KOSSUTH ÉS SCHURZ, CARL

E664
S39 E13

Easum, Chester Verne: The American-
ization of Carl Schurz. (Chicago, 1929,
Univ. of Chicago Press.)

of it," he tried to supply by activity what he lacked in conviction. But he found no happiness in it.

One plan formed by the exiles was the raising of a "German national loan" on the credit of the government which they were going to set up with its proceeds, whenever they should find such a course possible. In the interest of this plan, Schurz made another venturesome trip to the Continent, in October, 1851, revisiting Paris and getting out two hours before the arrests of all foreigners began, going to Strassburg, spending two weeks among the German refugees still in Switzerland, and, after staying secretly twelve days more in Paris, returning again to London, more confident than ever in his personal "luck" but no more so in the strength of the cause he had gone there to serve.[82]

In the interest of the same scheme Kinkel made a tour of America, just before that of Kossuth, meeting a reception only a little less cordial than Kossuth's but achieving results but little more substantial than his.[83] While he was gone, Schurz served once more as his lieutenant, carrying on a voluminous correspondence, sending out printed "interim receipts" and circularizing the Germans in America in the interests of the loan.[84] The national-loan project did attain some strength, and enough funds were raised to become

[82] Letter to parents from London, October 25, 1851, in *Lebn.*, III, 841; C.S., *Rem.*, I, 374.

[83] Ernest Bruncken, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

[84] Letter to parents, *supra*, n. 82.

a subject of discussion for ten years thence, it being proposed at certain times to turn them over to a sort of international league of revolutionists to be used wherever possible, and again, to give them to Garibaldi.[55]

Schurz had interviews with Kossuth in London both before and after the personally triumphant but financially and politically unsuccessful tour of the great Hungarian leader in the United States; and he noted on the second occasion the change in his bearing.[56] But while he had then some idea of the reason for it, he was, of course, in no such position to understand it as he was many years later when he wrote his account of Kossuth's interview in December, 1851, with Henry Clay. In it, he described how high Kossuth's hopes had been raised by the friendly attitude of the United States government toward the movement for Hungarian independence in the days of its initial success, by his own journey on board a United States warship from asylum in Turkey to a rapturously admiring reception in the United States, by Webster's famous Huelsemann letter, and by many speeches he had heard since his arrival. He then told how the aged

[55] Kinkel, as custodian of the fund, was ordered to do this by the German loan-committees of St. Louis and New York but refused. Letters: Schurz to Kinkel, January 23, 1855, in *Lebn.*, III, 119–21; and Kinkel to Schurz, August 19, 1860, in C.S. MSS., W.H.S. The total amount seems to have been about $20,000.

[56] C.S., *Rem.*, I, 384 and 402; II, 50–53.

Clay, in startling contrast, had expressed his disappointment that France had so submitted to the *coup d'etat* of Louis Napoleon, and warned his visitor that hopes of intervention by the United States in the interest of republicanism in Europe were quite without foundation. The biographer then commented:

> This was not what Kossuth had come to hear. But it was what the American people really thought when sobered from the fascination of Kossuth's presence, and what other American statesmen would have said to him had they frankly expressed their sentiments.[87]

The fulness of knowledge and maturity of understanding with which he wrote the foregoing words a full generation later were naturally not his when a young exile in London. On one point, however, he was already in full agreement with Clay. The submission of France, in December, 1851, destroyed his last hope of a speedy revival of the Republican movement elsewhere and of his own early return to Germany.

To that extent, the dramatic account, in his *Reminiscences*, of the formation of his own decision to come to America seems to be literally true. In it, he describes himself as sitting on one end of a Hyde Park bench while Louis Blanc sat on the other, plunged in deepest dejection and admitting hopeless defeat: "*C'est fini.*" Viewing this scene in retrospect, almost half a century later, he described himself as thinking:

[87] Schurz, *Henry Clay* (2 vols., Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1887), II, 394 and 395.

The fatherland was closed to me. England was to me a foreign country, and would always remain so. Where, then? "To America," I said to myself . . . . *Ubi libertas, ibi patria* —I formed my resolution on the spot. I would remain only a short time longer in England to make some necessary preparations, and then—off to America.[88]

As a matter of fact, his emigration to this country did not take place for more than eight months thereafter. The length of that period of preparation may have been partly due to the fact that during it he fell in love with the sister-in-law of another German refugee, Miss Margaretha Meyer, of Hamburg, to whom he was married, July 6, 1852.[89]

During the spring and early summer of that year, several letters were written which have a direct bearing upon the formation of his decision to come to America. To his prospective brother-in-law, Adolph Meyer, a member of a prosperous commercial family of Hamburg, who had, as Margaretha's protector, made some very natural inquiries as to his plans and prospects, he wrote that he was quite able to earn enough in London, by teaching, to support two people comfortably, and that, too, without taking Margaretha's property into the reckoning. But "mere bread" was not enough.

[88] C.S., *Rem.*, I, 401.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 402. His own story of the meeting and courtship, written for his children at their request, is in the German manuscripts; but there appears no historical reason for introducing it here, while his expressed wish is a superfluous one for not doing so.

The foreigner here is always a foreigner. Under such circumstances, I cannot feel at home. What I seek in America is not only personal freedom, but the chance to gain full legal citizenship. If I cannot be a citizen of a free Germany, then I would at least be a citizen of a free America.

The situation of his parents, moreover, impelled him to the same decision. Because of him, they had for more than a year suffered almost uninterrupted interference and annoyance from the Prussian police; so that they were in real distress and it seemed imperative that he effect their migration to Wisconsin, where several of their relatives were already well established. So, "immediately after the unfortunate events of December, in France," he had decided to migrate. That was before he had met Margaretha; but she was willing to go with him, and by lecturing in American cities on the recent history of France, he hoped to earn a living from the start. He even hoped that Margaretha, who, because she had "never known what it was to provide her own living" had "not yet learned to enjoy it," would be happier there.[80]

That the failure of the French, then, again to set a successful and contagious example for the republicans of Germany, was the determining factor in his decision to emigrate seems to be well substantiated. That he found the life of a professional political exile empty and irritating, rather than merely enervating, has al-

[80] Letter to Adolph Meyer from London, April 19, 1852, in *Lebn.*, III, 86–88.

ready been suggested. That the circumstances of his parents were genuinely uncomfortable is apparent from the distress he showed in a letter of May 19, sending them money and regretting his inability to send more, and expressing concern as to their ability to hold out for six months more while he preceded them to the land of asylum and opportunity and prepared a place for them there.[91]

But that he had actually planned, either then or earlier, a really permanent transfer of his interests and allegiance to the new fatherland, or had yet abandoned hope of an eventual return to the old, is made to appear extremely doubtful by a group of letters written just before he left England with his bride. In them he described the same plan as to Adolph Meyer, to lecture on the history of France from 1789 to 1852, the subject about which he knew most and Americans least. Unable to content himself with far distant prospects in Europe, he would thus make his "time of exile fruitful." The other exiles were again showing great interest in a scheme for the formation of an international revolutionary league with membership on both sides of the Atlantic, the American members (apparently) to furnish the funds and the Europeans the agitation and political activity on their side, while the early grant of

[91] Letter to parents from London, May 19, 1852, *ibid.*, p. 90. His wife was also subjected to some unpleasant experience with the Prussian police when on a visit to Germany as late as 1855. Letter to her, November 5, 1855, in C.S. MSS., W.H.S. Cf. also n. 73.