



Ivan Chrucki (1810–1885), Victor Vincent Adam (1801–1866), Luis Philippe Alphonse Bichebois (1801–1850), Jan Kazimierz Wilczynski (1806–1885), "The surroundings of Vilnius. Ðnipiðkës suburb", J. Lemerrier's printing house (Paris), 1848, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-2591

THE ERA OF MYKOLAS KLEOPAS OGINSKIS: POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH

In the publication "Oligarchic Power of the 18th c. and the Three Partitions"⁶ journalist Zina Rimgailienė writes:

"After the death of Augustus II, the nobles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania already wanted to have their own local king because they were bothered by the Saxons and their union with Russia. However, there was no unity among the nobility. Stanislaw⁷ was replaced by Augustus III, who to Grodno parliament first came ten years after his election as the king. Before that, a trustee Saxon Minister H. Brühl ruled the Kingdom. During the reign of Augustus III, noble oligarchic government was established, expressing the noble opposition to any land management reforms, efforts to reform the social or even educational affairs. There was no thought for the national defence or maintenance of the troops. No one cared that the army without fortresses, artillery and an officer school would not be able to defend the state borders. In addition, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania gradually turned into a "stop in tavern". During the Seven Years' War, in 1756, Russian and Austrian troops marched freely through the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The state weakened. Increasingly, the Seimas meetings began to disintegrate because of one of its members on behalf of their Voivodeship veto, made to come down all other members of Seimas. During the 18th century, this 'illness' became so common that for decades members of Seimas could not decide anything. According to historian Adolfas Đapoka, a new popular saying emerged meaning "Republic is a mess"."

In Dr. Ramunė Ėmigelskytė-Stukienė's book "Millennium Book"⁸ (Vilnius, published in 2013), the

author introduces a chronological overview of the most important historical and political events of M. K. Oginskis's live period. The same path, leading through the book and other written resources, is ahead of us.

At the beginning of the 18th c. Europe was being ravaged by wars and their inevitable satellites – epidemics and famines. The Tsarist Russia intensified its power and influence trying to establish themselves in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was being destroyed by internal disagreements inside the party and slow adoption of the much-needed reforms. Consequently, the nobility was raising heads, demanding even more freedoms and rights. With each year, the doom of the Republic was more and more apparent. In the time, only the elite society realized that the Republic could only be saved by the reforms and the inside changes. Someone had to take actions and that someone was the Czartoryski group in the year 1764–1766, supported by the king S. A. Poniatowski. Sadly, a glimpse of hope that the state of the Republic might improve was quickly shadowed by the monarchic neighbouring countries - Russia, Prussia and Austria. In 1764 in St. Petersburg, Russia and Prussia have agreed to join actions to prevent the changes in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Seimas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth further tried to resist the pressure from the neighbouring countries. In 1766, Seimas rejected the Russian claim to grant equal political rights as Catholics had for the Orthodox and Protestants nobility⁹. In response, the Russian empress Catherine II¹⁰ started sup-

⁶ *Azzeri.lt* <http://azeri.lt/xviii-a-oligarchine-valdzia-ir-trys-padalijimai/> (site previewed on: 01-08-2015)

⁷ Stanislovas Lelešinskas (1677–1766) – king of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1704–1709 and in 1733–1736, Duke of Lorraine.

⁸ *Millennium Book*, Kaunas: Kraštotvarka, 1999, Volume 1, p. 49–60.

⁹ At that time they were called dissidents.

¹⁰ Catherine II (or Catherine the Great, Catherine Alekseyevna, in Lithuania Kotryna II) – the Russian Empress. Born on 2nd of May 1729, died on 17th of November 1796.

porting the opponents of the Czartoryski reforms - noblemen who gathered in the Confederation of Radom. In October 1767, Russian troops surrounded Warsaw city and Seimas. Thus, the Confederation of Radom restored the earlier regime of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On 24th of February 1768, Orthodox and Protestant noblemen were granted political rights, and Catherine II became the guarantor of the internal political system of the Republic. During that period, the legal sovereignty of the Republic was de facto limited – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became dependent on Russia. Many of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth population was dissatisfied with the opposition and in 29th of February 1769 in the city of Bar¹¹ some former politicians joined forces against the Confederation of Radom, Russia's influence in Poland and Lithuania, the king S. A. Poniatowski and the Catholic rights realignment. The Confederation of Bar claimed the defence of the independence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and their aims to continue and strengthen the earlier started internal reforms. In July 1768, the confederates started their activity in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Confederation founders hoped to sway the general uprising of the nobility and receive support from Austria, France, Saxony and Turkish. Mykolas Jonas Pacas¹² became the Chief Marshal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under the Confederation of Bar flag. The nobles Juozapas Sapiega¹³, Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis, Karolis Stanislovas Radvila¹⁴ supported confederation. Among its founders and leaders were Adam Stanislaw Krasinski¹⁵ and Joachim Potocki¹⁶.

During the year 1768–1772, the Confederation of Bar developed its activities throughout the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Confederate army consisted of nobles and royal mili-

tia "flag", townspeople and peasants. Fights began in April 1768, covering almost the entire country. A few hundred battles took place, the most important of which were the Holy Trinity fortress and Bialystok battle in 1769, battle near Dobro in 1770, battle near Vidawa Stalovicze, Lonckorona in 1771, and the battle near Wawel in 1772.

The confederate forces were too weak to resist Russia and the expected help from abroad never showed up. The Russian troops defeated the Confederate inexperienced any greater losses. The last Confederate pivot point – Czestochowa¹⁷ – surrendered on 18th of August 1772. Some of the survivors of the Confederate fled abroad, others (about five thousand) were taken to the Russian army.

Austria and Prussia, aware about increasing Russia's influence in Europe on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth account, begun negotiations with Russia on the partition of the Republic in 1769. Shortly after the defeat of the Confederation of Bar, on the 5th of August 1772 Russia, Prussia and Austria signed the first agreement of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth partition. Thereunder Russia got the part of 92 thousand square kilometres area (Polotsk, Vitebsk, Mstislav Voivodeships, the eastern part of the Minsk Voivodeship, Latgale), Prussia and Austria received the parts of the lands of Poland (Prussia – 36 thousand square kilometres of Pomerania and the West Prussia and Warmia, Austria – 81.9 thousand square kilometres, Lesser Polish lands and Lviv city). In total, during the first partition, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lost about 30% (211 thousand square kilometres) area and about 35% (4.18 million) of its population. In 1773, the Seimas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, pressured by the neighbouring countries and political circumstances, was forced to ratify the first parti-

¹¹ Podolia, region of Vinnytsia.

¹² Mykolas Jonas Pacas (1730–1787) – statesman and war figure of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, major-general (1764), lieutenant-general (1766–1767) of Lithuanian army, elder of Ziolowski. Chamberlain of August III, marshal-general of the Confederation of Bar (1769–1772) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

¹³ Juzefas Sapiega (1737–1792) – nobleman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, deputy of Hetman of the Confederation of Bar.

¹⁴ Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł Panie Kochanku – nobleman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, statesman and war figure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, general marshal of the Confederation of Bar. Born on 27th of February 1734 in Nesvizh, died on 21st of November 1790 in Biala Podlaska.

¹⁵ Adam Stanisław Krasieński (1714–1800) – nobleman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

¹⁶ Joachim Karol Potocki – nobleman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, political and war figure, cup-bearer of Lithuania (1763–1780), elder of Terebovlia and Grybów, one of the founders and leaders of the Confederation of Bar. Born in about 1725 in Trzebowa, died in 1791 in Murafa.

¹⁷ Czestochowa – Southern Poland city near Warta river, which attracts thousands of pilgrims. There is an icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa from the 14th c. which is considered to be magical. In the city there are a spectacular church, a monastery, which was built in 17th - 18th c., also the industry are developed there.

tion act of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Despite the Russian, Prussian and Austrian policies, massive losses, the Republic continued inner reforms. On 14th of October 1774, by the decision of Seimas, one of the first ministries of education in Europe – the Commission of National Education – was established. Under its administration went all of the academies and schools, and it was instructed to take care not only in education but also in science, goals to reorganize and secularise state education system, modernize educational content. Bishop of Vilnius Ignotus Masalskis¹⁸ became the first chairman of the Commission. In 1774, the Commission started a primary school reform – it was decided to set up one primary school in each three parishes. By the end of 1777, there were more than 300 such schools established in Vilnius. Peasant children in these primary schools were taught in their native language.

In 1775, by the resolution of Seimas a new governmental body was established – the Permanent Council acted in 1775–1788. It was a joint institution of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland, created in hopes to take over the executive functions and lay the foundations for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to create a constitutional monarchy. The Permanent Council consisted of 36 members of the Seimas delegation and had five departments: Military, Treasury, Foreign Affairs, Police and Justice. They controlled the executive power in respectable fields. During that time, the country was undergoing other reforms as well: the modernization of the army, restructuring charges, legal system and the courts, innovations, which should guarantee the progress of the economy and rapid social development. The Permanent Council succeeded to increase and modernize the army, limited hetman lawlessness, and implemented mercantile economic and financial reform, revived economic life of the Republic. During the period, the numbers of the population increased: in 1772, there lived not more than 6.5 million people, at the end of the 18th cen-

tury – about 9 million¹⁹. The Commission of National Education and the Permanent Council became the first shared executive organs.

At the end of the 80's of the 18th century, the attention of European countries was captured by the Balkan war events and a situation in France where the Revolution took place. Under these circumstances, the Republic decided to carry out larger social and economic reforms, strengthening the state independence.

In 1781, Vilnius University was named as the main school of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Several new faculties – Astronomy, Medicine (1781) and Architecture (1793) were established. On the second part of the 18th century dissemination system of information and knowledge began to take shape – in the Printing House of Vilnius University the first calendars-books were published.

Seimas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth began its work on the 6th of October 1788 in Warsaw. This Seimas was better known as the Four-Year Seimas because he worked for only 4 years (1788–1792), with which significant reforms of the Republic are related. On the 3rd of May 1791, the Parliament adopted the Constitution, which was one of the first written constitutions in the world. In this constitution the 18th century European concept was set, which corresponded to the state organization of the regime. With the adoption of this document, the republic of nobilities (when the ruler was elected) became a constitutional monarchy. Under the Constitution, the chief power was given to the Seimas, the executive power, as before, left to the king and cabinet of ministry, who were named the Legislative guard. The king was to be elected from the ruling dynasty.

The Four-Year Seimas abolished the liberum veto power, formed a caste judicial system, laid the foundations for many other reforms, which were long needed and have helped strengthen the state. The Constitution introduced the principle of bourgeois property: landless nobility lost the right to participate in the Seimelis and wealthier city dwellers received nobilita-

¹⁸ Ignacy Jakub Massalski – bishop of Vilnius, first chairman of an education commission, member of the Targowica Confederation, the reconstruction founder of Vilnius Cathedral, builder of Verkiai Palace. Born in Warsaw on 30th of June 1726, died on 28th of June 1794 (was hanged by Tadeusz Kosciuszko for the reason of betrayal during the Uprising period).

¹⁹ In 1790, according to the data gained from the first general census of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, more than 3.5 million people lived there.

tion law (the ability to be promoted). During the year 1788–1792, the Republic introduced a permanent state fee for landowners, raised an army and renewed its management. On 19th of January 1789, the Permanent Council was abolished. In 1789, the Russian troops were withdrawn from the country's territory. On 18th of April 1791, the Parliament adopted a new law "Our free royal cities of the State" mainly called "the Urban Act". This law was the first step in the transformation from the caste society. It opened the way for the formation of civil society, provided a legal foundation for urban economic development, urban self-development, made it possible to consolidate and expand the social support of the monarchy. The law guaranteed the citizens these civil rights: the right to acquire land, the right to delegate their representatives to the parliament and take part in debates discussing urban affairs, the right to receive service of the state administrative apparatus and the courts, the right to serve in the army as an officer, the right to have a distinct nobility administration, the police, the courts, and the right not to be arrested without a court order. The Constitution declared state custody and guaranteed personal liberty to every citizen and those peasants who fled abroad and returned.

After the approval of the Constitution, Seimas elected four committees (ministries) of Education, Police, Military and Treasury.

The unitary state model described in the Constitution of May 3 did not satisfy the Grand Duchy of Lithuania aims to preserve the individuality from Poland. However, the proponents of the reforms (group led by Artillery General of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega²⁰), understanding the need to strengthen the law and seeing a threat to its very existence, was supported by the Constitution. The goal was to legalize the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as equal partners in the federal state with Poland and support dualism.

On the 20th of October 1791, the Four-Year Seimas passed a law called the "Mutual Commitment of Two Nations" (pol. *Zaręczenie wzajemne Obojga Narodowy*), which has become an essential amend-

ment to the Constitution. This law was presented to Seimas by the Confederation of Lithuanian Marshal Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega. The king S. A. Poniatowski, who feared that differences between Poland and Lithuania could be exploited by the hostile Russia, also supported his project. The Seimas adopted the "Commitment" unanimously, and on the 22nd of October, it was included in the court books. This document is also known as the Two Nations mutual guarantees by law. It was set that an equal number of members in joint central government will represent Poland and the Grand Duchy. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been recognized as equivalent to the Republic of Poland and the second part of the dualistic Republic.

On the 16th of April 1792 in Vilnius Town Hall, Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis together with 37 other nobles, in order to increase the number of supporters of the Constitution of May 3, especially the nobility, included himself into the books of the municipality. Vilnius city dwellers authorized Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis to thank the king S. A. Poniatowski on their behalf for adopting the urban law and the Constitution and asked to deliver a message that the residents of Vilnius are willing to give away their wealth and lives. After receiving these orders, Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis, as a delegate of Vilnius municipality, went to Warsaw and there on the 3rd of May 1792 participated in the first annual celebration of the Constitution.

Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis noted:

*"If the Constitution of May 3, 1791 would have been published in eighteen months earlier, Poland would have been saved. It would have a sufficient time to mobilize and strengthen its government during the period of 1789–1792. Poland would not have lost its advantage, which could have been given by the Prussian king invitation for a union; that way there would not have been time for Russia to make peace with Turkey and Sweden and could have prevented the Russian rapprochement with Prussia, which began in 1792 after the French domestic unrest."*²¹

The Four-Year reform of the Seimas and the Constitution did not satisfy the nobility, who saw

²⁰ Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega – nobleman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, political and war figure, army general of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1773–1793). In the year 1774, he was awarded by the order of Saint Stanislaus, in 1779 he gained an order of the White Eagle. Born on 14th of February 1757, died on 25th of May 1798 in Vienna.

²¹ Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis, *Atsiminimai* ("Memoirs"), Vilnius: Regionø kultūrinio iniciatyvø centras, 2007, volume 1, p. 42.

the highest in the old form of government and spoke against any reforms that could destroy their caste privileges. In addition, the strengthening of the Republic did not meet Russia's interests.

On the 27th of April 1792 in St. Petersburg, opponents of the Constitution²² signed a Confederation Act (manifesto)²³ aimed against the carried-out reforms. This manifesto was published with a false date (14th of May 1792) and announced near the Targowica town after the Russian army marched into Poland and Lithuania.

Russia and other neighbouring monarchic states feared that the French Revolution ideas could inspire the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, therefore one of the biggest critics of the French Revolution, the Russian Empress Catherine II, this time on the grounds to defend the rights of the nobility living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the spring of 1792 gave the order for the Russian army to invade the Republic. In May of 1792, near the border of the Republic massive Russian military force – 80 thousand regular army soldiers and 20 thousand Cossacks were deployed. On 19th of May 1792, this army crossed the Polish border, and on the 21st invaded the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. During the months of May-July, the Russian troops have not anticipated any greater resistance and occupied the entire territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

On the 25th of June 1792 in Vilnius, the General Confederation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been established, with heads of the organization – the Field Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Simon Kossakowski²⁴ and his brother Livonian Bishop Joseph Kossakowski²⁵. The goals were to not only restore the old nobility freedoms, but also ensure the return of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania unionist rights. On the 23rd of July 1792, the General Confederation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was joi-

ned by the ruler S.A. Poniatowski – by this act he eliminated the Constitution of May 3, 1791.

On the 23rd of January 1793 in St. Petersburg, Russia and Prussia signed the second agreement of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth partition. Under the document, lands of Bratslav, Kiev, Minsk, Podolia Voivodeships, the eastern part of Vilnius Voivodeship, Brest land and the eastern part of Volhynia was assigned to Russia; Prussia got the Western Polish lands and Gdansk, Toruń and Poznań. After the second partition of the Republic, it lost about 250 thousand square kilometres – almost half of their earlier territory. Seimas initially refused to recognize this partition agreement. In that case, the usurpers turned to violence: some representatives of the Seimas were arrested, Russian troops surrounded the Seimas in Grodno, and armed officers entered the meeting room. Resistance became futile; therefore, Seimas under the violence of the Russia ratifies the second partition act on the 19th of August 1793. The neighbouring countries cut a 308 thousand square kilometres area, which had more than 4 million population of inhabitants. The Constitution of May 3, 1791 and the Urban Law were retracted. Under the pressure of Russia and Prussia, Seimas appointed a delegation that on the 25th of September 1793 signed an agreement on occupied lands of the second partition of the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth.

After the second partition, an uprising began to take shape. Supporters were interested in liberating Poland and Lithuania from Russia and ceasing the influence of the Confederation of Targowica; they wanted to restore the country with the 1772 territory borders and continuation of 1788–1792 reforms. The uprising began in Krakow, on 24th of March in 1794. The main commander was appointed General Tadeusz Kosciuszko²⁶. The rebels formed their government – the National Supreme

²² Initiators of the confederation was Stanisław Szczęśny Potocki, Polish field Hetman Seweryn Rzewuski, Hetman Franciszek Ksawery Branicki and eleven other noblemen of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On 27th of April 1792 in Saint Petersburg, they signed the confederation act (manifesto) of Targowica.

²³ Called the Targowica Confederation act.

²⁴ Szymon Juda Marcin Korwin-Kossakowski – political and war figure of the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth, the last Great Hetman of Lithuania, confederate. Born in Ćilai manor (now – territory in Jonava district), died on 25th of April 1794 in Vilnius (was hanged in the Town Hall of Vilnius during the first days of Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising). Buried in the cellar of the church of St. Jacob the Apostle in Jonava.

²⁵ Józef Kazimierz Korwin Kossakowski – poet, dramatist, memorialist, translator, bishop of Livonia, suffragan of Trakai and coadjutor of Vilnius, founder of Jonava church, participant of Bar and Targowica confederations. Born on 16th of March 1738 in Ćilai manor (now – territory of Jonava district), died on 9th of May 1794 in Warsaw (was hanged for the reason of betrayal during the period of Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising).

²⁶ Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko – nobleman of the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth, national immortal (hero), army general, leader of the Uprising against Russia and Prussia. Born on 4th of February 1764 in Kosow (now – Belarus), died on 15th of October 1817 in Solothurn, Switzerland.

Council. On the 16th of April 1794, the Kosciuszko Uprising began in Lithuania. The first Lithuanian military units rebelled in Īliauliai. During the days of 23rd and 24th of April, rebels of Grand Duchy of Lithuania took control of Vilnius. A rebel government act was declared in which the executive power was assigned to Lithuanian national supreme council. The Uprising broke throughout the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Up to 25th of 1794, the uprising covered the whole territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Initially, military engineers, led by the General Jokūbas Jasinskis, the rebels acted independently. Their goal was to fight not only for the independence of the Republic but also for all citizens' freedom and equality. Nevertheless, the rebel forces were too weak to stand against a mighty Russian army. During the days of 11th and 12th of August, Russia took back control of Vilnius and in the late September-mid-October – the entire Lithuanian territory to the Nemunas and the Prussian army – to the Užnemunė. On the 5th of November 1794, Warsaw capitulated. At the end of the year, the uprising was over.

On 22nd of March 1795, supporters of the Confederation of Targowica pledged allegiance to the Empress of Russia.

On 24th of October 1795 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Austria and Prussia signed the third partition of the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth. Under the document, Russia adhered the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the west of the Nemunas, Volyn and Courland, Prussia and Austria shared the remaining Polish lands, Prussia occupied Užnemunė. The king S.A. Poniatowski, forced by Russia and its allies, refused the throne. After this decision, on the 25th of November 1795 it was announced that the authority of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth king is being removed. At the same time, all previously approved titles, posts and state citizenship was removed as well.

In 1796, the Tsarist government in Lithuania introduced a new administrative arrangements –

civil administration, meaning that by Russia's example the land was divided into governorates (Vilnius and Slonim), which later merged into a single Governorate of Lithuania ruled by the Baltic Governor-General. On the 15th of January 1797, in St. Petersburg Russia, Prussia and Austria signed a definitive partition pact that abolished the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

On 21st of September 1801, Governorate of Lithuania was divided into Lithuanian Vilnius and Lithuanian Grodno Governorates, which were under the control of the Lithuanian Governor-General, residing in Vilnius.

On 16th of April 1803, the Senior Vilnius (former Lithuanian) high school was transformed, under the Russian Emperor Alexander I decree, to the Imperial University of Vilnius. Instead of the Education Commission, Vilnius education district was established to handle the matters.

In 1807, Napoleon Bonaparte²⁷ based on the Tilsit agreement signed by the Russian and French governments on the 7th of July 1807, concluded the Duchy of Warsaw, which included a part of Lithuania called Užnemunė. There, under the Napoleonic Code, the peasants received personal freedom, however, did not receive the right to become landowners. The Duchy existed until 1815.

In 1811, Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis presented the Russian Emperor Alexander I with a draft of the restoration of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in which he suggested concluding the Duchy of 8 Russian governorates, where Lithuanian Statute would have active rights and the Duchy would receive a position of an autonomous state. However, under unfavourable circumstances, the project was not implemented.

On 24th of June 1812, Napoleon went to war against Russia. His army entered Nemunas at Kaunas and in a few days occupied the Lithuanian territory. On the 1st of July, by the Napoleonic decree French-controlled Lithuanian interim government commission, that performed Lithuanian administration functions, was established. The president of the

²⁷ Napoléon Bonaparte, calling himself as Napoleon the First. Born on 15th of August 1769 in Ajaccio (Corsica). French Revolutionary Army General, since 1799 a ruler of France. Since 11th of November 1799, the first consul of the Republic of France. Consul for life from 1802, on 2nd of December 1804 he became the Emperor of France (he was an Emperor till 6th of April 1814 and from 1st of March till 22nd of June 1815). In 1805 he was crowned as a king of Italy, from 1806 he became a vice rector of the Confederation of the Rhine. Died on 5th of May 1821 in the island of Saint Helena.

Commission was appointed Stanislovas Soltanas²⁸. Vilnius, Grodno, Minsk governorates, called departments, and Bialystok (Białystok) ended under the Commission law. The Commission worked until the December of 1812 until it was terminated when the defeated Napoleon's army withdrew from Lithuania.

On 14th of July 1812, an act was declared at the Vilnius Cathedral. The act declared the resolve of the residents of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to uphold the status of Lithuania as a political entity, just as Lithuanian had been during the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

On 6th of January 1813, Emperor Alexander I²⁹ signed a manifesto in which the end of the war with Napoleon was declared. By that time, Russian army already re-occupied the entire Lithuanian territory previously invaded by Napoleon.

In 1815 by the decision of Vienna Congress the Polish Kingdom, which included Užnemunė, was created. Napoleon acquis, the Gregorian calendar still existed there. In administration and judicial institutions, the only spoken language was Polish. The kingdom was in a deep relationship with the Russian Empire and had its own constitution 'gifted' by the Russian Emperor.

In 1816 in Vilnius, secret student societies called Philomath and Filaret began operating. They aroused the patriotic spirit of young people and urged to fight against the Russian government, encouraged young people, especially students, to organize and create rebellious groups organizations in Vilnius, Krašiai, Kėdainiai, Kaunas and in other Lithuanian places. Through them moral development, self-help, education and the fight against the Russian autocracy ideas were popularised. One of the founders of the Society

of Philomath was a known poet Adam Mickiewicz.

In 1817, the majority of Vilnius county nobility Seimelis were in favour of the abolition of the serfdom and handed the request to the Russian Emperor demanding personal freedom. Not surprisingly, the request was not granted.

In 1817, Vilnius intelligentsia founded the Masonic Society, which criticized outdated social customs in the press. Society prepared proposals on how to merge educational Vilnius district with the Polish Kingdom. Secret Masonic and student organizations were active in Lithuania in the year 1817–1823 period; however, in 1822 Russian Emperor Alexander I forbade Masonic organizations. Lithuania schoolchildren organizations and other student societies were closed and their members repressed, even exiled.

In 1819, Lithuanian seaside stretch – Palanga and its surroundings – were separated from the Lithuanian Vilnius Governorate and connected to the Courland Governorate.

In 1828, Vilnius University attempted to establish a Lithuanian language department.

During the 1830–1831 Uprising against the Russian government appeared throughout Poland and Lithuania. In Lithuania and Western Belarus, they were mainly organized and led by the chief committee established in Vilnius. The chief commander was Antanas Gelgudas³⁰. The rebels had to deal with a larger, better-armed and trained Russian army. The inevitable defeat of the rebels came with a reinforced censorship, newly established contribution from Lithuania and Polish residents, insurrection leaders' deaths and the exile of the other active members.

In 1832, Vilnius University was closed.

²⁸ Stanislovas Soltanas (1756–1836) – Lithuanian political and war figure, general – major of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (from 1782), Palace (manor) marshal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1790–1791), one of the coordinators of the Uprising in Lithuania. The chairman of the Provisional government of Lithuania, formed by Napoléon on 1st of July 1812 (till 24th of August 1812). Chairman of food and magazine commissions. Awarded of his merits and gained an order of the White Eagle in 1791, an order of Saint Stanislaus in 1782, order of the Legion of Honour in 1813.

²⁹ Alexander I (1777–1825) – Russian Emperor (1801–1825), inherited the throne after the revolution, in which his father Tsar Paul I was killed. Under the Alexander's I order, based on slightly modified model of Educational commission of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a reform of Education was implemented. At the time of the reform a network of secondary schools were extended, and the Principal School of Lithuania was redesigned into the Imperial University of Vilnius. Government led by the Alexander I tolerated culture traditions of Lithuanian noblemen, retained a name of Lithuania and used it in official titles of the Russian Empire administrative territorial units. At the end of the second decade of 19th c., Alexander I moved away from his conducted politics, which he carried out during the early stages of his ruling. During the last period of his life, Alexander I became very religious. Caught a cold and died while traveling.

³⁰ The summary of the most important events of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the years of 1764–1831 was prepared according to the information, which was published in the text of Ramunė Ūmigelskytė-Stukienė in *Millenium Book*, Kaunas: Kraštotvarka, 1999, volume 1, p. 49–60.