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## THE LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SWEDISH PRESS ON POLAND

This article aims at demonstrating what type of information from and on Poland conveyed Swedish newspapers and magazines of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and what the attitude was of the then Swedish press towards Poland and her affairs. The press played a significant role in shaping the image of Poland, influenced readers' opinions as well as it voiced the Swedish public opinion. In the breakthrough, for the Republic of Poland, years, namely, 1768–1772, and 1788–1795 reports from Poland appeared in the Swedish press very often. The information on the affairs of Sweden's southern friend was published in every second issue of a newspaper, on the average, and not infrequently on the first page. Also, it was not rare that these articles had more than one page.

The research takes into consideration the most important, from the point of view of an analysed subject, the general Swedish journals issued in Stockholm such as: "Almänna Tidningar", "Nya Almänna Tidningar", "Dagligt Allehanda", "Nya Dagligt Allehanda", and the most popular newspapers published outside the capital such as: "Åbo Tidningar", "Göteborgs Tidningar", and "Göteborgs Allehanda". Among periodicals, the monthlies such as "Svenska Magazinet" and "Almänna Magazinet" and the magazine "Stats Skrifter" issued by Carl Christopher Gjørwell have been used.<sup>1</sup> It needs to be mentioned that the people such as Johan Henryk Kellgren of "Stockholms Posten", or C.C. Gjørwell, editor and publisher of "Almänna Tidningar" as well as Frans Mikael Franzén, editor

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<sup>1</sup> B. Lundstedt: *Sveriges periodiska litteratur*, Stockholm 1969.

of “Åbo Tidningar” played a significant role in the development of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Swedish press.<sup>2</sup>

Information from Poland got through to the Swedish press mainly in connection with important political events such as confederacies, partitions, wars, uprisings, the Sejm in sessions, treaties and pacts with foreign states, and attempts to reconstruct the Republic of Poland. Apart from the major events, the Swedish press also informed the reader on less significant matters such as epidemics, or even prosaic occurrences, for example blizzards.

Much space in the Swedish press was devoted to the situation in the Republic of Poland at the time of the Bar Confederacy. Information on confederates’ fights was given to the public on daily basis. Sorrow was expressed at both the Russian oppression and the fact of Repnin having imprisoned Polish senators. In “*Almänna Magazinet*” Gjörwell published a 14-page-long article in which he discussed not only the course of the confederacy but also its genesis going back to earlier confederations.<sup>3</sup> Also, “*Almänna Tidningar*” which Gjörwell published, too, wrote frequently of Poland’s difficult situation due to the Bar Confederacy.

From the perspective of the Swedish press, the Poland of the years 1768–1772 presents an almost apocalyptic view. The press informed that the situation in Poland was lamentable, want, poverty, and misery were omnipresent. Oppression of Polish people was the order of the day. Embittered with the Russian rule, confederates destroyed and disorganized the life in the entire country. People suffered due to the fact that they had to deliver forage and food for confederates. The devastation of villages and towns proceeded, the living and other inventories are robbed, crops were destroyed, famine spread, and there were hundreds and thousands of casualties. The situation gradually got worsened, this being due to conflicts among confederates themselves. There was common distrust, the king could not make appropriate decisions any longer, which in turn did not cause his subject to trust him, either, the argument of the Swedish press went. The atmosphere of confusion and destruction affected also burghers and peasants who murder, burn, and rob thus taking revenge on the oppressors. Instead of mitigating conflicts and anxieties, the church foments this hatred and calls for the anni-

<sup>2</sup> G. Samuelson: *A History of Swedish Literature*, Stockholm 1970, pp. 138–152; Z. Ciesielski: *Historia literatury szwedzkiej* [A History of the Swedish Literature], Wrocław 1990, pp. 58–65.

<sup>3</sup> *Underrättelse om de i Polen så ofta förekommande confederationer*, “*Almänna Magazinet*”, utg. C.C. Gjörwell, del I, 1770, pp. 1–14.

hilation of the believers of any other, than Catholic, religion – this is what readers of Swedish journals were informed about.<sup>4</sup>

Still, it was not only confederacy fights and their disastrous effects that the Swedish press in question wrote about. In 1770, in the section entitled *State Affairs*, “*Almänna Tidningar*” devoted one of its articles to the critical discussion of the Polish political system. Attention had been paid to the king’s power severely limited by nobility, the noblemen’s huge role in ruling the country, the role which practically helped appropriate Poland for themselves. Readers were informed of the deprivation of other states of their rights and of peasants’ very bitter fate resembling that of slaves. Also, the election practices (*liberum veto*) and free election were classified as the weaknesses of the Republic of Poland’s system of rule.<sup>5</sup> However, the editor of the journal saw a chance for positive changes in this respect. He indicated a group of people close to the king who aim at reforming the system by introducing hereditary monarchy. At the same time the editor pointed to the fact that a large part of nobility is supported by Russia in that the reforms were unnecessary. Under the pretext of regulating religious questions, Russia interfered with internal affairs of the Republic of Poland, and her army, while stationing in Poland, saw to the interests of Tsarina Catherine II Great – he wrote. The editor also reminded that on the recommendation of the Russian ambassador Repnin, opponents, the Bishop of Cracow Kajetan Sołtyk included, had been deported into Russia.<sup>6</sup>

On the average, every second issue of the “*Almänna Tidningar*” from 1771 informs on the tense situation in Warsaw: confederates’ conflicts, riots, disagreements, or fratricidal fights. The notes depict the bitter fate of the Polish peasants deprived of rights and land.<sup>7</sup> Poland’s situation and the critique of the exorbitant Polish freedom also appeared in other journals, for example in “*Dagligt Allehanda*”.

In 1772 the growth of the public opinion’s interest in the situation of the Republic of Poland can be observed. This year was the breakthrough time, both for Poland and Sweden. Sweden managed to introduce a new constitution thus reinforcing her political system, whereas Poland succumbed to her three neighbours

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–10; “*Almänna Tidningar*”, no. 78, 16.06.1770; no. 124, 27.10.1770; no. 133, 24.11.1770; no. 138, 19.12.1770.

<sup>5</sup> “*Almänna Tidningar*”, no. 80, 21.06.1770.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 407.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., no. 58, 12.09.1771.

which partitioned her for the first time. The Swedish King Gustav III invoked her anarchy, confusion, and parties' struggles when he spoke of the 1<sup>st</sup> partition of Poland as an occasion to reintroduce in the country strong monarchic rule. The Swedish "Hats" party and the court circles compared the oppositional party of "Caps" to the Polish Magnates in their desire to make use of the Russian gold. The Swedish Chancellors' College commented critically, even contemptuously of the Polish government and political system. The College accused Polish authorities of having not made any decision whatsoever as regards reforms and stated that it was internal conflicts and submissiveness towards foreign superpowers which had disabled the salvation of the country.<sup>8</sup>

The then Swedish press devoted much space to the discussion of Polish affairs. The journals such as "Almänna Tidningar", "Dagligt Allehanda", and "Nya Almänna Tidningar" prioritized the situation in Poland. The information on the development of this situation was frequently published in them. Often-times, in particular from the mid-1772 one-page articles appeared on these newspapers' first pages. Contrary to the official position the Swedish authorities took, the press, as an expression of the public voice, showed sympathy and empathy towards Poland.

King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski evoked much interest among Swedish readers. Soon after his election, when the first reforms began to be introduced, the king appeared as a positive figure to the Swedish reading audience. "Svenska Magazinet" wrote that, in spite of the neighbours' reluctance and Poland's internal opposition, the Polish monarch aimed at reinforcing the state. Attention had been paid to the king's winsome demeanour, his manners, good education, wide knowledge of foreign languages, and charming appearance, namely, dark hair and black eyes.<sup>9</sup> It needs to be mentioned that, at the commencement of his rule and until the Bar Confederacy, King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski delighted the Swedish Prince, Gustav. Unfortunately, the attitude the king assumed at the time of the Bar Confederacy, namely, the lack of reaction to Russian violence and his request of being protected by the Russian Tsarina eventually changed this delight

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<sup>8</sup> G. Majewska: *Szwecja. Kraj – ludzie – rządy w polskiej opinii II połowy XVIII wieku* [Sweden: the Country – the People – the Power from the Point of View of the Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Perspective], Gdańsk 2004, pp. 314, 315.

<sup>9</sup> "Svenska Magazinet", 1766, pp. 62, 549–550.

into contempt.<sup>10</sup> The newspapers commented on the behavior of the Polish monarch in the context of both fights with the confederates, the increasing tension in the international policy and foreign encroachment. They emphasized that King Stanislaus August was enthroned due to the Russian favouritism, his position was weak, and he was depended upon Moscow in his actions, a reason for his indecisiveness one example of which could be the mentioned attitude he assumed at the time of the confederacy.<sup>11</sup>

From the mid-1772 the Swedish press devoted much attention to the presence of foreign armies: Prussian, Russian, and Austrian in Poland. In July of the same year they informed that the Austrian army was moving inland and surrounded Tyniec, yet, with Austrian soldiers having been good Catholics, the Benedictine monastery was left untouched.<sup>12</sup> The press was sorry to establish that foreign monarchs dictated conditions to Poland and the country's dwellers lived in uncertainty, had little knowledge on what the future would bring for the information they obtained concerning the lot of their fatherland contradicted one another.<sup>13</sup>

The first partition impressed the Swedish public opinion enormously. Poland and her people's miserable situation stirred up much sympathy. The sad lot of the Polish monarch was a much deplored subject. Journals informed readers which territories in particular Poland lost at the same time stressing that the partition weakened Poland but strengthened her neighbours. Notes appeared communicating to the Swedish people the fact of Poland having lost almost one third of her territory, including the best economically developed and urbanized territories of the eastern Prussia and Little Poland. Attention was also given to the information that the first partition had ruined the attempt to introduce, with Russia's consent, reforms to a limited degree and that confederate chaos and fights destroyed many a town and village, disorganizing the Polish state apparatus and caused big population losses.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> W. Konopczyński: *Polska a Szwecja. Od pokoju oliwskiego do upadku Rzeczypospolitej 1660–1795* [Poland and Sweden. From the Oliva Peace to the Demise of the Republic of Poland 1660–1795], Warszawa 1924, p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> "Almänna Tidningar", del I, no. 17, 22.01.1772; del II, no. 50, 29.02.1772; no. 247, 05.11.1772.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., del II, no. 100, 24.07.1772.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., del II, no. 224, 02.11. 1772; "Dagligt Allehanda", no. 220, 01.10.1772.

<sup>14</sup> "Almänna Tidningar", del II, no. 209, 19.09.1772; no. 247, 05.11.1772; no. 262, 23.11.1772; no. 291, 30.12.1772.

The situation in Poland was also on agenda in the Swedish press in the following years. One of the first issues of “*Nya Almäna Tidningar*” of 1773 wrote: “if there is a state in the world which needs a good piece of advice, it is Poland. For several years now this country has been deprived of both the proper and independent government and its best territories.” Further the argument was that the establishment of a new administration was a number one issue to be considered by the new Sejm.<sup>15</sup> The works on a New Form of the Government were also commented on and the proposed programme of changes was listed with the emphasis on the fact that such a programme had to be approved by the three adjacent courts, a note which reminded the Swedish reader that all the propositions concerning the state changes had to be accepted by these courts.<sup>16</sup>

Correspondence from Warsaw described the situation in the post-partition Poland. The press commented on both King Stanislaus Augustus’s and the Polish Sejm’s enormous dependence on occupation authorities, big role of the Russian ambassador Otton Stackelberg, or the presence of foreign armies on the Polish territories.<sup>17</sup> The adjacent states decided on not only the shape of the Polish government, but they also imposed the economic solutions profitable for them only - the Swedish press informed. Prussia enforced the granting of customs duty privileges and aimed at subordinating Gdańsk.<sup>18</sup> Both the sessions of the Polish Sejm and ratification of partition treaties were commented on. It was with regret established that the Polish nobility had not drawn any conclusions from the first partition for, instead of debating over the lot of their motherland, the Sejm members discussed unimportant matters, whereas leaders of political parties took care of their own private interests only.<sup>19</sup> The Swedish society was also informed on the suppression of the Jesuit order in Poland and allocating all of its numerous assets for the purpose of enlivening the activity of the National Education Commission and education reform.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “*Nya Almäna Tidningar*”, del I, no. 12, 16.01.1773.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, del I, no. 45, 24.02.1773; no. 65, 19.03.1773.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, del I, no. 7, 11.01.1773; no. 34, 11.02.1773; no. 57, 10.03.1773; del II, no. 75, 01.04.1773; no. 102, 06.05.1773.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, del. I, no. 39, 17.02.1773; del II, no. 105, 10.05.1773.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, del II, no. 108, 13.05.1773; no. 117, 26.05.1773; no. 120, 29.05.1773; no. 123, 03.06.1773; no. 125, 05.06.1773; del III, no. 175, 05.08.1773; no. 192, 25.08.1773; no. 258, 22.10.1773; “*Dagligt Allehanda*”, no. 231, 11.10.1773.

<sup>20</sup> “*Dagligt Allehanda*”, no. 229, 05.10.1773.

The increase in the interest in Poland occurred again in the late 1780s. In the Eastern Europe a new political arrangement cropped up. In 1787 the war between Russia and Austria on one hand and Turkey on the other broke. Also, Russia entered the state of war with Sweden (1788–1790). The situation of Tsarina Catherine II the Great worsened significantly. Sweden was supported by England, France, Holland, and Prussia, antagonisms arose between Berlin and St. Petersburg. These events resulted in the change of the political situation of the Republic of Poland. The latter was at the moment slowly but surely becoming not only an object of “horse trading,” but first and foremost a territory for rivalry and a weak yet desired ally. Preparing for the war with Catherine II, King Gustav III counted on the support and aid of Poland, and, when he had entered the state of this war eventually, he strove for the alliance with Poland and military aid against the tsarina. Thus, Poland and Sweden became allied by the fact of having a common enemy – Russia.

At the turn of the 1780s and 1790s Sweden still maintained a critical, even contemptuous approach towards the authorities, nobility, and the Republic of Poland’s political system. The social injustice of the then Poland was greatly criticized, and her nobility’s omnipotence as well as the administration’s inertia irritated. The press spoke negatively of the development of Polish agriculture, manufactures, crafts, and trade. Journals informed that the trade could no develop due to the high, for amounting to even 50% worth of goods, customs duty prizes imposed by Prussia. Berlin’s restrictive customs duty policy assailed primarily at Gdańsk, the main port for Polish corn. According to a Swedish journal, the result was that the merchants who earlier arrived into Gdańsk, preferred going to Elbląg (Elbing), for the town offered them much better conditions of trade exchange. The trade treaty imposed on Poland by Prussia in 1772 was much hated by Polish landowners, the journal in question informed. Russia’s huge impact and her interference in all more important affairs of the Republic of Poland and were emphasized constantly. The Swedish press also paid attention to the fact of foreign armies stationing in Poland. With regret, this press commented that there would be no peace in Poland as long as Russia kept her army there.<sup>21</sup>

No less attention was paid to the sessions of the Four-Year Sejm in the Swedish press. Sejm debates and struggles for the state’s improvement were commented on and off. Positive attempts were noticed to change Poland’s political

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<sup>21</sup> “*Almänna Tidningar*”, del I, no. 7, 15.01.1790; del III, no. 188, 19.08.1790.

system and appreciative statements were made on the concept of reforms as submitted by the patriotic party. It was accented that the society's patriotic circles made a great effort to strengthen Poland's position and in order to reinstate her among independent European states.<sup>22</sup> Evaluating in his journal the then current situation in Poland, C.C. Gjørwell, editor of *Almänna Tidningar* stated that "one can see in this state most noble aspirations to reinvent Poland as a respectful country again and to reinstate her among Europe's sovereign powers."<sup>23</sup> In *Stats Skrifter*, the magazines he issued, Gjørwell published the project of the New Form of the Government prepared by Ignacy Potocki.<sup>24</sup>

The Swedish press observed the works of the Sejm on the country's strengthening with hope. At the beginning of 1790 this press announced that a good moment had come for Poland to begin changes. The Sejm's sessions were commented on in details and speeches of individual Parliament members were noted. The press informed of the introduction of disciplinary civil-military commissions, a fact which facilitated the administrative work. Much space was devoted to the debates on the army and treasury reform. With satisfaction, the press wrote that the Sejm worked on the reinforcement of the state's defense forces and that the military committee prepared the army's reform.<sup>25</sup> At the same time the Swedish press regretted that, due to financial shortages, the realization of the resolution on the enlarging the number of army men up to 100,000 soldiers turned out unrealistic and that the number of these soldiers had to be diminished to 60,000–65,000 men.<sup>26</sup>

The extension in 1790 of the Sejm's term, an event which the Swedish press commented on, enlivened the hopes of Stockholm that the process of reforming the Polish political system would be completed. The Swedish public opinion learnt of the engagement of Polish Parliament members in the works on the New Form of the Government even though, according to "Almänna Tidningar", the Russian party and the Polish king's enemies did their best to prevent the reforms,

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., del I, no. 37, 15.02.1790; no. 67, 22.03.1790; del II, no. 75, 01.04.1790.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., del I, no. 67.

<sup>24</sup> *Stats Skrifter*, Stockholm 1790, bd. I, part 1, pp. 12–14, 19–21.

<sup>25</sup> "Almänna Tidningar", del I, no. 70, 26.03.1790 (p. 554); del II, no. 97, 29.04.1790; no. 102, 05.05.1790.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., del I, no. 36, 13.02.1790 (pp. 281–285); no. 61, 15.03.1790; no. 63, 17.03.1790; no. 67, 22.03.1790; del II, no. 97, 29.04.1790; no. 102, 05.05.1790; "Götheborgs Tidningar", no. 47, 23.04.1790.



for example, disturbed peace in the country.<sup>27</sup> The Göteborg-issued “Göteborgs Allehanda” pathetically wrote that the works on the new Polish law were permeated with the patriotic spirit hovering in the Sejm chamber.<sup>28</sup> Big hopes for the successful completion of the reformatory works were voiced in connection with the agreement between King Stanislaus Augustus and leaders of the patriotic party. One of the most significant affairs which provoked heated discussions was the question of royal inheritance. The change of the successor could not, as press readers were informed, result from either foreign intervention, or influences exerted by foreign ministers and governments. The readers were also informed about the announcement of the candidature of a Saxon prince for the Polish throne after King Stanislaus Augustus’ death.<sup>29</sup>

The Swedish press also noticed the radicalization of social moods and attempts to solve the peasant and urban problem. Journals informed that people rebelled against the nobility’s powers and demands freedom and participation in the authority representation as well as they expressed the hope that the situation of Polish peasants and burghers would improve. As an example of such Polish social injustices the person of Prince Radziwiłł, one of the most affluent Europeans, in possession of hundreds of towns and thousands of villages, was commented on.<sup>30</sup> In *Stats Skriften* Gjörwell published burghers’ memorial demanding the granting of political rights to town dwellers and their participation in the state authorities.<sup>31</sup>

The events of May 1791 made a very positive impression on Swedes. As soon as the beginning of this month the press informed about parliamentary members’ ardent works on new law which would strengthen the state.<sup>32</sup> About the Constitution of May 3<sup>rd</sup> the Swedish press wrote that it was incomparable to any other constitution in the whole world. According to the press in question, this Polish form of government was patterned on both English political mod-

<sup>27</sup> “Almänna Tidningar”, del III, no. 179, 09.08.1790.

<sup>28</sup> “Göteborgs Tidningar”, no. 102, 03.09.1790; no. 114, 01.10.1790; no. 115, 05.10.1790; “Göteborgs Allehanda”, no. 9, 01.02.1791.

<sup>29</sup> “Almänna Tidningar”, del III, no. 179, 09.08.1790 (pp. 1423–1427); no. 221, 28.09.1790 (pp. 1759–1760); “Göteborgs Tidningar”, no. 141, 03.12.1790; no. 143, 09.12.1790.

<sup>30</sup> “Göteborgs Tidningar”, no. 25, 02.03.1790; no. 148, 21.12.1790; “Almänna Tidningar”, no. 179, 221.

<sup>31</sup> *Stats Skrifter, Ansökning af borgerskapet i Polen hos konungen och Ständerne at återwinna sina Rättigheter. Sasom et Riksståns, ubi Dec. 1789*, Stockholm 1790, bd. I, part 2, pp. 70–72, 77–80, 85–88, 92–96.

<sup>32</sup> “Dagligt Allehanda”, no. 102, 05.05.1791.

els and the American constitution, yet without their shortcomings. Of the many regulations the Constitution brought about Swedish journals commented on the notions of reinforcing the king's powers, introducing the throne inheritance, and strengthening the country's defense forces the most. Also, references were made to social questions, so interesting for Swedes, while emphasizing that the rights of burghers had been ratified whereas peasants had been secured legal protection on the part of the state.<sup>33</sup> Swedish publishers were unanimous in that they considered the Constitution a factor in the reinstatement of the Republic of Poland as an independent country and enabled the struggle for further reforms leading to the construction of a modern state and nation, particularly in the direction of the legal improvement of peasants' lot.

The Swedish press was glad to inform readers that the Constitution had been ratified by the majority of votes and that the entire country celebrates its ratification, yet, it was also pointing to the fact that not all Poles were in favour of the reforms. The protesters were usually supporters of Tsarina Catherine II ("Russian people").<sup>34</sup> A December Warsaw report informed on the tension increase in the society, of riots and fights caused by the fact of ratification of the Constitution. According to a Swedish newspaper, arguments and tussle occurred also in the course of the Sejm sessions, and to such a degree that the Sejm Marshal had difficulties in preventing bloodshed. The incidents were caused by a proposition to introduce the death penalty for publishing manifests against the new government regulation. The Swedish press was indignant to inform readers of Polish magnates – representatives of a conservative opposition who began negotiations with St. Petersburg as regards obtaining aid in abolishing the Constitution as early as in the May of 1791. The main accusations were made against Szczęsny Potocki and Seweryn Rzewuski who allegedly prepared an armed rebellion in St. Petersburg directed against both the constitution authorities and supporting them patriots.<sup>35</sup>

Among the press notes from Poland those commenting on her foreign relations, particularly with Russia and Prussia, were the most numerous. Both countries were blamed for Poland's weakness and partitions. Journals oftentimes

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 117, 23.05.1791; "Götheborgs Tidningar", no. 57, 20.05.1791; "Götheborgs Allehanda", no. 41, 24.05.1791.

<sup>34</sup> "Götheborgs Tidningar", no. 57, 20.05.1790; no. 66, 10.06.1791; "Dagligt Allehanda", no. 117, 23.05.1791; "Götheborgs Allehanda", no. 41, 24.05.1791.

<sup>35</sup> "Götheborgs Allehanda", no. 149, 8.12.1791.

informed readers on negotiations with Prussia, discussions regarding the nationality of Gdańsk and Toruń (Thorn), or signing the defensive-aggressive treaty with Berlin in March 23, 1790.<sup>36</sup> Also, attention was paid to the endeavours of the Prussian court aiming at gaining both the leaders of the Four-Year Sejm and hopes of the patriotic party for Berlin's support for the Polish political reforms.<sup>37</sup> Russia was presented in the Swedish press as a tyrant and Poland's oppressor and the main cause of all her misfortunes. Determined to prevent the strengthening in Poland of the system based on the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution, Tsarina Catherine II aided the Confederacy in Targowica in May 1792. The Swedish papers also informed Swedes on the course of the Polish-Russian war of 1792.

An attempt to bring Warsaw and Stockholm closer as well as the endeavours to sign the Swedish-Polish defense treaty (1788–1790) became points of interest for the Swedish press, too. "Almänna Tidningar" informed on the fact of reading out loud in the Sejm on March 5, 1790 of King Gustav III's note in which the Swedish monarch declared aid to Poland if Tsarina Catherine II attacked her and warned that Russia aims at gaining the domination over the entire North, that both states were equally jeopardized by her. The document asserted that the Swedish monarch was deeply concerned with the Republic of Poland's well-being and independence. According to journals, the note impressed the members of the Four-Year Sejm enormously as well as it excited the hatred towards Russia anew.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the information about the end of the Swedish-Russian war and signing the peace treaty in Värälä on September 14, 1790 was a sensation in Warsaw, one Swedish journal wrote. The surprise was of a particular nature for it had been preceded by the victory of the Swedish fleet at Svensksund.<sup>39</sup>

In the years of 1793 and 1795 Stockholm's attention, with regard to Polish affairs, concentrated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> partition. The information on the course of the partition Sejm held in Grodno (Garten) in 1793 where, in the presence of the Russian military forces surrounding the Grodno castle, a partition treaty was ratified evoked the indignation of the Swedish public opinion.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "Almänna Tidningar", del I, no. 29, 05.02.1790; del II, no. 86, 16.04.1790; no. 89, 20.04.1790; del III, no. 195, 27.08.1790; "Göteborgs Tidningar", no. 6, 15.01.1790; no. 11, 28.01.1790; no. 22, 23.02.1790, no. 32, 18.03.1789; no. 39, 03.04.1790.

<sup>37</sup> "Almänna Tidningar", del I, no. 74, 31.03.1790; del III, no. 220, 27.09.1790.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, del II, no. 80, 09.04.1790 (pp. 631–633).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, del III, no. 220, 27.09.1790.

<sup>40</sup> "Göteborgs Tidningar", no. 115, 04.10.1790; no. 116, 08.10.1790; no. 121, 18.10.1790.

The Kościuszko insurrection, too, evoked a wide response in Sweden. The Swedish press reported on its outbreak and course as well as it pondered over the insurrectionists' chances. The insurrection's leader, Tadeusz Kościuszko, was a subject upon whom press commentaries were of particularly warm nature. The press recognized entirely his military education and organizational skills and informed readers in detail on Kościuszko's stay in Finland and Sweden in the late 1796 and the early 1797. Freed from a Russian prison, Kościuszko travelled to the United States, precisely via Finland and Sweden. In all of his stopovers (Åbo, Stockholm, Göteborg) he was shown much sympathy and kindness, and he was welcomed like a national hero. The journal "Åbo Tidningar" wrote about a special concert given by the town authorities in the honour of the Polish general; it also printed an epigram by a famous poet and university teacher Frans Michael Franzén describing a sad lot of the Polish hero compelled to leave his homeland.<sup>41</sup> Also, the Stockholm journal "Dagligt Allehanda" printed a note in its first page section on the Åbo correspondence on the stay in the town of a "very renowned Polish general" whom many town dwellers want to see and the best musicians even gave a concert in the honour of.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of January 1797 Kościuszko eventually reached Stockholm. There, C.C. Gjörwell and the former Ambassador to Warsaw Johan Christopher Toll gave him a very warm welcome. Ambassadors of foreign states accredited to the Swedish capital paid him visits. The capital dwellers welcomed this Polish hero with great kindness, and the local press devoted many a good word to him.<sup>43</sup> This is how the poet Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz who accompanied Kościuszko characterised the agitation in the capital of Sweden caused by the arrival of the insurrection leader, earlier released from czarist prison: "all tried to visit a man who defended the dying homeland so courageously. The door to his apartments never closed [...] all the officials, domestic and foreign ministers, went to see the

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<sup>41</sup> "Åbo Tidningar", no. 3, 09.01.1797; no. 12.27.01.1797.

<sup>42</sup> "Dagligt Allehanda", no. 22, 27.01.1797.

<sup>43</sup> K. G. Fellenius: *Kościuszko och Sverige. Ett minne från 1797*, Stockholm 1936, p. 27; idem: *Polens störste nationalhjälte och Sverige*, "Allsvensk Samling" 25, 1938, 13–14, pp. 9 ff.; J. Śliżiński: *Tadeusz Kościuszko w literaturze narodów Europy i Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej* [Tadeusz Kościuszko in the Literature of European Nations and of the United States of America], Warszawa 1981, pp. 157–159.

ill leader.<sup>44</sup> At the end of February, Kościuszko left Stockholm for Göteborg. The local newspaper mentioned this stay in this town.<sup>45</sup>

Not only did journal and magazine editors informed of the events in the Republic of Poland but also often expressed opinions and commented on them. Their reactions to the Polish situation were different: they criticized, sympathized as much as praised it. The editors deplored the Russian oppression of Poland and expressed regret over the Polish senators deported into Russia. They condemned the Confederacy and the tragic situation of Polish peasants and the lack of political rights for burghers. Also, these editors criticized the Polish anarchy, nobility's omnipotence, free election, the Polish monarch's weak position and King Stanislaus Augustus' indecisiveness. They wrote with sympathy of the Republic of Poland's miserable situation. Commentaries on the partitions of Poland were full of indignation. Regretted was the presence of foreign military forces in Poland. Still, positive changes were noticed, too. In the commentaries of the Swedish press there is recognition visible of the concept of the reforms aimed at both reinstating Poland as a strong and autonomous state and improve peasants and burghers' situation. Hope was expressed with regard to the signing of the defense treaty between Warsaw and Stockholm and the legal regulation of the trade exchange between these two states. Enthusiasm can be seen in the commentaries on the ratification of the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution. The Swedish press was glad to inform that Poles were overjoyed about the Constitution ratification, yet, it also mourned over the magnates asking Russia for help in abolishing it. The course of the Kościuszko insurrection was followed with sympathy and kindness could be felt in the press notes on the insurrection's leader, Tadeusz Kościuszko.

*Translated by Beata Zawadka*

## **PRASA SZWEDZKA KOŃCA XVIII WIEKU O POLSCE**

### **Streszczenie**

W artykule pokazano, jakie informacje z Polski przekazywała szwedzka prasa końca XVIII wieku oraz jaki był jej stosunek do Polski i jej spraw. Począwszy od lat 60 XVIII stulecia na łamach szwedzkiej prasy często pojawiały się doniesienia z Rzeczypospolitej.

<sup>44</sup> J. U. Niemcewicz: *Pamiętniki czasów moich* [The Memoirs of My Times], Lipsk 1868, p. 244.

<sup>45</sup> K. G. Fellenius: *Polens störste ...*, p. 10.

Obok krótkich wiadomości informujących o bieżących wydarzeniach w naszym kraju, gazety i czasopisma zamieszczały obszernie artykuły poświęcone swemu południowemu sąsiadowi. Donosiły o przebiegu konfederacji barskiej i relacjonowały działania konfederatów. Zamieszczały charakterystykę Stanisława Augusta i oceniały jego postawę. Szeroko opisywały ustrój polityczny, omawiały i oceniały próby jego reformy, szczególnie reformy Sejmu Czteroletniego, dużo miejsca poświęcały konstytucji 3 maja. Dużo uwagi przywiązywały do panujących w Polsce, a tak odmiennych od szwedzkich, stosunków społecznych, a zwłaszcza ogromnej przewagi szlachty nad pozostałymi stanami i ciężkiej sytuacji chłopów. Pisały o polskiej gospodarce i nierozwiązanych kwestiach religijnych. Sporą uwagę przyciągały relacje Polski z obcymi państwami, zwłaszcza z Rosją i Prusami, ale też ze Szwecją. Szwedzka prasa szeroko informowała o ingerencji Moskwy w wewnętrzne sprawy Rzeczypospolitej, relacjonowała przebieg wojny polsko-rosyjskiej w 1792 r. oraz powstania kościuszkowskiego, informowała o próbach podpisania traktatu obronnego polsko-szwedzkiego w 1788 r. Oburzenie towarzyszyło komentarzom poświęconym rozbiorom, ale z entuzjazmem komentowano uchwalenie Konstytucji 3 maja.