

CASIMIR PULASKI
AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO
POLAND AND AMERICA

by

Angela Mischke, A.B.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School, Marquette University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Re-
quirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
July, 1962



Pulaski's coat of arms: the night-heron

PREFACE

In the words of Emerson: "Man does not live by bread alone but by faith, by admiration and by sympathy." Heroes can help us fill that other need. Casimir Pulaski, a true hero, can teach us much that is of value in our personal lives, especially in this day and age when the ideals for which he fought and died have not as yet been won for all peoples. Therefore, this study is intended to disclose a life unselfishly led and abundant with personal and civic virtues worthy of emulation.

My deep and sincere gratitude must be expressed to Dr. Roman Smal-Stocki who, as a person and a scholar, has been an example and an inspiration. Without his kindness and encouragement the task at hand would have been immeasurably more difficult. I also wish to thank my mother, who first introduced me to things Polish, and thereby greatly enriched my life.

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CHAPTER I

CASIMIR PULASKI IN POLAND

Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century

In 1770 Poland-Lithuania was a large country which extended from the Baltic almost to the Black Sea. It had an area of about 280,000 square miles. The population was about eleven and a half million, with almost seven million Poles. Poland was an agricultural country and its public wealth was slight. Thus, compared with its geographical size, Poland's population was sparse and its financial condition was wanting. Poland, as a result, was encountering increasing difficulty in raising and maintaining an army of sufficient size and effectiveness to cope with the rising military establishments of Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Also, against the attacks of these powers Poland lacked natural as well as artificial fortifications. Its land was wide and flat, mostly unprotected by mountains and almost inviting attack.

Poland throughout its history had been ruled by several dynasties, both Polish and foreign, and in the eighteenth century the Saxons were on the throne. Under them, culture, learning, and state affairs reached their lowest level in Poland, and

We find that the parliamentary system had degenerated due to the 'Liberum Veto'¹. . .

¹The right of one representative of the Polish Sejm (Diet) to render all legislation null and void by saying "nie pozwalam" (I do not permit it.) In the eighteenth century this privilege often broke up the Diet and not until the Constitution of the third of May, 1791, was it replaced with the principle of majority rule.

Financial mismanagement caused the reduction of the standing army. Religious intolerance of the kings, decline of the towns, the supremacy and selfishness of the magnates, and the pauperization of the country for the sake of the vain foreign kings and aristocrats characterize the period. The decline of education brought indifference and apathy among the gentry.²

In 1763 the Polish throne became vacant due to the death of the Saxon king, Augustus III. Immediately Russia and Prussia made a treaty between themselves to support Stanislaus Poniatowski, the nephew of one of Poland's most illustrious magnates, Prince Adam Czartoryski.³ This Russo-Prussian treaty also provided for mutual military and financial assistance in case of war; opposition to any Polish constitutional changes, by force of arms if necessary; and finally, intercession with the Polish government on behalf of the dissidents.

Poniatowski had little to recommend him for the position of king of Poland except his handsomeness and his pleasant cultured manner. This of course appealed very much to Catherine of Russia. In 1756 Poniatowski was attached to the suite of Hanbury Williams, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg. Here he attracted the attention of the young Grand Duchess Catherine, wife of the heir to the throne of Russia. He became one of her many lovers and

²Joseph A. Wytrawal, America's Polish Heritage. (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1961), pp. 13-14.

³Czartoryski, (1734-1823), was a prince of Poland, a general and a writer.

Catherine later supported him for the throne of Poland. Perhaps though, this is too harsh an estimate of Poniatowski, for he also had a fine mind and a fascinating personality which gave birth to a later Polish cultural, political, and intellectual regeneration.

Unfortunately, the moral strength which alone could have made young Poniatowski the king Poland needed in the tragic hours that awaited her, formed no part of that accomplished intellectuality. Supple and benevolent, he was wanting not only the energy which had assured his father's amazing career, but, above all, in the moral principles which were being reborn in the tormented souls of many other Poles.⁴

The support Catherine gave Poniatowski was more than just an expression of preference. In addition to much bribery, she supported her candidate with an army of fifteen thousand men which appeared at Warsaw and surrounded the Diet on the day of election, while a much larger force was stationed on the frontier ready to invade Poland. In such a manner was Poniatowski elected king of Poland on September 7, 1764. Although normally the king of Poland was restricted in his authority, the new king had even less power because he was subject to the Russian agent, Prince Nicholas Repnin,⁵ who had guaranteed his election. King Poniatowski was nominally head of the executive branch and of the army. The executive branch consisted of the chief officers of state, over whom the king had little control, as they were

⁴Oscar Halecki, A History of Poland. (New York: Roy Publishers, 1956), pp. 191-92.

⁵Repnin, (1734-1801), was a Russian prince, general, and diplomat.

appointed for life. The army was small and often without pay. In time of war the gentry was expected to raise forces, but there was no effective way of enforcing this obligation. With such conditions, a less determined, less dedicated king could easily be content with accepting the extreme restrictions on his rightful power and be satisfied with being a well-dressed, polite, and gracious cultural leader.

In addition, even before Poniatowski became king, legislation in the Diet became practically impossible. The most necessary reforms were indefinitely postponed. The liberum veto had blocked all progress and practically encouraged dishonest politics and bribery. To add to the general anarchy of the period was a custom which had grown up among the gentry. This custom permitted them, wrongly or rightly, to form confederations, often with considerable military strength, in opposition to the policies of the Diet or the activities of the king. This tended to make the gentry very independent, undisciplined, and oftentimes tyrannical in its dealings, especially with the peasants. Evidencing the general discord and degeneracy of the period is the old Polish saying, "Under the Saxon king, eat, drink, and loosen your belt."⁶ With this philosophy in mind, the gentry concerned itself less and less with the well-being of Poland, but rather sought to enrich itself at the expense of Poland.

⁶Josef Chociszewski, Dzieje Narodu Polskiego. (Poznań: J. K. Zupański, 1888), p. 224. (Writer's translation).

However, these serious defects in Poland did not go unnoticed, and they were predicted and exposed as long ago as 1667 when King Casimir stated:

Magnanimous Polish gentlemen, you are a glorious republic . . . the day will arrive, and the day is perhaps not far off when this glorious republic will get torn into shreds hither thither, be stuffed into the pockets of covetous neighbors, Brandenburg, Muscovy, and Austria, and find itself reduced to zero, and abolished from the face of the earth.⁷

Also, Peter Skarga, an outstanding Polish priest and orator said:

What can I do with you, poor State, it will fall when you do not expect it and crush you all in its ruins, you will be poor exiles, despised vagabonds.⁸

Despite these enormous problems within Poland, it is certain that a remedy would have been found. However, by the time serious reform was in the making, Poland was already too much in the clutches of its enemies, who were determined to prevent reform, keep Poland weak, and eventually partition it among them. Among the leaders of Poland's enemies were several outstanding personalities. In the East there was Catherine II, Empress of Russia, who was certainly one of the most remarkable women of history.

She allowed no considerations of public morality or faith in treaties to interfere in her schemes. It is certain that from a very early period of her reign this bold, proud, and self-reliant woman determined to extend her territory at the expense of Poland.⁹

⁷Lord Eversley, The Partitions of Poland. (London: T. Fischer Unwin, Ltd., 1915), p. 15.

⁸Ibid., p. 30.

⁹Ibid., p. 31.

The first manifestations of Catherine's aggressive policy toward Poland were found in her insistence that Peter Biron, instead of the king of Poland's son, Prince Karl of Saxony, be duke of Courland. This dictate was quite obviously outside Catherine's authority, as the duchy of Courland was a fief of the Polish Crown. In 1763 Poland refused Catherine's demand; nevertheless, after various threats, Catherine sent Russian troops into Courland and seized it for Peter Biron.

Although Courland remained for another thirty years under the nominal suzerainty of Poland, she had become for all practical purposes a Russian protectorate and was treated as such.¹⁰

In the West there was Frederick of Prussia, who won his reputation as a great general and administrator.

In his young days, he wrote an able refutation of Machiavelli's The Prince. When he ascended the throne he very soon flung aside the great principles which he had so strongly insisted upon in his book. Territorial aggrandizement was to him as to Catherine, the main object of his foreign policy.¹¹

Finally, in the South, Poland was faced with Austria and Empress Maria Teresa. Traditionally, Austria had been friendly with Poland and recognized the necessity of an independent Poland as a buffer state. In addition, Austria owed a debt of gratitude to Poland because Poland's king, John Sobieski, saved Austria and Christendom from the Turks at the battle of Vienna in 1683. Then too, Empress Maria

¹⁰Michael T. Florinsky, Russia. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 516.

¹¹Eversley, p. 30.

Teresa, who was known for her virtue and honesty, was opposed to any interference or territorial expansion at the expense of Poland.

But Austria alone was not able to withstand a combination of Russia and Prussia, especially when it was involved in a war with France . . . On the plea of her advisors, Empress Maria Teresa was persuaded much against her will to join in a combination against Poland.¹²

Curiously though, despite Austria's apparent regret for the fate of Poland, it was the first to annex a part of Poland's territory.

Which country, then, was chiefly responsible for the aggressive policy toward Poland? Obviously, since all three nations shared in the spoils, all three shared the responsibility. However, of the three, Russia most actively conspired against Poland, and most diligently worked, mainly through bribery and military force, to secure Russian domination over Poland. Before and during Poniatowski's reign, Russia openly dictated to Poland, and when satisfactory control could not be maintained over recalcitrant Polish elements, the Russian army was sent into Poland on the pretext of maintaining order. Goaded by increasing Polish resistance to Russian interference, Russia had no choice but to finally outright partition Poland. Thus, certainly in the first partition, and then in the subsequent partitions, Russia played the largest part.

Although Poland was surrounded by enemies and had

¹²Ibid., p. 33.

almost insurmountable domestic problems, it at last made a valiant attempt at reform.

In spite of all the failures of Poniatowski's foreign policy, his reign constitutes an epoch of genuine national regeneration, a regeneration which could not avert the final catastrophe, but which forbids us to see in that catastrophe the immediate and fatal consequence of the decay that had preceded it.¹³

The beginnings of reform started even before Poniatowski became king. Educational reforms were desperately needed and Father Stanislaus Konarski¹⁴ was chiefly responsible for them. Governmental reforms were begun at the Diet of Convocation which preceded Poniatowski's election. There an attempt was made to limit the liberum veto; however, Repnin, who was already at that time working for Russia, successfully contrived to maintain the anarchical constitution of the country. Nevertheless, at this Diet, beginnings were made in social, economic, and administrative reform, and four commissions were established - war, justice, police, and treasury - and there was a general duty introduced on all goods, which eliminated one of the gentry's greatest privileges.¹⁵

When Poniatowski came to the throne he was willing to permit further reform, but he encountered many difficulties. He was not given much support by the Poles themselves because many refused to accept him as their lawful king

¹³Halecki, p. 189.

¹⁴Konarski, (1700-1773), was a Piarist priest, and writer. He was the founder of the Collegium Nobilium, a school for the Polish gentry. He also advocated state reforms.

¹⁵August Sokolowski, Dzieje Polski Illustrowane (Vienna: Mauryce Perles Co., 1904), p. 392.

due to the election irregularities and his personal unpopularity. He provoked Catherine by not being as docile as she had expected, and he tried to improve Polish relations with Austria and France, which in turn further strengthened Prussia's and Russia's determination to hamper reform in Poland. Nevertheless, during the first two years of King Poniatowski's reign, several ministries and commissions were formed which functioned well, and a special council of ministers was to be formed. Also, financial and monetary reforms helped the budget to be balanced. With Prince Czartoryski, Poniatowski founded an excellent military school where attended among others, Tadeusz Kosciuszko. And, with Count Andrew Zamoyski¹⁶ he began a consideration of the needs of the urban population.

In 1766 the first Diet of Poniatowski's reign was called. It was hoped that this Diet would develop these beginnings and especially work toward the limitation of the liberum veto; however, consideration of this subject was quickly dropped under further Russian and Prussian threats of war. To further cause trouble, Russia and Prussia through their bribed representatives brought up the question of the rights of the non-Catholic population. As was previously mentioned, only about seven out of the eleven million people living in Poland were Poles. The remainder was Lithuanian, Jewish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, etc.

¹⁶Zamoyski, (1716-1792), was a count and chancellor of Poland from 1764-67.

Religious toleration was accorded to the non-Catholic minorities, the "dissenters", in Poland for hundreds of years; however, in the eighteenth century the Catholic majority became less tolerant and refused equal civil rights to the dissenters. From the point of view of Rome and the Catholic Pole, perhaps these were drastic measures, but they were necessary considering the prevalent dangers. In Poland there was the tremendous influence of the Lutheran state, Prussia, and the Orthodox state, Russia. And, because of Poland's strong bonds with, and admiration for the French, the enlightened, irreligious ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, etc., were spreading in Poland. Therefore the Poles, fearful of non-Catholic or irreligious inroads, were in no mood to be forced in their own country by Russia and Prussia into accepting the dissenters as equals.

Also, we must remember that the dissenters were demanding from the Catholic majority an equality that existed in no other country in Europe in the eighteenth century. When this equality was not forthcoming, the dissenters appealed for assistance to foreign powers, Protestants to Prussia, and Orthodox to Russia.¹⁷ This of course gave Prussia, and particularly Russia, another excuse to interfere, as was readily admitted by Panin, Catherine's chief of foreign affairs from 1763 to 1780. In a letter to Prince Repnin in Warsaw, dated August 14, 1767,

¹⁷ Carlton J. Hayes, Modern Europe To 1870 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 300.

Panin stated with utmost frankness that the emancipation of the dissidents had for its object the acquisition by Russia once and forever, through our co-religionists and the Protestants, of a firm and reliable party legally entitled to participate in the affairs of Poland.¹⁸

The final blow to the Diet of 1766 was the inability of the Polish gentry to unite and overlook their differences. Their constant quarreling, pettiness, and lack of the spirit of compromise made it impossible to make radical decisions. Those of the gentry who worked for their country's interests were often hampered by their less patriotic peers and by the representatives of the foreign powers. As a result, the Diet was unable to accomplish anything of significance and it was really Repnin who dictated to the Poles.

In 1767 the Confederation of Radom was formed. It was organized by Prince Charles Radziwiłł¹⁹ under the instigation of Prince Repnin. This confederation opposed the king, the movements of reform initiated by the Czartoryski family, and the dissidents who had recently formed their own confederation. In the name of freedom they appealed to Catherine, but she made them recognize King Poniatowski, the rights of the dissidents, and worst of all, they were forced to accept the fact that Poland was now under the

¹⁸Florinsky, p. 519.

¹⁹Radziwiłł, (1734-1790), "Panie Kochanku," was a Polish prince from Lithuania. He was very much opposed to Poniatowski's election and in protest left Poland. Three years later he fell into Prince Repnin's trap and became marshal of the Radom Confederation. After its failure he emigrated again.

protection of Russia. A Russo-Polish treaty of February 24, 1768, placed the Polish constitution under the guarantee of Russia for all time, while a separate act gave the dissidents full civil and political rights. Thus the Confederation of Radom only made matters worse. It certainly illustrated the Poles' disunity - how one Pole could call in a foreigner against another Pole. At the Diet of the same year, two bishops, Soltyk and Zaluski, and a senator, Rzewuski, protested Poland's subservience to Russia, and for their perceptiveness of Poland's plight, they were arrested and deported to Russia.

With the signing of the Russo-Polish treaty of 1768,

Catherine, Panin, and Repnin were congratulating themselves on their bloodless victory over Poland, but the real troubles were just beginning.²⁰

Soon Russia would be forced to realize that it was no longer dealing with the decadent Poland of Saxon times.

Casimir Pulaski and The Confederation of Bar

The Poles in many ways were idealists. When a goal or a cause inspired or appealed to them, they were willing to give all, even their lives, without considering the cost. Like the French, the Poles were individualists; it was easy for them to be convinced of their individual righteousness. Nevertheless, there were two values most Poles were united upon: their Church and their country. Most Poles were attached to their religion, Catholicism, emotionally

²⁰Florinsky, p. 519.

and traditionally, if not always intellectually. Most Poles were ardent patriots, even if sometimes their behavior did not indicate it. And, peculiarly in Poland, religious and patriotic beliefs were tied together, as symbolized by the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa. This was perhaps due to the fact that Poland's aggressors generally intended to extinguish Catholicism as well as destroy the Polish national consciousness through the suppression of language and culture. For these two convictions, Church and country, the Poles were willing to fight impossible odds, as they had often done, with the almost predictable outcome of reprisals. Perhaps the Poles were foolish, not brave, nevertheless they continued struggling in the hope that the miracle might happen, or at least that the inevitable might be delayed. Most of all perhaps, the Poles wished to demonstrate that they would not give up; that they would help right triumph even though it would take a long time, for they had faith that ultimately it would.

As equally as the Poles were united in their convictions, they were divided as to how they would protect them. Although the gentry was unable to unite in the Diets, it was faced with the absolute necessity of uniting to throw out the meddlers militarily. If the Poles wished to survive, Pole could no longer fight Pole. And as the realization of this fact finally struck the Poles, Prussia and Russia perceived a real threat to their past successes and future plans, for the Poles were planning a union which if

successful would free Poland from foreign interference.

On February 29, 1768, in the town of Bar,²¹ several thousand of the gentry employed their old privilege of confederation. This confederation, which later became known as the Confederation of Bar, differed radically from previous confederations of the gentry. Selfish, petty aims did not motivate it; rather it was a religious, patriotic movement intended to free Poland from Russian influence, assure Polish territory, and protect the Catholic religion against the Orthodox Russians and the Protestant Prussians. A large part of the gentry took part in this confederation, together with large segments of the peasant and urban population. Poles from all provinces came to the aid of Poland, and this most widespread and intense opposition to Russian imperialism evidenced the fact that Poles would unite and fight.

At the forefront of this confederation was the Pulaski family, Joseph, and his three sons, Francis, Antony, and Casimir. Casimir Pulaski was born on March 4, 1747, at the family estate, Winiary, a quarter of a mile from the town of Warka, which is less than thirty miles from Warsaw, the capital of Poland. Pulaski was of a minor noble family, although through both his father and mother he was related to some of Poland's most prominent families. His father,

²¹Bar was a small fortified town in the south-east of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth near the Turkish border. It is presently located in Soviet Ukraine.

Joseph, was a lawyer by profession, and in addition to managing the family estates, he was responsible for fourteen towns and a hundred and eight villages. Unlike many of the gentry who had forgotten the old Polish tradition of service to Poland, Joseph Pulaski admirably united his private interests with public service. He took part in four Diets, 1744, 1748, 1750, and 1754, and actively called for reform and an increase in the Polish military defenses. In general orientation, the family was staunchly Catholic, and in recent years because of the increased Russian interference, tended to be anti-Russian.

Pulaski was one of eight children. Of the five girls in the family, Anna entered a convent near Warsaw and always remained close to the family despite its affiliation with the Confederation of Bar (which was looked upon unfavorably in many quarters at that time), while Josefa, Joanna, Pauline, and Margaret married Confederates. The boys were Francis, Antony and Casimir.

Pulaski's childhood was undoubtedly pleasant, surrounded as he was by a large happy family on a beautiful estate. After completing his elementary education at the local parochial school at Warka, Pulaski was sent to Warsaw to study with the Teatyn priests. This choice of a school for Pulaski was in a way unfortunate because the emphasis was not on a good solid education, but rather on the development of good manners, knowledge of several languages, dancing, etc. Thus Pulaski did not finish a systematic course at this school and his formal education was definitely

quite sketchy. When Pulaski reached the age of fifteen, his father, perhaps dissatisfied with the kind of education his son was receiving in Warsaw, decided to give him some practical experience as a courtier and sent him to the court of Prince Karl of Courland. Here Pulaski was introduced to that which was to be his future career. As a young boy at Winiary he had become a skilled horseman. At Prince Karl's court at Mitau he developed this skill and added to it various other military skills such as shooting and tactics. In addition, he became aware for the first time of Poland's position in relation to Russia. As was previously mentioned, Russia had decided to take over the duchy of Courland, and at the time of Pulaski's stay there, steps had already been taken to expel the rightful Polish ruler, Prince Karl, and replace him with its choice, Peter Biron. A detachment of forty Polish horsemen could hardly defend Prince Karl and the Polish claim to Courland, so Prince Karl and his court (including Pulaski) returned to Poland.

His education was finished. He had seen little or no military service. He had taken part in no battle but he had an unparalleled opportunity to study Russian methods and Russian character. He had gained an ideal of what Poland should be and he determined to do his best to bring his vision into action. Back home, his father too felt keenly this new disgrace to the Polish King and the Polish reputation, but the time was not ripe for action. Life went on at Winiary but in the Pulaski family the sufferings of Poland and the need for a revived army were emphasized. Patriotism replaced personal ambition. Petty questions of law and of

personal profit receded into the background and father and son thought earnestly of the situation.²²

As we have seen, the irregular election of Poniatowski, and the Russian-directed Polish policy, created conditions that called the Confederation of Bar into existence. Prior to its formal institution at Bar, many preparations were made by the Pulaskis, who can certainly be considered to have inspired the movement. From the beginning, Joseph Pulaski assumed the leadership of the movement and his three sons became his emissaries in search of support and supplies. When their activities had reached such proportions that they could no longer be hidden from the numerous Russian units near Winiary, the town of Bar was chosen as the new headquarters. In a short time there were many small units of Poles training at Bar. Joseph Pulaski, in order to give form to the growing movement, decided to establish a traditional Polish confederation. Joseph Pulaski was elected the military head, and Michael Krasinski was the temporary civilian head. At the same time, Joseph Pulaski established a military order of the Knights of the Holy Cross, its model being the old military religious orders of the Middle Ages. Some of its tenets were:

- 1) The Order is to defend the Roman Catholic faith with their lives and their blood.
- 2) It is to commit no violence or outrages among Catholics, Jews, and Lutherans.
- 3) There is to be one chief banner of the Catholic league; the Lord Jesus crucified

²²Clarence A. Manning, Soldier of Liberty, Casimir Pulaski (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 37.

on a gold or silver background. A second banner is to have a representation of the most noble Mother of God on the same background. There can be other banners under the sign of the Holy Cross but these two are to be preserved at all cost in battle rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the enemies of the Holy Faith.

- 4) A troop is to be one hundred strong, composed of sworn knights, except the privates and is to have four officers, a captain, lieutenant, ensign, and doctor, also a trumpeter and a drummer.²³

From the beginning, the situation was confusing. It was unknown to many uninformed Poles whether the Confederation was fighting the Polish army, the king, or the Russians because there was no formal declaration of war against Russia. Actually, the movement was in opposition to the Russians, but if some Poles were in alliance with them, they too would be considered the enemy notwithstanding that this might include the king himself.

Actual fighting took a long time to get started, but Pulaski had his first encounter on April 20 when he and his men were attacked by a Russian detachment of carabineers, hussars, and Don Cossacks near the town of Staro-Konstantynów.²⁴ There was a victory which Pulaski painted in glowing terms:

Our knowledge of the battle is absolutely definite; the number of those who fell in the battle is absolutely unknown to us, for since the firing lasted a little over three hours and everyone shot well, we saw almost two hundred Muscovites lying on the field, but they left none; as soon as anyone fell, others carried him from the field and we took only two, one alive

²³Ibid., pp. 45-46.

²⁴Staro-Konstantynów was a town in the south-east part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, not far from Bar. It is also presently located in the Soviet Ukraine.

in the pursuit, when they began to withdraw and we to pursue. The number of the attackers was over two thousand and there were about four hundred of us, for we did not all have hand weapons; it is known that one man with a star received a shell by my favor, for after I fired a shell at one platoon, more than ten falling made a significant breach in their line and then I secured another shell and the ball which was aimed high rolled under the horse of the commanding general, and greatly frightened him, so that he with his whole army had to retreat rapidly.²⁵

The next few weeks saw several skirmishes in the area with no great gains on either side. Just at this time a powerful Polish lord, Joachim Potocki, decided to join the Confederates. Although this promised much because of his wealth, the manpower available to him, and his position, Potocki was soon defeated by the Russians and forced to escape to Turkey. To add to the troubles of May, 1768, the Confederates found themselves unable to count upon Polish help from other areas of Poland. Due to fantastic propaganda spread by the Russians, the Ukrainian peasants and the Cossacks began to revolt against the Polish gentry. This naturally left little time for the patriotic gentry to think about their own quarrel with the Russians, and in fact, they were forced to ask Russian help in putting down this bloody uprising. When over a hundred thousand blameless people were killed, the Russian army marched in to put down the rebellion, closing their eyes to the fact

²⁵Ibid., p. 52.

that they were largely responsible for it themselves. Because at least for the time being it was impossible to get help from these stricken provinces, the Confederation of Bar turned to the provinces of Kiev²⁶ and Zytomierz.²⁷ To maintain supply lines, it was necessary to establish a stronghold midway between Bar and these provinces. The town of Berdyczów, with its old fortress-like monastery was chosen. The only man among the Confederates who had any real military success so far was Pulaski, so he was chosen to hold it. The Russians under General Peter Krechetnikov began a siege which lasted over two weeks. After severe bombardment, the shutting-off of the water supply, and poor morale among the town's residents and monks, Pulaski's garrison was forced to capitulate. The Russians took over 1361 prisoners, including Pulaski. With the capture of Berdyczów, it became impossible to hold Bar, and Joseph Pulaski and two thousand of his followers were forced to flee to Turkey. Thus, the first year of the Bar Confederation came to a close with very little accomplished; major military failures and exiled leadership were the only ostensible results. Nevertheless, a growing support for the Confederation began evidencing itself as other confederations in sympathy with the Bar Confederation started forming

²⁶The province of Kiev was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and it is presently located in the Soviet Ukraine. The city of Kiev, founded in 862 A.D., was the capital of "Rus" and it is presently the capital of Soviet Ukraine.

²⁷The province of Zytomierz was part of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and it is presently located in the Soviet Ukraine.

and more Poles began to volunteer and join the original Confederate remnants in Turkey. Also, foreign aid began to come. France, remembering its long friendship with Poland, offered as much assistance as it could, considering the difficulties it was itself undergoing. It was believed that the trickle of money and supplies from Louis XV would soon grow into more substantial aid. At first Turkey also gave some aid, but, becoming disgusted with the squabbles among the Poles, and becoming similarly involved in a war with Russia, could not be depended upon for further assistance.

It seems that Pulaski's capture posed a difficult problem for the Polish king, who himself was pained by the condition of Poles being moved around in their own country as prisoners of war by the Russians. Due to his intercession, most of the captured gentry in time obtained release by promising not to rejoin the Confederation. Eventually, Pulaski also promised, and just in time escaped to Turkey, for Repnin had changed his mind concerning Pulaski's release.

If we ask did he really and sincerely want to persuade his comrades to put down their arms, or did he only want to deceive the Russians, we cannot categorically decide.²⁸

In any case, once Pulaski had rejoined his family in Turkey, he issued a statement intended for the Polish court and the Russians that he would continue to support the Confederation and work toward its triumphant reentry into Poland. However, because of the still inadequate support and supplies, and the very serious feud between Joseph Pulaski

²⁸Władysław Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski (Cracow: "Polska Akademia Umiejętności," 1931), p. 48. (Writer's translation).

and Joachim Potocki, Pulaski was forced to general inactivity, with the exception of frequent short forays into Poland for more men and supplies. The following months saw further setbacks for the Confederation and Pulaski personally. The disunity among the members and the leaders was getting worse. Joseph Pulaski was captured and put into a Tartar prison, and Antony Pulaski became a prisoner of the Russians. To make matters worse, Pulaski had suffered another serious defeat at the castle of the Holy Trinity at Okopy.²⁹ Fortunately, Pulaski and 164 of his men escaped. With the leadership of the original Bar Confederation now in the hands of Joachim Potocki, who bore considerable enmity toward all the Pulaskis, Pulaski decided to continue his fight elsewhere by joining Martin Lubomirski, at this time located near Cracow. Lubomirski was one of many isolated leaders of small units in opposition to the Russians and the king, and he

. . . was a man after Casimir's own heart in his willingness to run risks and to stake everything upon the success of the cause.³⁰

Despite Lubomirski's small successes, his efforts and the efforts of the other independent Polish confederates could have little significance because they were on too small a scale. To the king and his Russian supporters they were little more than bothersome disturbers of the

²⁹Okopy was a heavily fortified town in the south-east part of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. It is presently located in Soviet Ukraine near the Rumanian border.

³⁰Manning, p. 79.

tranquility of the nation. Without a strong union and definite action, the different groups of Polish Confederates could hardly hope to depose the king, or at least eliminate the Russian dictatorship over him and Poland. Most of the leaders of the other confederations, among them Theodore Wessel, Adam Krasinski, Bishop Soltyk, etc., although loudly opposing Russian interference, did nothing much except plan from a safe distance in Slovakia and dream of foreign help. Up to 1769 most of the hard fighting had been done by the Bar Confederates under Pulaski. Because these other Confederate leaders were not anxious to fight, Pulaski from the beginning had no popularity with them. Also, Pulaski gained their hostility because he was far more successful in recruiting men and obtaining supplies than they, even in territories they considered their own. Pulaski's position took its worse turn when at long last all the leaders agreed to unite, but under the command of his, (and in particular his father's) enemy, Joachim Potocki. Pulaski tried to accept him in good faith, pledging him his assistance for the good of Poland. On May 1, 1769, he wrote to Bierzynski, one of the military leaders of the newly formed General Confederation, and the Marshal of Sieradz:

In the uniform desire to be useful to my country, I will not bring into my public activities anything which is opposed to it. I came into these regions, by forcing my way through a multitude of enemies. I have weighed in the balance the loss of my life or of achieving my goal, and I decided always to know the views of the inhabitants and to be useful to my country. The misfortune of division is more depressing to me than the power of the enemy can be. I

was, in the beginning of the Confederation of Bar, always a full commander. I knew my duties to my superiors, without whom I never acted in my causes. In the provinces of Krakow and Sandomierz, in which I found marshals, I considered it just to turn to them and obey their orders. The duty of a commander is not laid upon me for the first time, while in these provinces the marshals have given me orders which I might consider it a fault to accept but with the pure desire of using my services for my country without introducing by myself any discord among the inhabitants. There has recently come to me notice of a change of marshals into which it is not fitting for me to enter. But as I have no other desire than to aid the interests of the Confederation, not counting my own private interests, without any objections, with complete satisfaction, I am ready to assume the obligations imposed upon me. My merits are small and not worthy of regard. My satisfaction lies completely in my sincere wishes, God knows; I shall be most happy wherever He calls me.

Your excellency may be satisfied that you can rely on the firmness of my two beliefs in the Faith and Freedom. My command, although diminished by bloody battles with a powerful enemy, always recognizes the omnipotence of God which assists those who trust in it. I will say without deceit that I shall be glad to serve as a common soldier under their command in such a post as will satisfy my collaborators . . . ³¹

But soon after Pulaski's brother returned to Poland with the news that their father had died of the plague, Pulaski's attitude changed. Both had little more than 150 men, yet

. . . they felt that their honor and filial piety demanded that they continue to uphold the cause for which their father had laid down his life and that it was dishonorable for them to acknowledge Joachim Potocki as their superior. It seemed madness

³¹ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

for the two brothers to play a lone hand and to challenge Russia, the King, and the Confederates.³²

But they did, and after renewing the Confederation of Bar, the two brothers decided on an immediate plan of action. The strategically located Polish city of Lvov was to be attacked; however, their plans soon became known to the other Confederates, who immediately decided to join the Pulaskis for fear that the attack might be successful and the brothers alone would share the public praise. As a result, the attack had so many leaders that it was ineffectual, and when the news came that General Drevich³³ was approaching Lvov the attack was abandoned.

With this setback, Francis and Casimir Pulaski moved into a different part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Lithuania. Here they hoped to build resistance against the Russians and increase their army and supplies. Francis Pulaski undertook the diplomatic aspects of the new campaign, while Casimir Pulaski was in charge of the military side. Before long, they had a band of over a thousand men with which they harassed the Russians in the neighborhood and had several victories. Because of Pulaski's growing reputation, he was accorded the honor of being elected Marshal of Lomża, a truly high position which entitled him to sit in the Polish Council of War. The Russians increasingly came to fear Pulaski, and finally sent the

³²Ibid., p. 83.

³³By 1768 Drevich already had a fearful reputation as an unbeatable Russian general, who in only one year, had destroyed the Confederations of Poznań, Sieradzk and Wielun.

great Suvorov³⁴ against him. At Orzechów,³⁵ on September 15, Suvorov succeeded in completely outmaneuvering Pulaski, and in four short hours Pulaski saw his brother fatally wounded and his work reduced to nothing.

Pulaski had no choice but to return with his remnant band to the Confederate headquarters in Zborow, Slovakia. After a year and a half of fighting and sacrifice, the personal results for Pulaski were father and brother dead; another brother in a Russian prison; and serious Russian attacks against his mother, sisters and estate at Winiary. Nevertheless, it could be said that Pulaski alone "had been the goad that had driven the other leaders to action."³⁶

Less than a month after Pulaski's arrival at Zborow, the various magnates and military leaders agreed to establish a Generalcy of the Confederation. This was to be a truly unified board which would coordinate all opposition to the Russians and at the same time appear as the spokesman of Polish resistance to foreign nations (from which it was still hoped aid would come.) Michael Pac of Lithuania was appointed political head, and Pulaski's old enemy, Joachim Potocki, was appointed the military chief. No

³⁴Suvorov, (1729-1800), "the greatest of all Russian generals had served for years as a common soldier and was able to get more out of his men than any Russian commander before or since his time." Melvin C. Wren, The Course of Russian History (New York: Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 308. Also, the highest Russian military decoration is named after him.

³⁵Orzechów was a small town located in the central part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is presently located in the north-west corner of Soviet Ukraine.

³⁶Manning, p. 91.

significant place was found for Pulaski and the other Bar Confederates. In general, they were snubbed, and their previous efforts for the cause and their superior experience were ignored. Recognizing the need for unity, Pulaski accepted this slight and submitted to being used for any mission. However, rather than stay at the headquarters which specialized in making inoperable plans and intrigues, Pulaski made frequent frontier raids and worked at rebuilding his small band. When at last the French sent more supplies and men, including General Charles Dumouriez, the Generalcy began to make even more grandiose plans for a restored Poland. General Dumouriez immediately perceived the disadvantages under which the Poles were operating. In a letter written by General Dumouriez to the French court, dated August 15, 1770, he stated:

Thus as say the Poles and the newspapers, the Confederation has to sustain this war only three to four thousand men, divided into eight or ten small separated units . . . In order to sustain this shadow of an army, there is as total resource only 278,304 Polish Florins. 16,000 ducats are to be received in the month of September for the rest of the year, out of which it is necessary to pay ambassadors and all the other expenses.³⁷

In order to improve the leadership and the army, General Dumouriez suggested that the Poles stop fighting among themselves and seize a chain of forts behind which they could recruit and train men and obtain supplies. The starting point of this new campaign was to be the occupation

³⁷Władysław Konopczyński, Materiały do Dziejów Konfederackiej (Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności!, 1931), p. 56. (Writer's translation.)

of the monastery fortress of Czestochowa. Pulaski was put in charge of the army which was to accomplish this. Up to this day, the shrine at Czestochowa is the spiritual and patriotic center of Poland, and in those days it was an ideal spot to defend. The church and the adjacent buildings are surrounded by a high wall and a moat and there is a tall tower from which the surrounding countryside can be viewed for miles. Previously the Russians had tried to seize the treasure in the shrine, but the people of the town of Czestochowa prevented it. Because the monks were not particularly happy about having any army stationed in their monastery, Pulaski had to resort to trickery to get in. Once there, most of the monks grew to appreciate his presence, for in the two years that the shrine was Pulaski's headquarters, the safety of the monastery was assured against the Russians. Pulaski immediately joined forces with Joseph Zaremba³⁸ and began to build up the defenses of the monastery.

In the meantime, Dumouriez and the Generalcy of the Confederation declared the deposition of King Poniatowski. On October 22, 1770, King Poniatowski was declared a "friend of Moscow" and the oppressor of his people. It is true that King Poniatowski sat in Warsaw like a painted doll during his country's turmoil, doing nothing more than trying to keep the small Polish army out of the struggle

³⁸Zaremba was the supreme military commander of "Great Poland." Later there was a serious break in relations between him and Pulaski over the deposition of King Poniatowski.

between the Confederates and the Russians. His position demanded he make a choice - but was he, as a Pole, to join the Confederates, who were fighting to save their country, but opposed him, or was he to favor the Russians, who had given him his throne, and thoroughly rationalized their actions. King Poniatowski's vacillation between the Russian and the Confederate camps was settled with the deposition announcement, which necessarily threw him into the Russian camp. Although there was some justification for the deposition announcement, in many ways it was a serious mistake on the part of the Confederates. Now, even though his sympathies were with them, the king was forced to completely disassociate himself from the Confederates, and many Poles were alienated from the Confederates because they wished to remain loyal to the king. Because Pulaski was under the orders of the Confederation, he accepted the deposition announcement and began to act as if there were no king, by confiscating where necessary the king's property.

Dumouriez and the Generalcy were aghast at the conclusion Casimir drew from their plain statements. Of course they were engaged in deposing the king, but not too much or too strenuously, just as they were fighting the Russians, but not too much or too strenuously.³⁹

It was difficult for Pulaski to accept such a lackadaisical policy, but he was determined to cooperate at all costs.

³⁹Manning, p. 112.

The next few months saw several minor battles, but the Russians were mainly concerned with preparing a major attack against Czestochowa and Pulaski. The command was given to General Drevich, who said he would quickly capture that "hen-house." Instead, he could not accomplish its capture in over eighteen days of intermittent attacks. Preparations and negotiations were carried on by both sides for days, General Drevich even going to the length of trying to make a deal with Pulaski by offering him the rank of general in the Russian army. In one of the many raids into the town of Czestochowa that preceded the battle itself, Pulaski almost lost his life. Finally, at 2 A.M. on January 10, 1771, the major attack of one of the most famous battles of Polish history began. Three Russian battalions tried to scale the walls of the monastery fortress. Rocks and fireballs were dropped on the Russians and quickly, after an hour and a half of fighting, the attack was called off. The Confederates listed their casualties at twenty-five, and the Russians at 1460.⁴⁰ Then, as General Drevich recommenced the bombardment and prepared for another attack, word reached him that more Confederates were coming to the defense of Czestochowa. General Drevich decided to retreat.

Everyone recognized that the victory was the work of Casimir Pulaski and of his men. They realized that he had been left in an impossible situation and that it was his courage, audacity, and skill that had saved the day for the Confederates.⁴¹

⁴⁰Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, p. 213.

⁴¹Manning, p. 121.

Some of the praises heaped upon Pulaski at this time were:

Pulaski is good, courageous and has a soldier's soul . . . Truly his fame went far beyond the Polish borders, French, German, Dutch, English newspapers wrote about Pulaski.⁴²

Even Voltaire supposedly made a remark that the Blessed Virgin herself threw down General Drevich's ladder during the attack.⁴³

Instead of the Czestochowa victory being a significant step toward final victory in the campaign of 1771, it was a signal for the renewal of the old feuds which resulted in three different factions that even General Dumouriez was unable to unite. The three Confederate factions included:

. . . that of Pulaski who believed that the salvation of Poland must come by Polish arms and who brought under his influence all those commanders who believed in fighting, that of Zarembo who refused to risk his men in battle and who adopted a dilatory policy and that of the magnates who, living safely at Zborow across the border, waited for some turn in European developments which would free their country without undue effort on their part.⁴⁴

And because each group pulled its own way, there were no important Confederate victories during 1771. This situation could have continued indefinitely had not one incident occurred. This incident created such an uproar and scandal that Pulaski's reputation was ruined and the Confederation was doomed to collapse. It appears that the Generalcy of the Confederation decided that it was necessary to kidnap

⁴²Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, p. 215. (Writer's translation.)

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Manning, p. 124.

the king. The motivation for the plan seems completely obscure.⁴⁵ The undertaking from today's perspective seems foolhardy, if not stupid, and we can only speculate as to its motivation. It was known that

there was a considerable number of magnates who for practical reasons, timidity, prudence, caution, interests, kept silent, but only waited to declare themselves when there was powerful support and certain help.⁴⁶

Perhaps the Generalcy thought that if the king could be persuaded to support the Confederation, more Polish nobles and fractious military leaders, and greater foreign backing would come to the aid of the Confederation.

To carry out the abduction plot, forty of Pulaski's men were chosen. Pulaski himself, however, was not included. On a dark evening in November, 1771, Strawinski, Lukawski, Kuzma, and about thirty other Confederates entered Warsaw by hiding in hay wagons. Knowing that King Poniatowski was to return from visiting Prince Czartoryski along a certain route, they waited for him in a nearby Dominican cloister. As soon as the king's carriage, which was accompanied by only a few servants, was spotted, it was stopped and the king was hurriedly dragged from it. Then he was taken beyond the city to a forest where more Confederates were waiting. During this time, one of the Confederates, Kuzma, noticed that the king had no hat and only one shoe. Out of sympathy, he offered the king his own. At the same time, Kuzma made a proposal to the king. If the king would pardon him for his

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁶Konopczyński, Materjały p. 55, (Writer's translation.)

role in the activities of the Confederation, he would help the king to escape. The king readily agreed, in fact, he also promised Kuzma a reward. As a result, a note was sent to the king's army, and before long the king was rescued and was back in Warsaw. King Poniatowski immediately placed the blame on Pulaski and soon all of Europe was condemning Pulaski as a would-be regicide and murderer.⁴⁷

The other leaders of the Confederation more directly responsible for the plot, now that it had failed, were happy to have the blame cast from themselves onto Pulaski. The truth of the matter seems to be that since the Generalcy had decided upon the abduction plot, Pulaski hesitatingly agreed, with the proviso, however, that the king was not to be harmed. In a letter of defense to the king of France he wrote:

. . . I have never transgressed the feelings of nature or that education which my honorable father gave me. All my actions together testify to my moderate character in carnage and in war; I proclaimed pardon to the conquered and I set myself an example of it: when the Russians treated my parents barbarously, I sent them back forty prisoners. The death penalty which all laws prescribe for spies and bandits, I replaced with public labor. Would I be desirous of the blood of people, I who would give life even to my enemies? Now is it possible to charge me with participation in a terrible conspiracy against the life of the monarch? I would have counted it the most wonderful day of my life, if I could have fought with him as he marched at the head of slaves and enemies, whom he had called into my country to exterminate citizens like myself . . . I would truly have felt myself the happiest of mortals, if I could have taken him prisoner and compelled him to abdicate the

⁴⁷Manning, p. 137.

throne which he had sprinkled with the blood of my relatives and friends; but I would be a man without honor and I would die of despair, if I had conceived the idea of dirtying my sword by the murder of an enemy whom I can overthrow and conquer.⁴⁸

By ruining the reputation of the most illustrious leader of the Confederation, the death blow had been dealt to the Confederation. Not only did many Poles lose their sympathy for the Confederates and refuse to help them any longer, but European public opinion was such that further foreign aid was completely out of the question. To make matters worse, fearing for their thrones,

the Austrian, Prussian and Russian monarchies began to think among themselves, how to divide Poland.⁴⁹

Pulaski, anticipating this final degradation for Poland, continued his fight, and despite several more defeats managed to hold Czestochowa. This was the one stronghold that had not yet fallen and to which flocked many who still thought Poland could be saved. Nevertheless, Pulaski soon realized that the situation was hopeless, for without supplies it was impossible to hold off the growing Russian army which was preparing an enormous final attack against Czestochowa. Rather than be responsible for the massacre of Polish patriots who could perhaps be used later in the defense of their country, and rather than see the destruction of Poland's spiritual and historic center by further attacks,

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁹L. Sieminski, Historia Narodu Polskiego (Cracow: J. M. Himmelbau Co., 1873), p. 272. (writer's translation.)

Pulaski decided to end Confederate resistance. Before leaving for Prussia he left the following farewell message for his troops:

I took arms in my hand for the public good; for it I must lay them down. The union of three mighty empires takes away from us all means of possible defense, and the case in which I am involved would render it difficult for me to arrange a capitulation for you, by linking you with my misfortune. I know your zeal and your courage, and I am certain that when happier circumstances arise for the service of your country you will be the same as you have been with me.⁵⁰

Reasons for the Failure of the Confederation of Bar

The reasons for the failure of the General Confederation and the original Bar Confederation seem to us quite evident today. First, there was Russia's military superiority, which was coupled with its imperialistic drive to subjugate Poland. As we have seen, in addition to more men and supplies, Russia had great military leaders like Drevich and Suvorov. Then, ever since Peter the Great, (when Russia became a European power and developed an army) Russia had become more and more imperialistic. When Catherine II came to the throne in 1762, she had two major thoughts in mind - the increase of her personal glory and the extension of Russian power. Catherine, longing for adulation, made every effort to appear as the enlightened, benevolent monarch, and she diligently cultivated the friendship of the intellectual leaders of the day.

⁵⁰ Manning, p. 147.

So successfully did she create the desired impression that even her imperialistic aggression toward Poland was lauded by Voltaire as a "victory of 'tolerance' over fanaticism." 51

Although peace had been a youthful dream of Catherine's, she rejected it in favor of pursuing an international policy which would give to her and Russia military glory and a dominant position in Europe. Catherine realized that Russia's future lay with the west. She also knew that Poland would prove to be a barrier. Thus "the Empress attached the greatest importance to Russian domination over Poland."⁵² Not only was Russia interested in playing a leading part in international affairs; it was convinced of its "historic mission" to expand. As a result, its imperialistic policy was not directed solely against Poland; the Balkans, Turkey, etc., were also in the way of Russian expansion.

When it later came to the actual partition of Poland, Catherine wished to have some justification, for opinion-conscious Catherine had her pride, and Poland could command sympathy. After all, the conquest of a superior culture by an inferior one would be bound to create a torrent of disapproval in civilized Europe if there no plausible explanation for it. In search of this justification, Catherine hit upon the idea that "there must be archives in Berlin containing some claim on Poland." ⁵³ This idea failed to produce

⁵¹Florinsky, p. 506.

⁵²Ibid., p. 518.

⁵³Bernard Pares, A History of Russia (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 264.

results so Catherine used two excuses which she hoped would be ample justification.

The first reason she offered was that the state of anarchy in Poland necessitated that a stable power step in to restore order. Of course, Catherine ignored the fact that the Poles themselves had begun the gigantic task of recovery and reform; if Russia had not interfered, the Poles could have rebuilt the nation.

The second reason, as we have seen, was the religious problem. However, again Russia used it to its advantage, for the extension of Russian rule was the motive for insisting upon and forcing tolerance. Again the Poles themselves could have remedied this problem to the satisfaction of all religious groups by the gradual elimination of civil inequalities and intolerance.

Although as we shall later see, Russia agreed to share the Polish spoils with Prussia and Austria in the partition of 1772, there is evidence to suggest that Russia was determined to dominate all of Poland, and that it wished to share Poland with neither Prussia nor Austria. And, although Russia had originally agreed to act with Austria and Prussia, after its victories in Turkey its confidence became so great as to motivate it to risk Austrian and Prussian dissatisfaction by saying to them that it alone wanted to take over Poland. But Frederick II

. . . reminded her (Catherine) of the idea of partition threatening that she would have to fight Prussia and Austria in the case of refusal. Catherine yielded.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Victor Durrey, *A History of the World* (Cleveland: World Syndicate Publishing Co., 1937), p. 406.

Secondly, the General Confederation failed because there were very many serious shortcomings within the Confederation itself. Although it is not difficult to find many brave, unselfish, and talented men in its ranks, as for example the Pulaskis, there were also many who were, if not dishonest and patriotically unmotivated, petty and stupid. Then the Confederation counted too much on foreign aid. As it materialized, it was too limited to do much good. Pulaski early realized that if the Poles wished to succeed they would have to do it alone by fighting, not by pestering foreign courts for aid. Finally, we saw that the Confederation seriously lacked unity in organization and execution. Generals, each conducting their own battles with their own confederations, were individually too weak to be pitted successfully against a large Russian army. Only when they managed to achieve some harmony, altogether too infrequently, did they win as in the case of Czestochowa. Also, because for a long time Poland did not have much of an army, and was in reality quite anti-militaristic in spirit, Poles did not have the knowledge of military strategy or the needed equipment to conduct a successful war.

The absolute ignorance of war, the bad state of Polish troops, the failure of supply on the part of the first Confederates could not be a sufficient obstacle against the discipline of the Russians. ⁵⁵

The Confederation's only really knowledgeable military

⁵⁵Konopczyński, Materjały . . . p. 53. (Writer's translation.)

leader, Pulaski, was ignored and hampered in his efforts much of the time. And, as the General Confederation failed militarily and was discredited for the abduction plot through Pulaski, the Bar Confederation, as its associate, was likewise crushed.

The Significance of the Confederation of Bar

However, of the General Confederation, the Bar segment was the most successful. Due to outstanding leadership, fine morale and relative efficiency, it stands out against the bleakness and bad management of the General Confederation. Although it failed, we must not underestimate its significance for Poland.

In spite of its miscarriage and in spite of the reproaches that can be leveled against it, the Bar Confederation is after all, an occurrence with the highest influence on the whole of Polish society.⁵⁶

For the first time the Poles were aware of the great danger facing their national existence. The Bar Confederation exposed the threat of Orthodox and Protestant powers to Catholic Poland. In addition to exposing this danger, it awoke the nation as a whole and made it realize that if it wished to survive as a nation, each guilty Pole would have to personally reverse his disinterested, anarchical behavior.

Most important, the Bar Confederation gave to Poland a new ideal. As we saw, especially during the eighteenth

⁵⁶Antoni Wrotnowski, Porozbiorwe Aspiracje Polityczne (Cracow: G. Gebethner, 1898), p. 50. (Writer's translation).

century, Poland had been degenerating. The ideals of the old Polish kings, namely, loyalty to country and a true spirituality, were lacking. From the top, through kings and gentry, Poland had in many ways become demoralized. Rarely in this period was one dedicated to the service of the state, rather one bragged at how much one received from a foreign power for an act of disloyalty or even treason. Instead of the old religious toleration, as for instance displayed by Casimir the Great toward the Jews, there was a growing bigotry and prejudice.

To counteract these evils in Poland, the Bar Confederation became the symbol of a new patriotism and a new tolerant religiosity. In the place of privilege and selfishness, the Bar Confederation advocated dedication, loyalty, and sacrifice for the fatherland. In the place of spiritual torpor, and intolerance, the Bar Confederation demonstrated a truer Catholicity and respect for others' religious convictions which promoted a tolerant understanding. This rebirth of Polish idealism gave the Poles the courage to bear the future years of oppression nobly, and even win the respect of their rulers. These new ideals united the Poles to a common spiritual and historical heritage which motivated them to preserve their national entity, which under terrible difficulties could have vanished. These new ideals spurred continuous Polish action against the oppressor in the form of numerous uprisings such as Kosciuszko's in 1794, Dabrowski's in 1797, and the November revolution of 1830. Also, these

new ideals and their application regained the respect and sympathy of foreign nations.

Thus the Bar Confederation was extremely important for future Polish history because it forged the direction of much of the future Polish thought and action. It exemplified future Polish dedication to ideals which had to be preserved as long as a Pole would exist, that in spite of all opposition and despite even the eradication of a geographical Polish entity, a Poland would exist. For the Confederation of Bar gave to Poland the essential ingredient for future accomplishment, namely, a positive ideal which could command dedication. After the collapse of the Confederation and the exile of its leaders, two things immediately resulted.

The first was the Russo-Turkish War, which had started even before the Polish Confederation ended, and which was directly influenced by activities in Poland.

Turkey had watched with deep suspicion the progress of Russian penetration in Poland. The Sultan had refused to recognize the election of Poniatowski on the ground that it had been forced on the point of Muscovite bayonets.⁵⁷

When the leaders of the Confederation turned to Turkey for help against Russia, the Sultan willingly helped especially because of French and Austrian encouragement. He realized that Russian domination of Poland would almost guarantee Russian attacks on Turkey. So when his request to Russia of withdrawing Russian troops from Poland was ignored, he

⁵⁷Florinsky, p. 520.

declared war and formed an alliance with the Confederation of Bar. Thus both the Polish and Eastern questions were joined, and in both cases Russia was the winner. Although Russia was poorly equipped to undertake two wars, it conducted the Turkish war also quite effectively. Thanks to several important victories, among them the naval victory of Alexis Orlov at Chios, Russia was able to command superior terms in the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardjii of 1774.

The second result of the collapse of the Confederation was the partition of Poland. Throughout the years of the Confederation's activity and the accompanying rebirth of patriotism, culture and religiosity, Poland's neighbors were growing more and more uneasy. So when Confederate troops were finally defeated, they decided that the time had come to act. Without any consideration of morality or international law, they proceeded to partition Poland for the first time. The agreement was made on August 5, 1772, between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and the three countries began immediately to occupy the confiscated provinces. Russia got the largest share, the area which now forms Soviet Belorussia, beyond the Dvina and the Dnieper. Prussia obtained the most valuable part of Poland, namely, West Prussia. Austria also received a large part of Poland: Galicia, western Podolia, and a part of the Cracow area. Altogether, Poland lost about a fifth of her population, a fourth of her territory, and almost half of her national wealth. But this was only the first partition; future partitions would cost even more.

Not only did these powers annex Polish territory, but they also wanted the Polish Diet to ratify the seizure. Poland, thoroughly weakened by its four year struggle, could do nothing but agree. The king and the Diet assembled in April, 1773, and ratified the partition on the threat that refusal would mean even more annexation. Despite valiant attempts at reform and military action, the Polish vacuum of power had not been filled in time.

CHAPTER TWO

CASIMIR PULASKI IN EXILE

After Pulaski left Czestochowa, his closest place of safety was Prussia and Prince Karl's court, which had become only a shadow of the former Mitau court. Here at Dresden, Pulaski became seriously ill and depressed, and during this period he wrote several letters for protection to Buat, the French ambassador at Dresden, and even to the Russians. After his recovery he began to try to defend himself, instead of only asking for protection:

In this he took the dubious course of casting all the responsibility for the kidnapping upon his subordinates, especially Strawinski, and he avoided any statement that might involve or clear the Generalcy, whose participation in the movement was completely ignored. This adds to the mystery of the kidnapping. The answer could not definitely clear Pulaski for there remained the question of the control that he had over his subordinates and the control that his superiors had over him.¹

The trial resulting from the attempt to abduct the king took place the following year, 1773, and the following sentence was promulgated:

Casimir Pulaski, Stanislaus Strawinski, fugitives, and Walenty Lukawski are not only to be deprived of their ranks and honor, but their bodies as tools of a shameful crime deserve to be subjected to punishment, and although for such a heinous deed they have deserved much greater and more savage punishment, yet on the intercession of His Royal Majesty

¹Manning, pp. 153-54.

to our court, we decree that Walenty Lukawski who is under arrest, and the fugitives Casimir Pulaski and Stanislaus Strawinski be put to death by beheading. Their hands are to be displayed on the public roads and after a while burned, their bodies immediately after beheading are to be quartered, burned, and scattered to the winds. The whole property of Casimir Pulaski we adjudge to the Royal Treasury and the informer, without touching in any way the rights of his mother, Mme. Pulaska.²

Indicative of the general Polish reaction to Pulaski's sentence was the response of a theater audience to a play given at a Jesuit school in Luck. The plot of the play concerned a father and his three sons. The first two sons were rebellious and disobedient. The third was obedient and willing to risk even his life for his father, but his father always persecuted him. The audience said, "In exactly this way the Republic repays Pulaski."³

Despite general opposition to this unfair sentencing of Pulaski, who did not even take part in the abduction plot, the doors to Poland were henceforth closed to him. He aimlessly traveled from Dresden to Altwasser, Nisa, Frankfurt am Main, Strasbourg, and Paris. Then in the latter part of the summer of 1773, the international situation took a new turn which made Pulaski feel that perhaps there was still a chance for Poland. He believed that a new Polish army should be formed in Turkey and immediately made plans to undertake this project. Fired with enthusiasm, Pulaski was able to gather enough funds and support to send off a seventy-five man expedition to Turkey. Once there, the

²Ibid., p. 157.

³Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, p. 335. (Writer's translation).

Turks gave Pulaski and his pitifully small group considerable aid, but the Christian Western ambassadors stationed in Turkey were unable to give or even promise any help. Traveling through the Balkan countries toward Poland was difficult for the Poles, for they were oftentimes attacked despite their Turkish guards. Understandably so, for not knowing that Christian Poles were traveling under the protection of the Turkish pasha, Christian Greeks, Montenegrinians, etc., attacked their Turkish oppressors and their escorted guests.

As it happened, Pulaski and his group were present at the Turkish defeat, the battle of Jeni Pazar on June 29, 1774, which ended the Russo-Turkish war. During the course of this battle, Pulaski lost all the money and supplies gathered for the new invasion of Poland. This "battle convinced even the incorrigibly optimistic Casimir that his hopes of securing liberation of Poland through a Turkish army were in vain."⁴

Pulaski and his friends were now in a desperate situation. They were alone and poor in a defeated land, and there was the strong possibility that the terms of the Russo-Turkish peace treaty would include the surrender of Pulaski if he was still in Turkey. Disguised as a Tartar, and then as a "Mr. Romer", Pulaski was able to make his way to Smyrna where he received assistance so that he could obtain passage on a ship bound for Marseilles. This happened just in time

⁴Manning, p. 169.

for a Russian battleship appeared in the harbor of Smyrna and demanded the surrender of Mr. Romer just six hours after Pulaski put out to sea.⁵

About the middle of October, Pulaski landed at Marseilles and then, living as Mr. Romer, tried to recoup his finances. He had lost his Polish estates; he had a number of large debts from the Turkish fiasco; and he had five officers to support. Besides, it was impossible for him to find appropriate work, for he had knowledge of only the military and now, despite his fine reputation as a soldier, he was also infamous as a condemned would-be regicide, thereby making it impossible for him to get a commission in any European service. Thus, as the months passed he grew deeper and deeper in debt until he had accumulated a debt of over 12,000 pounds.

To make matters worse, he took to gambling. Perhaps it was a relaxation; perhaps it was in the vain hope that luck would favor him and that he might somehow win enough to cover the most pressing of his debts. He was always disappointed. Yet it is interesting to note that gambling was not forbidden to the Knights of the Holy Cross. It was the one vice that was not mentioned in the code to which he had always remained true.⁶

In October, 1775, the final blow fell, for Pulaski was imprisoned for debt. If it had not been for the two Rossi brothers, one of whom was a major in the French army, Pulaski could have remained in prison indefinitely. They shamed the

⁵Ibid., p. 172.

⁶Ibid., p. 177.

emigre leaders of the Generalcy into raising enough money to pay Pulaski's debts which to a large extent were incurred in the Polish cause. By November, Pulaski left prison and was guaranteed at least a modest living.

Pulaski began to think then how to clear his name and how to remove the order of execution and somehow to have his property restored. However, nothing came of his efforts in this regard, for his case was ignored by the officials in Poland. This probably would have been a great tragedy for Pulaski had he not already found a new interest and cause. It seems that he had definitely reconciled himself to the hopelessness of the Polish situation and his personal inability to do anything about it and, being struck with the news of the American revolution, as was the rest of Europe, he began to see a new opportunity for himself. It was evident that the new and inexperienced army would be in need of trained soldiers. Then too, it appears that Pulaski was developing a great deal of sympathy for the Americans who were beginning a difficult undertaking in the name of their personal and national liberty.

It was a year before Pulaski had the opportunity to make known his interest and when, in the summer of 1776, Silas Deane arrived in Paris as a representative of the new United States, Pulaski wrote to him. This letter was unanswered, but when Benjamin Franklin arrived soon after, Pulaski's request for an American commission and service received much greater attention. Pulaski's name carried with it numerous connotations which necessitated careful

consideration on the part of Franklin. There was no doubt about Pulaski's military record, but his name had not yet been cleared of the regicide charge. Not that this would mean much to the Americans who were becoming more and more anti-monarchical, but Franklin, in trying to gain European support, did not want to antagonize European courts which were in a position to aid the recently declared revolution and new nation. Due to the recommendations of several friends, including the famed Claude de Rulhière,⁷ Franklin became convinced of the necessity of trying to secure Pulaski's services. Because only George Washington and the Continental Congress could offer Pulaski a commission in the American army, Franklin gave Pulaski passage on a ship to America and a letter of introduction to Washington. The letter read:

Count Pulaski, of Poland, an officer famed throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defence of the liberties of his country against the three great invading powers of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, will have the honor of delivering this into your Excellency's hands. The Court here have encouraged, promoted his voyage, from an opinion that he may be highly useful to our service. Mr. Deane has written so fully concerning him that I need not enlarge; and I add my wishes, that he may find in our armies under your Excellency occasion of distinguishing himself.⁸

With the help of the French government, Pulaski was able to completely clear his financial record and then he began to

⁷Rulhière was a French diplomat and historian. He was the author of Histoire de l'anarchie de Pologne in 1807.

⁸Letter from Franklin to Washington, in a brochure The Pulaski Sesqui-Centennial. Jersey City, 1929.

prepare for his departure for America. In America he undoubtedly hoped to accomplish two things. Still a young man, only thirty, he would first try to restore his reputation and the family financial position. In a letter dated June 6, 1777, to his sister Anna, the nun, he expressed his ambition to improve the lot of his family which had suffered so much in the past years.⁹ Then, as ever, dedicated to the fight for liberty wherever it was to be fought, Pulaski wished to aid the new country where it was possible for people to achieve their rightful heritage. As he said:

I could not stoop before all the
sovereigns of Europe and so I came
to hazard all for the freedom of
America.¹⁰

Pulaski saw France for the last time on June 13, 1777, when he sailed from Nantes aboard the Massachusetts, a ship of the state navy of Massachusetts. During the forty-four days of the voyage, it is possible to imagine some of the new difficulties and challenges that were beginning to become apparent to Pulaski for perhaps the first time. From the very Catholic environment of Poland and even France, Pulaski, the Knight of the Holy Cross, was moving into a clearly non-Catholic, Protestant environment, an environment probably much closer to that of the Dissidents whom he had opposed in Poland. For the devout Pole, the absence of the succor of

⁹Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, pp. 366-67.

¹⁰Letter from Count Pulaski to Congress, August 19, 1779, in the Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Reports of the Secretaries of State, War, and the Treasury respecting the services of Count Pulaski. Washington, D. C., 1887.

his religion was undoubtedly his greatest hardship. Besides, Pulaski had a language barrier. French, Italian, and Tatar were of little use in the new English-speaking country.

Then too, it is understandable that Pulaski came to America with certain natural attitudes and preconceptions which he soon had to modify. First, there was the absence of social differences which he, as a count,¹¹ would have to accept. Secondly, he would have to reappraise much of his military thinking and experience, which was geared to the European and Polish situation. He would have to learn to appreciate the vastness of American forests, the different terrains, and the mentality of the American people. Thirdly, perhaps

More disturbing than all these considerations was the fact that he speedily learned that there was a great difference between the reality of the Revolution and the glorious picture that Franklin was spreading so industriously in France.¹²

Pulaski was gradually introduced to all these problems aboard the Massachusetts, but as we shall see, they did not discourage him, for his first interest upon arrival in America was to immediately request active service.

¹¹Pulaski belonged to a Polish noble family having the coat-of-arms of the night-heron. Kasper Niesiecki, Herbarz Polski (Lipsk: J. N. Bobrowicz, 1841), p. 377. Because the Polish nobility or gentry did not have titles, and the Pulaski family is not listed in the Prussian, French, Austrian, or Russian catalogues of titles, the title "Count" was most probably given to Pulaski as a courtesy title. After all, he was a member of the nobility and in those days one had to call a member of such a family by some kind of a title.

¹²Manning, p. 201.

CHAPTER THREE

CASIMIR PULASKI IN AMERICA

The British Colonies in America Before 1776

Part of the revolutionary movement which dominated the eighteenth century was the American Revolution. During this Revolution thirteen British colonies broke away from the motherland and formed an independent nation, the United States of America. Although the Revolution gave the American colonists political independence from Great Britain, the ties of common language, customs, and ancestry were not easily severed. This was so because just before the Revolution, the majority of the three million American colonial population was of English origin, although there were large groups of French, German, Scotch-Irish, Polish, Swiss, etc., ancestry. These colonists were scattered along the Atlantic seaboard within thirteen colonies.

The New England colonies were: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. New England's population of 700,000 was unusually homogeneous. "They were generally alike in language, piety, and ways of thought."¹

Emigration to New England was generally by English groups which set up independent towns based on the English model which were the center of all social, religious, and political activity. The inhabitants tended to be Puritans,

¹Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, The Pocket History of the United States (New York: Pocket Books, 1942), p. 36.

and if they were not on arrival, they became Puritans.² Small scale agriculture, fishing, shipbuilding, and commerce were the predominant livelihoods. Education was considered more important in the New England colonies than in the other colonies due in part to the religious interest of wanting to teach people to read the Bible.³ As a result, numerous schools were founded, including Harvard College, Yale, Brown, and Dartmouth.

The Middle Colonies were New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. They had a great diversity in population and in addition to the Hudson Valley Dutch, the Pennsylvania Germans, the English Quakers, and the Scotch-Irish, there were Jews, French Huguenots, etc. Although the great majority of people lived on small, very productive farms, there were great manorial estates like those of the Van Rensselaers, Cortlandts, and other aristocrats. Farming was the chief occupation, although manufacturing and commerce soon developed and became significant. With the growth of the cities, especially New York and Philadelphia, a mixed and polished society began to appear. There tended to be greater religious toleration in the Middle Colonies and life in general was fuller and more pleasant than in the New England colonies.⁴

The Southern Colonies were: Maryland, Virginia,

²John D. Hicks and George E. Mowry, A Short History of American Democracy (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1956), p. 31.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Nevins and Commager, p. 41.

South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. Some of the unique features of the Southern Colonies, especially Virginia and South Carolina, were: they tended to be predominantly rural with only the cities of Charleston and Baltimore being of any importance; there was a prevalence of large self-sufficient estates which created the plantation system; and there was a sharp stratification of society into classes.⁵ The English were the majority group in the Southern Colonies and they established the rural type of British government and the Anglican Church. Besides the English, there were over 300,000 Negroes living in the Southern Colonies. The plantation system and the rich soil made agriculture very successful and together with trade with England, which made possible the exchange of agricultural products such as tobacco and rice for expensive European luxuries like fine clothes, wines, and furniture, they were the chief occupations of the South.

Besides these three groups of colonies, there was the colonial West, the "back-country," which was continually shifting westward in back of most of the older colonies. Despite the hardships of frontier life, many flocked to the newly opened regions because land was cheap and fertile. In fact, the Western drive was so strong that by the time of the American Revolution, colonists had already made settlements beyond the Appalachian Mountains in what is today Kentucky and Tennessee. Frontier society was considerably different from that of the older areas along the Atlantic

⁵Ibid., p. 42.

coast, for it was much more cosmopolitan and democratic.⁶

Yet in spite of the different Old World backgrounds and the varied colonial living conditions "that race now called American have arisen."⁷ Even in colonial times, before the formal establishment of an American state or nationality, numerous American institutions and characteristics had made their appearance. Among them were: general possession of land, public education as originally sponsored by the Puritans and Separatists, freedom of the press which was championed by John Peter Zenger and Andrew Hamilton in 1735, and democracy and ingenuity as practiced on the frontier - and many more. With the development of these truly American elements, the enlightened men of the late eighteenth century could begin "to crystallize a truly indigenous American mind."⁸

To a large extent the American colonists were free to develop their own culture and unique institutions because from the early days of American colonial settlement, Great Britain showed little interest in colonial development and control. Although Great Britain believed in theory that the colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country, and that they should be subject to any regulations that the mother country should choose to make, it took a long time

⁶Hicks and Mowry, p. 44.

⁷Leon H. Canfield and Howard B. Wilder, et al., The Making of Modern America (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1952), p. 62.

⁸Stow Persons, American Minds, A History of Ideas (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 72.

for a definite British policy or control to develop. In the meantime the colonists enjoyed the British institutions of government and soon became very freedom-minded and politically experienced.

With the British victory in the Seven Years' War, the American colonies were placed in a completely different position. On the one hand, the War had relieved much of the French and Spanish pressure on the colonies, thereby making them less dependent upon British protection. Also, it demonstrated that American colonists could fight as well as the British, and it gave them some valuable training in fighting.⁹

On the other hand, the Seven Years' War had cost Great Britain a great deal financially, and had given it new territories to govern. Therefore it decided that it was time to regain close control over the colonies, and that there was no alternative to levying taxes on the colonists in order to meet expenses.¹⁰

Through the imposition of numerous measures, among them the Navigation Acts and the Molasses Act, Great Britain began along the path of seriously regulating colonial trade to harmonize with the prevalent mercantile theory. However, such acts governing colonial trade and manufacture were only a part of Great Britain's more determined policy of increasing the control over the colonies so that they would

⁹Nevins and Commager, p. 68.

¹⁰Howard H. Peckham, The War for Independence. A Military History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 1.

in fact be a part of a great British Empire. British insistence that by law the colonies were part of the British Empire was to be found

. . . in the words of the Declaration Act of 1766 that the colonies 'have been, are, and of right ought to be subordinate unto and dependent upon the Imperial Crown and Parliament of Great Britain' and that Parliament had 'full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America . . . in all cases whatsoever.'¹¹

The American colonists, as inheritors of the British political tradition and "the rights of Englishmen," resented any encroachments upon their independence by a power located thousands of miles away. The preservation of these inheritances could have been achieved through the recognition of the federal principle which would allow a certain measure of decentralization, thus making possible the preservation of local autonomy and authority. However, Great Britain, dedicated to the maintenance and strengthening of a centralized empire did not take the opportunity to create a federal state. "

It was partly because of the inability of men to preserve the balance between them [Imperialism and Federalism] that the Revolution occurred and terminated as it did.¹²

When the British began imposing taxes as well as trade regulations, the American colonists became extremely angry.

¹¹Nevins and Commager, p. 72.

¹²Randolph G. Adams, Political Ideas of the American Revolution (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1958), pp. 39-40.

The American position was that, while Parliament could legislate for the colonies, taxes were a gift to the government from the people and could be levied only through their direct representatives, of which they had none in Parliament.¹³

The Americans seemed to be willing to accept external taxation in the form of import duties but they were opposed to internal taxation which they considered "taxation without representation." In the face of American opposition and economic boycotting, Great Britain was forced to back down several times from 1763 to 1775 and to make at least mock deference to the American distinction between internal and external taxes.

Nevertheless, the imposition of the Revenue Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Townsend Duty Act of 1767, the Boston Massacre of 1770, the Tea Act of 1773, and the Intolerable Acts of 1774, all increased American resentment to the point that the American Revolution did not occur in 1776, but rather, according to John Adams:

. . . the revolution was in the minds of the people, and the union of the colonies, both of which were accomplished before hostilities commenced.¹⁴

And finally, because

. . . independence had long existed in spirit in most of the essential matters of colonial life . . . the British government had only to seek to establish its power over the colonies in order to arouse a desire for formal independence.¹⁵

¹³Peckham, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴Nevins and Commager, p. 73.

¹⁵Claude Halstead Van Tyne, The American Revolution (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1905), p.5.

During the last ten years before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, party lines grew more and more definite, with the need for the colonists to decide which side they were going to support. But even the radicals who agreed that no concessions should be made to the British point of view did not all believe that revolution and independence were the only course that could be taken. Some of the most prominent radical leaders were: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and others. They were educated writers and thinkers and, using many of the arguments which justified the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in Great Britain, they developed much of the American political philosophy that became the cornerstone of the Revolution and the new republic. And because they were armed with an outstanding political philosophy, and were able writers and publicists, these radical leaders were capable of making their views predominate. Thus the radicals soon gained control over American affairs, and chose the path of independence; but there was fully a third of the American colonial population which remained openly or secretly loyal to the mother country even during the Revolution.¹⁶

The revolt against the British government was carefully planned, and was not a spontaneous movement.¹⁷ Several steps preceded the actual Revolutionary War, which was only

¹⁶Hicks and Mowry, p. 76.

¹⁷Nevins and Commager, p. 85.

the climax to the argument.

Perhaps the ultimate issue surprised them . . . The goal might still have been denied them by force, and therefore they turned from an appeal to reason to an appeal to arms.¹⁸

The first step in the movement toward independence was severe rioting against British measures. Property and persons were threatened, and organizations like the Sons of Liberty sprang up to encourage resistance.

The second step was considerable economic boycotting of British goods. Due to the stringency of the boycotting, British imports dropped by almost a half in some colonies, thus forcing the repeal of many of the unpopular acts.

The third step was the formation of committees of correspondence, which were to explain to the other colonies, and to the world, what were the rights of the colonies, and how they were being violated by Great Britain. Samuel Adams was the principal instigator of the first committee in Boston, and soon other committees were formed in the other colonies.

The fourth step was the formation of revolutionary legislatures, and finally the First Continental Congress was called in September, 1774. Delegates from every colony except Georgia met, and they appealed to the king for liberty and to have their wrongs righted. They also agreed not to import or export to Great Britain until the abuses had been corrected. This of course hurt the colonists as much as the British, but they had determined at this First Continental

¹⁸Peckham, p. 3.

Congress to fight for their rights, but economically. In addition, the Congress backed Massachusetts' opposition to the Intolerable Acts by declaring "that if force were used against the people of that colony 'all Americans ought to support them' in resistance."¹⁹

The British answered the proclamations of the Continental Congress by a Restraining Act, which further limited the colonies' trade; and by an increased grant for British military and naval forces in America. British General Thomas Gage was commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, as well as governor of Massachusetts. In Boston, a city of sixteen thousand, he was trying to police the city and govern it with almost four thousand troops.²⁰ Outside of Boston, and all over the country, military companies were being formed and supplies were being bought and stored. Neither side wished to start the war, but General Gage believed that the spring of 1775 would bring an attack against his force in Boston.²¹ In an attempt to prevent this attack and an all-out war, General Gage decided to seize some illegal military stores at Concord, and two arch-conspirators, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. On April 18, 1775, General Gage sent eight hundred men toward Concord, but the countryside was warned by Paul Revere. As a result, British Major John Pitcairn and his men were met by a band of militiamen at Lexington. A shot was fired, and soon seven militiamen were dead. The British troops then marched on to Concord

¹⁹Nevins and Commager, pp. 91-92.

²⁰Peckham, pp. 19-20.

²¹Nevins and Commager, p. 92.

and destroyed the military stores. All along the way back to Boston, the British were attacked; they lost 273 men during the march. The Battles of Lexington and Concord had the result of uniting the colonies as never before.

Within a few days, a great mass of patriot troops besieged General Gage and his army in Boston, and all the royal governments in the colonies were being overturned. By May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress had met in Philadelphia and had organized the "American Continental Army," with George Washington in command. However, before Washington took command, the famous Battle of Bunker Hill was fought. On June 17, 1775, General Gage sent General Howe to drive the Americans from Bunker Hill (Breeds Hill), which was dangerously close to Boston. After two unsuccessful attacks, the third British attack was successful only because the Americans had run out of ammunition and had decided to retreat anyway.

British losses were considerably more than the American losses. The Battle of Bunker Hill was significant because it increased American confidence tremendously; it showed that the American colonial soldiers could stand up to a professional army without special equipment and training. It was also important because it impressed upon the British for the first time what the fighting American was like:

These People Shew a Spirit and Conduct
against us they never shewed against
the French . . . They are now Spirited

up by a Rage and Enthusiasm as great as ever People were possessed of, and you must proceed in earnest or give the Business up . . . The loss we have sustained is greater than we can bear.²²

The American Revolutionary War

With the blows struck at Lexington and Concord, the American Revolutionary War had begun. The conflict was to last nearly eight years and many times the Patriot forces came very close to total defeat. To continue as colonies of Great Britain after the Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill seemed impossible, nevertheless, the decision to declare complete independence was a difficult one. But finally on June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia moved in the Continental Congress "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states."²³ Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams were the major contributors to the American Declaration of Independence which was formally adopted on July 4, 1776. Now that American independence had been proclaimed, it had to be won.

Great Britain and the new United States were greatly unequal in population, size and strength. Great Britain had a population of about nine million²⁴ as opposed to that of the United States, which was about three million. Washington seldom had more than sixteen thousand - sometimes only one

²²Peckham, p. 20.

²³Hicks and Mowry, p. 78.

²⁴Peckham, p. 4.

thousand poorly equipped and fed men in the field, while the British had close to sixty thousand adequately supplied men who could in case of emergencies be supplemented with "Hessians," Loyalists, or Indians.²⁵ Great Britain had the greatest navy in the world, as well as fine, regular professional armies, while the United States had practically no navy and in general its army was composed of inexperienced militiamen and volunteers. Then too, the United States had tremendous difficulty in financing the war, whereas the British had adequate gold to pay for all their needs.

Besides these disadvantages, the Americans had other weaknesses, most significant of which was that all Americans themselves were not united in the war effort against Great Britain. As was previously mentioned, perhaps more than one third of the Americans were in sympathy with Great Britain. This made recruitment, supply procurement, and finance all the more difficult. Then as the war progressed, it became obvious that the Americans were plagued with the same problems that harmed the Poles - lack of unity and central authority. The Continental Congress had declared independence and a war, but it did not have the power to carry on a war. It was not able to raise taxes, enforce a draft, etc. Thus the states were free to contribute toward the cause as they chose. And because of their distrust of Congress, and their mutual jealousy,²⁶ cooperation, manpower, money, and supplies were seriously lacking.

²⁵Hicks and Mowry, p. 80.

²⁶Nevins and Commager, p. 97.

In the light of such huge difficulties, how was it possible for the United States to win? First to be considered are the British weaknesses which made American victory possible. Undoubtedly, the fact that Great Britain was fighting three thousand miles from home base was in part responsible for its defeat. Then too, British military leaders were quite ineffective.

Secondly, the United States was helped towards victory by foreign aid, especially "France's assistance in all kinds of supplies, in cash and loans, and finally in ships and troops [which] was of immense and even decisive help."²⁷ Also, several experienced European military men came to the United States, among them two Germans, Steuben and Kalb, the Frenchman, Lafayette, and the two Poles, Kosciuszko and Pulaski, who all performed very admirably in the American cause.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the United States had certain strengths which would not be beaten ultimately. There were numerous persevering individuals who were completely dedicated to the cause of American independence, and to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. And "there were enough of them - many not known by name - to keep the country actively at war. They had pledged their lives to win, and they meant it."²⁸ One of these individuals, George Washington, was perhaps at the head of this indispensable group. Then, at the core of the Continental army were a few

²⁷Peckham, p. 202.

²⁸Ibid., p. 203.

regiments whose valor and toughness were completely superior to the British²⁹ who fought mainly by reflex and out of tradition. These American soldiers introduced a new concept into war and into the motivation of a fighting man: patriotism.³⁰

After the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War moved into its second phase, which lasted from July, 1776, to June, 1778. The first year of the war, 1775-1776, had showed few gains on either side, but the second year brought four major campaigns: the British campaign against New York, Washington's New Jersey campaign, General Howe's capture of the American capital, Philadelphia, and General Burgoyne's disastrous march from Canada.

General Howe and his brother, Admiral Richard Howe, had intended to end the war quickly by defeating Washington and capturing New York City. Although General Howe was able to seriously defeat Washington and his army at the Battle of Long Island, he did not continue the attack long enough. As a result, Washington and the remainder of the Continental army managed to escape, but this meant that New York was lost to the British for the rest of the war. However, not long after, Washington recrossed the Delaware River, and in a magnificent ten-day campaign secured New Jersey for the Americans, tremendously reviving American spirits after the Long Island defeat.

²⁹Richard M. Ketchum (ed.), The American Heritage Book of the Revolution (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1958), p. 168.

³⁰Peckham, p. 204.

In May, 1777, General Howe, the captor of New York, decided to attack Philadelphia. At the same time, General Burgoyne was moving south along the Hudson River from Canada. Washington tried to stop General Howe from taking Philadelphia by interception at Brandywine. However, he was defeated and the British moved into Philadelphia on September 11, 1777.

Just as winter was closing in, Washington made a final attempt to drive the British from Philadelphia by an attack on Germantown. This too was unsuccessful and was followed by a retreat to Valley Forge, the winter headquarters of the Continental army. Indicative of the privation and starvation, yet courageous endurance of those at Valley Forge was a remark by Doctor Albigeance Waldo, who wrote:

I am ashamed to say it, but I am tempted to steal Fowls if I could find them - or even a whole Hog - for I feel as if I could eat one. But the Impoverish'd Country about us, affords but little matter to employ a Thief - or keep a Clever Fellow in good humour - But why do I talk of hunger & hard usage, when so many in the World have not even fire Cake & Water to eat . . .³¹

Meanwhile General Burgoyne was meeting severe resistance in his south-bound New York campaign. It was finally culminated by his defeat at Saratoga on October 17, 1777.

³¹ Albigeance Waldo, "Life at Valley Forge (1777-1778)," American History Told by Contemporaries, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898), II, Part VIII, 571.

The defeat of Burgoyne has been called one of the decisive events of the world's history, because it brought France into the war."³²

The third phase of the war saw a shift from major engagements in the North to engagements in the West, South, and on the sea. In the West, through the efforts of George Rogers Clark, and the capture of the British forts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, the Patriots were able to secure the entire northwest territory for the United States.

After France entered the war in the spring of 1777, Great Britain decided to shift the bulk of its campaigns to the South where it was believed that there was more Loyalist support. The American position appeared especially bad, particularly after the British seizures of Savannah and Charleston, and the failure to recapture Savannah, but fortunately the Battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens helped to restore the balance.

On the seas and the Great Lakes, the United States, with the help of France, was able to raise a small fleet. The most significant naval victories were won by the father of the American navy, John Paul Jones. Also, privateers contributed to the American naval effort. However, the operations of the French and Spanish fleets were of more importance than the generally impotent American navy and the various state navies. French Admiral Jean Baptiste d'Estaing interfered with the British attacks on the Atlantic states, and

³²Philip Davidson, "Revolutionary War in America," The World Book Encyclopedia, 34th ed., Vol. XIV.

together with the Spanish fleet, was almost able to attack Great Britain itself. Then in 1781, largely due to French Admiral François de Grasse's fleet, which was stationed so that British General Cornwallis' escape to the sea was cut off, Washington was able to force British surrender at the Battle of Yorktown.

The final campaign of the war was fought in Virginia, where General Cornwallis had his army stationed. Because later in 1781 General Cornwallis concentrated all his forces on the Yorktown peninsula, Washington and Admiral Grasse were able to win the Battle of Yorktown, which ended the Revolutionary War.

General Cornwallis' defeat need not have meant the end of the Revolutionary War, because the British still had thirty thousand troops in America who controlled the major cities of Charleston, Savannah, and New York. But it appeared that Great Britain had had enough of war, and was willing to agree to a generous peace treaty.

The final peace treaty which formally ended the Revolutionary War was the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The treaty was most favorable for the United States, and of course, its basis was American independence from Great Britain. The Revolutionary War had won American independence, and a significant change had taken place in American society during it.³³ Now the task was to forge a new, strong and independent nation.

³³Nevins and Commager, p. 109.

Casimir Pulaski Under Washington's Command

At last Pulaski arrived in America. He landed at Marblehead, Massachusetts, not much more than fifteen miles from Boston, on July 23, 1777. His arrival happened to coincide with a new military crisis, for British General Howe had begun moving South from New York City in an attempt to capture Philadelphia. At the same time General Burgoyne was moving towards Albany after successfully attacking Ticonderoga.

Pulaski first went to Boston, where he met with General William Heath, the commander of that city. Then he set out for Washington's headquarters on Neshaminy Creek, south of Philadelphia. Carrying numerous letters of recommendation, including a letter from Lafayette's ³⁴ wife, it was possible for Pulaski to be introduced to many prominent people. Lafayette immediately became Pulaski's close friend, and personally presented him to Washington. It was from Washington that Pulaski learned that he could receive a commission only from the Continental Congress, which at that time was meeting in Philadelphia. Several persons, including Washington and Lafayette wrote letters of recommendation for him to the Continental Congress, and Pulaski himself wrote to the Congress asking for a rank and a command which would make him subordinate only to Washington or Lafayette.³⁵ The answer of

³⁴Lafayette's full name was Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette. Not only did he contribute greatly to the American Revolution, but he played a large part in the French Revolution. His dates are 1757-1834.

³⁵Manning, p. 206.

the Military Committee of the Continental Congress to Pulaski's request was . . .

that a compliance with these expectations would be as contrary to the prevailing sentiments in the several states as to the Constitution of our army and therefore highly impolitic.³⁶

With this impasse, Congress decided to refer Pulaski back to Washington so that Washington, after further discussion with Pulaski, could suggest a specific position for him. In a letter to Congress of August 28, 1777, Washington wrote:

Having endeavored . . . to think of some mode of employing him [Pulaski] in our service, there is none occurs to me liable to so few inconveniences and exceptions, as the giving him command of the horse . . . The Count appears, by his recommendations, to have sustained no inconsiderable military character in his own country; and as the principal attention in Poland has been for some time past paid to the Cavalry, it is presumed this gentleman is not unacquainted with it . . . This gentleman, we are told has been, like us, engaged in defending the liberty and independence of his country, and has sacrificed his fortune in his zeal for these objects. He deserves from hence a title to our respect, that ought to operate in his favour, as far as the good of the service will permit; but it can never be expected we should lose sight of this.³⁷

Days passed and still Pulaski heard nothing of his appointment. He could do nothing but try to wait patiently and put his time to good use by familiarizing himself with the

³⁶Letter of James Lovell, Member of the Military Committee, to the Continental Congress, in Pulaski W Ameryce (Warsaw: F. Hoesick Co., 1930), pp. V-VI.

³⁷Manning, pp. 207-08.

new country. Thanks to his numerous letters of introduction from friends in France, he soon gained entrance into an entirely new set of friends. Many of them, including Washington and Lafayette, were Masons. Due to his close association with them and many other Masons, it is not at all improbable that Pulaski himself became a Mason. Perhaps Pulaski even became a Mason while still in Europe.³⁸ Most present-day Masonic authorities are of the opinion that Pulaski became a Mason in America, however, they are still in need of that one piece of written evidence testifying to his membership in a Masonic lodge.³⁹ Reflecting that general opinion is the fact that numerous articles⁴⁰ claim Pulaski as a Mason, and in fact there are four Masonic lodges named after him today.⁴¹

43. ³⁸William Stuart, "Pulaski, The Builder, (February, 1926),

³⁹Letter of Wendell K. Walker, Director of the Library and Museum of the Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, of the State of New York, to the Author, March 22, 1962, which stated: "Although we should be glad to be able to claim him [Pulaski] for a member, you will see from the enclosed material that the available information is much less conclusive." Also a letter of Captain Franklin Kemp, Masonic historian, to the author, March 30, 1962, included the following: "Masonic authorities with whom I have contacted feel strongly that the General was a Mason, although all are still searching for that one piece of evidence that will be in writing."

⁴⁰"Pulaski Day," The New Age, January, 1937, p. 5. George W. Baird, "Casimir Pulaski," The Builder, (May, 1917), p. 96. Gilbert Patten Brown, "The Monument to Casimir Pulaski," Masonic Voice Review, (January, 1911), pp. 5-8. W. R. Denslow, "Count Casimir Pulaski," Ten Thousand Famous Freemasons, III, p. 307. Franklin Kemp, "The Pulaski Banner," The New Age, (March, 1962), pp. 49-51. William Stuart, "Pulaski", The Builder, (February, 1926), pp. 42-45.

⁴¹The four Masonic lodges named after Pulaski are located in Pottsville, Pennsylvania; Pulaski, Tennessee; Buffalo, New York; and Chicago, Illinois.

Some reasons why present-day historians can conclude quite safely that Pulaski became a Mason are:

First, as was mentioned, many of Pulaski's closest friends and benefactors were Masons, and it is most probable that they invited him to join their lodge and activities.

Secondly, although Pulaski was a practicing Catholic, he could have been a Mason, for although Masonry had been banned by the Pope, knowledge of the ban was not widespread.⁴²
In fact:

Daniel Carroll, brother of the first American bishop, was active in Masonry, and apparently Bishop Carroll did not consider the papal ban applicable to this country until sometime after 1800.⁴³

Thirdly, Pulaski must have been conscious of Masonic symbols, and they must have meant something to him, because the symbol found on the banner used by his legion is similar to the "Masonic all-seeing eye."

Fourthly, Lafayette, also a Mason, laid the cornerstone for a monument to Pulaski with Masonic services in Savannah, Georgia, on March 21, 1825.⁴⁴ It seems improbable

⁴²Masonry was formally condemned by the Pope in 1738. Masonry's lodges were "condemned for their religious naturalism, not their atheism, for their immoral oaths, for their historic if technically unofficial anti-clericalism. William J. Whalen, Christianity and American Freemasonry (Milwaukee; The Bruce Publishing Co., 1958), p. 109.

⁴³Ibid., p. 103.

⁴⁴"Pulaski Day," The New Age, January, 1937, p. 5.

that Lafayette, a contemporary of Pulaski, would have agreed to Masonic services if he had known Pulaski not to be a Mason.

Fifthly, a respected nineteenth century Masonic historian, Robert Freke Gould, listed Pulaski as a member of a military lodge in Georgia.⁴⁵ Also, during this period of inactivity, Pulaski worked to improve his English and became more familiar with American military operations. He especially noticed how inadequate the American cavalry was, and how little importance was given to it. Undoubtedly, he resolved to do something about it if he would ever have the chance. However, he grew more and more impatient as he saw that a major battle with the British was impending. Washington, anticipating a battle in the defense of Philadelphia, moved his headquarters near the Brandywine River.

The forces of Washington and General Howe met on September 11, 1777, at the Battle of Brandywine. Pulaski still had not received a commission from the Continental Congress, but after a day of disastrous fighting for the Americans, his impatience reached the boiling point, and Pulaski requested special permission from Washington to lead a small cavalry detachment. In broken English, French, and Polish he made an effective charge against the British and created a useful diversion which gave the Americans more time for their withdrawal.

⁴⁵ Robert Freke Gould, Military Lodges (London: 1899), pp. 218-20.

Evidently Pulaski's action at Brandywine made a favorable impression on the Continental Congress, for just four days later, Congress voted to give him a commission, and from Washington's new headquarters in Warwick Furnace, he announced that

. . . the Hon-ble Congress have been pleas'd to appoint C. Pulaski to the command of the American Light Dragoons with the rank of Brig-r Gen-1.⁴⁶

As Pulaski earlier recognized, the American cavalry was in a terrible state. When he took over, there were only 727 men in four cavalry regiments, none of whom were well-trained.⁴⁷ Previous to Pulaski's assumption of command of these four regiments, they were under the command of four colonels: Moylan, Bland, Seldon, and Baylor. The fact that Pulaski, a foreigner, was given command of these regiments over the other officers was the source of future trouble for him.

Before Pulaski had even begun to make any headway in trying to reorganize the cavalry, Washington decided to attack the British at Germantown. The result of this attack on October 4, 1777, was another dismal failure for the American forces, and Pulaski

. . . was able to do practically nothing in covering the American armies even in their retreat after an unsuccessful attack.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Washington's Orders, Vol. III, fol. 308, quoted in Władysław Wayda, Pułaski W Ameryce, p. VII.

⁴⁷Manning, p. 216.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 218.

Although there is little information about Pulaski's part in the Battle of Germantown, some forty years later it gave rise to a peculiar controversy. In 1822, a book entitled Sketches Of Life And Correspondence Of Nathaniel Greene, Major General Of The Armies Of The Revolution, by Judge William Johnson, charged that Pulaski, who was to command a patrol, was found asleep in a farmhouse by Washington. And it was only due to policy, and a regard for the rank and misfortune of the offender, that caused Washington to suppress the fact.⁴⁹ However, Paul Bentalou⁵⁰ refuted this by saying first:

He who deems himself to vindicate the fame of the injured Pulaski, is one of his surviving officers - one whose pride it ever shall be to have served his country under that celebrated commander and the greatest partisan of his time.⁵¹

Further, Bentalou added that Judge Johnson's statement was false and that had the incident occurred, Washington would have most certainly mentioned it.⁵² Then later, after

⁴⁹William Johnson, Sketches of Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene, Major General of the Armies of the Revolution, I (Charleston, 1822), p. 83.

⁵⁰Paul Bentalou was a Frenchman who also came to fight for American independence. He was Pulaski's closest friend in America and was a captain in Pulaski's legion.

⁵¹Paul Bentalou, "Pulaski Vindicated from An Unsupported Charge." The Magazine of History, VIII (1909), 17.

⁵²Ibid.

Lafayette's visit to America in 1824, Bentalou wrote that he

. . . put the question whether Lafayette had ever heard Washington or anyone else say that Pulaski had been found asleep by Washington and that the ill success at Germantown was principally ascribed to that Circumstance . . . He [Lafayette] answered, "No, never." 53

Thus it appears that Judge Johnson's charge was rash and unsubstantiated.

With the defeat at Germantown, operations for the winter of 1777 came almost to an end. With the exception of short scouting expeditions and occasional harrassment of British troops near the front lines, Pulaski was free to begin his major task of reorganizing and training the cavalry. Washington had chosen Valley Forge for the winter quarters, and for a few weeks Pulaski and his men were stationed there. Evidently Pulaski stood out among the men at Valley Forge, for Doctor Albigence Waldo wrote:

Count P., general of the horse, is a man of hardly middling stature, sharp countenance and lively air . . . he is greatly respected and admired for his martial skill, courage and intrepidity.⁵⁴

From the letters Pulaski wrote to Washington during the winter of 1777 we can get a good idea of the problems Pulaski was facing. In December, 1777, he wrote to Washington:

⁵³Paul Bentalou, "A Reply to Judge Johnson's Remarks," North American Review (1826), p. 10.

⁵⁴Albigence Waldo, Magazine of History and Biography, cited by Władysław Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, p. 401.

I make no doubt but your Excellency is acquainted with the present ineffective state of the cavalry. In this situation it cannot be appropriated to any other service than that of orderlies, or reconnoitering the enemy's lines, which your Excellency must be persuaded is not the only service expected from a corps, which, when on a proper footing, is so very formidable . . . What has greatly contributed to the present weak state of the cavalry was, the frequent detachments ordered to the suite of general and other officers . . .⁵⁵

Further, Pulaski described and enumerated suggested changes and badly needed equipment and supplies.⁵⁶

Besides the problems involved in supplying and training the men, Pulaski had difficulty in trying to coordinate the four previously separated regiments. Because they were raised in different parts of the country and had had different commanders, they were somewhat suspicious and jealous of their new commander; especially because he was a foreigner. Pulaski had the most trouble with a Colonel Stephen Moylan, who instigated considerable dissatisfaction and ill-feeling in the cavalry.⁵⁷ Pulaski, although understanding resentment against a foreigner being placed in charge, nevertheless seemed somewhat hurt and disturbed by it, for he wrote to his friend Rulhière in France: "they do not like foreigners

⁵⁵Letter from Brigadier-General Pulaski to George Washington, December, 1777, in Correspondence of the American Revolution: Being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington, From The Time of His Taking Command of The Army to the End of His Presidency, ed. Jared Sparks (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1853), II, 53-54.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Manning, p. 222.

here and they put up with them only when they are necessary." 58

Around the end of December, the conditions at Valley Forge became so bad that even no fodder could be found for the horses. Therefore Washington ordered Pulaski to take his men to Trenton, where it was hoped better conditions would prevail. Unfortunately, Trenton also was badly off, so Pulaski was forced to split up his regiments and send them to the nearby towns of Flemington and Penntown. Here Pulaski continued his work of drilling the officers and men, introducing new regulations such as practiced in the King of Prussia's army, trying to obtain supplies and equipment, and he even designed a new saddle for his men. Pulaski also tried to recruit more men for his cavalry, but without assurance of being able to pay salaries, he was not successful. But, at least in one respect, the change from Valley Forge to Trenton and the environs was not much of an improvement, for Pulaski complained to Washington that:

We have not gained much by changing our quarters, in camp [Valley Forge] the cavalry received Rum from time to time, here we have none. I hope, my General, that when you give orders for furnishing the infantry with means for making themselves merry, you will not leave the cavalry in the dumps. 59

Despite Pulaski's difficulties in trying to supply and train his men, his biggest disappointment was that the Americans in general underestimated the service which could be rendered by the cavalry, and as a result, neglected it.

⁵⁸Letter of Pulaski to Rulhière, February, 1778, in Correspondence du Général Casimir Pulaski avec Claude de Rulhière (Paris: Société Historique et Littéraire Polonaise, 1948), p. 35. (Writer's translation).

⁵⁹Letter from Pulaski to Washington, in Wayda, Pulaski W Ameryce, p. XXI.

Pulaski stated his idea of what the cavalry should be in a letter to Washington which said:

The cavalry in an army generally forms a separate division, and has greater privileges than the infantry, which the honor of the service exacts; but here I find it is the contrary. Not that I aim at a superiority over the rest of the army, but am desirous of having justice done the corps I command. It is my duty. For my own part I wish to be subject to your Excellency's order only, agreeably to my request upon entering the service, which is the limit of my ambition.⁶⁰

Evidently Pulaski's plea did not make much of an impression upon Washington, who was terrifically overburdened.

Pulaski continued his struggle, but spring finally found him without the large and well-trained force that he hoped to have. Also about this time (spring of 1778), it appears that Pulaski became very discouraged with his efforts and the prejudice against him because he was a foreigner and did not know the language well. He wrote to Rulhière that:

My intention is to lead my corps to General Washington and to remit them to him and to leave for Europe, perhaps I shall change my plan, but at this moment, I am nearly decided.⁶¹

In the meantime Pulaski took part in a battle with General Anthony Wayne, who afterward said of Pulaski that he

. . . behaved with his Usual Bravery having his Own with four Other Horse wounded - the little handful of Infantry who had an Opportunity of Engaging behaved with a Spirit that would have done Honour to the Oldest Veteran.⁶²

⁶⁰Letter from Pulaski to Washington, in Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution . . . , p. 56.

⁶¹Letter from Pulaski to Rulhière, in Correspondence du Général Pulaski . . . , p. 37. (Writer's translation).

⁶²Manning, p. 238.

After the battle of Haddonsfield, Pulaski retained his determination to resign his position as "commander of the horse," however, he changed his mind about returning to Europe. Pulaski evidently felt he could be of more use in a different capacity.

This act proves the disinterested disposition of this good man. Entrusted with high position, he returned his commission so soon as his conduct and services in that capacity, in his judgment, did not promote perfect harmony and entire good will among the advocates of his adoption - so soon as he believed there were other circumstances under which his knowledge, experience, and influence might be more efficiently and acceptably employed.⁶³

And it is significant that Washington did not accept Pulaski's resignation until Pulaski had been given permission to undertake a new mission by the Continental Congress. Washington personally took it upon himself to write to the president of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens, so as to obtain permission for Pulaski "to raise an independent corps composed of 68 horse and 200 foot," and to retain his "rank as Brigadier General to which he is entitled owing to his General Character and particular disinterestedness on the present occasion."⁶⁴ On March 28, 1778, Congress granted Pulaski this permission.

⁶³Charles C. Jones, "Casimir Pulaski," Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, III (February 13, 1871), 400.

⁶⁴Letter from Washington to Henry Laurens, March 4, 1778, in Wayda, Pużaski W Ameryce, p. XXX.

The Pulaski Legion

With his newly obtained permission to found an independent Legion, Pulaski would have a free hand to try out his European theories of warfare and training and put his unique experience to use. He could recruit whom he chose, with the exception of prisoners of war, who often proved unreliable. He was especially pleased because Washington gave him permission to name his own officers. Most of those chosen were Europeans, because communication was easier, and because they were familiar with European military systems. Pulaski's friend, Bentalou, became a captain, and his personal aide. John Zielinski⁶⁵ was first made a lieutenant in the Legion and later he was promoted to captain. Michael Kowacz⁶⁶ was commissioned as colonel commandant and "Master of Exercises" of Pulaski's Legion. And as paymaster and captain, Pulaski chose Joseph Baldeski.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Zielinski was a relative of Pulaski's and an officer in the Confederation of Bar. "He was another Pole who died on the field of glory, for the freedom of America. He expired on September 25, 1779, during the southern campaign of the Legion, but the circumstances of his death are not clear." Mieczislaus Haiman, Poland and the American Revolutionary War (Chicago: Polish Roman Catholic Union, 1932), p. 55.

⁶⁶It is unknown whether Kowacz was a Pole or a Hungarian, but he was an officer in the old Prussian army before coming to America. He was killed before Charleston on May 11, 1779. Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁷Baldeski's nationality is unknown. Previous to coming to America he served in the French army. He figures prominently in Pulaski's money troubles with Congress and because later charges were made by members of Congress reflecting on his reputation, he resigned his commission in disgust. Ibid., p. 36.

In April, 1778, Congress appropriated \$50,000 for the Legion, however because this money was received in payments, it was impossible to supply the men immediately as Congress had specified. Each man in the Legion was to receive \$150.00 worth of equipment, which was to include a carbine, cap, pair of trousers, coat, two pairs of stockings, two pairs of drawers, three pairs of shoes, cartridge box; and the cavalry men in addition were to have a lance, boots, saddle, bit, currycomb, cloak, saddlebags and a halter.

Baltimore, Maryland, was selected as the training headquarters and efforts were made to enlist men, so that the Legion would be increased to the number specified by Congress of 268 men. Pulaski was very successful, and in about a month and a half he had over 330 men.

During Holy Week, Pulaski went to visit his wounded friend, Lafayette, who was being cared for by the Moravian nuns.⁶⁸ And, strangely enough, although there are no records of Pulaski attending any Catholic services in America, there is a record of Pulaski attending a Holy Thursday service of the Moravian Church⁶⁹ and then returning to attend another service a month later. At that time Pulaski obtained a banner, which became the standard of the Pulaski Legion. On the one side of the banner are the letters "U.S." and in a circle around them are the words "Unitas

⁶⁸The Moravian nuns are not nuns in the strict sense of the word, for although they were unmarried women living together in community and following many different occupations, they were free to leave or marry and they took no vows similar to Catholic nuns.

⁶⁹The Moravian Church is an old Protestant church which was founded in Bohemia by the followers of John Hus in 1457. The first Moravian Church was established at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1735.

Virtus Forcior." 70 On the other side in the center is the all-seeing eye with the words "Non Alius Regit." 71 The banner was originally crimson silk, and the designs were embroidered in yellow silk thread. The faded banner is now to be found at Baltimore in the possession of the Maryland Historical Society.

The Pulaski banner was made famous by the following poem of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

HYMN OF THE MORAVIAN NUNS OF BETHLEHEM
AT THE CONSECRATION OF PULASKI'S BANNER

When the dying flame of day
Through the chancel shot its ray,
Far the glimmering tapers shed
Faint light on the cowed head;
And the censor burning swung,
Where, before the altar, hung
The crimson banner, that with prayer
Had been consecrated there.
And the nuns' sweet hymn was heard the while,
Sung low, in the dim, mysterious aisle.

"Take thy banner! May it wave
Proudly o'er the good and brave;
When the battle's distant wail
Breaks the sabbath of our vale,
When the clarion's music thrills
To the hearts of these lone hills,
When the spear in conflict shakes,
And the strong lance shivering breaks.

Take thy banner! and beneath
The battle-cloud's encircling wreath,
Guard it, till our homes are free!
Guard it - God will prosper thee!
In the dark and trying hour,
In the breaking forth of power,
In the rush of steeds and men,
His right hand will shield thee then.

70 It means, "Union Makes Valor Stronger." On the banner the word "Forcior" was misspelled. It should have been "Fortior."

71 It means, "No other GOverns."

Take thy banner! But when night
 Closes round the ghastly fight,
 If the vanquished warrior bow,
 Spare him! By our holy vow,
 By our prayers and many tears,
 By the mercy that endears,
 Spare him! he our love hath shared!
 Spare him! As thou wouldst be spared!

Take thy banner! and if e'er
 Thou shouldst press the soldier's bier,
 And the muffled drum should beat
 To the tread of mournful feet,
 Then this crimson flag shall be
 Martial cloak and shroud for thee!"

The warrior took that banner proud,
 And it was his martial cloak and shroud!

Strangely enough, a controversy has arisen over the origin of the banner. Some say that it was given to Pulaski for his Legion by the Moravian nuns in gratitude for his protection.⁷² Others say that Pulaski, on his first visit to the Moravian nuns, noticed their beautiful embroidery and asked them to make a standard for his Legion and paid them for it.⁷³ However, the most probable explanation is that which is upheld by the testimony of Bentalou, who stated that some patriotically motivated Baltimore ladies caused the standard to be made and given to the new corps.⁷⁴

In June the theater of war shifted, and the British began to consolidate their forces by having General Howe and his army evacuate Philadelphia and move back to New York. Washington pursued and attacked them; however at the battle of Monmouth, Washington found it impossible to stop them.

⁷²Kemp, p. 51.

⁷³Manning, p. 254.

⁷⁴William W. Gordon, "Count C. Pulaski," The Georgia Historical Quarterly, XIII (October, 1929), p. 191.

Pulaski, hearing of this new encounter, was more impatient than ever to have his Legion completely ready so that it could take part in the summer campaign. However, the Legion was still short of supplies, and in order to get them quickly, Pulaski paid for them out of his own funds. Somehow his financial situation had improved and he obtained a considerable sum from Poland which made a \$16,000 outlay possible. Congress was obligated to return the amount to Pulaski, but the fact that Pulaski was not interested in paper work, and did not keep receipts and fill out the proper forms, caused long disputes with Congress, which refused to accept bills that were not in the proper form.

In addition to money problems, Pulaski experienced numerous complaints against the discipline of his troops. Pulaski, often seeing his troops hungry and inadequately supplied, allowed his men to requisition supplies from the civilian population and make payment in depreciated continental currency. If the people refused to sell the supplies, Pulaski allowed his soldiers to confiscate them according to European war laws.

Of course there were many who protested such methods but Pulaski's attitude was that if his soldiers were willing to fight and die for American liberty, then the population could at least be willing to supply them. And because he had no sympathy for indifferent civilians who refused to help the Patriots but yet sold to the British, Pulaski tended to ignore the complaints against his soldiers. Undoubtedly

though, at times Pulaski's soldiers probably did exceed his orders to requisition only what was needed.

The whole problem reached the point that finally, just before Pulaski was to leave for a campaign, he was arrested as being responsible for his mens' requisitions. The case was appealed to Congress, and although Congress upheld Pulaski's action, it also insisted that military officers must recognize civilian authority and property.

By the end of July, Pulaski had his Legion ready; it only had to be approved by Congress. Although the Legion received Congressional approval, it was weeks before an assignment was given it because of a mix-up between the civilian authority, Congress, and the military authority, Washington.

Whenever Pulaski was plagued with waiting and inactivity he became despondent, and in an attempt to spur Congress into some decision on behalf of his Legion, he wrote a letter which included the following remarks:

I am a republican which the love of glory
and the honour of supporting the Liberty
of Union drew hither. I blush tho to
find my self languishing in a state of in-
activity animated with the zeal of servir
[serving] ye . . . 75

Finally after six weeks of waiting, Pulaski and his Legion were ordered to put themselves under the command of Major General Lord Stirling in New Jersey. In the meantime, the British had started a new attack on the New Jersey

⁷⁵Better from Pulaski to Congress, October 17, 1778, in Wayda, Pulaski W Ameryce, p. XXXVIII.

coast, and as a result, Washington ordered Pulaski to Egg Harbor instead. Due to several miscalculations, and the treachery of a Lieutenant Gustaw Juliet, a deserter, a British surprise attack considerably decimated Pulaski's infantry. Again Pulaski was required to make a fresh start, at least as far as his infantry was concerned. But by a new recruitment, he was able to bring his infantry back to normal size.

By that time winter was again growing near. Washington, in an attempt to find a place that could supply food and fodder for the Legion, and at the same time had need of the Legion's protection, chose the Minising settlement on the Delaware River in New Jersey. Pulaski hoped that this new frontier mission would prove more successful than the New Jersey defeat, and that his Legion would distinguish itself by protecting the settlers from the Indians. However Pulaski soon learned that the forest was no place for the cavalry, and that his mounted patrols which searched for the enemy were of little use there. Thus Pulaski and his Legion could do nothing except wait for a raiding party which might occasionally appear.

Again confronted with inactivity, supply troubles, and new possibilities,⁷⁶ Pulaski wrote to Washington and Congress

⁷⁶Captain Kotkowski, a former officer in the Confederation of Bar, joined Pulaski at Minising and suggested that due to a change in the Polish situation there would be better use for Pulaski's services in Poland than in America. It seems he tried to persuade Pulaski to give up his American service.

that he wished to resign his commission and return to Europe. Washington gave Pulaski permission to leave his Legion and go to Philadelphia, and Brigadier General Edward Hand⁷⁷ took over Pulaski's position.

Not long after Pulaski's return to Philadelphia, especially after hearing about the new British campaign which was to take place in the south, Pulaski changed his mind about leaving America, for he wrote to Congress that:

I have given my reason to the General of the army for which I had a Mind to depart for Europe, but this is not at this Time when I am in some activity. I love my profession and I can not employ this better as in the cause of freedom.⁷⁸

Before the end of autumn of 1778, as part of the new British southern campaign, Savannah, Georgia, had been seized, and it was expected that in the spring Savannah would be the base of operations for a campaign to recover all of the southern states. This meant a tremendous new pressure was beginning to be formed against the Americans, for Washington could not break up his army and send a part of it to strengthen Southern forces without tempting the British, who were bottled up in New York, to march into the poorly protected New England states. Therefore there was a great need for new units to march to the South.

Washington, realizing that Pulaski's infantry was out of place on the frontier, and that his cavalry was degenerating

⁷⁷Brigadier Edward Hand was much more suited for the frontier post than Pulaski for he had considerable experience fighting Indians.

⁷⁸Letter from Pulaski to Congress, December 4, 1778, in Wayda, Pulaski W Ameryce, p. LV.

due to inactivity in Philadelphia, decided to order them to take part in the southern campaign. Pulaski was made subordinate only to the commander-in-chief of the South, General Lincoln, and although the order came through to move on February 2, 1779, it was not until March 28, that Pulaski was able to start. The delay again was due to Congress, which had postponed appropriations of money for enlistments and supplies.

Before leaving, Pulaski had hoped to have the matter of the Legion's previous debts settled with Congress, but again there was so much procrastination that his paymaster, Captain Baldeski, had to remain in Philadelphia to try to straighten out the matter. Not until after Pulaski's death was it ever completely settled.

As always, a new campaign and much activity raised Pulaski's spirits and during the 450 mile march from Philadelphia to Charleston, South Carolina, spring had arrived in full force. The southern country probably reminded Pulaski very much of the countryside near his home in Poland, but he did not have much time to reminisce, for Charleston was in a critical position.

The British army under General Prevost was approaching Charleston, and the greater part of the city's inhabitants were of the opinion that the town should be surrendered. It was believed that the Congress had abandoned the South and that General William Moultrie, in charge of the troops around Charleston, could not possibly hope to hold off more

than one thousand British soldiers. But the loss of Charleston would be a serious detriment to the American war effort, for Charleston was one of the largest southern cities and was strategically located.

During this period of indecision within Charleston as to whether or not it would be wiser to surrender, Pulaski and his 150 men arrived. Learning of the prevalent opinion of surrendering Charleston, Pulaski and Colonel John Lauren, son of the former President of the Continental Congress, barged in on a meeting of the Governor and his Council. Pulaski frankly forbade the surrender of the city and offered and insisted upon defending it. Evidently Pulaski's determination had its effect, for it was decided that the city would resist.

Then, while enthusiasm remained, Pulaski and his Legion attacked the advancing British. The British forces were much larger and they practically demolished the Legion's infantry. Nevertheless, the attack was significant because it showed that Americans would take the offensive to protect the South despite numerically inferior forces.

Not long after this battle, General Prevost intercepted a message from General Lincoln that the Americans with 4000 men were advancing to help Charleston. In the face of such large American reinforcements, General Prevost had no choice but to retreat.

Here, for the first time since the battle of Brandywine, did Pulaski receive any recognition. His Legion, although

tremendously reduced as a result of its action, had performed well and to the credit of Pulaski's faith in its bravery and the training he had given it. In fact, to Pulaski was attributed the saving of Charleston and the reinstatement of American honor by daring to attack a larger force. As a result, Pulaski became the hero of the hour and was admitted to the inner military circles.⁷⁹

The only things which marred his success were reports from Philadelphia that repeated attacks were being made against his honor and honesty in relation to the expenses incurred in supplying the Legion. In Pulaski's last letter to Congress he attempted to clear up this misunderstanding:

Every information from the Northward that has reached me since my departure from there, strengthen my opinin [opinion], indeed - convinces me that there is some malignant Spirit constantly casting such an impenetrable [impenetrable] mist before your eyes as to render it impossible [impossible] for you to see and judge of my conduct with propriety as belongs the character of Gentlemen in your Exalted Nations . . . I have lately received a letter from my family advising that they dispatsched [dispatched] 100,000 livres in hard money to me, should it fortunately come safe, the pleasure to me will be truly great to repay you to the utmost farthing the whole charge of my Legion. Change you then your opinion of one foreigner who from his entrance into your servive [service] has never cause to be pleased . . . The campaign is at hand, perhaps I may still have occasion of sheving [showing] that I am friend of the cause without being happy enough to please some individuals . . . ⁸⁰

⁷⁹Manning, p. 290.

⁸⁰Letter from Pulaski to Congress, August 19, 1779, in Wayda, Pułaski W Ameryce, p. LXVII-LXXI.

Pulaski At Savannah

The situation in the South had dramatically changed in favor of the Americans. The British steadily retreated and lost all but their original base of Savannah. During this time, Pulaski had been traveling with General Lincoln as part of the American push toward Savannah.

While on patrol on the Georgia coast, a French soldier came to Pulaski with a message from Count Charles Hector d'Estaing, who was the leader of a squadron of thirty-two ships which had been sent to help the Americans after the French-American treaty of alliance. After considerable success against the British in the West Indies, he had heard about the American situation in the South and decided that he would try to help the Americans rid the British from their last bastion in the South. However, because of the approaching winter and his wish to return to France before then, Count d'Estaing was in a hurry to attack.

While establishing contact with Pulaski, who was at the head of the advance force of General Lincoln's southern army, he ordered the disembarkation of his 3500 troops and the placement of guns around the city of Savannah. Believing impetuously that the French alone could force the surrender of the British, Count d'Estaing had the city bombarded and then demanded that it surrender. General Prevost asked for time to consider the decision, but in the meantime British Lieutenant Colonel Maffland, with his eight hundred men, managed to get past the French gun posts and reinforce

the city. With this additional support, General Prevost refused to surrender. Immediately the British began a fast and furious project of fortifying the city, and despite continued French bombardment, the British defenses grew stronger. Finally Count d'Estaing realized that he had to have American help.

Pulaski was contacted, and he in turn informed General Lincoln of the French situation. However, not until the end of September were all the American and French forces united for an attack against Savannah.

In appraising the strength of both sides, the Americans and the French definitely had the advantage. There were 3500 French troops, and 1500 American troops,⁸¹ and together they had fifty-three guns, fourteen mortars and the support of the French fleet which was anchored not far from Savannah. The British had only 2400 men, with no possibility of reinforcements, but they did have seventy-six guns.

At first the French and Americans thought they could take the city by intensive shelling, but when after three days the British seemed just as adamant as ever in their refusal to surrender, the plans were revised. Instead it was decided that there was to be a full-scale attack on October 9th against the city.

The assault was to take place in the following way: first, there was to be a major attack on the southwestern side of the city by Count d'Estaing and 2200 men; second, all the cavalry, French and American, was to be under

⁸¹Peckham, p. 124.

the command of Pulaski and was to follow the French infantry; third, the American infantry was to follow Pulaski's cavalry; fourth, French General Hugger with 500 men was to make a diversionary attack on the opposite side of the city in order to confuse the British. What was not in the plan, but which actually occurred, was that a deserter, James Currie, informed the British of the American and French plan of attack. And, being completely forewarned, the British confidently prepared for the attack in the right places.

As a result, from the very beginning of the attack things went wrong for the Americans and the French. As soon as their troops began to run into the direct fire of the British, it was obvious that the French and Americans had fallen into a trap. Complete chaos arose. To make matters worse, Count d'Estaing was wounded, and his officers could do nothing to restore the confidence of the French troops who had led the attack.

Up to this time the cavalry had relatively little to do, for according to plan, it was to follow the French infantry, which had not yet made any great progress. After Pulaski heard that Count d'Estaing was wounded, and his troops had become panicked, he rushed to the front, and according to Major Rogowski,⁸² the following occurred:

⁸²Major Rogowski was supposedly an officer of Pulaski's Legion. However, present-day Polish historians question his authenticity. The problem of Rogowski's existence is discussed in some detail in Haiman's Poland and the American Revolutionary War.

Pulaski, seeing an opening between the enemy's batteries, decided with his Legion and part of the Georgia cavalry to charge into the center of the city and in this manner confuse the enemy and cheer up the inhabitants. General Lincoln approved this plan and after calling upon God's help Pulaski shouted "forward" and we, two hundred strong, rode after him at a gallop so that the earth shook under us. The first two minutes went well. We hurried like knights into the danger, but as we passed the gap between the two batteries, a crossfire like a shower confused our ranks. I looked, painful moment which is ever to be remembered! Pulaski was on the ground. I jumped from my horse, thinking that perhaps his wound was not serious, but, great misfortune, a shot had hit his leg and the blood was also flowing from his chest, probably from another wound. As I got to my knees and tried to lift him he said in a faint voice, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph." Further I do not know because in the same moment a carbine shot wounded me⁸³

With the subsequent failure of the American infantry to get past the southern British defenses, the attack was called off. It had been a dismal fiasco. Pulaski was carried off the field, and from this point there are two versions as to what happened.

One version described Pulaski's death and burial in the following manner:

Mrs. Beecroft . . . witnessed with her mother, the arrival at Greenwich, during the day of the battle, of a litter containing a wounded man . . . they were soon after informed that it was Count Pulaski. Pulaski is represented to have suffered much from his bleeding wound and languished but a few hours

⁸³ Maciej Rogowski, Reszty Pamiętników Macieja Rogowskiego Rotmistrza Konfederacji Barskiej (Paris: Księgarni Katolickiej Polskiej, 1847), pp. 114-16. (Writer's translation.)

when were heard the faint expiring struggles, mingled with the lamentations of the surrounding friends of that devoted, gallant, and patriotic soldier - "Pulaski, the beloved Pulaski, is no more." This sad event occurred at night, and his comrades, anxious to join their companions of the fleet, determined on an immediate burial.⁸⁴

Thus, according to this version, Pulaski died on shore and was later buried in Greenwich at a place called today "Pulaski's Grove." In the writer's opinion, this version is somewhat farfetched for, according to several authorities, including Bentalou and Major Rogowski, who all agree, the final hours of Pulaski were spent in this way:

Pulaski with his wounded officer was conveyed on board the U.S. brig Wasp, to go round Charleston. They remained some days on the Savannah river; and during that time the most skillful surgeons attended on Count Pulaski. It was found impossible to establish suppuration and gangrene was the consequence. Just as the Wasp got out of the river, Pulaski breathed his last and the corpse immediately became so offensive that his officer, though reluctantly, was forced to consign to a watery grave all that was left upon the earth of his beloved and honored commander.⁸⁵

Further, the South Carolina American General Gazette of October 29, 1779, said:

The gallant Count Pulaski died at sea, on his return from Georgia, of his wound; and on Thursday, last week, his funeral rites were performed here, in a manner suitable to the

⁸⁴ William P. Bowen, With an Account of the Ceremonies Upon That Occasion (On Laying the Cornerstone of a Monument to Pulaski), and at the Completion of the Monument, January 8 1855. To Which is added a summary of the evidence Designating the Burial Place of Pulaski. (Savannah, 1855), pp. 32-33.

⁸⁵ Bentalou, "Pulaski Vindicated from an Unsupported Charge." p. 39.

rank and merits of that intrepid and much
lamented officer.⁸⁶

On October 22, 1779, a public funeral was conducted for Pulaski, who had died on October 11th. His empty pall was carried by three American and three French officers, and his white charger carried his equipment. His funeral procession was so long that it wound completely around the city of Charleston.

Before long, the news of Pulaski's death reached Washington, Congress, and Europe. But, as in the case of other great, self-sacrificing people, his well-deserved recognition came too late. Even King Poniatowski, who, not ten years ago had made life so difficult for Pulaski, had to admit that "Pulaski died as he lived - a hero - but an enemy of kings."

⁸⁶Gordon, p. 224.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EVALUATION OF CASIMIR PULASKI
AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO POLAND AND AMERICA

An Evaluation of Casimir Pulaski

Casimir Pulaski was an idealist and a man of action.

Born of a wealthy noble family in a time when much of the best in life was sacrificed to the pursuance of wealth and comfort, Pulaski could have easily become a product of his age. But from his early youth he was imbued instead with a dedication to Catholicism, as evidenced by his willingness to join and adhere to the very religiously orientated Knights of the Holy Cross, and a dedication to liberty, as evidenced by his life-long struggle for the freedom of Poland and America. This dedication undoubtedly helped him become a strong individual with many outstanding character traits. Three traits which were most evident to all who knew him were his courage, his perseverance, and his enthusiasm.

Pulaski's courage was manifested in many ways. His disregard for personal safety is obvious when we consider the numerous battles in which he took part and the number of times he was wounded. In fact, his life from the age of sixteen was filled with not only adventure, but also freely chosen hazards

in the defense of his principles. Considering the many dangers he experienced, it is amazing that he survived as long as he did.

The courage of Pulaski was also to be found in his adherence to unpopular, although necessary measures. The welfare of his men was paramount in his mind. Because of this, he was frequently at variance with his superiors, but this opposition did not dissuade him from continuing to defend his men's interests and his own point of view. Humanly, of course, at times his judgments were not always correct, but no one can doubt his well-meant intentions.

A second major character trait to be found in Pulaski was his perseverance. Belief in, and fighting for an ideal which appeared doomed from the beginning was no dissuasion for him. Certainly, Pulaski, as an intelligent man, realized that it was only a matter of time before Poland most probably would be hacked up by its three more powerful neighbors, but he, through silence and inactivity, refused to be party to it, even if it meant great loss and hardship for himself. Likewise, in America, the situation was desperate, but Pulaski saw beyond this and had enough faith in liberty to continue the fight. For Pulaski persevered because something was a good cause, rather than because it was a sure winner.

Pulaski's perseverance is also demonstrated by his ability to overcome continual frustration and defeat. How many times was he defeated and had his men decimated and months of training and supply-gathering ruined, only to

begin again. How many times was he delayed by incompetent superiors, confused orders, and lack of supplies, and yet he endured. However, for him this was all part of the fight which, if it could not be changed, had to be withstood.

A third significant character trait proper to Pulaski was his obvious enthusiasm and personal dynamism which made him a leader of men. Many times it was only this quality which motivated his men to action when lack of food and ammunition would have made them prone to defeatism. This energy and enthusiasm made him popular with most of his men and with his great peers, Washington, Lafayette, Franklin, etc. He was a soldier's soldier - a man of "blood and guts."

In addition to these traits, Pulaski had other highly admirable personal qualities. He was loyal to his friends even though at times it meant a heavy burden. He was unselfish to the point of sharing even when his future was endangered by his generosity. He was a true gentleman of the eighteenth century; he was not afraid to be courteous, gallant, and gracious even when the circumstances of war made it easier to be the opposite.

As a man of action, theory, paperwork, and diplomacy were not for Pulaski. He believed that his greatest contribution could be made by action - by fighting. He expected that convictions should be manifested by acts, and that they should be defended when necessary. This, to a large extent, was the reason for his impatience with the groups in Poland and America who chose to talk when only action could have had any effect.

Pulaski was happiest when he was preparing for a campaign and when he was fighting, for then he knew he was coming at least somewhat closer to the achievement of his ideals for his people. Thus, primarily Pulaski was a soldier. He never considered himself a diplomat, a political theorist, or a politician. He was only a soldier and therefore when he was in disagreement with such men, he often fell short of being adequately able to defend himself. For Pulaski, problems were simple, and he refused to complicate them with extraneous considerations such as gaining prestige and special favors. For he wished only to be free to fight for his beliefs and not be concerned with political intrigues and petty squabbles.

As a military man it is difficult to appraise his ability. Pulaski had no formal military training at a military academy as such, and his military education was mainly through experience. But he certainly had some good instructors in Poland, among them the great Russian generals Suvorov and Drevich, who taught him some valuable, albeit painful lessons. Nevertheless, his Polish military experiences unfortunately were to some extent useless in America, for reasons cited previously. However, Pulaski proved adaptable, and, as testified to by several contemporary admirers, Pulaski proved among the best of his day. When considering his practically insurmountable difficulties of lack of manpower and supplies, the fact of any victories at all is in itself surprising, and can only be attributed to his military skill and influence upon his men.

Concomitant with his military skill he had a tremendous reputation as a horseman far exceeding that of an average member of the cavalry. According to one report, Pulaski could

. . . while his steed was under full gallop, discharge his pistol, throw it in the air, catch it by the barrel, and then hurl it in front as if at an enemy. Without checking the speed of his horse, he would take one foot from the stirrup and, bending over toward the ground, recover his pistol and wheel into line with as much precision as if he had been engaged in nothing but the management of the animal.¹

Pulaski, as in the case of many great people, after a self-appraisal which discovered his strengths and talents, put that which was best within him to the service of his convictions. He personally enjoyed little and sacrificed much, but at least today he is worthy of our esteem.

The Contribution of Casimir Pulaski to Poland

Pulaski's greatest contribution to Poland became evident only after his death. Although he was successful in several military endeavors, the overall resistance could not succeed against the overpowering strength of the three powers which had determined to condemn Poland to national extinction. Pulaski must be remembered, however, for his contribution which lived beyond his military efforts and which is still extant if one chooses to recognize it. For Pulaski's major contribution to Poland is that he became a symbol of a new and regenerated Polish youth which, if it could not save the geographical Poland, could save the Polish ideals and culture. Pulaski's dedication to two Polish ideals - Church and country - which have been present in Poland since the founding

¹ Stuart, p. 43.

of the Polish state in 966, became the source of inspiration for many who in later years refused to permit a Catholic Poland to be erased by predaceous neighbors. For instance, under his magic influence the first uprising of students against the Russians took place in Cracow.²

Pulaski's example of dedication to ideals could be of practical value today in Poland. This is realized by those in power in present-day Poland who would most certainly be Pulaski's enemies were he alive now. As a result, they have done whatever possible to bury his memory and example.

The Contribution of Casimir Pulaski to America

Pulaski's contributions to America are chiefly three. By his willingness to fight in the American Revolutionary War, he contributed to the cause of American freedom his greatest possession - his life.

Then Pulaski is known as the father of the American cavalry. Obviously, in the day of nuclear weapons and mechanized warfare, the cavalry has lost its importance. However, up to the World War I, it did play an important role which was to a large extent defined by Pulaski. Pulaski was the first to stress the importance of the cavalry in a military engagement; he was the first to organize a unified cavalry command; and he was the first to insist upon special training for the cavalry, thereby also issuing many directives which were henceforth incorporated into cavalry training and maneuvers.

²Konopczyński, Kazimierz Pułaski, p. 402.

Beyond this, Pulaski is equally as worthy of emulation as any of our great American patriots for his dedication to liberty and human rights. We must recognize the universality of his beliefs in freedom and human rights, for he wished them for all men, not just his fellow Poles. According to an old Polish saying, Pulaski, as well as Kosciuszko and many other Poles, was willing to renounce all, "za naszą i waszą wolność."³ This can be worth remembering for Americans, who once having achieved their own freedom, are often content to ignore others' appeals for that same freedom. Perhaps someday we Americans can send to Poland an American Pulaski who will help win for Poland that which Pulaski helped win for us.

³Translation: "for our and your freedom."

CHAPTER FIVE

PULASKIANA IN POLAND AND AMERICA

Pulaskiana In Poland

Recently the writer had the opportunity of spending several months in Poland. At that time it seemed appropriate and of interest to pay a visit to the birthplace of one of our mutual heroes, Casimir Pulaski. Located in central Poland, near Warka, Pulaski's countryside is rolling, wooded, and good for farming. The town of Warka, probably more than five hundred years old, has nothing to distinguish it from any other relatively small Polish town, with the exception of a very old and picturesque church, and a winery. But only three-quarters of a mile down a dusty road is to be found the area's formerly great attraction, Winiary.

As one walks past the ramshackled entrance, pillars toward the main building, one sees the remains of landscaping and care. With only a little imagination one can visualize the beauty of the estate in former days.

The main building, Pulaski's home, would almost remind one of a Georgian colonial home, with the exception that it lacks large columns. The exterior is white; however, it is shell-marked, for a German front moved through Warka in 1943 and several minor skirmishes took place at Winiary. Presently, the home and grounds belong to the Polish government, and all but two rooms on the first floor are occupied by families. The remaining two rooms contain the remnants of the former Pulaski museum which at one time occupied the entire building.

Evidently many people do not come to visit Winiary any-

more, for besides the obvious neglect of the home and the grounds, it was a major project for the writer to find someone who could obtain a key so that it would be possible to see the interior of the two-room museum. The writer was told that the last person to visit the museum was an American, several months ago.

Having once cleared the hurdle of getting the key, one was free to wander through the two high-ceilinged rooms, with their old painted fireplaces and water-marked walls. What was to be found in the way of exhibits was quite surprising, for there were only a few glass-enclosed cases with costumes of the eighteenth century, a few old coins and sabers, some pictures on the walls, and interestingly enough, several American citations in honor of Pulaski. In general, the so-called museum was quite disappointing, especially in comparison with other Polish museums.

The only redeeming aspect of the one-time Pulaski estate is the shrine to the Blessed Mother, where it is said that Pulaski often prayed as a child. This shrine is the only feature on the entire estate which is not ruined or neglected in some way. The people of the area maintain it and put fresh flowers there every day.

How is it possible that Pulaski's birthplace, the former home of one of Poland's and America's great heroes is so neglected? As we have seen, to the Poles as well as the Americans, Pulaski is a symbol of dedication to certain ideals. These ideals are antithetical to the ideals of the Communist regime in power in Poland today. For it, Pulaski, as well as that for which he stands, should be relegated to the past.

As a result, although Pulaski and his contributions are well-known by the older generation, many of the younger Polish generation are completely unfamiliar with him because he is ignored in the schools. And as was also discovered by Congressman Clement Zablocki, Pulaski is not presently considered one of the Poles' national heroes, and "the reason for this is readily understood when you consider the political leanings of the current regime."¹

This, together with lack of funds in a still war-torn Poland, forbids the restoration and maintenance of a place in memory of Pulaski.

However, this situation was not always so. Previous to the coming of power of the present regime, Pulaski was indeed considered one of the great national Polish heroes who merited considerable Polish attention. For instance, the greatest scholarly work about Pulaski was contributed by a Pole. In fact, the outstanding Polish historian, Władysław Konopczyński, contributed a truly great biography of Pulaski; unfortunately, it is not available in full English translation.

Then, too, Pulaski became a very popular subject for Polish poets and writers, among them, Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krąszewski, Kitowicz, and Rzewuski. And the Poles have honored Pulaski's memory by the construction of monuments in the cities of Krynice and Częstochowa.

But as was previously mentioned, the greatest honor paid to Pulaski was the honor of imitation. For this honor can grow and be fruitful and result in accomplishments truly desired but never possessed without struggle by Pulaski.

¹Letter from Clement J. Zablocki, November 13, 1961, to the writer.

Pulaskiana In America

Pulaski almost immediately was considered a hero by the Americans. Not much more than a month after his death, Congress, having forgotten the grief it had given him, resolved that a monument should be built in his honor. Despite the rush to resolve that a monument be built to Pulaski's memory, it was not accomplished until 1910 in Washington, D.C.

In the meantime numerous other statues were erected, so that today memorials to Pulaski can be found in Savannah, Egg Harbor, Utica, Baltimore, Stevens Point, and Milwaukee.

Also, it seems that Americans were much taken with naming things after Pulaski. There are, for instance, six counties² at least twenty towns and villages,³ two parks,⁴ six streets and squares⁵ and two schools⁶ named for him. Besides there

²The six counties are in the following states: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Virginia. Ladislas Siekaniec, "Pulaski, U.S.A.," Polish American Studies, VII (January-June, 1950), 39.

³The twenty towns and villages are: Pulaski, Alabama; Pulaski Heights, Arkansas; Pulaski, Georgia; Pulaski and Mount Pulaski, Illinois; Pulaski, Indiana; Pulaski, Iowa; Pulaski, Kentucky; Pulaski, Michigan; Pulaski, Mississippi; Pulaski and Pulaskiefield, Missouri; Pulaski, New York; Pulaski Township, North Dakota; Pulaski, Tennessee; Pulaski, Texas; Pulaski, Virginia; Pulaski and Pulaski Village, Wisconsin. Ibid.

⁴The parks are to be found in Sioux City, Iowa, and Wyandotte, Michigan.

⁵The streets and squares are the following: the Pulaski Skyway, between Newark and Jersey City in New Jersey; Pulaski Road in Chicago, Illinois; Pulaski Street in Pulaski Heights, Arkansas; Pulaski Street in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Pulaski Avenue and Pulaski Square in Cleveland, Ohio. Ibid., p. 40

⁶There is a Pulaski High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and there is the "General Pulaski Vocational and Technical High School" in Bayonne, New Jersey. Ibid.

is an unknown quantity of stores, banks, savings and loan associations, clubs, etc., named after him.

As regards American literature, Pulaski has been given very little attention in poetry and novels. Also, there has been little serious scholarly work on especially the American aspects of Pulaski's life. Nevertheless, Pulaski has been the subject of many popular short articles and features in numerous journals, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers which have made him quite well-known on the American scene. Four major groups that have been especially interested in Pulaski in the past are: the Polish-American organizations, Catholic groups, American historians, and the Masons.

The Polish-American groups, among them the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish National Alliance, and the Polish American Historical Association have made the greatest effort to preserve Pulaski's memory and at the same time make known his ideals through the publication of short biographical sketches, fictionalized stories, etc. Unfortunately, many of their fine articles and monographs are written in Polish and have not yet been translated into English. Despite this, there seems to be a feeling among some Polish-Americans that even this interest shown by their groups has been inadequate and that Polish-Americans should take as an example the honor paid Pulaski by non-Polish Americans.⁷

Catholic historians and writers have also considered Pulaski as a worthy subject. He is included in most

⁷Edward Horwath, "O Kazimierzu Pułaskim," Polish American Studies, V (January-June, 1948), 55.

compilations of Catholics in America, in Catholic periodical literature, and even a very charming and quite accurate biography, Cavalry Hero, Casimir Pulaski, by Dorothy Adams, has been written for children as a part of a Catholic series on the lives of Catholic heroes and heroines in American history.

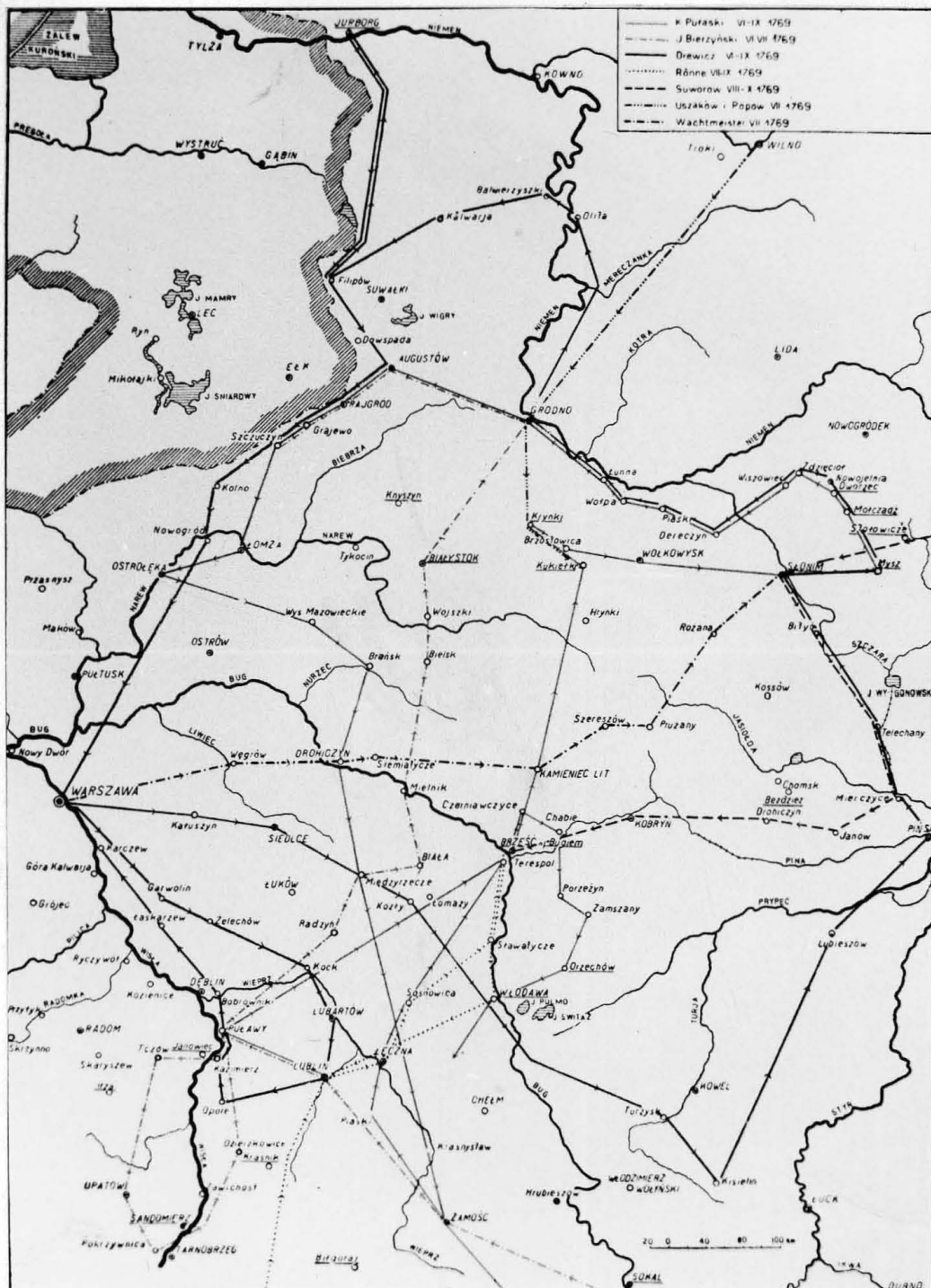
American historians, especially historians of the Revolutionary War, are all familiar with Pulaski's contribution. And few, if any American history books, even if exceptionally general, do not at least make mention of him. However, only one American historian, Professor Clarence A. Manning, has done a complete biographical work on Pulaski. It is not, unfortunately, particularly scholarly, and the writer suspects that in many instances it is only a partial translation of the basic work of Professor Konopczyński, without the proper credit, however, being given to this outstanding Polish historian. In addition, American historical magazines have featured several worthwhile articles about Pulaski.

It is in the area of American history, however, and general biographical and encyclopedic materials that the greatest shortcoming is to be found. For instance, it is unusual for an article about Pulaski to be completely accurate, even in a very reputable encyclopedia.⁸ Major errors are to be found in facts like date and place of birth, role in Poland, role in America, cause and place of death, etc.

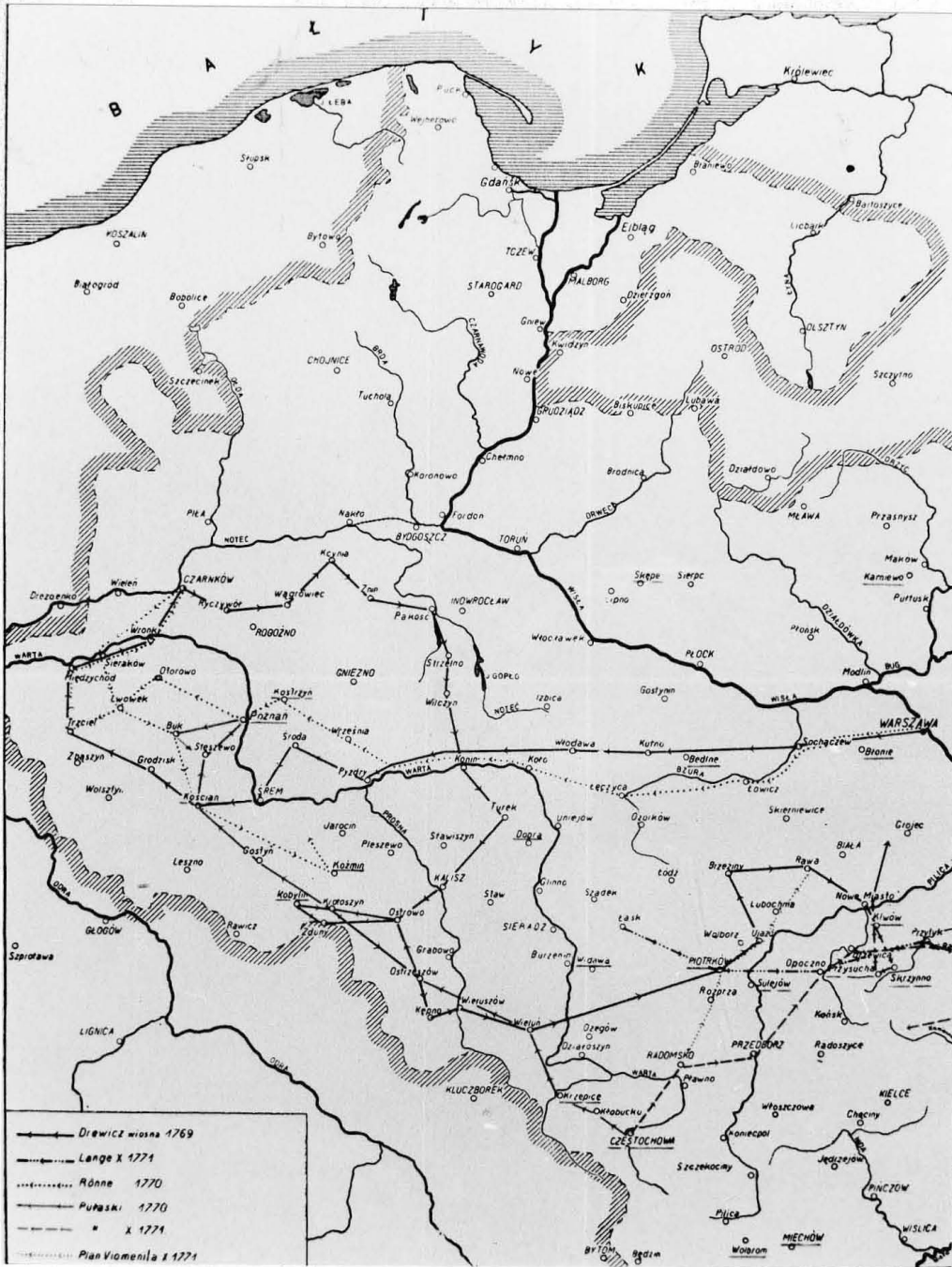
⁸ Among the encyclopedias checked by the writer at random which contained errors concerning Pulaski are the following: Collier's Encyclopedia, Catholic Encyclopedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica, etc.

Most surprising to the writer is the fact that the Masons too have developed a considerable literature about Pulaski in an attempt to prove that he was one of them. Via this interest, Masonic historians, among them Franklin Kemp, have become interested in other aspects of Pulaski's career.

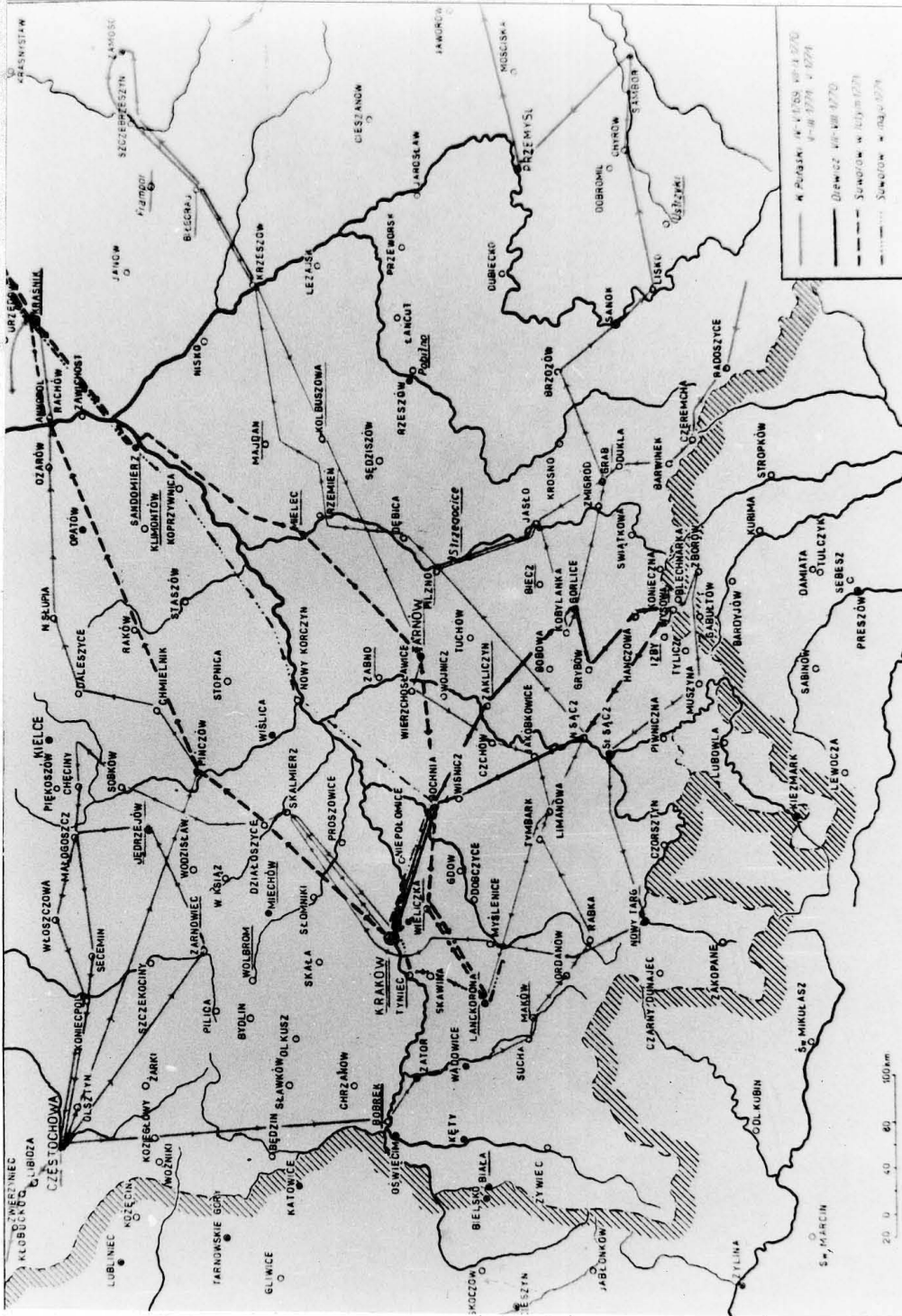
In summary, Pulaski, as in Poland, has left his mark in America. The preservation of his memory through literature and monuments are important tributes of our gratitude; however, the greatest tribute that can be given him is the preservation of his ideals.



Map of Pulaski's Campaign in Lithuania, 1769



The province of Great Poland as the terrain for the Bar Confederation War, 1769-71



Terrain of the Vistula and San Rivers for the Bar Confederation War, 1770-71

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