

SUMMARY

Norbert Loch

Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth nobility's opinion about Ciekliński's confederation (1612-1614)

The purpose of this dissertation is to present the opinions of the nobility about the confederation formed under the leadership of Józef Ciekliński in 1612. This union was created by soldiers who, shortly before the anti-Polish uprising in Moscow and the resulting siege of the city, left the capital of the tsarist state and waited for the overdue pay. After declaring obedience to the king, these soldiers entered the borders of the Commonwealth with intention to force their payment. An unprecedented situation occurred, because aside from the confederation discussed above, three other military unions ravaged the country, and the king, parliament, and nobility had to take a number of actions to investigate the confederates' claims, collect appropriate funds and efficiently pay off the debts. The scale of the problem was so great that all residents of the Commonwealth were familiar with it and somehow affected.

Very high taxes, however necessary to pay off rebel soldiers, caused great dissatisfaction of the nobility, which resonated in local sejmiks. Some of their deputies gave the Sejm only a preliminary agreement on part of the salary, taking the rest "to the brothers" which meant decision of the sejmik. It was the first time this solution was used on such a scale, resulting in unsatisfactory rate of collecting the funds required. The vast majority of the money needed to pay the confederates was collected in the Crown (Poland), Lithuania additionally focused on paying off those unions that directly threatened her. Clerics' donations were also disappointing because their sum was much lower than expected. These fiscal burdens combined with plunder had to have a negative impact on the nobility's opinion about confederates, but the condemnation could not be widespread, because in some parliamentary instructions after 1614 one could find voices in defense of the condemned leaders of the Ciekliński's confederation.

Referring to the unity of the nobility and presenting confederation as a natural extension of the right to resistance had a great impact on the reception of the confederation by the nobility. The rebellious soldiers repeatedly invoked a sense of community in their contacts with the

Npigueto 26.02.2020 J

regional councils and the Sejm, causing at least some of the nobility to see them as "good sons of their homeland." However, although noble estates were treated by the confederates of those times relatively mildly in comparison to, for example, the royal property, plundering often happened and that did not help to consolidate the aforementioned vision of brotherhood.

Researchers dealing with the perception of the profession of soldier among the public drew attention to several important aspects of the case. On the one hand, military service was a fairly common phenomenon, because the vast majority of the nobility had at least a brief military episode, be it by necessity or the purpose of gaining booty or popularity and experience necessary in the process of building a political career. On the other hand, one should remember about the reluctance of the nobility in the Commonwealth to wage offensive wars and about their perception of the soldiers as people prone to violence and abuse, the victims of which were ordinary, peaceful citizens. Over time, the opinion of the soldiers worsened, and there were voices saying that there was practically no difference between the soldier and the robber. And again an interesting discrepancy occurred, because there was no lack of examples of universal respect for morally doubtful people, who repeatedly violated the law and did not care for a good name, being outstandingly good soldiers at the same time.

Although most literary works from the first half of the 17th century condemn soldiers' waywardness and plunder made by the confederates and the army in general. In response the rebel soldiers themselves also used literature to convey their viewpoint and influence public opinion. Thus appeared some literary works describing the harsh times of the army fighting beyond the eastern border of the Commonwealth, especially focusing on the terrible conditions in the camp of soldiers besieged in the Kremlin by Moscow insurgents. It's difficult to estimate the popularity of these poems, but they were certainly a kind of counterweight to the criticism targeted towards the soldiers. In turn, the leaflets from the time of Sigismund III, although they seem to be an excellent source for research on propaganda, cover the domestic situation only to a small extent.

Summarizing, a contemporary historian looking for opinions on "capital confederates" faces a very difficult task. Despite getting acquainted with the available sources in the form of private and official correspondence, literature, leaflets and propaganda letters, one cannot come across extensive explanations allowing to draw a conclusion other than the obvious - people hurt by rebel soldiers were inimical to them, but especially among the nobility and former military men there was a thread of sympathy for the confederates. It resulted from the

widespread belief that confederates were rightfully demanding payment for their honest service and only soldiers' abuse was stigmatized.

Harbert Led