an increase of territory to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and demanded for the remaining parts of Poland autonomous institutions guaranteeing their nationality and giving their Polish inhabitants a share in the administration of the country; it further proclaimed freedom of trade on the Vistula.

Thus were laid down the principles on which the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was to be partitioned, and also those on which political institutions were to be given to the Poles; it remained to embody these principles in a treaty.

Although the task might now have seemed an easy one, difficulties sprang up which impeded the work of the Congress even in this matter. The last Period of the Congress. The danger arose of an actual breach. The misunderstandings between the Prussian and the Austrian Cabinets almost led to war. Lord Castlereagh, who had previously concluded an agreement with Talleyrand and done his share in procuring the admission of France to the inner Congress, and who had subsequently brought about an offensive and defensive alliance between England, Austria, and France against Russia (January 3, 1815), acquired once more the position of mediator. He tried to champion Prussia and secure for her adequate material gains; at the same time he tried to win over Alexander in order to influence through him Prussia. In a Note, dated January 12th, he pleaded in favour of the principles laid down by Alexander—this Note was endorsed by Russia on January 19th, by Prussia on January 30th, and by Austria on February 21st, and he secured the incorporation of those principles in the protocol of the Congress, as a guarantee to the Poles that they would receive autonomous institutions in each of the three parts of their country. He then exerted a moderating influence on Prussia as well as on Austria, and tried to gain for the former a compensation for Leipzig, which was to be returned to Saxony; much diminished in size, Saxony was given back to its King, Frederic Augustus. To bring about this



settlement Alexander put at the disposal of Castle-reagh the town and district of Thorn. Castlereagh took over, in the name of Great Britain, the payment of the Dutch debt to Russia, and by giving Thorn to Prussia obtained its renunciation of Leipzig. On February 11, 1815, Articles 1-3 of the Treaty were agreed upon. They dealt with the acquisitions of Prussia and Russia, and formed the basis of a new partition of Poland and of the new power of Prussia.

There remained the question of the name and Constitution to be given to the part which was passing into the hands of Russia. Of no avail were the endeavours which Prince Czartoryski was making concerning the settlement of that question with the Tsar, with the Russian Ministers, and with the representatives of other Powers. On April 30th the Tsar announced to the President of the Warsaw Senate that he had assumed the title of King of Poland; the treaties between Russia and Austria and Russia and Prussia were signed on May 3rd, the principles of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland were proclaimed, and the final act of the Congress of Vienna was signed on June 9th.

Prussia obtained the western part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw with the districts of Chelmno (in German : Kulm) and Michalow. Austria acquired the district of Podgorze, and, moreover, received back from Russia the district of Tarnopol. The trunk of the dissected body of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was

The  
Stipulations  
of the  
Congress.

to be constitutionally united to Russia under the name of the Kingdom of Poland, and was to remain under the rule of the Russian dynasty. The Tsar reserved to himself the right to extend within the limits of his own dominions that separately administered State in whatever way he might think fit—in other words, the right to unite to the Kingdom of Poland the Lithuanian and Ruthenian districts of Old Poland. To the Polish subjects of Russia (outside the Kingdom), and to those of Austria and Prussia, such representative and national institutions were to be given as each of these three Governments should consider useful and appropriate.

The town and district of Cracow were proclaimed for ever a free and independent city, strictly neutral, under the joint protectorate of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The principles of its Constitution were defined in the additional Treaty of May 3, 1815. All the rivers and canals throughout all the provinces of the Polish Commonwealth within its frontiers of 1772 were declared free to all the inhabitants of those provinces—in other words, the economic independence of the old Polish Commonwealth was acknowledged and proclaimed, and its commercial integrity was secured.

These obligations were to be guaranteed, not only by the partitioning Powers, but also by Great Britain, France, and the other States of pacified Europe.



which, however, was gradually stifled by repressive measures on the part of the Government. These repressions led to the outbreak of the revolution of 1830, and at the same time were accompanied by a recrudescence of reaction in the territories of the two other partitioning countries, Prussia and Austria. By the outbreak of the revolution Europe was again confronted by the unsolved Polish Question.

## IV

## THE "CONGRESS" KINGDOM OF POLAND

THE Polish knot was not solved at the Congress; it was cut. Still, the Poles were given back their name and certain conditions of cultural <sup>1815-1831.</sup> development were guaranteed to them, whilst to Europe peace was secured in that quarter for a number of years—that is, for so long as the partitioning Powers observed their promises.

In 1825, after a long economic struggle started by Prussia, who, contrary to the stipulations of the Treaty, tried to impose duties on the exports from the new Kingdom of Poland, favourable economic conditions were obtained for the Kingdom. Though it was not possible to preserve the principles laid down in the original Treaty, the demands of Prussia were reduced to a very large extent. Against Russia a Customs line was drawn along the frontier between the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, and a tariff favourable for the Kingdom was obtained from Russia. Owing to the energetic activity of the autonomous Government of the Kingdom, a manifold economic life began to develop in the country. At first it was accompanied also by a development of political life,



## V

## THE POLISH QUESTION IN 1830-1831

THE news of the outbreak of the revolution was received at Petersburg with the greatest indignation. Tsar Nicholas, though himself greatly upset by the events, at first restrained his entourage. In the action of the Poles he saw an activity connected with that of other nations which his policy opposed. He always looked upon Great Britain as his only adversary in the Near East, and also as the only champion of constitutional principles which he feared. France was for him the seat of revolution, and in the war against revolution he saw the aim of his life. He treated the Belgian revolution and the Belgian State with mingled contempt and hatred. He had intended to use the Kingdom of Poland for war against revolution in Europe ; now that it was opposing the will of its monarch and demanding its own rights it was putting itself under the banner of his enemies. By rising in arms the constitutional Kingdom of Poland was threatening the very existence of Russian autocracy, and throwing down to it the challenge which Tsar Nicholas I was bound

to answer by a war of life and death. The ill-success of the campaign of 1830 did not change the relation of the Tsar to Poland, but only increased his hatred for her. He was prepared to abandon all his Polish possessions for the price of crushing Poland. To secure the co-operation of Prussia and Austria he was ready to give back to Prussia the territories west of the Vistula and north of the Narew (pronounce Nareff) and to Austria Cracow, though it was a free city secured by an international agreement.

In the war against the Kingdom of Poland the Tsar counted, first and foremost, on the support of

**The attitude  
of the Great  
Powers.**

Prussia ; family ties, the identity of autocratic principles and common interests were binding links between the two States. The Prussian Government of Frederick William III, frightened by the events in Belgium and by the growing spirit of liberty, feared an insurrectional movement in the province of Posen ; it desired, moreover, the economic ruin of the Kingdom of Poland.

Austria's position was different. The Russian victories in the Near East, the occupation of the Danubian Principalities, the Russian preparations for a campaign against Galicia, the coronation of Nicholas I in Warsaw in 1829, the championship of Slavdom by Russia, were in Austria giving rise to fears of danger in connection with the Eastern Question and with the internal Slav and Hungarian problems of Austria. The Polish revolution was



less menacing to Austria than the power of Russia, which, beginning from the western frontier of the Kingdom of Poland, was closing round her. Therefore, notwithstanding her fear of the revolutionary influences penetrating from the west, from the south, and from the north, Austria, whilst upholding law and order at home and ostentatiously showing friendship for Russia, in secret supported the Poles.

In France, when once the new dynasty had been established, two distinct currents became observable. The King was anxious to give his Government as much of a legitimate character as possible, in order to gain the recognition of the Great Powers of Europe. The public was eager to propagate abroad the principles for which they had shed their blood.

The middle-class Government in France, placed between the popular demand for the "natural frontiers," which had been lost by the Bourbons, and the danger which threatened both the State and their own persons, were giving way more and more to the influence of the King, and turned away the alluring prospect offered in Belgium (the Belgians had invited a French prince to the throne), put forward the watchword of non-intervention, and ceded to Great Britain the first place in the Concert of Europe.

At that time British interest was centred in the Belgian Question. A conference met in London for the settlement of that question, and, in the first

place, towards London were turned the eyes of all Polish politicians.

The Provisional Polish National Government tried at first to localize the revolutionary conflagration.

The attitude of the Polish Government. Whilst strengthening the army and preparing for the war which it wished to avoid, it invested General Chlopicki (pronounce Hlopitski) with dictatorial powers; meanwhile it tried to retain a form of government approaching as far as possible that prescribed by the Constitution, and endeavoured to enter into negotiations with its constitutional monarch, Tsar Nicholas. Still, it was impossible to keep the balance between the pressure of the Radical elements and the resistance of the autocrat, between the will of the people which desired to live its own life and the attitude of the monarch who would not admit any compromise. Action was delayed, hopes were attached to the deputation sent to Petersburg, concessions of a constitutional nature were expected, and the war was not carried into Lithuania. Meantime events were developing rapidly. On December 22, 1830, Tsar Nicholas published the manifesto of "extermination"; on January 25, 1831, the Polish Government answered by proclaiming his dethronement. War was becoming unavoidable.

There were amongst the Poles differences of opinion concerning the action against Russia, there were none with regard to their relations with Europe. From the outset all were convinced that the Polish Question could not be treated as a



domestic affair of Russia, nor as merely a constitutional problem of the Kingdom of Poland. In their view it extended to the entire territory of the old Polish Commonwealth, and it had to include, as falling within the limits of the Polish-Russian relations, not only the Kingdom but also the western provinces of Russia—i.e. Lithuania with Podolia, Volhynia, and the Ukraine. As an international question *par excellence* it had to be put on an international basis. An appeal had to be made to the Powers that had concluded the Treaty of Vienna, and had guaranteed its final stipulations, the basis, now shattered, of the past relations between the Poles and Russia. Such an appeal seemed to suit the interest of a Europe resting on a general balance of power that was now endangered. Diplomatic negotiations had to be opened. First of all a diplomatic agent was sent to London; he was Alexander Marquis Wielopolski. Shortly after representatives of revolutionary Poland were sent to Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. The Polish agents were treated everywhere in the same way. They were received at the best as private visitors, their presence was hidden from the watchful eyes of the Russian diplomats, and relations with them were kept secret. They were tolerated in Berlin, Paris, and London, and in Vienna negotiations were conducted with them after the fashion of a conspiracy. The correspondence of the Polish agents with their Government at Warsaw was intercepted; this was done especially at Berlin, whence their con-

tents were communicated to the Russian Government.

The Polish diplomatic action in Berlin and Vienna was merely of secondary importance. It aimed at first at procuring benevolent neutrality. Later on, as events were developing, an attempt was made to secure the candidature of a Habsburg for the vacant throne of the Kingdom of Poland (Metternich was prepared to give his consent to an Austrian secundo-geniture in Warsaw in the person of Archduke Charles, who was repeatedly summoned to the Polish throne, but he was unwilling to engage the forces of Austria against Russia). But the main diplomatic endeavours were concentrated on the two Western Powers, and there the centre of activity gradually shifted from London to Paris. The Polish mission in Paris became the diplomatic centre for the whole of Western Europe. From here instructions were sent to the agents in other capitals, who had to adjust their activity to the proceedings in Paris. Marquis Wielopolski met with a very cold reception in London. The members of the Liberal Government who formerly, whilst in opposition, had been friends of Poland, avoided contact with him. Lord Palmerston received Wielopolski at home, but always with the reservation that he could not speak to him in his official capacity. Wielopolski limited himself to forming connections with the parliamentary Opposition and influencing public opinion by the publication of articles in the Press,

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by speeches delivered at banquets, and by the publication of a book containing information about Poland.

On March 8, 1831, the diplomatic mission at Paris and Wielopolski approached the Governments of the Western Powers with the request for support for Poland. They demanded the acknowledgment of the independence of the Kingdom, and suggested the possibility of summoning an Austrian candidate to the Polish throne. The answer given by Palmerston seemed to settle the entire question. At that time news from Prussian sources was being circulated through Europe about Russian victories and the fall of Warsaw. An absolute regard for treaties, said Palmerston, was the sole basis of the policy of His Majesty's Government. Great Britain would decidedly oppose an attempt on the part of the Tsar to incorporate the Kingdom of Poland in Russia, but the Tsar had not shown any such intention. As far as Lithuania was concerned, no revolution had broken out in that country, and it therefore remained outside the range of discussion. He admitted that the attitude of England towards the Greek Question had been different when the Turkish Government had been unable to master a long-maintained revolution, and it had also been different in the Belgian Question, as the King of Holland himself had appealed to Europe. Obviously if the revolution was to last long, if the movement extended to Lithuania, which, according to Palmerston, was an unlikely contingency, the question

would assume a different aspect. Meantime Lord Palmerston merely recommended submission to the conqueror.

In answer to the *démarche* of the diplomatic mission at Paris, the French Government instructed its Ambassador at St. Petersburg to speak for the vanquished, but in a very general way, so as not to offend the conqueror, and at the same time it made suggestions to the British Government for common action. Under the pressure of public opinion, but with due care not to offend Russia, the British Cabinet on March 22, 1831, ordered its Ambassador to demand that the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna be maintained, and to join the French Ambassador in common action, but at the same time it directed its representative to avoid unfriendly discussions.

Notwithstanding the depression which prevailed at the Court of Petersburg on account of the ill-success of General Dibitch, Nesselrode's answer was in the negative. Russia assured the Western Powers that she would not deviate from the road of strict observance of the Treaty, but at the same time refused to acknowledge any right on the part of Europe to speak on a question which only concerned Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The British Ambassador, Heytesbury, added, whilst transmitting this news to London, that in the case of a victory the present Constitution would be in reality abolished, even if its form remained. The British Government contented itself with the answer, did



not undertake any further *démarche* in support of its point of view, and subsequently did not return to the Polish Question, not even when France was making in London some feeble efforts to bring about the suspension of hostilities between Russia and Poland, and the recognition of the latter as an independent State. The further Polish diplomatic endeavours and the plan of Talleyrand to substitute a Prussian candidature for that of a Habsburg led to no result, and failed to produce a common Anglo-French action. Only the pressure of public opinion or a decisive Polish victory could have moved the British Cabinet; public opinion, however, was pre-occupied by the proposals of Parliamentary Reform, and on September 8th came the fall of Warsaw. The diplomatic activity in Paris and in London before the fall of the Polish capital had only this effect—that each of the two Cabinets made separate, guarded, friendly representations to Russia, demanding the maintenance of the stipulations of the Congress of Vienna. The position of Russia was clear. The victory had given her a decisive preponderance in Europe; the centre of gravity in international politics had shifted from London to Petersburg. Not only Prussia, which had always inclined towards Russia, but even Austria passed definitely to her side. Tsar Nicholas I, as the uncompromising defender of the principles of autocracy, became the leader of monarchical Europe. In the conquered Kingdom of Poland began a period of severe repression, and a policy was inaugurated

which aimed at the uprooting of the separate Polish administration and at the destruction of Polish culture. In her answers to the European Governments Russia formulated a new theory: the Poles themselves had destroyed the Constitution of the Kingdom and nothing could compel the Tsar to restore it. At the same time, however, the Russian Government published an Act, which pretended to satisfy the obligations imposed upon it at the Congress of Vienna. This was done from fear of pressure on the part of the European States which, compelled by Parliamentary discussions, were demanding from Russia, through their representatives, the observance of those stipulations. On February 26, 1832, an Organic Law was imposed for the Kingdom of Poland. It was never put into practice, and yet was never rescinded.



## VI

## THE FREE CITY OF CRACOW

IN sketching the plans for further action against the Poles, Prince Paskevitch, chief adviser of Tsar Nicholas, conqueror of Warsaw, wrote as follows: "Cracow ought to be occupied immediately by the armies of the three Powers. If that cannot be done at once for fear of the French Government and the other Cabinets, since it is necessary that the conditions laid down by the Congress of Vienna should not be broken, a revolution might be provoked in Cracow and then, taking advantage of it, an army might enter the city." It is true that Cracow, on the recommendation of the Polish revolutionary Government, had observed the strictest neutrality during the revolution; nevertheless, in consequence of the fact that it was an asylum for refugees from Russian Poland, and the centre of independent Polish life, which was continually developing in spite of the difficulties created by the three guaranteeing Governments, Cracow appeared to Tsar Nicholas as the "nest of serpents" of Poland, which must be destroyed as soon as possible. Russia wished to hand over Cracow to Austria, which "coveted it," but Austria was afraid of violating too openly the conditions

laid down by the Congress of Vienna, and she also feared the rivalry of Prussia. The latter, taking advantage of the fact that Cracow was a free trade city, was drawing from it very considerable economic profit, and the economic connection between her and the territory of Cracow was continually becoming closer. The difficulties raised by Prussia became particularly serious after 1840, i.e. after the accession of Frederick William IV. At the Congresses of Münchengrätz in 1833 and Teplitz in 1835, Cracow, at the initiative of Russia, was recognized as theoretically under the rule of Austria. In 1836 Cracow was for a short time occupied by the three Powers in common. This was a punishment for the agitation carried on by the more extreme elements in the town agitation, which the guaranteeing Powers themselves had provoked. The Government of the Republic, deprived of all importance, and reduced to complete dependence on the Ministers of the three neighbouring Powers, was forced to expel all the political refugees. It tried to defend itself, and appealed in 1839 to the other Powers which guaranteed the Treaty of Vienna—France and England. The protest had no result, and in order to save whatever remained of independence, the Republic found itself compelled to submit to the arbitrary will of the Conference. In the meantime Russia and Austria began to undertake economic reprisals against Cracow, while Metternich inspired the city with hopes of inde-

Attitude of  
Russia.

Congresses of  
München-  
grätz and  
Teplitz.



pendence. The connection of Cracow with the Revolution which was being prepared in Galicia, and in the Grand Duchy of Posen in the year 1846 was to serve as pretext for the final destruction of the Republic. Russia's demands for the annexation of the free city were growing stronger and stronger, and the united efforts of Russia and Austria finally succeeded in overcoming the resistance of Berlin. Yet Metternich delayed action; he pleaded fear of international complications, but in reality he was counting on the impatience of Tsar Nicholas, and had hopes of occupying Cracow with the right of fortifying the town. Then Russia put before him the choice: Austria should either occupy Cracow immediately or she would have to renounce it in favour of Russia. On November 16, 1846, Cracow was annexed to Austria. Europe was faced with an accomplished fact. Questions in Parliament compelled the French and the British Governments once more to take up a definite position in the question, and once more Lord Palmerston avoided joint action with France. The French Government contented itself with a formal *démarche*, and attempted to profit from the violation of the international agreements in regard to Poland by establishing it as a precedent for analogous action on her part in Italy. Lord Palmerston protested vigorously against the annexation of Cracow, but he did nothing more. Austria had acquired Cracow at the instigation and under the protection of Tsar Nicholas.

November  
16, 1846.

## VII

## EMIGRATION

BEFORE Warsaw had capitulated in 1831, the army, the Government, and the administration had abandoned the city, and had left the country which had been reduced by Russia. Henceforth the best part of Polish society was compelled to live abroad under difficult material and moral conditions, and to work for one single idea, the struggle to regain Polish independence. There were two large political groups among the emigrants. The democrats, who demanded far-reaching social reforms at home, believed that with the fall of autocracy in Europe all injustice would disappear, and upheld the solidarity of all nations in their struggle against autocracy. At the head of this group stood the so-called Central Organization of Versailles, and its representatives, whilst conspiring and preparing for revolution in Poland, at the same time took part in the wars for liberty all over Europe (in the popular movements in France, in the wars for the union of Italy, in the struggles for constitutional liberty in Germany, for independence in Hungary, and for electoral reform in England).

The two  
groups.



The second group, which gathered round the Hôtel Lambert, the residence of Prince Adam Czartoryski, professed Conservative principles and counted on the inevitability of a breach of European peace over the Eastern Question, they expected that the Polish Question would in that case be bound to reappear in international politics. The party of Prince Adam Czartoryski based its activity on Parliamentary and Cabinet combinations, and staked its chief hopes on diplomatic action.

While social consciousness was growing in Europe, the Polish emigrants prepared for revolution. These preparations led, however, <sup>1846-1848.</sup> not to success, but defeat. In Galicia in 1846 the movement was swamped in massacres of the gentry by the peasants. In Prussia a movement was forestalled and a tremendous persecution set on foot against the real and the alleged conspirators. Repression delayed but did not destroy the movement for liberation. The Polish Question, in the halo of fresh martyrdom, was becoming a factor in the ferment among the nations of Central Europe.

When, in 1848, a wave of revolution covered the whole of Western Europe, the Polish Question came to the front. As a postulate of justice it was advanced by all the revolutionary or sincerely Liberal groups. It became the object of the united hatred of the governments threatened by revolution (Prussia and Austria), and of those indirectly affected by it. (Tsar Nicholas, in taking up the

struggle against the Hungarian revolution, emphasized the fact that in doing so he was fighting the Poles, a revolutionary element.) The demand for the exclusion of the Grand Duchy of Posen from Prussia and of Galicia from Austria, supported as it was by armed force, called forth the joint opposition of the German Governments and of the dominant nationality, i.e. the Germans against the Poles. After a short period of liberalism came a hard and ruthless struggle against the Poles. Not only in the political but also in the social and economic sphere this war against the Poles was destined to become one of the chief factors in the return of reaction in Europe.

After the bombardment of Cracow and Lwow, and after the suppression of the revolution in Posen, the Polish democrats became the leaders of the surviving Italian revolutionary movement (in Sicily), of the German revolution, especially in Dresden, Vienna, and in the Palatinate, and of the Hungarian revolution in 1849. They were the last to give up the fight, when it could not be carried on any longer.

Reaction triumphed in Europe, and at its two ends stood the countries which had remained untouched by revolution—autocratic Russia and constitutional England, both equally interested in the problems of the Near East. In 1853 Russian ambitions in that sphere led to a war in which, together with England and Turkey, participated the Emperor of the French, Napoleon

The Crimean War.



III, and in which Sardinia subsequently took part. From the beginning of the war official opinion in England was clearly anti-Russian. It saw the aim of the war in the closing in of the Russian State within the frontiers marked for it by nature and history. Yet that aim was conceived in different ways. One section of British public opinion wished to press back Russia from the Black Sea and to cut her off from Asia; another thought of sheltering Europe from her pressure and influence. This second conception, which was widely popular in England, involved the possibility of a reconstitution of Poland. (Cf. the pamphlet "The Polish Question from the German Point of View," 1855.) Great Britain began the war with small forces, which she increased as time went on. At first she failed to give a concrete expression to her own aims.

For Napoleon the Crimean War was not fought for material interests in the East, but aimed much more at enhancing the position of France as a Great Power and at establishing the personal authority of her Emperor. Thus Napoleon was of necessity desirous of the glory of easy victories, and from the very beginning he threw considerable forces into the field. He understood the impossibility of crushing Russia, but he could not deny the leading national principles of his own policy, and therefore could not turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of the Hôtel Lambert, which was pleading for the interests of Poland, and which, like

the Democrats, was endeavouring to form a Polish military force. Napoleon repeatedly suggested to the British Government the necessity of putting forward the Polish Question and of agreeing on a Polish State, even if only within the frontiers of the old Grand Duchy of Warsaw, but he met regularly with an evasive answer. On the other hand, he did not commit himself too far in activities for the formation of a Polish army. E.g. when Mickiewicz wished to go to the front, he was sent out to the East, but only after long endeavours and owing to very considerable influence which supported him, and even then only under the pretext of a literary mission. The activities of the chief agent of the Hôtel Lambert, Count Wladyslaw Zamoyski, met with only partial success. An agreement was reached with Great Britain by which a Polish army was formed, in the pay of England. The British Government, however, did not admit of its being called "Polish"; the Poles were to fight under the name of "Cossacks of the Sultan." Moreover, it was expected that the Poles, of whom almost 300,000 took part in the campaign on the Russian side, would desert to the Allies. Hardly any desertions occurred, and only very small groups arrived at Constantinople from Poland, so that the Polish corps was not ready until the close of the war. For the settlement of the questions arising out of the war, a Congress was summoned to Paris in which, together with the belligerent Powers, Prussia, which throughout the war had sided with



Russia, also took part. In spite of Great Britain, Napoleon was also thinking of an understanding with Russia. Great Britain at once saw through the game of France and decided to forestall it. She now declared herself ready to support France in an action for the return in Poland to at least the condition of 1815. But Napoleon saw in his very first conversation with the Russian representative, Count Orloff, that Russia would prove irreconcilable on the Polish Question, and he decided not to disturb the incipient understanding. At the same time the Franco-British relations were growing colder. Finally the Polish Question was not raised at the Congress of Paris. When, after the Treaty had been signed, the question of the organization of Poland was put forward for discussion, on the initiative of Great Britain, in one of the concluding sittings, Count Orloff answered that the raising of that question would merely render the condition of the Poles worse, and even threatened that, should the question be raised, the representatives of Russia would leave the conference.

By April 1856 it was evident that neither the work of Czartoryski's party, which had been carried on for many years, nor the political connections which it enjoyed, had produced any results.

## VIII

## THE POLISH INSURRECTION

THE Polish Question had not been raised and had not been solved in the course of the diplomatic entanglements, but it was now brought to the front by the independent action of the Poles. On January 22, 1863, a revolution broke out in the Kingdom of Poland, and, at least during its first stage, it spread very quickly. The Polish movement was aimed exclusively against Russian rule, nevertheless it led to a reformation and to the strengthening of friendly ties between the two partitioning Powers, Russia and Prussia, on the initiation of Bismarck, who had just become Prussian Prime Minister. At his urgent demand his suggestions were accepted by the Russian Government. A secret agreement was entered into by Russia and Prussia, providing for joint action in the event of a Polish revolution. It is difficult to say precisely what motives were at the back of Bismarck's action in regard to this particular question. Possibly he was afraid of losing the Polish Provinces which belonged to Prussia, but it is also possible that he counted on Prussia's being drawn into the war and occupying the Kingdom



of Poland when Russia, tired of the continuous difficulties, would give up the country; Prussia's temporary occupation would thus become permanent. At that moment Bismarck saw in Polish affairs only a tool for the attainment of certain distant aims. By pushing forward the Polish Question he wished to create conditions in Prussia which would enable him to overcome the growing opposition, and secure the victory of the Crown over Parliament. On the other hand, he needed a sure foundation for the realization of his plans abroad—to exclude Austria from the German Empire, to eliminate French influence, and to secure first place in Germany for a territorially increased Prussia. The foundation could not be found except in an alliance with Russia. But that alliance had yet to be achieved. Bismarck achieved it by his readiness to take up the struggle in face of the common Polish danger, whilst by divulging the existence of the secret agreement he created difficulties for Russia which compelled her to put an enhanced value on the friendship of Prussia.

Such was the view of the situation held in Paris. The friendship with Russia, which France had been trying with much difficulty to establish since the Congress of Paris, might be endangered by the necessity of defining her position in regard to the Polish Question, but the publicity given to the agreement rendered such a definition unavoidable. At the same time Napoleon wished as far as possible to direct the point of his

**The Position  
of France.**

*démarche* against Prussia and to spare Russia; he also wished to draw Great Britain and Austria into the matter, since that would weaken the connection between England and Prussia and would not expose France towards Russia. This attempt at collective action against Prussia failed; Austria refused to take part, but came to an understanding with France. Great Britain did not allow herself to be drawn into the affair, and handed to Russia a Note couched in moderate terms, and based on the stipulations of the Treaty of 1815.

Two separate groups appeared in the first stages of the diplomatic activity to which the revolution had given rise; on one hand there was the solidarity between the Prussians and the Russians, on the other the alleged solidarity, but actual diversity, of interest between France and England; while Austria, having since 1859 entered upon the road to constitutional and national concessions, maintained a moderately friendly neutrality towards the movement. From that time onwards the Western Powers were in the habit of raising the Polish Question according to the development of events; they looked upon it as a diversion, the results of which would benefit them in other directions to which they attached greater importance. Public opinion was stirred in England, and still more in France, and the Governments of these countries were compelled to take further action. The long-drawn-out negotiations between the French and German Governments brought about

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Campaign.**



a simultaneous but not uniform *démarche*, this time directed against Russia. From the Notes presented to him Prince Gortchakoff on April 17, 1863, saw, though not too clearly, that the views held by the Powers in regard to the means of action lacked unity.

Austria was displeased by the excessive importance which was now being attached to the Polish Question; she was afraid of war and the possibility of losing Galicia or Venetia. Against her own interests she avoided a conflict with Russia, which was bound to come later and at a moment chosen by the latter; she aimed at an understanding with Great Britain, and did not venture to incur the displeasure of Russia. In her Note Austria mentioned disturbances caused in Galicia by the Poles in Russian Poland, and expressed a hope that Russia would soon be able to pacify the country.

The French attitude was obscure and undecided. The idea of Polish independence under a Habsburg or a Russian Grand Duke was put forward simultaneously with the return to the conditions of 1815. The personal influence of the Emperor and the authority of France were overrated in Paris. Napoleon III's eccentric character, the discordance of views in his nearest surroundings, and the Polish sympathies of a wide public, were imparting to the action of the French Government an uncertain and fantastic quality. The French Government did not mention the Treaty of Vienna in its Note; it

relied on the liberal intentions of Tsar Alexander II, pointed at the necessity of pacifying Europe, and took up a broad and indefinite attitude on the question. In Great Britain Lord John Russell was continuing the traditions of Lord Palmerston. He took his share in urging the inviolability of the conditions laid down by the Congress of Vienna, and expressing his "fervent hope" that the Russian Government would be able to give back to the Polish nation and to Europe the peace which had been disturbed by the insurrection. Great Britain in her policy was particularly anxious to avoid a war against Prussia and also an alliance between France and Austria; at the same time she aimed at preventing the establishment of an Entente between France and Russia. The fear of a possible increase in the moral and material power of France was hiding from British statesmen the other problem, namely, the need of a door into the Baltic and of maintaining the integrity of Denmark. This led to a hesitating policy in their relations to Prussia in regard to the Danish problem, and to a lenient treatment of Russia. In the midst of all these problems the Polish Question was losing in importance, as was clearly shown in a dispatch of Lord Napier (April 6, 1863). He considered that the reconstitution of Poland within the historical frontiers would have been harmful to England. It would have threatened the unity of Protestant Germany, and might possibly have prevented it. It would have increased the power of Catholicism and



of France in Europe, and would thereby have weakened Great Britain ; the diminution of Russian territory and of Russia's influence in Europe would not have been sufficient compensation for that loss. The interests of Russia were bound to prevent the reconstitution of Poland within the borders of the kingdom as defined in 1815. In exchange for concessions Russia might have demanded from Europe and from Great Britain guarantees which it would have been impossible to give.

Without waiting for the *démarche* of the European Powers, Russia on April 12, 1863, proclaimed an amnesty for all revolutionaries who returned to their normal occupations before May 13th. In Lithuania and the Ruthenian provinces all those were excluded who "had joined the bands of rebels and had been taken prisoner by our armies, as well as those whose share in the revolution had been ascertained by other means." Thus the demands of the European Powers were forestalled and deprived of value, and the ground was made ready for a diplomatic campaign. The first reply of Prince Gortchakoff was polite ; but he laid the blame for all that had happened in Poland on the tacit encouragement given by London and Paris.

The first collective *démarche* did not lead to the results expected. Prussia took to herself the credit for the amnesty, and demanded a closer alliance with Russia. The amnesty was rejected in the Kingdom of Poland, and the moderate elements

began to join the revolution, encouraged to do so by Prince Vladislav Czartoryski, son of Prince Adam, who in Paris kept up relations with semi-official French circles. In Poland feeling was growing in favour of holding out. People were coming to believe, as Napoleon III assured them, that the boundaries of the Polish State would extend wherever Polish blood should flow on the field of battle. The movement spread to Lithuania, Podolia, Volhynia, and the Ukraine.

The three Western Powers which, after their first *démarche*, had gained the support of Spain and of Sweden, who was prepared to put an army of one hundred thousand men into the field, also of the young Italian State, of Holland, Denmark, and Turkey, were obliged to consider some more decisive plan of action. Notes were handed in by them to the Russian Government on June 16, 1863, setting forth the following uniform demands : (1) amnesty, (2) national representation, (3) only Poles were to be appointed to Government offices in Poland, (4) freedom of conscience was to be guaranteed and restrictions on the Roman Catholic religion were to be abolished, (5) Polish was to be the exclusive official language, (6) a regular and legal system of conscription was to be introduced. The putting forward of uniform and concrete demands at a moment when the Russian armies were unable to deal with the revolution would have constituted a serious threat to Russia if only the action on the part of the European Governments had been genuine



and whole-hearted. But there was no real unity. There were formal differences between the Notes of such importance that Prince Gortchakoff was free to disregard the main demand, which called for a conference between those States which had participated in the Congress of Vienna. The Vice-Chancellor rejected the proposal of a conference, denied Europe the right of interfering in internal Russian affairs, argued that the Constitution of Poland was entirely due to the magnanimity of Tsar Alexander I, and gave the assurance that Tsar Alexander II was himself favourably disposed towards the Poles, that he wished to carry out the reforms, of which a beginning had been made, but that he was unable to accede to all the demands which had been put forward on July 13th. At the same time the Vice-Chancellor appealed to Russian public opinion, which took his side unanimously, and demanded repressive measures against the Poles. In Warsaw the Marquis Wielopolski tendered his resignation. The actual government was taken over, although then unofficially, by Count Berg. In Lithuania there began the period of the reign of Muravieff.

A refusal had been expected, although not in that form; preparations were made for further joint action. Drouyn de Lhuys suggested an agreement to the Prussian and Austrian Governments with regard to united action on the Polish Question and the means of making Russia accept more speedily the demands which had been made to her. The

situation was now assuming a threatening appearance and war seemed imminent, but Great Britain, after the experience of the Crimean campaign, did not wish for war. So far as France was concerned, England had attained her aim. There was a report that it was said in London: "Nous voulons vous mener à ce que vous ne vous entendiez pas si bien avec la Russie!" and she even rejected the French proposal of presenting to Russia a Note identical with those of the other Cabinets. About the middle of August the three Cabinets sent in separate and divergent Notes, giving rise to something more like a debate about Russia's position. The firmest stand was taken by France. At first Tsar Alexander thought of declaring war on France, but he was not certain of Austria, and in order to secure her neutrality he had to obtain the support of Prussia. But William I and Bismarck did not allow themselves to be drawn into war. It might have diverted them from their immediate aim, which was to occupy the Danish principalities. They were approaching this slowly but steadily, by the Polish Question, through which they had acquired the support of Russia, and by exploiting England's mistrust of France, with a view to weakening the position of Denmark. In face of Prussia's refusal the Tsar was forced to abandon the idea of war. Gortchakoff sent a sharp reply, refusing the European Powers the right of interference in Russian affairs. The initiative for a further sharp measure now lay with France, if



Napoleon had really prepared for events and foreseen the consequence of his action. With fresh hesitation and indecision he put forward his favourite plan, and without mentioning Poland proposed to summon an international Congress for the regulation and settlement of all European problems (November 4th). This idea, which Russia accepted in principle, but with restrictions, met with the strongest opposition on the part of Great Britain. As early as September Great Britain had changed her attitude. The Foreign Office was preparing for decisive action. A Note was prepared which was to proclaim that Russia had forfeited her rights in regard to Poland by breaking obligations which she had accepted at the Congress of Vienna; an understanding was reached with France concerning a joint *démarche* towards Russia; the British Ambassador at Petersburg, Lord Napier, was instructed in that sense. And then Count Bernsdorff appeared at the Foreign Office with a communication in the name of Prussia to the effect that should Alexander II be declared to have forfeited his rights to the Kingdom of Poland, the German Governments would have to take simultaneously a similar stand against the Kingdom of Denmark. Thus Bismarck, who had constantly disclaimed any action aimed against Denmark, suddenly disclosed his real intentions. Prussia's action bore fruit. The London Foreign Office telegraphed countermanding the dispatch which had been sent off and informing Lord Napier that no action would be taken.

The original differences between Austria, France, and England developed into complete discord. The unity of Europe was breaking up over the Polish Question, while the Alliance between Prussia and Russia gained in strength. The possibility of joint action disappeared from the sphere of reality into that of pure imagination. Bismarck immediately drew his conclusions. In 1864 he originated, with the consent of Russia and the support of Austria, a military expedition against Denmark, which he had previously paralysed and disarmed in spite of the guarantee of Great Britain. Subsequently, acting on the same basis and having tested the effectiveness of his new weapon, he turned its point against Austria and France. The Russian Government, rid of all European interference, could now carry out its policy in Poland freely and without regard to any one. In spite of the solemn assurances given in the Imperial Rescript of October 31, 1863, there began a period of deadly struggle against everything Polish, and under the pretext of reorganizing, all Constitutions imparting an individual character to the Kingdom of Poland were uprooted.

The Results  
of the  
Diplomatic  
Campaign.



## THE PRESENT ERA

IN appearance the Polish Question had definitely receded from the international arena. A period began in which there was a gradual absorption of the parts of the Polish nation and of the provinces of the Old Polish Commonwealth by three different State organisms. This process took on different aspects; it was carried out on the basis of the solidarity of Prussia and Russia; the very nature of the Polish Question seemed to be changed. But this was not so in reality. During the period of international equilibrium the unchangeable nature of the Polish Question was proved by the persistent consciousness of unity between the three parts of Poland and by the continually growing consciousness of the unity of the nation which, in spite of external difficulties, was growing in numbers, in social and economic strength, and in its own national culture. The smallest disturbance of the general equilibrium, even a local conflict in which the interests of only one of the Great Powers were concerned, regularly brought out the Polish Question into the international area in relation to their own peculiar problems. (Cf. the debate on the

Uniates in the British Parliament on the eve of the Turkish-Russian War; the plans for a Polish revolutionary movement in 1878, which had the support of British Conservatives; the Polish memorandum at the Congress at Berlin, etc.) To-day, as towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Polish Question is again coming forward to the front of general problems, for it never ceases to be, as Napoleon called it, "the pivot of the balance of power in Europe," whose equilibrium was upset by the partition of Poland—an equilibrium which only her reconstitution could have restored. This fact has had to be acknowledged by all parties in the present war. It was announced by the first proclamation of Prussia and Austria, and it was clearly and strongly emphasized by the Manifesto of the Grand Duke. Thus the Polish Question is proved to possess an international character, and from the very outset the problem is raised before Europe, which she must in her own interest solve in favour of the Polish nation.

This question, therefore, assumes fresh importance at a moment when the peace of Europe has been broken and Russo-Prussian solidarity has collapsed.



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