

= Sejm of the Estates =

The Sejm of the Estates (Polish : sejm stanowy) or Estates of Galicia (Polish : stany galicyjskie) were the parliament in the first half of the 19th century Galicia region in Austrian Empire . The body existed from 1775 to 1845 . In the history of the Polish parliament , it succeeded the general sejm and local sejmik on the territories of the Austrian partition . The Estates were disbanded following the Kraków Uprising of 1846 . In 1861 they were succeeded by the Sejm of the Land (Polish : sejm krajowy) .

The estates in question were primarily clergy and nobility , with a token townsfolk representation . Peasantry was not represented .

= = History = =

= = = Postulate Sejm = = =

Parts of the Polish ? Lithuanian Commonwealth Lesser Poland territories were included in the Austrian partition as early as the First Partition of Poland in 1772 . In order to reduce dissent , the Austrian Empire in 1775 allowed the Polish nobility (szlachta) of the newly acquired territories to continue their tradition of holding local parliament @-@ like meetings , and gave the permission for an advisory body , the Postulate Sejm (Polish : sejm postulatowy) , to be held every year . The implementation of the Postulate Sejm was delayed , and eventually it held only four sessions , all in Lviv (Lwów) : in 1782 , 1784 , 1786 and 1788 . The body had no real power ; it could only write petitions to the monarch , who had no obligation to act on them . Polish legal scholar Stanisław Grodziski noted that while the Sejm , on the surface , continued the Polish parliamentary tradition , the real goal of the powerless body , as intended by the Austrian court , was to drive a wedge between the various groups of Polish nobility , reducing their unity and influence . The Postulate Sejm was composed of wealthy nobility and two deputies from the city of Lviv . The sessions lasted a few days each . The 1788 session was the last one ; parts of the Austrian @-@ held Commonwealth territories were briefly included in the Duchy of Warsaw following the Polish ? Austrian War in 1806 , and the populace represented at the Sejm of the Duchy of Warsaw , but this was short lived , as the territories in question were restored to Austria following the Duchy 's occupation and the terms of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 .

= = = Estates of Galicia = = =

Soon afterward , in 1817 , Francis I of Austria called for a new sejm , now named the Estates of Galicia (Polish : Stany Galicyjskie) , which met again in Lviv . Most scholars , like Jacek Jędruch , see this body as a continuation of the Postulate Sejm , and discuss both of them together . The Austrian Emperor decreed that the members have to wear a special uniform ; this made it the only Polish parliament @-@ like body in the history of Polish politics with a dress code requirement .

Excepting the establishment of the Ossolineum as a center for Polish cultural study , the Sejm reflected the conservative attitudes of the body 's unelected members from the nobility and the landed gentry . From the late 1830s an influx of new members , such as Leon Sapieha , Władysław Badeni and Agenor Gołuchowski made the body more progressive and representative . In the 1840s the Sejm saw much debate on the subject of the abolition of serfdom . The Estates last met in 1845 , when they voted , 116 to 10 , on the proposal to abolish serfdom ; however they lacked the power to implement it and had to wait for the Emperor 's decision . The Estates were disbanded following the Kraków Uprising of 1846 , a mostly peasant rebellion aimed , ironically , at many of the nobles who were supportive of the abolition of serfdom . In 1848 , during the Spring of Nations unrest , when the Emperor tried to convene the Estates , the members refused , demanding a more representative composition , and increased powers ; the Emperor turned down their demand . In 1861 the Estates were succeeded by the Country Sejm (Polish : sejm krajowy) .

= = Composition and organization = =

The number of the members was not fixed ; it varied from over 200 (with 289 in 1782 and 213 in 1817) to as low as 41 (in 1834) ; in most years the Sejm had averaged 60 to 80 deputies . They were composed of clergy , nobility (either titled or above a certain , relatively high , income level) , two deputies from the city of Lviv representing the burghers and later , chancellor of the University of Lwów . The members were not elective , holding the mandates due to their offices , titles or wealth . This made the Sejm not representative , and rather conservative .

The Estates met for a few days each year , with some exceptions : they were not convened in the years 1831 and 1832 (time of the November Uprising in the neighboring Polish statelet , the Congress Kingdom) .

The Estates had no dedicated location to meet . To evade Emperor 's limitation on the proceedings duration and topics to be discussed , the members met before each session at various locations . While in session , they met at the former monastery buildings , owned by the University of Lwów .

= = Competences = =

Just like the preceding Postulate Sejm , the Estates had very limited competences : they met to hear the Emperor decrees , distribute tax assessments , grant Galician titles of nobility to individuals who already held similar titles elsewhere in the Austrian Empire , prepare petitions and appeals to be heard by the Emperor . Polish 19th @-@ century historian , Henryk Schmitt , wrote that the role of the Estates was to listen to the government decisions , and file petitions , which often waited for the royal reply for several years ; he thus notes that the Estates were powerless , a " comedy " , their only purpose being to fulfill the Congress of Vienna requirement of having some form of " national representation " on the lands of the Austrian partition .