

Piotr Hapanowicz



TADEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO (1746–1817).
FRIEND OF FREEDOM

with an Introduction by Piotr Dobosz



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Kraków 2024

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Portrait of Tadeusz Kościusko, painted by Karl Gottlieb Schweikart, after 1802,
National Museum in Warsaw

Design for hospital buildings at West Point, by Tadeusz Kościusko,
Alexander McDougall papers, The New York Historical Society, 1779–1782

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Dear Readers,

The Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow, established by the Senate of the Free City of Kraków in 1820 and operating to the present day in the modern legal form of the Kościuszko Museum cultural and organisational structure, presents to you this new publication on the life and works of Tadeusz Kościuszko, national hero of several nations including the Poles, the Americans, and the French, a historical figure whose memory is cultivated and honoured on many continents around the world.

This book was written by Dr Piotr Hapanowicz, author of numerous publications about Kościuszko, distinguished museum curator, and long-standing member of the Kościuszko Mound Committee w Krakow.

“Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746–1817). Friend of Freedom” covers the basic which illustrate this outstanding personage in many contexts. The author eloquently presents first a narrative of the life and activities of Kościuszko, followed by a calendar of events in his life, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions about this remarkable person.

In further sections of the book, we explore the respect with which Tadeusz Kościuszko has been viewed not only by his contemporaries, but also in much later times. Thomas Jefferson, friend of Kościuszko and President of the United States of America, so expressively said of him: “He is as pure a son of liberty, as I have ever known, and of that liberty which is to go to all.” That opinion is of a timeless and universal nature. Kościuszko, expressing the idea of liberty in its fullest form throughout his entire life, was a paragon of courage and steadfastness. For how else can one assess, as one of many examples, his gesture of freeing the slaves given to him and providing for plans for their security, including basic education? Kościuszko was not merely a man of courage, a man of liberty, but also a visionary who perceived the need to materialise for every person freedoms which

are for us today so obvious and accessible that we sometimes take them for granted.

Tadeusz Kościuszko is also presented here from the military perspective, as one who experienced successes and failures. These latter in no way diminish the skill of Kościuszko, his bravery, or his martial ingenuity. He appears to us as an exceptional engineer, organiser, soldier, leader, and statesman. But he is also a man “of flesh and blood”, and this side, the side shown in terms of human doubts, dreams, and the daily reality of existence, is also shown in this publication.

The book additionally includes an analysis of what we call the legacy of Tadeusz Kościuszko, a legacy written with a capital “L”. This legacy has both a material and intangible nature, which ultimately leads us to reflections on how much, for how long, and how universally we owe to the genius of Kościuszko, a man whose legacy “belongs to the entire world.” The Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow, as caretaker of the Kościuszko Mound, which is not only a historic structure but also a memorial to history, evokes the memory of this great Pole, drawing attention to history while also adding a contemporary accent.

The final section of the book includes a selected bibliography of works on Kościuszko.

On behalf of the Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow and the Kościuszko Museum, I thank all readers of this book for their memory of the great Pole and Citizen of the Free World, General Tadeusz Kościuszko.



Prof. Dr hab. Piotr Dobosz
12th President of the
Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow
established in 1820
by the Senate of the Free City of Kraków

Kraków, 7 October 2024

MOTTO

*Liberty is the sweetest of rights,
which a man can savour on this earth [...]*

TADEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO, *Address to the Nation*,
from the encampment at Mokotów, 24 September 1794r.

Introduction

[Kościuszko] He is as pure a son of liberty, as I have ever known, and of that liberty which is to go to all.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746–1817) is a national hero of Poland and warrior for the freedom of the United States of America, honorary citizen of revolutionary era France, and one of the most recognisable Poles in Poland and around the world. The times of his life were not only an exceptionally difficult and tempestuous period for the history of the Polish state, but also for the history of Europe and North America, bearing witness to events such as the establishment of the USA, the French Revolution, and the fall of the *ancien régime* in Western Europe, the Napoleonic era, and the Congress of Vienna.

Kościuszko was born into a noble family from the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which before the reign of the Jagiellon dynasty had been joined to the Kingdom of Poland first through a personal union and then from 1569 through a real union. In Kościuszko's era, this once-mighty European state, known as the Commonwealth of Two Nations, was undergoing a profound crisis. The 18th century had fully revealed the internal weaknesses of the Commonwealth; anarchy, the lack of an army, economic stagnation, and a political impasse. At the same time, the country's nearest neighbours, Russia, Austria and Prussia, had grown into European political and military great powers which frequently interfered with the internal affairs of the Commonwealth. In 1772, these three conducted the First Partition of Poland. The Commonwealth, which had before the partition covered an area of roughly 732,000 km², lost nearly one third of its territory. Attempts to reform the state undertaken by the Four-Year Sejm (1788–1792) were reflected in the adoption of the Government Act of May 3, 1791, one of the first written constitutions

in the world. However, as a result of the armed intervention of Russian forces, the administrative and military reform of the Polish state was never implemented. In January 1793, Russia and Prussia conducted the Second Partition of Poland. An attempt to preserve state sovereignty was made in the form of an armed uprising led by General Kościuszko which began on 24 March 1794 in Kraków. The insurrectionists bravely fought for eight months with the superior Russian and Prussian forces. The uprising was crushed. The result of its failure was the Third Partition of Poland, conducted in 1795 by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and the elimination of the Polish state from the map for the next 123 years.



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko in armour, unknown author, late 18th century, National Museum in Krakow

Kościuszko in the opinion of others

*He is as pure a son of liberty, as I have ever known, and of that liberty
which is to go to all.*

THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743–1826),
President of the United States of America.

Kościuszko is the only pure republican I ever knew. He is without dross.

HORATIO GATES (1727–1806),
American general.

*What besides greatly distinguished him was an unparalleled modesty and
entire unconsciousness of having done anything extraordinary.*

NATHANAEL GREENE (1742–1786),
American general.

*Kościuszko [...] as an excellent officer and engineer, was fearless but always
calm in his daring. [...] He was a passionate lover of liberty and national
independence.*

JAN URSYN NIEMCEWICZ (1757–1841),
Polish writer.

*He is animated only by a love for his Homeland, no other passions have
authority over him, his integrity is irrefutable.*

JÓZEF MAKSYMILIAN OSSOLIŃSKI (1748–1826),
Polish cultural activist.

*This general was highly useful not only due to his valour,
but in particular due to his prudence.*

PRINCE JÓZEF PONIATOWSKI (1763–1813),
Polish leader, Marshal of France.

*[...] the rebel Kościuszko, having incited Poland to rebellion, hopes through
his contacts with the monsters ruling France to sow
rebellion everywhere to spite Russia.*

KATARZYNA II (1729–1796),
Tsarina of Russia.

*I beg you to be assured that no one has a higher respect and veneration for
your character than I have [...].*

GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732–1799),
President of the United States of America.

Kościuszko, martyr of liberty, is no more [...].

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON (1773–1841),
President of the United States of America.

*Kościuszko] became one of the undying heroes of humanity.
Why? For his name is Poland.*

SZYMON ASKENAZY (1865–1935),
Polish historian.

Calendar of events in the life of Tadeusz Kościuszko

4 February 1746

Probable birthdate of Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura in Merczowszczyzna.

1755–1760

Primary studies at the Piarist College in Lubieszów.

1765–1769

Further studies at the Corp of Cadets in Warsaw, also known as the School of Chivalry, and subsequently at the Engineering School of the Corp of Cadets (École de Génie).



Kościuszko family manor in Merczowszczyzna, painted by Michał Kulesza, before 1863, National Museum in Krakow

20 December 1766

Receives his officer's commission at the Corp of Cadets.

1769–1774

Royal scholarship in France.

5 August 1772

Russia, Prussia and Austria conduct the First Partition of Poland.

1776–1783

Kościuszko participates in the American War of Independence.

18 October 1776

Nomination for the position of military engineer with the rank of colonel in the American army.

Before 19 September 1777

Fortification of Bemis Heights near Saratoga by Kościuszko in order to halt the advance of the British army.

17 October 1777

Capitulation of the British army at Saratoga. The first significant success of the Americans in the war of independence.

1778–1780

Fortification of West Point on the Hudson River by Kościuszko.

1780–1782

Kościuszko – chief engineer of the Southern Army commanded by Gen. Nathanael Greene.

13 October 1783

Nomination to Brigadier General of the Continental Army, acceptance into the elite Order of the Cincinnati.



George Washington awards Kościuszko with the Order of the Cincinnati, painted by Michał Stachowicz, 1818, National Museum in Krakow

12 October 1789

King of Poland Stanisław August Poniatowski nominates Kościuszko for the post of Major General of the Royal Army.

May–July 1792

Kościuszko participates in the war against Russia in defence of the Constitution of 3 May.

18 July 1792

Takes part in the Battle of Dubienka.

26 August 1792

The French Legislative Assembly grants Kościuszko the title of honorary citizen of France.

23 January 1793

Russia and Prussia conduct the Second Partition of Poland.



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko, painted by Kazimierz Wojniakowski, 1794, Poznań Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences, National Museum in Poznań

24 March 1794

Outbreak of the armed insurrection in defence of the independence and sovereignty of Poland. Kościuszko takes a ceremonial oath on the Old Market Square of Kraków as the Supreme Commander of the National Armed Forces.

4 April 1794

The battle of the insurrectionists against the Russians at Raclawice. Kościuszko's army is victorious.

7 May 1794

Kościuszko issues the Proclamation of Połaniec near the town of the same name concerning peasants' rights, granting the peasants personal freedom and restricting serfdom.

July–September 1794

Siege of Warsaw by the Prussian and Russian armies. Kościuszko skillfully defends the capital of Poland.

10 October 1794

Defeat of the insurrectionist army at the Battle of Maciejowice. The seriously injured Kościuszko is taken prisoner.

October 1794 – November 1796

Kościuszko is a Russian captive.

24 October 1795

The treaty establishing partition of Poland between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Poland ceases to exist as a state for 123 years.

26–27 November 1796

Release of Kościuszko by Tsar Paul I.

August 1797 – June 1798

Kościuszko's second sojourn in the USA.

before 5 May 1798

Kościuszko draws up a document with all the characteristics of a last will and testament, leaving his American fortune for the purchase of freedom for black slaves and for their appropriate education.

1798–1815

Residence in France.

9 November 1799

General Bonaparte's 18 Brumaire Coup in Paris. Kościuszko considers Bonaparte to be a usurper sounding the death-knell of the French Revolution.

August–September 1800

At Kościuszko's initiative, an anonymous brochure penned by Józef Pawlikowski entitled "*Can the Poles achieve independence?*" is published in Paris.

22 July 1807

Napoleon grants a constitution to the Duchy of Warsaw.

22 June 1812

Napoleon announces the "second Polish war" against Russia and leads the Grande Armée into Russian territory.

early March 1814

Beginning of the offensive by the armies of the anti-French coalition culminating in the abdication of Napoleon as emperor (6 April).

9 April 1814

Kościuszko writes a letter to Tsar Alexander I imploring for an amnesty for Poles, and for the Tsar to occupy the Polish throne and introduce a constitutional monarchy on the English model.

April 1814

Kościuszko meets with Alexander I in Paris to discuss Polish affairs. During the meeting, he obtains promises from the Tsar on the rebirth of Poland.

September 1814

The Congress of Vienna begins.



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko in advanced age, painted by Stefan Kozakiewicz, 1867, Kościuszko Mound Committee in Kraków

1 March 1815

Napoleon's return from Elba, beginning the 100 Days of his return to power ending with defeat at Waterloo on 18 June and his second abdication.

27 May 1815

Kościuszko meets with Alexander I in Braunau am Inn.

9 June

By an act of the Congress of Vienna the rump state of the Congress Kingdom of Poland is created..

2 April 1817

Kościuszko settles in Solothurn, Switzerland.

15 October 1817

Kościuszko draws up his will, granting his peasants in Siechnowicze personal freedom and the right to own the property and farms they occupy.

15 października 1817

Around 10 p.m., Kościuszko dies in Solothurn in the presence of the Zeltner family, aged 71.

17 October 1817

Kościuszko's internal organs are interred at Zuchwil.

19 October 1817

His remains are deposited at the Jesuit church in Solothurn.

24 March–11 April 1818

A coffin with his remains is transported from Solothurn to Kraków.

23 June 1818

His coffin is laid to rest in the Royal Crypt of the St. Leonard at Wawel Cathedral.

1820–1823

The monumental Kościuszko Mound is raised in Kraków by Poles.

15 October 1927

An urn containing Kościuszko's heart is placed in the chapel of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

Kościuszko the soldier

*Thy lotted people and extinguish'd name,
Thy sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear – Kosciuszko!*

(LORD GEORGE BYRON)

As a young man born into the times of the greatest downfall of the Polish state, Kościuszko acquired a sound general education. He attended the newly established School of Chivalry in Warsaw (1765–1769). The statutory task of this institution was to prepare noble youth both for military service and for public service, educating them in a spirit of love and dedication for the country, inculcating civic virtues and a patriotic spirit.

Kościuszko was particularly interested in military engineering. It was this field that became his specialisation and in time it was here that he achieved his greatest successes in his difficult and complicated military career. He expanded his knowledge of engineering over the course of a several-year-long stay scholarship in Paris. As a foreigner, he was not allowed access to the Parisian military schools (École militaire), but he engaged in self-education and attended preparatory courses. After returning to his homeland, despite adequate preparation he did not receive a commission in the Polish army, nor in the Lithuanian army. With no employment and poor prospects for changing his fate, in conflict with his brother over an inheritance, and after a failed romance with Ludwika Sosnowska, his only choices were to live as a minor provincial nobleman or to take up service in a foreign army.

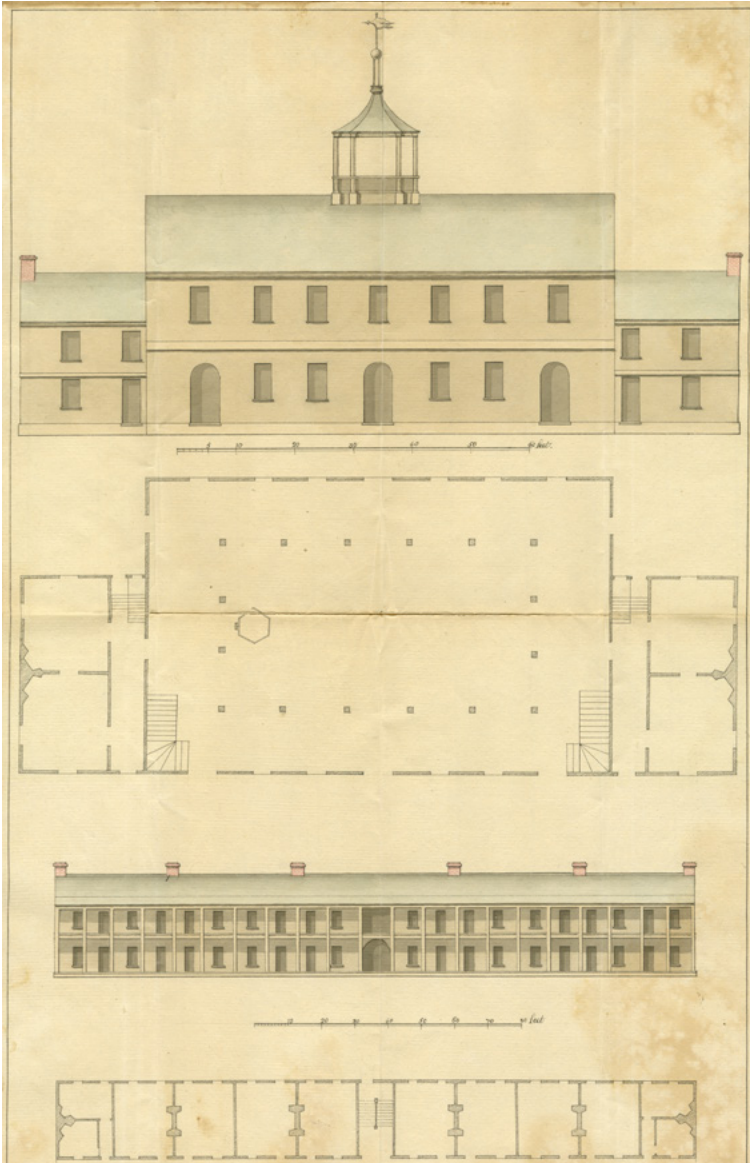
It was then that he made an epochal decision in his life and set out abroad in search of employment and happiness in 1775. However, his attempts to find employment in Saxony and France ended in disaster. Nonetheless, he was a bold man, one who took risks: he decided to set

out for North America, where the war for American independence was ongoing. This decisive had both idealistic and practical aspects. Kościuszko was known for his libertarian convictions, and he wanted to utilise his military abilities to assist the American insurrectionists. When he arrived in America in August of 1776, the war against the British was in progress on all fronts, with varying turns of fate. Facing a British offensive against Philadelphia, the Americans desperately needed engineers who could prepare the city for the anticipated attack from the direction of the Delaware River. Kościuszko had got his opportunity; the Americans verified his qualifications as an engineer, entrusting him with the development of a plan for fortifications near Billingsport. When on 18 October 1776 he was nominated as an engineer of the Continental Army, his “American dream” came true, as he was given a higher officer’s commission somewhat prematurely, in expectation of success. After all, he had not graduated from any renowned European school, he had no combat experience, and what’s more he was only 30 years old. In spring 1777, he was posted to the northern area of the enormous Fort Ticonderoga, which was of great strategic importance as it defended access to the United States from the north. However, his plans for the appropriate security measures for Sugar Loaf Hill were rejected, which undoubtedly contributed to the fall of the fort and to it being taken by the British. During the retreat of General Horatio Gates’ Northern Army, Kościuszko was its chief engineer. He was responsible for the fortification of a variety of encampments which effectively hampered the further march of the British. He gained fame with the fortification in September 1777 of the approaches to Bemis Heights, which contributed to the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga (17 October 1777). This victory had enormous significance for American military prospects and morale. As an expression of recognition for Kościuszko’s engineering skills, he was entrusted with the construction of the mighty fortress of West Point, which was intended to close off the Hudson River to British ships and at the same time constitute an important element of the defences surrounding New York. He energetically pursued these



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko, unknown author, ca. 1792, Polish Army Museum

fortification works in the years 1778–1780, winning the support of the commander of the American army, General George Washington. According to Kościuszko's plan, a huge iron chain was set across the Hudson River on 30 April 1778. As an engineer, Kościuszko was gifted with an exceptional sense of space, of geography, and of topography. His plan for fortifying West Point was innovative, breaking from traditions of solid fortification in favour of a system of loosely dispersed forts which masterfully exploited the defensive properties of the terrain. In the summer of 1780, Kościuszko finished transforming the hills along the Hudson into a fortress. A fort complex which was nearly impossible to capture resulted, called by American soldiers of the time "the American Gibraltar." Managing the construction of the fortifications at West Point was a considerable distinction for the Pole, but for a man of action like Kościuszko, it was tiresome in the long term. After more than two years working on the project, he wished to leave West Point and join the units on the front lines to search for glory on the battlefield. Ultimately, he was chosen as the chief engineer of the Southern Army commanded by General Nathanael Greene. The military situation at the time did not favour the Americans. The entire thrust of the British attack was directed towards the southern front. Kościuszko organised effective delaying actions which hampered the enemy's moves. He planned the crossing of the Yadkin and Dan rivers in North Carolina. Beginning in May 1781, for a month he participated in the futile siege of the powerful star Fort at Ninety-Six in South Carolina. After the defeat of General Charles Cornwallis' army at Yorktown in November 1781, the struggle for the independence of the United States entered its final phase. In 1782, Kościuszko led engineering works at the blockade of Charleston, distinguishing himself in skirmishes as an officer of the line. On 15 November, he took part in the final battle of the war on James Island. After the end of the war, Kościuszko began to pursue his ambition of obtaining a general's epaulets. He was especially interested in an individual promotion, which was more honourable and esteemed among officers. Ultimately, in recognition of his services



Design for hospital buildings at West Point, by Tadeusz Kościuszko, 1779–1782, Alexander McDougall papers, The New York Historical Society



Portrait of Kościuszko in the uniform of a general of the American Army, in the background Fort Clinton, painted by Boleslaw Jan Czedekowski, 1947, Kościuszko Foundation in New York

by an act of Congress in a group promotion he was awarded the rank of brigadier general of the American army on 13 October 1783. Without success he awaited a position as the head of the Engineering Corps. However, Kościuszko received great satisfaction from the fact that as one of only three foreigners, he was inducted into the elite

Society of the Cincinnati. This society was established by the most meritorious veterans of the war for independence. During his time in North America, Kościuszko gained considerable experience, as a military engineer, as a specialist in the construction of fortifications, but also in field fortifications. He demonstrated himself to be a good organiser, understanding the importance of quartering and provisioning. He believed in the possibility of conducting warfare with an improvised army, particularly in terms of the importance of field fortifications, as well as of the use of artillery.

After returning to Poland, which at the time was experiencing the crisis following the first partition of the state, once again he failed to obtain an army commission. Kościuszko's dream of obtaining the rank of general and a commission in the army was to come true only in 1789. It was at that time that a momentous event took place in the country with the sitting of the parliamentary session known as the Great Sejm or Four-Year Sejm, in the years 1788–1792, which undertook to comprehensively reform the state, resulting in the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May 1791, one of the first such foundational acts in the world.

Kościuszko took part in the war against Russian aggression in defence of the Constitution of May 3 in mid 1792, protecting the retreat of Polish armies from what today is Ukraine. On 18 July 1792, he fought a major battle in defence of Dubienka on the Bug River. This was the bloodiest and fiercest battle of the whole campaign. The fame he won at Dubienka, where the Polish army bravely faced the superior Russian forces, later made him a key candidate for leader of the uprising. To his soldiers, he became from then on a model and moral authority. Kościuszko's services were rewarded with the *Virtuti Militari* order (Latin for "for military valour"), the highest Polish military distinction. Nonetheless, the Russian armies ultimately occupied the Polish lands. On 13 January 1793, the Prussians signed an understanding with Russia on the second partition of Poland. The political and economic situation in the country was getting worse with each passing day. The de facto ruler of Poland, the Russian



Scene of the blessing of the sabres of Tadeusz Kościuszko and General Józef Wodzicki, painted by Walery Eliaz Radzikowski, 2nd half of the 19th century, Museum of Krakow

general Iosif Igelström, was harsh and ruthless. In light of this, both in the country and in émigré communities, the dominant conviction turned toward the belief that the only chance to save the homeland was by inciting the nation to an armed uprising. On 24 March 1794, the insurrection broke out in Kraków, and Kościuszko was chosen



Battle of Raclawice, painted by Walery Eliaz Radzikowski, 1895,
Museum of Krakow

as the Supreme Commander of the National Armed Forces. The Commander began intensive organisational operations to increase the size of the army and create an administrative structure. There were shortages of everything: officer and junior officer cadres, firearms and handheld weapons, uniforms, food, funding, and finally of recruits themselves. To compensate for the lack of firearms, the insurrectionists were armed with scythes and pikes. Kościuszko's main aim after taking command of the uprising was to expand the military operations to all parts of the country. First and foremost, he aimed to incite an insurrection in Warsaw. The commander realised that war against three partitioning powers at once was doomed to failure. He was counting on the hope that the war could be restricted to a confrontation with Russia alone, but unfortunately he was forced to conduct a war against the more numerous, well-trained and well-equipped Russian and Prussian armies. On 4 April 1794, he fought a battle at Raclawice against the Russians. In the assault led personally by the Commander, the *kosynierzy*, that is peasants armed with

modified scythes, routed some of the Russian infantry units and captured cannons. This first battle of the insurrection was won the Poles. The victory at Raclawice was a tactical success, but also had enormous significance in terms of propaganda and morale, providing encouragement for further insurrectionary actions in other parts of Poland. After the battle, Kościuszko dressed himself in the traditional peasant's sukmana coat, going down in history as the leader who fulfilled the vow that he had made to the Poles that he would fight for the freedom of the entire nation. In the operational scale, however, the Battle of Raclawice was a failure, as the Russian army forced Kościuszko's units to withdraw in the direction of Kraków. The most important military task that the Commander undertook was to break the isolation of the separate insurrectionary centres and to bring about the tight coordination of the whole struggle. The Battle of Szczekociny (6 June 1794) was the largest field engagement which Kościuszko took part in and led. Facing the decidedly superior Prussian and Russian forces, the insurrectionist units were defeated, compelling Kościuszko to halt the battle and retreat in an orderly fashion. This was the correct decision, allowing the Polish army to be saved. The defence of Warsaw from the Prussian and Russian armies (13 July – 6 September 1794) was without a doubt the largest and most spectacular of Kościuszko's military operations in Polish lands. He created a strongly fortified encampment, making use of natural obstacles and existing constructions. Kościuszko took an active role in leading the defence, organising sorties beyond the defensive ramparts and diversionary attacks. The Prussian charges became bogged down at successive defensive positions and ultimately the Prussian king withdrew his army from the Polish capital. The greatest controversy surrounds the quality of Kościuszko's leadership at the Battle of Maciejowice (10 October 1794). The idea itself of striking against the Russian division led by General Ivan Fersen so that they could not join forces with the forces led by the most capable of Russian generals, Alexander Suvorov, reflects well on Kościuszko. But the implementation of this intent failed completely. The Commander



Kościuszko at Maciejowice, painted by Teodor Baltazar Stachowicz, 1st half of the 19th century, Museum of Krakow

himself fought bravely until the end, and was severely wounded. The Poles lost the battle, and Kościuszko was taken into Russian captivity. A few days after the battle, he began to experience temporary paresis of his injured leg. It was only four years later that he recovered full mobility.

Kościuszko gained fame in the American War of Independence as a talented military engineer. He is regarded as one of the best organisers that the Polish army has ever had. As Commander in Chief, he managed to field a relatively strong and decently equipped army in spite of very difficult conditions. His conceptions for the organisation of the Polish armed forces were original and practical. He decided to make use of strategies based on general conscription supplemented with volunteer enlistment. This conception was in many ways analogous to that implemented by Lazare Carnot,

creator of the French Republican army. As the military historian Michał Baczkowski writes, Kościuszko was the most competent and bold Polish leader of the late 18th century. His concepts for the conduct of offensive actions were in general reasonable and were well within the mainstream of contemporary military planning. During battles, he reacted in a flexible manner to the actions of his opponent and was able to exploit their mistakes. The weak side of Kościuszko's leadership was his terrible reconnaissance, insufficient intelligence work, and lack of a concept for the use of cavalry. He also seemed to attach excessive importance to the idea of a struggle for a just cause. In reality, as it turned out to be the case in the struggle for the existence of Poland in 1794, the decisive factors were the years of training and military routine of the invading powers and not the patriotic sentiments of the Polish soldiers. Kościuszko was guided by classical principles of 18th century strategy which were sufficient for use against the Prussian army, which operated in a slow and predictable way. But to defeat the Russian army, led by such outstanding officers as Alexander Suvorov, this turned out to be insufficient.

Kościuszko provided examples of his valour as a soldier on many occasions, he was "fearless, but always cool in his daring." He tended to follow the rules of military honour. Despite his unimpressive physical size, he inspired respect, sharing all the hardships and inconveniences of military service with his subordinates, and taking care of their needs and of the good morale of the army. As a leader, he was demanding, insisting on discipline and order. He had a talent for developing a rapport with his soldiers, and understood how to motivate them to action, while his optimism and trust in victory were infectious. He was beloved by his officers and troops.

Kościuszko's military career was relatively short and ended suddenly in 1794 as a result of the collapse of the Insurrection and the elimination of the Polish state. Despite the failure of the Insurrection, even in his own lifetime he became a national hero.



Freeing Tadeusz Kościuszko from Petropavlovsk Fortress 26 Oct 1796, Vilnius circle,
1st half of the 19th century, Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko, unknown author, ca. 1840, Museum of Krakow

Kościuszko the statesman

I, Tadeusz Kościuszko, hereby swear by God to the entire Polish nation that I shall not use the powers vested in me for anyone's oppression, but for defense of the integrity of the borders, recuperation of Nation's sovereignty and strengthening the universal freedom. So help me God and the innocent passion of His Son.

[TADEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO, 24 III 1794 R.]

Kościuszko owed his broad intellectual horizons, multiplicity of passions, and interests, unusual for persons of his background, to his education. During his time at the Corps of Cadets, he formed a sense of his own worth and of the appropriate level of his aspirations, as well as a curiosity about the world and a critical attitude towards the realities of the day. His worldview was also significantly impacted by his several-year-long stay in France on the eve of the great revolution, as well as by his sojourn in North America and participation in the American War of Independence. These made of Kościuszko a citizen of the world. Open-minded towards a modern, Enlightenment vision of the world, he was a witness to the transformations and shaping of the new ideal of mankind. He felt an affinity for the Enlightenment doctrine of natural rights, of which the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 listed the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The formative American democracy became for him the model political entity. At a time when most European countries were monarchies, he was a declared opponent of absolutism and a great advocate of Republican principles. As General Horatio Gates said, "Kościuszko is the only pure republican I ever knew." Kościuszko's public activities are a good representation of the motto of the Order of

the Cincinnati, which he was granted in 1783 for service in the struggle for American independence: "Omnia reliquit servare Republicam" ("He gave up everything to serve the Republic"). Despite the fact that he spent nearly half his life abroad, he remained a Pole, dreaming of the greatness of his country and its inhabitants. Kościuszko's heroic acts in the war with Russia in 1792 in defence of the reforming Constitution of 3 May are the basis for the rapidly growing popularity of the general in Polish patriotic circles, which resulted in him being offered the role of supreme commander of the independence movement. On 26 August 1792, in recognition of his service in the struggle for liberty, he was made an honorary citizen of revolutionary France.

In the Polish national consciousness, Kościuszko went down as the first supreme commander to inspire the Polish people to insurrection by showing them that armed struggle is the only path to the reconstruction of the country and the erasure of the shame of the partitions. Kościuszko is seen as the one who "passionately loved liberty and national independence", who was "moved only by love for his Homeland". One important indication of Kościuszko's approach to civic duty were his words: "A citizen who wishes to share the honour of being a Pole must devote everything to the Homeland and always be humane and just."

On 24 March 1794, he undertook a great challenge, to save the failing Polish state. By the power of the "insurrectionary Act", he became the commander of the armed uprising, conducting a kind of coup d'état. After all, the country was still ruled by the king Stanisław August Poniatowski, who however was powerless against influence from the partitioning powers. The aim of the insurrection was to free Poland from enemy forces, to restore and secure its borders, and to regain the sovereignty of the Polish state and establish universal freedom. As Supreme Commander, Kościuszko swore a public oath on the old Market Square of Kraków whose words are the quintessence of Polish armed struggle. The oath opened a new chapter in Kościuszko's life, who went from military leader to the leader of the nation. For the seven months of the insurrection, Kościuszko consistently carried



The Oath of Tadeusz Kościuszko at the Kraków Old Town Market Square, painted by Michał Stachowicz, 1797, Museum of Krakow

out his plan to save Poland, undertaking political actions at two levels, both domestically and internationally. The Commander was responsible not only for the military affairs of the uprising, that is the creation of an army and leading it in war, but also for the operation of the state. Kościuszko was guided by the demands of the *raison d'état* of the besieged Poland, he preferred to seek compromise, he avoided radical steps. He was against rule with an iron fist, and radical Jacobin methods and a showdown with the king. He believed that traitors should be punished in accordance with the law, rejecting kangaroo courts and uncontrolled outbursts of the anger of the people. He attempted to obtain support for the Polish cause from all parts of Polish society, both the privileged classes such as the nobility and clergy, and the more numerous but most disadvantaged sector, the peasants. This latter issue was meant to be resolved in the insurrection by the Proclamation of Połaniec, issued by Kościuszko on 7 May 1794. This document introduced personal freedom for peasants, who comprised the majority of the population. Additionally, it ensured them the right not to be

removed from their land, and the restriction of obligations of serfdom during the crisis. This proclamation intended to introduce the equality of all inhabitants of Poland, and was a testament to the farsightedness of Kościuszko, who had earlier stressed the fact that the nobility alone would not fight, and that without the freedom of all citizens there could be no mention of the independence of the country. This was a vision of a new Poland. Kościuszko's ambition was to obtain for the insurrection the support of national and religious minorities. As a republican and democrat by conviction, he stressed his lack of prejudice against these social groups, and example of which may be his visit to the Old Synagogue in Kazimierz on the outskirts of Kraków. It was precisely then that, in one of his addresses, there appeared several times the phrase "for our liberty and yours", one of the most important elements of the ideological legacy of the insurrection. The uprising lasted a mere eight months, but its impact on Polish history was of primary significance.

The role that Kościuszko played in the uprising of 1794 consolidated his position as a hero in the struggle for freedom. After the collapse of the insurrection, he spent more than two years in Russian captivity, and to free himself and his compatriots from bondage to the Tsar in 1796 he paid a high moral price. In spite of this Kościuszko, defeated as the Commander, gravely wounded and taken into captivity, paradoxically obtained a new attribute, one which was perhaps even more precious than the glow of victory. He became a martyr of liberty. The figure of Kościuszko was universally known. During a stay in England in 1797, he was visited and honoured by leaders of the Whigs such as Lord Charles James Fox and Charles Grey. During his second stay in the United States, Kościuszko sympathised with Thomas Jefferson and his supporters in the Democratic Republican party, while avoiding contact with the Federalists led by John Adams.

Since the times of the insurrection, Kościuszko had been considered the leader of Poland, fighting for its independence both at home and abroad. For the rest of his life, he attempted to bring about the rebirth of the Polish state. The events unfolding in Europe at the beginning



Tadeusz Kościuszko Saving Poland from the Grave, painted by Michał Stachowicz, 18th/19th century, National Museum in Krakow

of the 19th century seemed to offer an opportunity for the resurrection of Poland. After his arrival in France in 1798, the opinion was commonly held that Kościuszko should take up the leadership of the Polish Legions, which had fought at the side of the French army in Italy. Kościuszko felt respect for the idea of the Legions, but he did not agree to take command. For his part, he stressed his willingness to exercise patronage over the Legions, in line with republican principles. He represented Polish national interests in contacts with the French government, frequently intervening on behalf of the Legions. Over time, one can notice a progressing radicalisation in Kościuszko in his political views. One example is his demand to the French minister of war that all newly commissioned Polish officers of the Danube Legions as well as privates: “swear an oath of hatred against kings and aristocrats and to the eternal principles of liberty and equality.” On two occasions, Kościuszko attempted to find external support for Polish affairs from the two greatest European powers of the

time, the French leader Napoleon Bonaparte and the Tsar of Russia Alexander I. These two, however, courted his favour only in order to advance their political intrigues. Kościuszko, although he was not an outstanding politician, always wanted to maintain his independence and resisted any attempts to draw him onto an ideological path or into political dependence on anyone. When on 9 November 1799, General Napoleon Bonaparte carried out the 18 Brumaire coup, the event was a great shock to Kościuszko. This was because it dealt a fatal blow to the Republic. The imposition of autocratic rule by Bonaparte as First Consul was a clear harbinger of the reintroduction of the monarchical system. Kościuszko condemned the coup in harsh terms, considering Napoleon to be the gravedigger of the Republic and a tyrant. He stated that Bonaparte would “do nothing for the salvation of Poland.” This was one of the reasons why Kościuszko did not support the idea of the Duchy of Warsaw, a substitute for the Polish state which was created at the behest of the Emperor of the French. Kościuszko, who had so stubbornly defended the interest of Poland and demanded the restoration of the independence of the entire Commonwealth, found himself outside of the pro-French circle. In the early 19th century, this meant exclusion from participation in the leading political events of Europe. The position of the Commander incited the anger of the Polish émigré community, who to a large extent supported Napoleon’s vision. Kościuszko wrote to Thomas Jefferson: “I am idle and of no use to humanity.”

Kościuszko’s attitude towards Russia is difficult to call unambiguous. His insight into the imperial politics of Catherine II, the partitions of Poland and the destruction of its state sovereignty, his period of captivity, and the ambivalent posture of Tsar Paul I and his court left Kościuszko with an unfavourable attitude towards Russia. The situation changed in 1814, at the time that the new order was being formed in Europe, when he began to associate serious hopes for the rebirth of Poland with the person of Tsar Alexander I. Kościuszko’s attitude in the years 1814 and 1815 demonstrate his realistic view of reality. Among the three partitioning powers at the Congress of Vienna, Russia offered

the most to the Poles. Ultimately, however, the attitude of the Tsar and the provisions of the Congress of Vienna were deeply disappointing for Kościuszko, and a sovereign Polish state was not reconstituted within the pre-partition borders. He wrote: "I watch as the allied powers betray their given word, as they inflict harm on other, smaller nations, and do with their people as wolves do with sheep." During his stay in the Swiss town of Solothurn, he felt a deep distaste for politics, directing his interests towards education, pointing out its fundamental role in social life. Kościuszko died in 1817 in exile as the spiritual leader of a nation without its own state.

Kościuszko's political testament was the brochure "Can the Poles achieve independence?", written under his direction by his secretary, Józef Pawlikowski. This brochure was published anonymously in Paris in 1800. It encapsulated the idea of the struggle for Polish independence via the preparation of a new uprising in the country, without reaching for external aid. Additionally, it contained postulates for a strong national government and for the liberation of the peasants, as it would only be when this happened that they would be ready to fight for the independent existence of their homeland. The brochure propagated continuous partisan warfare. It was condemned in the period of Napoleon's First Consulate, while in a later period it enjoyed renown among radical activists, both Polish and European, and the instructions it contained on conducting a national liberation partisan war were studied and developed by outstanding organisers of democratic uprisings, such as Giuseppe Mazzini.

Tadeusz Kościuszko was a specific type of statesman, as the historian Tomasz Gąsowski writes; he was guided first and foremost by principles for which he tried to choose the best means of implementation in his understanding. He followed a straight course towards his goal, avoiding complicated political intrigues. The goals which he chose were maximalist. This was undoubtedly a path to greatness, but not necessarily a path to success. The only motivation for Kościuszko's public activities was the common good understood as the totality and independence of a Homeland of free citizens.



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko, unknown author, ca. 1800,
Polish Army Museum in Warsaw

Kościuszko in private

A good man and valorous, yet unhappy.

(KSIĘŻNA MARIA Z CZARTORYSKICH WIRTEMBERSKA)

WYGLĄD. Appearance. For obvious reasons, Kościuszko's figure has been portrayed many times over, primarily in national iconography, but also in foreign works, and quite a few descriptions of his appearance have survived. He was a slender man, not tall, of a slight build and light frame, with irregular facial features. characteristic element of his profile was his slightly snub nose. His appearance was rather common, his physiology did not stand out. Two assets were his quite fair, thick and slightly wavy hair and his striking, certainly blue eyes. His facial expressions were very lively. For years, Kościuszko was often seen as a younger man than he was in reality. Towards the end of his life he began to go bald, going grey somewhat earlier. To the end of his life, he retained his slim and graceful figure.

He did not take excessive care of his appearance. Kosciuszko's style of dress was characterised by modesty, neatness, simplicity, and an unforced elegance. During his time in America, he acquired a taste for modest, not very Polish clothing, preferring straight, that is natural, hairstyles, without powders, somewhat longish hair without a bear or moustache. As the Commander of the insurrection in 1794, Kościuszko often wore a greatcoat of undyed, simple cloth and, characteristically for his style, without "any badges of highest authority." After the victory at Raclawice, in recognition of the contribution of the peasant scythemen, he began to wear the traditional sukmana peasant's coat. This costume indeed became the signature item of clothing of the leader, along with his American Order of the Cincinnati.

In exile in France, his most commonly worn outfit was a dark blue greatcoat, a black cravat, boots with cuffs, and a round hat. He did

not wear orders. For more formal occasions, he dressed in a black frock coat, in which, however, he did not feel comfortable. Sometimes on these occasions, he attached a red carnation to his lapel. During his frequent visits to the countryside in Berville, he wore the dress of a French villager and a large straw hat. In matters of dress, Kościuszko paid attention most to functionality and comfort. In the last years of his life at Solothurn, he dressed in an old, faded dark blue greatcoat which had been patched and darned, sometimes adorning his lapel with a rose or violets.

PERSONALITY. Kościuszko was a man of composure, yet with a lively manner. He came across as a sensitive person who was easy to wound, thus losing his trust. He was well-meaning and open to the problems of others. He reacted flexibly to events, in a constructive and pragmatic way. From his youth, he was highly animated and determined; he was a man of action. He was a bold man, prepared to take on serious risk; examples are his first voyage to North America or his acceptance of the leadership of the Insurrection in 1794. He was also characterised by a high level of adaptability to new surroundings. Other essential aspects of Kościuszko's character were his industriousness, thoroughness, and reliability. He was exceptionally focused and trustworthy in carrying out the tasks assigned to him. Kościuszko had a deeply ingrained sense of honour.

He was a modest man, observers have noted is straightforwardness, uncomplicated nature, and a certain shyness which sometimes hampered contacts with his surroundings. Although he was never particularly sociable, he was also not entirely a loner. He avoided unnecessary conflicts with others. In one of his letters he wrote: "I love peace and I wish to maintain good relations with all, as much as possible." For these reasons, he at times had difficulty with taking unpopular and controversial decisions. He was a skilful mediator, as is evidenced by the diplomatic mission he was charged with in 1798 by the Vice President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, aiming to ameliorate the conflict between that country and France.

He valued independence, and generally was not susceptible to suggestion or pressure. In his life, Kościuszko experienced many adversities



Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko, painted by Jan Nepomucen Bizański, 1862,
Museum of Krakow



Portrait of Thomas Jefferson, after a drawing by Tadeusz Kościuszko, by Michał Sokolnicki, National Portrait Gallery in Washington

and failures, and his spirit was on many occasions put to a heavy test. In general, in extreme situation he behaved rationally, but sporadically he experienced nervous breakdowns. After the defeats of Szczekociny and Maciejowice, he even attempted suicide. Nonetheless, he was not

lacking in strong will or fortitude to the vagaries of fate. the disaster of Maciejowice and Russian captivity were traumatic events in his life, but he managed to overcome this internal crisis in a matter of months. It must be added, though, that Russian captivity weakened his faith in mankind and trust towards people.

Kościuszko's personal traits, including his modesty, prudence, industriousness, and also courage, personal dignity, and care for others contributed to his great popularity, not only among his subordinates.

INTERPERSONAL TIES. Kościuszko was not especially sociable. By nature modest and shy, he felt uncomfortable in large groups of people. He was noted for his dignified behaviour and good manners. Though convivial by nature, he rarely confided in others, preferring to maintain a certain distance. In his choice of close friends, he was highly critical. In North America, Kościuszko gained public recognition as a capable engineer of fortifications, won his general's epaulets, and had many dear friends. Some of these, such as Thomas Jefferson and the generals Horatio Gates and Nathanael Greene, were among the leading personalities of the United States. He also enjoyed very good relations with General Anthony Walton White. Kościuszko shared a friendship which lasted many years with Thomas Jefferson, one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence, and the third president of the United States. They were bonded by shared views and interests and corresponded with each other until the ends of their lives. Jefferson encouraged Kościuszko to return to America for good. In one of his letters he wrote: "Come to Monticello and be a part of our family. [...] Come and lay your old bones next to mine in the cemetery of Monticello." Kościuszko's circle of Polish friends included General Józef Orłowski, the representative to the Sejm Michał Zaleski, and the writer and political activist Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz. Among his close acquaintances were his former subordinates, the generals Karol Kniaziewicz and Stanisław Fiszer. The Commander felt a special affection for the latter. Among his good friends in exile was Franciszek Paszkowski, who for several years was Kościuszko's secretary.



Portrait of Ludwika Sosnowska, unknown author, ca. 1775,
National Museum in Krakow

Kościuszko clearly separated his personal and public life. During his French period in the home of the Zeltner family, he received socially only trusted persons. He felt good in their company and enjoyed joking. After Napoleon's seizure of power, however, his circle of French friends constricted. He did not maintain social relations with people in the government sphere, seeing socially only committed republicans, including the generals Marie Joseph de La Fayette, Jean Victor Moreau, Etienne Jacques MacDonald, and André Massena. Another friend of Kościuszko was General Lazare Carnot, a military engineer and organiser of the revolutionary army. While in France, Kościuszko was frequently visited by other Poles, who he accorded "fatherly tenderness, brotherly feelings, being with them sincere and open." He held the same attitude towards Americans: in their company, he felt just as good as among Poles. The republican convictions of Kościuszko and Franz Xaver Zeltner had a significant impact on the Commanders' social relations in Solothurn, where he was respected by, but remained outside of the local elite circles. His Swiss acquaintances included Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Philip Emanuel von Fellenberg.

Inner life. Kościuszko was raised in a family with traditional customs. In his youth, he certainly preferred a sentimental model of love. A confirmation of this theory can be seen in the story of Kościuszko's first great unfulfilled love. His beloved was Ludwika Sosnowska, the daughter of a senator, a wealthy and influential man. She was a woman with beautiful, striking eyes, educated, sophisticated and sensitive. In love with her, with the feeling returned, he decided to ask for his chosen one's hand in marriage. Ludwika's parents were clearly against the union, primarily due to Kościuszko's low social status and material worth. The refusal was a great drama for Kościuszko and Ludwika. Stories have it that Kościuszko sought the aid of powerful protectors, even travelling to King Stanisław August, who however advised him to restrain his affections. Desperate, at the beginning of October 1775 is said to have attempted to elope with Ludwika and marry her in secret, but the forewarned senator transported away from Sosnowica. This unhappy love played a powerful role in

Kościuszko's decision to go abroad, a decision which was to have a tremendous impact on his life.

It is a characteristic feature of his personality that this amorous disappointment and other failures in personal and professional life unleashed in him a desire to act. It would be an exaggeration, however, to claim that from then on Kościuszko never fell in love with any other woman. His later romances were with women who resembled Sosnowska, if not in their appearance then in their manner and character.

His services in the war of 1792 made him an attractive and popular person; he became an object of admiration. Kościuszko's attitude to the fairer sex was visible in all its magnificence during the insurrection. One of the first addresses which he gave as Commander was aimed precisely towards women, being a complete novelty in the way that women were publicly perceived in Poland. In this document, we read: "Oh ornament of the human species! The beautiful sex! I truly suffer at the sight of your worried care for the fate of this bold enterprise which in the name of the liberation of the Homeland is being undertaken by the Poles!"

Kościuszko's distinguished conduct towards women was widely known, and the stormy events of his life made him attractive to women. After arriving in London in 1797, he met many influential ladies, including Jane Elizabeth Harley, Countess of Oxford, and the "queen" of the aristocratic salons of the time, Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire.

To his friends, Kościuszko often played the role of mentor and advisor in matters of the heart. A broad treatment of Kościuszko's opinion on marriage can be found in a letter to his friend, General Stanisław Fiszer, in relation to the latter's planned wedding: "A great deal of common sense is required, sang-froid and patience, but also indulgence. As the first and highest principle, have mutual respect for one another, gentleness, always behave with grace towards one another [...]"

Kościuszko's sense of humour on the delicate subject of erotica is demonstrated in his letters written to a junior officers in the Legions,

Józef Chłopicki, later to become the dictator of the November Uprising. Kościuszko warned him of the unpleasant consequences of excessively frivolous dalliance with Cupid. In the context of his era, Kościuszko was an unusual figure; apart from ephemeral relationships based only on physical attraction, he was also capable of authentic, deep feelings. He was sentimental, yet was also able to enjoy life and sensuality. In women, he searched for a kindred spirit; the women he loved were in psychological terms similar to him, introverted and sensitive.

It may be that after the misfortunes he suffered in his youth, Kościuszko did not want to associate himself with any woman permanently. It is not impossible that after a certain time he chose not to change his bachelor habits and lifestyle. Interestingly, it was to women that Kościuszko owed his opinion as an above-average man, combining in himself the masculine traits of a soldier with the gentleness and sensitivity of a man of the new era, of the era of Romanticism.

Neither his background nor his personality traits predestined Kościuszko to greatness. He owed his position and importance not to accident, but to his capabilities and determination. Unassuming physically, he built his authority on successive experiences and acquired skills. Life did not spare him disasters, but was able to overcome these without giving up hope for a better tomorrow. In his daily life, he was undemanding.

He led a regular style of life but was not of a pedantic nature. From his childhood onward, he was physically active, which contributed to his good physical condition and endurance even late in life. Physical exercise a time spent frequently in the fresh air hardened him and, despite his modest physique, he was resilient in the face of fatigue and hardship. His passions included gardening and horsemanship. From his childhood, he also exhibited artistic and manual talents. He enjoyed drawing and painting, and making small crafts objects on a lathe. In exile, he read widely. He also enjoyed music very much; he is said to have composed two polonaises and a waltz. He was never very fond of social life, although as a public person he was forced to some degree to participate in it. He enjoyed playing chess, whist, and billiards. He was

no gourmand, being satisfied with simple cuisine. He avoided strong spirits, although he drank beer on a day-to-day basis, and enjoyed a good Hungarian wine on special occasions. His favourite vice was coffee, which he knew how to prepare in many different ways.

His greatest unrealised ambition was to start a family and a household. However, apart from his childhood and a short episode of living alone in Siechnowicze (1785–1789), he never had his own home. As a man of action, one who frequently travelled, he was not the stay-at-home type. He adapted relatively easily to new places and conditions, and always had modest needs. Kościuszko was known for his philanthropic activity, in the Swiss town of Solothurn he was called the “benefactor of the poor.” It is known that in the last years of his life, he lived very modestly, although a glance at his will and testament reveals that he was a quite wealthy man.

Kościuszko's legacy

“Kościuszko became the devoted soldier of liberty. [...] His fame will last as long as liberty remains upon the earth.”

(WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON)

Kościuszko is one of the most significant heroes in the world, his personage has risen to the rank of a symbol of freedom, patriotism, and



Kościuszko's Apotheosis, painted by Michał Stachowicz, 1818,
National Museum in Krakow

democracy. Although his political, and even military, decisions have sometimes been criticised, nearly all stress his boundless love for liberty, his homeland, and his virtuous, indomitable character.

He was a modern man, in the best sense of the word, close to our contemporary way of thinking. He was characterised by his prudent abandonment of many conventions, his striving for a noble simplicity without, however, giving up that which makes a person noble – honour, loyalty to ethical values, and a love for the liberty of every person and nation. Based on his experiences, Kościuszko developed his own philosophy of life, in which the idea of freedom was paramount. The basis of this philosophy was the idea of progress and hope for the improvement of the lot of each person. Kościuszko's own words on the subject are telling: "Liberty is the sweetest of rights which a man can savour on this earth." He believed that every person had a right to liberty and to equal treatment. As Thomas Jefferson wrote of Kościuszko: "He is as pure a son of liberty, as I have ever known, and of that liberty which is to go to all." The concept of society had a broad meaning for him. He was cognizant of the existence of marginalised groups; disenfranchised peasants in Poland, black slaves in the United States, as well as women in public life. He had the courage to criticise the status quo, and what is more, he had ideas on how to change the situation. He started with himself, issuing documents granting freedom in his estates; to the peasants at his estate in Poland and to the black slaves at his estate in the North America, while also making arrangements for their financial security and future education. Kościuszko was one of the precursors of abolitionism. He fiercely juxtaposed the idea of the independence of the United States with the injustice of slavery in that country. Before departing the USA on 5 May 1798, he drew up a document with all the characteristics of a last will and testament leaving his American fortune for the purchase of freedom for black slaves and for their appropriate education, appointing the future president Thomas Jefferson as his executor. Kościuszko's attitude towards slavery was an expression on the one hand of his Enlightenment humanism, and on the other of his idealism. Regarding the right of every person to liberty,

the radicalism of his actions clearly were ahead of his times. In contrast to Jefferson, who was also an opponent of slavery, however, he did not take the economic effects of the abolition of slavery into account. While fully agreeing with Kościuszko's views, Jefferson did not find the courage within himself to stand up against the social order of the times, an order of which he was a beneficiary. In line with Kościuszko's will, a school for African-American children was established in Newark, New Jersey, in 1826 bearing the name "The Kosciusko School".

Kościuszko demanded personal freedom and enfranchisement for the peasants in Polish lands. During his period of emigration, his views on the subject became noticeably radicalised. In the brochure "*Can the Poles achieve independence?*", we see his postulates for radical social changes; "There are some who say that first the peasants must be educated before they are given freedom. I am of the opposite opinion – wanting to educate the people, they must be liberated." In a memorandum of 1814 addressed to Tsar Alexander I, Kościuszko suggests the abolition of serfdom and the enfranchisement of peasants in estates owned by the state. They were to be followed in this by the landlords of private estates. Towards the end of his life, on 4 June 1817, he drew up a will in which he ordered the abolition of serfdom and of corvée labour obligations towards the peasants at his family estate. One of Kościuszko's most important civic mottoes was: "The making of others happy is in my highest regard."

In 1794, Kościuszko incited Poles to armed rebellion, arguing that armed resistance is the only road to the reconstruction of the nation. Successive generations of Poles fought for the independence of Poland; in the November Uprising (1830–1831), in the Kraków Uprising (1846), in the events of the Springtime of the Peoples (1848), in the January Uprising (1863–1864), and during the First World War. After 123 years of bondage, an independent Polish state was reborn in 1918, with its main co-creator Józef Piłsudski, drawing on the legacy of Kościuszko, first taking office of Provisional Chief of State and later Chief of State. As the historian Szymon Askenazy wrote, Kościuszko: "to the greatest extent embodied his nation. All of him, his virtues and vices,

were a part of this. [...] Yet he became one of the undying heroes of humanity. Why? For his name is Poland”.

Kościuszko dedicated his life to the idea of liberty and independence, and the price that he paid for this was high. He never fully recovered his health after the wounds he suffered on the battlefield and in Russian captivity, in private life he was not fortunate enough to enjoy the happiness of his own family, he did not have his own home apart from the period of his childhood, and he died an émigré.

The death of Kościuszko becomes the beginning of his life as a historical figure in human memory. The admiration in which he is held can be seen in the fact that the most outstanding literary figures of the time dedicated works to him; Lord George Byron, John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Wolcot, Leight Hunt, Thomas Campbell, and Adam Mickiewicz. A great admirer of Kościuszko was the Scottish writer Jane Porter, whose lengthy novel “Thaddeus of Warsaw” was highly popular in the early 19th century in the USA. Motifs involving Kościuszko were very popular in the visual arts, and many portraits of him were made, including by Benjamin West, Richard Cosway, William Sharp, Johan Frederik Martin, Jan Matejko, and Wojciech Kossak.

After his death, he became the object of a veritable cult. Less than half a year after the death of the Supreme Commander, on 11 April 1818 Prince Antoni Jabłonowski brought Kościuszko's remains from Solothurn to Polish lands, to Kraków. For nine weeks, the people of Kraków and the vicinity paid homage to the memory of the deceased Commander. On 23 June 1818, the coffin bearing his remains was laid to rest in the Crypt of St. Leonard at Wawel Cathedral. Kościuszko lay in this royal space in the company of King Jan III Sobieski, victor against the Turks at the Battle of Vienna in 1683, and of Prince Józef Poniatowski, hero of the Polish nation and Marshal of France, who had been interred there the previous year. The Poles honoured the memory of Kościuszko in a particular way; over the years 1820–1823, they raised a more than 30-metre earthen mound. Kościuszko Mound became an “everlasting sign” in the Polish national consciousness. During the



Procession to Kościuszko Mound in Kraków with Soil from the Raclawice Battlefield, painted by Teodor Baltazar Stachowicz, 1859, Museum of Krakow

period of autonomy in Galicia, when Kraków was the spiritual capital of a partitioned Poland, the site became the destination of national pilgrimages which aroused patriotic feelings and united Poles from all three partitions. In 2000, in the historic interiors of Bastion V of Fort no. 2 “Kościuszko” adjacent to Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, a modern, new permanent exhibition entitled “Kościuszko – A Hero for Our Times” was opened. The exhibition is narrative in nature, essentially comprising a story which draws on visitors’ knowledge, understanding and the senses by using artefacts as “actors” which pull the visitor into the universal world of a timeless hero. One of the aims of the exhibition is to illustrate the role that Kościuszko’s legacy can play in modern times.

Kościuszko has also been commemorated in many other places around the world. In Philadelphia, we find the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, in Solothurn the Kosciuszko-Museum. the Polish traveller, Paweł Edmund Strzelecki, named the highest peak in Australia, which he had discovered, Mount Kosciuszko. There

are monuments to Kościuszko in Poland (among others in Kraków, Łódź, and Warsaw), in the USA (among others in Washington, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Cleveland), and in Switzerland (Solothurn). New York is home to the Kosciuszko Bridge. In the USA, one of the counties of Indiana is called Kosciusko County. His name also graces an island off the coast of Alaska and a noble foundation supporting Polish-American academic and cultural relations. Kościuszko's name was taken by Polish partisan units in the Second World War , and by the First Infantry Division formed in the USSR in 1943, as well as by the famed 303rd RAF Fighter Squadron in Great Britain. Kościuszko's name is in the names of many primary and secondary schools in Poland, as well as in the names of universities such as the Cracow University of Technology.



Kościuszko Monument in Washington, photo by Feliks Molki

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