

# NAPOLEON AND FORMATION OF LITHUANIA'S AUTHORITY DURING THE CAMPAIGN IN 1812

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## ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the new historical investigations on Napoleon and formation of Lithuania's authority during the campaign in 1812. Preparing for the confrontation with Russia in 1812, Napoleon hoped for a quick result of his campaign through fighting a decisive battle with the army of Alexander I on the territory of Lithuania. However, he also took into consideration another variant of the war progress and assumed the necessity of the wealth mobilization of the former Republic of Poland's land which belonged to Russia. It is obvious that Napoleon did not have any final or the only plan for political course of action concerning the area of western gubernyas conquered by the French.

KEY WORDS: History of Lithuania, history of Poland, beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> C., Napoleon, campaign in 1812, Lithuania's authority, confrontation with Russia, Alexander I, western gubernyas.

## ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje pateikiama Napoleono laikotarpio (1812 m.) Lietuvos valdžios formavimosi proceso naujų istorinių tyrimų medžiaga. Rengdamasis 1812 m. karinei akcijai Rusijoje Napoleonas tikėjosi greitos jos pabaigos, laimėdamas pagrindinius karo mūšius prieš caro Aleksandro I kariuomenę Lietuvos teritorijoje. Be to, jis turėjo rengtis ir kitokiam karo tęsimui su visuotiniu turto nusavinimu to meto Lenkijos Respublikos teritorijoje, priklausiusioje Rusijai. Autoriaus nuomone, yra akivaizdu, kad Napoleonas neturėjo aiškios socialinių-politinių veiksmų bei formacijų strategijos Prancūzijos užgrobtose Rusijos vakarinėse gubernijose.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Lietuvos istorija, Lenkijos istorija, XIX a. pradžia, Napoleonas, 1812 m. karinė akcija, Lietuvos valdžia, konfrontacija su Rusija, Aleksandras I, vakarinės gubernijos.

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Preparing for the confrontation with Russia in 1812, Napoleon hoped for a quick result of his campaign through fighting a decisive battle with the army of Alexander I on the territory of Lithuania. However, he also took into consideration another variant of the war progress and assumed the necessity of the wealth mobilization of the former Republic of Poland's land which belonged to Russia. It is obvious that Napoleon did not have any final or the only plan for political course of action concerning the area of western gubernyas conquered by the French. Bear it in mind, he never stuck to one prepared project and was always willing to take advantage of any unpredictable and favourable circumstances, which were brought along the course of action. Thus, before the war he did not state in an unambiguous way the political future of his captured land. Instead, he considered taking different steps towards the conquered territory depending on the progress of the oncoming military campaign. Napoleon's plan fell through during the first week of the campaign. The Russian army was regressing east and Napoleon had to face the organization of Lithuania, so that he could use its wealth in further military actions. On 28<sup>th</sup> June in Warsaw General Confederation of the Polish Kingdom was announced. It was to bring about the uprising movement at the back of the Russian army but it changed into a political manifestation. The emperor himself by the manifesto in Wyłkowyszki announced the beginning of the second Polish war. Entering Lithuania, he was

forced to specify his policy concerning the reviving of Polish Kingdom. The progress of the campaign determined the result, in which Napoleon decided to give Lithuania a separate organization, excluding it from the declared Kingdom. In that situation, during the first three days of his stay in Vilnius, apart from continuation of work on military plans, the emperor had to appoint the Lithuanian government (Dundulis 1940:121-124; Handelsman 1915:197; Denniee 1842:34; Pradt 1815:57; Fain 1827:49; Ernouf 1884:390; Caulaincourt 1933:281, 306; Mansuy 1903-1904:248; Vandal 1891-1896 v.1:13, 89, v.2:427, 539).

The first step towards forming the power in Lithuania was already on the second day of his stay in Vilnius, in the afternoon of 29<sup>th</sup> June when he gave the floor to the Lithuanian noblemen. Waiting for the emperor, the noblemen signed up on "The List of Citizens of the Administrative Units", which was to give the approximate number of more significant Lithuanian noblemen who had arrived at the capital.<sup>1</sup> On the same day, 29<sup>th</sup> June, at the Vilnius cathedral due to the University of Vilnius students' initiative the act of Polish-Lithuanian Unity restoration was declared. A few thousands people spontaneously signed up that document during the next couple of days and on 30<sup>th</sup> of June Alexander Sapieha put forward the act to Napoleon. The students' action was determined by the lack of knowledge referring to the activity of the General Confederation and to the emperor's plans (Iwaszkiewicz 1910:452: 1912:90; Pugačiauskas 2004:19-20; Grzymała 1833:37; Ostrowski 1840:196; Falkowski 1877:104; Pradt 1815:129-130).<sup>2</sup> Napoleon's decisions about Lithuania could not have been made according to the action of the patriotic youth. His decisions concerning the appointment of the Lithuanian government were closely related to his plans about the future status of former land of the Polish Republic, which was taken from Russia. What surprises is the emperor's quick course of action in order to appoint the Lithuanian government comparing to his similar steps in Prussian annexation in 1806. But one should remember that Napoleon conquering the country, which was destroyed and deprived of all administration by the Russians, immediately, had to form the structures which would allow using the Lithuanian wealth in further military actions. Due to Napoleon's order, after 25<sup>th</sup> June the first action to form the local authorities in Kowno was taken.<sup>3</sup>

While reconstructing Napoleon's plans concerning the future of the Duchy of Warsaw and Lithuania, the fact that Napoleon was not sure about the extent of the possible victory over Alexander should be taken into consideration. Undoubtedly, he assumed the victory which would allow him to conquer some part of Russia's land. That territory would be the basis for forming The Polish Kingdom, which would include the Duchy of Warsaw and separately organized Lithuania in 1812. Surely, Napoleon did not plan to reconstitute The Polish Republic within the borders that dated back before the first partition. A newly formed state would include only the territory of the Duchy and formed in 1812 białostocki, grodzieński, wileński and miński departments. Formation of separate Lithuania was neither the solution which would meet Lithuanians' aspiration for separatism, nor the answer to Alexander's policy deceiving Lithuanians before the war by his plans of restitution of the Great Duchy of Lithuania in the unity with Russia. In fact, the act of constituting Lithuania was then the most reasonable temporary solution for the status of the seized territory of the former Pol-

<sup>1</sup> Kraków. Biblioteka Jagiellońska. (later on BJ) Rps 3087; Baliński: Wilno w 1812 r., p. 30; Plater M. Dziennik z 1812 r. ( w przygotowaniu do druku), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Paris. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (later on AMAE). Corr. Pologne 330, Bulletin d'informations 11, 14, 16 VII 1812., p. 618-620, 622, -623, 652-654, Corr. Pologne 331, p. 81-12.

<sup>3</sup> Paris. Archives Nationales Paris (later on AN). AF IV 1647, pl. 1 nr 2. Zapiska A. Chodkiewicza b. d.; Sanguuszko 1876:65.

ish Republic, which would allow, after the victory over Russia in the war, uniting that territory with the Duchy of Warsaw. This fact would also bring about forming a new state which would match a new power system in Europe generated after the defeat of Alexander I. In this context, it should be emphasized that a new state, the Polish Kingdom was to be formed not by the act of incorporating the Lithuanian land to the Duchy of Warsaw, which had existed since 1807, but by uniting two temporary states: formed in 1812 the Great Duchy of Lithuania, as it was finally called due to the Lithuanian government, and the Duchy of Warsaw, which had existed for a few years. It would be mutually beneficial for both Napoleon and the Polish together with the Lithuanians. The emperor would get a buffer state against Russia which would be strong enough to form a real border of the Great Empire and simultaneously, weak enough to match the political system created by Napoleon in Europe. The benefit for the Polish and Lithuanian would be the reconstruction of the state, the Polish Kingdom, which would not include all the territory of the former Polish Republic, but undoubtedly, would make a lot of difference from the temporary and partly solution of the Duchy of Warsaw, which was the result of the compromises of Tylża (Dundulis 1940:155-169; Driault 1924:399-401; Kukiel 1937:367-376).

Nevertheless, on the last days of June 1812 in Vilnius it was commonly expected that Napoleon would create a separate authority for each occupied Lithuanian gubernyas and would give the supervision over them to the government of the Duchy of Warsaw. To the surprise of all, he did not do it. On 30<sup>th</sup> of June at the headquarters of the Count of Dar more significant Lithuanians who were staying in the city had an appointment with the people who had arrived together with the headquarters of the Great Army. The meeting was not by all means secret, which would gather the people who had arrived with Napoleon to Vilnius and a couple of Lithuanians arranging backstage the Lithuanian government. Quite opposite, this was an official conference which aimed at presenting the project of Napoleon's order and at asking the present people to appoint, through election, candidates to the Lithuanian government.<sup>4</sup> It disproves Iwaszkiewicz's thesis of great influence of Alexander Sapieha on the personal shape of the Lithuanian government (Iwaszkiewicz 1912:79, 132, 159). Firstly, Napoleon decided that Lithuanians themselves should elect their government; although from the very beginning he was going to control the Lithuanian government by the French representatives. Secondly, Sapieha himself was pleased with that solution. He suggested taking similar action by Napoleon in 1807, which resulted from the duke's strong conviction of the Lithuanians' touchiness.<sup>5</sup>

Alexander Sapieha and a few other representatives of the Russian annexation, who had arrived together with Napoleon to Vilnius, participated in the meeting. But, first of all, the citizens who were to represent the Lithuanian gubernyas occupied by the Great Army took part in it. The basis of appointing them was "The List of Citizens of Administrative Units" formed before the audience on 29<sup>th</sup> June. According to the list, the most significant Lithuanians present on that day in the capital were invited.<sup>6</sup> According to Michał Plater's direct report of the meeting at the Count of Dar, the

<sup>4</sup> AN. AF. IV, 1647, pl. 3, nr 46; H. Maret do Napoleona z 10 VIII 1812 z Wilna; Fabry 1900-1903:895; Iwaszkiewicz 1912:77-78; Handelsman 1914:154-156; Sanguszko 1876:63. Grzymała 1833:200; 1833a:39; Baliński: Wilno...:31-33; BJ. Rps 3087.

<sup>5</sup> Lwów. Biblioteka Ukrainskiej Akademii Nauk. Archiwum Sapiehów (later on BUAN. AS) 119/ II c. Nie datowane notatki A. Sapiehy z początku 1807 r.; Vincennes. Service Historique de L'Armee de terre. Vincennes. (later on SHAT). Donation Davout. K-1. F. Potocki do marsz. L. Davouta z 2 IX 1807 oraz raport F. Potockiego i memoriał „Observations sur la Lithuanie et rapprochement de son administration actuelle avec la forme constitutionnelle du 3 Mai 1791.” Skowronek 1992:159-161.

<sup>6</sup> BJ. Rps 3134; Daru do J. Śniadeckiego z 30 VI 1812 r. z Wilna; Baliński 1878:694.

representatives of Lithuania and the group connected with the emperor's headquarters at the presence of Napoleon's representative elected the members of the Lithuanian government, as well as the authorities of the department and the city of Vilnius (Plater. *Dziennik...*:66). It gives us a different image of the conference of 30<sup>th</sup> June. It is hard to say if there was any list of people recommended by Napoleon who were to take over the positions at the Lithuanian government. It was in Napoleon's best interest to keep up appearances of the participants' independent and important decisions (Fabry 1900-1903:895-897; Kukiel 1937:384).<sup>7</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Lithuanians elected the government independently and Napoleon's agreement on such a form of election resulted from his subsequent decisions, along which the emperor indeed incapacitated the new Lithuanian authorities. Finally, 5 people were elected to the Commission of the Government. They were as follows in the order of the votes gained: Stanisław Sołtan, Karol Prozor, Józef Sierakowski, Aleksander Sapieha, and Franciszek Jelski. Józef Ignacy Kossakowski was elected as the Secretary of the Commission. Sapieha was included in the Commission of the Government due to his position at the emperor and his role which he played in Lithuania, according to the opinion of the people present. Sierakowski was elected due to his involvement in the Lithuanian case in 1807, when as a state representative arrived at Napoleon's headquarters. And Sołtan, Jelski and Prozor owed their elections to their positions in the public life of Lithuania and to the role which they played preparing and participating in the last great rise for independence in Lithuania, the Kościuszko Uprising. As the contemporary observer noted:

Not all the elections agreed with the public wish but there were the people who were well-known for their integrity and attachment to their homeland.<sup>8</sup>

After the conference and election of the Lithuanian authorities according to the order of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1812, article 1 Napoleon raised The Provisional Government of Lithuania accounting its makeup for 5 members plus a secretary. Article 2 obliged the Commission of the Government to administer the state, its finance and food supplies and ordered to organize the state army and form the National Guard and police. Article 3 appointed the emperor's agent at the Commission of the Government but did not account for his position. Article 4 appointed the territory subordinate to the administration of the Commission as follows: Vilnius, grodzieńska, mińska gubernyas and białostocki unit and handed over its management to the Commissions (Administrative Houses) which included three people lead by a commissioner. In that place the emperor by his personal signature crossed out the precision of "the French commissioner." Article 5 subordinated Administrative Commissions formed at the above mentioned territories to the Commission of the Government, whose orders they were supposed to execute. Article 6 handed over the administration of the units to sub-prefects. Article 7 accounted for the administration of Vilnius which was lead by the mayor, four seniors and the city council made of 12 members, whose obligation was to administer the city, supervise the charity organization and the municipal police. Article 15 accounted for the obligation of the major general, marshal Berthier, who was to nominate the governors of each of the four gubernyas who were to supervise the National Guard, police and the state army. They were to be appointed from the generals and officers of high rank of the French and Polish army.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 1, nr. 25, H. Maret do Napoleona z 22 VII 1812.

<sup>8</sup> BJ. Rps 3087. M. Baliński, Wilno... p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5354. Ordre du jour 1 VII 1812.

Napoleon's subsequent orders of 1<sup>st</sup> July completed the above resolutions. The first order appointed five members of the Commission of the Government according to the result of the elections and the votes gained.<sup>10</sup> The second one nominated the emperor's agent at the Commission, Edward Bignon on the strength of article 1. In article 2 Napoleon subordinated four commissioners in four gubernyas to the agent.<sup>11</sup> Further orders of that day included nominations of the members of the Administrative Commissions for four gubernyas, nominations of sub-prefects in wileńska gubernya, members of Vilnius authorities, captains of National Guard battalions in the capital.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 5<sup>th</sup> July when Napoleon completed those nominations with the appointment of four commissioners of the French State Council to the commissioners in four gubernyas.<sup>13</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> July the resolutions were announced to the citizens of Vilnius.<sup>14</sup>

The contemporary, waiting for the incorporation of occupied Lithuanian territory to the Duchy of Warsaw, did not understand Napoleon's decision. As P. Maleszewski wrote:

We do not have here enough knowledge, so that we could explain how to reconcile the government of the Duchy of Warsaw, the importance of The General Confederation and the activity of the Provisional Government of Lithuania. But we leave it all to the emperor and we cordially wish the victory as soon as possible and the ultimate defeat of Russia.<sup>15</sup>

The Commission of the Government, as Maret himself concluded, resembled The Commission Governing formed in January 1807 in Warsaw to execute similar tasks on the areas, being liberated from the Prussian annexation (Handelsman 1914:168). In the activity of both political organs from 1807 and 1812 one could clearly note that there was the aspiration for creating not very developed Napoleon's administration. In both cases the emperor, not giving any guarantee for the permanent political existence, directed all efforts of those organs to providing the Great Army with peace at the back and with maximum supplies and even to completing soldiers' squads at the back of military actions.

The emperor secured a wide range of competences and freedom in minor cases for the Commission of the Government, taking into consideration the situation of war, but he emphasized the inferior character of the administration being formed, in the most important matter. First of all, as his resolution of 1<sup>st</sup> July proves, he extended police responsibilities of the new authorities, which was essential to ensure the Lithuanians' security and was to put an end to common plunders, desertions and growing number of marauders, which already during the first week of the war rapidly decreased the power of the Great Army. However, in the above mentioned resolution and other decisions of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1812 Napoleon neglected the essential issues for functioning of the new authorities, such as the mode of appointment and recall of the authority at the lower administration ranks, its dependence on the superiors and what is more important, its dependence on simultaneously being formed military administration of the Great Army. The article about the governors was not precise concerning their responsibilities and gave, as the whole resolution, a wide range of interpretation. Indeed, what still had the legal force was the directive about the status of the occupied terri-

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<sup>10</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl 5354. Ordre du jour 1 VII 1812.

<sup>11</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5354. Ordre du jour 1 VII 1812.

<sup>12</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5354. Ordre du jour 1 VII 1812.

<sup>13</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5383. Decret 5 VII 1812.

<sup>14</sup> BJ. Rps 3087; M. Baliński, *Wilno...* p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> BUAN. AS 762/ IV e, p. 29. P. Maleszewski do A. Sapieżyny z 29 VII 1812 z Paryża.

tory of the former Polish Republic as the land conquered from Russia and under the occupying rules. Following that directive or even within it, Napoleon initiated the experiment of forming civil authorities for the local society. In M. Kukiel's opinion, the Lithuanian government was in a political sense a kind of nothingness, deprived of any initiative, extremely careful, was not able to lead the society to any activity and did not have any ambition to do that. "The Lithuanian government appeared as the organ of Napoleon's occupying administration." (Kukiel 1937:388; Skowronek 1992:280-281; Iwaszkiewicz 1912:80, 135; Dundulis 1940:135-138; Pugačiauskas 1998:47-54). Showing that criticism, he assumed the independence of the Lithuanian authorities, which Napoleon was never going to give to them.

The emperor by means of his decisions stopped any local people's attempts to organize the authorities connected with the General Confederation. Probably, only to convince of the autonomy of the new authorities, Napoleon limited himself to a general remark that at the Commission of the Government there would be the emperor's agent and in each of the three-member Administrative Commission governing the gubernyas- departments there would preside a commissioner. The emperor personally crossed out the word French before commissioner, though he appointed a Frenchman to that post in each of four gubernyas. The commissioners were subordinate to the emperor's agent at the Commission of the Government. In that way, a factual French- Lithuanian double authority was established with no regulations concerning cooperation between the agent and The Commission of the Government and the French military authorities, which were additionally appointed by the emperor's further decisions.

At the first conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1812, although the emperor did not account for the functioning rules of the Commission of the Government, newly nominated members of that organ elected Stanisław Sołtan for the president, as he was the Lithuanian court speaker and above all, he was the first on the list of the nominated to the Commission. It was agreed that the leadership of the Commission would be determined by the order of the nomination. At the same time, they decided that by the time of Sołtan's arrival at the capital the conference would be chaired by Józef Sierakowski, who until 18<sup>th</sup> July took over the responsibilities of the president according to his third position on the list. In that situation, Alexander Sapieha during the following weeks of the works of the Commission of the Government found himself overshadowed by his two colleagues, though, as all sources show, it was Count Sapieha who played a decisive role for the works of the Commission then. He still kept the strong position by Napoleon's side, who was staying in Vilnius for the first two weeks of July (Caulaincourt 1933:351, 357; Plater. *Dziennik...*:67-70; Skowronek 1992:285-287). That situation caused a not very convenient system, in which the Commission of the Government was formally led by first Sierakowski and then Sołtan, but its real leader was Alexander Sapieha, who had the access and respect at Napoleons.

Due to the problems with the absence and the lack of any information about the two members of the Commission, Napoleon nominated the next two, which enlarged the Commission to 7 members. Along with the emperor's subsequent decree of 7<sup>th</sup> July Jan Śniadecki and Alexander Potocki were included in the Commission.<sup>16</sup> It was Count Sapieha who supported the reinforcement of the Commission, which would allow it to start works and execute the tasks. And this was the only influence which Sapieha had on the emperor's decision concerning the makeup of the Lithuanian authorities. Napoleon was favourable to Śniadecki's nomination as he respected people of science and culture

<sup>16</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5384. Ordre du jour 7 VII 1812.

such as the vice-chancellor of the University of Vilnius. Alexander Potocki also owed his nomination to the count. In his memories Potocki confirmed that it was Sapieha's support which allowed his designation. Sapieha could count on Potocki as a devoted and competent partner, known for his scientific activity.<sup>17</sup>

J. Iwaszkiewicz assessed that the choice of people appointed to high positions in the Lithuanian government could not be regarded as right, since they had neither energy nor the precise knowledge of relations in the country (Iwaszkiewicz 1912:79). B. Dundulis concluded in the same mode, writing that the Commission of the Government in 1812 did not fulfil its duty. They elected its members by means of family background, social position or financial status (Dundulis 1940:135). Whereas M. Kukiel assessed that the members of the Commission were the most popular and important in Lithuania (Kukiel 1937:277-278). It does not seem that in that situation at the turn of June and July 1812 Napoleon could make a better choice. Appointing more energetic representatives of the Duchy of Warsaw, for example Józef Wybicki, would not have improved the effects of the activity of the new authorities. And it was not because the people from the Duchy dominated in the Lithuanian authorities, which Jerzy Skowronek suggested (Skowronek 1992:278). As that remark could only refer to one out of eight members of the Commission, Alexander Potocki, whereas Sapieha and Sierakowski, who had come with the headquarters, were closely connected with Lithuania. The essential was the fact that Napoleon was not going to form any authority branch of the Duchy of Warsaw made of people not knowing much about the situation of the Lithuanian territory. The Lithuanians' possible aversion towards the people from Warsaw was meaningless for the emperor's political plans concerning Lithuania and the Duchy in 1812, which determined the final solutions of forming the Commission of the Government.

The most important issue for the members of the Commission of the Government was describing the functioning rules and dividing the responsibilities among its members. Surely, the issue of organizing the Commission was consulted with Napoleon during the audience on 4<sup>th</sup> July and the dinner with the emperor on 10<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>18</sup> Only after the last meeting, on 11<sup>th</sup> of July the Commission finished its organizational works and finally divided competences among its members. The allotment of particular commissions resulted from Sapieha's plans. He took over the Military Committee, which allowed him to play the role of the real "chief" of Lithuania. Alexander Potocki took over the responsibility of the Committee of the Interior, which was very important due to the organization of Lithuanian authorities and a wide range of competences. Sierakowski as the leader of the Police Committee was in charge of returning the security in the country. Now absent in Vilnius, Sołtan and Prozor were responsible for the Committee of Food Supplies and Finance, whose main task was to collect basic taxes in money and supplies from inhabitants, "the two of the most hated by people." This activity, as Alexander Potocki wrote in the letter to his father, was supposed to be helped by the popularity of those two politicians among the Lithuanians, who "know them and trust them." Older Jelski and involved in educational issues Śniadecki were in charge of the Committees, whose competences were not directly connected with the mobilization of Lithuania. Their commitment to the highest state authorities was only essential for the propaganda reasons.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> AN. AF IV 671, pl. 5384. Ordre du jour 7 VII 1812.

<sup>18</sup> „Kurier Litewski”, Nr. 50, 1812; Baliński 1878:696.

<sup>19</sup> Warszawa. Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych. (later on AGAD). Archiwum Publiczne Potockich. (later on APP) 284. A. Potocki do S. K. Potockiego z 14 VII 1812.

As the resolutions of the Commission of the Government stated each of the seven Committees functioning as ministries was to include, apart from the leader, 5-10 members and the selection of so called, counsellors began on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.<sup>20</sup> At the strength of only 5 people the Commission of the Government had to establish its rules which were finally accepted after Sołtan took over the position of the president. At that stage, Alexander Sapięha played the key role, supported by Alexander Potocki in organizational works. In accordance with the already introduced solution, article 1 stated that the Commission of the Government was to be presided by “the first member in the order of nomination,” and in cases of his absence the next in the hierarchy. Article 2 approved the division on Committees and article 3 accounted for its makeup. Articles 4 and 5 included the rules of functioning of the Commission of the Government. Article 6 stated the superiority of decisions of the Commission over the Committee leaders, who were to execute all Commission tasks related to subordinate territories.<sup>21</sup>

Further activity of the Lithuanian government concentrated on organization of 7 Committees. So that they could function properly, some “General Rules of the Committees” were drawn up. According to its article 1 the leader of each Committee needed to be a member of the Commission of the Government. Along with this resolution and the rules included in the organization of the Commission of the Government, decisions in a particular case were made by the leader of the Committee, who was entirely responsible for them. In case of the leader’s absence an appointed deputy was to make decisions. Article 6 accounted for the further competences of the leader who was to divide the work of the Committee among its members, establish the order of conferences and the whole interior organization.<sup>22</sup> Assessing the personal makeup of the Committees, among the counsellors we can find people who had served the public at the time of the Polish Republic, as well as, people who had just gained the administrative skills. Among them there were people of Targowica, people of Kościuszko insurrection, people active at the times of Russian rule and people who were coming back to the public life after the years spent in their quiet houses, but ready to make an effort and work over the restitution of the Polish Kingdom. The makeup of the Committees shows that any divisions with their sources in the past were rejected and that the basis of counsellors appointment was their commitment to building the state administration and their participation in performing the most important tasks of the new authorities, which were to provide the Great Army with food and to organize their own army.<sup>23</sup>

Simultaneously with the formation of the central power, the members had to get involved in equally important issues, forming the administration on department and smaller unit level. The key role in forming the structure of the Lithuanian authorities was played by the Interior Committee lead by Alexander Potocki, who according to Napoleon’s orders of 1<sup>st</sup> July, would try to build the most reasonable administrative system of the four departments. In the organization of the Administrative Commissions, keeping up appearances of collective decisions related to its three members

<sup>20</sup> AGAD. Archiwum Zamoyskich (later on AZ) 83, p. 398. Wiadomość o składzie rządu teraźniejszego Litwy (z końca lipca 1812 r.); Grzymała 1833:200; Dundulis 1940:122; Iwaszkiewicz 1912:130-137.

<sup>21</sup> Vilnius. Lietuvos Valstybės Istorijos Archyvas (later on LVIA) F. 1532, a.1, b.1, p. 56. Wiadomości o wewnętrznej organizacji Komisji Rządu Tymczasowego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim; AN. AF IV, 1650, pl. 2, nr. 7, 8, 9 itd.; Wojeński 1912:137-141; Iwaszkiewicz 1912:130-135, 282-283; „Kurier Litewski”, Nr. 55, 1812; Dundulis 1940:122-123.

<sup>22</sup> Moskwa. Russkij Gosudarstwennyj Vojenno-Istoriczeskij Archiv (later on RGVIA). BUA 3856, p. 26. Ogólne prawidła Komitetów.

<sup>23</sup> AGAD. AZ 83, p. 398. Wiadomość o składzie rządu teraźniejszego Litwy (z końca lipca 1812 r.).



appointed by the decrees of 1<sup>st</sup> July, indeed, any independence of decisions concerning departments matter was restricted in favour of executing commands of the Commission of the Government and its Committees. Additionally, the role of the commissioner was not precisely accounted for. According to the order of 1<sup>st</sup> July he functioned as the leader of the Commission, which entangled the elimination of the rule of collective decisions. It was the reflection of Napoleon's conception of vertical management, which allowed the local authority at the department stage only to execute commands of the central government. The situation was additionally complicated by the fact that the commissioners chairing the Administrative Commissions did not subordinate to the Commission of the Government. Napoleon selected the commissioners out of the commissioners of the emperor's State Council, which showed the consequences of his policy as he aspired to put all the Lithuanian government under control of the French representatives. The commissioners, as the leaders of the Administrative Commissions, did not subordinate to the resolutions of the Commission of the Government but executed the commands of the emperor's agent, Edward Bignon. This meant that all decisions of the Commission of the Government sent to the departments authorities had to be approved by Bignon, who was superior to the commissioners, executing those commands as the leaders of the Administrative Commissions.

Napoleon's next order of 1<sup>st</sup> July began the appointment of units' authorities. In accordance with the suggestion of Lithuanian representatives gathered at the conference at the Count of Dar, sub-prefects of Vilnius department were appointed. At its first conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July the Commission of the Government obliged the constituting department authorities to send one of "the trusted citizens" from each, who were to establish sub-prefectures in the departments, provide food supplies to the squads of the Great Army and to start forming the police company. The number of the delegated was to agree with the number of administrative units of 4 departments, 33 people.<sup>24</sup> At the next conference of the Commission of the Government on 8<sup>th</sup> of July further delegates were decided to be sent: Count Anthony Giedroyc to grodzieński and białostocki department and Peterson to miński department. Again, they were told to put the departments in order and to complete the installation of the local authorities. They were also supposed to dissolve those local authorities which were organized spontaneously by the Lithuanians on the liberated territories. The author of *The News...* wrote that the delegate, sent to Grodno by the Commission of the Government,

... had the oral command that in each administrative unit the first public servant becomes a sub-prefect. According to that, he established sub-prefectures there. The same delegate, due to his dignity, established municipal authorities following Vilnius pattern. In miński, as well as, in grodzieński and białostocki departments the first public servants took responsibilities of sub-prefects.<sup>25</sup>

They were loyal noble speakers of court, public servants and magistrates (marszałkowie szlachechy, urzędnicy ziemscy i sędziowie ziemscy, grodzcy, graniczni).

On 21<sup>st</sup> July "Arrangements concerning sub-prefectures" were sent to the the Administrative Commissions. Article 1 stated that sub-prefects would take all responsibilities of the former court

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<sup>24</sup> LVIA. F. 1532, a.1, b.1, p. 5 i 7. Komisja Rządu Tymczasowego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego (later on KRTWKL) do Komisji Administracyjnej Departamentu Wileńskiego (later on KADW) z 2 VII i 3 VII 1812 r.

<sup>25</sup> LVIA. F. 1532, a.1, b.1, p. 56. Wiadomość o wewnętrznej organizacji Komisji Rządu Tymczasowego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim; AN. AF IV 1646, pl. 7, nr. 33. Gen. Narbonne: Apres pour l'Empereur sur l'administration russe en Lituanie.

speakers of the units.<sup>26</sup> In the organization of units' authorities the rule of vertical management remained, since sub-prefects were in fact the executors of central power commands which were directed to administrative units through The Administrative Commissions. The authority in sub-prefectures did not apply the rule of collective decisions. A problem was the fact that sub-prefect's competences in the police area interfered the commanding officer's responsibilities and the authorities did not prepare any rules concerning indispensable cooperation of the civil and military administration. However, the Commission of the Government's most serious mistake was too a small number of the unit authorities. At the administrative unit stage the sub-prefect, his two partners at the rank of unit counsellors, the secretary and his partner were supposed to fulfil all tasks concerning the administration of the territory subordinate to them, but above all, to take over the serious responsibilities of providing food supplies, organizing depots, further requisitions and recruitment to the squads of the police. In the oncoming months they were also obliged to recruit soldiers to Lithuanian front line army, battalions of riflemen, the National Guard and militia. The unit authorities' weakness concerning the number of its public servants compared to high importance and wide range of tasks to execute, forced the Commission of the Government to introduce the reform of the sub-prefectures.

Historians criticized the makeup of local authorities, saying that ex noble public servants from the time of the Russian rule were commonly nominated while they were not, in fact, interested in supporting the mobilization of Lithuania. Firstly, this practice was initiated by Napoleon himself and as A. Potocki wrote: "The Highest Emperor selected those men who, according to the wish of citizens, should be appointed to the heads of departments"<sup>27</sup> Secondly, noble servants in Lithuania were the people who were commonly respected by local noblemen. Thirdly, nomination of ex court speakers of the units guaranteed, at least partly, efficiency of the new administration, which was essential considering the fact that it was being built brand new. Newly nominated sub-prefects knew the departments and units very well. Now, they became those departments and units' representatives of the Commission of the Government and, as the further months would show, most of them would prove to get entirely involved in the restitution of their homeland. Wealthy landowners, who were the elite of the Lithuanian society, were mostly designated to administrative councils. They could not have been substituted in the political or organizational works by any of other social group.

Since the very beginning Napoleon was not going to give the Lithuanians the full control over the territory of four departments, which were governed by the Commission of the Government. Appointing the military governors for four departments restricted the independence of Lithuania, as well. Article 15 of Napoleon's order of 1<sup>st</sup> of July stated that the major general, who was marshal Berthier, was responsible for nominating governors for each of four gubernyas, choosing from generals and officers of higher ranks in French and Polish army in front line service. On 3<sup>rd</sup> July Berthier nominated Swiss brigadier general baron Antoine Henri Jomini to the Vilnius governor, General Anne Charles Le Brun to the grodzieński governor, brigadier general Jacques Ferrier to białostocki governor and Polish brigadier general Bronikowski, serving in the French army, to the miński gov-

<sup>26</sup> LVIA. F. 1532, a.1, b.1, p. 54-55. Urządzenia dotyczące się podprefektur. KRTWKL do KADW z 22 VII 1812.

<sup>27</sup> LVIA. F. 1532, a.1, b. 2, p. 3-4. A. Potocki do Komisji Administracyjnych czterech departamentów z 26 VII 1812.

ernor. The instruction issued by Berthier finally accounted for the generals' responsibilities.<sup>28</sup> The governor was to command the French army, as well as, forming squads of front line in the Lithuanian army, including the police and National Guard. He was supposed to watch the security of the department, including the police. In order to execute this order under the governors' command, there were officers and French public servants who were to be in charge of organizing depots and military hospitals.<sup>29</sup> The governors were also obliged to appoint commandants "de place" in each main town of administrative unit in the departments.<sup>30</sup>

What was essential, the governors were not dependent in any way on the Commission of the Government or on the emperor's agent appointed by the Commission. Major general, marshal Berthier was in control over the governors, and their responsibilities and competences of the military administration subordinate to them interfered clearly with the tasks of the Lithuanian authorities connected with the mobilization of Lithuania. The resolution which Napoleon chose caused, indeed, double power of Lithuanian administration under French control and the military administration, which was independent on the Lithuanian authority. Additionally, the need to chase the regressing east Russian army made it impossible for the major general to hold power over the governors. Thus, Napoleon, although he had not anticipated this solution in his order of 1<sup>st</sup> July, decided to create a new post: the governor of Lithuania who would hold power over the governors of four Lithuanian departments and the military administration subordinate to them. He did not account for the governor of Lithuania's competences, thinking that the area of his responsibilities would appear obvious on the basis of the responsibilities of nominated governors and that it would be enough to state that he held the highest military power in four departments. On 8<sup>th</sup> July in Vilnius, the major general appointed the emperor's adjutant and the governor of Królewiec, so far, Dutch division general count Dirk van Hogendorp.<sup>31</sup>

The system of civil and military power created by Napoleon in Lithuania generated the three competitive power centres. The first one was the Commission of the Government, officially and according to the resolution of 1<sup>st</sup> July holding the highest authority over the four Lithuanian departments. The second was co-ruling emperor's agent Bignon. The third one was the general governor of Lithuania, having power over the developed military structure, which was competitive to the civil administration. Napoleon wished to control this complicated situation and therefore, leaving Vilnius on 16<sup>th</sup> July, decided to give the authority over the whole Lithuania and three power centres to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H. Maret Count Bassano, who was staying in Vilnius. Maret was to watch the back of the Great Army and coordinate the mobilization of Lithuania. He held the authority over all stages of the Lithuanian administration and all French civil servants in Lithuania. The minister was to cooperate and supervise the activities of the Commission of the Government, the emperor's agent and the general governor of Lithuania (Ernouf 1884:394-397; Fain 1827:218; Meneval 1893-1894:39; Dundulis 1940:126).

<sup>28</sup> SHAT. C-2, 128. Raport A. Berthiera dla Napoleona z 3 VII 1812; A. Berthier do D. Hogendorpa z 11 VII 1812; Instrukcje dla gubernatorów czterech departamentów litewskich z 10 VII 1812; 1857-1870. *Correspondance de Napoleon I-er, publiee par ordre de l'Empereur Napoleon III*. Paris, (later on Corr.) v. 24, nr. 18939; Fabry 1900-1903:6-7; Ernouf 1884:411; Hogendorp 1887:314-315; LVIA. F. 1532, a.1, b.1, p. 56. Wiadomość o wewnętrznej organizacji Komisji Rządu Tymczasowego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim.

<sup>29</sup> Corr. Nr. 18993; Fabry 1900-1903:6-7, ann. p. 31, 73-75, v. 4, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Corr. Nr. 18939; Iwaszkiewicz 1912:145.

<sup>31</sup> SHAT. C-17 111; Corr. Nr. 18922; Fabry 1900-1903:6-7; v. 5, p. 921; Wojeński 1912:261; Hogendorp 1887:307; Melon 1938:155.

Such a complicated structure of authorities in Lithuania, appointed by Napoleon's decisions, must have caused conflicts, and it was already noticeable after the first month of the activity of the new administration. Competency arguments and misunderstandings between the French and Lithuanian authorities concerned not only the central power, but also all stages of administration in the capital, as well as, the provinces. The lack of clear division of competences between the civil and military organs of authority, between the Lithuanians and French complicated the situation and often caused a paralysis of decisions. In the departments there were, above mentioned, governors, all French military administration and French commissioners dependent on the emperor's agent Bignon against those being in the chair of three-member Administrative Commissions, the authority in each of four departments, theoretically subordinate to the Commission of the Government. This status quo brought about a lot of conflicts, in which the issues of high rank of particular institutions and the wish to increase the prerogative began to play the main role (Ernouf 1884:411; Fabry 1900-1903:533-536, 262, 263, 302-303; Hogendorp 1887:314-316; Bignon 1864:293-240).<sup>32</sup>

There were more and more conflicts concerning the relation between the French military administration and Lithuanian civil administration, and first of all, personal conflicts between Hogendorp, agent Edward Bignon and Vilnius governor Jomini, between the general governor and the Commission of the Government, which was supported by the agent, and particularly between Hogendorp and Alexander Sapieha, being in chair of the Military Committee; as well as, the arguments and ambitions in the Committee itself were on the increase, which caused the next hot spot between its leader and generals Giedroyc and Niesiołowski. In reply to all of those conflict, the emperor decided to cut the Gordian knot, which he personally created, and improve functioning of the authorities in Lithuania. Finally, he made a decision which astonished all. On 24<sup>th</sup> August he appointed Hogendorp for the president of the Commission of the Government, the superior of the Lithuanian civil authorities; eventually settling that the general governor was entirely superior over Lithuania and the organization of the army.<sup>33</sup> In consequence of Napoleon's decision Edward Bignon was rebuked by the emperor for opposing Hogendorp.<sup>34</sup> The post of the emperor's agent, which Maret wanted to turn into the superior of the civil administration equal to the general governor in military matter and simultaneously, being the official agent between the latter and the Commission of the Government, now was subordinate to Hogendorp. Finally, the emperor, being in favour of vertical management, ordered Bignon to support the general governor, instead of opposing him. The agent was then to be Hogendorp's secretary supporting him with his effort.<sup>35</sup>

Napoleon's decision of nominating Hogendorp, which astonished all, resulted from the guidelines of the policy concerning Lithuania. Napoleon in the situation which he personally created had to put an end to conflicts paralysing the activity of all authority organs. However, the emperor could neither give all power over Lithuania to the Commission of the Government, nor nominate a civil servant, the emperor's agent, to the superior of the military administration. Giving Bignon the power over the Lithuanian authorities could not have solved the conflicts which, also at the local

<sup>32</sup> BUAN. Sap. 451 / III c, k. 50; T. Matuszewicz do A Sapiehy z Warszawy z 21 VIII 1812; AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 2, nr. 51-53. H. Maret do Napoleona z 12 VIII 1812 z Wilna; AN. AF IV 1650, pl. 3, nr. 3. J. Giedroyc do H. Mareta z 24 VII 1812; AN. AF. IV 1649, pl. 5, nr. 12. R. Giedroyc do H. Mareta z 19 VII 1812; RGVIA. BUA 3856, p. 28-29. R. Giedroyc do A Sapiehy z 11 VIII 1812.

<sup>33</sup> AN. AF IV 685, pl. 5480. Ordre du jour 24 VIII 1812.

<sup>34</sup> Corr. nr. 19136.

<sup>35</sup> Corr. nr. 19136, 19119, 19135, 19137; Chuquet 1912:396.

stage, meant more and more frequent competency arguments between the organs of civil and military power. The most reasonable solution was to give the superior power over the both civil and military administration to one person, who was general Hogendorp, combining the post of general governor of Lithuania and the president of the Commission of the Government. This guaranteed holding the ultimate control over the Lithuanian authorities, eliminated, at least partly, competency arguments and what was the most essential, in Napoleon's opinion, allowed hastening the action of mobilization of Lithuanian wealth which was more and more indispensable for the Great Army.

Nevertheless, nomination of Hogendorp to the president of the Commission of the Government broke the functioning rules of the Lithuanian authorities. As a general governor, Hogendorp was entirely superior over the governors of the four departments and in the area of their competences he was subordinate to the major general of the Great Army and to the emperor. Whereas, as the president of the Commission of the Government he was a member of a collective body, in which the way of making decisions and responsibility for resolutions belonged to all of its members. As the general governor, however, he was not subordinate to the Commission and the solution led to the situation, in which the Commission of the Government in the area of the general governor's competences was subordinate to Hogendorp. Therefore, the new president did not take over the position of the leader of one of the Committees, which was each member's right. It is worth mentioning here that as the general governor, Hogendorp made decisions personally in the matter of supplies for the army, hospitals, the power over the French and Lithuanian armies and security in the four departments. In that way, he made the Commission only the executioner of his orders in the areas which the Lithuanian authorities were responsible for. A clear conclusion can be drawn here that as a result of the changes, Hogendorp held the ultimate power over the most essential issues for the mobilization of Lithuania. While, the collective way of making decisions in the Commission of the Government was restricted to the areas exceeding the general governor's competences, which meant minor issues connected with activity of the Committee of Justice or Enlightenment and Religion.

The news of Hogendorp's nomination, which was brought on 27<sup>th</sup> August in Vilnius, caused such a real consternation among the members of the Lithuanian authorities that the Commission of the Government seemed to dissolve soon.<sup>36</sup> Alexander Sapieha put forward his resignation and Stanisław Sołtan took a leave. General Hogendorp triumphantly was taking the entire control over Lithuania. However, very quickly he realised that he lacked the appropriate qualifications and knowledge in order to fulfil new tasks as the president of the Commission of the Government. He did not know Lithuania and its problems. Most of discussions concerned the topics which were not familiar to him so he stopped participating in the conferences of the Commission. Eventually, Sołtan came back to Vilnius and again took over the leadership in the Commission, whereas its formal president controlled only the military issues. After all the changes, including the reforms of the authorities of local units and departments, in September and October 1812 the situation in Lithuania seemed to stabilize. However, the Lithuanian authorities remained still in conflict with Hogendorp, about whom Alexander Potocki wrote: "this is the man of no common sense, talents or politeness; imagine my Father what circumstances they are, so far all the things have been in our favour as Duke Bassano and Bignon support us."<sup>37</sup> Against previous opinions, it should be stated that the

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<sup>36</sup> AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 2, nr. 103-104 i nr. 108. H. Maret do Napoleona z 28 VIII 1812 i z 29 VIII 1812 z Wilna; Ernouf 1884:415-416; Hogendorp 1887:317.

<sup>37</sup> AGAD. APP 285. A. Potocki do S. K. Potockiego z Wilna z końca X 1812.

Lithuanians fulfilled their duties. Despite the devastation of the country, financial difficulties, they made an effort and formed the army, which had 20 thousand people, including irregular squads, and supplied huge depots of food for the Great Army.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> RGVIA. F. BUA 3856. Etat de Situation des nouveaux Regiments formes en Lithuanie avant l'epoque du 1 XII 1812 r. oraz Grande Arme - Troupes Lithuanienes; Nawrot 2004:55-56.

## NAPOLEONAS IR LIETUVOS VALDŽIOS FORMAVIMAS 1812 M.

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### Santrauka

Ruošdamasis karui su Rusija 1812 m. birželį Napoleonas tikėjosi trumpo karo ir lemiamo mūšio su Aleksandro I armija Lietuvos teritorijoje. Šiai pergalei pasiekti lemiamoje savo imperijos konfrontacijoje su Rusija jis taip pat svarstė ir kitą įvykių versiją, neatmesdamas ir būtinumo mobilizuoti Lietuvos išteklius. Vienu iš pergalę lemiančių kozičių buvo pasinaudojimas Lenkijos Karalystės restitucijos paskelbimu, turėjusiu lemti vakarų gubernijų nuo Rusijos atplėšimą ir šių žemių gyventojų pagalbą Didžiajai armijai jai kovojant su Rusijos armija. Pirmas kampanijos etapas neatnešė Napoleonui didelių karinių pergalių, nors buvo užimti Vilnius, Gardinas ir Minskas. Norint tęsti kampaniją reikėjo mobilizuoti Lietuvos gyventojus ir Lietuvoje sukurti sau palankią valdžią. Napoleonas, nenorėdamas užkirsti kelio deryboms su Aleksandru, atsisakė Lietuvos prijungimo prie paskelbtos Varšuvoje Lenkijos Karalystės, nusprenddamas 1812 m. liepos 1 d. įsaku sudaryti Vilniuje trims gubernijoms ir Baltstogės sričiai atskirą valdžią ir jos aukščiausiąjį organą, tai yra Laikinosios vyriausybės komisiją, palikdamas jų kontrolę imperatoriaus atstovams.

1812 m. liepos 1 d. įsaku Napoleonas likvidavo visus vietinių gyventojų bandymus organizuoti vietinę valdžią, susijusią su Generaline konfederacija. Vilniuje lietuviai savarankiškai išrinko naują valdžią, o Napoleono pritarimas tokiai rinkimų formai turėjo įtakos jo vėlesniems sprendimams. Imperatorius faktiškai pripažino neveiksnią naują Lietuvos valdžią. Napoleonas formaliai garantavo Vyriausybės komisijai gana plačias (turint omenyje karo veiksmus) kompetencijas ir veikimo laisvę nesvarbiuose reikaluose, bet labai aiškiai pabrėžė pagalbinį kuriamos administracijos pobūdį svarbiausiuose reikaluose. Napoleono sudaryta civilinės ir karinės valdžios sistema Lietuvoje lėmė, kad atsirado trys konkuruojantys valdžios centrai. Pirmasis jų buvo Laikinosios vyriausybės komisija, oficialiai pagal minėtą liepos 1 d. įsaką valdanti keturis Lietuvos departamentus. Antrasis buvo faktiškai kartu valdantis imperatoriaus komisaras prie Vyriausybės komisijos E. Bignon. Trečiasis – Lietuvos generalinis gubernatorius D. Hogendorp, išvystytos ir konkurencingos civilinei administracijai karinės valdžios vadas. Norėdamas kontroliuoti šią komplikuoatą situaciją, Napoleonas, liepos 16 d. palikdamas Vilnių, nusprendė atiduoti visos Lietuvos ir sukurtų trijų valdžios organų priežiūrą užsienio reikalų ministrui H. Maretui Bassano, kuris liko sostinėje.

Tokia sudėtinga valdžios struktūra Lietuvoje turėjo kelti konfliktus, ir tai pasireiškė jau po pirmojo naujos administracijos valdymo mėnesio. Ginčai ir nesutarimai tarp Prancūzijos ir Lietuvos valdžios buvo susiję ne tik su centriniais valdžios organais, bet ir su visų lygių administracija ne tik sostinėje, bet ir provincijoje. Tai lėmė, kad Napoleonas nusprendė paskirti Lietuvos generalinį gubernatorių Vyriausybės komisijos pirmininku. Taigi galima drąsiai teigti, kad pakeitimų rezultatas buvo toks, kad svarbiausiuose reikaluose, susijusiuose su Lietuvos išteklių mobilizacija, Hogendorp gavo visišką valdžią, tuo tarpu Vyriausybės komisijos įtaka priimant sprendimus apsiribojo reikalais, kurie buvo už generalinio gubernatoriaus kompetencijos ribų. Komisijos kompetencijos

apsiribojo nesvarbių problemų, susijusių su Teisingumo ar Švietimo ir religijos komiteto veikla, sprendimu. Nors lietuviai, užimantys postus šalies valdžioje, buvo visiškai kontroliuojami Napoleono atstovų, jie padarė viską, kad įvykdytų užduotis, paskirtas Prancūzų imperatoriaus jų šaliai, t. y. pripildė Didžiosios armijos sandėlius ir surinko 20 tūkstančių karių.

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