

A Pyrrhic Victory

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Napoleon Bonaparte, who is by some considered as the greatest military leader in history doesn't need to be introduced any further. Despite the fact he was born to a quite poor Corsican family, he has become a Brigadier General in his twenty-four, a First Consul to France in his thirty and five years later – in December 1804 – he crowned himself an Emperor in Pope's presence. The peak of his dominion came in July 1807 after he had subjugated defiant Prussians and practically split Europe in two spheres of influence with Russian emperor Alexander I.

However, even Napoleon's authority wasn't steadfast and constantly greater pressure of his enemies, mainly Britons and British emissaries on the continent couldn't conceal a drawback of a fragile Empire and Bonaparte's reign in general. We could say that ambitions and a feeling of own infallibility overshadowed the greatness of France and there had been only Napoleon's personality that could touch the skies – despite the lives of several millions of people.

Bonaparte's downfall had occurred much sooner than he himself expected. His clinging to old, strategical manoeuvres brought him defeat on the Berezina River at the end of November 1812 and final doom met the Emperor one year later, when French engineers blew up a bridge and made it impossible for the most of French army to draw back to France. This turning of tables could have brought France a long-awaited respite, but the Emperor stood against this idea. He refused Allies' (including Britons, Prussian, Russians and Austrians) demands to diminish borders to borders of year 1792, which would have left France without the territory of today's Belgium: by this act, Napoleon said he would "*trample underfoot my coronation oath, betray*

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the trust placed in me with such confidence" and would leave France smaller than he had obtained it.¹

His unwillingness to cooperate resulted in four hundred thousands of allied army invading France in three directions: Prussian troops under command of Gebhard von Blücher were marching from the east across the river Rhine, Austrian units under Karl Philipp, Prince of Schwarzenberg from Switzerland and Russian soldiers led by Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte across the then territory of Netherlands. Their headquarters were set in the city of Langres, south of Paris. There was, however, Bonaparte's army against them with Nicolas Soult's help from Spain and Eugene de Beauharnais' Italian troops, in total two hundred and seventy thousand French and French Foreign Legion soldiers.²

Although the Allies were superior in numbers, there were certain conflicts between them – while the Russian Czar Alexander I and Prussian King Frederick William III were seeking to humiliate Napoleon and defeat him, the Austrian Empire's chancellor Klemens von Metternich and British Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh were trying to achieve peace and to prevent a civil war in France. They were doing so not just because Bonaparte was son-in-law of Austrian Emperor Francis I, but also because of czar's plan to appoint his favourite Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte a new French ruler. Metternich's approach was more than refusing: *"We have no interest in sacrificing a single soldier to put Bernadotte on the French throne."*³

Such matters were discussed on 25th January in the city of Langres. The Allies wished to restore the balance of power in Europe, just like it was before the Revolution. To achieve this goal, the Allies were to negotiate with Napoleon but also to propose a final resolution created by themselves which the French Emperor should only acquiesce to. Castlereagh as the leader of negotiations proposed, for example to build a line of fortresses in Austrian Netherlands and promised to not endorse the Russian intention to crown Bernadotte a French King.

Austria had then been assailed by Alexander himself – when he was turned down – with words that Austrian troops were marching

¹ M. PRICE, *Napoleon: The End of Glory*, Oxford 2014, p. 195.

² O. CONNELLY, *The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1792–1815*, New York 2006, p. 194.

³ PRICE, p. 187.

through neutral Switzerland and if they don't accept his proposal, he would declare war on them. However, he didn't know, that before the march Metternich induced Swiss to accept Austrian soldiers, in order to defend their neutrality by which he was in the clear and threatened the Czar that he will leave the coalition with Castlereagh. Alexander gave in and the congress was dismissed without any result.

The most pressing question was the extent of the French territory, which was debated on 3rd February in the city of Châtillon, to the west of Langres. The Congress began on 5th February and the only person who did not want to have peace was Napoleon himself. If France was to be restored within borders from 1792, participants should have talked about taking colonies away from France, which was rejected by Alexander who wanted peace first and then to solve the colonies. The Russians were delaying the negotiations and were urging for an advance on Paris, while French ambassador Armand Caulaincourt was reluctant to sign a peace treaty, determining the former borders, because he favoured peace with natural borders.

Since the French Emperor saw that, he was almost overwhelmed, he acquiesced to give up on Belgium and even the left bank of the river Rhine,⁴ if the Allies weren't satisfied enough. Napoleon was convinced that he had lost both German states and Italy, however he was also convinced that he could turn the tide of battle. On 29th January he attacked the Blücher's army but was defeated near Brienne. He sought revenge and found it on 9th February by the city of Champaubert where he beat isolated Russian troops. On 14th February, Bonaparte vanquished Blücher near the village of Vauchamps and on 18th February he pushed Austrian troops beyond the river Seine.⁵

Napoleon's partial victories enraged Alexander I. On 13th February, during a meeting, he had finally revealed why he wanted to conquer the capital: in Paris was to be a Russian military governor who would have supervised the election of a new ruler. Again, Metternich with Castlereagh threatened to leave the coalition and to separately conclude peace with Napoleon. When they were joined by Prussians the Czar once again gave in and a preliminary peace could have been created.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 196.

⁵ Ibidem, pp. 192 and 198–199.

Victories – as petty and meaningless as they were – made Napoleon think he could defeat his enemies and return to the capital. He forbade Caulaincourt to acquiesce to any conditions of peace prearranged at Châtillon. Bonaparte's claims of retaining Antwerp and a territory of contemporary Belgium were not met with eagerness and even an armistice was unthinkable. Representatives of the sixth coalition therefore signed a Treaty of Chaumont⁶ which included an obligation for each member to provide fifty thousand soldiers, the Great Britain ought to provide generous subsidies of 5 million pounds instead, a prohibition to conclude separate peaces with Napoleon and a joint cooperation in expulsion of French from Spanish and German and Italian areas. The Châtillon congress was disbanded on 17th March and the Allies were preparing to march on Paris.

At the same time royalist tendencies began to occur. The first city that surrendered was Bordeaux which was captured by British on 11th March. It soon became a headquarters of royalists – a victorious expedition into an emptied city, praising of Bourbons or erecting royal flags made an impression on the Allies despite the fact that the Czar didn't like Louis Stanislas Xavier (a future king and a brother of the former guillotined king) and despite that, Austrians didn't want Napoleon to be replaced by anybody else and favoured his wife, Marie Louise as a future ruler.

News of Bordeaux's betrayal soon reached Napoleon who wanted to answer with force. On 9th March he clashed with Blücher by Laon (where the Emperor lost) and on 12th March he freed Reims from Russian troops and was ready to attack Prussians. However as successful as he was on a field of battle, the capture of Paris couldn't be delayed. Bonaparte was hesitating whether to return to the capital or to march to the east, cut off enemy troops and defeat them one after another. He chose the second option – the capital city was exposed, and the Allies took the chance of capturing the most essential thing they could.

Marmont's Treason and Emperor's Fall

An immense mass, one hundred and eighty thousand soldiers, began to march on Paris on 25th March. From intercepted letters, the

⁶ F.R. BRIDGE – R. BULLEN, *The Great Powers and the European States System 1814-1914*, New York 2005, p. 24.

Allies' commanders knew that there would be no resistance to them. Although Parisians were trying to build barricades and fortifications, a short time for preparation made it impossible to be well-guarded. In addition, Joseph Bonaparte, a temporary mayor of Paris, couldn't have rallied enough men to defend the city – there were only 42,000 French against four-times more enemy troops. There was an option to distribute rifles among Parisians but recent memories on revolutionary acts of violence quickly repulsed this idea.

Fear of uprisings were groundless however and Parisians didn't have anybody to draw swords for – the Empress Marie Louise had wanted to stay, but after reading Napoleon's letter addressed to his brother, she left the city: "*My brother, you cannot allow that, under any circumstances, the Empress and the King of Rome [Bonaparte's son] fall into enemies' hands. If the enemy marched on Paris with such force that any oppression would be futile, send in the direction of the Loire river the regentess, my son, high officials and the ministers.*"⁷ The Parisian Regency council therefore decided that the Empress should leave with her brother-in-law in the direction of Tours while the city itself would be protected by Marshal Auguste Marmont, the Duke of Ragusa and negotiations with Allies would be led by former Foreign Minister Charles Maurice de Talleyrand.

Few hours after regents' departure, on 30th March, the gates of Paris were being besieged and the city bombarded from the north. The Duke of Ragusa, charged with guarding the gates, couldn't face his enemy with a not very numerous and ill-equipped squad, so he capitulated in the afternoon and the capital with him. Since this moment, Marmont's title of *Ragusa* became a French synonym for a treason, *raguser*. The most shameful and disgraceful scene occurred next day – in the morning of 31st March 1814 a ceremonial parade of Prussian, Russian and Austrian armies entered the capital. They pledged to not negotiate with Napoleon and to recognize integrity and Constitution of France.

Alexander, Frederick and Karl Philipp were then taken to Talleyrand's place and the Czar offered three alternatives. There could be either

⁷ N. BONAPARTE – J. DUMAINE – H. PLON (eds.), *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*. T. 27, Paris 1869, pp. 377–378.

1. peace with Napoleon, which was not so hard to convince Alexander it wouldn't last long or
2. a new ruler could have been Marie Louise as a regentess, which was again objected, that it would be in fact Napoleon's rule but under her name. Lastly, it was agreed that
3. Bonaparte was to be replaced by Bourbons who were, in fact, not popular in France.

In addition to this, Talleyrand made further changes: on 1st April he was appointed as a head of the new Provisional Government, on 2nd April were the Emperor and his family deposed and finally on 4th April were "all symbols, monograms and coat of arms reminding Bonaparte's reign removed and erased from all places they could be found".⁸

What about Napoleon's whereabouts at that time? He had settled in Fontainebleau to the southeast from Paris; his plan was to attack each Ally and cut him off from incoming forces, however he was taken by surprise when they besieged Paris so rapidly and from all sides. It is said that once he reached Fontainebleau on an exhausted horse, he didn't exchange it but went to 31 miles away Paris on foot, frenzied and angry. There was nothing that could change his mind about giving up, but the idea of being murdered by the hands of a common citizen – worried by his Marshal's words, he had sat behind a massive desk at Fontainebleau and drafted a first version of his abdication.

His first abdication (so-called conditional) was written in favour of his son: "The Emperor Napoleon declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to leave France and even to give up on his life for the prosperity of the country which is indivisible from the right of his son, the Empress' regency and Emperor's laws."⁹ This proclamation was obtained by Czar's emissaries in the evening, but the Czar himself doubted the regency and demanded an unconditional abdication. A vision of a possible civil war – or more likely a vision of an annual income of 2 millions francs – compelled Napoleon to draft an unconditional abdication: "The Emperor Napoleon declares that he renounces, for himself and his heirs the throne

⁸ J. MAVIDAL – E. LAURENT, *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860 : Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des chambres françaises*. T. 12, Paris 1868, p. 11.

⁹ N. YOUNG, *Napoleon in Exile: Elba*, Montana 2006, pp. 30–31.

of France and Italy; and that there is no personal sacrifice, not even that of life itself, which he is not willing to make for the interests of France."¹⁰

It was 6th April 1814 and Bonaparte's reign was at the end. Not only army but also his family had left him: his brother-in-law Joachim Murat joined Austrian Empire in January 1814 in order to retain the throne of Kingdom of Naples; Marie Louise was "separated from her spouse and by this act she is only tied together with her noble father who can and who must take her under his protective wings"¹¹ including her son Napoléon François Bonaparte. While the former Emperor was about to sign a new treaty with the Allies, a new French King was appointed on 6th April as Louis XVIII whose reign was affected by his indecisiveness and a circle of power-hungry aristocrats who soon joined him in returning to France.

The only unmarked issue was where to put Napoleon. There were islands taken in account like Corfu, Corsica or Elba. However Elba was a thorn not only in Castlereagh's side, for it was too close to the continent, but also in Austrian Emperor Francis' side: "I disagree with a choice of Elba as Napoleon's residence; they are detaching it from the property of my family in favour of foreigners."¹² Indeed – this was Alexander's move and it could either make Napoleon to owe him a life or to make Napoleon as a tool against those who would not agree with the Czar.

A final treaty, known as the Treaty of Fontainebleau¹³ was signed on 11th April 1814 and was too lenient to the erstwhile ruler. Even though the first article deprived Napoleon and his whole family of "all rights of sovereignty and domination over the French Empire, Italian Kingdom and every other country", Murat's exception spoiled the impression. Britons didn't intend to recognize a title of Emperor for Napoleon, his wife and various titles for his siblings. Plus, handing Elba over to the erstwhile French Emperor was a major obstacle for his Austrian father-in-law.

Paying of an "annual rent of two and a half million francs which will be distributed among members of Napoleon's family" would make a fuss

¹⁰ L. GOLDSMITH, *Recueil de décrets, ordonnances, traités de paix, manifests, proclamations, discours etc. de Napoléon Bonaparte et des membres du gouvernement français*. T. 5, Londres 1815, p. 678.

¹¹ YOUNG, p. 38.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 43.

¹³ A. N. CAMPBELL, *Napoleon at Fontainebleau and Elba*, London 1869, pp. 163–168.

in France, that's why even Louis XVIII didn't take the Treaty seriously. Also, Prussians were against the Treaty for they didn't consent to create passports for Bonaparte's family, with which they could freely travel through Europe. Even though the Czar had managed to make compromises – he arranged a succession in Duchies of Parma and Piacenza and he donated Napoleon's belongings to France – it was certain that the Allies would have had communication issues that lasted almost the whole year.

A British Colonel Neil Campbell was appointed as the leader of caravan heading south where he could embark on a ship *Undaunted* and sail to Elba with him. It is said that before 20th April when they had to leave Fontainebleau, Napoleon tried to poison himself but unsuccessfully – there was a far more bitter journey before him. When they had been passing Avignon, the people praising the king were throwing medium-sized stones at his carriage and one man even attacked with his sword. An embarrassing situation was followed by an even more embarrassing Bonaparte's move: he borrowed a blue coat, a peaked cap, a cloak and a hat with a white cocard¹⁴ (symbol of royalists) and disguised himself as a commissioner.

When the caravan had been resting, Napoleon rushed to the nearest inn where he, masked as Campbell, ordered food for the former Emperor and the lady innkeeper told him: "*I won't bother myself with a dinner preparation for that monster. When he will be passing the city I will take a look when the people will be burning him alive for all his crimes and bloodshed.*"¹⁵ We can assume that this moment of sincerity made Napoleon shiver, and as Campbell documents, he found Bonaparte pale and shaking in the inn's corner. However, the Fortune was on his side again when they reached Fréjus on 27th April. A disbanded massive Italian army had been marching on Fréjus where they wanted to free the Emperor, but a British captain Thomas Ussher had persuaded Napoleon to board the *Undaunted* and to sail out to the isolated island of Elba in Tyrrhenan Sea the next day.

¹⁴ J. M. THOMPSON, Napoleon's Journey to Elba in 1814: Part I. By Land, in: *American Historical Review* 55, 1, 1949, p. 15; YOUNG, pp. 66 and 68.

¹⁵ THOMPSON, p. 15.

The Emperor and the Prince of the Island of Elba

After a week on the ship, Napoleon arrived at his new dominion. A ceremonial hymn *Te Deum* welcomed him on the land on 4th May. However nice and beautiful the place could have been, “*the Elban Mountains symbolized only a mound of parched hills that tire senses and bring suffering to one’s soul. Many of country houses are just lonely ruins and the capital is a small, Mediterranean dilapidated harbour full of diseases*”.¹⁶ The loneliness and the boredom were just the reasons why Bonaparte left the island after 9 months.

On the very same day, 4th May, France too got a new ruler according to its Constitution: “*The French people freely call Louis Stanislas Xavier of France, the brother of the recent king, to the French throne.*”¹⁷ Same as Napoleon, Louis XVIII was welcomed in Paris by *Te Deum*, however the French weren’t happy at all and their distance¹⁸ to the new king has been visible throughout his short reign. Louis’ most important act was creating a new Chamber of Peers and releasing a new “*Charter of 1814*”, providing guaranteed equality before the law, religious freedom, the inviolability of property and the ban on the propagation of ideas before the restoration which explicitly attacked the Bonapartist period. In summary, the whole Louis’ reign was rather slow-paced and indecisive and Louis was, according to contemporary observers, sometimes entertaining, sometimes wise and constantly terrified of hard work, debates or decision-making.¹⁹

The Elban delegation, including General Dalesme, the commander of the Elban National Guard, Pons de l’Hérault, the local mines administrator and Mayor Pietro Traditi, handed over the golden keys from the city of Portoferraio to the new ruler. Along the road to the church, the new Elban flags (with bees on a red lane) were flying from the windows, Napoleon’s favourite violets were planted in the gardens and women bowed in their best clothes. The whole atmosphere was spoiled by the fact that Bonaparte had not been given golden but gilded keys which were not from the town hall but from the mayor’s basement, and a provisional throne made up of an old dusty couch. From there Napoleon gave his words of praise to the

¹⁶ S. COOTE, *Napoleon and the Hundred Days*, Cambridge (Mass.) 2007, p. 84.

¹⁷ MAVIDAL, pp. 12–13.

¹⁸ COOTE, p. 81.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

inhabitants, calling them his children;²⁰ he wasn't serious because he feared his children so much that he had called for one British officer to sleep in front of the door on the mattress, dressed and sword-in-hand in case an unexpected attack would occur.

Bonaparte's companions were General Henri Bertrand, a Grand Marshal of the Palace, Count Antoine Drouot, a Governor of the island, and Napoleon's sister Pauline who oversaw organizing celebrations on Elba. A treasurer and a critic of the Prince's excessive spendings, Guillaume Peyrusse, was a man of high standards who was most of the time standing against Napoleon although he was one of the closest men to him. Napoleon was also assigned a small army who served only for his, not Elbas' protection: Polish lancers were used as his bodyguards, cavalrymen "*were before their service controlled,*" his carriage "*was always accompanied by five men with loaded rifles*" and his seamen "*must have always had their sabers, muskets and two packets of cartridge*".²¹

Bonaparte established an imperial etiquette: if he sailed out and wanted to be incognito, the flags wouldn't be raised; if he wasn't present in Portoferraio, his entourage couldn't wear hats until he had returned. We also know how much the Prince stressed manners: "*Monsieur Count Bertrand, you had left without asking me; that's a very bad behaviour and next time you have to wait until I allow you to leave.*"²² Altogether with a new etiquette Napoleon created new laws and a Constitution, a document never known until then. Elba had become an Empire consisting of 6 departments (with 2,000 citizens in each of it), each department was divided into 1 prefecture and 2 sub-prefectures.

There were 4 new main ministries of Police, of War, of Navy and of Foreign affairs altogether with 4 other ministries – of Cults, of Finances and Treasury, of Justice and finally of Interior. The Emperor had also adjusted taxes, created a Legion of Honor and was managing lists of people and of conscriptions.²³ Elbas had been split in four

²⁰ YOUNG, p. 105.

²¹ L. G. PÉLISSIER, *Le Registre de l'île d'Elbe : Lettres et Ordres inédits de Napoléon Ier*. T. 2, Paris 1897, pp. 15, 110 and 114.

²² DUMAINE, p. 496.

²³ *Constitution donnée par Napoléon Buonaparte aux habitants de l'île d'Elbe* [online]. Paris 1814 [visited 2018-11-02], pp. 2-3. Available at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57962407.r=Constitution%20donnée%20par%20Napoléon>

groups – the eldest had to take seats in government or cultivate science, women participated in a trade and agriculture, children were employed in ploughing and the rest was called to protect the Empire and the Emperor himself.

A new monarch has decided to stay at the Mulini Palace. The Emperor was living on the ground floor, the first floor was intended for his sister Pauline. The northern side was protected by cliffs, the road from the city led through the long stairs and the building itself was surrounded by walls – Napoleon could have felt completely impregnable, also thanks to engineers and artillerymen living on the opposite side of their Emperor. The furniture was brought from Italy while the library consisted of books imported from Fontainebleau, Paris or Fréjus and each book had to be the newest or in the best condition.

Once settled, Napoleon finished roads in Portoferraio and its surroundings and focused especially on the connection from the Mulini Palace to his command house in San Martino. He had ordered roads to be widened so that *“he could use them without any danger”* and so that *“two carriages could go next to each other”*. He also ordered that rubbish should be swept out of the streets and that the pavements ought to be repaired, removed of the rubbish and grinded so he could have not slipped on them while heading to church or townhall. Besides that, he decreed that Portoferraio was to be supplied with two water tank and commanded to build latrines to prevent spreading of smell.

Moreover, Bonaparte ordered to dry out marshes and grow corn there instead. He also tried to persuade Elbans to grow potatoes, cauliflower, onions, salad, radish and other vegetables, but unsuccessfully. An idea of planting mulberries and olive trees also didn't become real, same as creating a center of art and sciences. The only thing Napoleon didn't want was that Elbans would be learning his birth language – he dismissed a French teacher by which he saved some money. This issue was on the agenda since June 1814 for Emperor's demands were slowly growing because of his expensive living, maintaining a fairly big army, exacting reconstructions and building of new communications.

[%20Buonaparte\%20aux\%20habitans\%20de\%20l\%27ile\%20d\%27Elbe?rk=21459;2.](#)

Nevertheless, saving in wrong places resulted in antagonizing from most of Elbans. As Campbell writes: *“It seems that Napoleon becomes less and less popular every day because it looks like his every order is affected by greed and self-interest altogether with an absolute indifference towards others.”*²⁴ That indifference had been manifested in demands of certain districts when they were denied to be paid for building roads or cleaning them. Napoleon hadn’t paid a cent and he even saved money because he employed his own Imperial Guard for secondary works like ploughing the soil or paving streets. Despite that he got into debt – his expenses rose to 1 million francs a year, while his incomes didn’t exceed four hundred thousand francs.

July 1814 was very critical. Emperor’s tax collector had been charged to collect taxes for period since September 1813 till May 1814, a period in which Napoleon wasn’t ruling the island, which resulted in general discontentment and a possible uprising. According to Campbell, *“if Napoleon wasn’t that moderate and didn’t have his Guard on the island, there could be nothing that could prevent the people from attacking him”*.²⁵ When the Emperor had wished to take money from the Legion of Honor, he was turned down by Pons de l’Hérault who said that the money belonged to the French government.²⁶ When Elbans had discovered that one of Emperor’s employee dared to oppose him, situation could worsen so much, it could endanger the Emperor himself.

The Quarrelsome Congress

Bonaparte soon began to think about fleeing. He was pleased by hearing that *“the French nation hadn’t been satisfied with a Bourbon reign, that there were disturbances in Nice and people in Fréjus were concerned about Napoleon”*.²⁷ It was as Bonaparte had expected few weeks ago – Bourbons would have discredited themselves in the eyes of French people. They *“had deprived France of Belgium, they forfeited weapons, fleet, warehouses, artillery and much more of the things I have collected”*.²⁸ The

²⁴ CAMPBELL, p. 248.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 249.

²⁶ YOUNG, p. 200.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 135.

²⁸ P. A. E. F. de CHABOULON, *Les Cent jours : Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de la Vie privée, du Retour et du Règne de Napoléon en 1815*. T. 1, Londres 1820, pp. 114–115.

only obstacle preventing him from coming back were Allies' troops in France; he waited until mainly Russian troops would return home.

And not only troops. Bonaparte knew about an upcoming Congress in Vienna and thought that if they quarrelled, it would be a good advantage point for him. If they weren't, it would be advantageous too for the representants would soon depart into their countries and could not endanger him. On 1st October the victorious Allies had met in Vienna to outline a new map of Europe. There were many who arrived: the Czar with his wife, 4 kings, 1 queen, 2 crown princes, 3 grand-duchesses, 3 princes of the royal blood and 215 heads of houses of princes including several ministers, high officers, aide-de-camps and members of delegation.²⁹

Castlereagh with his consultants Cathcart and Stewart were negotiating for the Great Britain, Metternich was representing Austria; Frederick William III was deciding for Prussia with his chancellor Hardenberg and counsellor Humboldt. Czar Alexander I arrived with his experts on specific areas: Adam Czartoryski for Poland, Pozzo di Borgo, Stein and Nesselrode for German states. Besides these were also invited the representants of Sweden, Spain, Portugal, delegates of Pope, Osman sultan and many others.

The main reason was to establish a balance of power in which no power will dominate over others. Each country wanted to have peace, security for its own territory and expansion of their borders. Even in those times, were two sides that battled: Britain with Austria on one side and Russia with Prussia on the other. Talleyrand had been trying from the very beginning to set them against each other, plus to encourage the weaker states against the stronger ones – this resulted in 13 lesser German states to “*resist the usurpation of the great powers*”.³⁰ In addition to that, the Czar with Prussia made a proposal to claim Poland and Saxony which by his words belonged to one of his brothers or to his sister's husband.

However, a greater gain of territory would cause an imbalance in Europe, when Russia would have reached too far to the west and Prussia would have gone too far to the south. Castlereagh and Metternich were bolstered by Talleyrand and tried to forestall Russia's proposal.

²⁹ P. JOHNSON, *The Birth of the Modern-World Society, 1815–1830*. New York 1991, p. 85.

³⁰ M. JARRETT, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon*, London 2013, p. 93.

Prussia was between its Allies – on one hand, it was blackmailed by Russian troops on Prussian land, but was promised to gain Saxony, on the other hand it was worried about its eastern border.

This stalemate was partly solved by Metternich himself: to prevent war (announced by the Czar), he prolonged the Congress by making up illnesses and holding balls, soirées and theatre performances – that's why was this Congress pejoratively called the Dancing Congress. It had to last only three weeks, but because of inability to find a compromise the negotiations lasted for 9 months until June 1815.

The Corsican Monster on the Run

Metternich had also appointed – apart from providing amusements – many spies not only in Vienna, but also along Tuscany's coast. Talleyrand's spy Chevalier Mariotti had been sent to Livorno where he was receiving information right from Portoferraio. Every person coming from Elba had been controlled, all Napoleon's letters were opened and most of them confiscated, every person travelling to Elba was thoroughly body-searched. Despite all these controls, according to Bonaparte's own diary he was sending out letters already on 24th July. Letters have travelled variously to Genoa, Rome or even to Marie Louise in Vienna.

Soon after Talleyrand, even Napoleon had had his own spies. We can mention Bartolucci, who was Mariotti's rival in Livorno, cardinal Fesch, Bonaparte's uncle operating in Rome, and many others. To all letters he had received, Bonaparte was responding and thanks to his captains' deliveries of newspapers he also stayed in touch with the continent. A French minister of War had soon found out about Napoleon and wrote to Talleyrand: "*The inhabitant of the island of Elba often receives letters from Naples and from elsewhere. He wakes up several times at night, writes dispatches and looks too busy even though he pretends that he lives a peaceful life.*"³¹

Talleyrand had immediately informed the king and Allies about Murat's collaboration and suggested to expel him on the island of Corfu, Bonaparte was to be moved to the Azores: "*It appeared that we basically agree on Bonaparte's deportation from the island of Elba. I proposed*

³¹ G. PALLAIN, *Correspondance inédite du Prince de Talleyrand et du Roi Louis XVIII pendant le Congrès de Vienne*, Paris 1881, p. 44.

to move him to the Azores." Louis XVIII had answered that he would ignore the clause of the Treaty of Fontainebleau if the "excellent idea with the Azores" was realized. The installed king, as a matter of fact, admitted not to abide Article III and IV of the Treaty that spoke of Elba being Napoleon's lifelong property and other powers pledged to respect that. Thanks to this idea, Talleyrand had managed to divide Russia from others and to become a worthy representant of his country.

Once Bonaparte had found out about possible deportation to the even more isolated island, he confided to Campbell: "I don't exist for the world anymore. I am a dead man. What interests me is only my family, my haven, my cows and my mules."³² But he knew what danger could have possibly awaited him: since September he has been dividing his subjects all over the island and was consulting with commanders how to strengthen fortresses, troops and support naval garrisons against corsairs. With no doubt, a danger of being transfered further from the continent made him think about fleeing. A final decision to leave the island came with Fleury de Chaboulon, Bonaparte's erstwhile secretary, who has been staying on Elba between 13th and 18th February 1815.³³

French had been – according to Chaboulon – dissatisfied and their number was growing each day. Unsuccessful and non-functional reign had been facing "a disgust and an aversion of tired, humiliated and indignant citizens" and that's why "Louis' royalistic rule has come to an end". Apart from that, the most citizens, even army had wanted Napoleon back – Louis XVIII paid soldiers very modestly (if he did at all) and high unemployment transformed them into a convenient tool for deposing Bourbons. On the other hand, marshals have been paid throughout Louis' reign very generously, but the French army was disintegrating while Napoleon could have been supported by Saxon, Genoan, Belgian, Polish, German and Italian troops.

The plan how to escape had not yet been in Emperor's mind, however he knew that all had to be prepared. Bourbons needed to be deposed in silence and without alarming the Allies, but people could not take revenge on them. An ultimate decision had been made after

³² CAMPBELL, p. 299.

³³ For the whole dialogue see CHABOULON, pp. 109–148.

asking one simple question: “*Is France waiting for its Emperor to come back and will she welcome him as her liberator?*” Chaboulon nodded and Bonaparte added: “*I will arrive in Paris so quickly that they won’t be able to react. It was me who delivered France to Bourbons – it will be me who will deprive her of them!*”³⁴

The last obstacle was a British colonel. Since December, Napoleon had instructed Bertrand and Drouot to be distant to him. The colonel noticed the change in their behaviour and wrote that “*their chief motive is to disgust me and make me leave this island*”.³⁵ He had indeed left on 16th February, he sailed to Tuscany to his mistress. On the very same day Bonaparte ordered to place the ship *Inconstant* into harbour, to cover it with copper, repair it³⁶ and make it ready to sail out. Besides that, it was to be repainted with red and blue colours so it resembled a British ship. One half of Elba’s soldiers loaded 7 ships with goods like money, food and papers for creating proclamations to people. The other half was needed up in the city where they improved gardens and masterly confused Allies’ spies.

Saturday, 25th February 1815, is marked as the last day of Napoleon on Elba. At 8 pm he had boarded the *Inconstant* and headed with 6 other ships for the French coast, to Antibes. The wind at Portoferraio was favourable that day but in Tuscany it was calm. Spies’ news about a possible flight had reached Campbell who said that “*if any Napoleon’s ship was discovered he would order his captain to pursue it and, if it offered resistance, to sink it*”.³⁷ Just for assurance they had left Tuscany on 27th in the morning and even saw Bonaparte’s ship but considered it as a British merchant ship. On Wednesday 1st March 1815 Emperor’s closest men landed in Antibes.

The Flight of the Eagle and an Exhausting Mobilisation

To win French people’s favour, Napoleon had prepared 3 proclamations to convince them to join him in his journey to the north. He reminded them of “*duke of Castiglione’s betrayal when he had delivered Lyon to the enemy*” and of “*duke of Ragusa’s perfidiousness who left the capital at*

³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 127–128.

³⁵ CAMPBELL, p. 357.

³⁶ R. M. JOHNSTON, *The Corsican: A Diary of Napoleon’s Life in His Own Words*, Boston 1910, pp. 446–447.

³⁷ CAMPBELL, p. 368.

the mercy of the enemy and disorganized the army".³⁸ Although generals Bertrand and Lamouret had been captured at Antibes while demanding rations for Bonaparte, the Emperor could not have lingered and wanted to take the throne by surprise – the general Pierre Cambonne was ordered to cut off communication of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur with the rest of France.

Sooner or later, the rest of Europe will find out about Napoleon escaping Elba. The march had to be swift. On 2nd March they had reached Grasse where the bells were ringing; the entourage thought they were discovered but the bells were just announcing a funeral. Later on they had to bypass royalist Provence through the Alps, so they tied sacks with money on mules and took weapons alone while sinking into snow.

In the meantime, after Campbell had found out Napoleon escaped, he immediately informed an emissary in Florence who sent messages to Paris, London and Vienna. Metternich with Talleyrand received the letter on 7th March, Louis XVIII already on 5th March. Upon opening the despatch, he had drily announced that "*a new revolution has broken out*" and that he wants a "*Minister of war to come to him and advise him what do to next*". On 6th March he – before both Chambers – declared Napoleon Bonaparte a traitor and a rebel.

The traitor Napoleon's army was getting bigger and bigger, the more he was approaching Paris. He had met a squad of young Delessart's men. They had experienced a legendary moment that turned them anti-Bourbon – Napoleon appeared in front of them, opened his overcoat and gave a speech: "*What is it that none of you recognize me, my friends? I am your Emperor. If there is anybody among you that wants to kill his General, may he do it.*"³⁹ Nobody did and joined him instead, including Delessart.

On 7th March he had reached Grenoble where Jean Marchand's soldiers deserted him and opened the gates. After the surrender Bonaparte had said: "*As far as Grenoble I was an adventurer; at Grenoble I was a prince.*"⁴⁰ On 10th March he was standing in front of Lyon that was

³⁸ N. BONAPARTE – J. DUMAINE – H. PLON (eds.), *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*. T. 28, Paris 1869, pp. 1–2.

³⁹ CHABOULON, p. 180.

⁴⁰ O. BROWNING, *The Fall of Napoleon*, New York 1907, p. 171; P. GUEDALLA, *The Hundred Days*, Leipzig 2015, p. 28.

strengthened by King's brother comte d'Artois and marshal Étienne MacDonald. The city's garrison had deserted and Bonaparte issued decrees⁴¹ forbidding feudal titles, expelling emigrants or dissolving the Chamber of Peers and the Chamber of Representatives, for "their powers expired and each of them lost the nation's trust".

The nation also ceased to trust its King. He and the Allies managed to issue a decree which declared "that Napoleon Bonaparte is excluded from civil and social relations, and, as an Enemy and Disturber of the tranquility of the World, that he has incurred public vengeance."⁴² After Louis' speech which he had delivered on 16th March, all nobles, ministers and members of the royal family got in carriages and left the city. Joseph Fouché, erstwhile Minister of Police, was to be arrested but he managed to slip through. The King himself declared that "we are leaving, with some few people, to a distant region to gather there an army and to find French who will be willing to fight for the right cause".⁴³ A desperate act from the hated King. His corpulent body sat into carriage on 18th March before midnight because "the sun can in no case look upon this disgraceful flight".⁴⁴

France had got into turmoil – soldiers were either fleeing or joining Napoleon but in no way listening to King's orders. Marshal Michel Ney had offered the King to "bring Napoleon in an iron cage" but he didn't succeed. Parisian trade stopped, shops were closed, Parisians beat up those who favoured Bonaparte, many of them left their houses and their belongings in the city. His supporters had prevailed, however, and on the afternoon of 20th March they could have welcomed him in Tuileries after they took over a post office and reseeded Bourbon lilies into Bonapartist bees.

Once Napoleon had entered the capital, the Powers considered it as an act of declaring war and began to arm, the French Emperor soon started too. The Allies were afraid of the new regime for it reassembled the Revolution – royalists were suppressed once more and jacobins, united with bonapartists, were once again heard in the provinces to

⁴¹ COOTE, p. 140; GUEDALLA, p. 34.

⁴² Ch. M. de TALLEYRAND – C. LÉVY (eds.), *Mémoires du Prince Talleyrand: publiés avec une préface et des notes par le duc de Broglie*, Paris 1891, p. 112.

⁴³ L. GOLDSMITH, *Supplément au Recueil des décrets, danifestes, discours etc. de Napoleon Bonaparte*, Londres 1816, p. 17.

⁴⁴ BROWNING, p. 179.

Bonaparte's displeasure. When Napoleon had told Chaboulon that Bourbons have learned nothing, we could say the same about him. His cabinet consisted of few former revolutionists including Joseph Fouché as a Minister of Police, also known as "the Butcher of Lyon", Armand Caulaincourt as a Minister of Foreign Affairs or Lazare Carnot as a Minister of Interior.

Indebted France was in immediate opposition to Napoleon's need to mobilize and finding new recruits. Numerous state properties were sold, financing and functioning of navy and theatres were suspended, some students even donated their savings and soldiers were voluntarily giving up their pay in favour of the state. Carnot was responsible for pacification of the country because in the west the royalists rose up, in the south were civic riots and in the north a civil war was a real threat. Because of uprisings, Fouché was once again controlling the public opinion and overseeing all citizens.

Minister of War, Louis Davout had been burning candles at both ends to satisfy Emperor's escalating demands. He oversaw providing accommodation and food for soldiers, of getting weaponry and equipment or to take care of horses, transportation and supplies. He created 8 supervising army corps, intended to guard the borderlands, 4 main armies (of the North, of the Moselle, of the Rhine and of the Alps), 2 reserve armies and several foreign legions consisting of Belgian, Swedish or Polish troops.

A decree from 28th March was calling up all non-commissioned officers and soldiers who deserted army to rejoin their corps and rush to the defence of homeland. National guardsmen were organized by a new office and rearranging all troops has taken for several weeks for it needed to take care of 250 thousand of guardsmen and 80 thousand of horses.⁴⁵ Davout was also supervising a distribution of rifles which were lacking. He had built up manufactories, some rifles were imported from Corsica or Elba and discarded ones were being repaired in old factories. The workers there weren't paid sufficiently and the demand for 240 thousand rifles wasn't fulfilled.

Arming and creating new troops was finished at the end of May. In addition, Bonaparte fortified some cities, made Versailles the centre of all military materials and built up storehouses and tents for soldiers

⁴⁵ DUMAINE, pp. 39–42 and 50–51.

there; seaports were charged to guard the coast and engineers placed cannons on many bridges in France. The Allies were still outnumbered though, so Caulaincourt tried to battle with diplomatic letters and to prevent an inevitable war: he had stated that Napoleon would like to live in peace and won't occupy any territory. No wonder no one trusted him, and British Prince-regent didn't even open the letter.

After all, Emperor's power was soon diminishing. France was given a new Charter, an *Additional Act to the Charter of 1814*⁴⁶ which provided an expansion of the right to vote, an abolishing of censorship of the press and a separation of the church from the state. This act from 22nd April meant a strong blow to Napoleon's authority. Another blow came from Naples – Bonaparte's brother-in-law Joachim Murat was encouraged by Napoleon's escape and tried to rally Italians in fight against Austrians. He was defeated on 23rd May and was deprived of the Kingdom of Naples, fled to France and stayed in disfavour. The rest of Bonaparte family was either interned (Elisa or Pauline) or detained (Joseph).⁴⁷

The Allies went even further and on 25th March had made a new agreement, creating the seventh coalition. Each was to provide 150 thousand men, Britain got to pay 5 million pounds to each of her allies. Britain wanted to be a protector of peace on the continent, while Prussia yearned for dividing France. Russia joined because its debts in Holland were cut in half and Austria, fighting against Murat, was motivated by British subsidies.

The last march on the battlefield Napoleon experienced on 12th June before dawn. He had named Davout a chief of Paris and left him 30 thousand National guardsmen, 20 thousand conscripts, same number of seamen and another 20 thousand of men available in departments. Paris must have been guarded at all costs; if it was captured, all would be lost. The north was the most endangered, for Britons could have disembarked there and Paris was very near this border. That's why the Emperor had to launch a defensive campaign in northern France and an aggressive one in Belgium. He wanted to conquer Brussels, cut off Britons and defeat Prussians. That's why he had

⁴⁶ GOLDSMITH, pp. 144–152.

⁴⁷ PALLAIN, pp. 330–331.

instructed Ney to “*well position your troops so your 8 divisions could at my command and without difficulties march on Brussels*”.⁴⁸

The city of Beaumont near borders had become a new (military) Versailles – the city was flooded with French troops and guardsmen, artillery, engineers and cavalrymen. Engineers had been sent into the Kingdom of Holland to build bridges and soldiers were sent to push their way through forests so to prevent leakage of information. Thanks to this, the Allies were informed about enemy’s advancement as late as on 15th June while French were ahead because they were interrogating the population. After the parade the French armies marched for the last time – the Belgian campaign began on 15th June.

The Climax of the Napoleonic Wars

There were two sides in a concluding battle – a compact group of French and a disparate mixture of Hanoverans, Bavarians, Hessians, Dutchmen and Prussians led by a military veteran Arthur Wellesley, duke of Wellington. Both armies were equally composed of very young and inexperienced boys; Napoleon’s side was cheered up by patriotic attitude while the Allies were driven by hatred towards Frenchmen instigated by Blücher and his staff commander August von Gneisenau.

According to Talleyrand the Allies’ army was reaching nearly 700 thousand soldiers.⁴⁹ Wellington troops consisted of around 93 thousand men, two thirds of these were foreigners though. He could have relied on lord Hill’s support in the southwest at Ath and Prince of Orange’s help in the city of Mons, Blücher’s 117 thousand armed forces took position in the east, in the city of Ligny. Auxiliary forces were intended to come from the east and from northern Italy and Naples together with Austria, however both forces would have appeared no sooner than in July and Russian troops were deliberating whether to come or not because it found out that France had made a secret agreement with Austria and Britain in January 1815.

Bonaparte placed about 125 thousand Frenchmen on the battlefield including his most experienced troop, an Imperial Guard. He was joined by some deserted Marshals, his numerous artillery and cavalry

⁴⁸ DUMAINE, p. 291.

⁴⁹ PALLAIN, p. 359.

later brought many deaths in battles. Although the French troops had been informed about enemy's position much sooner than themselves, they were unable to make use of it due to bad communication and delayed despatches caused a jam on the road to the strategic position of Charleroi. In the end, just before lunch the city fell into French hands on 15th June and became a headquarters for them.

Soon after Marshal Ney joined Napoleon and the whole army had split in two: the left wing with Ney was to march on western Quatre-Bras, attack Wellington, push him to the northwest and make the road to Brussels clear for Napoleon. The right wing with Emmanuel Grouchy was to march to the East, to defeat Prussians by the city of Fleurus, cut them off from Britons and push Blücher to the East so the Allies' troops could not join. The western frontline where Wellington was supported by Prince of Orange had been strongly reinforced because Ney and Grouchy went to sleep instead of pursuing their enemy.

The eastern front where Blücher could have relied on Gneisenau's men was poorly guarded so Napoleon made his army march to Ligny while sending Ney to capture Quatre Bras and later to attack Blücher's right wing. The Emperor was impatient though, and on 16th June sent Ney a despatch: *"You need to act according to Emperor's orders. If you acted impetuously the army would be lost. The fate of France is in your hands."*⁵⁰ The psychological effect was so strong that Ney had sent his finest cavalymen to destroy Britons, but he didn't succeed.

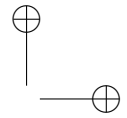
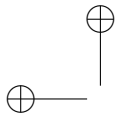
He immediately ordered general d'Erlon to arrive – the general however sent him a despatch reading that he must help the Emperor. Ney had declined Emperor's command and ordered d'Erlon to come to his aid. On cavalymen captain Kellerman's question what to do Ney answered: *"Throw yourselves among Englishmen, trample them!"*⁵¹ After two failed waves Kellerman was not willing to sacrifice anymore cavalymen. Ney scolded him with words: *"They don't matter at all. Attack with what you have! Just ride already!"*⁵² A bloodshed followed, and this battle was won by Britons.

In the same time Napoleon's didn't wait for d'Erlon – who had been retreating to help Ney, so he didn't help the Emperor nor the Marshal – and ruthlessly attacked Ligny. Thanks to Grouchy's cavalry, Prus-

⁵⁰ BROWNING, p. 240.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 244.

⁵² Ibidem, p. 245.



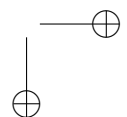
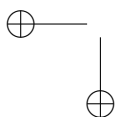
sians had been besieged by Frenchmen and soon after massacred. If Blücher, whose horse was hit under him, didn't have his loyal aide-de-camp he would surely die under hooves of the enemy. Prussians with Gneisenau withdrew to the north and Grouchy tried to pursue them. The French Marshal had been unfortunately so inconsistent, he allowed Prussians to unite with Englishmen near the village of Waterloo.

This village ought to be the proof that France would either win and would take Belgium back or would lose and become an unwanted participant in a new European organization. More was at stake: Napoleon himself. He didn't have anything to lose, he was just a temporary Emperor and he knew it for his power has been diminishing since April and he was losing his enthusiasm. To his disadvantage it was Wellington, not him, who had decided where the final battle would take place. The Emperor didn't know the terrain much and the Duke could rely on his allies from all sides and more of them incoming. The whole Saturday was raining, and both commanders had some time to plan out their attacks.

The battlefield at Waterloo offered much more advantages to defenders than to attackers. A watersoaked soil would have delayed French troops for so long they could be liquidated. Not speaking of small steep hills on which the British shooters were standing plus many of them hiding in high rye. Three small castles represented a welcome refuge to its garrisons; Nassauvian and Hanoveran troops occupied the largest castle, Hougomont.

On Sunday 18th June, at 11.30 am, there was a cannon blast and French firstly marched on Hougomont on the left side. Led by Jérôme they had lost so much time conquering the unconquerable and lost many men who after a while got into a courtyard but met a rain of missiles. The central position was to be attacked by d'Erlon with 16 thousand men. He had delivered four attack waves and after only the third one managed to reach Britons, they came out of the rye and finished the cavalry with their muskets. On the other hand, even allies lost a fair amount of men especially when Ney attacked them on the right.

Even without an artillery support, he had managed to conquer a smaller castle, burn it and make its garrison flee. While withdrawing to the comrades, Frenchmen drew their swords and an unthinkable bloodshed followed. Cheered up by his victory, he had started to



follow them but didn't see clearly because of the smoke from the burning castle; his five thousand squad was soon stabbed to death. The tide of battle was on Bonaparte's side as one of enemy's officer confided: *"We were in danger. Each minute was making our staying in battle more and more uncertain."*⁵³

Nearly winning, Ney requested some of the Imperial guard men, but Napoleon refused. The Emperor had been waiting till the right time would come, but it didn't. The defeat was almost sure when Prussians appeared on the right wing after 4 pm. Friedrich von Bülow with Hans von Zieten had 30 thousand men that were outnumbering the 10 thousand Frenchmen. Only then Napoleon had decided to march on them and join in – but without support from auxiliary forces, cavalrymen, artillery and firepower it was a futile march.

Wellington's two acts marked Bonaparte's final defeat. After Frenchmen reached the Duke's central position, Wellington shouted: *"Now, Maitland, now it's your time!"*⁵⁴ An unexpected row of British rifles had suddenly appeared from behind ryes and ridges and began to fire with unforeseen steadiness and swiftness. Hundreds of men had immediately fallen and rest fled into the hollow where they were joined by the second part of the army being killed by British cavalry. Wellington had then taken off his embellished hat and ordered his whole mass of army to attack at once. Cries *"All is lost! The Guard is defeated!"*⁵⁵ meant that Frenchmen fled to all sides and the Emperor quickly retreated to the south.

Fouché's Reign

It was night already and Frenchmen had been still pursued by Prussians until French borders, many men were taken hostage altogether with cannons. Many Frenchmen were only cut and left bleeding to death. An overall statistics say that 67 thousand of French men died while Blücher lost 30 thousand Prussians and Wellington 23 thousand soldiers.

One hour after midnight Napoleon had reached Quatre Bras and send a letter to his brother Joseph: *"Not all is lost. I estimate that I could call one hundred and fifty thousands men into arms. The National guard*

⁵³ COOTE, pp. 239–240.

⁵⁴ BROWNING, p. 270; GUEDALLA, p. 98.

⁵⁵ DUMAINE, p. 297.

consists of another one hundred thousands men, the reserve army about fifty thousands.”⁵⁶ He only needed a new Chamber of Representatives to approve that. However, he could have not relied on them, for it was inclining to republicanism under Fouché who has been from the very beginning thinking about becoming a First man of France.

Right after crossing French borders, Bonaparte’s supporters were either imprisoned or mauled. They had been prosecuted, their cattle and properties were confiscated, immovable properties were torn down. Napoleon had at that time only 8,600 men available plus those of Grouchy. We cannot say the Marshal didn’t listen to Emperor’s orders; he was battling with von Thielmann at Wavre and was engaged there. The despatch he got read that “*la bataille est engage*” which means that the battle has begun. Nevertheless, Grouchy read that “*la bataille est gagnée*” which means that the battle is won.⁵⁷ The despatch was written with a pencil and the soaked paper from the day before made the difference.

The return of Louis XVIII was once again being discussed. Castle-reagh had received a letter on 22nd June which stated a possible returning of the king, and that ministers Fouché and Carnot have come with an idea on a republican government. Even further, Fouché had issued two documents about “*a horrible state of affairs in France*” and impudently recommended himself to be the head of the new government so he could correct those affairs!

Bonaparte had returned on the morning of 21st and found out that his power was transferred to the Chamber of Representatives which declared that “*any attempts to interrupt its session would be regarded as a criminal act of high treason*”.⁵⁸ The pressure from all sides and the impossibility to turn the tables prompted him to write down a second unconditional abdication: “*My political life has ended. I designate my son, who would be using a title Napoleon II, as the Emperor of the French*.”⁵⁹ The Regent government of five people had to reign in Napoleon II’s name, Fouché was appointed as its head. The Government had been soon overseeing people, was immediately imprisoning those who were in

⁵⁶ JOHNSTON, p. 461.

⁵⁷ BROWNING, p. 275.

⁵⁸ *Le Moniteur*, p. 711.

⁵⁹ DUMAINE, p. 300.

touch with the enemy, supported civil riots and participated in desertions so the change needed to come very quickly.

Fouché's reign lasted since 23rd June till 8th July 1815. Once Prussians entered France on 21st June and pillaged the north of the country, Britons arrived on 23rd June, Russians were in Reims and Austrians appeared near Lyon,⁶⁰ Fouché coerced Napoleon to leave Paris. The erstwhile Emperor had moved to Malmaison, then to Rochefort and a threat of a civil uprising was soon trampled because Fouché had called National guard to arms to (for effect) defend Paris. On 3rd July the Allies and French ministers made an agreement at Saint-Cloud in which they agreed on a military neutrality and sent French troops to the south.

Five days later, Louis XVIII had arrived in the capital, deprived Fouché of his powers and named Talleyrand as the head of a new Royalistic government. After 8th July, when the Parisian prefect Gaspard de Chabrol had welcomed the King in Paris after "*the perilous Hunder days*", the white terror broke out – officers were blamed for cooperating with Napoleon, two of them were murdered. The list of proscribed was created by the King himself and many have left the country.

Napoleon had reach Rochefort on 3rd July and was apparently thinking about fleeing again. But where? There was no place he could go. He could have used the troops that were marching to the south, but even with some Marshals he could have not turned the tide. Italy was under Austria's rule, the east Europe was in the Czar's hands, the United States were too far. The Great Britain remained.

The Islands had sent their captain Maitland on a ship *Bellerophon* to guard Napoleon until the representants found a solution. Bonaparte even wrote to the Prince-Regent a letter in which he "*is terminating his political life for certain. Powers are dividing my country. I am placing myself under the protection of the British laws of His Royal Highness as the wisest, stablest and the most generous enemy*".⁶¹ The former Emperor surely wasn't sincere and vision of Bonaparte finally standing on the British soil could have easily started a civil uprising which could have again deprive Louis of his throne. The Allies wouldn't allow that – 18th July was Napoleon's last day on the continent. A vessel *Épervier* had trans-

⁶⁰ The number of the Allies' troops was reaching nearly half a million soldiers. COOTE, p. 261.

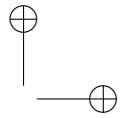
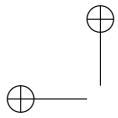
⁶¹ GOLDSMITH, p. 353.

ported him on the board of *Bellerophon* which took him on the Islands. There was decided that Bonaparte would be on 7th August conveyed on the island of Saint Helene in the South Atlantic Ocean. Napoleon Bonaparte had landed on the island on 17th October and every symbol of his reign has already been destroyed – Murat was executed on 13th October in Calabria because of an unsuccessful coup attempt and Ney was murdered due to the White terror on 7th December 1815.

The whole adventurous journey had come to a bitter end. Once defeated at Leipzig, Napoleon must have known there would be no option but to give up. Although he had experienced partial victories in January and February 1814, he must have acquiesced to the Allies' proposals and was deposed. Both sides had accepted articles of the Treaty of Fontainebleau however neither one was fulfilling them – a part of Bonaparte's family still ruled Italy, the French King refused to pay an annual income and Austria with the Great Britain declined to call Napoleon an Emperor. There was a third side of "outsiders" such as the Czar Alexander I who appropriated an honour to be the head of the Allies and the French negotiator Charles Talleyrand who had stood against the Allies and replaced Russia.

Mutual conflicts have almost led to war at the end of the year if it weren't Napoleon who would have once more stirred the calm Europe by his escape from the island of Elba in late February 1815. There was no option though – if he had stayed longer, he would have been transported to even more distant place and could have not influenced situation in Europe from whence he was receiving informations about the Allies' discrepancies. If he had fled later than he did, he would have been caught by attending representants' armies and surely would have been sent into another exile – if not sent to death. He had fled just in time when Alexander was nearly declaring war while Talleyrand was making secret alliance with Austria and the Great Britain and was unknowingly helping Napoleon escape.

The most surprising was Bonaparte's swift and non-violent march to Paris. The mobilisation and recruiting were however drawing his power and the war that was inevitable would have decide whether he deserves to be the Emperor once more or to be condemned and forgotten forever. The confused battle of Waterloo on 18th June 1815 had sealed his fate and sent him to the island of Saint Helena where he soon – but already too late – searched his confidence. This is how



ingloriously ended a Napoleonic period which has changed the usual order and left Europe with deep wounds that had changed its form and made irreversible transformations.

