



Czy Polacy mogą się wybić na niepodległość? (fragmenty) - Tekst angielski

FOREWORD

POLAND has been expunged from the circle of European powers. Will this terrible fate be eternal or is it just a temporary defeat, similar to extraordinary floods that destroy but not engulf everything, with waves rolling back yet leaving considerable loss? Could this political question be answered in absolute truth? [...] Unfortunately, justice among nations is merely an illusion! Murderous iron marks everything with blind fury, embraces and plunders all and sets authorities, while millions of innocent people fall under the yoke of debauched villains... Poles! You can see how futile your complaining and suffering are in Europe. If you want happiness, virtue and glory for you and your descendants, you need to use measures and powers nature has put in a man's spirit. It seems I can make a burnt offering on the altar of our homeland if I open my mind and express my thoughts on how to regain Poland's independence. I will show my compatriots the flaws that prevented them from rising to a level at which they could be respected by foreigners and enjoy inner happiness and do justice to the qualities that can lead them to greatness.

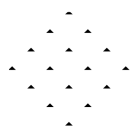
Polish flaws that hamper the regaining of political independence

It is necessary that a nation that wants independence believes in its strength. If its people do not have this faith, if they try to maintain their existence not through their own efforts but through others' support or favours, we can safely say that they will never reach happiness, virtue or fame. Looking at history, does any country we remember has reached its glory relying on protection from others? And indeed, it yields sad results. [...] Our poor opinion about ourselves began when the Polish noblemen no longer searched for the good of the country but started relying on the pride of aristocratic families. During interregnums, every party that wanted to provide their compatriots with a new ruler visited foreign courts to ask for military help and money, which they could distribute among people and thus win supporters. The more wrestlers a family had, the more certain were its victories in tribunals, the more beneficial for its members



were its laws in the parliament and thus the more money it collected, gathering wealth that could not be found in any other European country. The weaker ones had to look for the help of the more powerful so that their property was not taken from them in courts. Neighbouring kings looking for intrigues in Poland approached noblemen and gave them money, and the latter ordered their people or gave them small amounts to provoke the unrest the king who had initially paid for them needed. (1) [...]

It has to be said that the Poles hate any kind of yoke and are enthusiastic about freedom and virtue, but their fault is that they are as willing to start bold acts as they are volatile in finishing their plans and weak in the face of adversity. To appreciate rules and justice is not enough; what is needed is bravery to maintain them. I see, however, that Polish people are not consistent in their thoughts in the face of adversities and that they pondered too little over the course of events or human acts. Misfortune can be sometimes compared to Cadmus's head: when cut off, new soldiers were unleashed. Over time, things happen that human minds have not predicted. [...] If military science was as reliable in its predictions as mathematical calculations, the Dutch would not resist Spain, the Swiss would not resist Austria, and America would certainly not resist England. New approaches, new weapons, new army types can make all manoeuvrers soldiers are accustomed to useless. The best Prussian cavalry in Europe was afraid of and could not resist Polish spears. A nation that has a good cause will see beneficial results if it exhibits constancy in its undertakings. The fall of the Poles did not happen because of their country's location or the impossibility to resist their enemies but because of lack of energy and constancy of their minds. No one can deny the truth that if Ukraine had revolted like Greater Poland, the Russian army would have had to retreat or split, which means they would have been weaker and we would have found it easier to liberate ourselves from them. Let alone the uprising in Galicia... Kościuszko's misfortune stopped our revolutionary aspirations and the establishment of other provinces. I respect our attachment to the great man and feel moved by the floods of tears cried for his loss. Perhaps it is the most beautiful and the most tender homage paid to a great virtue that we can find in the history of the whole world. A praiseworthy feeling of a moral nation and praiseworthy respect for Kościuszko. But it is a shame for my compatriots that they seem to have weakened because of the fall of one man and now just keep waiting for their end. (4) [...] If only the Poles had made it through the winter during the last uprising (which they could have done)! The Prussian king was then asking France for peace and – as he admitted himself during the Imperial Diet in Regensburg – refrained from the coalition because of the Polish revolution. [...] Let me remind you that the French achieved the greatest victories during



that winter, including conquering the Netherlands and thus approaching the Prussian states. I will not speak in length about it, but it is clear that the French had a good reason to support the Poles since it was the only nation in Europe that also took up arms to fight for the rights of all men. And how would France benefit from moving Moscow away and finding Austria an enemy on the other side? Could we find any other power that could benefit from supporting a country being a threat to the barbarity of the Russian court? We lost everything because of our incompetence and there is no one other to blame for us being under a foreign rule.

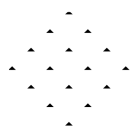
The Poles have yet another fault: they blindly copy others because they do not think enough or take things into proper consideration. Since we share one cause with the French, we urgently need the same resources, the same army and the same passions and think we cannot reach our aim without them. But we have to realise that our country is a different one with a different location, different riches and people of a different character, which means it needs different defence and type of war. We should not irrationally mimic others but analyse their behaviour to find good practices and think how to use them so that we can achieve our desired result.

Does the Polish nation have means to prepare an uprising and what are they?

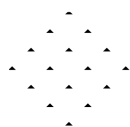
[...]

We have seen in our history that it is not the number nor a huge army that achieves victory but enthusiasm about virtue and freedom and constancy of mind. Was the defence of Warsaw, counted as one of the military miracles, possible because of the numbers or because of the quality of our army? We know that there were only sixteen thousand Poles, including scythe-bearers, (8) and forty thousand enemy soldiers. The same Frederick William who had besieged and taken the greatest fortress in Mainz could not take Warsaw without any castle and located in the plain after two months of siege. If the Poles had not weakened in their efforts, they would have held on. [...]

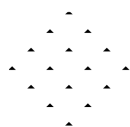
Before the first partition, Poland had sixteen million inhabitants. Before the second one, there were eight and half a million Poles. These calculations were done before 1778 by Büsching, but the number of Polish inhabitants has increased since then. Before the partitions, Austria had a population of seventeen million, Prussia – of almost three million five hundred thousand. Moscow did not have more than twenty million inhabitants in Asia and Europe, including four parts in Europe and the fifth in Asia. We should always think about Poland as a country between



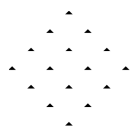
its first borders. Virtuous Poles should never stop thinking that this division is a result of immorality and hope that the ravenous wolves (as Mirabeau called the kings who have partitioned Poland) would not keep the loot in their jaws any longer. During the revolution of 1794, the Poles under the Prussian rule have nobly proven that the love for their homeland was still flowing in their veins. Does it mean that there are no Polish hearts, no great spirits that would love freedom and happiness of their brethren under the Austrian and Russian rule? Looking at the population of Poland before the first partition, the ratio of our inhabitants to our enemies is one to almost two and a half. It is much easier to look at the numbers after the partitions. Considering France from the beginning of the revolution and war, the ratio of its population to its enemies was at least one to five. (9) If we take France from the times of the War in the Vendée and the turbulence in Toulon and Lyon, the ratio could be one to ten. The American revolution was like one to eight and the Swiss one – like one to twenty, similarly to the Dutch one. Looking at the proportions, we can see that our enemies are not that numerous as pictured by our timidity. Other countries were far more outnumbered. The proportion is most probably valid for the beginning of the uprising, but the longer it lasts, the more probable it is that the size of the enemies' forces will decrease, and of the revolutionary ones – increase. We saw a similar phenomenon in France. Wouldn't a Russian peasant tormented by so many atrocities eagerly join the cause to liberate himself from his oppressors if only the circumstances allowed him? Do you think that an oppressed Cossack would not want his freedoms back? Every day Prussians realise more and more that they are not slaves to the treasury. Some enslaved provinces would happily cast off the yoke. Silesia is as Austrian as it is Prussian. Wouldn't it benefit from joining Poland? [...] Wouldn't Hungarians want to be independent? (10) It is all about weapons. At the beginning of the revolution, the Poles should not seek ways to build military columns but to destroy their enemy. Armies assemble themselves over time and with changing circumstances. Our country is open, flat and easy to enter, but – as rightly said by J.-J. Rousseau – the Poles should not focus on preventing the enemies from entering the country but on preventing them from leaving it. The key for achieving that can be found in the small war, *la petite guerre*, that is in tearing the enemy apart and limiting their access to food. This form of fight let the Parthians, whose country was similar to ours, defeated Romans, the greatest tacticians. In his work, Loyd mentions Poland and says that to defend itself it needs a lot of cavalry to nag its enemies and damage their stocks. There is no better nation in Europe able to quickly prepare cavalry than the Poles. All of us know how to ride a horse (which we learn in foreign countries) and – with a pike or broadsword – we can be all very useful for achieving our goal. For infantry, we have scythes, the best weapon one could find. Kościuszko



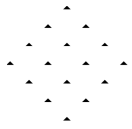
claims that – as long as its bearer demonstrates courage – there is no weapon that would resist the scythe and there is no army in Europe that could not be defeated with scythes. [...] Many contemporary military men of letters emphasise the uselessness of firearms in battles and recommend going back to pikes, just as they were used by the ancients. (11) We know that cannons miss many times before they fire a successful shot. It is difficult to successfully aim a cannon, especially during a battle, and the smallest mistake makes the shot useless. [...] All battles that have ever taken place were won with not firearms but bayonets or broadswords. But let us take ourselves as an example. Four hundred peasants with scythes were brought at night before the battle of Raclawice. It started in the morning. Kościuszko stood in front of them and said, “It’s about your freedom, follow me.” They responded immediately, attacked and – despite the grapeshot – took the cannons. No bayonet was left with the enemy – some were used to kill, others to take the remaining Russians captive. Let others also take scythes and speak common language with the people so that the scythe becomes victorious over any other weapon. (12) I want generals and officers to talk to people and soldiers and encourage them. Roman commanders would not start a fight without showing the fighters the reasons for the war and the rightness of their cause in a speech. [...] “Here are the foes who have torn your homeland apart and wanted to appropriate it. Here are those who stand against the freedom of your fathers, your brothers and your own, who do not want you to have equal rights and live like brethren but keep each others in captivity and humiliation. We want you to be free, they want you to become subjects to their kings without the right to the fruit of your labour and without the right to pass your own laws. They want you to depend on their will, on their atrocities and on their whim. [...] Here are the enemies who looted your houses, who disgraced your mothers, wives and sisters, who carried Polish children on their bayonets. Follow me, and I will lead you in your lack of experience. Let’s fight the enemy and let’s not stop until he meets death or until he lays down his arms in the face of our victory.” Those and other reasons heighten the fighters’ senses. Can the enemy say anything similar? Injustice abounds in excuses but cannot find a way to touch one’s heart. (13) The cruel Suvorov always talked to his soldiers and, although he was not right at all, kept hammering that they were the best army in Europe into their heads and reminded them about some of their victories. As a result, they were more successful under his command than under the command of other generals. The more often one is reminded about his courage, the more courageous he becomes. Otherwise, when he is despised, he loses self-confidence. Some Polish generals did not think much of the scythe-bearers. How could those people be so brave under their command? Instead of building, they weakened their confidence in weapons. In their shallow minds, those who did not know uniforms from their own country



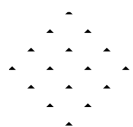
Before the first partition, Poland had sixteen million inhabitants. Before the second one, there were eight and half a million Poles. These calculations were done before 1778 by Büsching, but the number of Polish inhabitants has increased since then. Before the partitions, Austria had a population of seventeen million, Prussia – of almost three million five hundred thousand. Moscow did not have more than twenty million inhabitants in Asia and Europe, including four parts in Europe and the fifth in Asia. We should always think about Poland as a country between its first borders. Virtuous Poles should never stop thinking that this division is a result of immorality and hope that the ravenous wolves (as Mirabeau called the kings who have partitioned Poland) would not keep the loot in their jaws any longer. During the revolution of 1794, the Poles under the Prussian rule have nobly proven that the love for their homeland was still flowing in their veins. Does it mean that there are no Polish hearts, no great spirits that would love freedom and happiness of their brethren under the Austrian and Russian rule? Looking at the population of Poland before the first partition, the ratio of our inhabitants to our enemies is one to almost two and a half. It is much easier to look at the numbers after the partitions. Considering France from the beginning of the revolution and war, the ratio of its population to its enemies was at least one to five. (9) If we take France from the times of the War in the Vendée and the turbulence in Toulon and Lyon, the ratio could be one to ten. The American revolution was like one to eight and the Swiss one – like one to twenty, similarly to the Dutch one. Looking at the proportions, we can see that our enemies are not that numerous as pictured by our timidity. Other countries were far more outnumbered. The proportion is most probably valid for the beginning of the uprising, but the longer it lasts, the more probable it is that the size of the enemies' forces will decrease, and of the revolutionary ones – increase. We saw a similar phenomenon in France. Wouldn't a Russian peasant tormented by so many atrocities eagerly join the cause to liberate himself from his oppressors if only the circumstances allowed him? Do you think that an oppressed Cossack would not want his freedoms back? Every day Prussians realise more and more that they are not slaves to the treasury. Some enslaved provinces would happily cast off the yoke. Silesia is as Austrian as it is Prussian. Wouldn't it benefit from joining Poland? [...] Wouldn't Hungarians want to be independent? (10) It is all about weapons. At the beginning of the revolution, the Poles should not seek ways to build military columns but to destroy their enemy. Armies assemble themselves over time and with changing circumstances. Our country is open, flat and easy to enter, but – as rightly said by J.-J. Rousseau – the Poles should not focus on preventing the enemies from entering the country but on preventing them from leaving it. The key for achieving that can be found in the small war, *la petite guerre*, that is in tearing the enemy apart and limiting their access to food. This form of fight let the Parthians, whose country was similar to ours, defeated Romans, the greatest tacticians. In his work, Loyd mentions Poland and says that to defend itself it needs a lot of cavalry to nag its enemies and damage their stocks. There is no better nation in Europe able to quickly prepare cavalry than the Poles. All of us know how to ride a horse (which we learn in foreign countries) and – with a pike or broadsword – we can be all very useful for achieving our goal. For infantry, we have scythes, the best weapon one could find. Kościuszko claims that – as long as its bearer demonstrates courage – there is no weapon that would resist the scythe and there is no army in Europe that could not be defeated with scythes. [...] Many contemporary military men of letters emphasise the uselessness of firearms in battles and recommend going back to pikes, just as they were used by the ancients. (11) We know that cannons miss many times before they fire a successful shot. It is difficult to successfully aim a cannon, especially during a battle, and the smallest mistake makes the shot useless. [...] All battles that have ever taken place were won with not firearms but bayonets or broadswords. But let us



take ourselves as an example. Four hundred peasants with scythes were brought at night before the battle of Raclawice. It started in the morning. Kościuszko stood in front of them and said, "It's about your freedom, follow me." They responded immediately, attacked and – despite the grapeshot – took the cannons. No bayonet was left with the enemy – some were used to kill, others to take the remaining Russians captive. Let others also take scythes and speak common language with the people so that the scythe becomes victorious over any other weapon. (12) I want generals and officers to talk to people and soldiers and encourage them. Roman commanders would not start a fight without showing the fighters the reasons for the war and the rightness of their cause in a speech. [...] "Here are the foes who have torn your homeland apart and wanted to appropriate it. Here are those who stand against the freedom of your fathers, your brothers and your own, who do not want you to have equal rights and live like brethren but keep each others in captivity and humiliation. We want you to be free, they want you to become subjects to their kings without the right to the fruit of your labour and without the right to pass your own laws. They want you to depend on their will, on their atrocities and on their whim. [...] Here are the enemies who looted your houses, who disgraced your mothers, wives and sisters, who carried Polish children on their bayonets. Follow me, and I will lead you in your lack of experience. Let's fight the enemy and let's not stop until he meets death or until he lays down his arms in the face of our victory." Those and other reasons heighten the fighters' senses. Can the enemy say anything similar? Injustice abounds in excuses but cannot find a way to touch one's heart. (13) The cruel Suvorov always talked to his soldiers and, although he was not right at all, kept hammering that they were the best army in Europe into their heads and reminded them about some of their victories. As a result, they were more successful under his command than under the command of other generals. The more often one is reminded about his courage, the more courageous he becomes. Otherwise, when he is despised, he loses self-confidence. Some Polish generals did not think much of the scythe-bearers. How could those people be so brave under their command? Instead of building, they weakened their confidence in weapons. In their shallow minds, those who did not know uniforms from their own country could not fight or were without a soul. And yet it is not the type of uniform nor weapon that makes the soldier but his courage and willingness to win. [...] A commander has to spur his people to fight for freedom, but how can he do this if he does not value it in his heart? How successful can his efforts be? And if you hear words that contradict one's convictions, does honour protect you? (14) In my opinion, it is a military man's true talent that he wants to benefit from everything and can adapt to the cause for which he fights, to the genius of the nation and to the resources and situation of the country. I see a genius and an important defender of the rights of all people in Kościuszko. The Poles did not have an army or weapons, and he created a new national force, the scythe-bearers. The human mind is not limited as far as inventions are concerned. Who knows what means of support we could find if we tried? Our enemies have called our scythes dreadful. (15) The Americans did not have cannons, so they took a heap of iron, put it together and fired at their enemies from those. They did not have shotgun shells, so they put off lead from windows and used it to create them. True zeal can achieve anything, and constancy of mind will always win. Loyd says that freedom is the strongest mainspring of courage in the army. [...] The more enthusiasm for freedom the French had, the more dreadful they were for their enemies. What could the Poles achieve if they were filled with such a spirit, having inherited greater physical strength than any other nation in Europe? Which people have enjoyed as successful events fighting for their independence as we have? Others did not know if they could fight against regular soldiers, while our peasants have some experience already: they have been under fire. And in those provinces that did not take part in the uprising, they know about their brothers who have fought and drawn their scythes against cannons. The spirit of freedom has already spread across Poland and reached its



people. If someone does not see the enthusiasm they need in the beginning, they will find it over time as long as they are constant in their spirit and raise the spirit of others as well. I saw myself how peasants from Cracow resisted joining Kościuszko's camp and how they tried – even after the battle of Raclawice – to leave it, but when they realised that it was all about freedom, they stood on guard themselves and no one escaped even though they could easily hide in Galicia (there was only the Vistula separating us from those lands, and it was easy to cross the river). We could later see how they kept watch in the countryside, we could see their caution and their readiness to kill their enemies.



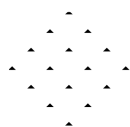
Let us now consider military manoeuvres.

If an army of several dozen or a hundred thousand soldiers wants to camp together, it will occupy three Polish miles. What can they do to revolutionaries who can move everywhere in small groups? A huge army needs huge stocks but will not maintain them if the insurgents keep disturbing them and stealing their food. If the army starts dividing itself into smaller groups in order to stop the insurgents or to buy food, the latter can cluster together and attack the enemy's groups, thus weakening, destroying and defeating them. Local people find the small war easier than their enemies. They know all crossings and tracks their foes cannot use, so they can gather, approach and attack the enemy unexpectedly and hide quickly afterwards. If we were to hide from their enemy's huge army in the Polish forests, what would the foe's artillery or shooters do? The means the locals can use to fight their enemy are unknown to its soldiers. (16) [...] Was there anything more irregular than the Bar Confederation? And yet the Russians emphasise how harmful that war was to them and compare it to a hydra, (17) whose heads – when cut off – were always replaced by new ones. Despite their power, they could not kill it for several years, and it was only the confederates' mistake that allowed them to win. The Bar Confederation was an association of nobles only, and they were still divided, with almost a half of them staying loyal to the King. Townsmen and peasants were indifferent to the conflict. Wouldn't it be certainly beneficial if the whole nation joined it unanimously? [...] The knowledge of a country is so important for fighters that Gustavus Adolphus, the first hero of his century, said that the greatest talents in the world cannot do anything great without it because the general cannot approach the enemy nor set up any ambush. (18) No army, especially a foreign one, can know a country as well as those who were born and live in it. The French conquered Europe but could not win in Vendée. The republicans have never lost more during a fight against a foreign army than in this province. Even though it was a fight between the French, the people of Vendée knew their region very well and never lost courage, which is why they could approach and surround the Republican army and thus defeat it. When the Republicans agreed to their conditions, they made peace. The Vendéans eventually lost because the people resigned from fighting together. Some claim that one cannot withstand attacks without fortresses. I think that fortresses cannot be as useful to us as forests and field fortifications can be. In a fortress, you need a large amount of food and the enemy can see you and leave a part of its army to continue the siege. Sooner or later, they will take the fortress and the people hiding inside. (19) But when armed locals are scattered across the whole country in forests and the enemy guards them in just one place, they can move to another. When enemy attacks them from the front, they can approach him from the back. [...]

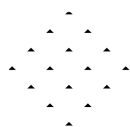


There are forests stretching for several up to even several dozen miles in some places. The enemy would need a huge army to surround one forest and certainly could not surround the largest ones. And if the whole country took part in the uprising, they could not even besiege forests as they would be attacked from all sides. We know the importance of communications between armed forces. If the whole nation participates in a revolution and we set up a large cavalry, it could operate among our foes, cut their communications and thus weaken them heavily. Each corps would be left alone without support and thus lose its strengths, becoming easier to defeat. It is impossible or at least very hard, on the other hand, to prevent communications between local people, especially in our plains. They know about all secret crossings and can exchange signals to plan and act accordingly. [...] Moving from one place to another, they do not need to carry grains, while the enemy needs to take their stocks everywhere they turn. Nature has provided us with enough wood and soil to prepare batteries and redoubts to protect ourselves from bombs (a l'épreuve des bombes), which are almost stronger than fortresses made of stone or brick. Inside, there are casemates used to store food and other goods collected according to our needs. The Americans found similar constructions very useful. They can protect from five hundred to a thousand people. Moreover, they are surrounded with trenches so that the enemy cannot climb them but has to approach them like fortresses and lay siege to them. Poles! These are your mountains and fortresses! You can make thousands of them! Such fortifications are more useful than fortresses, and you will be taught how to build them. We already have iron, grains and wood; we just need courage, boldness and constancy in our undertakings, and we will regain our independence. It is not possible that a country as vast as Poland, with a population of sixteen million people, be conquered if its inhabitants defend themselves with energy and want to liberate their state. There is no similar case in history, and such small nations as the Swiss and the Dutch gained their freedom when they wanted. [...] Let us now calculate the forces we and our enemies have.

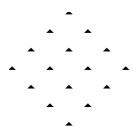
Let me consider Moscow, the Emperor and the Prussian King in a situation when they are not occupied with any war but fight just us. We know that Moscow has an army of four hundred thousand, Austria – of three hundred thousand, and Prussia – of two hundred thousand. The Russian army consists of people of different nations: Bashkirs, Kalmyks, etc., whose weaknesses are known to us. The number includes both ground and naval forces. The Poles will fight a war of opinions: wherever they manage to go, they will proclaim freedom, which is much more powerful than an army of a hundred thousand soldiers. Moscow will not dare to rely on the Cossacks's allegiance at all since they have always longed for their independence. We can see from all of the past wars led by St. Petersburg that – altogether – it has not sent more than one hundred thousand soldiers out of the country. A ruthless ruler, one that could not be born even in hell, needs many soldiers to maintain his people's obedience.



A country that occupies three million German square miles must have a huge army! If we separate Polish provinces from Moscow, the rest of the country, excluding Livonia, may seem empty and weak. When the Polish revolution begins and we manage to make the Russian people understand our rights, our freedom, equality and brotherly communion, our discipline, reliability and honesty, the court in St. Petersburg will have to double its army there to prevent an uprising. It seems that Moscow would not put more than one hundred and thirty thousand soldiers against the Poles, but I suppose it would be two hundred thousand. Austria, when it was not indebted and not lacking in people and when England paid for its support, did not send more than one hundred and fifty thousand people against the French (the rest of the soldiers were from Germany or the coalition). Since now it is tormented by misfortune, exhausted and lacking resources and England's financial support, it could not send that many soldiers into battle. Austria has vast lands; during the Polish revolution, Hungary and Silesia would seek the Emperor's protection, but despite all that, I think Austria would send one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers to Poland. The Prussian king has not gathered an army of more than eighty thousand people (even with England's support) for any battle in any war. I assume that one hundred thousand would march against us. Any country, even if it had enough soldiers, could not allow all of them to fight in a war. Sending an army into battle with all of their needs costs almost double their pay. Apart from maintaining its lands' dependence, a monarchic government needs to take other factors into consideration as well, for example that if it is defeated, it needs to rebuild the army. It is not as easy to immediately find recruits as rouse the Polish people. To move from one Russian border to another, a soldier would need half a year and to move in Prussia from the Rhine to the Polish border or in Austria from the Adriatic to Bielsk, they would need several months. In a free country and after the government's appeal, people just take their weapons and fight. In monarchies, where recruits are enlisted by force and sometimes even brought in chains, they do not quickly get used to fighting nor become soldiers ready for battle. We have one more advantage: there are Poles in the armies of all those three countries, and if they often laid down their arms before the French, escaped from them and refused to fight, we can expect that if Ukraine revolts, Ukrainians from the Russian army would join their brethren and that Cracovians will leave Austrian forces and the inhabitants of Greater Poland – the Prussian ones. Moreover, foreigners constitute one third of the Prussian army. They are just waiting for a chance to escape, and we can help them achieve it. It appears from my analysis of the forces of our enemies that we can face four hundred and fifty thousand soldiers. I am certain, however, that the enemies will not reach this number, but I prefer to exaggerate a little so that I can convince my compatriots that whatever the efforts of our partitioners are, they can never threaten us. If there are sixteen million people in Poland and if we



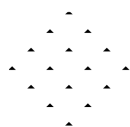
exclude women and children and basically four out of every five people, then we end up with three million two hundred thousand. Wouldn't that number defeat our foes? If a half of them even join the fight, we get one million six hundred thousand; if one third of them – one million sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six. [...] If the Poles set up a thousand posts for the uprising (the more, the better), the enemy would have to split into a thousand parts. I assume that initially we would not find many people likely to join the uprising (although we should try to convince as many as possible), but the enemy – realising our strength described above – would have to be careful everywhere and split into parts. The longer the uprising, the more insurgents. The Poles are courageous by nature, but we should not be discouraged if they do not show themselves as heroes from the very beginning. The Americans were initially running away from the Englishmen, but when they realised that not every gunshot kills and many of them do not even harm anyone, they dared to defeat their tyrants. [...] Fighting depends on one's bravery and stratagems. Having the former, the more of new and sudden stratagems we adopt, the more certain the victory is. The longer the Poles fight, the more prolific their minds are as far as traps and ambushes are concerned. As regards bravery, the Poles are second to none in Europe. I am not saying this to increase the virtues of my compatriots, but there were cases in Italy when the Polish legions proved more courageous than the brave French. All Poles are proud and happy to hear about the beautiful deeds of their compatriots, but they are miserable to realise that this bravery is not used to free their homeland from foreign violence. [...] Some may worry that the enraged enemy would set the country on fire. We have to realise, however, that – by doing so – they would just fuel our rage. An enemy sets a country on fire when they cannot stay there. Otherwise, they would leave their army to destruction. But is there no way to prevent the tragedy? In 1794, when the Prussians started persecuting the Poles, sending trembling women to the gallows and putting nooses round their necks, the National Council issued an appeal with an order that if the enemy did not stop their atrocities, the Poles should adopt a tit for tat strategy (*des représailles*) with the captured Prussians. Since that time, they had become more humane. [...] Our country does not have workshops or handicraft, and the enemy cannot destroy it because they cannot set the soil on fire or deprive it of fertility. With freedom and wise laws, it will flourish. But do we always have to keep a theatre of war in our lands? The Russian and North Prussian borders are open, Austrian Silesia is not sheltered. The Poles should go there, proclaim freedom to the local people and talk to them; each act should be a sign of morality so that we can win their hearts and achieve numerous benefits. Our foes would have more enemies but lower stocks. They would have to leave Poland or reduce their army to protect their country. After the Battle of Maciejowice, the Prussians had Cracow and



Sandomierz Provinces reaching as far as the Vistula River and yet – when the fighters of the Greater Poland uprising reached Silesia – the Prussians suddenly left both provinces to protect the region, where a lot of handicraft work could be devastated and where the people always grumble about the Prussian yoke. In his journal, Dumouriez describes how he wanted to move the war from Poland to Russia in the times of the Bar Confederation. It are indeed many ways to do so. [...] Every nation will heartily welcome freedom because it is a source of their heart and happiness. We should not look at foreign examples in this case. Those who promised to bring freedom have always been awaited everywhere. But when lack of discipline, debauchery and crime spread in armies, people had to take up arms to fight against the oppression. Let us make sure that every Polish act is based on morality, that we are not only far from the debauchery seen in other armies but also driven by humanity. Let discipline block the path to crime, and nations will respect us, join us and support us with their forces to achieve victory sooner.

Poles! Do not wait for favourable circumstances, do not rely on others' wars or on peace. You have a lot of strength – use it against the enemy, and you will win. Every moment is favourable for freedom and justice, and with them come new circumstances created by courageous men. The Swiss, the Dutch or the Americans did not care whether their foes were at war with someone else and they did not seek external support. They were spurred on to opposing violence and fought hard, and soon foreign support came by itself. In order to weaken Spain, England and France finally offered help to the Dutch. After three years of the American war, France and Spain signed a treaty with the Americans in order to humiliate England. If our efforts are constant, we will find countries among the European powers that will readily establish relations with us. [...]

Poles! You can call yourselves so lucky! You possess heavenly gifts (which others lack) that let you become a free, respected and flourishing nation without foreign aid. Dare to use them and maintain constancy of mind, and the end will crown your efforts. The Swiss managed to gain their independence on barren soil and rocks with almost no food. If you are insensitive to your dishonour, to the injustice brought about to your nation and to human rights and if you keep cherishing your yoke, I will bitterly admit with despair and contempt, "Nation, you are born to bondage!". "Gens ad servitutem nata".

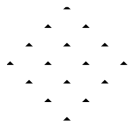


[...]

I have mentioned already to prepare numerous posts and start occupying them during one day. The enemy will not be able to conquer them. The more insurgents there are, the fewer die. If you openly and wholeheartedly promote freedom and equality, people will join you and stay with you. You need order, obedience and thus also a political system and temporary government. But there is one organisation ready. I would like us to follow the course of the revolution of 1794 but with some amendments. The trust in the virtues of our general, Kościuszko, was a good thing. We could see how it helped us avoid disagreements, cut our arrogance and overcome divisions. It seems that the Poles cultivated their virtues solely following his example. Despite being possessive about their freedom, the Romans turned to Dictatorship for help in the face of every danger or war, and this is the measure that saved them. I would like the command to last until our enemies are expelled from our country. But I would not like the office to be necessarily permanent. After the death of one, let the government control the army. If later the nation sees the need for an individual's command and finds a person worthy of the position, they could establish such an office. I would like us to improve the organisation of the National Council and separate legislative activities and roles from the executive ones. We could name it the Congress. Candidates for all offices should be appointed anew. The Congress would have to stay in the main camp.

Since the rights of freedom and equality allow all people to serve their country on equal terms, I would like us to appoint people from all estates to all municipalities in order to unite the whole nation and develop trust in the revolution.

I do not recommend, however, to act rashly and foolhardily. We should first check most of the Provinces and make sure that we have well-known and wise people with character able to lead others. The most difficult thing for the Poles is to keep a secret and make sure that each member serves the true interests of the nation. For power or riches, people can hide behind different masks they cast off later in front of our enemies. We need to think about a system and the kind of people we can trust. We may have friends that follow the rules but cannot keep any secret. Their twittering can be more dangerous and harmful than open hostility. As regards satisfying various needs, the right organisation, discipline, stocks, food supplies and efficient communication, so that everyone knows what has to be done in different circumstances, it is only general concern for the common good that can assure those issues are taken care of, as well as hard-working people's belief that we cannot do anything without equal freedoms for everyone, without order and the virtues typical of the republicans. It is important that every Pole is given what they need to ensure freedom and independence for the nation. It is not enough to encourage others. Everyone needs a heroic soul to act in the interest of mankind.

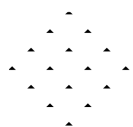


The moral condition of the Poles

[...]

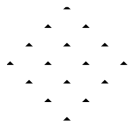
Some claim that a nation should be enlightened first before it is granted freedom. I think quite the opposite. If you want to enlighten a nation, you should first free its people. Do we know about many nations whose people could not read but were free? Freedom is not a science but a moral need. It is as beneficial for man's happiness as fresh air is for his health. Legislation needs a lot of knowledge, and only a small part of each nation specialise in it. Is so-called petty nobility much more enlightened than peasants? And yet it lives freely. It is also said that the French were enlightened. How was that possible if there was no one who would educate them before the revolution, and a half of France speaks a language that is as different from French as Samogitian is from Polish? Even today there are many people in offices in different cantons that cannot read or write. I believe that a Polish peasant is more reasonable than a French one and would never believe the superstitions for which the peasants from Vendée fought. Those people were convinced that someone who fights in the name of fanaticism will be resurrected after three days, and they believed in the Resurrection. People become enlightened when they see a need for it and possible benefits. The Englishmen started to enlighten themselves because of freedom. Before the revolution, ordinary Frenchmen were not into public affairs, (20) but when they gained the right of legislative initiative, they started learning the law and considering their nation's interests.

J.-J. Rousseau described people's rights, eloquent Mirabeau encouraged the French to regain them, and yet so many are still uneducated! As soon as the light came to Poland, people accepted it, which is seen in the open minds of our compatriots. There is no reasonable Pole that would not laugh at the political superstitions of the kingdom and the nobility. Everyone knows that those people do not have privileged minds, so why do they usurp the right to rule nations without the latter's will? If it were not for the blindness of the monarchic armies that kill whoever they are ordered to kill by the one who pays, (21) who would not be ashamed of being ruled by such mindless people as some European kings? The Poles have realised that and reject the political charlatanry that used to oppress people and be an affront for justice and reason. If only we had courage in our acts, constancy in our minds and virtue in our behaviour, we could be one of the most highly esteemed nations.



The state of the Polish wealth

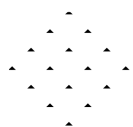
I reckon it would be difficult to find a Pole with such a mean soul that he would flinch at the thought of sacrificing a part of his wealth to liberate the nation. I would not even describe future benefits and past sacrifices to such despicable minds but only show them the example of those who served foreign courts by betraying their country. Apart from being rightly cursed by their compatriots, what did they gain from the monarchs? Humiliated, they are only terrified of their rulers. If they had served the nation, their compatriots' and enemies' respect would have accompanied them everywhere they would go. Instead, they have just become an object of contempt for those to whom they made sacrifices by betraying their own homeland. All nations famous for their riches both in the past and in recent times have always gained their wealth by means of freedom. How did Carthage, Florence, Venice, the Netherlands and England reach their prosperity? A man cannot have confidence in the industry, the biggest source of wealth, if he is not confident about freedom. [...] The Poles have everything they need for a war and can do without foreign products and without foreign support. They can live comfortable lives without any external trade. Our country is rich in grains, wool, wood, iron, horses, etc. We can have plenty of money because money can be made of not only silver or gold but any metal or even paper, as long as people trust in it. England, the richest country in Europe, has over six times more money in paper than in metal. Paper will have its value as long as the government does not deviate from the course of reliability and always keeps their pledge. The value of the English paper money is maintained because of their handicraft. In our case, it will be maintained through cereals and wood, which are more durable. (22) There is no other country that would have as much resources to guarantee the value of their notes as Poland. Our country has unchanging national goods and no debts. [...] During the revolution, we need to make sacrifices and be content with little if we want freedom, and afterwards we will enjoy benefits worth millions. Sacrifice to the revolution can be compared to expenditures made in order to raise crop on fertile soil. We have the most fortunate country and many navigable rivers with some obstacles that could be removed to make the waterways useful. If we dig new canals, we could gain connections and thus trade routes between almost all provinces in whole Poland. With their freedom, the Dutch constructed banks along the sea, and the Swiss turned rocks into fertile fields. Americans doubled their population in twenty years (which takes as long as five hundred years in other countries, according to Smith). What couldn't we achieve with such a fortunate land?



CONCLUSION

POLES! I have showed you the ways to independence. I do not want to inspire noble despair in you (you have already given proof thereof), but I am encouraging you to win when you rush at your enemies with bravery. You have everything you need to win. You just have to dare to do it. If you keep fighting bravely together, the enemy – even if they outnumber you like they do now – will not be able to defeat you. But if you do not try to cast off the yoke, you should not complain about your fate because you yourselves are the authors of your misery. I consider it right that those who are indifferent to crushed justice and oppressed mankind rot in captivity... But which Pole will be attached to a life pervaded with meanness? Won't you rather unite with those who – after the wounds they have received and the agony they have suffered in royal prisons – trustfully sacrifice the rest of their blood to liberating their homeland? How noble are all the efforts aimed at trampling the hydra of tyranny and restoring the altars of sacred freedom! I can feel my heart tremble in joy at the very thought of this! It is so pleasant to see the victorious faces of free people who embody the greatest virtue! Fortunate are those who are members of such a nation! It is an honour that raises spirits... And being aware that I have contributed to casting off the chains of my compatriots and to providing them with sweet rights and freedoms is a bliss, even despite the persecution! As noted by Montesquieu, every man is capable of doing good to others, but to contribute to the happiness of an ENTIRE SOCIETY is to become akin to the GODS.*

(*) Letres persannes, Vol. t. N. 89

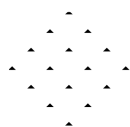


NOTES

(1) It appears from the papers taken from the Russian delegation during the revolution of 1794 that even the king himself did not flinch from taking money from the Russians.

(2) The Poles have never thought about the resources they have and how they could be used or multiplied. When someone wanted to establish a confederation, they always looked for protection and a court to give them money and satisfy their needs. The rest was acquired through contributions. If they did not succeed, the court would make sure they were granted amnesty for everything they had done. In such cases, the weaker returned home with a horse and poverty and magnates returned home with money from courts or even with whole counties. This long-established habit has not changed to this day. Polish nobles do not ask how they could liberate their country but analyse where they could find support and which power is Poland's ally. I believe the poor have deep and virtuous attachment to their country and sacrifice their lives and a lot of their wealth to it. Unaccustomed to political swindles, they do not ask about foreign relations but about their duties and how to liberate the country. There are spoiled ones, however, who do not take any steps if there are no favours from the Russian, German or Austrian rulers or if there are no millions from the French. Great Czarnecki! You did not tour foreign courts and countries to beg for help! The misfortune of your compatriots spurred you to action. You revived their enthusiasm, your attachment to your country was a source of solemnity and you have freed your homeland from the flood of its enemies. Virtuous Kościuszko! You did not ask other powers for anything when you rushed alone to save your compatriots from captivity. You found treasures, courage and weapons in a nation despised by others. It was just fate, misfortune itself that stopped you from finishing your great work. But your genius will support the leaning homeland, and Polish people will happily cover the scars you bear after defending freedom with a wreath of gratitude. It is necessary that those Poles who look for external support know that without hearts, minds and souls, others' help is worth nothing.

(3) Poles are mistaken when they think that the French are in general so enlightened that everyone there can be an officer and has all the required knowledge. This shortage is seen in the army, and French generals admit that Polish officers are better than their own. We should notice our mistakes but also respect ourselves and do ourselves justice when we deserve it. There is the same disproportion among French people as in other nations.



(4) What a shame for the Poles! It seems that they have not fought for freedom but for the interest of an individual and that they have lost their spirits after the defeat near Maciejowice. If the Romans had sunk into despair after the Battle of Cannae, Rome would have been devastated under the yoke of Carthage. But their bravery exceeded all their misfortunes. Instead of accusing the commanders who lost the fight, they sent senators to those returning from the battle to thank them for coming back to their country and not doubting its integrity. They put the lands where the Carthaginian camp was located on sale. Thanks to such a great character, the Romans defeated their enemies without the need for education. It was a miracle of one city ruling the whole world. Poles! Be magnanimous and brave in any misfortune, and you will defeat your tyrants!

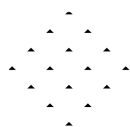
(5) The American revolution began in 1775. The country has allied with France in three years. In 1778, a treaty was signed, and the French forces moved to the American states. It was already after the victory over Bourguignon, when the general had been forced to lay down arms together with twelve thousand Englishmen. The Americans had been almost certain about their independence already then.

(6) Those who read the Monitor at that time could see that there was such a huge number of Frenchmen marching to Champagne that generals would appeal to the convention to stop them as there was no need for such an army. The Prussian king had to surrender, and the French did him almost a favour by allowing him to retreat. It was freedom itself that aroused the enthusiasm and united all the people. There is no other trace in the French history of people gathering with such eagerness when their enemy entered their country.

(7) One can read about it everywhere, even in the campaigns of Suvorov.

(8) The data is not a guess: it is based on reports. The soldiers located along the Narew bank towards Grodno and the army near Warsaw included 28,000 people, 16,000 of whom defended the city and 11,000 stretched along the river.

(9) I did not take into account other English, Spanish and Portuguese people than those living in Europe. If we added other settlements to the enemies of France (just as the people of Asian Russia are calculated in relation to Poland), then we could speak of at least one to fifteen. The people of the English, Portuguese and Spanish settlements and India did not indeed fight against the French, but the resources and riches of those lands were certainly helpful for the French enemies.

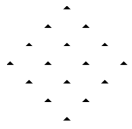


(10) The electricity of freedom always reaches neighbouring countries faster since they have a greater possibility of seeing its benefits. Nobody thought about the Cisalpine or Roman Republics or the changes in Switzerland or the Netherlands at the beginning of the French Revolution. Our enemies try to prevent the introduction of freedom to Poland by every possible means because its beautiful example could be most harmful for their thrones.

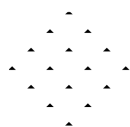
(11) Folard shows the superiority of pikes and similar old weapons over rifles. Loyd, one of the most reasonable military writers, takes a similar view and advises to set at least one row of spears in the infantry. Some claim that the rifle is even more useless as there are only three hits per a hundred shots. In the beginning, firearms can be quite useful, but when the soldiers mingle together, shooting has to stop.

(12) If someone tells me that the enemy often beat scythe-bearers, I will reply that they also beat brave Frenchmen with their cannons, rifles and bayonets. Wars are ruled mainly by coincidence: luck alternates with misfortune, and – as in the case of all human acts – there can be many mistakes. It all comes down to the benefits of the weapons that bring victories. In the case of the French, it is the bayonet. In our case, it could and can be the scythe.

(13) Loyd emphasises that there are three most important factors that help soldiers muster up courage: freedom, religion and robbery. He praises the first the most. It is freedom that makes people display miraculous heroism. Three hundred Spartans stopped the numerous Persian army at the Battle of Thermopylae. Eight hundred Swiss fighters defeated thirty thousand Frenchmen. Religion or rather fanaticism rouses minds and makes people think that they serve God by fighting for Him or that rather God needs their weapons and so they rush headlong into danger. But there is a difference between the courage of freedom and that of fanaticism: the former raises one's spirit and fills their heart with the most pleasant feelings, intensifying all strengths and virtues of their mind. Admittedly, fanaticism strengthens the spirit as well, but it also makes people blind and prevents them from thinking, which is why it will never equal the heroism of freedom. Freedom is like a part of the nature's heritage, it is something pleasant and inherent to everyone. Fighting and aiming for freedom is a virtue. Since fanaticism is a product of imagination, all related feelings are works of art. Fanatics do not want to win but to kill the enemy, which is why they often recklessly put themselves in danger. But fanaticism has some germ of independence and freedom in itself. People want to believe in whatever they choose; it is only the mind that can disarm them. One cannot declare a religious war against Poland since we have fortunately never persecuted anyone for their beliefs. In this respect, the government should follow heaven, which grants every religion with salutary dew. There were times when people killed each other for gods they had created themselves; today, Europe is convinced that the God of nature does not need creatures that cannot grasp His being to shed blood for Him. He only gives them benefits. No power can use religious war against Poland, and Moscow indeed violated conscience. Finally, priests of all religions in Poland know too much about the injustice, deceit and violence of kings to fall into their traps. The third factor, robbery, is very dangerous. Soldiers abandon discipline, get used to misdeeds, lose heroism and either waste their loot on debauchery and thus destroy their own bravery or hide it and avoid fighting so that the enemy cannot take anything from them or that there finally comes the time when they can use what they have taken. The Poles and their army should always be an example of morality. Unaware of all those ways of encouraging



people to fight or unable to use them under the yoke of monarchy, Montecuccoli resorts to drinks and other bland means: See Vol. 11, p. 34. I will not even describe their obvious insignificance.



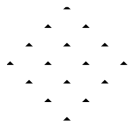
(14) Let me consider political opinions like religious ones during the war between the Protestants and the Catholics. Could a Catholic serving in a Protestant army want revenge on other Catholics? I would rather not accept anyone who is not deeply attached to the idea of freedom. Its rules were initially constantly inculcated into the French army by its officers. Generals reminded about them in every appeal. Clearly, despite their knowledge, none of the French generals of the old government covered themselves with glory during the revolution. The most famous French generals achieved so much thanks to freedom, even though they were almost uneducated. I respect education, but it is nature that turns someone into a general. Charlemagne could not write, and yet he managed to conquer Europe. In his work on the Prussian monarchy, Mirbeau describes the Secretary of the Duke of Brunswick, who prepared all plans for the Duke in spite of never being in the army himself. Since some of our generals were attached to kings, they opposed everything proposed by the revolution. Instead of developing trust in the scythe as a weapon, instead of encouraging people, they despised both the weapon and the people. Generals' constant silence made people uncertain. As they never ensured or even mentioned freedom, the soldiers could think it was just an empty promise. Failure to promote freedom could be seen even in civilian municipalities, which is why we could not and still cannot defeat our enemies. I remember what one peasant told me when I told him about the goal of the revolution, "If it is really true, I won't eat. I will give food to the soldiers and go fight myself." I can also quote the words of a Lithuanian peasant uttered to one republican general: "show us freedom, and we will not count on the fifth one of us or the recruit but join the fight ourselves." Such people cannot be defeated.

(15) "L'usage de cette armée terrible était de l'invention de Kościuszko." *Campagnes de Suworow*, vol. II, p. 154.

(16) I do not claim that we should immediately attack the enemy, especially the most numerous one, and die without thinking at all. Quite the opposite, we should protect ourselves so that we do not lose people in vain but use them wisely to harm the enemy. Local people should see to it that there are fighters everywhere around the enemy: at their front, at their back and at their sides. They should pester them and take them by assault at the right moment, especially at night. Our victory depends precisely on us being patient and numerous.

(17) "C'était la tête de l'hydre que ces Polonois, il se reproduisaient par-tout." *Campagnes de Suwarów*, vol. I, p. 60.

(18) "Car sans le secours des ceux qui en sont et qui en connoissent les détours et les endroits, qui peuvent servir à la ruse et à l'artifice, disoit le grand Gustave, le plus grand capitaine du monde, n'exécuteroit jamais rien de fort éclatant." Folard, *Histoire de Polybe*. Préf. Vol. I. p. 38.



(19) People in Italy barred themselves in defensive cities and – if they did not have a secret place to leave – they were always taken.

(20) The French before the revolution did not count on one paper. There were a hundred and fifty papers in 1797 in France, apart from the department ones. Forty thousand copies came out every day in Paris.

(21) The profession of a soldier in a free nation, who sacrifices their lives to defend their compatriots, is praiseworthy. But how despicable is someone who blindly harms and kills others and – if only ordered by the monarch – is able to trample on the natural laws for a ruler who always wishes for his will to become law and his whim to turn into solemnity and who always wants people as docile as those beasts that calmly allow others to drive them to slaughter...! A ruler's order is more important for a monarchical soldier than justice! They treat him as the source of the greatest wisdom. Even if he acts against common sense, they are ready to profane the most sacred laws of nature for him. Is there anything more despicable?

(22) Revolution is possible in Poland even with poor taxes and without drawing from private property. Our great national goods gives us enough resources to both fight a war and award the defenders of our homeland. Moreover, our economy and the good intentions of the Polish army guarantee success in fiscal regulations. Polish soldiers were also republicans. They did not seek splendour like monarch's servants but considered all clothes as decent ones and sought glory only in acts of virtue and bravery. We could see some people sacrifice their wealth if needed. No one would grumble if they had to suffer for a moment.