



Pranciškus Smuglevičius (1745–1807), "Tadeusz Kosciuszko's oath in the Krakow Market Square", 1797, National Museum in Poznan (Poland). Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Smuglewicz\\_Kosciuszko\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Smuglewicz_Kosciuszko_2.jpg) (site previewed on: 07-09-2015)

## IN THE KOSCIUSZKO UPRISING

After the second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the influence of Russia, Austria and Prussia particularly increased. It caused the great discontent in the country when the Constitution of May 3 and other reforms were revoked. The uprising was about to happen in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On 24th of March 1794, Tadeusz Kosciuszko declared the manifesto "For Freedom, the Territorial Integrity of the State and Independence of the Nation" in the Market Square of Krakow<sup>80</sup>. M. K. Oginskis in his "Memoirs" writes that about the Kosciuszko's manifesto and the forthcoming uprising in Warsaw he found out a few days after the announcement was revolted<sup>81</sup>. At the time, he was participating in the session of land purchase and legalization and mortgage deliberation work in Navahrudak. On 30th of March, the envoy from Warsaw delivered the text of the published act in Krakow and copies of T. Kosciuszko's manifesto. He then found out that the uprising in Warsaw would begin in no later than two weeks. After taking care of his family, M. K. Oginskis wrote a letter to his wife that she would leave Warsaw as soon as possible and head to Vilnius. Mykolas Kleopas has taken steps to get rid of "a Russian officer, whom General Otto Henrik Igelström<sup>82</sup> appointed as a protection in the journey, but in fact was order to be followed me"<sup>83</sup>. According to Mykolas Kleopas, he did not

believe in the success of the uprising and decided to "stay in the motherland and share the hardships with my people." The uprising act of Lithuanian nation was declared on 24th of April in the Town Hall Square. The rebel government was set up immediately. It was called the Supreme National Council of Lithuania. The commander of the rebels was elected military engineer General Jokūbas Jasinskis<sup>84</sup>. On 29th of April M. K. Oginskis joined the uprising in Vilnius. On the same day, he retired from the Treasurer of the Great Duchy of Lithuania post and determined to contribute to the success of the uprising putting all his efforts. Mykolas Kleopas signed the oath: "For the sake of the Motherland, I would give my share: my property, my work, and my life". He donated 20 thousand golden coins for the needs of the uprising. Together with Dominykas Narbutas<sup>85</sup> and Michaił Franciszek Karpowicz<sup>86</sup> from the Voivodeship of Vilnius M. K. Oginskis was elected to the most important institution of the uprising in Lithuania – the Supreme National Council. On 6th of May Mykolas Kleopas once again donated 118 thousand golden coins for the needs of the uprising. In 1794, rebel headquarters settled in Vilnius in the abandoned Sluokai Palace (in the current day the palace stands between T. Kosėiukos and Sluokø streets), which belonged to the Great Hetman Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis (1728–1800). In the

<sup>80</sup> Kraków (Polish pronunciation: [ˈkrakuf] ( listen) also Cracow, or Krakow is the second largest and one of the oldest cities in Poland.

<sup>81</sup> M. K. Oginskis, *Atsiminimai*, volume 1, p. 209.

<sup>82</sup> Otto Henrik Igelström – Swedish origin statesman of Russian empire, military officer, army general and landowner. Born on 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1737 in Tartu (Estonia), died on 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1817, in Gargzdai (Lithuania).

<sup>83</sup> M. K. Oginskis, *Atsiminimai*, volume 1, p. 209.

<sup>84</sup> Jakub Jasiński – Lithuanian engineer, poet, political figure, commander of the Uprising in Lithuania in 1794, lieutenant-general (1794). Born on 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1761 in Węglów (now -voivodeship of Great Poland). Studied in a Warsaw military school (1773–1783). From the 1790 was a superior of Vilnius school of military engineering. Died on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1794 in Warsaw.

<sup>85</sup> Dominykas Narbutas. Active figure of the Uprising in 1794. Born in 1740.

<sup>86</sup> Michaił Franciszek Karpowicz – Lithuanian bishop, theologian, at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> c. he was one of the most famous Lithuanian preachers, active member of the Uprising in 1794. Born on 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1744 in Kamianets (now – Brest region, Belarus), died on 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1803 in Berżniki, buried in Wigry (Poland).

Sluokai Palace, the projectile foundry was re-established and worked during the uprising. After the uprising, the Tsarist government confiscated the palace and turned it to a leasehold house. During the first weeks of the uprising M. K. Oginskis together with D. Narbutas and M. F. Karpowicz in the Supreme National Council prepared the regulations of the Council and its departments for organization and action, and other act of the uprising took the lead in organizational work of the uprising. On 6th of May on behalf of the Supreme National Council M. K. Oginskis made an inspiring speech in Pohulianka Square<sup>87</sup>, where 30 thousand rebellious Vilnius residents were gathered, and urged them instead of bearing malice or invoking anarchy, rather support the order and discipline instituted by the Supreme National Council working in Vilnius. At the beginning of May M. K. Oginskis was invited to lead on the merchants Francis Frybes and John Miller formed infantry regiment, which consisted of several hundred rebels – wool merchants and nobles. He accepted that offer. In the subsequent months, M. K. Oginskis retired from the civil leadership of the uprising and became vigorously involved into the military actions. He mobilized armed forces and led them. He marched twice to the areas controlled by the Russian army. Mykolas Kleopas led the rebels of Ukmergė, Dvenionys, and Breslau. On 4th of June, Jakūbas Jasinskis – who led the Lithuanian rebels – gave an order to M. K. Oginskis to carry out the attack against the Voivodeship of Minsk. The main idea of this attack in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was to encourage people to revolt and strengthen the armed forces of the uprising. On 7th of June M. K. Oginskis, leading about three hundred riflemen and having in his disposal about two hundred riders of the Lieutenant Caspar Korsak, for the first time in his life led the army to a military campaign. In order to reach the heart of the White Ruthenia, M. K. Oginskis turned his armed forces straight to the Voivodeship of Minsk (where his manors stood) controlled by the Russian army. There M. K. Oginskis expected to bring 10 thousand peasants to the uprising by promising them freedom. Information about the uprising, its aims and objectives, the rebel government proclamations, prompts to join the rebel ranks were disseminated in Ashmyany, Bariunai, Slabady, Valozhyn, Vyshnev during this campaign. In the beginning, the campaign was accompanied by success, but on 17th of June M. K. Oginskis

forces were suddenly assaulted in the surroundings of Vyshnev by the Russian troops led by the General Count Nikolay Zubov<sup>88</sup> and Baron Levin Bennigsen<sup>89</sup>. The attack was unexpected and rebels had to retreat. On this attack 50 rebels were killed, 64 soldiers and 4 officers were captured, personal M. K. Oginskis cash register with 7 thousand ducats and documents were taken away. M. K. Oginskis with remaining forces retreated to Kreva and merged with the division of the General J. Jasinskis. Although it failed to achieve the main objectives of the attack, the raid had a notable political significance and was positively assessed. M. K. Oginskis' attack managed to distract the Russian army from suppression of the uprising in other territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. All these events Mykolas Kleopas described in detail in his "Memoirs". M. K. Oginskis' actions in the uprising brought many new and original ideas. Dr. Ramunė Dmigeliskytė-Stukienė in the earlier mentioned monograph writes:

*"In the proclamation to the Russians (13th of May 1794) we can detect a noticeable M. K. Oginskis attempt to weaken the enemy by bringing its soldiers to his side. This kind of "thefts", only with a greater success, were applied a couple of years later shaping the Polish legions of Italy. In proclamations in Polish and Russian languages, he tried to persuade soldiers to leave "blind slavery hordes" ruled by the "tyranny". It was because the greater part of the Russian army's soldiers descended from the territories, which were taken away after the second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. T. Kosciuszko emphasized that "Citizen Oginskis, who successfully accomplished his expedition, earned the nation's gratitude, which on behalf of the nation I have already announced. Such guerrilla method of warfare is currently the most important for us; it must be expanded as far as possible."*

After the march to Minsk, from Kreva M. K. Oginskis returned to Vilnius. After receiving an order from the new commander in Lithuania General Michał Wielhorski<sup>90</sup>, he went to Poland to inform T. Kosciuszko about the progress of the uprising in Lithuania and ask for help for the Polish forces. In the second half of July M. K. Oginskis returned to Vilnius and asked the permission of M. Wielhorski to attack the enemy's territory second time – this time the Courland. The plan was to organize the diversionary attack in Livonia, support the rebels of the Courland and protect the capital of Lithuania Vilnius, which was



Joseph Marszewski (1827–1883), "View of Vilnius from the Taurus Hill", 1872, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM T-2140

<sup>87</sup> Pohulanka square was in a current area of Basanavicius street.

<sup>88</sup> Nikolay Zubov (1763–1805) – Count, obershtalmeister of the Russian Imperial Palace, the murderer of Emperor Paul I (Pavel I). He was a son of Count Alexander Zubov (6<sup>th</sup> of August 1727 – 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1795), who was a reserve lieutenant-colonel of Russian imperial army, senator's prosecutor of the Russian Empire, senator, the real secret adviser. His brothers were Russian imperial army major-general Dmitry Zubov (1764–1836), the greatest Duke of the Saint Roman Empire, Russian general-feldmarschall, statesman Platon Zubov (1767–1822), Russian Emperor general commander-in-chief and adjutant general Valerijonas Zubovas (1771–1804). Sister – Olga Zubova-Perebcova (1767) - 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1849), former participant of the 1801 year collusion against Paul I (Pavel I), wife of Aleksandras Perebcovas (1754–1807), favourite of the King George IV of England, she gave birth to an illegitimate son George Nord.

<sup>89</sup> Levin August Gottlieb Theophil, Graf von Bennigsen – war figure of the Russian Empire, general of the cavalry. From July 1801 till October 1806, he was a Governor-general of Vilnius city. Born on 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1745 in Brunswick, died on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1826 in Banteln (Lower Saxony).

<sup>90</sup> General Michaił Wielhorski (1755–1805) – participant of the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising in 1792 and 1794. In 1794, instead of Jokūbas Jasinskis, he was designated as a commander of the Uprising in Lithuania.



Vincentas Dmachauskas (1805/1807–1862), "Vilnius Image", 1857, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-418

surrounded by the enemy at that time. At the end of July, M. K. Oginskis together with 50 riders left Vilnius. The march was through Nemenėinė, Ėvenėionys. On the first days, M. K. Oginskis' forces joined the rebels of Uþneris led by Jonas Zenkevičiaus, the rebels of Breslou led by Kazimieras Belikavičius, and the rebels of Vilkmėrgė on the disposal of Ignotas Marikonis. There were 100 cavalry and 1,500 infantry units in this march. The majority of the rebels were poorly armed peasants. They had only 200 rifles and two cannons. M. K. Oginskis realized that continue marching further with so poorly armed rebels does not make sense, so he picked out 300 the best-armed riders and took the road towards Daugavpils. Other rebels he left in Dusetos, where they had to be taken to the disposal of Romualdas Giedraitis<sup>91</sup> and Tomasz Wawrzecki<sup>92</sup>.

In the morning of August 11, by the Daugava River M. K. Oginskis troops were strafed by cannons of the Russian army. M. K. Oginskis failed to take the fortress. On 12th of August, he announced the proclamation to the Livonian people, inviting them to join the rebels. The commander of Daugavpils fortress was handed the ultimatum to surrender. The Commander rejected the ultimatum. Knowing that Daugavpils fortress is heavily guarded and receiving the information that soon additional Russian army forces are coming, M. K. Oginskis had to stop the march. T. Kosciuszko ordered him to turn back from the Courland and stay in Dusetos. The greatest achievement of this march was that M. K. Oginskis disorientated commanders of the Russian army and shortly detained Russian onslaught. On 14th of August in Dusetos, M. K.

Oginskis found out that on 12th of August the Russian army occupied Vilnius. He passed the leadership to I. Morikonis and through Jonava, Kaunas went to Warsaw – to the headquarters of the T. Kosciuszko Uprising.

Mykolas Kleopas reached Warsaw in mid-September. He spent there few weeks and then went to his residence in Sokolowo. In the late September-mid October 1794, the Russian army flushed out the rebels from the territory of Lithuania reaching Nemunas, and the Prussian army entrenched in Uþnemunė. During the 10th of October battle by Maciejowice T. Kosciuszko was injured and captured.

In the mid-October, when the Russian army approached Sokolowo, M. K. Oginskis came back to Warsaw. He was ordered to join the General's R. Giedraitis forces, fighting against the Prussian army, and he obeyed. On the 4th of November, the Russian army led by A. Suvorov assaulted Prague – the suburbs of Warsaw. The rebels had no chance of resistance. On 5th of November, Warsaw capitulated. Losses were enormous. J. Jasinskis the rebel commander from Lithuania died defending Warsaw. Many of the rebels were captured, though a lot of managed to escape from persecutor, and avoiding retaliation, had to choose the path of political emigrants. Among them was Mykolas Kleopas.

Under the different surname – Michailovskoje – he on the 7th of December managed to escape. Supposedly, during those days Mykolas Kleopas created the famous Polish "Farewell to Motherland". After a long journey, Mykolas Kleopas stayed in Venice.



Adolphe Jean-Baptiste Bayot (1810–1866), Philippe Benoist (1813–1879), "Krakow. Slavkov Gate", 1850, Lithuanian Art Museum, LDM G-6043

Living in exile, he rejected the proposal of the Duke Nikolaj Repnin<sup>93</sup> of the Empress Catherine II. The proposal was to write a letter of repentance to the Empress of Russia for participation in the

uprising, admitting "reckless participation in the rebellion". Having learned that M. K. Oginskis will not repent, all of his manors and property in the Russian-controlled territories were confiscated.

<sup>91</sup> Romuald Giedroyc – lieutenant-general, participant of the Uprising in 1794. Born on 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1750, in Baptynas (near Baptai), died on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1842 in Warsaw.

<sup>92</sup> Tomasz Wawrzecki – Polish military general, lawyer, envoy of the Four-Year Sejm, landlord, one of the commanders of Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising. Born in 1754 in Meikstai manor (Braslau district). After the defeat at Maciejowice (Poland) and the capture of Kosciuszko, he became a commander of the Uprising. In 1794–1796, after the suppression of the Uprising he was imprisoned in the Petersburg Peter and Paul Fortress. In 1796, he was amnestied by the Russian Tsar Paul I (Pavel I). In 1812, during the war against Napoleon his political orientation was pro-Russian. In the last years of his life, he worked in Poland – firstly he was a governor of justice department of the provisional government, later – the minister of justice. In 1816, after the worsening of his health, he gained a temporary vacation. Came back and died in Lithuania on 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1816. Buried in the churchyard of Vidzy. There is information that he gave a personal freedom to his peasants. It might be decided from the contract, which he signed with the peasants of Kalviai manor and the peasants of Rokiskiai, Sevelionys, Kazokai, Butkiemis, Plytninkai. On 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1794 this contract was written in the acts book of Raseiniai land court (at that time he had stopped his led division in Raseiniai. The division was reattreating from the Samogitia region).

<sup>93</sup> Nikolai Vasilyevich Repnin (1734–1801) – Russian nobleman, army general. In 1764–1769 he was an ambassador of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Distinguished himself in a Turkey war (1787–1792). During the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising he was a military commander. After the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he was a Governor-General in Lithuania (1795–1797). In 1798 he was sent to Berlin and Vienna to carry out the diplomatic mission, which was aimed to disunite Prussia from the France and to link the Hapsburg dynasty and Prussia for the battle against the first French Republic.