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THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO:  
THE PATH TOWARDS FREEDOM

Diplomová práce

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### **Annotation**

The diploma thesis deals with the historical figure of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the national hero of the United States, Belarus and Poland, and his pursuit of freedom within the historical context of the eighteenth century, particularly, the American Revolutionary War and the Polish Uprising of 1794. The evolution and philosophy of *freedom* are disclosed by the description of various philosophical approaches towards the concept. The detailed description of Kosciuszko's contribution to the achievement of the American independence from the British and the struggle for the Polish sovereignty is showed in the thesis.

Keywords: Freedom, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita), szlachta, The American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, fortification, West Point, Saratoga, the Uprising of 1794.

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3. Thaddeus Kosciuszko in the United States.
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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci na téma “Thaddeus Kosciuszko: The Path towards Freedom” vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne .....

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## **Introduction**

Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the national hero of Belarus, Poland and the United States of America, emerged in the European and American history of the eighteenth century as a legendary figure. He was able to change the course of history and became a driving element in a chain of events which drastically changed the political map, the social order, and the way *statehood, equality, freedom, independence, and patriotism* were perceived.

In the diachronically changing process of the formation of state borders as a consequence of political decisions, wars, and revolutions, it is hard to find a leader whose deeds and actions are interpreted as fully positive, with no need to criticize him as a person and a historically and politically important and influential character. Being a human being made of flesh and blood, he was not free of mistakes, as is made clear in the biographical works written by the scant number of those who have explored Kosciuszko's life. But even those who attempted to find the drawbacks in his deeds, or express irony about Kosciuszko's excessive idealism, would still find a feeling of sympathy, mixed with one of respect and reverence towards the military leader. In world history he can be considered as an exemplary and exceptional phenomenon worth keeping in the lists of heroes who managed to change the world for the better.

The objective which I aspire to approach by this project dealing with this particular historical personality is connected with many factors and problems faced by 21<sup>st</sup>-century society, at a time when society is faced with, on the one hand, tremendous technical progress and comfort, and on the other, a decline in morality and amnesia about the historical past. A lack of interest in family history, nation, and the history of one's home country is becoming the norm, not the exception. Obviously, such amnesia leads to nothing but instability and a lack of self-awareness. Kosciuszko is an ideal example of a person devoted to his homeland, an embodiment of courage and spiritual maturity, morality, and industriousness. Learning from such a positive example could transform our minds for the better.

Another reason is closely connected with cultural links. Today the frameworks separating nations and countries are more or less clear. But it is worth

remembering that before people started to name their nationality and to realize who they are in terms of their national identity, whether Poles, Belarusians, or Americans, they had undergone long-term struggles and confrontations. Despite this, there are a lot of links that bring the representatives of different nations to the same historical core and show a similar shared past. Thaddeus Kosciuszko is a link that connects Belarusians and Polish people; he also helps us to dive into American culture, which is also a mixture of nationalities, bound by the same historical past.

The key concept of *freedom*, which is introduced and included in the title of the project, is no less important than the personality of Kosciuszko himself. Kosciuszko and freedom stand close to each other; they are put together, and are equivalent in their importance. Freedom was the purpose of his life, and mentioning his biographical data is justified. Being not purely biographical, the project is historical and cultural in its basis, and is linked with the political context.

The abstract notion of freedom, the desire to get it, has always been a starting point in the process of the development of cultures, nations, and social groups, as well as in the process of the formation of new countries. This highly moral concept varies in its definitions, depending on the perspective of understanding and the field where it is discussed: politics, philosophy, ethics, religion, or psychology. Nevertheless, the single feature which the concept of freedom possesses is that it cannot appear, exist, and be fully expressed without an individual and the society in which he is involved and is surrounded by. The realization of freedom, putting the abstract notion to practical use, depends heavily on the maturity of a particular society and the individuals who it is composed of, while readiness and maturity require a specific state of mind, state of things, and level of self-development, both moral and spiritual, of a group and its members. A deeper understanding and analysis of Kosciuszko's life and achievements, which were obviously international in terms of their background, helps us to trace and find correlations and consistent patterns in the phenomena that can be observed in the history of the United States, Europe, and Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

The biographical facts about Thaddeus Kosciuszko that are analyzed in the project function as a tool to show the realization of the aspiration to freedom of the

eighteenth-century western and eastern societies. The military engineer also appears as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the historical processes of a particular time and the realization of the international dialog and the interaction between the countries and their political leaders in a difficult historical period of the formation of statehood, tailoring of the world map, and the changing of the ideals of human existence.

In this diploma project I connect the concept of freedom with the personality of Thaddeus Kosciuszko as a unique example of the realization of this concept. Chapter by chapter, starting from the theoretical part of the philosophical and political understanding of freedom, continuing with the analysis of the American-European political affairs and philosophies, and looking at Kosciuszko's contribution to the American Revolution and struggle for the independence of his homeland, I will display the path that was walked by him during his life and what results, disappointments, and victories he achieved in his life-long walk towards freedom.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko never aimed at reaching the heights in politics, however indirectly he may have been involved in it. To become a political leader was never his goal, which was rather mainly connected to his mission in the military and engineering spheres. But during the Uprising of 1794, when people chose him to become a Commander, he did not hesitate to take responsibility both as a military leader and a political one. In fact, he was an executive above whom there were always higher authorities who were more influential in the process of shaping history. But this did not prevent him from becoming the master of his own ultimate goal, which he pursued all his life and remained dedicated to until the last day of his life. His ultimate goal was the *aspiration to freedom*. Thus at the center of the project will lie the concept of freedom in all its complexity and various interpretations, on different levels and in different conditions.

In Chapter One the genesis of the concept of freedom will be explored, mostly in terms of philosophical thought. The practical usage of this concept and its evolution will be shown in a particular historical context.

Chapter Two will provide an overview of the history of Poland and Belarus in order to uncover the core of Kosciuszko's patriotism and attachment to his

motherland. The “Kosciuszko question,” which is still debated in Belarus and Poland, will be analyzed and discussed in greater detail. Tracking his path through life as a young man will help the reader to uncover the most decisive facts that contributed to the shaping of Kosciuszko’s ideals and principles and his professional adolescence.

Chapter Three will be dedicated to Kosciuszko’s journey to America, especially the reasons for his immigration to the American continent, the deeds that made him famous during the shaping of the American state, his connections with American and European leaders, and his search for and gaining a deeper understanding of freedom in America, or, to cut a long story short, his contribution on American soil.

Chapter Four will inform the reader about the political conditions in Poland, particularly in the Polish Kingdom at that time, the involvement of Kosciuszko in the struggle against the Russian invasion, and the attempts of the Polish state to achieve its independence by means of revolutions. The greatest attention will be paid to the Uprising of 1794, in which Kosciuszko made his last attempt to achieve the independence of his homeland.

## **Chapter 1. Genesis and Evolution of *freedom*. Freedom in Philosophy**

### **1.1. The Introduction of the Concept of *freedom*, its Definitions and Origin**

The freedom of a human being as a holistic creature is a phenomenon that has natural, social, and spiritual levels. Humans are social creatures and it is impossible to understand freedom without identifying it with social communication. The tendency to understand freedom must have appeared at the same time as the human became capable of self-understanding, started to identify himself as a part of a community, and became involved in the process of socialization and communication in groups.

A dominant aspect concerns the specific features of various forms of freedom. However, there has always been a tendency to realize it within an individual only, regardless of the external factors influencing him and moving away from the social influence so as to make a human being the central figure and the main tool in understanding the concept of freedom. Social freedom is based on the individual freedoms of the members of society, whereas the freedom of an individual is a fusion of personal, group, and common-to-all-mankind freedoms.

The meaning of freedom, like a human being himself, has gone through evolution. It was rather a dynamic than a static concept, adapting to the times, philosophies, and people's visions of themselves and the world surrounding them. Freedom has been acquiring additional implications and specifications according to different branches of studies and scientific areas. In the present-day literature one can find both abstract and general definitions of freedom, combined with a specific and narrow understanding of it. Over the centuries this phenomenon has been closely connected with social and political changes.

Concerning the initial meaning of "freedom," it comes from the Proto-Germanic *frijaz*, reconstructed from the Proto-Indo-European *prijoz*. The root "pri," meaning "love," was incorporated into a variety of other terms in the years to come up with meanings such as "beloved," "help," "peace," and "affection." Gradually, words like *free* and *freedom* came into their modern sense of not being bound by the

law, society, circumstances, etc., possibly because of the social divide between free and beloved friends and family members as opposed to slaves and servants.<sup>1</sup>

The Old English *frēodōm* meant “power of self-determination,” “state of free will,” “emancipation from slavery,” and “deliverance.” The meaning “exemption from arbitrary or despotic control, civil liberty” is from the late fourteenth century. The meaning “possession of particular privileges” is from the 1570s.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the “Slavic” origin of *freedom*, which is *svoboda* in Czech and Russian, the scholars differ in their assumptions. In his work *Freedom and Power* the Russian historian Alexander Milovidov goes back to the Ostromir Gospel, the oldest dated East Slavic book, where he found out that *svoboda* comes from the noun “svob,” which was the name of one of the pagan gods. He draws the conclusion that freedom is not a feeling or emotion but something that has a high and mystical origin, a prerogative or right given to a god. He insists that freedom is a form of activity which can be filled up with any contents, either true or false. The quality and value of freedom depends on how we use this right.<sup>3</sup>

The present-day explanation of freedom in dictionaries is realized in different meanings which have a common core but differ according to the branches and fields in which this concept is used.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *freedom* is defined as

1. Exemption or release from slavery or imprisonment; personal liberty.
2. Liberation from the bondage of sin.
3. Exemption from arbitrary, despotic, or autocratic control; independence; civil liberty.
4. The quality of being free or noble; nobility, generosity, liberality.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Partridge. *A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 1186.

Etymology Now. “Etymology of Freedom,” September 3, 2011, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://etymologynow.blogspot.com.by/2011/09/etymology-of-powerful-terms-likefree.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Harper. *Freedom*. Online Etymology Dictionary. 2001-2016, accessed September 5, 2015, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=freedom>.

<sup>3</sup> Voronezh Identification. The Association of Historians of Voronezh State University. Georgi Milovidov. “About Freedom and Power,” first published in “Philological Notes” *Jornal*, Voronezh, 1906, accessed September 3, 2015, <http://vrn-id.ru/filzaps06.htm>.

5. The state of being able to act without hindrance or restraint, liberty of action.

6. The quality of being free from the control of fate or necessity; the power of self-determination attributed to the will.

7. Readiness or willingness to act.<sup>4</sup>

The Oxford English Dictionary gives such definitions as “absence of subjection to foreign domination or despotic government,” “the power of self-determination attributed to the will, the quality of being independent of fate or necessity,” “the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved,” and “the state of being unrestricted and able to move easily.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul F. Boller, a prolific American historian and writer, describes freedom in the following manner:

At the highest level of abstraction freedom (or liberty) has had three major definitions: self-realization, self-perfection, and self-determination. The self-realization holds that a person is free if circumstances are such that he is able to do as he pleases, that is, realize his desires, even though his desires are causally shaped. The self-perfectionist asserts that only if an individual has emancipated himself from his passions and prejudices and brought his will into harmony with reason or moral law can it be said that he is truly free. And the self-determinationist believes that freedom is a power which the individual possesses innately to initiate on his own acts of will which are to some extent unshaped by antecedent determining conditions. From this point of view, if an individual has an inherent power of causal initiative, his will (and therefore he) is said to be free.

It is no matter of chance that he uses one more word synonymous with *freedom*, *liberty*, which he refers to French and German, and provides a slight distinction between these two words:

The French language contains the word *liberté*, and the German language the word *Freiheit*. English, however, has two words, liberty and freedom, and they have slightly different shades of meaning. Liberty implies positive exercise of power (*liberty to speak*) and freedom connotes absence of constraint and restraint (*freedom from fear*). Liberty also tends to be used in legal and political contexts and freedom in philosophical and more general contexts. Some people contend that liberty is French, foolish, and frivolous, while freedom is English, solid, and sensible. Thus the two words are

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<sup>4</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*, by John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, “freedom”, Second Edition, Volume VI, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 164.

<sup>5</sup> *On-line Oxford English Dictionary*. “Freedom.” (Oxford University Press, 2016), accessed September 2, 2015, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/freedom>.

virtually indistinguishable in meaning, and they are used interchangeably by the American people as well as by English.<sup>6</sup>

As is evident from the definitions given above, they have a similar content; they describe freedom as a state or condition and touch on such elements as personality, society or community, and the condition of a person within political institutions. Further discussion of freedom in the next subchapter will be connected first of all to the background of philosophy and politics, taking into account the fact that the thesis touches on the political, philosophical and social issues of the eighteenth century, an age full of radical alterations and turbulence.

## 1.2. Freedom in Ancient Times

The modern understanding of freedom, as well as the ideas of law, justice, and civil rights, originates in ancient and medieval philosophy. Further movements in philosophical and political thought have only developed these theoretical categories and applied them as a basis for the formation of modern democratic states.

The question of the possible value of freedom in a given sociopolitical context needs to take into account a characteristic trait of the society in the ancient times.

Both the genesis of freedom in antiquity and its medieval understanding were tightly connected with the perception of what the individual was and what his place and position in the universe were. Ancient man realized himself as a part of the cosmos, which lived according to its own laws and was the reason for his existence. People in ancient times placed the impersonal natural element, which was actually fate, at the center of existence. One of the representations of cosmic life was a human being. The world and the human being did not contradict each other; they were both subjugated to this spontaneous fatal principle.

According to the historians of philosophy, *eleutheria* or *libertas* did not originally carry a specific philosophical meaning in ancient Greece. The history of the Greek freedom is difficult to reconstruct. What happened in Athens affected the entire

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<sup>6</sup> Paul F. Boller, Jr., *Freedom and Fate in American Thought, from Edwards to Dewey* (New York: Southern Methodist University Press, 1978), 14-15.

Greek world intellectually and ideologically. The orators, historians, and philosophers of the late fifth and fourth centuries B.C. absorbed and reacted to the Athenian views of freedom, shaped this concept in turn, developed it further, and passed it on as a common Greek heritage, first to the Hellenistic world and then to Rome and the later cultural tradition of the Western world.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, in the case of *eleutheria*, the word appears first as an adjective, then as a nominal (the free) and only much later as the abstract noun *freedom*. To be free, according to Homer, meant to live in one's native land and being not under somebody's dominance and pressure. After Homer the concept of being free was already firmly entrenched in the discourse of the Greek polis, which embodies a free land and a free man who lives on the land of the polis. The polis itself embodied a free land and a free man as a part of the land and society. Moreover, freedom meant a natural condition of life, somehow involved in the bonds of necessity.<sup>8</sup>

The degree of freedom depended greatly on the statuses of people and the degree of rights and privileges they had. Citizens definitely possessed a higher degree of freedom than non-citizens. The plurality of statuses even among the free could not but affect the value of freedom as a sociopolitical context. The status of a free man was opposed to slavery. The political freedom of a community also denoted the subjugation of other communities under its control. The preservation of an individual's liberty was not considered to be inconsistent with the deprivation of another's, and this was also the case with a political community. In addition, the Greek (especially Athenian) concept of liberty entailed equality of political rights and the freedom of male political participation in the public sphere.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Peter John Rhodes, *Athenian Democracy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 118-134.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur L. Keith, "Fate and Freedom as Viewed by Homer," *The Open Court*: Vol. 1928: Iss. 1, Article 2, accessed May 15, 2016, <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4023&context=ocj>.

<sup>9</sup> Rhodes, *Athenian Democracy*, 118-134.

Science Encyclopedia. Liberty. Ancient Conceptions.2014, accessed December 12, 2015, <http://science.jrank.org/pages/9964/Liberty-Ancient-Conceptions.html>.

Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) assumed that complete freedom is the key to a happy life, highlighting the active role of an individual in the process of choosing his actions and the ability to perform moral assessment.<sup>10</sup>

Freedom in ancient times played a significant role in many spheres of life, almost all genres of literature, and the most important political events. The investigation focuses on the two predominant categories of external and internal freedom, the freedom of the community and freedom within the community. By the fifth century B.C. the spectrum of meanings and functions of freedom in both the individual private and the public-political spheres was almost fully developed. The politicization and ideologization of freedom had reached a climax both within Greek communities and in their mutual relations. Freedom and autonomy were fixed items in interstate diplomacy and the language of treaties.

The term *personal freedom* receives much attention in Homer. Lack of freedom was determined on the one hand by subjugation to force and a foreign will, and, on the other hand, loss of protection, home, and country. The “Homeric” idea of being free must at the very least include control over one’s own person and actions and the security of living in an intact, stable community. The Homeric “freedom of community” could be understood as the sum of the possibilities for individual freedom. The sense of community of the inhabitants of the polis meant “an awareness of freedom,” as well as describing this polis as “the space of freedom.”<sup>11</sup>

In the era of the Greek Sophists, who distinguished between nature (*physis*) and convention (*nomos*), the law was thought of as a human invention arrived at by consensus for the purpose of restricting natural freedoms for the sake of expediency and the self-interest of the leaders who created and maintained the laws. Thus there appears the notion of the “entire freedom” of an individual. The state of freedom in this case may be achieved regardless of the law and politics but is understood as the harmony of *logos* and nature. This approach to the understanding of freedom was

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Stolyarov, *Freedom of Will as Problem of the European Moral Conscience*, (Moscow: Greek Latin Cabinet, 1999), 36-43.

<sup>11</sup> Kurt Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17-20.

further developed in the European philosophical tradition and in medieval philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) continued the theme of responsibility as an integral part of freedom, claiming that it depends on a person whether he chooses to perform moral or immoral actions. He divides all actions into intentional and non-intentional ones. The intentional actions are the choice of the free will of a human being. Aristotle connects freedom with the nature of virtues, which he describes in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>13</sup>

Aristotle appears as a generator of the idea of *free will*, where a human being differs from other creatures in the ability to make a free choice and be capable of action; it is the background for taking responsibility. Aristotle paid attention on the realization of free will where one of the main roles is played by the human mind as a background for self-determination and making independent decisions, contrasting with the spontaneity of arbitrariness: “Therefore virtue also is in our own power, and so too vice. For where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and vice versa.”<sup>14</sup>

The value of ancient philosophy for the following generations is huge. Whatever philosophical theme has been further explored in the area of philosophy, a return to the classical philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome has always been unavoidable. The contribution of ancient philosophy lay in giving basic examples for the development of philosophical themes. All the resources the philosophy of modern times possesses can initially be found in ancient philosophy in its basic tenets. To exaggerate a little, it is possible to claim that to some extent modern philosophy repeated, deepened, and recombined the streams of thought found in the ancient

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<sup>12</sup> A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece from Homer to the Fifth Century*, Ancient culture and society, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 20-45.

<sup>13</sup> Stolyarov, *Freedom of Will as Problem of the European Moral Conscience*, 36-43. Internet Sacred Text Archive. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by William David Ross, 1906. 2010. accessed April 23, 2016, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/ari/nico/nico027.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Internet Sacred Text Archive. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by William David Ross, 1906. 2010. accessed April 23, 2016, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/ari/nico/nico027.htm>.

heritage. Freedom was a highly discussed issue and the classical approaches to its understanding have remained eternally useful and applicable. Ancient thinkers explored freedom in connection with the perfection and deeper investigation of a human being and his interaction with society, the state, and God. Ancient philosophy gave birth to models in politics, such as republicanism, that became efficient and applied in the eighteenth century in the United States and Europe, where the freedom of man became one of the most valuable issues and a target to achieve.

### **1.3. Freedom in Medieval Communities and the Renaissance**

The society of medieval times rested on two pillars: feudalism and Christianity. Therefore the realization of freedom started to be transformed very actively and differed drastically from antiquity and the Renaissance. On the secular level freedom was closely connected with the status of people within a community and its hierarchy, the rights different social classes possessed, and the actions they could take, according to their rights.

Christianity caused a crucial turn in people's thinking, and the common notion that the medieval era is considered to be the dark ages, a time of ignorance and obscurantism, is not completely true. Faith in God was a given and the ultimate truth around which all other notions and ideas were grouped, the truth with which cultural and societal values were associated, the final regulatory principle in the whole picture of the world of that era. Philosophers, poets, and artists cohesively worked on the discovery of freedom in the Middle Ages.

Freedom in medieval society was not simply the opposite of dependence but blended with it. The medieval culture continuously faced the paradoxical interplay of the polar opposites, dark and comic, spiritual and bodily, life and death. These extremes come closer to each other and switch places only to break up again. Medieval culture is an impossible combination of oppositions. Realizing the essence of freedom in different ages, it is necessary to take into account the position of a human being in the universe: what was put at its center and what was peripheral. In the Middle Ages the human position was peripheral, while at the center there was

God. So the discussion of freedom was based on the dialog between a human being and God, community, and partly himself.

It is possible but difficult to distinguish the spheres of intellectual thought such as philosophy, esthetics, and historical thought. All intellectual thought is aimed at trying to comprehend God. All the visual forms play the role of tools in the process of comprehending God. The fear of the Last Judgement gave people a choice as to whether to sin or to survive.

The medieval understanding of freedom went through a transformation in its understanding since antiquity. In medieval society the division into the natural and social cosmos was nominal because people were bonded with agrarian relations and the connection of a peasant with his land was strong. An important feature of medieval society was its strongly displayed hierarchy, and the feudal society was built on the basis of domination and subordination; nobody at all was free, even those at the top of the hierarchical ladder. Human individuality did not exist; people remained tightly connected to a group. Freedom in the Middle Ages had its own particular content, not being just an antithesis of non-freedom and dependence, as in antiquity. It also differed from the Modern Age. As Gurevich mentions, in the feudal society there were no people who were completely independent. Whatever status people had, the highest authority was God. Freedom could be more or less, depending on the rights that members of society possessed. Peasants were also protected by legal status. Complete freedom could be achieved only in Heaven, but part of it could also be achieved through humbly bearing hardships and adversities. According to medieval philosophy, only God was completely free but Man was given free will in order to choose the path towards either sin or salvation. A human being in the Middle Ages was the slave of sins and passions.<sup>15</sup>

Augustine argues that one's freedom depends on who, or what, he is serving:

He is freely in bondage who does with pleasure the will of his master. Accordingly, he who is the servant of sin is free to sin. And hence he will not be free to do right, until, being freed from sin, he

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<sup>15</sup> Aron Gurevich. *Categories of Medieval Culture*. Trans. by G. L. Campbell. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 163-173.

shall begin to be the servant of righteousness. And this is true liberty, for he has pleasure in the righteous deed; and it is at the same time a holy bondage, for he is obedient to the will of God.<sup>16</sup>

In the **Renaissance Era** the scheme of the Universe enters the domain of Man. The domination of the Church was broken, while the capabilities of Man were acknowledged. Francesco Petrarca, a pioneer of the Italian Renaissance, preached the dignity and grandeur of Man and his faith in himself. Lorenzo Valla, Leon Battista Alberti, and Pico della Mirandola picked up that view and developed the idea of the main virtue of a Renaissance Man – his free will, the ability to make his own life and himself.

According to Leon Battista Alberti, “a man can do all things if he will”;<sup>17</sup> this idea embodied the basic tenets of Renaissance Humanism. Man became the center of the Universe, which led to the notion that men should try to embrace all knowledge and develop their own capacities as fully possible.<sup>18</sup>

Pico della Mirandola stresses that the dignity and specific characteristics of Man lie in his free will gifted by God. Acquiring free will, people can create and change the world which also gives the social position in the ladder of the social hierarchy. Man can define himself, to be an angel or a beast.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the anthropocentrism of the Renaissance was not completely free. While in the Medieval Era there was no doubt in people’s minds that God provided a great deal for a person’s freedom, in the Modern Age, beginning from the Renaissance, philosophers and explorers of the essence of freedom started to form

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Charles Sproul, *Willing to Believe. The Controversy over Free Will*. (Michigan: Baker Books, 1997), 64.

Brandon Peterson, “Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination”, accessed April 23, 2015, [http://www3.nd.edu/~ujournal/wp-content/uploads/Peterson\\_05-06.pdf](http://www3.nd.edu/~ujournal/wp-content/uploads/Peterson_05-06.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Yale-New Heaven Teachers Institute. Peter N. Herdon, “The Ideas and Ideals of Man from the Renaissance to the Reformation,” accessed April 15, 2016, <http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/1986/3/86.03.04.x.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. Renaissance Man, accessed December 12, 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Renaissance-man>

<sup>19</sup> Jens Zimmermann, *Incarnational Humanism. A Philosophy of Culture for the Church in the World*, (Dorner's Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2012), 136-137.

Pico della Mirandola, *New Essays*, edited by Michael Dougherty, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 70-74, accessed April, 2016, [http://michaelsudduth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Mirandola\\_Sudduth.pdf](http://michaelsudduth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Mirandola_Sudduth.pdf).

two groups: those who did not exclude God's participation in providing freedom to Man and that party of thinkers who related human freedom with divine providence and power.

The Renaissance tells us about Man as a creative active creature, and freedom was gradually moving to the domain of action, allowing Man to gain self-orientation and producing the experience of a new freedom. The era gave a path to Humanism and inspired the Christianized European nations with optimism and optimistic down-to-earth hopes. It was a time of transition to the power and domination of the middle class, characterized by the rapid process of progressive change in the political, economic, cultural, and scientific spheres and in the entire field of spiritual life, and the rapid development of science. Philosophy was the ideological basis of progressive changes, but also preceded them.

René Descartes identifies the faculty of will with freedom of choice, “the ability to do or not do something,”<sup>20</sup> and proudly declares:

My will is so perfect and so great that I can't conceive of its becoming even greater and more perfect; it is a striking fact that this is true of my will and not of any other aspect of my nature.<sup>21</sup>

In the Modern Age the view of freedom gained new impetus for its development. René Descartes, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Kant, and many other philosophers created and developed their theories, and, on the basis of the experience of the past, developed and refuted, added and mastered the understanding of freedom. Nevertheless, there was one feature of the Modern Era that connected theorists and acted as a background to their views, the key to the epoch: **an anthropocentric perspective on freedom** in which the human mind played a central role in its understanding. By the close of the nineteenth century freedom was understood as that of individual action. For many people it became the possibility of realizing the self in a manner that was congruent with some ideal held by the community. Instead of

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<sup>20</sup> Ohio State University. “Free Will in Early Modern Philosophy. Descartes on Human Freedom: Indifference or Spontaneity?” Blog created by the graduate students in Philos 8200, accessed April 15, 2016, <https://u.osu.edu/freewill/descartes-2/descartes-on-human-freedom-indifference-or-spontaneity/>

<sup>21</sup> Rene Descartes, *Meditations On First Philosophy*. “Fourth Meditation: Truth and Falsity.” Jonathan Bennet. 2010-2015.e-book, accessed April 30, 2016, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1641.pdf>.

“credo quia absurdum”,<sup>22</sup> we got “cogito ergo sum.”<sup>23</sup> Philosophers were convinced that there is no use trying to comprehend God, who can never be fully comprehended by the human mind. They found it more reasonable to try to comprehend the freedom and personal experience of a man.

Exploring the nature of freedom, the philosophers mentioned *necessity* as a trigger for reaching freedom.

I call a thing free which exists and acts from the pure necessity of its nature, and I call that unfree, of which the being and action are precisely and fixedly determined by something else. Thus, for example, God, though necessary, is free because he exists only through the necessity of his own nature. Similarly, God cognizes himself and all else freely, because it follows solely from the necessity of his nature that he cognizes all. You see, therefore, that for me freedom consists not in free decision, but in free necessity.<sup>24</sup>

Freedom, according to some theorists, such as Rudolf Steiner, is tightly connected with moral law and involves the freedom of motives. Action always has its motives, and therefore motives, or triggers that result in actions, are an integral part of freedom of action:

“Acting out of freedom does not exclude the moral laws; it includes them, but shows itself to be on a higher level than those actions which are merely dictated by such laws. The free man acts morally because he has a moral idea; he does not act in order that morality may come into being. Human individuals, with the moral ideas belonging to their nature, are the prerequisites of a moral world order.”<sup>25</sup>

While we are speaking briefly about the views on freedom of other prominent philosophers, Spinoza considered the desire for self-learning to be the highest expression of freedom but complicated the concept by linking it with necessity, looking at freedom through the prism of determinism:

A fully determined choice can also be free, if it is determined by the ideas and actions that are part of your own nature.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A Latin phrase that means “I believe because it is absurd.”

<sup>23</sup> Translated into English as “I think, therefore I am.” Introduced by Rene Descartes in *Principles of Philosophy* in 1644.

<sup>24</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom*. E-book, 22.

[http://www.markfoster.net/rn/Rudolph\\_Steiner-The-Philosophy-of-Freedom.pdf](http://www.markfoster.net/rn/Rudolph_Steiner-The-Philosophy-of-Freedom.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Beth Lord, *Spinoza's Ethic: an Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), E-book, accessed May 20, 2016, 141-142.

He claimed that absolute freedom does not exist because of natural necessity as the main trigger of all actions. But the realization of the aims, courses, and results of actions can lead to freedom as a release from natural necessity.

Kant promoted the idea that the law of freedom is merged with the law of morality; free action, for him, is moral action. In his *Moral Philosophy* he defends the idea that:

The moral law does not impose a constraint on the will; it merely says that it has to do in order to be an autonomous will at all. It has to choose a law.<sup>27</sup>

Summarizing various attempts at understanding freedom, I come to the conclusion that people's attitude and vision of it depended greatly on the epochs humanity lived in, the development of philosophical and religious thought, the realization of Man within the society, and himself in isolation. There are huge differences in the descriptions of what freedom looked like in the Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance eras, but it would be a mistake to consider the freedom of the Middle Ages something completely different from those of Ancient times, or the Renaissance freedom something disconnected from the Middle Ages, because in all the ages the main pivots of understanding freedom were Man, society, the state, God, and the deeds people do. Thus these overlapping notions pass through all the times, and the concept of freedom depended greatly on that, acquiring additional meanings along with the developments of civilization.

At the same time, comparing the epochs, namely, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, regarding the political and social changes during those periods, one can notice that the Renaissance times had a destructive impact on the development of freedoms. The climax of the decrease of freedom was the Reformation. On the other hand, the Renaissance and later the era of the Enlightenment provoked a continuous struggle for the most valuable gift that humanity ever possessed – freedom.

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[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary\\_zabel/Phil\\_100/Spinoza\\_files/guide%20to%20spinozas-ethics.pdf](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Phil_100/Spinoza_files/guide%20to%20spinozas-ethics.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer K. Uleman, *An Introduction to Kant's Moral Philosophy*, chapter 6, "Morality as Freedom," (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167, accessed February 20, 2015, <http://fitelson.org/seminar/korsgaard.pdf>.

#### **1.4. The Enlightenment. The Connection between Philosophy and Politics**

As is evident from the previous subchapters, freedom is first of all a philosophical concept, a thirst for understanding which goes back to Ancient times and even earlier. An overview was given of the evolution of this concept in philosophical thought from the time of Plato to the Renaissance period, but in this subchapter, in order to obtain a deeper immersion into the theme of the project, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the Enlightenment era and to connect the understanding of freedom more closely to the political context, such as to the revolutionary events of the eighteenth century, by discussing the following questions:

- What was the connection between philosophy and politics in the eighteenth century and to what extent were the grand events that took place then influenced by philosophy?
- Was the period of the Enlightenment a monolithic phenomenon or did it appear to put on different masks, and how did the American Enlightenment differ from the European one?
- What was the result of the influence of philosophy on the political upheavals that transformed the world map in the eighteenth century and what was the role of freedom in all those processes?

The eighteenth century went down in history as a century of two revolutions – the French (1789-1799) and American (1775-1783) ones. It was a time when a new independent country, the United States of America, appeared on the map of the world, opening a new era in history and creating a new united nation of the Americans. “Thinkers prepare the revolution” remarks one of the Mexican novelist Mariano Azuela’s characters.<sup>28</sup> When we look at the backgrounds of the revolutions it is easy to see that philosophers built a good platform for the great changes. Since ancient times philosophy and politics have always joined hands; it is no wonder that the term “political philosophy” led to a separate discipline in the course of time.

Politics is a sphere of human life in which the conditions for the communal lives of individuals are created, let us say, the basics of social behavior. What can

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<sup>28</sup> David T. Courtwright, *No Right Turn. Conservative Politics in a Liberal America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010), 111.

philosophy do in this space, if it is understood as an infinite creation of meanings and fundamental principles of being? Where is the point at which politics and philosophy intersect? The answer is evident from the time of Plato, who meditated on the project of an ideal state: only philosophy is capable of explaining to us the common good which politics should aim for. In *Politics* he mentions that the best ruler and politician is a philosopher in his ability to make supersensitive observations. What a philosopher and a ruler must have in common is theoretical (the ability to comprehend the idea of the common good) and practical knowledge (the ability to judge and govern). Thus the optimal politics is one predetermined by philosophy. Paradoxically, this idea of politics being guided by philosophy has remained stable until now. The essence of this tradition is that philosophy, with the help of the rational tools that are accessible to it, determines the goals and objectives of politics and shapes an ideal to which a politician should aspire. The combination of the wisdom of a philosopher and the practical skills of a ruler is what creates motion in societies. In other words, philosophy prepares the background for the practical realization of political changes.

In the times of the radical changes of the eighteenth century the coalition of philosophy as a theoretical part and politics as a practical part became very obvious, as did the insight that an individual is able not only to grasp reality but to change it for the purpose of modification and enhancement. The Enlightenment philosophers agreed with certitude that the enlightened mind is capable not only of subduing nature but also of drastically reforming society. Philosophy should serve as a ground prepared for the building of a new society, and is based on the idea of *kalon k'agathon*<sup>29</sup> as the main objective.<sup>30</sup>

The term 'the Enlightenment' was only defined in the nineteenth century. It is difficult to give a concise definition of it, but broadly speaking, it was a

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<sup>29</sup> Translated into English as "the fine and the good."

<sup>30</sup> Мария Федорова, "Философия и политика". Доклад представлен на конференции "Философия в публичном пространстве" 27 марта 2012 в Институте философии (РАН). Maria Fedorova, "Philosophy and Politics." The report was introduced at the conference "Philosophy in Public Surroundings" on March 27, 2012 at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Science, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://philosophicalclub.ru/content/docs/Philosophy&Politics.pdf>

philosophical, intellectual, and cultural movement during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which stressed reason, logic, and freedom of thought over dogma and blind faith. It also rejected the notion of the absolute authority of the church and state.<sup>31</sup> It was characterized by dramatic revolutions in science, philosophy, society, and politics.<sup>32</sup>

The Enlightenment is most closely identified with its political accomplishments. The era is marked by three political revolutions, which together formed the basis for modern, republican, constitutional democracies: the English Revolution (1688), the American Revolution (1775-83), and the French Revolution (1789-99). Enlightenment philosophers find that the existing social and political orders do not stand up to critical scrutiny; they find that existing political and social authority is shrouded in religious myth and mystery and founded on the basis of obscure traditions.<sup>33</sup>

It was obviously not a monolithic phenomenon; there were several philosophical “streams” that differed in their views and persuasions. The most diametrically opposed ones were English and French philosophical thought, but another branch, the American “Age of Reason,” was influenced by the British thinkers (John Locke, David Hume, and Adam Smith), but on the other, America created and occupied its own niche in the philosophical arena.

When endeavoring to distinguish between the European and American Enlightenment, it is worth describing the main philosophical currents typical of the British Enlightenment which influenced American social views.

The English Civil War, which resulted in the execution of King Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, became the first experiment at a republic, which lasted only ten years but did not bring about advances in terms of freedom, but a return to a point of reference: the Church and

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<sup>31</sup> “What is the English Enlightenment? Definitions, Ideals and Thinkers.” Lesson 9, accessed December 25, 2015, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-the-english-enlightenment-definition-ideals-thinkers.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Enlightenment. First published August 20, 2010, accessed June 13, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/>

<sup>33</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Enlightenment. First published August 20, 2010, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment>.

sects and confrontations between the Crown and Parliament. Then, after the restoration of the monarchy under King Charles II, Parliament placed limits on the reestablished monarchy, but the refusal of the Stuart monarchy to obey these restrictions resulted in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the English people once again overthrew the Stuart monarchy and essentially chose their next rulers themselves. The English Bill of Rights was drawn up, increasing parliamentary power and ensuring personal liberties.<sup>34</sup>

After the storm of religious wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “the best minds” looked for “salvation” in science, looking for the pure truths of mathematics and physics, truths common for everyone. So the Enlightenment in Europe began with the Scientific Revolution, and the philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton with his “*Principia Mathematica*” (1686), and John Locke with his “*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*” (1689) opened a new page in history. There can be no doubt that the new science, like any other new science, needed freedom – the freedom to do research, freedom from dogmatic preconditions, and a choice between possible conclusions. The influence of science gained almost the status of a religion, and for that reason, the ideals of science became the ideals of the whole society, those of all classes. Having gained a foothold in the economy it spread to other spheres of social life: politics, family, and social morality.

John Locke, an English philosopher, commonly known as a progenitor of modern liberalism, was born at Wrington, Somerset, in 1632. After an introduction to the world of diplomacy he was involved in a mission to Brandenburg to set out to qualify in medicine. His work as a physician greatly influenced his philosophical views.<sup>35</sup> His name is automatically associated with empiricism, having proposed a

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<sup>34</sup> David McDowall, *An Illustrated History of Britain* (Edinburgh: Longman, 1989). e-book, 80-106.

<sup>35</sup> Stuart C. Brown, *British Philosophy and the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1996). 70, 96.

fundamental principle that all our knowledge and ideas arise from experience expressed in the “theory of knowledge.”<sup>36</sup>

Making reference to John Locke as a philosopher whose ideas were borrowed by the Americans during the time of the American Revolution and the War of Independence, I would like to take a closer look at Locke’s political theory and his vision of the concept of freedom, because his ideas concerning classical liberalism and liberal theory are reflected in the Declaration of Independence (1776), which is also a background focus of the thesis.

In his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Locke explained the proper character of political authority. His political doctrine was based on an assumption as to what the place of God is. The Lockean God is taken to be mankind’s superior: He outperforms people in all salient aspects and, on the basis of these, is fitted to direct and guide them. God, according to him, was the author of moral prescriptions for mankind, which assumed two media: revelation and reason. To him, God was superior to man in terms of intelligence. The Lockean God not only provided direction but also imposed obligations. These theological and ethical points had political relevance and were followed by the doctrine of responsible government, which is limited and accountable and can be contrasted with absolutism, where the ruler bears no responsibility for the ruled.<sup>37</sup>

The political theory of Locke is described in *Two Treaties*, where he also develops the idea of a constitutional monarchy and elaborates the concept of legislative, executive, and federal powers (international relations), where the priority is given to the parliament, but not to the government, which must obey the law. The nation is utterly sovereign and has the right to subvert and not to support the government.<sup>38</sup> Locke also supports the right to revolt against a government that opposes the purposes for which legitimate government is founded within the context in which he wrote (the English Revolution). According to Locke, the civil and

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<sup>36</sup> Philosophy Pages. Garth Kemerling, “Locke: the Origin of Ideas”. 2011, accessed May10, 2016, <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/4l.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *British Philosophy*, 100-104.

<sup>38</sup> Политология. Лекции по политологии. Идеи Джона Локка. 2010. (Politology. Lectures on Politology. The Ideas of John Locke. 2010, accessed May13, 2016, <http://political-science.ru/?p=50>).

political law, founded ultimately upon the consent of the governed, does not cancel the natural law, according to Locke, but merely serves to draw that law closer. The law is to serve interests and function as an instrument to expand the freedoms of an individual, and at the same time protect him from persecution. Locke pays much attention to freedom, assuming that the natural freedom that a human being gets after his birth is his natural quality. As a logical consequence, it cannot be violated by political power. This vision makes Locke a fierce foe of slavery. To him, an individual is free and rational and empowered to authorize political institutions.<sup>39</sup>

### **1.5. The American Enlightenment**

The American Enlightenment was a two-faced and contradictory phenomenon, according to the view it equipped American society with. On the one hand it was influenced by European philosophy, while on the other, it included a specific feature that became a typically purely “American” feature: the combination of theory and practice, thought and action, philosophy and politics. It was a time of great social changes and gigantic works of thought that brought about changes in the views of the old world of feudalism. Philosophers were not purely thinkers, writers, and moralists; they combined those roles with being political and military leaders and diplomats responsible for the path from the transformation of the mind to the reformation of society.

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine created a completely effective, global, in-depth program of influence and propaganda that finally led to independence and the birth of a new American society. It was based on the fact that the philosophy of the Enlightenment was inextricably connected with religion, ethics, esthetics, and literature.

The American Enlightenment philosophy was first developed in connection with the British one. Nevertheless, while the British Enlightenment consisted of comprehensive criticism of the political and social system that relied on estates and corporations, the aristocracy, and the Church, in American thought such an object of criticism had not been formed yet, for there were no conditions for the British type of

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<sup>39</sup> Brown, *British Philosophy*, 96-117.

Enlightenment. In America a belief in progress and indifference to the past were widespread. One may argue that the first settlers were not only going to create a new society but also recreate the mode of life of their Mother England; but it should be highlighted that American institutions were, from the beginning, free of the remnants of feudalism and monarchism, and did not take account of the influence of Britain.

The rise of the American thinkers was heavily dependent on the school of Moral Sense based on the concepts of John Locke, David Hume, and Adam Smith and the Theory of Moral Sentiments with the concept of sensationalism. According to this stream of thought, a man is ruled in his judgements by the senses, and the cognitive abilities are transferred from the domain of the mind to that of the senses. That position resulted in the basic credi formulated and promoted by the leaders of the time:

- an individual is born kind and unspoiled;
- a man should aspire to the good and to happiness, but first he should work on the development of sympathy and mutual favor. He should pay great attention to personal spiritual perfection, so as to contribute to the common good;
- just as the force of gravity is the source of harmony in the physical world, sympathy and favor guarantee social harmony in the relationships between an individual and society: one's personal wishes should be balanced with social ones.<sup>40</sup>

A good example explicitly displaying this new ideology was the creative work of Benjamin Franklin, whose main way of spreading the ideas of the Enlightenment was his writing. *The Autobiography*, written from 1771 to 1790 but never finished, gave people a good justification of the basic views by means of the practical example of Benjamin Franklin himself. The list of virtues (temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility) and their extended clarification with its didactic implications provided the newly and intensively formed new bourgeoisie with a moral code. Being

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<sup>40</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Moral Sentimentalism. January 29, 2014. accessed May 13, 2016, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-sentimentalism/>

inspired by the highly spiritual character of the doctrine, it is hard to notice the main aim of the proclaimed views: the aim of material enrichment. It is clearly visible in *Poor Richard* that teaching practicality and rationalism was a part of his philosophical schema. Thus in the works of Franklin the double-sided nature of the American Enlightenment is displayed. On the one hand, the “world of reason” and “common sense”, on the other the world of capital with its lack of spirituality. But despite this, the works of Franklin and his contemporaries proved to be highly democratic and masterly planning and preparation of human minds for the coming revolutionary waves.

### **1.6. Thomas Paine and Freedom**

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an outstanding representative of the radical wave of American bourgeois philosophy who put all his efforts into the ideological and political struggle by means of the pen. His philosophical treatise *The Age of Reason* gave a name to the epoch and proved him a fiery publicist who appealed to the masses, serving his nation faithfully. He was born into a poor family of Quakers and did not write much before arriving in Philadelphia in 1774 with a letter of recommendation from Benjamin Franklin.

The real fame came to him after the publishing of his famous pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), which contributed to radical changes in people’s minds. In colonial America there was hardly anybody who did not hear about it. For the Americans who still could not sunder their ties with their Mother England, that work became a trigger for them to take that step and start their own path and strive for independence.<sup>41</sup>

In *Common Sense* Paine spoke on behalf of an American patriot persuading his countrymen that connection with Britain would not bring any economic benefit. Opposing society and government, he claims that “society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness: the former promotes our happiness *positively* by uniting our affections, and the latter *negatively* by restraining our vices. Society in

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<sup>41</sup> I. P. Iliin, *The American age of reason: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine*, (Moscow: Progress, 1977), 13.

every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil.”<sup>42</sup>

The effect and success of the pamphlet was the result of its meticulously thought-out structure and the sequence of its ideas and the thorough argumentation as to why people should take up arms against Britain and why the present situation in America was not favorable. He explained clearly why the English Constitution was harmful and could not be considered a guarantor of freedom; he explained the origin of the monarchy as an institution and provided argumentation as to why it was not applicable to America. However, one concept that he discussed throughout all his work was that of freedom and liberty. Besides *Common Sense*, he presented his views on that issue in *Age of Reason*, *The Crisis*, *Rights of Man*, and his essay “African Slaves in America.”

Freedom, for Paine, meant doing what comes naturally; and that meant behaving sensibly, not foolishly. In his view, the principles of liberty are grounded in “natural rights,” “those which appertain to man in right of his existence,” and they “always imply *inherent liberty*.”<sup>43</sup> Paine wanted to eliminate all the barriers between people and their natural rights, which he thought had accumulated through long history and restore the pristine liberty and equality which he insisted all human beings had received from God at the moment of creation. First and foremost among the retained rights was freedom of thought, expression, and speech. We will further see that his ideas became a basis for the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Thomas Paine was a philosopher who, as already mentioned, combined his duties as a publicist with those of being a diplomat and a soldier, serving in the Continental Army in order to realize his pursuit of the freedom and independence of the American nation.

Contemplating the American Revolution, it is hard to disagree that it went through long-term preparation, realized, first of all, in the manipulation of minds. It obviously began from the group of political leaders and philosophers who created a

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<sup>42</sup> Iliin, *The American age of reason*, 14.

<sup>43</sup> The Jeffersonian Perspective. Commentary on Today's Social and Political Issues Based on the Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Eyler Robert Coates “Thomas Paine the Rights of Man.” 1996, accessed July 21, 2015, <http://eyler.freesevers.com/JeffPers/jefpco08.htm>.

structured plan for the formation of a new nation and state. They managed to unite American society by naming the common problems and suggesting possible decisions. One of the unique and progressive tasks the authorities performed was inducing trust and faith in the government which people chose and relied on. That trust was based on the initial equality of people, when common citizens considered the authorities to be working on their side and fighting for the common good for the sake of the common purpose. Consequently, the result of the Revolution was the output of the united forces and the mutual interest in building a strong state.

## **Chapter II. The Start of the Path: Thaddeus Kosciuszko on his Motherland**

### **2.1. The Significance of Kosciuszko for the Present-Day World and his Worldwide Recognition**

In 2016 the world has commemorated the 270th anniversary of the birth of the legendary figure of three continents—Andrey Thaddeus Benaventura Kosciuszko. His name is noted forever in Belarusian and world history. It is hard to find any other person who was born and lived in the territory of the present day Belarus and is so respected, someone who is so widely known across the world, and whose name has been so extendedly represented in terms of geography and politics worldwide.

In Poland nearly every town has streets and squares named after him. In many cities of Poland, such as Krakow, Lodz, and Poznan, there are numerous monuments built in commemoration of the famed military commander. In the Belarusian town of Merezkowschina one can visit the Memorial Museum, the farmstead where Kosciuszko's family lived. Unfortunately, during the Second World War it was destroyed by a fire, so then after a long period of time after the war the farmstead was reconstructed and reopened as a museum in 2004.

In Australia, Hungary and Brazil, places where Kosciuszko never set foot, we can find Mount Kosciuszko, which is the highest mountain in Australia, a street in Rio de Janeiro, and another street in Hungary which are all named after the general.

It is worth admitting that the attention of the American people towards their hero broke all records. Nowhere in the world is there such a great number of monuments, museums, geographical objects, and organizations that do not allow the memory of Kosciuszko to die. Attempts have been made to preserve it from Alaska to New York. Traveling from West to East one can cross bridges, rest in parks, or admire monuments that bear his name.

There is Kosciuszko Island in Alaska, Kosciuszko County in Indiana, and monuments in various towns and cities across the United States such as Milwaukee or Chicago; one can visit the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial in Philadelphia, or the Kosciuszko Bridge built in 1939 in New York, which connects Greenpoint in Brooklyn and Maspeth in Queens. There is even a town in Attala County, Mississippi,

along the Yockanookany which bears the hero's name and thus reminds Americans about the one who contributed to their democracy and the factual independence of the United States.

In the literary world Thaddeus Kosciuszko became a very popular topic for discussion by many authors from various countries. Poems were dedicated to him by poets in the past and their numbers are still adding up thanks to contemporary poets. Prose writers and journalists also try to restore the chronology of events and biographical data which concern Kosciuszko. It is obvious that poetry and prose in memory of Kosciuszko have different aims. Poems in honor of him serve to appeal to feelings which, in this particular case, must be feelings of patriotism and admiration and the aspiration to make the people of contemporary times understand the key points and the core of his deeds, what he was driven by on his path, and what the path of his life led to.

Three sonnets which share the same title "To Kosciuszko" were written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, and John Keats. They all wrote their own sonnet but each had it revolve around the same theme—Kosciuszko's heroism. Below are lines 8–14 from Coleridge's sonnet from 1796:

The dirge of murder'd Hope! while Freedom pale  
Bends in such anguish o'er her destin'd bier,  
As if from eldest time some Spirit meek  
Had gather'd in a mystic urn each tear  
That ever furrow'd a sad Patriot's cheek;  
And she had drain'd the sorrows of the bowl  
Ev'n till she reel'd, intoxicate of soul<sup>44</sup>

In Hunt's version, of which lines 1–5 are presented below, the honorable value of freedom is mentioned and stressed:

'Tis like thy patient valour thus to keep,

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<sup>44</sup> J. C. C. Mays, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poetical Works I*, Vol. I.I. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 160.

Great Kosciusko, to the rural shade,  
While Freedom's ill-found amulet still is made  
Pretence for old aggression, and a heap  
Of selfish mockeries. [...] <sup>45</sup>

The aim of prose about Kosciuszko is to show the details of his life as truly as possible, and to put the most significant facts of his outstanding and dramatic life together. As he left his mark on two continents and furrowed many lands, the details are scattered around different countries such as Poland, Belarus, the USA, France, and Switzerland. Every country where he lived keeps their archives where one can find remarkable details about him. The Polish journalist and writer Alex Storozinsky, the British writer Jane Porter, the American historian Gary B. Nash, and the Belarusian historians and writers Jazep Yocho and Uladimir Yemyalyanchik cooperated in terms of displaying their perspective of Kosciuszko's life, aspirations, deeds and contribution to making the history of the eighteenth century.

## **2.2. Motherland, Where are You?**

Kosciuszko, besides being an embodiment of freedom, also proved himself as a great patriot. Notions such as the motherland, patriotism, and freedom have changed, not purely in terms of meaning but rather in terms of the weight that people nowadays attach to these concepts when mentioning them.

A patriot, deriving from the Late Latin "patriota", meaning literally "countryman," later acquired its emotional aspect, meaning "a person who loves and is attached to his homeland." The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought another flavor to it, such as a "revolutionary" one; in other words, patriots were revolutionists who struggled for the great purpose of freedom, independence, and equality. <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Internet Archive. Full text of "Kosciuszko's Garden: Flowers of Verse for the Polish and American Patriot." By William Thomas Sherman. 2013, accessed December 15, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/KosciuszkosGardenFlowersOfVerseForThePolishAndAmericanPatriot>

<sup>46</sup> *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper. Patriot, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=patriot>.

Concerning the meaning of the concept of *motherland*, there are bright examples from the history of nations showing that the weight of this word was heavy and significant. When the first settlers came to America, they brought their dedication to their countries as well: the most difficult task was to break up with the Mother Country and start out on their own way. Simon Schama claims in the documentary “A History of Britain”: “They come from York to New York, from Hampshire to New Hampshire and they all ate, slept and breathed with the same mantra: Liberty and Britishness.”<sup>47</sup> That was not the only example of attachment to their roots and homeland, because that dedication was based on traditions and historical memory, the historical past that the nation as a whole shared and lived by.

As for Kosciuszko, motherland and patriotism were integral parts of his life and path towards the freedom he wished for his country, nation, and all the people in the world. There comes a question: **what was that country and what was that nation he belonged to?** Having been born on the territory of the present-day Belarus, in the village of Mereczowszczyzna, Brest Region, in a large amount of sources he is recognized as Polish.

It goes without saying that for every nation it is prestigious to have a national hero who made history to some extent, because a nation is considered to be one when the people have their national identity and historical past, preserve it, and are concerned about passing the experience of the past on to future generations for the purpose of analyzing the mistakes, learning from them, and cultivating a feeling of patriotism, which has always been a part of the ideology spread within the people of a particular country in order to preserve it as a united whole and ensure security and readiness to fight against potential enemies. But the question why it is that important, especially for these two countries, to immortalize the name of Kosciuszko, lies within the fact that Belarus and Poland, as quite small and freshly formed states, try to take care of our children’s children, who should and even must understand where they come from and what they are supposed to be proud of. It is a reasonable policy of every government.

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<sup>47</sup> Simon Schama, “A History of Britain. Part 11: The Wrong Empire. BBC, accessed May 15, 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuROIq0j-SM>.

Thus the question about Kosciuszko's nationality is still debated. Both sides, Belarus and Poland, assign the Kosciuszko brand as their own, making arguments to advocate each side. Looking back into history and the scripts written after Kosciuszko's authentic words, it is possible to conclude that the situation is double-sided.

Let us unwind this misleading knot by taking a leap back to the sixteenth century, with its geographical, historical, and political changes that led to the gradual formation of Belarus and Poland.

### **1.3. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth as the Ancestors of Belarus and Poland**

The status of Belarus and Poland as independent states has not always been what it is now. The Polish State announced its independence on November 11, 1918 after more than a century of partitions. The first, though failed, attempt to create a Belarusian state was first made on March 25, 1918, when, after the national uprising, the Belarusian National Republic was announced under the protectorate of Germany, but the country only actually acquired long-term independent status in 1991. Unfortunately, beginning from the seventeenth century, the history of Belarus did not develop in favor of the protection and cultivation of its ethnic authentic historical past and developing people's national identity, because of Russification under the rule of the Russian Empire, and then, being a part of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the most genuine sources when seeking the answer of the question "who are the Belarusian people?" can be found in the time when the lands were united into the powerful military state known as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The conditions of the historical development of Poland and Belarus have much in common in terms of being vulnerable lands constantly experiencing aggression from more powerful neighbors such as Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

As Norman Davies claims in his account of the history of Poland, few people have doubted that Poland's geography is the villain of her history. Trapped in the middle of the North European Plain, with no natural frontier to parry the onslaughts of more powerful neighbors, Poland has fought an unequal battle for survival against Germany and Russia. Poland has been variously described as "the disputed bride,"

condemned forever to lie between the rival embraces of two rapacious suitors, or, more cruelly, as “the gap between two stools.” An unfortunate geopolitical location is invoked to explain the Partitions of the eighteenth century, the Risings of the nineteenth, and the catastrophe of the Second Republic in the twentieth. It offers no protection whatsoever – no obstacles to the movement of peoples or to the progress of armies. It makes for constant insecurity. It encourages raids, invasions, and annexations. In various times in Eastern Europe, the Polish state has been everywhere and nowhere. Its territory, like the settlement patterns, cultural alignment, and ethnic mix of its population, has been subject to continual transformations. Poland has been a “butterfly”, gone today but here tomorrow, flitting from one mode of existence to the next. In the terminology of the Prussian historians who first expounded East Central Europe to the world at large, Poland was a “seasonal state.”<sup>48</sup>

In a letter to Czar Paul I Kosciuszko wrote: “I was born a Litvin...”<sup>49</sup> In order to understand what he meant by this, a short journey is necessary, to Navahrudak, on September 8, 1252, the date when Mindau became the first Prince of the Lithuanian lands, which, by then, had already incorporated a large number of principalities, such as Polack, Minsk, Pskov, Smolensk, and others. The territorial conquest had begun in 1048, when the first Lithuanian principality was created near the shores of the Dzvina River and consisted first of the *kryvichi* tribes. After the coronation of Mindau, land annexations continued and by the fourteenth century it was already an authoritative State which came into history under the name of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>50</sup>

Medieval Lithuania was the last pagan country in Europe, and at the time of the Polish Union, one of the most expansive and dynamic. Throughout the fourteenth century, Lithuanian expeditions had been fighting their way south from their ethnic heartland on the River Niemen, outturning the Ruthenian princes, and seizing

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<sup>48</sup> Dorman Davies, *God's Playground*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 26-29.

<sup>49</sup> Язэр Юхо, Уладзімір Емяльянчык. *Нарадзіўся я літвінам*, (Мінск: Навука і тэхніка, 1994). 6-17.

Translated as Yازهp Yucho, Uladimir Jemyalyanchik, *I was born a Litvin*, (Minsk: Navuka і Technika, 1994), 6-17.

<sup>50</sup> Олег Турчинович, *Обозрение Истории Беларуси*, (Санкт Петербург: Типография Эдуарда Праца, 1857), 5-48.

Translated as Oleg Turchinovich, *History of Belarus* (St. Petersburg: Eduard Prac Publishing House, 1857), e-book.

everything that the Mongols disrupted or broke. Lithuania stretched from the Baltic to the confines of the Crimea, from the Bug to the Don. It encompassed the entire basin of the Dnieper, including Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev, and Ochakov (Odessa). Its ruling caste consisted of warrior boyars, abjectly obedient to the absolute will of the Grand Duke. Its population consisted largely of Ruthenian Slavs, who were Orthodox Christians. Its economy depended heavily on slave labor and on seasonal looting. Its official language was *ruski* (a form now known as Old Byelorussian).<sup>51</sup>

Here, one must note the contentious issue of the name “Litva”. According to scholars of the Baltic persuasion, *Litva* was always and *ab origine* the generic label used by the Baltic tribes living in the Lakeland fastness. In its modern spelling, written as Lietuva, it is the modern Lithuanian name for Lithuania. According to the scholars of the Belarusian persuasion, however, *Litva* was originally the homeland of a Slavic tribe and purloined its name.<sup>52</sup>

In the fifteenth century, in the era of the personal union with Poland, the Grand Duchy stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It was a curious organism, ruled from Wilno (Vilnius, Vilna) in the north by a Lithuanian aristocracy which was gradually Polonized. But the mass of the populace, like the language of administration, was Ruthenian. After the constitutional union with Poland in 1569, it maintained its separate identity on a diminished, territorial base.<sup>53</sup>

The political cooperation between the Grand Duchy and the Polish Kingdom started in 1385 from the Union of Krevo, resulting from the death of Louis of Anjou, King of Poland and Hungary, whose younger daughter Jadwiga was designated by the magnates of Poland as the prospective successor and *rex*. Her fiancée Wilhelm von Habsburg, Prince of Austria, was not welcomed by the Polish nobility, whereas the Lithuanian connection was much more interesting. Thus the Lithuanian Duke Jogaila married Jadwiga and became the Polish King.

The Grand Duchy, on the one hand, benefited from this so-called “wedding” union, for the Lithuanian *szlachta* and magnates got the “golden rights” which the

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<sup>51</sup> Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 291-292.

<sup>52</sup> Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 293.

<sup>53</sup> Davies, *God's Playground*, 31.

Polish nobility possessed. On the other, that gave rise to the Polanization and Catholicization of the Lithuanian population.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Grand Duchy was a flourishing land, especially in the times of Jogaila's cousin Vitautus the Great (1350-1430). He received the obeisance of Tartar khans and Russian princes, exacted rich tribute from Novgorod, and conducted diplomatic relations with both the pope and the German emperor. After his death the Grand Duchy endured civil wars and annexations of Polish territories by the Russians. The weakening of the Grand Duchy because of the Livonian War (1558-1583) resulted in the Union of Lublin. The Act of Union was sealed on July 1, 1569, and was a formal political alliance between the Grand Duchy and the Polish Kingdom and led to the formation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, originally known as the *Rzeczpospolita*. There was to be one invisible body politick, one king, elected not born; one Sejm; one currency. The Lithuanians were to keep their own law, their own administration, their own army, and the titles of their princely families. Poland and Lithuania were to be joined together, "freemen with free, equals with equal."<sup>54</sup>

That was the land of the *Rzeczpospolita*, or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Thaddeus Kosciuszko was born on February 12, 1746, in the village of Merezowszczyzna, Brest Region, in the present-day Belarus. He was the eldest of four children, Anna, Catherine, and Joseph. The Kosciuszkos were part of the well-heeled top ten percent of society known as the *szlachta*.<sup>55</sup> To be a son of a noble in those days was to be born to arms and to become a soldier.<sup>56</sup> It also meant home education, which was why he studied with a "relative of his mother" until the age of nine. This social status opened new doors for him during his life in terms of education, connections, and opportunities. But the basic seeds of his worldview were planted by his parents and the conditions in which he experienced his adolescence. Ludwig Kosciuszko, a loving husband, father, landlord, and a retired soldier, believed

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<sup>54</sup> Davies, *God's Playground*, 31-33.

<sup>55</sup> *Szlachta* was a privileged social class in the Polish Kingdom and the Great Duchy of Lithuania.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Walton White Evans, *Memoirs of Kosciuszko, Poland's Hero and Patriot* (New York, 1883), 5-17.

that all people were entitled to hope and happiness. Thaddeus, the youngest child, was idealistic and took his father's philosophy to heart. He played with peasant children, sometimes leading them to his favorite perch, a huge boulder where he would squat and observe the world around him.<sup>57</sup>

When he turned nine he was sent to the Catholic Piarist Fathers' College at Lubieszow, near Pinsk, where he followed a new syllabus set up by Father Stanislaw Konarski, the Piarist leader of a cadre of reformist priests who were revolutionizing Poland's school system. They instituted a curriculum that included lessons about John Locke's theory of a social contract, in which the people of a nation consent to be governed in exchange for social order. The Poles had already experimented with their own form of democracy, but Father Konarski's educational reforms were laying the groundwork for political Enlightenment in Poland.<sup>58</sup>

The Piarist School gave him an opportunity to become fascinated by the Ancient Greeks and Roman Empire, the works of Tacitus and Plutarch, and the biography of Timoleon, the Greek statesman and general who freed his fellow Corinthians and the Sicilians from the tyranny of Carthage.<sup>59</sup>

There can be no doubt that this educational system raised first of all mavericks and critical thinkers, social creatures who were not indifferent to the changes and political processes. One of the reasons of such encouragement was that the Polish Commonwealth and its rulers were highly dependent on the Russian influence, which on the one hand was rejected, but on the other could not be avoided. Consequently, Kosciuszko could not but see the similarity between Timoleon's Greece and Poland's subjugation by czarist Russia.

The personality of Kosciuszko was shaped under the influence of the family and highly effective home and school education. The young boy got his first lessons in philosophy and history, patriotism, and humanism from his childhood and parents, and consequently, his development as a freedom fighter and a person of morality was a result of the opportunities and benefits that his origin and social status provided him

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<sup>57</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 50-58.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

with, together with the intelligent parents who invested all their wisdom and love into the young boy, and of course, the quality of the secondary education as a starting point of the formation of his mind and soul.

### **Chapter III. Thaddeus Kosciuszko in the United States. His First Arrival.**

#### **3.1. Towards the Creation of the American Nation: War or Revolution?**

The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), equally called the American Revolution or the War of Independence, is worthy of being accepted as a decisive historical phenomenon that changed the map of the world and triggered the formation of the most powerful and militarily influential state of the present day (according to the Global Firepower ranking)<sup>60</sup> and the largest economy in the world in terms of nominal GDP (according to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank),<sup>61</sup> the United States of America. It is a historically unprecedented case of shaping a new nation consisting of representatives of all races, a large number of nationalities who spoke their own languages and followed the traditions and customs which they had brought from their native lands since the Founding Fathers reached America in 1607. Regardless of all these differences and varieties, they found themselves as the American nation, bound by powerful links such as democracy, unity of views, an ideology of freedom, and the objective of creating their own civilization.

This episode in American history can be called *the war* and *the revolution* at the same time for several reasons. Its double nature is based on the aims the sides tried to achieve, their main purposes and motives, the strategies they chose, and the results they came to in the end. In answering the questions *why, how, and for what* the

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<sup>60</sup> Global Gunfire Ranking. 2016, accessed July 11, 2016), <http://www.globalfirepower.com/>

<sup>61</sup> Investopaedia. The World's Top Ten Economies by BajPai Brableen, July 18, 2016, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/022415/worlds-top-10-economies.asp>.

struggle was, one can understand the essence that makes this political and ideological confrontation double-sided.

Being called the War of Independence, the conflict proves itself as an armed political confrontation between the two opposing sides, Great Britain and its thirteen American colonies. In his treatise *On War*, the Prussian theorist and thinker Carl von Clausewitz defines war as “a duel, but on a larger scale,” “an act of force to compel our enemy to do his will.”<sup>62</sup> He defines war as “merely the continuation of policy by other means,” and assumes that “the political object is the original motive for the war.” According to him, the two elements of war are “hostile feelings” and “hostile intentions.”

Most of the sources describing the War of Independence agree on the start of the conflict as April 19, 1775, with the first shots at Lexington and Concord. Other sources link the start of the war with the first blood spilled during the Gaspee Affair in 1772.<sup>63</sup> However, war, as can be seen even in present-day politics, does not necessarily mean overt hostilities. The war between Britain and the colonies started on an economic basis with the attempts of the British government to kill two birds with one stone – it wished to improve its economy, particularly trade, after a half-a-century-long war with France, and was eager to expand the royal authority over the American colonists in order to subdue the colonies and make them serve the British government’s needs, and thus the Empire’s interest in the colonies rose extremely high.

By 1750 in Britain the immediate origins of what would soon become the Industrial Revolution were already visible. British imports, exports, and industrial production of various sorts – all the major indicators of economic growth – were rapidly rising. Americans were deeply involved in this sudden British economic expansion, and by 1760 they were prospering as never before.<sup>64</sup>

In 1763, Great Britain straddled the world with the greatest and richest empire since the fall of Rome. The Peace of Paris gave Britain undisputed dominance

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<sup>62</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, ). E-book.  
<http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/ps143a/readings/Clausewitz%20%20On%20War,%20Books%201%20and%208.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 10-11.

<sup>64</sup> Wood, *The American Revolution*, 12-13.

over the eastern half of North America. In the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, British officials found themselves having to make long-postponed decisions concerning the colonies that would set in motion a chain of events that ultimately shattered the empire.<sup>65</sup> According to the colonial reform, people from different places in Europe had been allowed to settle in the colonies, and land had been given out freely.

During the decade and a half before Independence, New England throbbed with movement. By the early 1760s the number of transients drifting from town to town throughout the region had multiplied dramatically, and people started to settle on the territories of Massachusetts, New England and Nova Scotia, New Hampshire, and Maine. All this movement had a far-reaching impact on American society and its place in the British Empire.

All the consequences flowing from the increased numbers of people in North America were bound to increase Britain's interest in its colonies. But population pressures were not the only factor reshaping British attitudes toward the colonies and transforming American society. Equally important was the remarkable expansion of the Anglo-American economy that was taking place in the middle years of the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution that was taking place in Britain was of benefit to the colonies, increasing trade and the demand for foodstuffs. That also meant rising prices for American exports. Soaring prices for agricultural exports meant rising standards of living for more and more Americans.

The atmosphere among the masses was becoming electrified after the British government's attempt to overhaul its empire and gain revenue from its colonies. The reforms began with the Proclamation Act in 1763, issued by King George III, which led to the creation of three royal governments – East Florida, West Florida, and Quebec, and the fixing of the Proclamation Line separating the “Indian Reserve” territory west of the Appalachian Mountains, and the territory south of Hudson Bay to Florida where the whites were allowed to settle. This Act was aimed at supporting Native Americans in order to release the tension caused by their resistance, and at the

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<sup>65</sup> Wood, *The American Revolution*, 13.

same time to increase the power of Britain over the colonies. That was both a matter of territorial control and an attempt to overcome the economic crisis connected with the post-war financial exhaustion of Britain. The Proclamation Act “was aimed to monopolize the highly lucrative fur trade”<sup>66</sup> and to stop the population settling farther to the west of the American continent, because it was easier to control the colonies on a limited territory.

The next steps, those of 1764, 1765, 1767, and 1773, represented a serious financial attack on the Americans in order to stop the growth of the independence of their economy and to strangle them as a threatening competitor. British Prime Minister George Grenville and the British Parliament took the initiative in challenging American autonomy by the Sugar Act (1764), designed “to tighten the navigation system and in particular to curb the colonists’ smuggling and corruption.”<sup>67</sup> The Stamp Act (1765) “levied a tax on nearly every form of paper used in the colonies.”<sup>68</sup> The Quartering Act (1765), Townshend Revenue Act (1767), and finally the Tea Act (1773) were attempts to support the East India Company, the worst enemy of colonial America. The Acts proved that Britain treated its colonies as a source of British enrichment.

As the War of Independence the conflict was aimed at gaining independence in its wider sense, in terms of the economy, politics, territory, ideology, national aspects, and the national identity of the Americans. Therefore the British measures could not help provoking continuous protests and armed resistance, the motion of which it was already impossible to stop, because the American colonies, regardless of the imperfection of their unity, already had core authorities led by the Sons of Liberty,<sup>69</sup> who acted according to their desire to preserve the power and autonomy of the colonies and to benefit the newly formed nation.

As the Revolution this intercontinental confrontation displays itself quite explicitly. It started much earlier than the visible hostilities for the reason that

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<sup>66</sup> Colonial America, April, 2015, accessed July 2015, <https://www.landofthebrave.info/south-carolina-colony.htm>.

<sup>67</sup> Wood, *The American Revolution*, 13-25.

<sup>68</sup> Wood, *The American Revolution*, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Wood, *The American Revolution*, 13.

revolution itself does not reflect the same objectives and does not have the same reasons as war does. The essence of revolution is change, which is mostly radical, relatively abrupt, and spiced with violence. This kind of change is presupposed and cultivated against the background of the remnants of a political system and social order which are no longer effective and do not contribute to progress but have a regressive effect on various social and political spheres or lead to stagnation. The War was a part of the American Revolution, while the Revolution was a preparatory stage for the full-scale war.

The Acts mentioned above led increasingly to numerous protests, with the realization of American society of the real threat posed by the colonial Empire. The indignation of the crowd was supported, or even sparked, by the authorities.

In 1764 the assemblies of eight colonies drew up and endorsed formal petitions claiming that the Sugar Act was causing economic injury and sent them to the royal authorities in England.” “The disregard of the petitions and further Stamp Act action excited not simply a colonial protest, but a firestorm of opposition that swept through the colonies with amazing force.<sup>70</sup>

When Great Britain first started its intolerable acts, American society escalated the degree of reaction from minor petitions, letters, and pamphlets directed to the British government to numerous boycotts, riots, and decisive military conflicts which finally led to American independence. No act of British injustice remained unnoticed by the colonists, and never failed to provoke a response. The voice of the representatives of the Sons of Liberty, the Continental Congress, made an attempt to settle the problems in a civilized manner. The Massachusetts Circular letter composed by Samuel Adams in 1768 as a reaction to the Townshend Acts was an attempt to unite the colonies against the British economic measures.

The most powerful weapon that led towards the Revolution was the word of the political elite, the aim of which was to prepare people’s minds to embrace the ideas and ideals to struggle for. The voices of Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Tom Paine, and other representatives of the Sons of Liberty were those whose task was to “turn traditional crowd action toward the British question and to generate new political consciousness among ordinary Americans. They began

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<sup>70</sup> Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 24.

the job of fusing the imperial issue and domestic problems into the one grand question of what kind of place America would be.” By means of media such as *The Borton Gazette*, or the *New York Journal*, society began to grasp the real situation and was goaded into action. The elite realized that “leaders are nothing without followers. Neither the colonial elite nor the Sons of Liberty could have done anything serious against British policy without enormous popular support.”<sup>71</sup>

The second phase was the revolution of the middle class, of small colonial merchants, artisans, and farmers, who were heavily dependent on exports to the Old World and shared an interest in making the American economy strong. These men knew that their personal welfare and their community’s welfare were bound together. The main task of these social classes was riots and rebellions, protesting against the redcoats, and moving actively and aggressively. “Crowd action during the Revolution was often angry, but it was never anarchic. People knew that they were confronting Britain but also their own situation, in their protest there was the heritage of protest that people carried in their minds and hearts.”<sup>72</sup>

On December 16, 1773, a group of patriots disguised as Indians dumped tea into Boston Harbor, which was called the Boston Tea Party and was followed by Parliament’s Coercive Acts as a punishment. Similar Tea Parties as a protest happened in other colonies such as Maryland, New York, and South Carolina.

One of the main peculiarities of the American Revolution was the fact that the political elite of the colonies and the middle class united towards a single target, connected with money and respect. However, the wishes of the politicians and the crowd differed – the leaders of the colonial world were struggling for places in Parliament, whereas the crowd, who were merchants, farmers and urban people, struggled for their right to comfortable trade and freedom as individuals. The interests of both the upper class and the lower classes met up and united in a long-term struggle.

Since the border between the Revolution and the War had become blurred, when the Continental Army was created and the main strategic battles started to take

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<sup>71</sup> Countryman, *The American Revolution*, 87.

<sup>72</sup> Countryman, *The American Revolution*, 97.

place, the conflict acquired a coherent and highly strategic character. The masses were enthused by the ideological ideas of a bright, prosperous, and independent future. Thanks to Tom Paine the crowd got the desirable promise of equality: he gave the Americans something to be for: a republic. “’Tis the Republican and not the Monarchical part of the constitution of England which Englishmen glory in,” he wrote. “It is easy to see that when Republican virtue fails, slavery ensues. Why is the constitution of England sickly? But because monarchy hath poisoned the Republic.”<sup>73</sup> The task before the Americans was not to restore a good state of affairs they had once enjoyed – it was to abandon their old ways so they could build a republic of their own.

Protests and petitions to the Parliament were ignored, which led to boycotts and demonstrations, but what came first was the protests of the authorities in the colonies.

France entered the American Revolution on the side of the colonists in 1778, turning what had essentially been a civil war into an international conflict. After French assistance helped the Continental Army force the British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, the Americans had effectively won their independence, though fighting would not formally end until 1783.

Summing up the previously said, the War of Independence was an unprecedented phenomenon and drastically differed from other revolutions around the globe in the following aspects:

- The American Revolution gave birth not only to a new nation but gave birth to a sense of nationhood, and contributed the creation of a new culture realized in people’s great hopes and values, their commitment to freedom.
- It was prepared in two aspects, ideological and military, the philosophical thought and the rational necessity made people ready for radical changes. In spite of the fact that the Continental Army could not boast its power, the soldiers had a strong weapon that helped them

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<sup>73</sup> United States History. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense. On Monarchy and Hereditary Succession*, accessed July, 31, 2015, <http://www.ushistory.org/paine/commonsense/index.htm>.

win, a weapon of a strong spirit and a healthy anger on the way to sovereignty. It was less tyrannical than the French Revolution but was more intellectual and conservative affair.

### **3.2. Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the American Revolution**

#### **3.2.1. European Education as the Background to American Success**

The streams of the American changes in the 1770s were actively discussed in Europe, especially in France, the country where the philosophy of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Francois Quesnay, the developer of physiocracy, were gradually stirring the masses, and the American moods were strongly shared by the French. The American Revolution absorbed the mostly British philosophy of Locke, but the lion's share fell to French philosophy, which was slowly but surely nurturing the French Revolution. Above all, France and the colonies were united against a common adversary, Britain.

As is evident from Kosciuszko's biography, the most successful, productive, and contributive part of his life appeared to be spent in America; however, his American experience would have been less effective without the educational background he obtained in France and, first and foremost, his self-education based on traveling around Europe and his observations there.

The Royal Knight School was an establishment that gave him a "gentleman's" education, with an emphasis on classics, mathematics, drawing, and French, followed by three years as a student and instructor at the Royal School for Cadets in Warsaw, where he attained the rank of captain.<sup>74</sup> The Knight School disclosed his talents and strengthened his confidence in the path he took in his life. Taught by talented scholars such as John Lind, the famous barrister from Oxford, the French military tactician Le Roy de Bosroger, and the Prussian military experts Friedrich Gunther and Antoni Leopold Oelsnitz, he acquired the basic theoretical knowledge necessary for gaining professional mastery.

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<sup>74</sup> Info Poland. University at Buffalo. State University of New York. From *The Correspondent* (1972). "Thaddeus Kosciuszko: a Polish Son of Liberty," accessed July, 2015, <http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/kosciuszko/son.html>.

Having finished the School in 1769, Kosciuszko traveled to Paris to enroll at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. In order to acquire military expertise, he had to take private tutors, because, as a foreigner, he was not allowed to attend the Ecole Militaire.

Kosciuszko learned the war strategies of Marshal Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban, Europe's foremost authority on building and besieging forts. He studied architecture with Jean-Rodolphe Perronet, the civil engineer who had built the most beautiful bridges, roads and buildings in Paris.<sup>75</sup>

In the atmosphere of Paris, the society mirrored and supported the American aspirations and was discussing the pros and cons of the revolutionary movement, especially after the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which reflected the ideals cherished for the sake of the bright future of the civilizations. In that vortex of changes in social consciousness appeared Kosciuszko, "spending free time in cafes swilling coffee and soaking up the political ideas that were brewing before the French Revolution."<sup>76</sup>

His main aim, however, was learning more about fortifications; hence he spent time in Holland exploring how the Dutch built dikes, and in England, Switzerland, Saxony, and the ruins of ancient Rome. Many years later he said of his early travels:

Throughout my five years in foreign lands I studied in order to become proficient in economics and military matters, for which things I had a native passion, so as to discover what was necessary to attain durable government and the due happiness of all.<sup>77</sup>

### **3.2.2. On the Way to Victory: Kosciuszko's First Tasks and Contribution**

The development of Thaddeus Kosciuszko as a professional took a long time; throughout his youth he, like Christopher Columbus, dedicated himself to mastering his skills and used every opportunity to educate himself and be educated by experienced teachers. Following his biography, coincidence played a huge role in his life. The right preconditions – tremendous enthusiasm, the desire to learn, opportunities to travel and broaden the borders of his personal outlook, faith in his

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<sup>75</sup> Alex Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 12.

<sup>76</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 13.

target, and good knowledge – opened the path to an effective contribution to “the common cause,” and history found the right place for the right person.

Describing Kosciuszko’s contribution to the American Revolution, one could ask what motives and reasons ruled him in his decision.

First of all, he was a great son of his motherland, and all the time, wherever he traveled and whatever part of the planet he was in, his thought and pain about his native land, the feeling he had of being too weak to return freedom and happiness to his nation, pursued him constantly. Crossing the Atlantic, Kosciuszko was eager to get more experience that would help him in the future fight for the independence of Poland. His thirst for experience that he could bring to his nation in order to serve his motherland was one of the reasons that brought him to America. As a systematic thinker and a brilliant chess player, he realized that Poland and its people had not yet reached the appropriate level of maturity necessary for the struggle and liberation. The social conditions and political situation were unfavorable to that. At the same time Kosciuszko knew that the time for action would come.

Another reason was a feeling of uselessness. The Polish Army did not need his services, but Kosciuszko realized how strong his skills were becoming and that it would be a sin to waste or bury them. Moreover, poverty and a lack of money were an additional motive to start moving forward.

The trigger for his trip was, supposedly, the Declaration of Independence. As he read it, he was moved almost to tears.

We hold these truths to be self evident, all men are created equal...endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.<sup>78</sup>

Even before his arrival in America, Thaddeus was at the crossroads of who to offer his services to. He clearly understood that could not “serve two masters”<sup>79</sup> but

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<sup>78</sup> American History. From Revolution to Reconstruction and beyond. The Final Text of the Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776. 2012, accessed 10 July, 2015, <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1776-1785/the-final-text-of-the-declaration-of-independence-july-4-1776.php>.

<sup>79</sup> *The Holy Bible*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Cornerstone Bible Publishers, 1999), Matthew 6:24, 834.

his talents were noticed by France and Britain, both of whom needed talented soldiers. The English offers would have taken him out of poverty till the end of his life, but Kosciuszko's ideals did not coincide with the British philosophy of dominance and subordination. Neither did serving France attract him – his main target was to join those who were fighting for freedom; the names of Silas Deane, Arthur Lee, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson were in the air of Paris, beckoning him to join the fight.

Kosciuszko's aim was to serve morality first of all, which meant staying committed to ideals rather than money. Therefore he decided to reach the American continent as soon as possible, choosing the only possible way of crossing the Atlantic – a ship, vulnerable to storms and winds. It is a small wonder that “after two months on the high seas it was blown off course by a tropical storm and smashed on the coral reefs near the coast of the island of Martinique.”<sup>80</sup> Most of Kosciuszko's biographies mention that he was on board with other soldiers, Poles who were planning to enlist in the American Army. Among his traveling companions there were also his French friend Charles Noel Romand and Nicholas Dietrich, Baron de Ottendorf.

Having a few *zlotys* in his pocket and a letter of recommendation from Prince Czartoryski to General Charles Lee, Kosciuszko arrived in Philadelphia via Charleston in August 1776 and faced the problem of who it was better to discuss his service in the Continental Army with. General Charles Lee had a great affection for Poland and the letter of recommendation suggested that Kosciuszko should search for him. But Kosciuszko decided to follow his ambition and dream – to offer his services directly to the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces, General Washington.

Because of the scarcity in the Continental Army of qualified soldiers, engineers, and military genius, each opportunity to employ foreign professional military men with knowledge of tactics, fortifications, and commanding troops while waging war was grasped with enthusiasm by the Army. However, the authorities were choosy and tested each potential commander very carefully. Among the most famous foreign generals were a Frenchman, Louis Duportail, Johan DeKalb from Germany, Charles Lee, an experienced British officer, and Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de

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<sup>80</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 45.

Lafayette, who served as a Major-General, Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a Prussian aristocrat and military officer, Edward Hand, an Irish Lieutenant-Colonel, Kosciuszko's Polish friend Kazimier Pulaski, and many others.<sup>81</sup>

The procedure of Kosciuszko's employment had already started in France, where Benjamin Franklin was sent by George Washington with a mission to recruit skilled commanders to help train and lead the American colonists, who were mostly farmers. When Benjamin Franklin was employing him, he asked him for his letters of recommendation. Kosciuszko replied:

A talented person should be able to show his worth, and not letters of recommendation. I want to show my competence by taking your placement exam on engineering, military architecture, etc." Quite amused, Franklin said: "Who would proctor such an exam when there is no one here who is even familiar with those subjects" and gave him a geometry test.<sup>82</sup>

Franklin recommended Kosciuszko to Congress and upon his arrival in Philadelphia Kosciuszko was hired as chief engineer with the mission of designing fortifications.

The American art of war differed from the European one in terms of the style of fighting. In his article "Who was the American soldier during the American Revolution", with reference to a book by John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence*, Caleb Klingler remarks that warfare in America was nothing like it was in Europe; fighting shoulder to shoulder arrayed in columns did not function well in the heavily wooded areas. George Washington preferred the European style of fighting, where soldiers fought side by side.<sup>83</sup> Another "fashion" from Europe in the new world was the art of fortification:

The period from the 1680s to the French Revolution has been called the 'classic century of military engineering,' a time when earlier forms of artillery fortifications were perfected and frequently tested in battle. The eye-pleasing geometry of these fort plans had a practical

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<sup>81</sup> Synonym. Marie Kelmas, "Famous Foreign Officers Who Served in the American Revolution," accessed July 20, 2015, <http://classroom.synonym.com/famous-foreign-officers-served-american-revolution-12551.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 86.

<sup>83</sup> Military History Online. On a March through the Past. Kaleb Klinger, "Who was the American Soldier during the American Revolution? A Historian's Perspective." 2008, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/revolutionarywar/articles/americanrevolution.aspx>

rationale: engineers wanted to create overlapping planes of fire, so that defenders could cover every angle of approach from the walls of the forts.

At first, American forts were less elaborate than those on the continent, since Europeans were defending against hostile Native Americans, who didn't have artillery to use against the colonizers.<sup>84</sup>

Kosciuszko's first two main assignments from George Washington were the designing of the two main strategic forts – Billingsport and Mercer. As has already been accepted by historians, the Continental Army in 1776 was not in an advantageous condition. Washington himself had never conducted a siege of a fortified position, and many of his officers “were hardly traditional gentlemen, drawn from middling ranks, innkeepers who were captains, and shoemakers who were colonels.”<sup>85</sup> No wonder that American prospects at the end of 1776, after the defeat on Long Island in August 1776, were poor. As Washington defined the Revolution as a defensive struggle, in order to protect the territories and prevent the British from moving forward, the fortifications were a necessary way to reach that target.

Fort Billingsport was named after its location, in Billingsport, Gloucester County, New Jersey. Despite the fact that in 1775 it was captured and destroyed by the British, it had become an attempt to adapt the Southern landscape to the way of fighting, because usually a lot depends on the surroundings, and the landscape factor is frequently decisive.

Kosciuszko's design for the defenses at Billingsport and Red Bank demonstrated his genius and creativity: two rows of crate-like structures constructed of heavy timbers. The crates were loaded with stones and sunk into the water. Mounted on the tops of the crates were a number of smaller wooden beams, each fitted with a sharp iron point. These beams slanted upward to within four feet of the water's surface. Any vessel that tried to pass over them was in danger of having its bottom ripped open. Additional redoubts adjacent to the larger fort, cannon trained over the river, and chevaux-de-frise, long poles tipped with iron points to puncture the bottom of ships and placed in the river itself, produced the defensive complex which prevented the invasion fleet from proceeding and

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<sup>84</sup> The Vault. Historical Treasures, Oddities and Delights. Rebecca Onion, “The Beautiful Geometry of the Eighteenth Century Forts, Built by Britain in the American Colonies,” accessed in August, 2016, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_vault/2015/01/07/history\\_of\\_fortifications\\_british\\_forts\\_in\\_the\\_american\\_colonies.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2015/01/07/history_of_fortifications_british_forts_in_the_american_colonies.html).

<sup>85</sup> Countryman, *The American Revolution*. 57.

the British General William Howe had to land his 15,000 troops on Chesapeake Bay and march them overland to Philadelphia instead.<sup>86</sup>

Kosciuszko's efforts in building the fort increased the level of Washington's and General Putman's respect for him. After his arrival in America Kosciuszko did not meet Washington, but the latter nevertheless said:

"There is one in Philadelphia who I am told is clever, but him I have never seen."<sup>87</sup>

After Billingsport, Kosciuszko was directed to erect defensive works at Fort Mercer, north of Philadelphia and on the New Jersey shore of the Delaware River. His job was also highly appreciated by General Putman, who arrived there to check progress.

"Excellent work, Colonel," Putman complimented him.<sup>88</sup>

The defensive work on Fort Mercer was a preparatory process for the subsequent Battle of Red Bank, which took place on October 22, 1777 and resulted in the defeat of the Hessian troops. In spite of the fact that the British besieged the fort a month later, the morale of the Colonial defenders rose high and contributed further victories. The losses were 14 killed against 82 British, 23 wounded against 228 British.

Fort Billingsport and Fort Mercer were the first practical application of Kosciuszko's knowledge acquired in Europe. The Continental Army moved more by determination, spirit, boldness, and commitment to the "common great cause", which was an unprecedented phenomenon in the eighteenth century. It consisted of freedom fighters from all social strata, and what is more impressive is that the commanders, generals, and regular soldiers showed real solidarity, sharing the pain of defeat and the joy of victory equally. Kosciuszko admired and greatly respected George Washington because of the absence of class distinctions. He believed that there were more chances to win when the leader of a community, especially in war conditions, must be close to the mass of the people and be a part of it in order to be followed.

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<sup>86</sup> Meg Greene, *Thaddeus Kosciuszko: Polish General and Patriot* (New York: Chelsea House, 2013). 1-24.

<sup>87</sup> David J. Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents: Thaddeus Kosciuszko*, (New York: J Messner, 1968), 63.

<sup>88</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 63.

Kosciuszko's opinion about Washington coincided with his vision of all the ideals declared in this newly formed country taking shape on the map:

He was a man who would have been a noble anywhere else but in this new land, where there were no class distinctions. Yet he was a man who did not hesitate to take command of an army made up of common people, farmers and tradesmen, using weapons hardly better than scythes, pitchforks and axes.<sup>89</sup>

Kosciuszko was lucky to have a team of enthusiasts, knowledgeable and like-minded people whose statuses blurred and whose lives were sacrificed for the sake of the spirit of freedom that was suffusing the air and promising a new life.

### **3.2.3. Kosciuszko in the Battle of Saratoga**

The Battle of Saratoga is considered to be a turning point in the American Revolution for several reasons. First, the battle resulted in a complete victory of the American army over the British. Secondly, it convinced the French to join the war on the American side and triggered the union of the two countries in the struggle for American independence. That defensive alliance led to official recognition of the American state. Moreover, it led to the involvement of other countries in the war against Britain: Spain in 1779 and Holland in 1780. For France, which was experienced in imperial warfare, it was a gamble to give funds to untried nations with a fairly weak military capacity, so the Saratoga victory guaranteed to some extent that the colonies were capable of standing up for themselves.

The Battle of Saratoga is renowned for the harmonious, though occasionally conflicting, work of the famous Generals such as General Arnold, General Gates, and the indispensable engineer Thaddeus Kosciuszko. The victory of the army was based on wise guidance and trust in the professional skills of each of them and their ability to motivate the troops and encourage them, boosting their spirit.

In 1777 Britain sent an army of 8,000 under General Burgoyne to recapture Fort Ticonderoga. The plan to join a secondary force under General Howe, advancing northward from New York City through the Hudson Valley, did not work and the routes of the two armies drifted apart: Howe decided to capture Philadelphia, the seat of the congressional government, while Burgoyne was gradually approaching the

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<sup>89</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 63.

Hudson Valley. George Washington confronted Howe at Brandywine, Pennsylvania, on September 11 and later on October 4 at Germantown and was defeated in both battles. But these defeats were not disastrous: they proved that the American army was capable of fighting organized battles, and they prevented Howe from moving north to help Burgoyne. Because of the thick forests and hills and hot and humid summer the advance of Burgoyne's army was slow.

The Continental Army started to retreat from the moment of the loss of Ticonderoga. The image of General Schuyler suffered and General Gates took over the leadership. Having become convinced that the British Army led by General Howe was marching north, George Washington sent 780 soldiers and the Provisional Rifle Corps, equipped with the best marksmen from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, to reinforce Gates' army.

Meanwhile, by September, Gates had marched the army up to Stillwater, along the Hudson a few miles south of Saratoga, where they decided to set up camp. General Gates trusted Kosciuszko's skills and experience and ordered him to fall back to Saratoga to establish new fighting positions. Kosciuszko had an idea for how to make the passage, the route which one day might be marched along by the British army, almost impassable. He took responsibility for choosing the right spot for the fortification:

“When they reached an elevated pasture above the road to Albany along the Hudson, Kosciuszko's eyes lit up and he galloped his horse around in circles on the hill and exclaimed: “This is the right spot!””<sup>90</sup> It was Bemis Heights on the Hudson River that he had chosen.

The defenses that were established under the guidance of Kosciuszko at Bemis Heights were formidable indeed. They comprised two slopes with three redoubts, in front of the last of which there was a hollow. Three more redoubts had been set into the hollow, placed at about the same angles as the first. In front of the three redoubts was a deep ravine that “took its rise in the deep woods.”<sup>91</sup> Cannons

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<sup>90</sup> James Thacher a military journal during the American revolutionary war, from 1775 to 1783.

<sup>91</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 88

there could hit the river and the road. Fortified lines on the flood plain controlled the road. The natural "bottleneck" in the river valley would funnel the British right into the American gunsights. Nor could the British go east around the position, as the rough terrain there and lack of good roads prevented much movement.<sup>92</sup>

During the battle Benedict Arnold, who was a subordinate but respected as a professional officer by General Gates, and Gates himself followed different strategies and this resulted in a confrontation with regard to the manner of acting. Arnold, impatient and impulsive, insisted on "marching out and attacking"<sup>93</sup> but the experienced Gates preferred to take advantage of the defenses and assumed that "waiting can only weaken the enemy."<sup>94</sup> The conflict between them resulted in the permission given by General Gates to attack the British.

The British Army realized the threat posed by the defenses and all their initiative was suppressed by the Americans. Imprisoned by the forests, they were losing their dominance under the constant gunfire of the colonists, who were trying to hold their lines. The preliminary collision between the two armies took place on September 19, 1777 near the abandoned farm of the Loyalist John Freeman, where the British appeared to be unable to maintain their positions. Their further attacks resulted in heavy casualties and Gates' army managed to block the movement of the British army south to Albany. At the beginning of October the British tried another flanking move but the resistance was strong. General Gates drove the British back to the fortifications and forced them to withdraw northwards and the British Army capitulated at Saratoga on 17 October 1777.<sup>95</sup>

For Kosciuszko, the victory at Saratoga meant a chance for his career to blossom and the realization of his aspirations.

The victory at Saratoga was a victory on a worldwide scale rather than one within several countries. Its significance was measured by the justification of the ideals and aspirations to liberty the nation had been heading for. For France, moved by the same philosophical currents, the American Revolution was a sort of

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<sup>92</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 57.

<sup>93</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 102.

<sup>94</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 57-58.

<sup>95</sup> The Battle of Saratoga, 1999, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://battle1777.saratoga.org>.

experiment that was going to be applied by the French themselves. Before the battle, the world, particularly Europe, adopted a temporizing position in order to limit the risk of choosing the wrong side.

Kosciuszko's mission in the battle was successfully completed thanks to his fortune, professionalism, strategic skills, and even gut feeling. The collective mind of the famous trio, the two generals and the engineer Kosciuszko, and their trust in each other and in the army they led in a united movement towards the same target to give their descendants a new life in freedom.

Obviously, the American Revolution was a political game and the Congress, after making an alliance with France, did their best to keep their political partner happy, and thus the matter of fair recognition of the fighters and giving them promotion in their military careers was sidelined. The priority of giving higher ranks to the French was indisputable. Colonel Duportail and other French officers got promotion, whereas Kosciuszko remained a Colonel. Insistent but fruitless attempts of George Washington and General Gates to persuade Congress to pay attention to Kosciuszko remained unheard but Thaddeus was dedicated to their main goal – to assisting the shaping of a new American nation and republicanism and as soon as possible to return to Poland and do his best for the motherland.

#### **3.2.4. The West Point Fortifications**

Today West Point is associated with the most famous US military establishment – the United States Military Academy, which, as the introductory page of the institution's website proudly states, “has been educating, training, and inspiring leaders of character for the United States Army and for the nation for more than 200 years. It is an internationally recognized institution for academic, military and physical excellence, whose cadets will become tomorrow's military, public and private-sector leaders.”<sup>96</sup>

200 years ago one could undoubtedly not find the academy itself, but only forests and bushes, the currents of the Hudson River, and the great potential of the location to be fortified. The American Revolution made explicit the strategic

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<sup>96</sup> United States Military Academy. West Point. About West Point, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://www.usma.edu/about/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

importance of the commanding plateau on the west bank of the Hudson River. The United States Military Academy itself was established by Thomas Jefferson in 1802, proclaiming that those attending the Academy would be representative of a democratic society. Through the centuries the Academy has been progressing and adapting to the present-day world and its needs. In 1964, President Johnson signed legislation increasing the strength of the Corps of Cadets, while another significant development at West Point came when enrollment was opened to women in 1976. In recent decades the cadets have been able to choose from one of more than a dozen fields, including subjects from the sciences and humanities.<sup>97</sup>

Established by nature as the main artery connecting a vast network of interior water communications with the Atlantic, the Hudson occupied a position of the highest strategic importance.<sup>98</sup> The experiences of Ticonderoga and Saratoga had proved the enormous importance of possession of the Hudson to preserving communication between the Eastern, Middle, and Southern States. Effective defense of the Hudson presupposed strengthening of the fortifications in the highlands below Bemis Heights. The first fortifications, initiated by George Washington, whose advisor was none other than Thaddeus Kosciuszko, started to tower up. There are four reasons why West Point was of the utmost defensive importance.

First, the distance across the river is only about fourteen hundred feet, a shorter distance by far than at any other point. Second, there is the peculiar turn of the river, forming almost a re-entering angle. Third, there are the high banks on both sides of the river, favorable for the construction of formidable batteries. Fourth, there was the demonstrated practicability of blocking the river with chains at a spot where vessels turning round the Point invariably lose headway, and, of course, their force, by which a chain at any other part of the river would be liable to be broken.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> United States Military Academy. West Point. About West Point, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://www.usma.edu/about/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>98</sup> Captain Edward C. Boynton, A. M., *History of West Point and its Military Importance during the American Revolution and the Origin of the Progress of the United States Military Academy* (London: Sampson Low, Son, & Marston, 1864). E-book, 5-28, <https://ia600300.us.archive.org/16/items/historyofwestpoi00inboyn/historyofwestpoi00inboyn.pdf>.

<sup>99</sup> Edward Carlisle Boynton, *History of West Point*, (London: Sampson Low Son & Marston, 1864). E-book. 5-28.

The initiative in building the fortifications belonged to George Washington but the spot was chosen by Kosciuszko, as in the case of Saratoga. Incidentally, the trust placed in him by the Commander-in-Chief was not shared by Congress, which danced to the tune of the French. That is why the West Point period for Kosciuszko was, on the one hand, triumphant, while on the other it was complicated in terms of cooperation within the crew. His fortune and efficiency contributed to his achieving the apogee of his military career, *per aspera ad astra*.

In the late summer of 1777 the Continental Congress sent Colonel Luis de la Radiere to the Hudson Valley as an engineer assigned to working on defenses but from the very beginning openly deprecated the work. General Putnam considered him an excellent paper engineer but agreed with General Washington that he was unqualified to actually build fortifications. Because of the support of Congress for the French, Kosciuszko was disregarded by Congress. Above all, his cooperation with Radiere was mostly characterized by conflict and disagreement. But the efforts of Washington and General Putnam and their continuous appeals to Congress resulted in Kosciuszko being acknowledged as Chief Engineer of the Middle Department.

West Point, additionally, became for Kosciuszko and General Gates a meeting spot, the site of their fruitful cooperation. For Kosciuszko, working under the command of Gates became the most pleasant and productive period of his stay in the US. They were linked not only by their main dream of freedom and hard work, but by long-lasting friendship; “there was no one for whom he had greater affection than General Gates.”<sup>100</sup>

The West Point time is also renowned for the first meeting of George Washington and Kosciuszko during the American Revolution. After the Battle of Saratoga Washington wrote a letter to Congress, in which he referred to Kosciuszko as “a gentleman of science and merit.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> David J. Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 99.

<sup>101</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick (editor), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*. Volume 10 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 35.

Kosciuszko's assignments were designing and building hilltop forts, gun emplacements, and troop barracks. Among the most famous forts in the design and building of which Kosciuszko directly participated were Fort Clinton, Fort Putnam, and Redoubt Four. The first was completed under the command of the Polish engineer. The memorial plaque on its walls and Kosciuszko's monument in the background remind visitors of his contribution. Kosciuszko convinced Generals McDougall, Parson, and Clinton to defend Crown Hill and drafted the blueprints for Fort Putnam. Redoubt Four was also designed by Kosciuszko, which is noted on the information plate available to visitors.<sup>102</sup>

The fortress itself was a polygonal citadel atop a rock face 60 meters above the river. Four additional forts were situated around it, three on nearby hills and the fourth on the river bank itself, featuring a 60-ton chain with two-foot-long links intended as a barrier against British ships. Seven redoubts took shape between the forts, and the complex held 2,500 soldiers. The entire project took two and a half years to complete. Kosciuszko considered it a triumph greater than his victory at Saratoga; he did it with a workforce of eighty-two laborers, three masons, and one stone-cutter.<sup>103</sup>

Another contribution of Kosciuszko to West Point was Kosciuszko's Garden, located on the side of the cliff overlooking the Hudson River, on the escarpment below Cullum Hall, and constructed in 1778. The Garden was a hobby rather than an obligation, and the site was a favorite spot of serenity and contemplation. Dr. James Thacher wrote in his diary:

Colonel Kosciuszko, a gentleman of distinction from Poland...amused himself while stationed on the point, in laying out a curious garden in a deep valley, abounding more in rocks than soil. I was gratified in viewing his curious water fountain with jets and cascades.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Stanley S. Sokol, *Polish Biographical Dictionary* (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy Carducci Publishers, 1992), 136.

Robert H. Wilson, "Thaddeus Kosciuszko and His Home in Philadelphia", accessed July 15, 2014, [http://www.clanbreazeale.com/EthelPage/Kosciuszko/T\\_Kosciuszko.htm](http://www.clanbreazeale.com/EthelPage/Kosciuszko/T_Kosciuszko.htm).

<sup>103</sup> Polish-American Journal. On the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of West Point. Denice Szafran Liscomb, "Kosciuszko's Fortifications Denied Hudson Valley to British." May 2002, accessed July 12, 2014, <http://www.polamjournal.com/Library/Biographies/Kosciuszko-WestPoint/kosciuszko-westpoint.html>.

<sup>104</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 121.

Through the winters of 1778-79 and 1779-80, working under the command of General Paterson, the Polish engineer built a unique series of sixteen fortified positions in three defensive rings that utilized sheer walls and rocky obstacles to adapt each stronghold to the nearby terrain. By late 1779, the nearly impregnable Hudson Heights fortress had neutralized the British campaign in the Northern States.<sup>105</sup>

After West Point Kosciuszko continued serving in the Continental Army, participating in the Southern Campaign. He joined the army of Nathanael Greene, who became his best wartime friend, together with General Gates. One of the most renowned battles during the Southern Campaign was the Siege of Ninety-Six. The sources that mention Kosciuszko's contribution to the American Revolution usually skip his achievements during that battle, ostensibly for the reason that it was a failure for Greene's army, and Kosciuszko was sometimes criticized for having made crucial mistakes that cost his side victory.

Greene's siege lasted from May 22 to June 18, 1781, and was one of the longest sieges during the Revolution. Kosciuszko, traveling with the army of General Gates, scouted rivers and suitable areas to set up camps, built flat-bottomed boats, and constructed fortifications across the South. He also assisted Greene in scouting the enemy positions. At Ninety-Six he constructed three parallels, trenches that were parallel to the defenses, which enabled the patriots to advance closer to the enemy garrison inside the Star Fort. Kosciuszko described that construction as a "soft stone" because of the red clay.

The digging of the mine initiated by Kosciuszko was, unfortunately, an unsuccessful undertaking. The idea was for the patriots to dig a mine underneath the Star Fort, pack it with gunpowder and blow it up. The expectations did not come to fruition as they were captured by the Loyalists and Kosciuszko was slightly wounded.

General Henry Lee accused the Polish engineer of making errors during their attempt to capture the fort. According to his memoirs, published thirty years after the end of the war, Colonel Kosciuszko "...never regarded the importance which was

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<sup>105</sup> Gary B. Nash and Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *Friends of Liberty* (New York: Basic Books: 2008), 58.

attached to depriving the enemy of water, for which he entirely depended on the rivulet to his left” and that “Kosciuszko applied his undivided attention to the demolition of the star, the strongest point of the enemy’s defense.” The latest studies by military historians such as Lt. Col. Joseph B. Mitchell have shown that the reproaches of Lee and those who accept this view are without justification.<sup>106</sup>

Kosciuszko’s military service during the Southern Campaign was a sort of active service on the battlefield, where he tried his abilities as a commander in the light infantry. His motivation and initiative were based on his expectations of the Polish Revolution, which was very close to happening and which he was going to lead on his return to his homeland. After Ninety-Six he continued to build outposts, did the day-to-day work of a field engineer, such as choosing campsites and preparing various items of equipment necessary for crossing rivers, and even commanded detachments carrying out raids against the British.

His service ended with his entering Charleston with the army of General Anthony Wayne at the head of the troops, and in July 1783 Kosciuszko left the Southern Army and set off for Philadelphia.

He left America in 1784 with the rank of Brigadier-General and with a certificate for 12,280 dollars, which he had not received, but had been promised it would be paid by 1784, and the right to 500 acres of land on the territory of the US. As it turned out, he never saw that money.

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<sup>106</sup> Bogdan Grzelonski, *Jefferson-Kosciuszko: Correspondence* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978), 14.

## Chapter IV. In Pursuit of the Motherland's Freedom.

### The Uprising of 1794

During Kosciuszko's stay in America, he could not stop thinking about his homeland. The news of how Prussia, Austria, and Russia were tearing it apart during the partitions of 1772 and 1793 was unbearably painful for him to hear. His countryman Casimir Pulaski, who also acquired recognition during the American Revolution, passed the news about what was going on in the Polish Kingdom to Kosciuszko. They met during the Christmas of 1775:

Are things any different in our homeland?" Kosciuszko asked. "Is there any hope?"

Pulaski shook his head. "The Russians are more entrenched than ever."

They talked for half an hour of the hopelessness of Poland and their mutual determination to go back after the American Revolution had ended.<sup>107</sup>

Kosciuszko arrived in his home country in 1784, but even by that time *Rzeczpospolita* was not yet ready for the great changes, and hence Kosciuszko had to spend four more years doing agricultural work in the village of Sechnovichi, not being required by the Polish-Lithuanian Army, in which he was willing to serve.

By the 1790s the country and its society were sufficiently mature to accept the reforms, for the reason that the pressure from the Russian Empire and Prussia, which had taken the Russian side, had become unbearable. The threat of a new partition was soaring and the drawbacks of the Polish political system continued to produce a damaging effect and were leading the country nowhere. The last hope for retrieving Polish freedom was the reforms which found their realization in the Constitution of May 3, 1791. However, the preparatory step was the Four-Year Sejm, held in Warsaw between 1788 and 1792, the main aim of which was to take measures that attempted to restore Polish sovereignty. The majority of the Sejm was composed of anti-royal opposition, although it was not homogeneous. The opposition announced itself as a patriotic party and launched a broad propaganda campaign. One of the measures taken by the Sejm was to expand the Polish-Lithuanian Army, which meant quadrupling the number of soldiers and officers in order to strengthen the State and

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<sup>107</sup> Abodaher, *Warrior on Two Continents*, 77.

revitalize the economy. It gave Kosciuszko a chance to show the military skills he had mastered during the American Revolution.

The Reforms carried out by the Sejm included the reform of towns, which were granted self-government, and the burghers obtained rights and privileges similar to those enjoyed by the gentry.

For Kosciuszko the Polish Constitution became the embodiment of republicanism and democracy, the pillars on which the American nation itself had been built. The Constitution was the second one written in the world after that of the United States. It established a constitutional monarchy, abolished the elections of kings and introduced a hereditary throne, established a government called the Guardian of Laws, and introduced responsibility of the ministers to the Sejm. It introduced elements of political equality between townspeople and the nobility, placed the peasants under the protection of the government, and banned *liberum veto*. The document remained in force for less than nineteen months, but even now it is universally acknowledged as a revolutionary document in the political history of the world. Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke praised Poland's progressive thinking and democratic spirit. Once again Poland's political vision was proven to be well ahead of its time.<sup>108</sup>

Imperial Russia, Austria, and Prussia did not tolerate the challenge of the *Rzeczpospolita* government and united in their desire to seize another portion of the Polish-Lithuanian territory, which resulted in the second partition of 1793.

That became a trigger for the radical resistance of the *szlachta*, petty bourgeoisie, and peasantry.

Like the American Revolution, carefully prepared by philosophical and ideological propaganda, the Polish-Lithuanian rebellion also had an ideological background. The works of Stanislaw Staszic, Guga Kalantaj, Kazimir Narbut, and Joachim Chreptowicz started to spread the ideas necessary for the integration of the masses into the struggle for the "great cause" – Polish independence.

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<sup>108</sup> Polish Embassy Home Page. Constitution of May 3, 1791. 2011, accessed July 12, 2014, <http://www.polishworld.com/polemb/const/>  
Marek Zebrowski, "History of the Polish Constitution." April 2008, accessed July 12, 2014, <http://pmc.usc.edu/3May1791Constitution.htm>

The Uprising of 1794 showed Kosciuszko's diverse talents and skills: as a military leader, a diplomat, a speaker, a publisher, and simply a commoner. His charismatic persona gained the trust of both the magnates and peasantry. The preparation of the insurrection itself took place both in the *Rzeczpospolita* and abroad. Kosciuszko left the army and went into exile in Leipzig in Saxony to make preparations. On the morning of 24 March 1794, in the Market Square in Cracow, he took the oath as a leader of the insurrection with the title of Supreme Commander of the national armed forces. He had been chosen because he was seen as a real democrat, while his military talents were also highly regarded.

Kosciuszko realized that the chances of winning were low but his mission during the preparation was not only to gather as many patriots as possible, but to boost their spirits as much as possible. The best impetus for lifting their motivation, as he experienced in the United States, was the Word. Never in his life had he succeeded so well as a speaker before the Uprising. In his first appeal, *To the Citizens*, he said:

The first step in throwing off subjugation is to dare to be free; the first step to victory is to recognize one's own strength." "Let us be one body with the Citizens, let us unite as closely as possible, let us unite the hearts, hands and arts of all the inhabitants of our Land."<sup>109</sup>

The appeal *To the Citizens* was followed by the appeals *To the Army*, *To the Clergy*, and *To Women*. Each of those appeals called for arms to be taken up and for people to stand up and defend their motherland's freedom. On March 24, 1794, the speech given by Kosciuszko, which is famous as "The Act of the Uprising," is considered the starting point of the Uprising. He voted "not to use these powers to oppress any person but to defend the integrity of the borders of Poland, regain the independence of the nation, and to strengthen universal liberties."<sup>110</sup>

The Act started with the disclosure of the villainy and deceit of Katherine II and Friedrich Wilhelm. The tsarina was dangerous for the European states because of her policies and tried to spread tyranny and power over the neighboring lands. She trampled on the sacred rights to the freedom, security, and untouchability of a human and his property. He considered the liberalism of Catherine specious and deceptive

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<sup>109</sup> Grzelonski, *Jefferson-Kosciuszko. Correspondence*, 14.

<sup>110</sup> Storozyński, *The Peasant Prince*, 184.

and camouflage for her main aim – the spread of tyranny.<sup>111</sup> The Act had a decisive significance for the integration and mobilization of all progressive forces in the struggle against the invaders.

According to the plan, the Uprising was to start simultaneously in three cities, Krakow, Warsaw, and Vilno. Among his countrymen responsible for leading the army were Guga Kalantaj, Ignacy Patocky, Jan Kilinsky, Jakub Jasinski, and other progressive leaders and talented generals. The victories of the Uprising started with the taking of Warsaw on April 17, when about 2000 Russian soldiers and officers were killed.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko is associated with and famous for the Battle of Raclawice and the Battle of Maciejowice, which resulted in victory and failure respectively. Even more than other clashes of the Polish army with the Russians, these two battles have the most evident historical significance. The army he commanded was diverse in its content, containing recruits from the *szlachta*, bourgeoisie, peasantry, and Jews, because quantity was just as important as quality in that particular case; in other words, the support of all the social classes was essential in order to resist the power of the Russians. Thus on April 4 at Raclawice the Poles, waving their pikes, axes, and scythes in the air, wearing *sukmanas*, peasant robes made from woven sheep's wool, struck the armies of General Denisov and Tosmanov. "Racing in front of them on his horse, Kosciuszko waved them on and shouted out their names: "Szymku, Macku, Bartku, keep going! My Boys, take that artillery! For God, for the Motherland! Go forward with faith!"<sup>112</sup>

By May the rebels had regained control of the greater part of the territory of *the Rzeczpospolita*; nevertheless, the turning point of the insurrection came when Catherine sent Suvorov, who was to join the other Russian forces in the early September of 1794.

The Battle of Maciejowice was a final defeat of Kosciuszko's troops, one of the bloodiest battles in the history of the Uprising. It took place just when Suvorov and

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<sup>111</sup> Язэр Юхо, Уладзімір Емяльянчык. *Нарадзіўся я ліцвінам*, 6-17.  
(Yucho, Jemyalyanchik, *I was born a Litvin*, 6-17).

<sup>112</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 185.

Fersen were on their way to join forces. Kosciuszko planned to fight his way each enemy separately before they met. Moreover, Kosciuszko was waiting for reinforcements, but the corps of Fersen struck first:

The initial phase of the battle went well...but Kosciuszko and his battlefield brethren understood how high the predominance of the Russians was. Sierakowski rushed to Kosciuszko and said: "I think we still have time to retreat."<sup>113</sup>

Kosciuszko replied to him: "There is no room here to retreat; this is the place to be buried, or to be victorious."<sup>114</sup>

Niemcewicz described the scene as "a shower of balls of every size, grapeshot, and grenades...The sound of whistling bullets and booming cannonballs terrified the horses...The Russian infantry charged in with their bayonets and stabbed the Polish soldiers and peasants...The tsarist troops jabbed away, stabbing and shooting thousands of Poles...The slaughter continued for three hours as four thousand Poles were killed or wounded...Kosciuszko continued to fight like a madman, with most of his men killed, wounded, or on the run, he finally tried to leave the battlefield. He was chased by several Cossacks, who caught Kosciuszko from behind and stabbed him in the back with a long pike. Dizzy from his wounds, he passed out in the mud."<sup>115</sup>

It was the end of his hopes. Some rumors claim that on the battlefield people heard Kosciuszko crying out the Latin words, *Finis Poloniae!*, but most of his countrymen did not believe that he had uttered such a phrase. However, when taking up arms at the beginning, he realized that there were many stumbling blocks and that, regardless of all hopes and efforts, there was only a small chance of winning. Nevertheless, he did not show his hesitation and doubts to the people who were around him and who trusted and followed him.

After the Uprising Thaddeus Kosciuszko was imprisoned by Catherine the Great but was pardoned by her successor Paul I in 1796. He spent two years in prison healing his wounds and mourning the unachieved liberty and sovereignty of his homeland.

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<sup>113</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 185.

<sup>114</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 185.

<sup>115</sup> Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince*, 208.

## **Chapter V. Against Serfdom and Slavery. Correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. The End of the Path**

The roots of Kosciuszko's hostility towards slavery and the feudal system go far back to his childhood. He did not look down on playing with peasant children, which was untypical for children from the noble class, and, seeing how hard the peasants worked, respected them and felt empathy and compassion for them, regardless of the established traditions and hierarchy of the feudal order.

Having reached adulthood, Kosciuszko had to accept the fact that to alter the political and social order alone was far from possible, but he himself could show a vivid example of justice and humanity in order to move the monolith of exploitative patterns, which were no longer effective but still beneficial for the nobility. There were thirty-one peasant families that worked the land that belonged to his family, but his parents taught him and his brother and sisters that "treating the peasants fairly and providing them with a greater share of the fruits of their labor would make them more productive."<sup>116</sup>

Kosciuszko saw the potential reality of the abolition of serfdom only through changes in the political system. While the state remained a kingdom where magnates and the golden concepts of freedom, democracy, republicanism, and equality were still unapproachable and inapplicable, the abolition of serfdom was a chimera.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko first attempted to raise "the peasant question" and make radical changes on the level of the law and government when he was authorised to do so through being a Commander of the Uprising of 1794. It took about half a century for Kosciuszko to put his views on slavery and serfdom into practice, giving a ray of hope to the peasants tired of their subordination. The document published by Kosciuszko is known under the title of "The Proclamation of Polaniec," or "The Polaniec Manifesto," issued on May 7, 1794, which is considered the most famous legal act of the Uprising. The document partially abolished serfdom and granted civil

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<sup>116</sup> Tadeusz Korzon, *Kosciuszko: Biografia z Dokumentow Wysnuta* (Krakow: Nakladem Muzeum Narodowego v Rappenswylu, 1894), 55.

liberties to all the peasants. Despite the fact that the Proclamation was aimed at attracting the peasants to participate in the struggle for freedom and lead a greater number of them to enlist in the army, the paper turned out to be the first real and practical step in bringing the atmosphere of democracy, equality, and freedom to the minds and lives of society. The Commander issued fourteen points, the first of which gave serfs the same rights as everyone else “under the laws and protection of the national government.” The second declared that “every peasant is personally free, and free to move where he wishes.” Kosciuszko cut the work requirement of the corvée in half. From then on peasants could also obtain their own land.<sup>117</sup>

Concerning slavery, Kosciuszko took it closer to heart than the situation regarding serfdom in the *Rzeczpospolita*. The exploitation of black people seemed much more cruel and inhuman to him and was in opposition to the idealistic ideas of the Enlightenment. Both in the Polish Kingdom and in the United States exploitation brought huge benefits to the economy of both countries. People took more explicit advantage of slavery in the United States. It was a source of prosperity, money, and wealth. The ideas of the American Revolution did not coincide with the support for exploitation, which was somewhat paradoxical. It took almost a century before the words pronounced in the Declaration of Independence were applied in practice.

Kosciuszko observed the horrors of slavery during the Southern Campaign, the region where slavery prospered in its cruelty. As Gary B. Nash mentions, “in the maelstrom of war, Kosciuszko had many opportunities to witness the Southern plantations reeking of misery, even as the fabric of slavery was shredding, and to think about how black bondage might come to an end.”<sup>118</sup>

The Continental Army, meanwhile, was interested in enlisting slaves, promising them release from their oppression. The American Revolution brought Kosciuszko together with one of the most famous black soldiers, named Agrippa Hull, with whom he fought for liberty side by side.

Kosciuszko’s effect on Hull was palpable, and vice versa. In the annealing crucible of war, the black New Englander came to admire the Pole greatly and built his life around his experiences in

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<sup>117</sup> Korzon, *Kosciuszko*, 332.

<sup>118</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Friends of Liberty*, 66.

the field with the good-hearted and self-effacing military engineer. With Hull constantly at his side, Kosciuszko grew to admire the courage of black soldiers as he saw them perform in the heat of battle during the Revolution,” claims Gary B. Nash.<sup>119</sup>

According to Jon Meacham, a Pulitzer Prize winner and a biographer of Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) is considered the most successful political leader of the early republic and perhaps in all of American history. Being the draftsman of the Declaration of Independence, an ambassador to France, the nation’s first secretary of state, the second vice-president, and the third President of the United States, from 1801 to 1809, prove him a genius of politics and a gifted philosopher. As the historian David Brion Davis noted, Jefferson is remembered as an antislavery hero, “one of the first statesmen anywhere to advocate concrete measures for eradicating slavery.”<sup>120</sup> However, the Virginia abolitionist Moncure Conway claimed, referring to Jefferson, that “never did a man achieve more fame for what he did not do.”<sup>121</sup>

In terms of his antislavery pronouncements, historians consider him a contradictory person, taking the position of a herald of freedom and equality, denouncing the slave trade as an “execrable commerce...this assemblage of horror” and “a cruel war against human nature itself violating its most sacred rights of life and liberties,”<sup>122</sup> but at the same time his mansion in Monticello is widely known as a mini-empire of slavery, where he owned about six hundred blacks:

From the terrace Jefferson looked out upon an industrious, well-organized enterprise of black coopers, smiths, nailmakers, a brewer, cooks professionally trained in French cuisine, a glazier, painters, millers and weavers. Black managers, slaves themselves, oversaw other slaves. A team of highly skilled artisans constructed Jefferson’s coach.<sup>123</sup>

Regardless of all the attacks on his person, “one cannot question the genuineness of Jefferson’s liberal dreams.” writes historian David Brion Davis. “He

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<sup>119</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Friends of Liberty*, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Jefferson Monticello. Lucia Stanton, “Thomas Jefferson and Slavery.” February, 2008, accessed December 11, 2015, <https://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/thomas-jefferson-and-slavery-0>.

<sup>121</sup> Smithsonian Magazine. Henry Wienczek, “The Dark Side of Thomas Jefferson.” October, 2012, accessed 10 July, 2015, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-dark-side-of-thomas-jefferson-35976004/>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

was one of the first statesmen in any part of the world to advocate concrete measures for restricting and eradicating Negro slavery.”<sup>124</sup>

The friendship of Thaddeus Kosciuszko with Thomas Jefferson is a phenomenon both typical of and unusual for the Revolutionary Age, an age of high ideals and aspirations. They were bound by a twenty-year-long friendship and correspondence full of respect and affection for each other. The correspondence seems to have begun with a letter from Kosciuszko in the early spring of 1798 concerning his preparation for a “secret” departure from the States. It closed with the Pole’s letter of July 16, 1817, just before he passed away. From the intervening period 41 letters have survived. The letters cover the years between Kosciuszko’s departure from America in 1798 and his death and were first published in one collection by Bogdan Grzelonski in 1978.

Jefferson’s quotation about Kosciuszko, “as pure a son of liberty I have ever known,”<sup>125</sup> spread around the world. He took comfort in the warmth of a growing friendship with the General. The two men were the same age but they made an unlikely pair: Kosciuszko was a man of action while Jefferson was a man of thoughts. Perhaps the key to the deep-running emotions that ran between them was their shared ideas about human improvement and a belief that individual virtue in the nation’s service was indispensable in any republic. Jefferson seems to have found in Kosciuszko a selflessness and strength of character that were in short supply in the new nation. In Jefferson Kosciuszko found the embodiment of reason and enlightened thinking.<sup>126</sup> Thus the theme of liberty bound Kosciuszko and Jefferson in a long-term friendship.

Kosciuszko’s second arrival in Philadelphia took place in 1797; there he settled at 143 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, where the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is now located. “The illustrious Defender of the Rights of Mankind,” as a Philadelphia paper described him, his head swathed in bandages, was greeted with the Federal

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<sup>124</sup> David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 174.

<sup>125</sup> Edward P. Alexander, “Jefferson and Kosciuszko: Friends of Liberty and of Man,” Jefferson to Horatio Gates, Feb. 21, 1798, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, accessed July 21, 2015, file:///C:/Users/Helen/Downloads/42353-42192-1-PB%20(2).pdf.

<sup>126</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Friends of Liberty*, 156.

salute and rowed to shore in a barge manned by eight masters of vessels in the harbor.<sup>127</sup> Jefferson was with him almost daily. An amateur artist, he painted a small watercolor of Jefferson, complete with laurel leaves on his brow. After Kosciuszko secretly left the United States, the correspondence continued.

The topics of discussion in the correspondence covered business, politics, state issues, education, republicanism, war, and others.

Part of this exchange was over business. Kosciuszko did not see his deserved pay for his military service with his own eyes, as his money was invested in stock of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and could not be transferred overseas. He asked Jefferson to lend him money, as he was not able to make ends meet. Jefferson could not help Kosciuszko and, on the contrary, borrowed \$4,500 from Kosciuszko to cover his own debts:

I believe we are both suffering this year, you on account of England and in yours, as for the year 1813 past I have received no interest for the small sum invested for me by you and of which I am in great need. I know that the war might have impeded communications with France, but try to send it me via England or Holland. I embrace you a thousand times with all my friendship and esteem.<sup>128</sup>

When Jefferson became President, Kosciuszko congratulated him rapturously:

I congratulate the United States of America on the choice they have made in your person for their President; there can no longer be any doubt that Republicanism must be inseparable from honesty, probity and strict justice.<sup>129</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was cautious about discussing politics in their correspondence, and his letters were dry. In February 1810, Jefferson wrote the General an explanation of his conservative policy of correspondence:

I have rarely written to you; never but by safe conveyances; and avoiding everything political, lest coming from me in the station I then held, it might be imputed injuriously to our country or perhaps even excite jealousy of you. Hence my letters were necessarily dry. Retired now from public concerns, totally unconnected with them, and avoiding all curiosity about what is done or intended, what I say is from myself only, the workings of my own mind, imputable to nobody else.

From then on his letters were more regular and contained fuller comments on American affairs. Usually they were models of clear and cogent writing. Jefferson

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<sup>127</sup> Julia Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Under their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America in 1797-1799, 180*, (New York: Grassman Publisher Co., 1965), 42.

<sup>128</sup> Bogdan Grzelonski, *Kosciuszko-Jefferson; Correspondence*, Kosciuszko to Jefferson, Paris, 15 May 1814 (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978).

<sup>129</sup> Grzelonski, *Correspondence*, Kosciuszko to Jefferson, 1801.

shared his thoughts on political affairs during the War of 1812 with Britain, and later during the Canadian Campaign of 1813.

Beginning about 1805, Kosciuszko repeatedly urged Jefferson to set up schools, especially military academies, in each state. They should be supervised directly by members of Congress and open to all, and would provide trained officers for the militia. He also thought that Jefferson should attack the Spaniards and take over Florida at once; thus, European nations would be impressed and impelled to seek alliances with the United States.<sup>130</sup>

Kosciuszko died in Switzerland in October 1817 at the home of his close friend Frantz Xavier Zeltner in Soleure.

What deserves much attention is the testament of Kosciuszko to Jefferson, written on May 5, 1798:

I Thaddeus Kosciuszko being just in my departure from America do hereby declare and direct that should I make no other testamentary disposition of my property in the United States I hereby authorise my friend Thomas Jefferson to employ the whole thereof in purchasing Negroes from among his own or any others and giving them Liberty in my name, in giving them an education in trades or otherwise and in having them instructed for their new condition in the duties of morality which may make them good neighbours good fathers or mothers, husbands or wives and in their duties as citizens teaching them to be defenders of their Liberty and Country and of the good order of Society and in whatsoever may Make them happy and useful, and I make the said Thomas Jefferson my executor of this.

That was the last will of the General, which was never executed by Jefferson. In 1819 he was thinking about Kosciuszko's idea of liberating the slaves and considered it unprofitable. As Storozynski says, Jefferson officially washed his hands of Kosciuszko's plan to free the slaves.

The twenty-year-long correspondence was, for both of them, a matter of raising their spirit, moral support, and attachment to a trustworthy person, which was hard to find in the rapidly changing eighteenth-century world. This relationship proves that such concepts as freedom, respect, faith, and dedication either to a cause or to a person played a much greater role than financial benefit and selfishness. Anyway, when one analyzes their friendship, Kosciuszko fulfilled all such kinds of obligations towards his friend. Concerning Jefferson, some details argue against the idea of real friendship and the image of Jefferson as a true friend of Kosciuszko. In

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<sup>130</sup> Edward P. Alexander, "Jefferson and Kosciuszko: Friends of Liberty and of Man," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Jan. 1968), 87-95, 97- 103.

this particular case the wisdom of our ancestors could reasonably be applied: “A friend in need is a friend indeed.” The moral virtues of the General prevailed over the financial issues, the circumstances of Kosciuszko’s life when moral support was not enough. In spite of this, till the end of his life he managed to maintain the pure human virtue of friendship, the significance of which is of no less importance than freedom and other high ideals.

### **Conclusion**

Thaddeus Kosciuszko is a hero of three peoples – the Belarusians, the Poles, and the Americans. He was a unique example of a leader who in the course of history was respected both by friends and foes, such as Catherine II and Napoleon, who considered him a “fool exaggerating his influence over the Polish”.<sup>131</sup>

Kosciuszko’s museums in Mereczowszczyzna in Belarus, the Polish-American Cultural Center in Philadelphia, the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York City, the museum in Solothurn in Switzerland, and the museums in Krakow and Warsaw, are all tributes to the national hero. In the innumerable portraits painted in honor of the General, he appears as a handsome and noble person with a spiritual facial expression, erect posture, and pure eyes in which there is hope for the bright and happy future of all mankind, but first and foremost, the independent and prosperous status of his homeland. In a time of materialism and commercialism and a gradual decline in morality and virtue, the good example of a person of honor must be shown to a younger generation in order to remind them about their prolific ancestors, as an exemplar to copy. Above all, the history of a nation would be incomplete without him.

Freedom became the main mission for Kosciuszko. His path towards it was bitter and complicated, brightened by the American achievements and thorny in the attempts to liberate the *Rzeczpospolita*. There remains the question of what the outcome of his path was. Did he get what he was looking for?

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<sup>131</sup> Originally in a letter from Napoleon to his Minister of Police, Joseph Fouché, 1807. Also in Stanisław Herbst, *"Tadeusz Kościuszko."* *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, (Warszawa: Instytut Historii (Polska Akademia Nauk), 1969). 438.

My personal answer, based on the analysis of all been stated above, is the following: his destination in his path towards freedom was half-successful. The mission was too idealistic and huge, and, regarding the social and political conditions Kosciuszko lived in, it was unbearable and incompatible with the political and social system of the *Rzeczpospolita*. The three aggressive wolves, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, were too strong and hungry in their power and influence. But Kosciuszko was sure that the first steps of the struggle should have been taken, regardless of the chances of winning.

The United States became for him the embodiment of all the philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment, a hostage and a committed follower of which he was. It was an example of how farmers and merchants can be victorious in the pursuit of independence and democracy.

He spent the greater part of his life in exile but never stopped loving his native land, showing the example of a patriot who can do a lot for his country even when far away from it.

Freedom, for him, was rather a process, a way in which he found himself, but he did not find his motherland liberated and free. He managed to rally people's minds and encourage his nation in its further struggles, giving them hope and patriotic anger.

Long live Thaddeus!

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