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**THE POLES IN KYIV REGION, VOLYN AND PODILLIA:
FROM THE DIVISIONS OF THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH
TO THE JANUARY UPRISING**

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to do a comprehensive analysis of the policy of the Russian Empire concerning the population of Right-Bank Ukraine (nobility, peasantry) in the context of socio-political and military processes at the end of the 18th – mid-19th centuries. The principles of historicism, scientific objectivity, systematicity and comprehensiveness are **the theoretical and methodological foundations** of the research. Such general and special scientific methods of the study as: logical, problem-chronological, historical situational, comparative have been used to solve the objectives. **The scientific novelty** of the research consists in the study of the state authorities role in the settlement/intensification of ethno-social conflicts on the Right-Bank, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the Polish-Ukrainian (noble-peasant) relations at the micro level, the levelling of myths and stereotypes about them, which gave rise to the Polish and Ukrainian historiography during the*

last century. **The Conclusions.** At the end of the 18th century the entry of Right-Bank Ukraine into the Russian Empire did not decrease the influence of the Polish nobility in the region, which was integrated into the power vertical of the Romanov Empire gradually. The factor of “wealthy Polish nobility” and “poor Ukrainian peasantry” determined the priorities of St. Petersburg’s ethno-social policy in the region: the former, *de facto*, received unlimited rights and opportunities, while the latter were granted a disenfranchised status, which naturally contributed to the growth of a social tension in the South-West region and stimulated anti-noble/anti-Polish uprisings. The anti-noble uprisings showed the shaky position of the Russian administration in the region, which was threatened with defeat without the support of the Ukrainian peasantry. In this context, the peasants of Right Bank acted as a kind of guarantor of the nobility’s obedience.

Key words: Russian Empire, Right-Bank Ukraine, Polish-Ukrainian relations, nobility, peasantry, uprising, conflicts.

ПОЛЯКИ НА КИЇВЩИНІ, ВОЛИНІ Й ПОДІЛЛІ: ВІД ПОДІЛІВ РЕЧІ ПОСПОЛИТОЇ ДО СІЧНЕВОГО ПОВСТАННЯ

Анотація. *Мета роботи* полягає у комплексному аналізі політики Російської імперії щодо населення Правобережної України (шляхта, селянство) у контексті суспільно-політичних та військових процесів кінця XVIII – середини XIX ст. **Теоретико-методологічними засадами** дослідження слугували принципи історизму, наукової об’єктивності, системності та всебічності. Для розв’язання поставлених завдань використано такі загально- та спеціальнонаукові методи дослідження, як: логічний, проблемно-хронологічний, історико-ситуаційний, порівняльний. **Наукова новизна** розвідки вбачається у дослідженні ролі органів державної влади в урегулюванні / посиленні етносоціальних конфліктів на Правобережжі, а також закріпленню безправний статус, що, закономірно, сприяло зростанню соціальної напруги в Південно-Західному краї та стимулювало антишляхетські / антипольські виступи. Шляхетські повстання показали хитке становище російської адміністрації у регіоні, якій без підтримки українського селянства загрозувала поразка. У цьому контексті, селяни Правобережжя виступали своєрідним гарантом покірності шляхти.

Ключові слова: Російська імперія, Правобережна Україна, польсько-українські відносини, шляхта, селянство, повстання, конфлікти.

The Problem Statement. In the Ukrainian and Polish historiography, the issue of the Polish presence in Kyiv region, Volyn, and Podillia (the end of the 18th – the mid-19th centuries) is one of the least researched, considering numerous ideological “taboos” that took place in Ukraine and Poland during the communist totalitarianism, and modern subjective factors. Among the Ukrainian researchers, who are mainly influenced by the historical views of Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, the outlined issue was and remains to some extent “foreign”. Instead, according to Krzysztof Pomian, the Poles are aware that “the historical image of the Polish presence in Right-Bank Ukraine (in the 19th century) does not strengthen hearts,” because “heroism is rare” (Beauvois, 1987a, s. 8). Instead, there are numerous unattractive, factual abuses of the Polish nobility against the Russky/Ukrainian serf peasants (Franko, 2020, pp. 13–27), as well as a number of modern Polish scholars try to avoid or even justify the abuses. Perhaps that is why, in the opinion of K. Pomian, none of the Polish

historians have created this image, and the Polish collective memory, as well as the Polish historiography, have not found a place for it (Beauvois, 1987a, p. 8).

The Review of Sources and Recent Research. Daniel Beauvois, a French scholar and follower of the School of Annals (in French: *École des Annales*), was the first historian to study the research issue thoroughly. He devoted a “short Ukrainian trilogy” to the issue of the Polish presence in Right-Bank Ukraine, the relations of Poles with the imperial authorities, the Ukrainians and the Jews, as well as a major synthesis of the issue, numerous articles and interviews (Bovua, 1996, 1998, 2020). Over time, owing to his research, the outlined issue became quite popular both in Poland and Ukraine. The Ukrainian researchers, including Ivan Lisevych (Lisevych, 1993), Valentyna Shandra (Shandra, 1998, 2005), Mykola Barmak (Barmak, 2007), Viktor Pavliuk (Pavliuk, 2000), Bohdan Hud (Hud, 2018) and the others, significantly supplemented the scientific research by D. Beauvois with valuable facts and analytical generalizations. Among Polish historians, the research issues started by the French historian are directly or indirectly studied by Roman Wapiński (Wapiński, 1994), Leszek Zasztowt (Zasztowt, 1997), Dariusz Szpoper (Szpoper, 2003), Tadeusz Epsztein (Epsztein, 1998), Mirosław Ustrzycki (Ustrzycki, 2006) and the others. However, today there are many gaps in the public consciousness of the Ukrainians and the Poles regarding understanding of importance of the above mentioned scientific issue. This, in particular, confirms the fact that on the pages of school textbooks, as well as studies on the history of our countries of the 19th century, there is little information on the issue unreasonably (Plokhii, 2016; Hrytsak, 2019; Yekelchuk, 2009; Zamojski, 2016). The above-mentioned fact prompts to draw the attention of researchers of the history of the Ukrainian-Polish relations in the new and modern times to the issue mentioned in the title of this article.

The purpose of the research is to do a comprehensive analysis of the policy of the Russian Empire concerning the population of Right-Bank Ukraine (nobility, peasantry) in the context of socio-political and military processes at the end of the 18th – mid-19th centuries.

The Results of the Research.

1. The nobility of Right-Bank after the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In the last quarter of the 18th century Right-bank Ukraine was incorporated by the Russian Empire. In 1796 – 1797, the former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were divided into three provinces (Kyiv, Podillia, and Volyn). For more than a century, they formed the so-called The South-Western Region, which in turn was part of the Western Region of the Romanov Empire. After the suppression of the November Uprising (1832), the Kyiv Governorate General was established, which was subordinated to the three aforementioned Right-Bank provinces (Barmak, 2007, pp. 158–159, 177). Since then, a qualitatively new stage of imperial policy began, aimed at (a) eliminating the peculiarities of the administrative system, (b) minimizing differences in the social structure of the region, (c) reducing the influence of the regional elite – the Polish nobility.

At the end of the 18th century the change in the vertical of power (from Warsaw to St. Petersburg) almost did not affect the position of the Polish elite of the Right Bank. The Russian government was forced to take into account the experience of the Poles in the system of local self-government, and therefore gave them the majority of positions in the provincial and district institutions. Catherine II extended to the local nobility the status and corporate privileges of the Russian nobility, defined by “The Charter to the Nobility” (1785), confirming the rights of landowners to the land that remained in their possession, together with serf “souls” (Kappeler, 2000, p. 65). However, after the defeat of the Kościuszko

Uprising (1794), the Russian government confiscated and handed over to the treasury the estates of active rebels, and sequestration (restrictions on the use and disposal of property) was imposed on the property of people suspected of aiding the rebels. However, the Polish landowners normalized their relations with the Russian authorities very quickly, swearing loyalty to the tsarist dynasty.

Paul I, after coming to the throne (1796), ordered the release from exile and imprisonment of several thousand participants of the Kościuszko Uprising, returned to the Polish nobility the estates previously taken, and restored the Catholic and Uniate dioceses. Polish “citizens” of Kyiv region, Volyn and Podillia were given the right to gather at local sejms and elect provincial and district marshals (leaders), judges, etc. The next step of Paul I was the decree of the Senate dated December 12, 1796, according to which Right-Bank provinces received a number of privileges, which legitimized their special position in the Russian Empire (for example, the Lithuanian Statute continued to apply in the region until 1840) (Shandra, 2005, p. 20).

However, the Polish nobility lost the guarantee of personal freedom, property inviolability and political rights (Dyłałowa, 2000, s. 14). However, all this was compensated by its influence on various levels of the imperial administrative “ladder”. As the lawyer and publicist of that time Kaytan Koźmian wrote, “rights, institutions, national traditions, customs have been preserved”, and the Poles are “government officials in the Russian Senate, sometimes governors, higher and lower officials in city courts, etc.” (Koźmian, 1972, p. 272). What’s more, the conviction prevailed among the Volyn nobility: “We are now even better than it was in Poland: we have everything that the motherland gave us, but we do not have obligations and the danger of the Uman massacre; and although without Poland, we are in Poland and remain the Poles” (Koźmian, 1972, p. 274).

According to some Polish authors, this state of affairs could indicate that “with the consent of the Russian government, southern Russia [Right-Bank Ukraine – authors] belonged to the sphere of influence of the Polish civilization” (Giertych, 1986, p. 297). In the first half of the 19th century, a significant number of representatives of the Polish/Polish nobility, led by magnates, lived in the region. At the same time, the mass of the Russky/Ukrainian peasantry, without a clear national/ethnic identity, was much more numerous. According to D. Beauvois, the population of Volyn, Podillia, and Kyiv regions numbered more than 3.3 million people, of whom the Poles made up 7–8% (in some districts of Volyn – 13–14%) (more than 400,000 people), the Jews – approx. 10%. The rest (80%) – “the Orthodox”, i.e. the Ukrainians and the Russians. In 1840, the total number of Right Bank residents increased by 1 million people approximately. Of them approx. 3 million were under the direct servitude of the Polish landowners (Bovua, 2020, pp. 44–45).

The top of the landowner/magnate “iceberg” was made up of representatives of wealthy families – the Czartoryscy, the Branicki, the Potoccy, the Rzewuscy, the Sanguszki, the Sobański and the others. They, as well as numerous Roman Catholic monasteries and churches, owned from 4 to 6 million acres of land, i.e. 90% of all private land, together with serf “souls”. The group of large landowners was not too numerous – on Right Bank only approx. 6 000 Poles owned capital, which, according to the figurative expression of D. Beauvois, “gave shine to their noble origin” (Hud, 2018, p. 140; Epsztein, 1997, p. 70). However, their opportunities were enormous, as were their estates, which in their area often exceeded individual principalities in Italy or Germany. The Volyn magnates even owned towns – Novohrad-Volynskyi, Starokonstantyniv, Ostrih, Zaslav, Dubno, Rivne, etc. (Dokumenty i materiały, 1962, pp. 233, 239; Bovua, 1996, p. 69; Giertych, 1986, p. 13).

In total, 80% of the territory of Right Bank was owned by 40 magnate families (Subtelnyi, 1991, p. 173).

However, the vast majority of Right Bank nobility gentry was the “aristocratic nobility” (“aristocratic proletariat”) – the gentry of the estates, czynszowa gentry, etc. There were representatives of this ethno-social group approx. 350 000 on Right Bank. Robert Howard Lord wrote that these were people who “either had no land at all, or were unable to make two ends meet cultivating that land. Poor, ragged, dirty, living like peasants, or even worse, they were still full of caste pride...” (Giertych, 1986, s. 14). It was the petty nobility that created the majority of problems for St. Petersburg, since they formed “the type of society in which mobility prevailed, in which the individual was not subject to any control by the government, but continued to live as if there were no divisions [of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – authors], without any obligations towards the Russian government, and even on the contrary – sowing enmity towards it... All this was intolerable for the Tsar” (Beauvois, 1987b, p. 76).

2. Peasants and Nobility.

The change in state ownership of Right Bank territories practically did not affect the situation of the local peasantry. According to M. Kostomarov, it continued to suffer under the terrible tyranny of “possessors and commissars”, who “tortured mercilessly and ripped off the peasants” (Kostomarov, 1870, pp. 131–132). As modern Polish historians admit, in the 19th century the widely practiced system of corporal punishment created an “endless school of savagery and cruelty”, due to which the fate of the peasant-serf, who was “in a state of the most severe slavery..., became unbearable” (Jędrzejewicz, 1970, p. 16; Filar, 2002, p. 350; Franko, 2020, pp. 13–27).

What’s more, after the arrival of the Russians, the situation of the peasantry worsened. Having equalized the local Polish nobility in rights and privileges with the Russian nobility, the imperial government transferred the serf “souls” to its full ownership, including the right to sell a peasant or exchange him for property. The nobility also received the right to send unruly peasants to hard labour in Siberia (Hurzhii, 1954, p. 23; Tarnowski, 2002, p. 30). Numerous documents are preserved in the Ukrainian archives, which testify to the true sadism of the Polish landlords towards their subjects. As P. Jasienica emphasized with bitter irony, “a landlord had very broad powers in relation to his “souls”... Capture, imprisonment, shackles or wooden blocks called *dyby* were commonplace. ...Didych gave orders for corporal punishment. The severity of punishment depended on a landlord. The law put forward only one limitation in this case, and it was interpreted very “liberally”: you can beat, so as not to kill” (Jasienica, 1992, p. 86).

However, some Polish contemporaries tried to shift the blame for landlords’ abuse of peasants onto the Russian government. According to them, a landlord actually “supported and justified” the existing state of relations in a serf village on the Right Bank. Under such conditions, “even angels ... would turn into devils” (Rok 1863 na Ukrainie, 1979, p. 21). F. Rawita-Gawroński agreed with the views of an unknown participant of the January Uprising, who also placed responsibility on the tsarist autocracy. “The relations of subject dependence of a peasant... have been deteriorating since the Russian occupation of the Russky provinces”, (Rawita-Gawroński, 1902, p. 17). These statements, however, do not correspond to the historical truth. The Polish liberal August Iwański senior admitted with regret that in the first half of the 19th century it was the Russian government that “had to limit and regulate the size of *panshcynna* demanded by landowners” (August Iwański senior, 1968, p. 20; Kraszewski, 1985, p. 142).

As in the 17th and 18th centuries, peasants of Kyiv region, Volyn and Podillia responded to the unbearable oppression with rebellions, riots and other manifestations of disobedience, the number of which significantly exceeded similar indicators on Left Bank. The most striking example is the peasant movement led by Ustym Karmaliuk, which lasted almost a quarter of a century (1813 – 1835). Its centre became Letychiv district in Podilla. In total, about 20,000 peasants and deserters from the tsarist army were members of Karmaliuk's units. After the death of the leader, more than 2,700 peasants, former members of the rebel groups, were brought to court. It is symptomatic that during the period of insurgent units activity, landowners treated peasants much more liberally (Hurzhii, 1958, pp. 20–21; Jędrzejewicz, 1970, p. 62).

The new rulers of Right-Bank Ukraine noticed a sharp ethno-social conflict between the peasants and the nobility quickly. To strengthen their rule, they resorted to the proven principle of the Roman Empire for centuries: “divide et impera”. As it is known, the “wildest forms of dependence and panshchyna” also reigned in the Russian provinces (Rawita-Gawroński, 1903, p. 17; Dostoevskiy, 1958, pp. 304–305). In these wildest forms, the Russian and Polish landowners differed little from each other. However, there was a very important difference between Russia proper and Right-Bank Ukraine. It consisted in the extent of the landlords' power over peasants. The relevant statistics is striking: in the Russian Empire, the share of serfs among the total peasantry was only 14.6%, in Ukraine – 59.5% in total, in Left-Bank, the number of landowner peasants was 38%, and in Southern Ukraine – only 25% of the total peasantry. On the other hand, in the former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, this percentage was the following: in Volyn – 78.5%, in Kyiv region – 83.8%, in Podillia – 87% (Pashuk, 2001, pp. 13, 18; Veryha, 1996, p. 90). Thus, during the period under study, the struggle between the Russians and the Poles broke out on the territories of Right-Bank Ukraine, newly annexed to Russia, in which “the Ukrainian souls” were at stake. “Souls” not in the sense of performers of forced labour, but souls in the literal sense, who had to be torn out from under the influence of Polish landowners and “transformed” into loyal subjects of the “Orthodox tsar” (Bovua, 1996, p. 76; Miller, 2000, p. 174).

For this purpose, the Russian administration of the South-Western region deceptively pretended to be defenders of the Ukrainian people against the violence of Polish landlords and defenders of the Orthodox faith against the influence of the Roman Catholic Church (Bovua, 1998, p. 82). The policy of “divide and conquer” was consistently and effectively pursued by the tsarist government until the outbreak of World War I. As a result, the public atmosphere of Right-Bank can be compared to a “time bomb”, whose explosive potential the Russian government (according to the situation) either decisively neutralized, pacifying the anti-landlord protests of peasants, or partially put them into action, inciting the latter against noble revolutionaries, as was the case during periods of the Polish national uprisings.

3. From November of 1830 to January of 1863

For the first time, the principle of “divide et impera” was applied after the beginning of the November Uprising of 1830. Without any doubt, the noble revolutionaries were aware of the crucial importance of the support of the Ukrainian peasantry for the success of their movement on the so-called territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, so they tried to sway the Ukrainian peasantry to their side. For this purpose, they, for example, distributed “Instructions for Teachers of the Rusky People”; sent to the so-called province “Rusky letters”, as well as numerous appeals written in the “Rusky” language of the time (but in Latin letters), which called on the local common people to anti-Russian uprisings (Sosnovskiy, 1974, p. 31; Kozak, 1993, p. 138; Reient, 2003, p. 79). However, in general,

the Poles were convinced that they would involve the serf peasants in the struggle for the independence of Poland by the power of their own influence (Buława, 2004, pp. 176–177). This belief can be observed in the writings of one of the leading ideologists and the most active participants in the uprising, Mauritsii Mochnacki. “*The Polish citizens*”, he wrote, “make up Poland there [in Rus – *authors*]. They can lead all...humanity behind them... because the peasant will follow...the one who exerts greater influence on him – the master, the Polish citizen” (Mochnacki, 1984, pp. 456–457).

Such a simplified analysis of the moods and sympathies of the peasantry in Kyiv region, Volyn and Podillia, which could choose at least the “lesser evil” between the two, was one of the main mistakes of the leaders of the Polish national movement, the consequences of which were not long in coming. The Russian administration of the South-West Region was aware that the peasants oppressed by the Polish magnates could become an ally of St. Petersburg in the fight against the nobility’s uprising. In order to encourage them to do this, the commander-in-chief of the Russian troops on Right-Bank, Field Marshal Fabian Gottlieb von der Osten-Sacken, issued a summons to the peasants of the South-Western Region on May 19, 1831, which ran: “Loyal subjects! We inform you that the rebels are deceiving you... Do not believe them... You will never again belong to those landlords who rebelled against the legitimate government” (Kieniewicz, Zahorski & Zajewski, 1992, p. 214; Selianskyi rukh na Ukraini, 1985, p. 12). Austen-Saken’s appeal was read by the Orthodox clergy in all the churches of the region, and the peasantry responded to it with enthusiasm: in the peasantry’s mind, the “good Orthodox monarch” was the guardian and benefactor of people, and the enemy was a bad landlord / Catholic / liakh.

As a result, the peasants ignored the Polish rebels’ requests for help, and often even opposed them. In Podillia, the serfs of the Sobansky counts reported to the authorities on the rebels. The same thing happened in Radomyshl and Kremenets poviats in Kyiv region and Volyn. The peasants refused to hide the rebels, provided them with false information about roads and crossings, seized noblemen and handed over them to the Russian troops, even those who were not involved in the uprising. In the atmosphere of fighting the “master’s war”, there were attacks by peasants on the estates in Bratslav and Baltsky poviats of Podillia province (Powstanie listopadowe, 2015, p. 423; Buława, 2004, p. 182).

M. Mochnacki explained a passive and even negative attitude of the Ukrainian peasantry towards the November Uprising by its “darkness and crowding”, as well as the influence of Orthodox priests on the local population, who seemed to paralyze the “efforts of good citizens” (Mochnacki, 1984, p. 473). However, the more real reason for the anti-Polish position of the Ukrainian peasants was, in our opinion, their slave status, which made them hostile towards the rebels, as well as aspiration to obtain “land and freedom” and the memory of the Haidamat movement, which was passed on to children and grandchildren from the still living witnesses of Koliyivshchyna (Spohady pro Tarasa Shevchenka, 1982, p. 24; Buława, 2004, p. 173).

The period between the uprisings of 1830 and 1863 gave the Polish side time to understand the reasons for the defeat and to formulate certain conclusions based on the fact of the indifferent or even hostile attitude of the “Russky” population of the South-Western region to the “noble revolution”. The bitter lesson prompted a number of figures of the “Great Emigration” and individual Polish writers of the so-called “Ukrainian school” to revise traditional approaches regarding the nature of relations with the Ukrainian people. Severyn Goszczynski and noble revolutionaries Leopold Kowalski, Jan Krynski, and the others from

the “Gromada Humań” Community, which was part of the “Polish People in Emigration” organization, expressed, in particular, “deep repentance” for the wrongs inflicted on the Ukrainian people and set the goal of creating a “fraternal union of neighbouring nations” (Janion & Żmigrodzka, 1978, p. 115).

However, despite the attempts of individual figures of the Polish liberation movement to improve the situation, the nature of social relations in Volyn, Kyiv region and Podillia in the plane of “a lord – a serf”/ a Pole – a Ukrainian did not undergo significant changes in the 40s and 50s of the 19th century. One of the main reasons for this state of affairs was, in particular, the fact that after the suppression of the uprising, the Russian government did not direct repression against the Polish landowning elite in general, as this could threaten the existence of the entire feudal system. Only those who fought against the Russian army with weapons in their hands or were suspected of helping the rebels (mainly representatives of the small-scale nobility) were persecuted. In the 1830s and 1840s, several hundred thousand of its mass were deprived of noble rights and privileges and transferred to the category of peasants (Hud, 2018, pp. 140–141).

At the same time, contrary to the claims of individual Polish authors, the scale of repression against large Polish estates was dramatic in Kyiv region, Volyn and Podillia. However, on December 21, 1830, Emperor Nicholas I signed a decree stating that “properties of violators of the duty of loyalty, who join the ranks of the enemies of the State, are subject to confiscation”. Also, on May 6, 1831, the emperor signed a decree imposing a sequestration on the estates of people of the Polish origin who participated in the uprising. Therefore, some landowners, in particular in Volyn, were confiscated part of their estates and serf peasants, who were transferred to the category of state peasants. In 1837, in Kyiv and Podillia provinces on lands, confiscated from the participants of the uprising, the so-called “military settlements” (Luhovyi, 2009, pp. 11–12). Nevertheless, the majority of the nobles in various ways managed to regain their sequestered estates and confiscated valuables, therefore, after 1831, the ratio of Polish and non-Polish land ownership in South-West Region did not change fundamentally (Barmaka, 2007, pp. 289–290).

The position of the serf peasants did not change either. After the suppression of the November Uprising, the landowners put their class interests first, and the tsarist administration was indifferent to the promises made to the peasants. The Russians and the Poles agreed on the return to the current system very quickly – the status quo ante, the positions of which were slightly shaken due to the events caused by the uprising movement. That is why, the “careless”, according to the expression of the governor-general D. Bibikov, the promises to the peasants given by Austen-Saken remained “on paper”. Of all the serfs who helped the authorities, only Semen Burdeliuk from Volyn was “free” for denunciation of his rebel-master (Bovua, 1996, pp. 73–74). The others were forced to return under the rule of the landlords, who “took revenge ... on the peasants who listened to the appeals of Fabian Austen-Saken and cooperated with the government ... and helped to suppress the uprising. The government did not protect them at all from the revenge of the masters. The situation of the peasants became even worse than it had been before the uprising, and they... fled to the south of Ukraine to Kherson and Tavriia provinces” (Lavrov, 1940, p. 108).

The imperial authorities’ attempts to keep the feudal system intact threatened, however, undermining its authority in the peasant environment. Therefore, a few years after the suppression of the uprising, the Russian government dared to take a step that allowed it to “preserve a good physiognomy for a bad game”: in May of 1847, on the initiative of

D. Bibikov, the so-called “Law on Inventory”, amended on December 26, 1848 (Veryha, 1996, p. 92). The law normalized the relationship of serf peasants with landowners, slightly increased the total area of peasant allotments, and reduced the lordship to three days a week. In addition, the nobles had no authority and were forbidden to send peasants to recruits or send them to Siberia, to interfere in private lives of their subjects, to punish them without a court verdict, etc. (Polonska-Vasylenko, 1995, p. 302). Of course, the tsar resorted to regulating the serf system on Right-Bank with the sole purpose of limiting the Polish influence. The main task of the inventory reform was to strengthen the pro-anarchist sentiments of the Ukrainian peasantry and reduce the scale of anti-serf movements, the suppression of which cost St. Petersburg considerable effort and expense (Leshchenko, 1963, p. 8).

In general, the inventory reform somewhat eased the situation of the peasants, but in 1855 the Polish landowners managed to suspend its effect finally (Bundak, 1999, p. 9). After that, serf oppression on Right-Bank intensified again, and antagonisms between peasants and landowners intensified as well. The Polish memoirist of that time wrote bitterly: “The landowners and the village are completely alien worlds to each other, today, in particular, they are divided by a terrible chasm dug out owing to government orders, religion and indifference of the Poles. Although once they had fabulous profits from the peasantry, there was not even such a connection between the owner and his (serf) “soul” as between the owner and the thing, the owner and the horse. Horses, sheep, cattle were taken care of, stables were built for them, but people were punished and beaten” (Matlakowski, 1991, pp. 260–261).

The sharpness of contradictions between the “Russky” plebs and the Polish elite on Right-Bank was especially vividly manifested in the last years of the existence of serfdom in the Russian Empire. Emperor Alexander II initiated the process of modernization of the Russian Empire, which was later called the “revolution from above”. It was designed to change the way of life of the Russian nobility fundamentally, including the Polish landowners of the southwestern provinces. The main component of the planned reforms was to eliminate serfdom in the countryside. Characteristically, the vast majority of Polish landowners were very hostile to the idea of reform, because they “saw in this their collapse and the loss of Rus for Poland forever”. For this point of view they were criticized in the printed organ of the Hotel Lamber “Wiadomości Polskie” more than once (Rok 1863 na Ukrainie, 1979, p. 18; Kieniewicz, 1986, pp. 769–770).

The Tsar Manifesto of February 19, 1861 caused a sharply negative reaction from the majority of Polish landowners on the Right-Bank. They declared it “harmful and premature”. Some of them even resisted the authorities’ attempts to convey the content of the Manifesto to the peasants (Poyda, 1960, p. 121). The imperial power once again took advantage of this. And although the reform developed by the government focused primarily on the interests of large landowners, without introducing the changes desired by the peasants, the government continued to play the role of the peasantry’s defender, contributing to the spread of anti-landlord, and therefore anti-Polish, rumors that “in the Great Russian provinces, the peasants were freed and were given plots of land in their possession, ... and here the lords changed it” (Poyda, 1960, p. 122).

Thus, on the eve of the January Uprising, the Ukrainian-Polish conflict reached another peak. Only in 1861 – 1863 in Kyiv region, Volyn and Podillia there were recorded 1150 anti-landlord uprisings approximately. The exceptional level of a social tension on the Right-Bank is also evidenced by the fact that 70% of the villages that responded to the predatory nature of the reform with riots and uprisings were located in these areas, and the share of villagers

who took part in the riots was 33% of the total population. In 412 cases, the army and police were used to restore order at the request of landowners (Bardach, 1994, p. 328).

The consequences of using “arguments of force” in the Polish-Ukrainian relations were very harmful to the Polish national cause, which some representatives of the “Ukrainian” nobility were aware of. In particular, in the summer of 1862, E. Moszynski angrily chastised his compatriots for putting their private selfish interests above national interests: “I believe that all those who sent the army against the people should be treated as traitors, because perhaps this is what they finally extinguished the sympathy of the peasants for our issue” (Bovua, 1996, p. 130). A little later, the author of “1863 in Ukraine” actually confirmed the validity of E. Moszynski’s words: “The peasants saw that the army was deployed, and their brothers were forced to work being beaten with whips, and this was done by the Poles, who promoted their freedom, so the heads of those ordinary children of nature could not contain so many contradictions... There weren’t many of them among the rebels” (Rok 1863 na Ukrainie, 1979, pp. 29–30).

The Conclusions. The course of the January Uprising showed that, just like thirty years ago, the ambitious intentions of the noble revolutionaries to revive the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth within the borders of 1772 were foreign to the peasants. They equated Poland with masters and serf oppression, and this further distanced them from the generally progressive, inherently anti-imperial intentions of the Warsaw insurgents. As the civilian governor of Podillia, R. Braunschweig, wrote in his report dated June 4, 1861, to the Minister of Internal Affairs, P. Valuyev, the local population, which consists of “a tribe related to the Russians by origin and faith”, did not tolerate the Poles, and was “even hostile” (Miller, 2000, p. 138). In view of this, M. Drahomanov believed that in those days the peasantry could take an active part only in anti-feudal action, as, for example, in Western Galicia in 1846. However, even the most “red” leaders of the Polish democratic movement did not dare to come up with such a radical concept. Therefore, the vast majority of the peasants of Right-Bank Ukraine were either passive regarding the hopeless struggle of the Poles, or assisted the Russian authorities in suppressing the January Uprising actively.

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