



Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 25, Number 3797, 23 May 1863 — ADDRESS OF THE POLISH NATIONAL COMMITTEE. [article]

ADDRESS OF THE POLISH NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

Americans! Poland is again in arms, and her battle cry startles the world. "Give us a country or death, O God!" is sounding through every heart; nor can the saber of the Cossack nor the musket of the Russian silence the Holy Chant. In the very face of death it breathes from the rose lips of our devoted women, and thrills through the quivering accents of our children. The white eagles of Poland are again upon the gale; over fields so often hallowed by the blood of the brave, again they lead to victory; and God Himself, in the perfect justice of our cause, is pledged for our success! Long crushed and tortured, Poland yet dares; frequently and ruthlessly betrayed, she is still true to herself and her high hopes; broken into fragments, limb torn from limb, her very name blotted from the roll of nations, and with the iron heel of the oppressor in her dauntless heart, she yet lives in a unity of being so close and entire that she is at last baffling the multitudinous powers of her enemies, and rousing herself like a giant for the final combat.

What is the secret of this marvelous unity, this tenacity of life and purpose? Love of country; enthusiastic love, which never slumbers or wearies, whether in the frozen wilds of Siberia or the dungeons of the Russians, and is never soothed into forgetfulness even among the dwellers in the happy climes where Freedom makes her home, and man may live as virtue and duty dictate. Strange love of Poland which enables the tender daughters of her soil to relinquish all luxury, to live in constant privation, in life-long anguish, often to arm and die for her sweet sake; enables even children to endure torture and exile in her cause; while men of all ranks and ages rush into the very jaws of death without one thought of self in their strong souls. "God bless and deliver Poland!" the last words sounding through their firm lips! Americans, is not this feeling in itself almost sufficient to insure victory for a cause so sacred that neither time, anguish nor death have power to chill the holy enthusiasm enkindled by it?

Our countrymen are again in arms—not for conquest, spoil, or revolution, but for re-organization, order, religion, toleration; that they may live and breathe as it alone behooves men to act and live—as freemen! The ancient rights

of Poland have never been renounced, her indisputable claim to nationality has never been abdicated; "the kings of the earth have risen up against her;" despots have combined to blot her glorious name from the face of the earth. But they have failed utterly, and ninety years of continuous oppression have not yet sufficed to efface it from the heart of one even among the least of her children! Poland grows no traitors on her bloody soil, and her men, women and children are as ready to die for her now as when her cruel dismemberment began.

No, "Poland is not dead," but writhes in the agonies of a new birth. The determination that she shall be free extends through all ranks and classes. Her white eagles again float in triumph over fields well known to glory; the tocsin, tolled by the anointed hands of her priests and bishops, again sounds from her time-worn cathedrals; her heart is on fire through the whole length and breadth of the soil so loved and so often drenched in gore. The flames which the Russians vainly sought to stifle when they surrounded Langewicz, almost under the very walls of Cracow, blaze now from north to south, encircling Warsaw, the center of Russian despotism, extending along the whole frontier of Russian Poland, into Courland and Livonia, along the coast of the Baltic to the shores of the Riga. Yes, the sacred ground, watered by the tears of noble women and the blood of patriots, is indeed on fire; the flames spread in every direction; all selfishness is consumed in the vivid glow, and every heart is ready to heave its last sob for the country of its ardent devotion.

The sons of Poland now fearlessly appeal to the sympathy of this great nation; they ask for aid in a cause which can never be buried in defeat or sunk in forgetfulness, for the conscience of the civilized world is now aroused; the universal sense of justice pants to relieve the injured victim, the long martyred nation calls for moral support—for that overwhelming strength which will nerve her arm when she feels her cause universally acknowledged to be just, when she feels the vast heart of all free peoples throbs pulse for pulse with her own, that the outrages committed against her are seen to be outrages against humanity itself, and that the prayers of all just men who know what freedom is are raised in her behalf to that God of Eternal Mercy who will that "all men shall be free." What use now to dwell upon the agonies so long endured by Poland? Every one knows that no faith has ever been kept with her, no promises made but to be broken, no treaties signed but to be rescinded.

Wrong upon wrong has been heaped upon her; humiliation upon humiliation. The very language in which her children first learn to

lisp the word "mother," they have sought to cancel in her patriot soul. Her unarmed populace have been fired upon in their own Capital, when at their simple devotions, when their dauntless virgins bared their snowy bosoms to the cold sharp steel of their ruthless enemy, and the tenderest mothers held up their innocent children to the shot and shell of the infuriated Russians. This is no place to enumerate the glories of Poland—they illuminate the pages of human history; nor is this the place for the names of her sages, poets and patriots. Many of her heroes stand indelibly graven upon the tables of your own bright national history, and live laurel-crowned in the memory of a grateful people—Kosciusko and Pulaski, are they not household words among Americans? Europe smiles upon our cause.

A meeting was called in Paris, in order to express sympathy, on March 22d, in Stockholm on the 24th, in Switzerland on the 23d, in Belgium, Madrid and Turin during the same month. Denmark has also expressed her interest for us in our present struggle, and even in St. Petersburg they have not been silent. A Territory and Liberty Society, long known as in existence there, has issued a circular commencing thus: "The blood of our brothers already flows; shall it always be so?" And then, appealing to the Russians, it continues: "The time has come when you should act in union with the Poles, to assure them those rights which Muscovite Czars have usurped." Thus all countries save the home of the exile, the land of the free, have given us assurances of ardent and beneficial sympathy; and our hearts are saddened by the fact that as yet no demonstration has been made in our favor. But this apparent apathy cannot last.

Men and brethren! we ask aid from hearts that have been rocked in the cradle of Liberty, suckled at the breast of Freedom, and bred in the school of human rights! we ask aid, not to enable us to wreak vengeance upon our oppressors; aid, not for conquest or glory, but aid for our struggling and noble country! and succor for anguished widows and orphans. The cry of the legions of Dombrowski is again upon the air. "Teczce Polska nie Zginzta." "No, Poland is not dead!" and while there is a God in Heaven she will not die! In the full confidence in that sacred brotherhood now stirring at the heart of all nations; in that wide-spread determination, that all oppression must cease, we call upon you to acknowledge our claims. Few in number, our cause is mighty, and appeals to all who feel. The Christ of Nations, bound hand and foot, is stirring in her tombs, and the day of her resurrection has already dawned.

Upon the very first day in which the Polish Committee met "they declared in the very moment when the holy struggle begins, that all the sons of Poland, without any distinction of faith or race, descent or station, are free and equal citizens of the country." We also wish to address a few lines to the Muscovite nation. Our traditional motto being the freedom and brotherhood of nations, we pardon you even the murder of our Fatherland, the blood of Praga and Oszmiana, the outrages in the streets of Warsaw, and the tortures in the cells of the citadels. We pardon you because you, too, are miserable and weary; because the dead bodies of your children are rocked on the gallows of the Czar and your prophets freeze in the snows of Siberia, etc. Such is the language of our Committee.

Equal rights to all and forgiveness to our enemies! People of the Union, first in the upward path of freedom, consider our just and sacred claims. The feeling of the French and English people is unmistakably in our favor; even Austria hesitates, and would fain be generous. We ask aid for the victims in this glorious warfare—aid, that Poland may once more live, that her long crucifixion may cease, that she may once more emerge into the bright sunshine of national independence, the strengthening air of constitutional liberty. Rally in her noble cause, and her millions shall greet you from across the sea; the warm tide of gratitude shall surge your souls with the bliss of well-doing; and the Brotherhood of the world shall have made its first great step in the new path now opening for the fraternal advance of ever-progressive humanity!

Signed by Dr. Mackiewics, Jaworowski, J. Gacek, Kalusowski, Colonel Krzyzanowski, Colonel Karga, Major Raszewski, Major Hlasko, X. Karrzewski, J. Markson, J. Pychowski, W. Piotrowski, Dr. Korwitz, W. Kochanowski, W. Biskupski, J. Wisnowski, Captain Maluski.
Central Polish Committee in the United States.

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