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An Unrealized Project of Irish Colonization in Ukraine (1655)

Yaroslav Fedoruk

Twelve years ago an article I wrote about a project to settle Irish colonists in the Ukrainian lands in 1655 was published.¹ Materials obtained since then have inspired the present article, which supplements the conclusions set forth in my earlier one. During the intervening period I have had occasion to discuss the question of mid-seventeenth-century Irish colonization of Ukraine with Frank Sysyn, who traces part of his ancestry back to Ireland. In one of our conversations he noted a mention of such colonization plans in an anonymous Polish political tract of the period. Since new sources on this subject have come into my hands only occasionally, in the course of research on larger projects, it has taken considerable time to accumulate enough material to warrant a re-examination of my earlier conclusions.

The spring of 1655 was the last period of relative peace enjoyed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before the Swedish invasion. The Okhmativ military campaign, which led to the de facto defeat of the Polish army and the Tatar Hordes, had just ended, and the hetman of Ukraine, Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1648–57), as well as the Muscovite tsar, Aleksei Mikhailovich (1645–76), were planning new campaigns against Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the north, King Charles X Gustav of Sweden (1654–60) was making extensive preparations for war with Poland, on which the Council of State in Stockholm had resolved following debates in December 1654. The Holy Roman Empire, weakened in the Thirty Years' War, refused to support King John Casimir of Poland (1648–68) with military force, restricting itself to diplomatic mediation between the Commonwealth and Muscovy or Sweden. At the same time Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England, was strongly importuned by Swedish envoys in London to conclude an agreement with Sweden against the United Provinces.² The diplomatic activity of the Polish government in

¹ "Polski plany irlandzkiej kolonizacji Ukrainy u 1655 roku," *Ukraina v mynulomu* (Kyiv and Lviv), vyp. 9 (1996): 31–36.

² Michael Roberts, "Cromwell and the Baltic," *The English Historical Review* 76,

the Dutch Republic and England in 1654 was directed toward the formation of a league for the defense of the Baltic region against the aggressive plans of Sweden. Contrary to their intent, John Casimir's actions led to a deterioration of relations between the Kingdom of Poland and the government of Oliver Cromwell.

After the end of the Okhmativ campaign the Commonwealth devoted considerable effort to raising new forces to fend off Ukrainian and Muscovite troops. Under these circumstances, there was talk in Polish official circles about Irish soldiers seeking to enter the service of the Crown army. This is apparent from a letter of 4 March 1655 from the castellan of Wojnicz, Jan Wielopolski, to King John Casimir. A copy of it is preserved in a seventeenth-century manuscript book that Wielopolski compiled. Such books, of the genre known as *silva rerum*, were popular among the nobility; they contained notes on a variety of current events and copies of official and private documents. "I see no other means for a military expedition," wrote Wielopolski in his letter,

than to levy some thousands of Irishmen (*Irlandczykow*) as soon as possible, who, as I have heard, offered their services to Your Royal Majesty, our Gracious Lord. I see many advantages in this: these people are ready now ... if given some respectable commissioner competent in accompanying foreigners, they would come directly under the command of the lords hetmans without delay. And not only could they be used in war, but, knowing them as martial men—this severity of the settlers also hardens their innate characteristics—Your Royal Majesty, our Gracious Lord, might also settle them in place of the Cossacks in those lands [*na mieysce Kozakow w tamtych kraiach osadzic moze w. k. m., p. n. młciwy*]. This will create a defense and a shield for the fatherland from that side [*munimentum i zasłona od tamtej strony Oyczyźnie się uczyni*], and at the same time these [lands] could be the place of [their] recompense. The best of them could be admitted to noble prerogatives ... so that subsequently this would create a great obstacle to any rebellion, just as the very difference of nations [would prevent rebellions] as well.³

This is not an unreliable report from a military camp, nor is it idle rumor or hearsay, but a letter from an influential Polish official to the king (Wielopolski also took part in diplomatic missions, for instance, as an envoy to Vienna in the autumn of 1656). The letter presents a plan for the recruitment of Irish soldiers to the Crown army, with further settle-

no. 300 (1961): 415–17.

³ Main Archives of Older Records in Warsaw, Public Archive of the Potockis, bk. 45, vol. 1, fols. 16–16^v. For the Polish text, see appendix 1 below.

ment on Cossack lands and possible future ennoblement of the most deserving among them. The date of the letter, 4 March 1655, indicates the hope of the castellan of Wojnicz that this problem would be considered at a council of the Senate that was soon to convene in Warsaw. As things turned out, the council debated much more important problems than that of Irish settlers in Ukraine, and the senators demanded that John Casimir convene the Diet as soon as possible.⁴ The main unresolved question of Polish foreign policy at the time was that of a peace treaty with Sweden; hence the most important matter for discussion at this council was the formulation of instructions for the Polish plenipotentiary envoy to Stockholm.

Another document—less trustworthy, and sometimes even unreliable in its reconstruction of events—is nevertheless important and deserves attention: a letter whose contents were copied into the well-known compendium of Marcin Goliński, a councillor in the town of Kazimierz near Cracow. On 26 June 1655 his fellow councillor Andrzej Jasowski wrote from Warsaw:

The Parliament of England, which put its king [Charles I, 1625–49] to death by execution, has also come out against his son [who later ruled as Charles II, 1660–85]. Scotland, or the Scottish land, has risen in support of the prince, as has Hibernia [the Latin name of Ireland] or the Icelanders [*Isliandowie*], who are Catholics. The English, the victors in this war, are driving them out of their own lands, which these unfortunates [the Icelanders], of whom there are two hundred thousand, must vacate along with their wives and children. Of these, there are forty thousand [ready] for battle. Their commander [*oberster*], or captain, came from that country to His Majesty the King and to the Commonwealth, requesting and pleading that the Commonwealth accept them and that they be given a piece of land [*stukę ziemię*] where they might gather and settle. And these forty thousand are declaring their readiness to go against the enemy, wherever the king commands, desiring no payment, but only that they be permitted to stay in the places that they will take from the enemy in that land. The lords and nobles [of the Diet] did not wish to give permission for this, lest they become like the crusaders in Prussia—as their forces increased, they became strong vis-à-vis the Poles.⁵

⁴ The king's proclamation (*uniwersał*) on the convocation of the Diet was issued on 31 March 1655. Cf. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska and Zdzisław Staniszevski, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy. Prawo — doktryna — praktyka*, vol. 1 (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2000), 232.

⁵ Lviv National Scientific Library, Ossoliński Collection, MS 189/II, fols. 759–60. For the Polish text, see appendix 2 below

Despite its somewhat chaotic exposition, Jasowski's letter basically corresponds in content to that of Jan Wielopolski. Both letters are fairly close in time, dating from the first half of 1655, although Jasowski wrote after the conclusion of the Diet session, which lasted from 19 May to 20 June. His news therefore reflects the rumors circulating in Warsaw after the Diet. Jasowski's letter confirms that the idea of colonizing part of the Commonwealth with Irish settlers (whom Goliński misnames "Icelanders") was fairly current in Warsaw at the time. The letter also makes reference to an Irish envoy to the king and the Commonwealth—an unnamed captain who was supposed to present the colonization scheme to them—and gives the reasons (as Jasowski understood them) why the king and the senators could not agree to the scheme. Their unfortunate experience with the Teutonic Knights had made the Poles skeptical about new foreign settlers. The scope of the colonization project differs greatly in the two letters: Wielopolski refers only to "a few thousand Irishmen," while Jasowski writes about a huge number—two hundred thousand, including forty thousand soldiers. As we shall see below, however, in June the Diet ultimately debated the settlement of only about a thousand Irish soldiers.

A Polish political tract of the mid-1650s provides further evidence of plans for employing Irish military regiments in the service of the Commonwealth and settling them in Ukraine. The context suggests that the tract may have been referring to the same period as that specified in the letters of Wielopolski and Jasowski: "And the Commonwealth could even populate free settlements [*slobody*] with foreigners, especially in Ukraine, involving ever new commanders and granting them [these estates] as their property, as the Irish, good soldiers and Catholics, have already proposed. The Welsh, also a multitudinous nation and Catholics to boot, could quickly be attracted here [for service], for they, like the Irish, are oppressed by the poverty of their homeland. Thus the Commonwealth would be defended by larger numbers of people and would enjoy greater revenue, according to the proverb: 'Wherever there are people, there are taxes' [*ubi populus, ibi obolus*]."⁶

Thus the documents show how some of the Polish authorities looked to Irish settlement as a partial solution to the problem of quelling Cos-

⁶ This proverb refers specifically to the colonization of new lands; the obolus is an ancient Greek coin worth one-sixth of a drachma. Cf. "Rada do poprawy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" (1657) in *Pisma polityczne z czasów panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy (1648–1668): Publicystyka–Eksorbitancje–Projekty–Memoriały*, vol. 1, 1648–1660, ed. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989), no.42, p. 202. In his review of this volume, in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15, nos. 3–4 (1991): 451, Frank E. Sysyn noted the mention of plans for Irish colonization. For the Polish text, see appendix 3.

sack revolts. Several important points concerning the treatment of the prospective settlers emerge from these texts. The settlers were to be directed to particular regions (the “place of the Cossacks in those lands”), namely, Kyiv, Bratslav, and Chernihiv palatinates. They were not to establish military garrisons scattered in various towns but to occupy part of Ukrainian territory *en bloc*. The lands on which they settled were to be regarded as recompense for their service. As good soldiers, the Irishmen could also be inducted into the Crown army “without delay” for use against the enemies of the Commonwealth. Finally, the colonization of free settlements by the Irish, who differed from the Cossacks in religion, was intended to raise a defensive wall “for the fatherland from that side,” that is, between the actual territory of the Kingdom of Poland (as the Poles defined it) and the Cossack lands of the three palatinates. The settlement of that territory by two distinct peoples would help secure it against the threat of further Cossack rebellions.

It should be noted that in Poland of that time colonization was generally directed against the Turks and the Crimean Tatars. Settlement of the wild steppe frontier was supposed to prevent invasions of nomadic hordes and devastation of the Commonwealth. But the outbreak of the war with the Cossacks in 1648, which subsequently led them to swear loyalty to the Muscovite tsar in 1654, confronted the Polish-Lithuanian state with a major crisis. A treaty between Poland and the Crimean khan Mehmed Giray IV (1641–44, 1654–66) was concluded in October 1654. Accordingly, the developments of 1655 discussed in this article should be seen as bearing more on the concrete political situation than on the general Polish policy of colonization. The broader political and diplomatic context of Northern Europe, especially England, should also be borne in mind. This will give us better insight into the origins of the Irish proposal to the king and the Commonwealth concerning the settlement of the wastelands of their realm.

* * *

After the conquest of Ireland by Cromwell’s army in 1651, that country began to produce a steady supply of recruits for the military forces of many European powers. England’s oppressive policies toward Ireland led to the requisition of the lands and properties of Catholics, reducing Catholic estates from 59 to 22 percent of the total between the Irish rebellion of 1641 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688.⁷ The mass resettlement (or

⁷ John Gerald Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation in Ireland, 1690–1703* (London: Faber and Faber, [1956]), 195, app. “Catholic Holdings in Ireland in 1641, 1688 and 1703”; Toby Christopher Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: Government and Reform in Ireland, 1649–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 11.

“transplantation,” as it was called at the time) of the Irish west of the Shannon River, the transporting of Catholics from Ireland into exile and slavery in Barbados and other English colonies in the West Indies, the persecution, imprisonment, and execution of rebels, and the Protestant colonization of the Irish lands were the basic features of England’s colonial policy in that country. The Irish Catholic clergy was particularly targeted for persecution, not only because of its opposition to the spread of Protestantism but also because of its role in instigating resistance to English rule and encouraging rebellion.⁸ An official who sedulously promoted such harsh measures was Cromwell’s son-in-law, Charles Fleetwood, who served as lord deputy in Ireland from 1652 to 1655. In July 1655 the commander of the Irish army, Henry Cromwell, was appointed to Dublin, and in September of that year he replaced Fleetwood as acting lord deputy. For the next two years he pursued a more moderate policy than that of his predecessor.

Because the governance of Cromwell’s officials placed a heavy burden on the Irish, the emigration of Catholics from that country to Spain, France, and the Spanish Netherlands became very intensive.⁹ The English authorities encouraged this development. “The Priests and Souldiers ... are for the first universally departed the Land,” according to a pamphlet printed in 1655.¹⁰ Severe restrictions were repeatedly imposed on Irish Catholics, for example, in June 1654. According to article 7 of the response to the proposals of the governor of Galway, Peter Stubbers, Irishmen who had been resettled to the county of Connaught were forbidden to move to England or Scotland or to engage in commerce there, but they could go “to such foreign parts as they shall desire.”¹¹ However, the status of the new English and Scottish settlers in Ireland remained highly uncertain. Parliament passed an Act of Settlement for Ireland in August

⁸ Patrick Francis Moran, *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions Suffered by the Catholics of Ireland under the rule of Cromwell and the Puritans* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1884), 258–61. Many documents on this subject appear in *Ireland under the Commonwealth, Being a Selection of the Documents Relating to the Government of Ireland from 1651 to 1659*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Dunlop (Manchester: University Press, 1913), 549, 553, 555–56, 559–60, 625, passim. I thank Prof. Victor Ostapchuk for providing me with a copy of this book.

⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 52.

¹⁰ Vincent Gookin, *The Great Case of Transplantation in Ireland Discussed; Or, Certain Considerations, Wherein the Many Great Inconveniences in Transplanting the Natives of Ireland Generally Out of the Yhree Provinces of Leinster, Ulster, and Munster, into the Province of Connaught, are Shewn* (London, 1655), 13.

¹¹ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, no. 510, p. 432.

1652, but colonization was far from spontaneous: it was encouraged by artificial means and supported mainly by military force.¹²

In the conquered country Irish military units caused a good deal of trouble for Cromwell's Dublin-based government. On the one hand, the English were unable to use them, even outside Ireland, to help propagate the Protestant religion. On the other, the armed Irishmen were a powerful force and potentially a source of support for the Royalists, who hoped to use Ireland as a base from which to launch an invasion of England, as well as to foment rebellion in Ireland itself. There was also the threat of foreign support for the Royalist project. In the course of Cromwell's Protectorate such a threat was first presented by France, and after the conclusion of a treaty between England and France in November 1655, also by Spain. The Protector therefore encouraged foreign rulers he considered allies to levy Irish units for their own military service.

A ruler who recruited many Irish troops for his army after Cromwell's conquest of the island was King Philip IV of Spain (1621–65). In January 1653 a report to the English Council of State noted that thirteen thousand Irish soldiers had been dispatched to the Spanish service since April of the previous year, and new forces raised from among those who had previously revolted against Parliament were to be transported to Spain.¹³ In March 1653 the English commissioners in Dublin wrote that Ireland would enjoy greater security and improve prospects for the spread of Protestantism if the largest possible number of Irish soldiers who had rebelled against England could be shipped off to Spain.¹⁴ "The agent of the Spanish Government transferred thousands and thousands of them every month, partly to Spain and partly to Belgium," noted an anonymous author in 1654.¹⁵ In all some thirty-four thousand Irishmen were dispatched for service abroad between 1651 and 1654.¹⁶

Aside from Spain, Cromwell offered Irish units to other countries, especially Sweden. In early 1655 the secretary of the Council of State, John Thurloe, refused the Swedish ambassador in London, Peter Julius Coyet, permission to levy Scottish regiments for the army of King Charles X Gustav, who was then preparing for war with Poland. It was suggested

¹² Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, 91; Edmund Curtis, *A History of Ireland*, 10th ed. (Norwich; Jarrold and Sons, 1964), 252–53.

¹³ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, no. 329, p. 310.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 351, pp. 323–24.

¹⁵ The quotation is taken from the manuscript "Status rei Cath[olicae] in Hibernia hoc anno 1654" See Moran, *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions*, 253 (Moran's translation).

¹⁶ John Patrick Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (New York: P. M. Haverty, 1868), 78.

that the ambassador recruit Irishmen instead of Scots, but Coyet replied that “the Scots were protestants, but the Irish were papists, upon whom ... [Charles X] could not place equal reliance if they should be engaged in the war with principe pontifico.”¹⁷ Thus Cromwell preferred Scottish regiments to Irish ones, as he could use them to promote the Protestant cause.

The mercenaries discussed in the letters of Polish officials cited above could certainly be counted among the Irish armed forces hostile to English rule, and Cromwell was well aware that they might seize the first opportunity to rebel against him. It therefore comes as no surprise that traces of the “thousands of Irishmen” Wielopolski and Jasowski mentioned are to be found, on the one hand, in England’s relations with Spain and, on the other, in John Casimir’s contacts with the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. Spaniards also served in the Polish Crown army,¹⁸ and it was common practice for whole regiments of Austrian mercenaries, as well as individual officers or instructors of engineering and fortification, to serve in Poland.

Until the autumn of 1654 Protestant England and Catholic Spain were united by a common anti-French orientation in foreign policy. The Franco-Spanish War (1653–59), as well as Cardinal Jules Mazarin’s support of the Stuart royal family, which took refuge in Paris,¹⁹ led to close cooperation between Cromwell and Philip IV. Mazarin’s sympathy for the Royalists and rebels in England, Scotland, and Ireland was well known in Europe. In the spring of 1653, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, the son of King Frederick I of Bohemia (1619–20) and Elizabeth Stuart, came to France after having spent years as a buccaneer in the West Indies. He was a nephew of the late Charles I and had been a commander of the Royalist forces during the Civil War. When Rupert made his way to Paris in January 1654, Mazarin considered dispatching him to Ireland or Scotland

¹⁷ Michael Roberts, ed., *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell’s Court, 1655–1656: The Missions of Peter Julius Coyet and Christer Bonde*, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, University College, 1988), no. 19 (Coyet to Charles X, London, 1 June 1655 O. S.); Michael Roberts, “Charles X and the Great Parenthesis: A Reconsideration,” in his *From Oxenstierna to Charles XII: Four Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 133.

¹⁸ Yaroslav Stepaniv [Yaroslav Dashkevych], “Portuhaliia, Ispaniia ta Ukraina (stezhkamy nebudennykh zviazkiv XVI–XVII st.),” *Ukraina: Nauka i kultura* (Kyiv), vyp. 25 (1991): 157.

¹⁹ The family included the widow of Charles I, Henrietta Maria (the eldest daughter of King Henri IV of France [1589–1610]), and her sons, Charles, king of Scotland and later of England, and James. They were expelled from Paris after the conclusion of a peace treaty between France and England in November 1655.

with Royalist and Irish troops to start a war with England.²⁰ With Anglo-French relations balanced on a knife edge, rumors of war between the two countries were rife in Europe throughout 1654. In March of that year, Mazarin's agents reported that one hundred and twenty English warships were on their way to the French coast.²¹ Although relations between England and France are not the focus of this article, even a superficial view of the matter suggests their mutual hostility was bound to drive Cromwell toward a rapprochement with Spain. The Anglo-Spanish alliance was also of indirect benefit to the persecuted Huguenots in France, who sent their envoys to the Lord Protector with the Prince de Condé.²²

In the course of their war with France, the Spaniards frequently requested military assistance from Cromwell, giving him a good opportunity to dispatch Irish Catholics to that front. As Cromwell saw it, Irish troops fighting for Philip IV of Spain would also be serving the interests of the English Protectorate. The dispatch of thousands of Irish soldiers to Flanders and other lands became a basic feature of his rule in Ireland between 1651 and 1657.²³ Although foreign service was a good way for the Irish to escape colonial dependence on England and the government encouraged them to do so by offering a good salary and privileges, they often became disillusioned and deserted the Spanish service for that of France or the Royalist cause.²⁴ Moreover, in late 1655 and early 1656 many of them surreptitiously returned to their homeland, presenting Cromwell with the threat of a new revolt and possible foreign intervention in Ireland with the participation of Charles Stuart.²⁵

²⁰ *Memoirs of Prince Rupert, and the Cavaliers*, vol. 3, ed. Eliot Warburton (London: Richard Bentley, 1849), 418–24; *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, no. 426, p. 373; *A Collection of State Papers of John Thurloe*, vol. 2, 1653–1654, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Printed for the Executor of F. Gyles, 1742), 6.

²¹ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649–1656*, vol. 3, 1653–1655 (New York: Longmans, Green, 1903), 123.

²² Jacob N. Bowman, *The Protestant Interest in Cromwell's Foreign Relations* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1900), 20–21.

²³ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, nos. 324, 329, 351, 360, 375, 417, 424, 427, 428, passim.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 328n.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 779, pp. 562–63; *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy*, 38 vols. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1864–1947, repr. Nendeln/Lichtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1970), vol. 30, no. 171, p. 125. On Charles Stuart's political plans relative to Cromwell's war with Spain, see Pieter Geyl, *Orange and Stuart, 1641–1672*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (New York: Scribner, 1969), 126.

The period leading up to the spring of 1655 (when the idea of settling Irish colonists in the Ukrainian lands began appearing in Polish documents) remained one of complicated relations between England, Spain, and mercenary regiments from Ireland. There were frequent negotiations between Philip IV and Cromwell about the dispatch of Irish forces, and one such agreement involving the transfer of ten thousand troops to the Continent was concluded at the end of 1653.²⁶ In March 1654 the French envoys in London, Baron Paul de Baas and Antoine de Bordeaux, reported to Mazarin and other officials in France about two English regiments and three thousand Irish troops preparing to set out from England.²⁷ Cromwell sent written instructions to his commissioners in Ireland to dispatch these three thousand “native Irish” to Flanders.²⁸ Louis II de Bourbon, the prince de Condé and a leader of the Fronde (1648–53), who had been obliged to seek refuge at the court of Philip IV, represented Spain’s interests in negotiations with England concerning Irish troops.²⁹ There are further reports from the summer of 1654 about the dispatch of several Irish regiments to the port of Saint-Sébastien near Dunkirk: Philip IV held back payment to the English merchants who transported these troops to Flanders.³⁰ In return for Cromwell’s assistance, Spain probably undertook certain obligations with regard to English interests in Dunkirk. Since Mazarin had offered Dunkirk to Cromwell in 1654 in exchange for the conclusion of an Anglo-French alliance, this question was of vital importance to Philip IV.³¹

Thus by the end of 1654, well before Wielopolski’s letter of March 1655, large numbers of Irish troops had been brought to the Continent and were at the disposal of allies of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. During this same period, however (late 1654–early 1655), Cromwell was slowly changing his policy toward Spain and France. In December 1654 he sent a strong fleet under the command of General-at-Sea William Penn to take over the Spanish colonies of Jamaica and Hispaniola.³² In the spring of 1655 the Spanish ambassador in London, Don

²⁶ Wilbur Cortez Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 3, 1653–1655 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 394.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3: 219; Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth*, 3: 122.

²⁸ Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3: 219.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth*, 3: 122–23.

³⁰ Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3: 280, 391, 393.

³¹ On Cromwell’s interest in Dunkirk and its seizure in 1658, see Clyde L. Grose, “England and Dunkirk,” *American Historical Review* 39, no. 1 (1933): 9; and Gerald Malcolm David Howat, *Stuart and Cromwellian Foreign Policy* (London: A. & C. Black, 1974), 84, 91.

³² Cromwell’s instructions to Penn are dated 4 December 1654. See Abbott, *The Writings*

Alonso de Cárdenas, was unable to conclude an alliance with England and was finally obliged to leave the country in late October.³³ Under such circumstances, Philip IV hoped to find a new ally in Flanders, and his expectations naturally turned toward Charles Stuart. On 12 April 1656 Philip concluded an agreement with the exiled prince, and Charles was given a command in Dunkirk and Ostend.³⁴ Under the terms of this agreement, Spain provided four thousand foot soldiers and two thousand cavalymen to the Royalists for an invasion of England.³⁵

Meanwhile England and France made progress toward the conclusion of a mutual defensive and offensive alliance against Spain. It was signed in London on 24 October 1655 O.S. and ratified by Mazarin at the end of the following month.³⁶ At the same time, Cromwell declared war on Spain.

The circumstances under which the Lord Protector began his war with Spain, as well as the motives involved, first attracted attention in Enlightenment-era historiography and continue to provoke debate among historians even now.³⁷ Cromwell's shift from a Spanish to a French orientation in the mid-1650s naturally had an impact on the Irish regiments in

and *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3: 530–32; Frank Strong, "The Causes of Cromwell's West Indian Expedition," *American Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (January 1899): 229–30; and my "Polityka Anhlії i antyosmanska diialnist Danyla Kalugera u 1655 rotsi," *Ukrainskyi arkhеohrafichnyi shchorichnyk*, new series (Kyiv and New York), no. 7 (2002): 232–42.

³³ *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655–1656*, no. XVII, p. 176 (Bonde's report to Charles X, 19 October 1655 O.S.); *Calendar of State Papers (Venice)*, vol. 30, nos. 176, 177, pp. 128–30 (Sagredo's reports to the Doge and Senate, 29 October 1655 N.S.). See also Thurlow, *A Collection of State Papers*, vol. 4, *Sept. 1655–May 1656*, 100.

³⁴ Charles Harding Firth, "Royalist and Cromwellian Armies in Flanders, 1657–1662," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, 17 (1903): 68; idem, *The Years of the Protectorate 1656–1658*, vol. 1, 1656–1657 (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1909), 24.

³⁵ *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655–1656*, no. XLVII, note 1 (Bonde's register, London, 2 May 1656); James Rees Jones, *Britain and Europe in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), 35.

³⁶ Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs: Or, an Historical Account of What Passed from the beginning of the Reign of King Charles the First, to King Charles the Second His Happy Restauration* (London, 1682), 631, 632. See also Sergei Arkhangelsky, "Vneshniaia politika Olivera Kromvelia," *Istoricheskii zhurnal*, 1943, nos. 5–6: 50; idem, "Anglo-frantsuzskaia voina s Ispaniei 1655–1659 gody," *Voprosy istorii*, 1947, no. 2: 46–66; Howat, *Stuart and Cromwellian Foreign Policy*, 82–94.

³⁷ David Hume, *The History of Great Britain, containing the Commonwealth, and the Reigns of Charles II and James II*, vol. 2 (London, 1757), 65; Robert A. Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain: A Study of the Spanish System, 1580–1720* (London and Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 136.

the service of Philip IV. The English authorities were at a loss as to how to deal with such a large number of Irishmen who were now prepared to attack them with arms in hand.³⁸

The prospect of an invasion of England by foreign powers in league with the Royalists or Irish rebels remained a constant threat during the years of warfare between England and Spain. For example, information to that effect was circulating in the English Council of State in September 1656, and Irish conspirators corresponded with the Royalists to obtain their support for such plans.³⁹ In letters to his son Henry, Oliver Cromwell often warned of the danger of invasion as a result of conspiratorial dealings between Spain, Charles Stuart, and the Irish.

Mention has already been made of the surreptitious return of Irishmen to their homeland in late 1655. Cromwell later deported many of them, along with Scots, to the West Indies.⁴⁰ But large numbers of Irish soldiers returned home after the Treaty of the Pyrenees (7 November 1659), and in view of this the Council of State enjoined the Dublin administration to strengthen its defenses on land and sea.⁴¹ Other Irish soldiers continued to serve in Spain, Flanders, France, Portugal, Italy, and elsewhere on the Continent.⁴²

* * *

As the preceding discussion has shown, mid-seventeenth-century Ireland produced a phenomenon unique in Europe—a formidable military force without a state or a refuge in its own homeland. That army was engaged in constant warfare for the interests of foreign European powers. Thus the state of international relations on the Continent in the mid-1650s is a useful background for understanding how some of these Irish soldiers became involved in a plan to colonize Ukrainian territories and dispatched an embassy to the Polish court in the spring of 1655.

The individual who had a license from the Lord Protector to recruit Irish units for the service of the king of Poland in early 1655 was Donagh MacCarthy, Viscount Muskerry. A prominent Irish nobleman, he had

³⁸ Moran, *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions*, 255.

³⁹ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, no. 872, pp. 620–21.

⁴⁰ Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 4, 1655–1658 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 156 (Cromwell to General George Monck, May 1656).

⁴¹ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, nos. 1020, 1045, pp. 704, 709.

⁴² Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain*, 125; Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659*, 226; Roger Lockyer, *Habsburg and Bourbon Europe, 1470–1720*, 8th ed. (New York: Longman, 1987), 419–20; Moran, *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions*, 55.

been a leader of the Irish Royalist party at the time of Cromwell's conquest of Ireland. In June 1651 he commanded Confederate troops in one of the last battles of the Irish Confederate Wars, waged in the course of the English offensive and siege of Limerick.⁴³ After the English victory in that battle and the fall of Limerick in November 1651, Lord Muskerry continued to resist the English forces as commander in chief of the Royal army in Munster. But once the last large Irish town, Galway, surrendered to the English in May 1652, Muskerry accepted the articles of capitulation in Munster on 22 June O.S. After the surrender, most of the Irish colonels were permitted to recruit Irish soldiers for service abroad.⁴⁴ Thus, according to article 4 of the agreement with Muskerry, he was given "liberty to transport 5,000 men to serve any foreign state in amity with the Commonwealth of England (and shall have liberty to treat with any agent or agents for that end and purpose)."

After concluding the act of capitulation, Lord Muskerry, as he said himself in July 1652, was to go to Spain with a thousand Irishmen.⁴⁵ In February 1653 he returned to Ireland in order to recruit military units according to the terms of his surrender, but a charge of murder was brought against him. The High Court of Justice acquitted Muskerry in the following year, and he applied once again to Cromwell for permission to recruit Irish soldiers.⁴⁶ At the same time, he sought agents in London "for transportation of such Irish into Flanders or other place pursuant to that agreement." On 25 October 1654 O.S., Charles Fleetwood and the Council of Ireland wrote to Cromwell with a request to approve Muskerry's recruitment, as the departure of such a large number of soldiers from Ireland would do much to help establish peace in that country.⁴⁷ In late December 1654 or early 1655 Cromwell granted such a license to Muskerry.⁴⁸ The question now was in what part of Europe he would serve with his Irish regiments. Rumors of negotiations between England and King John Casimir of Poland turned his thoughts toward Warsaw.

In November 1654 instructions for the Polish envoy to England, Nicholas de Bye, were formulated at a Diet in Hrodna. John Casimir's

⁴³ James Scott Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 207–11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 223. These articles were published in *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 1: 224–27n.

⁴⁵ *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 1, no. 219: 235.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 520, p. 436.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 544, pp. 452–53.

⁴⁸ "Some weekes since," as John Roche wrote to Thurloe on 4 February 1655 O.S. (Thurloe, *A Collection of State Papers*, 4: 500–501).

letter to Cromwell was dated 30 November 1654.⁴⁹ The principal aim of De Bye's mission was to convince Cromwell to invade Muscovy by sending a large fleet to Arkhangelsk and to create a league for the defense of the Baltic.

In Paris, Lord Muskerry made an agreement with John Casimir's envoy regarding his service with five thousand Irishmen in the Crown army. The Polish envoy "sent an express to give the king and court notice thereof, from whom a returne is dailly expected," as Muskerry's servant, John Roche, wrote to Secretary of State John Thurloe on 4 February 1655 O.S.⁵⁰ Another record, dated 12 February 1655 O.S., was published in the notes to John Patrick Prendergast's well-known work, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, compiled from the books of the Lord Deputy and Council in Ireland, which were preserved in the Record Tower in Dublin Castle. "On reading the within petition of John Gould, in behalf of the Lord Muskerry, who has license to transport 5,000 men out of Ireland to the service of any prince in amity with the Commonwealth, praying that while his lord is now in treaty with the Polish ambassador [in Paris] for those men ... they may not be transplanted [to Connaught (?)]: It is ordered, etc.... Dublin, 12 February, 1655."⁵¹

These, of course, were the facts that found their exact reflection in Wielopolski's above-cited letter of 4 March 1655 from Warsaw. But the mere reception of the Polish envoy in London by no means amounted to recognition of the king of Poland as a "prince in amity with the Commonwealth." The Venetian and Swedish ambassadors in London wrote of numerous complaints by English merchants against John Casimir with regard to the arrest of some of their number in Danzig, interference with

⁴⁹ Thurloe, *A Collection of State Papers*, 2: 731. Concerning the observations of English agents on Cromwell's titles in this letter, see *ibid.*, vol. 3, *Dec. 1654–Sept. 1655* (London, 1742), 50, 51.

⁵⁰ Thurloe, *A Collection of State Papers*, 4: 500–501.

⁵¹ Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, 78, n. 2. Prendergast discovered these books, titled "The Commissioners of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England for the Affairs of Ireland," in Dublin, and Robert Dunlop later published excerpts from most of them in his documentary collection about Ireland under Cromwell's rule. The document of 12 February 1655 was not included in Dunlop's excerpts (see documents for February 1655 in *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, vol. 2, nos. 604–12, pp. 480–83, and indexes). See also reviews of Dunlop's *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, with references to Prendergast's previous work, by Wilbur Cortez Abbott (*American Historical Review* 19, no. 3 [1914]: 611), W. E. Lunt (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 54 [1914]: 333), and Goddard H. Orpen (*The English Historical Review* 29, no. 13 [1914]: 165).

trade, and so on. Finally, in June 1655 the Polish envoy was obliged to leave London without an answer from the Protector about his mission.⁵²

Nevertheless, as Andrzej Jasowski's letter shows, the efforts of the Irish colonels were continued in their embassy to Warsaw. The papers of Edward Nicholas, secretary of state at Charles Stuart's court, contain a letter from Paris dated 16 April 1655 that mentions "the Lord Musgray [Muskerry] and old Mr. Bealing [Richard Bellings (?)]" as envoys to Poland.⁵³

On 19 June 1655, the day before the Diet session ended in Warsaw, the question of Irish settlement was debated in the Senate. The documents of the Diet—an official record that may be considered reliable—mention a thousand Irishmen who had requested permission (along with their families) to serve the king of Poland. The senators refused them permission to settle in the Commonwealth.⁵⁴ Although the number of Irish soldiers mentioned in the official record is much lower than in Jasowski's letter, both sources are concordant on the substance of the Senate debate. The reason for the refusal of the Irish request, as presented in Jasowski's letter, was quite logical: it was difficult to predict whether such a large military force might not establish its own relations with the Cossacks and conduct a policy at variance with that of the Kingdom of Poland. Thus, in June 1655 the Polish authorities closed the question of Irish settlement in the Ukrainian lands.

In November 1655 Lord Muskerry, along with the English royal court in exile, was deported from France.⁵⁵ In November of the following year, he is mentioned in the service of Charles Stuart in Flanders with Irish regiments that he had assembled mainly in France.⁵⁶

⁵² *Calendar of State Papers* (Venice), vol. 30, no. 60, p. 46; *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655–1656*, 57–60, 75, passim.

⁵³ *The Nicholas Papers: Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State*, ed. George F. Warner, 4 vols. (London: Printed for the Camden Society, 1886–1920, repr. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1965), vol. 2, *Jan. 1653–June 1655*, 256. With reference to the two envoys, the editor comments: "An unrecognizable title, unless Muskerry is meant. 'Old Mr. Bealing' is probably Richard Bellings, historian of the war in Ireland in 1641–1643." For a note on Bellings's diplomatic missions to various European states, see Alfred Webba, *A Compendium of Irish Biography: Comprising Sketches of Distinguished Irishmen, and of Eminent Persons Connected with Ireland by Office or by Their Writings* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1878, repr. New York: Lemma Publishing Corp., 1970), 15–16.

⁵⁴ Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska and Zdzisław Staniszevski, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy*, 1: 237, 247.

⁵⁵ Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3: 938.

⁵⁶ Thurloe, *A Collection of State Papers*, vol. 5, 1656, 588; Firth, "Royalist and Cromwellian Armies in Flanders, 1657–1662," 70.

The available documents thus reveal a hitherto neglected aspect of relations between the Polish court, England, and Ireland during the Protectorate.⁵⁷ They also provide evidence of an unusual initiative on the part of the Polish authorities to mitigate the problem of Cossack revolts by populating the free settlements between the lands of the Polish Crown and Cossack Ukraine. Although the project of Irish colonization did not gain the support of the Diet and was never carried out, it attests to a rare point of contact between Irish and Ukrainian history during the early modern period.

Translated by Myroslav Yurkevich

Appendix

1

4 March 1655. Extract from a letter from the castellan of Wojnicz, Jan Wielopolski, to King John Casimir, with reflections on Irish settlement of the Cossack lands

Copia listu i. m. p. woynickiego do krola j. m-ci na Conuokatya.

[...] Nie widze expeditionem modum, iako kilka tysięcy Irlandczykow, ktorzy, iakom słyszał, że powiadano, ofiarowali się na służbę w. k. m-ci, panu m. mciwemu, iako nayprędzy zaciągnąć. Upatruję ia w tym siła commoda: ludzie iusz gotowi, przes stanowisk, przes nizzczenia panstw w. k. m-ci, dawszy im zacnego iakiego y biegłego in tractandis externorum animis commissarza, prosto nie bawiąc się pod regiment ich mciow p. p. hetmanow przydą. A nie tylko in bello usu illorum bydz mozna, ale znaiąc ich za ludzi woiennych, hoc locorum asperitas hominum quoque ingenia durat, na mieysce Kozakow w tamtych kraiach osadzić moze w. k. m., p. n. młciwy, przes co munimentum i zasłona od tamtey strony Oyczyźnie się uczyni, y onym to oraz loco mercedis erit, z ktorych przednieysi mogliby się y ad praerogatiuis nobilitates przypuscic..., co by wielki, iako y sama nationum diuersitas, obicem wszelakim napotym rebelliom uczyniło. [...]

Source: Main Archives of Older Records in Warsaw, Public Archive of the Potockis, bk. 45, vol. 1: (Jan Wielopolski, biecki, bohenski starosta m. p. W Wielicz[c]e d[ie] 5 augusti 1655), fols. 16–16^v. Copy.

⁵⁷ There is no mention of the Irish regiments or their embassy to King John Casimir in articles specifically devoted to Anglo-Polish relations during the Protectorate, such as Józef Jasnowski, "England and Poland in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries (Political Relations)," *Polish Science and Learning* (London, New York, and Toronto), no. 7 (1948): 50–54 (section on "England and Poland during the Cromwellian Revolution"), and Rajnold Przedziecki, *Diplomatic Ventures and Adventures: Some Experiences of British Envoys at the Court of Poland* (London: Polish Research Centre, 1953), 95–103.

2

26 June 1655. Extract from Marcin Goliński's record of a letter from Andrzej Jasowski, a councillor of the town of Kazimierz near Cracow, about the mission of an Irish captain to King John Casimir on behalf of forty thousand Irish soldiers wishing to enter the Polish service

1655. Z Warszawy od p. Iasowskiego, raice kazimierzskiego, data 26 iuny do nas do Kazimierza. [...]

Parlament angielsky, ktorzi zabieli swego krolia, dawszi go scziac, y na sina iego nastapieli. Przi ktorim kroliewiczu oponowala sie Scotia albo Socka ziemya, takze Hibernia albo Isliandowie, ktorzi sa katolicy. Angielcikowie, ze sa wictoramy woyni, wipędzaią ych z ich własnych ziem, ktorzy niebożęta ustapicz muszą y zonami, y z dzyecmi, ktorych iest na dwakroc sto tysięcy. Między ktoremi iest 40000 do boiu, ktorich oberster albo kapitan stamtąd przyiehał do krolia i.m. y do Rzeczy Pospolitey, prosząc y suplikuiąc, aby ych Rzecz Posp[olita] raczyła yh przyiacz y aby im dano stukę ziemię, kędibi sie mogli kolokowacz y osadzacz. A te 40 tiszęczy ofiaruią sie zarazem yszcz przeciwo nieprzyiacieliowy, kędy im krol i.m. roskaze, nie hczacz zadni zapłaty, telko o to proszą, aby sie mogli ostacz przi tich miastach, ktorych dostaną od nieprzyiacielia y tey ziemię. Nie heieli na to panowie y sliachta pozwolic, obawiając sie tego, ze bi nie bely tak, iako przed tym y krzyzaczy w Prusieh, zmocniwszy sie, nie bely sylny Polakom.

Source: Lviv National Scientific Library of Ukraine, Ossoliński Collection, MS 189/II (Marcin Goliński's compendium), fols. 759–60. Copy.

3

1657(?) — Extract from an anonymous Polish tract arguing the benefits to the Kingdom of Poland of colonizing Ukraine with Irish and Welsh settlers

[...] A nawet mogłaby Rzeczpospolita cudzoziemcami slobody — mianowicie na Ukrainie — osadzić, zaciągając coraz nowych regimentarzów, a te im poseszje dawając, jako się już z tym ofiarowali Irlandczycy, dobrzy żołnierze i katolicy. Walonów także natio populosissima, a przy tym catholica prędko by się tu dała zwabić, bo ich także jako i Irlandów paupertas domi premit. Tak by tedy miała Rzeczpospolita i większą z ludzi obronę, i dostateczniejszą intratę według owego: “ubi populus, ibi obolus.” [...]

Source: *Pisma polityczne z czasów panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy (1648–1668): Publicystyka — Eksorbitancje — Projekty — Memoriały*, vol. 1, 1648–1660, ed. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989), no. 42, p. 202.