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Polish Uprising of 1863-1864 in the Right-bank UKRAINE AND BELARUS

Polish January uprising became the largest one which found support of the international public thought. Together with the Poles the Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarusians took part in there. It was the attempt to renew Polish national statehood and to get independence.

Just before the uprising two trends, named “the white” and “the red” were formed in Poland. The first ones, mainly great landowners and bourgeoisie, strived to renew Rich Pospolyta in the borders of 1772, i.e. with Lithuania, Belarus and Right-bank Ukraine in their territory. The second trend was small and landless nobles, intellectuals, urban poor, students and part of the peasantry. Their struggle for independence was associated with the solution of the agrarian question [3, c. 115].

In spring 1862 the Central national committee (CNC) was made up. It declared itself as “a secret government”, which demanded to do all of their orders from people, in particular to pay the compulsory national tax for the uprising preparation. The building of the illegal state apparatus started. These were provincial, district, municipal authorities (national committees), police, post etc. In Ukraine conspirators made up a Provincial Committee in Rus, and in Lithuania – a Lithuanian Provincial Committee (LPC), headed by Konstantin Kalinowski (1838-1864).

The initiator of the actions in the Ukraine was the son of the rebel of 1830, colonel of the Russian Army Edmund Ruzhitsky (1827-1893). He set contact with Warsaw and started the preparations for the uprising in Kyiv region, Podil region and Volyn region. “The Red” marked change in the situation in Ukraine, Belarus and

Lithuania where independent Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian national movements were awakening. They believed that after a victorious uprising and the overthrow of the Russian autocracy Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians together with Poles would form the voluntary and equal union within democratic Poland [1, c. 327-329].

In the Right-Bank Ukraine, where Polish rebels also operated, the secret organization "Land and Freedom" spread among the people and the tsar's troop's leaflets in support of the liberation struggle. The rebels also spread here their "The Rural people diploma", which promised to issue legally peasant land tenure, equality of everyone before everyone, freedom of rights, religion and language [5, p. 211]. It is known that the manifesto of Alexander II about the release of serfdom, read in churches in early spring 1861 was met with peasants rather skeptically, with distrust and dissatisfaction. In the wave of such mood Polish rebels tried to act, and thus "The Rural people diploma" appeared [2, p. 50].

However, Ukrainian peasants not only unsupported Polish rebels, but treated them with hostility. Even peasants duty officers were formed. Traditional distrust to any nobles' promises about the release of serfdom played their role. Besides, Ukrainian peasants didn't take the political program of Polish nobles about the renewal of the Polish state in the old borders [5, c. 211].

In the Right-Bank Ukraine rebel groups consisted mostly of local Polish population, mainly the nobility and petty shlyakhta. The rebels went to villages, gathered peasants and encouraged them to fight against the tsar regime, for freedom. In some places, Ukrainian peasants favored the rebels. However, the forces were unequal. The tsar regime sent a large and well-armed army to strangle the uprising. About 20 rebel groups operating in the Right-Bank Ukraine were destroyed, and some of them moved into the territory of Galicia. The total number of the repressed rebels was 4470 people [4].

As for Belarus, the first rebel groups were established in the western districts in March- April 1863. They were formed of the local shlyakhta, officers, artisans, students, and peasants. There was no any Action Plan, there was no mutual aid. The

heads were going to uprising in the Baltic and Russian provinces. But they failed to do that. More active rebel groups were in Vilno and Grodno regions. In Grodno region, there were 5 groups which numbered 1,700 people. In May 1863 the rebels had more than 20 fights. Among the leaders of the uprising, the struggle for power took place. “The White” set control over the governing bodies firstly in Warsaw and then locally. In March 1863 the LPC was dissolved and “the department, which manages the provinces of Lithuania” was established. K. Kalinowski and his comrades obeyed to avoid a split in the ranks of the rebels, and continued the rebel fight [6, p. 515-517].

From the middle of May 1863 the uprising oppression headed a new Vilno governor-general M. Muravyov. Since his arrival repressions had intensified. At the same time, a number of activities were made to attract peasants to the side of the authorities. In June some members of the Department managing the provinces of Lithuania were arrested. Since July, 31 K. Kalinowski had become the Head of the Vilno Department, and on August 22 he was transferred to the High Commissioner and the powers of the government in Warsaw and Vilno. K. Kalinowski’s secret government tried to revive the uprising. But the real success was not achieved. By September 1863 uprising had almost been crushed [6, p. 520].

Thus, the Polish uprising in Right-Bank Ukraine and Belarus took place in different ways, but the crucial role was played by both Ukrainian and Belarusian peasantry. Ukrainian peasants even started to fight with the rebels, and the Belarusian peasants were offered relatively improved living conditions that in the final result left the rebels without the support of the basic social mass at that time.

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