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## **French officials on the east land of the Polish Republic in 1812**

In preparing for confrontation with Russia in 1812, Napoleon had hoped for a quick victory through a decisive battle with the army of Alexander I on the territory of Lithuania. The first week of the campaign brought to ruin of the French emperor's plans as the Russian army retreated east. In such a situation Napoleon found it necessary to form a system of government for the occupied east lands of the former Republic of Poland so as to use its resources in the subsequent military campaign in Russia. He decided on the formation of the Lithuanian authorities on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1812, establishing the Commission of the Temporary Government as well as governing bodies of gubernyas: vilenski, minski, grodzienski and bialostocki. The members of both the Commission of the Government and local authorities were elected by the representatives of the Lithuanian society who had gathered in the capital. Napoleon agreed on that form of election so as to incapacitate the Lithuanian authorities. The leading power was nominally held by the Commission of the Government; however, the emperor's commissioner played the decisive role in managing the French intendants that governed the administration of those departments. Accordingly, the French military administration, including commanding officers of gubernyas and commanders of place were established in the

country<sup>1</sup>. What is most significant is that the French military administration did not have to obey the Commission of the Government or the emperor's commissioner, who was appointed to the commission. The major general, Marshal A. Berthier, had authority over the governors. Their competences together with duties of their submissive military administration were clearly included in the Lithuanian authorities' tasks, which focused on the Lithuanian mobilization, feeding to the Great Army, and providing police and security personnel. The pursuit of the Russians, as well as Napoleon and Berthier's departure from Vilnius, led to the establishment of a new position of the general governor of Lithuania, appointed by the order of 8<sup>th</sup> July, who was supposed to wield military power over the four departments as the head of the governors and the military administration which was subject to them<sup>2</sup>.

The system of civil and military authorities in Lithuania, formed by Napoleon, was a temporary solution and functioned according to the same rules as other systems formed in other countries captured by the French emperor's army. The characteristic feature was the centralization of hierarchical authority based on representatives of the country, who were

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<sup>1</sup> Ordre du jour, 1 VII 1812 Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter: AN), AF IV 671, pl. 5354; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon et la Lituanie en 1812*. Paris 1940, 122–123; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa w 1812 roku*. Kraków 1912, 130–135, 282–283; D. Nawrot, *Litwa i Napoleon w 1812 roku*. Katowice 2008, 273–364.

<sup>2</sup> Nomination, 8 VII 1812 in, *Correspondance de Napoléon I-er, publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III*. Paris 1857–1870 (Corr.) 1892; Service Historique de L'Armée de terre w Vincennes (hereafter: SHAT). C-17, 111; A. Berthier do D. van Hogendorpa z 11 VII 1812 r. – SHAT. C-2, 128; G. Fabry, *Campagne de Russie. Publié sous la Direction de la Section Historique de l'État-major de l'Armée*. Paris 1900–1903, vol. 3, 6–7; vol. 5, 921; D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires*. Paris–La Haye 1887, 307; P. Melon, *Le général Hogendorp, gouverneur à Java, aide de camp de Napoléon 1er, ermite à Rio de Janeiro*. Paris 1938, 155; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon...*, 284.

completely subjective to the French officials' control<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, the fact that Napoleon was willing to incapacitate the Lithuanian authorities and take control over them through his officials led to the formation of three competing powers. The first was the Commission of the Temporary Government, which, according to the order of 1<sup>st</sup> July, officially held the superior power over the four departments of Lithuania. The second authority was the emperor's commissioner, Eduard Bignon. Although the emperor did not describe the commissioner's competences in the order of 1<sup>st</sup> July, article 2 of the subsequent order of the same day which nominated him, gave Bignon superiority over the intendants who led the administrative commissions of the four departments. By this order, Napoleon appointed a commissioner who co-governed together with the Commission of the Government and had to gain Bignon's approval for all activities. The third power was the general governor of Lithuania, general Dirk van Hogendorp. In order to control such a complicated situation Napoleon decided upon his departure from Vilnius on 16<sup>th</sup> July to give the supervision over all Lithuania and the three authorities to foreign affairs minister Maret, the duke of Bassano, who stayed in the capital. Maret was supposed to watch the rear of the Great Army and coordinate all activities serving the mobilization of Lithuanian resources. All levels of the Lithuanian administration and all French officials staying in Lithuania were subject to him. The minister was supposed to cooperate with the Commission of the Government and supervise their actions as well as the activity of the emperor's commissioner and the general governor of Lithuania<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> D. Nawrot, *Litwa i Napoleon...*, 285–287; V. Pugačiauskas, *Napoleono administracija Lietuvoje*. Vilnius 1998, 46–49, 192.

<sup>4</sup> A. Ernouf, *Maret, duc de Bassano*. Paris 1884, 394–397; A. Fain, *Manuscrit de 1812 pour servir à l'histoire de l'empereur Napoléon*. Paris 1827, vol. 1, 218; C.F. Menéval, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Napoléon Ier depuis 1802 jusqu'à 1815*. Paris

Who were Napoleon's officials that found themselves on the eastern lands of the Polish Republic in 1812? The leading figure among them was 49-year-old Hugues-Bernard Maret, who for years had been Napoleon's closest collaborator, regarded as *the éminence grise* at the emperor's side. Before he took the position of foreign affairs minister in April 1811, he had been managing the main organ of the governing machine of France as the minister state secretary, regulating and coordinating all inter-ministry activities. Since his first stay at the Vistula River in 1806, Maret was known for his interest in the Polish issue. He co-formed the Governing Commission in 1807 and edited the constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw. At that time he already had a reputation for approving solutions favorable to the Poles. He started his career at the time of the revolution as a journalist and became a diplomat under the protection of the minister Pierre Henri Lebrun. He attached himself to Napoleon after the general's return from Egypt in 1799. While staying Maret's staying at the emperor's headquarters in Kamieniec Suski in 1807 he made friends with Alexander Sapieha, the actual leader of the Lithuanian authorities<sup>5</sup>.

51-year-old Dirk van Hogendorp became the general governor of Lithuania because he had been staying in Królewiec, close to the Lithuanian territory, since June 1812, as governor of Eastern Prussia. Hogendorp was Dutch but as a young man he started his military service in the army of Frederick the Great. He abandoned the Prussian army when Holland entered the U.S. War of Independence. He connected his future career with colonies in the Dutch East Indies and became the governor of Java in 1794. Hogendorp was influenced by liberal ideas enlivened by the French Revolution and began some reforms in his colony. He declared that the

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1893-1894, vol. 3, 39; Ch. Sor, *Le duc de Bassano*. Paris 1843, s. 74; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon...*, 126.

<sup>5</sup>*Dictionnaire Napoléon*. ed. J. Tulard. Paris 1999, vol. 2, 271.

feudal management of the Dutch East India Company did not relate to the ideas of Enlightenment and proposed thorough reforms, even including awarding the Java people the right to possess land. The projects met with hard opposition from conservative officials and Hogendorp was imprisoned in 1798. However, Dirk escaped from Java and returned to Holland so as to continue the fight for reforms in the Dutch East India Company. His activity in this field towards this goal was interrupted by his diplomatic service and, among other things, his mission to Russia and his holding the position of war minister in the Kingdom of Holland for a short period of time in 1807. After the incorporation of Holland into the French Empire, Hogendorp entered the French army at the rank of major general<sup>6</sup>. In 1812, together with Barthomeuf, who was a French official, Hogendorp was assigned the post of the main Lithuanian ordonator. He was directly subjected to the general intendant of the Great Army and appointed to take superior power over the French ordonators in the four departments<sup>7</sup>.

33-year-old Swiss brigadier general baron Antoine Henri Jomini, a well-known war theoretician, re-organiser of the Swiss army and the author of *Traite des Grandes Operations Militaires* from 1805, became the governor of the Vilenski department. He started his military service in the

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<sup>6</sup> J.A. Sillem, *Dirk van Hogendorp, (1761–1822), naar grootendeels onuitgegeven bronnen bewerkt*. Amsterdam 1890, 54–70, 112; D. Clive, *The Policy and Administration of the Dutch in Java*. New York 1904, 134–142; A. Sens, *La révolution batave et l'esclavage. Les (im)possibilités de l'abolition de la traite des noirs et de l'esclavage (1780–1814)*. *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 326 (2001), D. van Rinus, *Dirk van Hogendorp in Sint-Petersburg 1803–1805, een Fransgezinde diplomaat in actie voor de Bataafse onafhankelijkheid*. in, *Noord- en Zuid-Nederlanders in Rusland 1703–2003*. Red. E. Waegemans, H van Koningsbrugge. Groningen 2004, 93–121; *Repertorium der diplomatische Vertreter aller Laender*. Hrsg. O.F. Winter. Graz-Koeln 1965, 266, 268, 271; *Corr.* 18775.

<sup>7</sup> E. Bignon to Barthomeuf, 19 IX, 3 X and 12 XI 1812 – AN. 136 AP 9; *Akty izdavaemye Vilenskoû arheografickoû Komissieû*. Vil'na 1912, vol. 37, 405.

army of the Helvecka Republic and from 1804 served in the Great Army as the aide-de-camp of Marshal Ney and finally in marshal Berthier's staff. 51-year-old brigadier general Jean Antoine Bruno became the governor of the Grodzienski department. He had served in the revolutionary wars and the Egyptian campaign, and later as the military governor of Cherbourg and, in 1812, as the governor of Pilawa in Eastern Prussia. The Bialostocki department was governed by Italian campaign veteran and later aide-de-camp of Dutch king Ludvik, 41-year-old brigadier general Jacques Ferrier. From 1810 he had served the army of the Italian Kingdom as the commander of the cavalry brigade. Although initially the two departments, Grodzienski and Bialostocki, were to be united under one governor, due to the size of the bialostocki department, the nomination of separate governors was preferred. In the Minski department, 45-year-old Polish the brigadier general Mikołaj Bronikowski became the governor. He had served in the French army and been awarded with the Virtuti Militari cross after the battle of Zieleńce. He also participated in the 1794 insurrection in Lithuania and Great Poland. In 1809 he was the organizer of the II Vistula League. He fought in Spain as the brigadier general of the 1st division of the Aragon army of Marshal Suchet. He was considered to have "no particular skills and no power of spirit"<sup>8</sup>.

41-year-old Luis Pierre Eduard Bignon, who in December 1810 had been nominated the emperor's representative in the Duchy of Warsaw, became the emperor's commissioner at the Commission of the Government.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Berthier to J. Bruno, 10 VII 1812 ; A. Berthier to J. Ferrière, 10 VII 1812; A. Berthier to KRTWKL, 10 VII 1812 – SHAT. C-2, 128; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon...*, 284; *Dictionnaire Napoléon*. Ed. J. Tulard. Paris 1999, Antoine Henri Jomini – vol. 2, 83–84; Jean Antoine Brun – vol. 1, 330; Jacques Ferrière – vol. 1, 797; G Six, *Dictionnaire biographique des généraux & amiraux français de la Révolution et de l'Empire (1792–1814)*. Paryż 1934; A. Skałkowski, *Mikołaj Bronikowski*. Polski Słownik Biograficzny, Kraków 1936, vol. 2, 470.

He belonged to diplomats of the medium level and was often entrusted unusual tasks demanding a lot of discretion. He was a great friend of the Poles, whom he had first had contact with as a secretary of the French embassy in Milan in 1798–1799. Then he worked for the French diplomatic missions in German states. In 1806–1808 he organized the administration of occupied Prussia. After Napoleon's subsequent victory over Austria in 1809, he took on similar duties on the land captured by the French army. He also dealt with the organization of the French administration personnel in Illyria provinces. Bignon gained a great knowledge of administrative and statistic-economic issues. His mission in Warsaw was to strengthen the relationship between Poles and Napoleon, to encourage the authorities to make a greater effort to enlarge the treasury income, to prepare for the unavoidable war with Tsar Alexander I and, most importantly, to organize intelligence against Russia. His closest collaborator in the field of intelligence became the above mentioned Alexander Sapieha<sup>9</sup>.

32-year-old Scipion Cyprien Luis Martin Marie Elisabeth Louis Nicolai, auditor of the State Council in 1810, and from 1811 auditor of the second class at the forest administration and then auditor of the first class at the ministry of justice in the legislation section, became the intendant in

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<sup>9</sup> F.A. Mignet, *Notices historiques sur la vie et les travaux de M. Bignon*. in, E. Bignon, *Souvenirs d'un diplomate. La Pologne 1811–1813 par le baron...* Paris 1864; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Wstęp*. in, E. Bignon, *Polska w r. 1811 i 1813. Wspomnienia dyplomaty*. Wilno 1913, vol. 1, 5; E. Bignon Papers – AN. 136 AP 9, vol. 7–9; M. Handelsman, *Rezydenci napoleońscy w Warszawie 1807–1813*. Kraków 1915, 164–193; Idem, *Pod znakiem Napoleona*. Warszawa 1913, 217–218; B. Grochulska, *W obliczu klęski. Edwarda Bignona traktat o przyszłości Francji i Europy*. in, „O roku ów...” *Epoka napoleońska w polskiej historiografii, literaturze, sztuce i tradycji*. Red. M.M. Drozdowski, H. Szwankowska. Warszawa 2003, 75–80; J. Henri –Robert, *Dictionnaire des Diplomates de Napoléon*. Paris 1990; *Dictionnaire Napoléon...*, vol. 1, 228. See: H. Maret to A. Sapieha, 19 I 1811 – BCzart. Ms. 3763 III, k. 83, i z 21 II 1811 r. – BCzart. Ms., ew. 641 (ADCz. Ms. 7041); A. Ernouf, *Maret...*, 229–231.

the Vilenski department,. In 1812 he was delegated for the extraordinary service to the military administration<sup>10</sup>. 32-year-old François Casimir Duval Chassenon de Curzay, the auditor of the State Council of the first class from 1810, who later found himself in the territory of Illyria at the time of marshal Marmont's rule as the intendant of Rijeka, became the intendant in the Grodzienski department. He was very quickly involved in a competence conflict with the French authorities. Marmont wrote at that time about Chassenon's reprehensible behavior, complaining about "the superior reproaches which the auditors are making against the generals." After Chassenon's return from his leave in France the marshal forbade his deputy to hand his responsibilities over to him. In 1811 he was nominated the sub-prefect of Nantes and in 1812, similarly to the former intendant, he was delegated to the military administration<sup>11</sup>. In the Minski department, Pierre's Saulnier's son, the prefect of Moza and the general secretary of the ministry of justice, 22-year-old Sébastien Louis Saulnier, became the intendant. In 1810 Sébastien was nominated as auditor of the third class at the police prefecture and then auditor of the third class for the extraordinary service. In 1811 he held the position of the police general commissioner in Wesel and in 1812 he was delegated to the Great Army<sup>12</sup>. In the Bialostocki department, 24-year-old Adrien Louis Cochelet became the intendant. He had been the auditor at the ministry of finance and the

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<sup>10</sup> A. Robert, G. Cougny, *Dictionnaire des Parlementaires français de 1789 à 1889 comprenant tous les membres des Assemblées françaises et tous les ministres français depuis le 1er mai 1789 jusqu'au 1er mai 1889*. Paris 1889, vol. 4, 494; *Dictionnaire Napoléon...*, vol. 2, 393.

<sup>11</sup> Dossier. AN. F1bI 157/38; *Dictionnaire Napoléon...*, vol. 1, 425; M. Senkowska-Gluck, *Rządy napoleońskie w Ilirii 1809–1813*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1980, 42–43; Ch. Durand, *Les auditeurs au Conseil d'Etat de 1803 à 1814*. Aix-en-Provence 1958, 146–147.

<sup>12</sup> Dossier. AN, F1bI 173/9; *Dictionnaire Napoléon...*, vol. 2, 731

public treasury from 1809, then was nominated the intendant of Gorica in 1809. In 1810 he entered the extraordinary service and became auditor of the first class in the financial section. His career was aided by his sister's relationship with queen Hortense. In 1812 he was delegated to the Great Army<sup>13</sup>.

Deciding on the formation of the Lithuanian authorities and how to include French officials in its structure, Napoleon wished to avoid the situation in which he would lose control over the freed land of the Russian partition. Thus, he prevented any case in which the new Lithuanian authorities could start a spontaneous uprising in order to form a Polish Kingdom uncontrolled by France. Indeed, the directive regarding the condition of the captured territory of the former Polish Republic as part of the land captured from Russia and subjected to occupation rules was still in force. Apart from the directive, or even according to it, Napoleon carried out an experiment of forming new civil authorities for the local society. Appointed at Napoleon's direction such a complicated structure of authorities in Lithuania lead to competence and personal conflicts and after the first month the full extent of these conflicts was revealed. The competence conflicts and misunderstandings between the French and Lithuanian authorities concerned not only the central authority organs, but also administration at all levels, both in the capital and in the provinces. The lack of clear division between the military and civil authorities, or the French and Lithuanians, made the situation more complicated and very often brought about a paralysis in decision making. Those conflicts were also generated by the French intendants, who, on one hand, were dependent on the emperor's commissioner Bignon, but on the other,

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<sup>13</sup> Dossier. AN. F1bI 157/26; J.B.J. Boulliot, *Biographie ardennaise, ou histoire des hommes du Depart., ou Histoire Ardennais qui se sont fait remarquer*. Paris 1830, vol. 2, 462; *Dictionnaire Napoléon...*, vol. 1, 448.

presided over the three-person administrative commissions, which in fact were the authorities in each department theoretically submissive to the Commission of the Government. This condition led to frequent arguments, in which the issue of the superiority of a particular council or the wish to increase prerogatives played the main role<sup>14</sup>.

The administrative commissions worked in difficult conditions. The French authorities imposed on Lithuania such stringent demands that they could only be met with great effort<sup>15</sup>. A specific case is presented by the Grodzienski department and particularly the relationship between intendant Chassenon and the administrative commission which consisted of former colonel Ignacy Lachnicki, Jan Niemcewicz and Ludwig Panczerzyński. That relationship even led to violent scenes<sup>16</sup>. Chassenon tore apart the reports of the commission meetings or took money by force from the department treasury. He even sent military execution orders to the commission members. As member of the Commission of the Government Alexander Potocki wrote that the intendant played the role of “a little monarch,” who agreed with or rejected the commission’s proposals depending on his moods. He ordered his secretary, functioning as his “chancellor” to give his speeches and then he publicized them in print. He bombed the members of the department authorities with his own decrees,

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<sup>14</sup> Report of A. Chreptowicz, K. Daniłowicz in, K. Voenskij, *Akty, dokumenty i materialy dla polityczeskoj i bytovoj istorii 1812 goda* Sankt-Peterburg 1909-1912, vol. 1, 409, 411; *Akty...*, vol. 37, 224-225, 440; Podprefekt upicki to Komisja Administracyjna Departamentu Wileńskiego (KADW), 27 IX 1812 – Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas w Wilnie (hereafter: LVIA). F. 1532, a. 1, b. 14, k. 144.

<sup>15</sup> V. Pugačiauskas, *Napoleono administracija...*, 65, 194.

<sup>16</sup> K. Voenskij, *Akty...*, vol. 1, 435; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa...*, 144; E. Bignon do H. Mareta z 26 XII 1812 r. z Warszawy – Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères w Paryżu (hereafter: AMAE). Corr. Pologne 332, k. 578; A. Ernouf, *Maret...*, 447.

delaying in that way the works of the administrative commission<sup>17</sup>. The case was reported to Duke Bassano. The Commission of the Government and the Committee of Home Affairs intervened in the case of Chassenon, the Grodzienski department intendant, who demanded the governor charge the members of the Administrative Commission of the Gorodzienski Department officially in court. The Committee presented the opinion that the charges concerning the mess in military hospitals and delays of provisions related to the town authorities of Grodno. The problem was to decide about the proportion of finance that the whole department and the town should give to hospitals. According to the intendant's demand, the proposal of signing the contract for hospital provisions with the appointed Mr. Salur was accepted. A special commission led by Antoni Lechnicki was also established, whose purpose was to analyze any complaints about hospital maintenance<sup>18</sup>. Bignon presented the conflict at the Commission of the Government session in a different way. He stated that to the best of his knowledge, the members of the administrative commission gave the intendant a document in Polish answering his questions and when he demanded explanations, they told him he had all explanations in front of him. The furious intendant closed the session after that incident. However, as the reports from the Commission of the Government session proved, the members of the administrative commission sent the torn sheets of the report, which denied Bignon's version mentioned above<sup>19</sup>. As one of the

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<sup>17</sup> A. Potocki, *Pamiętnik* – Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie (hereafter: AGAD). APP 284, 205.

<sup>18</sup> Komitet Spraw Wewnętrznych (KSW) to Komisja Rządu Tymczasowego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego, 27 XI 1812 ; KSW to Komisja Administracyjna Departamentu Grodzieńskiego (KADG), 4 XII 1812 r. – AGAD. APP 144, vol. 2, k. 34, 51.

<sup>19</sup> Sesja KRTWKL, 29 IX 1812 – Rossijskij Gosudarstvennyj Arhiv Drevnih Aktov v Moskve (hereafter: RGADA). F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

sources of conflict in Grodno was presenting the intendant with a document in Polish, the Commission of the Government decided to include a secretary translator to the office of administrative commissions<sup>20</sup>. Finally, intendant Chassenon was shot as the result of argument with an officer from the Austrian Corps. In his diaries Victor de Broglie wrote about Chassenon's tendency for arguments and duels, which justifies the assumption that the source of conflicts in Grodno lay in Chassenon's violent personality<sup>21</sup>. What finally led to his dismissal was his recuperation. As a result, Cochelet, who was the intendant of Bialostocki department was temporarily rewarded the additional responsibilities. After consulting Maret, Bignon admitted that the management of the small Bialostocki department could be joined with the Grodzienski department, which for some time satiated conflicts<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, at the end of November the Administrative Commission of the Grodzienski Department requested the Commission of the Government to "protect them from the distress they received" from intendant Chassenon<sup>23</sup>. At that time, the report concerning the Grodzienski intendant's abuses reached Bignon, but there was no time to solve the problem<sup>24</sup>. Nonetheless, the two other French intendants, the above mentioned Cochelet in Bialystok and Saulnier in Minsk, managed to earn the respect of the local Lithuanian authorities<sup>25</sup>. As Alexander Potocki wrote, it was due to the fact that they did not disturb the activity of the administrative commissions which they

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<sup>20</sup> Sesja KRTWKL z 21, 24, 29 IX 1812 r. – RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>21</sup> V. De Broglie, *Souvenirs*. Paris 1886–887, vol. 1–4.

<sup>22</sup> E. Bignon to A. Berthier, 1, 2 XI 1812 – SHAT. C-2, 133; Sesja KRTWKL z 2 XI 1812 r. – RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>23</sup> Sesja KRTWKL z 27 XI 1812 r. – RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>24</sup> Sesja KRTWKL z 30 XI 1812 r. – RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>25</sup> E. Bignon to H. Maret, 26 XII 1812, Warsaw – AMAE. Corr. Pologne 332, k. 572, 578; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa...*, 144; M.K. Ogiński, *Mémoire sur la Pologne et les Polonais depuis 1788 jusqu'à la fin de 1815*. Paris 1826–1827, vol. 3, 217–218.

managed; thus, they saved themselves scenes similar to those in Grodno<sup>26</sup>. Saulnier was remembered as a good and righteous man, who donated a quite a large sum of money for improving the condition of hospitals in the town. Even Ogiński viewed him as just in his activity, although Saulnier controlled every little step of the members of the administrative commission in the department administration. Vilenski intendant Nicolai rarely took part in the sessions of the administrative commission. “A friendly and sweet man,” as Potocki described him, he only engaged himself in the workings of the department from time to time. He only intervened personally in key and urgent matters. He did not appeal to Lithuania, which influenced his involvement in the state issues<sup>27</sup>.

The governors of the four departments left a similar impression. They were in charge of the garrisons in the area of the departments as well as forming Lithuanian military units, the gendarmerie and the National Guard. They guarded the safety of the departments. The most crucial responsibilities of the governors were the organization and maintenance of the postal service, which was devastated by the retreating Russians, and watching the roads for the marching army, which included demarcating the stages on the roads and supplying the soldiers. The governors were also responsible for gathering the injured soldiers who stayed behind and forming them into marching squads. The governors took direct control over military commissioners and one official supervising military depots and hospitals – demarcating stages in each department. They also had authority over the French officials of lower ranks, who helped them<sup>28</sup>. In carrying out

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<sup>26</sup> A. Potocki, *Pamiętnik* – AGAD. APP 284, k. 205.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, k. 205. V. Pugačiauskas, *Napoleono administracija...*, 57–59, 193.

<sup>28</sup> Report of A. Berthier for Napoleon, 3 VII 1812– (SHAT). C–2, 128; *Corr.* 18939; G. Fabry, *Campagne...*, vol. 3, 6–7; A. Ernouf, *Maret...*, 411; D. van Hogendorp,

those duties, governor Brun was regarded as a restrained man. Ferriér did very little due to his frequent absence from the department. Bronikowski made a good impression of being involved in the works of the Minski department. Jomini was described unfavorably by Potocki as being as worthless as his supervisor, Hogendorp; however, being at a lower position, he could do much less harm<sup>29</sup>.

The most serious source of conflict was the central authorities in Lithuania and its beginning was connected with the general governor's arrival in Vilnius on 29<sup>th</sup> July. Hogendorp regarded himself to be the new emperor of Lithuania from the very beginning. In his diary, which he wrote after some years, he repeatedly wrote that at Napoleon's command, he was made the most important authority in Lithuania. At the same time as he emphasized his peacefulness, he accused all people who doubted his competences of unfavorable or even hostile activity against him. Hogendorp's attitude evoked immediate conflicts with Vilenski governor Jomini, the emperor's commissioner Bignon, The Commission of the Government, and above all with the president of the Military Commission, Alexander Sapieha.<sup>30</sup> Not telling anybody in advance about his arrival, Hogendorp bore grudges that he was not welcomed cordially. While staying at the Vilenski governor's house he awaited an official reception from the authorities. As there was some rumor in the town about his arrival, some single representatives turned up at the house. They were immediately told off for not giving a proper welcome. He complained that he had been

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*Mémoires...*, 314–315; *Wiadomość o wewnętrznej organizacji Komisji Rządu Tymczasowego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* – LVIA. F. 1532, a. 1, b. 1, k. 56.

<sup>29</sup> A. Potocki, *Pamiętnik* – AGAD. APP 284, k. 204; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa...*, 144, 360; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon...*, 124–125, 134.

<sup>30</sup> D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires...*, 314; „Kurier Litewski” ,1 VIII 1812, nr 59.

welcomed by neither Bignon nor Jomini<sup>31</sup>. Undoubtedly, the governor general of Lithuania, in fulfilling Napoleon's orders, had wished from the first day to force the pace of organizing the Lithuanian army and that is why he intervened in works of the Military Committee more and more often. However, he felt removed from real decisions. Above all there was no clear division of competences between Bignon, whom the Commission of the Government sympathized with, and Hogendorp, whose position was not anticipated in the order of 1<sup>st</sup> July. From the beginning, these two sides fell into deeper and deeper conflict about the extent of their power and Hogendorp complained about being kept in the dark and not being allowed to deal with military issues. He had grievances that he was not delivered daily reports from the Commission of the Government sessions as Maret was. He did not like the fact that Lithuanian authorities tried to keep some independence. Every day the conflicts intensified. Hogendorp continuously treated the members of the Commission of the Government contemptuously and publically showed his disrespect towards Lithuania and the Lithuanians. He also put forward an idea to treat the Lithuanian territory as an occupied land. He stated that in order to collect indispensable financial resources, the French should take all church silver and the treasury of Vilenski University and force the Jews to donate additionally. Maret in vain explained to the general governor that the scope of his power did not include the relationships with the Commission of the Government and that he should contact it by means of the emperor's commissioner.

Hogendorp did not accept these explanations and in his letters to Napoleon and Berthier he complained that his role was being diminished. He also accused the Lithuanian authorities of delays in tasks given by the

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<sup>31</sup> M. Handelsman, *Rezydenci...*, 278; D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires...*, 314–315.

emperor<sup>32</sup>. Alexander Potocki confirmed that general Hogendorp very rapidly started his “guerilla warfare” with the Commission of the Government. He had expected the position of general governor to be connected with great honors, excellent command and a fortune. It soon turned out that his command was limited to marching troops; furthermore, he was not given any salary and lacked clear, formally described competences. All that brought about a situation in which nobody was willing to regard him as the leading figure in Lithuania. He was dissatisfied about not being honored or paid suitably. As Potocki wrote, Hogendorp was “an arrogant and the greatest animal”; in accusing others with allegations about poorly managed armed forces or hospitals that were in fact included in his responsibilities, he discredited himself. The fact that the general governor firmly demanded suitable representative funds for himself was not to his credit<sup>33</sup>.

As the new general governor, Hogendorp who initiated conflicts with all potential partners within a couple of days, neither knew the complex situation in Lithuania nor understood it; thus, his orders led to more frequent arguments with the Military Committee and its leader, Alexander Sapieha. Hogendorp regarded count Sapieha to be a man of no personality, surrounded by the same dullards, which slowed down the country’s military effort. He criticized the method of recruitment to Lithuanian regiments and accused his commanders of inefficiency. One of the contentious questions was the issue of the officers’ assignments that Hogendorp wanted to appropriate for himself, appointing officers after

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<sup>32</sup> E. Bignon to H. Maret , 3 VIII 1812– AN. AF IV 1650, pl. 3, nr 10; A. Ernouf, *Maret...*, 411; G. Fabry, *Campagne...*, vol. 3, 533–536 – instruction for A. Berthier, 1 VIII 1812 ; vol. 4, 262, 263, 302–303; D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires...*, 314–316. Por. E. Bignon, *Polska...*, vol. 2, 16–17; M. Handelsman, *Rezydenci...*, 278–279.

<sup>33</sup> A. Potocki, *Pamiętnik* – AGAD. APP 284, k. 203, 231.

gaining Maret's and Bignon's opinion. Conversely, Sapieha demanded keeping the regulation, according to which the Commission of the Government put forward nomination proposals to the emperor. Bignon, who was befriended by Sapieha, supported the count. More and more frequently, the dispute was witnessed by Maret, whose support was sought by both parties. After one violent argument, the minister wrote that he was afraid for his furniture. Attempts to prevent the dispute were unsuccessful. In such heated arguments between the general governor, the emperor's commissioner and the Lithuanian authorities, Napoleon's support became necessary. In his letters to the emperor, Maret backed up Sapieha and accused Hogendorp of rudeness. He proposed a clear division of the governor's military authority and the Commission of the Government's civil powers, as he considered it to be the only way to avoid further conflicts. Accordingly, Maret wished to appoint Bignon as the highest superior of the Lithuanian civil authorities, which would create two independent power centers: a military administration in Hogendorp's hands and a civil administration in Bignon's hands<sup>34</sup>. A few years of cooperation between Bignon and Sapieha and the commissioner's good relations with other members of the Commission of the Government indicated that such a solution would facilitate harmonious cooperation between the Lithuanian authorities and Bignon. The commissioner being engaged in working with the Lithuanian authorities, he had to understand the entire complex situation in Lithuania. Thus, the minister needed to be sent precise instructions about the general governor's competences from Napoleon,

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<sup>34</sup> H. Maret to Napoleon, 12 VIII 1812, Vilnius – AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 2, nr 51–53; G. Fabry, *Campagne...*, vol. 4, 135–137; A. Ernouf, *Maret...*, 412–414.

which would finally delineate the boundaries of his power. He even demanded Hogendorp's dismissal<sup>35</sup>.

In reply to more frequent conflicts concerning the relationship between the French military administration and the Lithuanian civil authorities, which was personally connected with general governor Hogendorp, the emperor decided to cut the Gordian knot of competence and facilitate the activity of the Lithuanian authorities. Eventually, the emperor made a decision that astonished everyone. On 24<sup>th</sup> August he nominated Hogendorp as the president of the Commission of the Government, which meant the superior of the Lithuanian civil authorities, stating that it was the general governor who deserved the complete authority over the Lithuanian administration and army organization<sup>36</sup>. The position of emperor's commissioner, which Maret wanted to be the head of civil administration, was now subject to Hogendorp. The emperor, who was in favor of vertical management, ordered Bignon to support the general governor and not to reject his activity. The commissioner was supposed to be Hogendorp's secretary, supporting him in his efforts<sup>37</sup>. In that new situation the intendants subject to Bignon carried out the orders of Hogendorp, who was simultaneously the emperor's commissioner's superior and the president of the Commission of the Government. The emperor also dismissed governor Jomini, who was in conflict with Hogendorp. In his place the emperor nominated 51-year-old brigadier general Rock Godart, who had been a

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<sup>35</sup> H. Maret to Napoleon, 12 VIII 1812– AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 2, nr 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ordre du jour, 24 VIII 1812– AN. AF IV 685, pl. 5480; *Corr.* 19133.

<sup>37</sup> *Corr.* 19136, 19119, 19135, 19137; G. de Chambray, *Histoire de l'expédition de Russie*. Paris 1825, vol. 2, 46; M. Handelsman, *Rezydenci...*, s 281; A. Chuquet, *Ordres et apostilles de Napoléon Ier*. Paris 1903, vol. 2, 396.

participant of revolutionary and Napoleonic wars since 1792 and the commander of Tarn department from 1811<sup>38</sup>.

Most importantly, after the changes in the wake of Napoleon's orders, Hogendorp's and Bignon's influence on the issues of the Commission of the Government sessions increased. Its members became mere executors of the orders of the French authorities' representatives, although the general governor very quickly realized that he lacked the appropriate qualifications and knowledge to cope with his new responsibilities as the president of the Commission of the Government. Hogendorp did not know Lithuania and most issues discussed were unfamiliar to him. As a result, he stopped participating in the sessions of the Government Commission. Nevertheless, he ruled in a harsh and aloof way. He liked others to feel his superiority in solving even the most trivial issues and disrespected collaborators. Certainly, the governor's curtness resulted not only from his habits as Java's governor, but also from his experience in the army of Frederick II in his youth. A significant factor that influenced Hogendorp's attitude towards Lithuania might also have been his negative opinion of the Lithuanian elite, whom Hogendorp accused of keeping feudal relationships on Lithuanian land. On that issue, the Lithuanian authorities were in constant conflict with general Hogendorp, about whom Potocki wrote to his father "(...) he is a man of no reason, skills or courtesy, bear it in mind, my father, what coincidence it must be, fortunately so far we've had everything our own way as count Bassano and Bignon are supporting us".<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, when the Commission of the Government dared to alter the instructions for the intendants concerning demands for wheat, its members

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<sup>38</sup> H. Maret to Napoleon, 25 VIII 1812 – AN. AF IV 1647, pl. 2, nr 97; D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires...*, 308, 309, 311–313; X. Courville, *Jomini*. Paris 1935, 164–170. *Corr.* 19157, 18925; A. Chuquet, *Ordres...*, vol. 2, 406.

<sup>39</sup> A. Potocki to S.K. Potocki, late October 1812 from Vilnius, – AGAD. APP 285.

were forced to put forward a written statement that they had no intention, and in the future they would have no intention, to change the orders of the French authorities<sup>40</sup>. The administrative commissions were unconditionally obliged to carry out the orders of the highest French authorities, even those that were not confirmed by the Commission of the Government<sup>41</sup>. During that period, the role of the intendants increased. The Commission of the Government told the authorities of the four departments to inform them immediately about every act of the members of administrative commission when the intendants were absent from the sessions. They also confirmed that the commission consisted of an intendant and its three members<sup>42</sup>. Undoubtedly, the basic problem was the fact that the French officials arrived in Lithuania already prejudiced and having no knowledge about the country. They did not know the language, which resulted in translating every document that was put forward into French. It was not only costly, but also time-consuming, which delayed the activity of the authority<sup>43</sup>. Officials of lower rank in particular did not leave a positive impression in Lithuania. They were accused of maltreating of the country that they regarded as an occupied territory.<sup>44</sup> Some French also realized how responsible such behaviour was. However, most of the French officials, being paid very irregularly, lived at the expense of Lithuania<sup>45</sup>. J. Iwaszkiewicz wrote that the French officials demanded to be provided with the most expensive wines and liquors. B. Dundulis emphasized that those

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<sup>40</sup> Sesja KRTWKL, 12 XI 1812– RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>41</sup> Sesja KRTWKL, 5 X 1812– RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>42</sup> Sesja KRTWKL, 21 and 26 XI 1812– RGADA. F. 12, b. 262, part 5.

<sup>43</sup> A. Potocki, *Pamiętnik* – AGAD. APP 284, k. 205.

<sup>44</sup> V.G. Krasnânskij, *Minskij departament Velikogo Knâzestva Litovskogo*. Sankt-Peterburg 1902, 22; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa...*, 114.

<sup>45</sup> KRTWKL, 29 IX 1812. RGADA. F. 12, b. 261, nr 1097; K. Voenskij, *Akty...*, vol. 1, 412; J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa...*, 144.

officials should not have any special privileges concerning accommodation and military supplies. However, Dundulis forgot that the competences of the French authorities duplicated the responsibilities of the Lithuanian authorities in the most important issues<sup>46</sup>.

The final task of the French officials in Lithuania in 1812 was to cover the withdrawal of the Great army through the Lithuanian territory. Thanks to the Lithuanian's generosity in December 1812, the depots for Napoleon's army in Lithuania were full and allowed the army to survive the whole winter. The Lithuanians also managed to take out their last money to pay taxes and over 90% of the collected fund subsidized the formation of a Lithuanian army, whose troops could stop the Russian army's pursuit. The impending disaster could not be avoided, however. The French officials in Vilnius witnessed the most atrocious moments of the withdrawal from Russia as the chaos approached. Vilenski governor Godart looked on with horror upon seeing only the remains of the whole army coming back. Even though there were a few marshals and over 100 generals in the city, nobody could put everything back in order. As Hogendorp reported, there was a lot of bread and meat, but soldiers did not go to the places of accommodation they were directed to. Every one chose accommodation freely. The strong threw away the weaker and robbed food and vodka depots. Citizens became victims of robbery once again. Streets and squares of the city were crowded with people, horses and carts. For many soldiers who found accommodation, the warmth became the cause of their death<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup>B. Dundulis, *Napoléon...*, 134–135. Por. L. Brotonne, *Dernières lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*. Paris 1903, vol. 2, 282.

<sup>47</sup> M. Lignieres, *Souvenirs de la Grande Armée et de la Vieille Garde impériale*. Paris 1923, 129–130; M. Fézensac, *Souvenirs militaires de 1804 a 1814*. Paris 1866, 351–353; R. Godart, *Mémoires*. Paris 1895, 185–187; D. van Hogendorp, *Mémoires...*, 337.

It is difficult to state explicitly, how Napoleon's mistakes, which he made when initially constructing the authorities in four departments influenced Lithuanian military effort in 1812. Nevertheless, the results of the war seem to have been determined by objective factors as well as an overly optimistic forecast concerning Lithuania's resources, which were drastically diminished by both the Russian policy and the devastation of the country by the troops of the Great Army. Napoleon's political concepts, which eventually determined his policy towards Lithuania, also had a significant influence. A lot of people blamed the failure on the French officials' lack of competences as Dominik Dziewanowski accused "(...) foreign Governors, especially in Vilnius, neither allowing the natives to do any administration nor doing it by themselves in any other way, but by the suppliers, made all things highly expensive and thus, ripping off the poor citizens, who seeing such bargains with the Jews to be their doom and failure, finally cooled down their readiness".