

Kosciusko-Clowiek Idei, Mowa 18. Wrzesnia, Krakowske Predm.66

Dear Minister Anna Maria Anders,
Excellencies, Friends of Kosciusko

In

May and June 1815, after intervening desperately for the last time at the Vienna Congress on Poland's behalf, Kosciusko wrote a letter to Count Czartoryski including the following words:

"Being unable to serve meaningfully to my homeland, I will refuge myself to Switzerland."

About the same time he explained in a letter to President Thomas Jefferson, who had offered him Asylum in the US, that he wanted to remain not too far from his country, in order to, if solicited, be able to advise friends and compatriots.

Why did K choose Switzerland among all the countries in Europe? The Answer is simple: **Because Switzerland was an island of Republicanism in a reactionary Europe.**

His choice, in other words, was a last gesture of Rebellion.

Instead to be a Governor or Minister subordinate to the Tzar, he chose the destiny of a refugee, living in a small house with the befriended Zeltner Family in the Canton of Solothurn.

So did K, who's energy and determination to work and fight for a better political and social System was extraordinary, retire and become a private Citizen?

Those who know him know the answer.

Although K abandoned the immediate politics of the day or of his times, he replaced these political and diplomatic efforts by **engaging himself hence forcefully for the long term evolution of the society.**

Ks Passion and Idealism did not subside in his Swiss Refuge, it transformed itself. Instead of demanding liberty and equality for all at once, and pushing for it by political or military action, he worked for the same goals by supporting powerfully w the Education of the Masses. **He replaced the sword with the pen.** On his "new battle field", Kosciusko remembered the impact on him as a soldier and as a citizen of his studies at the School of Knights in Warsaw. In emotional and elaborated letters he urged Thomas Jefferson to build the US Society around schools. He was the founding father of the West Point

Academy, but he insisted for more and called for academic military Schools in each and every US State.

Based in Switzerland, Kosciusko worked hard on his Knowledge of Pedagogics. He was particularly captivated by two extraordinary Swiss Pedagogues:

The first was **Phillip von Fellenberg**, a Bernese Aristocrat turning Liberal, who himself shocked by the restoration of feudalism and authoritarian rule in Europe, invested his life and family fortune in creating an **Modell Agricultural Vocational School** as well as other Educational Facilities such as a Teachers College or Schools for neglected children.

The Second Swiss whose teachings K studied and supported was **Heinrich Pestalozzi**, the revolutionary Swiss Pedagogue.

Both men were convinced that the **only way to more freedom and equality for humans went through humanist education**. Only the education of the masses could force the abolishment of the privileges of the few but also avoid anarchy, if the masses took over, as it had happened in the French Revolution.

Pestalozzi and Kosciuszko were thus clear voices of moderation and evolution in a time when most people on the continent wanted either reaction or revolution.

Although K never sought a teaching mandate at any of the institutions, he did engage in pedagogical work with the children of his host family, the Zeltners. He particularly “adopted” one of the children, 18 year old Emily Zeltner whom he instructed in history and geography and who in Ks Testament but also heart had found a particular place.

Dear Friends, how could we characterize Ks Weltanschauung in the last two years of his life spent in Switzerland?

My best guess is, that **the hero of two continents** and hero of the oppressed on both continents, has **metamorphosed from a leading Soldier and impatient Social and Political Leader into a Philosopher and Pedagogue**, focusing his thoughts and efforts on Education, as the only and irresistible method to get rid of the Chains in which Europeans found themselves again, only 26 years after the French revolution. (Thank you)

