

= Second Partition of Poland =

The 1793 Second Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the second of three partitions (or partial annexations) that ended the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by 1795 . The second partition occurred in the aftermath of the War in Defense of the Constitution and the Targowica Confederation of 1792 , and was approved by its territorial beneficiaries , the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia . The division was ratified by the coerced Polish parliament (Sejm) in 1793 (see the Grodno Sejm) in a short-lived attempt to prevent the inevitable complete annexation of Poland , the Third Partition .

= Background =

By 1790 , on the political front , the Commonwealth had deteriorated into such a helpless condition that it was successfully forced into an unnatural and ultimately deadly alliance with its enemy , Prussia . The Polish-Prussian Pact of 1790 was signed , giving false hope that the Commonwealth might have at last found an ally that would shield it while it reformed itself . The May Constitution of 1791 enfranchised the bourgeoisie , established the separation of the three branches of government , and eliminated the abuses of Repnin Sejm . Those reforms prompted aggressive actions on the part of its neighbours , wary of the potential renaissance of the Commonwealth . Once again Poland dared to reform and improve itself without Russia's permission , and once again the Empress Catherine II was angered ; arguing that Poland had fallen prey to the radical Jacobinism then at high tide in France , Russian forces invaded the Commonwealth in 1792 .

In the War in Defense of the Constitution , the army of the Russian Empire , invited by the pro-Russian , conservative , Polish magnates' alliance , the Confederation of Targowica , fought against the Polish forces supporting the Constitution . The conservative nobility (szlachta) believed that the Russians would help them restore their Golden Liberty . Abandoned by their Prussian allies , the badly outnumbered Polish pro-Constitution forces fought under Prince Józef Poniatowski a defensive war with some measure of success , but were ultimately ordered to abandon their efforts by their supreme commander , King Stanisław August Poniatowski . The King decided to join the Targowica Confederation , as demanded by the Russians .

Russia invaded Poland to ensure the defeat of the Polish reforms , with no overt goal of another partition (it viewed Poland as its protectorate , and saw little need in giving up chunks of Poland to other countries) . Frederick William II of Prussia , however , saw those events as an opportunity to strengthen his country . Frederick demanded from Catherine that for his country's abandoning Poland as a close ally , and for Prussian participation in the War of the First Coalition against revolutionary France (a participation that Russia encouraged , and in which Prussia recently suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Valmy) , Prussia should be compensated - preferably with parts of the Polish territory . Russia soon decided to accept the Prussian offer .

= Partition =

On 23 January 1793 Prussia signed a treaty with Russia , agreeing that Polish reforms would be revoked and both countries would receive chunks of Commonwealth territory . Russian and Prussian military took control of the territories they claimed soon afterward , with Russian troops already present , and Prussian troops meeting only nominal resistance . In 1793 , deputies to the Grodno Sejm , the last Sejm of the Commonwealth , in the presence of Russian forces , agreed to the Russian and Prussian territorial demands . The Grodno Sejm became infamous not only as the last sejm of the Commonwealth , but because its deputies had been bribed and coerced by the Russians (Russia and Prussia wanted official , legal sanction from Poland for their demands) .

Russia took 250,000 square kilometres (97,000 sq mi) , while Prussia took 58,000 square kilometres (22,000 sq mi) . The Commonwealth lost about 307,000 km² , being reduced to 215,000 km² .

Russia received the Kiev Voivodeship , Bracław Voivodeship , Podole Voivodeship and Minsk

Voivodeship , and parts of the Vilnius Voivodeship , Nowogródek Voivodeship , Brest Litovsk Voivodeship and the Volhynian Voivodeship . This was accepted by the Grodno Sejm on 22 July . Russia reorganized its newly acquired territories into Minsk Viceroyalty and Izyaslav Viceroyalty (which in 1795 was split into Podolian and Volhynian Viceroyalties) .

Prussia received the cities of Gdańsk (Danzig) and Toruń (Thorn) , and Gniezno Voivodeship , Poznań Voivodeship , Sieradz Voivodeship , Kalisz Voivodeship , Płock Voivodeship , Brześć Kujawski Voivodeship , Inowrocław Voivodeship , Dobrzyń Land , and parts of the Kraków Voivodeship , Rawa Voivodeship and Masovian Voivodeship . This was accepted by the Grodno Sejm on 23 September or 25 September (sources vary) . Prussia organized its newly acquired territories into South Prussia .

The Commonwealth lost about 5 million people ; only about 4 million people remained in the Polish & Lithuanian lands .

What was left of the Commonwealth was merely a small buffer state with a puppet king , and Russian garrisons keeping an eye on the reduced Polish army .

= = Aftermath = =

Targowica confederates , who did not expect another partition , and the king , Stanisław August Poniatowski , who joined them near the end , both lost much prestige and support . The reformers , on the other hand , were attracting increasing support . In March 1794 the Kościuszko Uprising begun . The defeat of the Uprising in November that year resulted in the final Third Partition of Poland , ending the existence of the Commonwealth .