

Lesson 18: Khmel'nyts'kyi's Revolution and Its Aftermath

Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, especially from the point of view as founder of the Ukrainian Hetman state. In the scholarly literature, there are advanced different points of view as to evaluation of Khmel'nyts'kyi's activity, personality, achievements, and so on. We have no time to go into details and, therefore, I will not now discuss matters from the point of view of historiography. I would just like to give a general orientation about the situation and problems Khmel'nyts'kyi had to face. First of all, we should not forget that the revolution of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi began in 1647-1648. It was the time when one very important war, the Thirty Years War, came to an end. The Thirty Years War created a situation in Europe.

The war officially ended with the peace of Westphalia (in October 1648). The war was conducted by the Holy Roman Empire with France so that the part of the treaty dealing with France was conducted in Munster. With Sweden and the Protestant estates of the Empire was conducted at Ostnorig. In general, the victors were, on one side, Sweden, and on the other side, France and the German estates of the Empire, which now achieved the status of independent realms. Only since 1648, can we speak of the Bavarian,

the Brandenburg (which soon developed into the Prussian kingdom), and so on. It was the dissolution of the old order in the Empire and the Emperor and the Diet were left with the mere shadow of their former power. Sweden now received western Pomerania and some other parts, an enormous indemnity of five million dollars, and obtained control over the Baltic and the North Sea. The independence of Switzerland and the united Netherlands was recognized at the Peace of Westphalia. France, of course, obtained the recognition of the sovereignty over the bishoprics of Metz, Verdun, the upper and lower Alsace, and so on. In the year when Khmel'nyts'kyi obtained his great victories over Poland, it was a great sensation. But the old order, to a certain degree, was destroyed. One might say that it was comparatively possible to create a new order in Eastern Europe. The situation, however, was not that easy.

First of all, Khmel'nyts'kyi started as a rebel. Of course, when he rebelled against the Polish order, he did not have in mind to create an independent state. It was not the first nor the last time that a szlachta member rebelled against the order, not being able to get his rights within the system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was not also something very special that Khmel'nyts'kyi had foreign allies. It was, more or less,

a custom that many Polish magnates would have their private armies and would conduct their own, more or less, foreign policy and had ties with Transylvania or Crimea or to other powers. What made this story somehow different was the magnitude of Khmel'nyts'kyi's victory. The first state to appreciate this situation was Turkey. In June, 1648, immediately after Khmel'nyts'kyi's great victories, we have a Turkish embassy and the first Treaty between Khmel'nyts'kyi and Turkey, establishing a kind of Turkish protectorate over the Cossack realm, similar to the protectorates over Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. Unfortunately for Khmel'nyts'kyi a few weeks after the treaty was concluded, a revolution occurred in Turkey. The regime of the Great Vizer Akhmed Hazar-Para, who was Khmel'nyts'kyi's friend, was destroyed and the new Grand Vizier had different views of the problems in Eastern Europe. From this point of view, we can see that the entrance of Khmel'nyts'kyi into the international arena via Turkey was not successful. It promised to be something very important, but due to the special events, it was not achieved. One should not forget that the defeat at Lepanto in 1571 exposed the weakness of the Ottoman Empire as a maritime power. The war with Austria, which ended with the Treaty of Sequaterik, in 1606, similarly revealed the Empire's

military decline. The treaty with Austria, released Austria from the annual tribute which she had been paying to the sultan since the middle of the sixteenth century. For the first time, the Turks were forced to treat a European ruler on an equal basis, rather than with contempt. So we have a new situation--Turkey, by 1648, was threatened with revolution. Very soon after followed Akhmed Hazar-Para. The Sultan Ibrahim was arrested, then killed. The same thing happened one year later in England. This was the end of Turkish independent policy, of Turkish Eastern policy. In the 1660's and 1670's, they tried again and here we have the relation between the Ottoman Porte and Doroshenko. But it was just too late. The problem was ~~that~~ Khmel'nyts'kyi's revolution, if he would have to use Turkey as his main supporter, came too late. The beginning of 1649 was very important because Khmel'nyts'kyi was greeted in Kiev as a new Messiah, as a man who freed the Orthodox Rus' from the Polish yoke, and so on. This was the beginning of Khmel'nyts'kyi's ties with the Kievan intelligentsia. The views of the Kievan intelligentsia were not very clear. On one hand, they were interested in creating a kind of Orthodox Commonwealth, headed by Kiev. On the other hand, they tried to interest Muscovy in Ukrainian affairs, hoping that the Orthodox ruler would leave them freedom of action.

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Two variants of the Orthodox policy were developed: (1) alliance with Moldavia and using the Moldavian ruler as the source of charisma, because charisma was what was needed. Khmel'nyts'kyi was a member of the nobility, but he was not a member of the ruling house. We should not forget that this was still the seventeenth century. There were two sources of charisma within the Eastern Orthodox world. On one hand, the Moldavian ruler, because Moldavia had close ties with Western Ukraine and we should not forget that the creation of Kiev as the intellectual center of Eastern Europe was done together with Moldavia, Peter Mohyla was the son of a Moldavian voevoda. Khmel'nyts'kyi himself regarded this possibility as very important. As you know, he made all possible arrangements that a marriage was arranged between his oldest son Tymish and Rozanda, the daughter of Vasile Lupyl. Tymish, being the husband of Donna Rozanda, would at least have partial charisma. Of course, there was another variant if one of the two plans were impossible to achieve, the variant being such or another compromise with Poland. Here, the leader of this idea was Adam Kysil. We, unfortunately do not have time to discuss this important leader, who, in the circumstances, had charisma. He claimed an origin from the pre-Rurikid dynasty in Volhynia. The events proved that the last

variant was the most fitting, as exemplified by the Treaty of Zboriv. Of course, the Treaty of Zboriv was not the achievement of the goals, but it was a program, which under the circumstances was achieved. The importance of the treaty was that three of the governments--Kiev, Bratslav, and Chernihiv were now united in a quasi-independent unit. Khmel'nyts'kyi himself apparently liked the Zboriv solution very much, but there were difficulties. In 1647 and 1648, different groups of the population of the Ukraine took part in the revolution. All the groups were eager to dismiss the Polish yoke. But they had different ideas of how the future should be developed. One should not forget that the center of Cossack activity was the Zaporozhian Sich. It was not so easy to uproot at once the old understanding which grew out of the past history of the Cossacks to the effect that the center of Cossack activity and organization was "beyond the rapids" at Zaporozhe at the Sich, where the hetman was traditionally elected and Ukrainian policy formulated. Under the new Cossack regime, under the Treaty of Zboriv, the center of Ukrainian life came to be the residence of the Hetman, in this case, Chyhyryn, and at which place all matters were dealt by the Hetman's court and by the military chancellory, while the claims of the Sich to its former rights

now appeared obsolete. We will later see that the Sich's claim of the leading role was utilized by Muscovy after the Pereiaslav Treaty was

concluded. This internal conflict contained the seeds of destruction.

For different reasons, it was impossible for Khmel'nyts'kyi to solve the problem. The name of his state remained still the Zaporozhian Host until the Union of Hadiach in 1658. On the other side, a sharp social conflict between the mass of peasants and the Cossack officers came into being.

We should again not forget that this was the seventeenth century. The situation in the Ukraine was somehow different from the situation in Western Europe. The very fact that the magnates granted had to grant the colonizers freedom for at least twenty or thirty years. So people were accustomed to freedom for at least thirty years and this created a new situation.

On the other hand, we should not forget that Khmel'nyts'kyi and his officers belonged to the seventeenth century and the only political and social order which they knew was the political and social order in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Certainly, they destroyed the rule of Polish magnates there but it they could not imagine another another, as it was before, the only difference was that they would take the place of the Polish magnates in the Ukraine. The same was the attitude of the Cossack ruling class towards

the cities. In the Ukraine the Polish magnates tried to tax cities, even cities which were under Magdeburg law. Again, in the moment when the Cossack government replaced the Polish nobility, they started to do exactly the same thing. We do not know how things would have developed had Khmel'nyts'kyi lived or had a longer period of rule--not just for nine years, but for thirty or forty. Probably, it would be possible to find a solution, but the time of his tenure was too limited and full of external wars and, therefore, it was impossible to find a formula to solve all the problems, which became apparent after he destroyed the Polish rule in the Ukraine. As long as people had to fight against the Poles, they were united, but at the moment when they achieved their victory, everyone visualized the fruits of victory in another way. Now, you see on one hand, there was a tendency among some groups, especially among the former members of the gentry to replace the Polish higher class, and, on the other side, they had to take into account that the so-called popular masses, the common Cossacks, would not allow them to do it. It was necessary to find an umbrella, which somehow would unite them. Such an umbrella, which was needed, was Charisma. Two variants of charisma, one the Moldavian, and the other, Muscovite. From this point of view, one



can understand the Pereiaslav Treaty. This treaty has a long literature and there are all possible interpretations of it. I have no time to go into details, but I would like to mention that the various interpretations have called it a "personal union," a "real union," a "protectorate," a "quasi-protectorate," a "vassalage," a "military alliance," "autonomy," "incorporation," and so on. The Pereiaslav Treaty got its importance the same way the Vietnam War did. When the Vietnam War started, no one paid any attention to it. It was just apparently something not that significant. Therefore, it is not so easy to get or to evaluate that event. For Khmel'nyts'kyi, of course, the Pereiaslav Treaty was necessary in order to get charisma. The Muscovites, however, had some other ideas. So what happened happened. In my opinion, the Pereiaslav Treaty, which was the result of lengthy negotiations between two signatories having different systems, can not be subsumed under a single category. It can be regarded as a personal union, since the treaty had been concluded with the tsar and there were no common institutions apart from the person of the tsar, because of the preservation of a separate Cossack state and its continuing to be a subject of international law, capable of imposing tariffs, and so on. On the other hand, as I have mentioned, the tsar assumed the title of the

"tsar of Malaia Rossiia." It means that something new came into being from the point of international law, Malaia Rossiia. Now, the tsar of Muscovy, who was until 1654 possessed the title of "tsar of Vseia Rossiia." Now, he exchanged it for a more concrete title-- "Tsar of Vseia Velikiia i Malaia Rossiia." Now we have two states united under the person of the same monarch, which was the tsar of Muscovy. He became tsar of Velikiia and of Malaia Rossiia. It means that there was an independent unit, named Velikiia Rossiia and another unit, Malaia Rossiia. From that point of view, this is very important.

There were some difficulties. There are some special problems. There is a basis for regarding the Pereiaslav Treaty as a quasi-protectorate in view of the following considerations. Since the tsar, as an absolute monarch identified his person with the state, the Pereiaslav Treaty was not only an agreement between two rulers, but it was an agreement between two states. But very soon the result of the Pereiaslav Treaty was that two powers now decided to wage a war against Poland. They started the war in Belorussia. The result proved that instead to fight Belorussia, we had the situation where two Rus' fought for the third Rus'. It means that we had a kind of competition between the Muscovite army and the

Ukrainian army who first will occupy Russia. Of course, at the moment when Khmel'nyts'kyi needed military aid, at the moment Muscovite troops appeared in Kiev, they treated Kiev and the given territory as it would be their own. Of course, such a treaty and such results did not satisfy Khmel'nyts'kyi. In the meantime, we have the year 1655 and a new situation came into being. This is a new period in Khmel'nyts'kyi's activity, the most interesting period, when Khmel'nyts'kyi started his international policy. Unfortunately, he died within the next two years. In June, 1655, the new Swedish king, Charles Gustav, invaded. As you know, the relation between Poland and Sweden was not good since Sigismund III was elected to the Polish throne in 1587. There was two branches of the Vasa family--one Catholic, this was Sigismund, and then his sons. In Sweden, there were the Protestant branch. Both branches claimed the rights--one to the Polish crown, the other to the Swedish crown. Of course, it was impossible to solve the problem in any other way than by war. Charles had some Polish supporters, including the former chancellor Radziejewski, who had been exiled from Poland. The Protestants in Poland and especially in Lithuania hailed the Swedish king as their deliverer. Before long, the nobility of both Great Poland and Lithuania recognized Charles as their king. The Lithuanians stipulated that Charles should defend them from the

Muscovites. This prompted the Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William, to protect his own interests by sending troops to the Duchy of Prussia, which he held as the vassal of the kings of Poland. At that time, it seemed as though Poland ceased to exist as an independent state. King Jan Kasimir fled to Silesia. However, the recovery came as quickly as the fall. The majority of the Polish people were Roman Catholics and rallied to the support of their faith. Besides, both the szlachta and the peasants were irritated by the arrogant behavior and looting of the Swedish troops in Poland. In December 1655, the Crown Hetmans Potocki and Lanckorowcki formed a szlachta confederation against the Swedes. The confederation invited King Jan Kasimir back to the throne. Stefan Charniecki assumed the command of the Polish army. The Swedes were forced. When Charles realized that he was unable to keep the whole Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under his rule, he devised a plan to conclude a system of alliances and to partition the Polish Commonwealth--the first plan to partition it among his allies. He offered the Duchy of Prussia and the Great Poland to the Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William; the Little Poland, Mazovia, and Lithuania to Prince George Rakosci of Transylvania, and, of course, the Ukrainian territories to Khmel'nyts'kyi. For himself,

Charles reserved the Royal Prussia (Pomerania). The Poles responded to the Swedish political combination by making their own opposing diplomatic moves. They turned to Austria, which agreed to mediate between Poland and Muscovy. Besides, Austria agreed to lend Poland 12,000 troops. In 1657, Frederick William broke off from Sweden and concluded an alliance with Poland, instead. The prize Poland had to pay for this alliance did not seem to be too high for the Poles at that moment. They had to waive the Polish king's suzerainty rights over the Duchy of Prussia. In the historical perspective, however, this concession paved the way for the fusion of Brandenburg and Prussia, which led eventually to the creation of the kingdom of Prussia in 1701, and then, of course, the creation of the very important state of Prussia, which took part in the partition of Poland. The Swedish action provoked quite different feelings in Chyhyryn and in Moscow. Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi wholeheartedly supported Sweden's struggle with Poland and took an active part in the formation of the Swedish coalition. He had been in close touch with George Rakosci of Transylvania for many years. At this point, he concluded a military convention with him. Bohdan saw in the Swedish coalition the surest way to break Poland's strength and to prevent any possibility of any renewed attempt to restore

was convocated and all members of the Khmel'nyts'kyi cabinet decided that the Treaty of Pereiaslav was no longer relevant and that what was needed was another political combination which would free the Ukraine from the obligations of the Pereiaslav Treaty. New coalitions with Charles X and Rakosci came into being, but in the meantime, Khmel'nyts'kyi died, and the difficulties which the Swedish and Transylvanian coalition found in Poland, this made the Ukrainian leadership after the death of Khmel'nyts'kyi aware of the fact that another solution should be found and when after Ivan Vyhovs'kyi was elected, Moscow organized a kind of anti-hetman from the Zaporozhe. It was a kind of causus beli and Ivan Vyhovs'kyi felt free to negotiate with Poland and so the Hadiach Union came into being. The result was that the provinces of Kiev, Bratslav, and Chernigov, as it was originally in the Zboriv Treaty, were to become a separate state, the Great Duchy of Rus', with its own ministers, treasury, coinage, and military, similar to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and it was to be ruled by a hetman, who was to be elected with the participation of all estates or classes of the inhabitants, who would nominate candidates, one of whom the king would appoint as hetman. The Cossack army would consist of 30,000 men, and in addition, the Hetman could have at his own personal

disposal 10,000 mercenaries, altogether 40,000 men. The Orthodox faith was to enjoy equal rights with the Catholic and the Metropolitan and bishops were to have seats in the joint Senate, as the Lithuanians had. The Kievan Academy would have the same privileges as the Cracow Academy and another academy was to be founded in one of the cities of the Ukraine.

In order to conclude, I would like to review very briefly the situation. Here we have the Ukraine. The neighbors were on one side Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, Crimea, and the Ottoman Porte. All these states were within the existence of the Ottoman Porte. It was clear that from the very beginning for Khmel'nyts'kyi, who was accustomed to that part of the world, his first plans were connected with Turkey and this world. Here we have the Habsburg territories and the Habsburg senior was also the Holy Roman Emperor. After 1648, some powerful principalities received their independence. First of all, Brandenburg tied with the Duchy of Prussia, which came into being after a member of the Hohenzollern dynasty in 1525, who was the master of the Teutonic Order accepted Protestantism and became the first Duke of Prussia.

Here we have Venice. Austria, after the Spanish treaty renewed the war with Turkey. Venice, of course, was interested in controlling the

trade in the Mediterranean and interested in any sort of coalition against Turkey. Whoever will be the Hetman of the Ukraine, all plans of this hetman, if they were somehow connected with Turkey, they will have counter offensives from the side of the Habsburgs and Venice. Poland, as a Catholic state, normally was a member of such an anti-Turkish coalition. Had Turkey remained the power it had once been, in the sixteenth, probably it would not harm so much, but since Turkey was in the state of decline what remained for Khmel'nyts'kyi was an alliance with the Crimean khanate. This again had two sides. On one hand, the Crimean army was of great help, but on the other hand, since the Polish invasions of other territories was a kind of profession for the different hordes within the system of Crimea, it created a very complicated situation.

It was clear that Khmel'nyts'kyi could hardly have had an alliance with Venice or with Austria. In 1650, already, there was a Venetian legation visiting Chyhyryn, but it was the period after Zboriv. Khmel'nyts'kyi could never get Austrian or Venetian support against Poland. It is clear that, on one side, semi-independent states such as Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania could be sought as members of the coalition, but Transylvania was a member of the Protestant League, headed



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by Sweden. Since the head of Sweden was of the Vasa dynasty, and had claims to the Polish crown, there were also problems, even when Charles X needed the support of Khmel'nyts'kyi, they had great difficulties in finding a common denominator, because Charles X also had some hopes of becoming king of Poland, and as king of Poland, he could not surrender Western Ukraine.

The same thing happened with Rakosci, who also plans to be elected king of Poland. As king of Poland, of course, he could not, even if the situation was such that a compromise on both sides was necessary, but whether it was Sweden or Transylvania, the given rulers could never forget that their policies should hurt Polish feeling too much because they had plans, as I had mentioned before. The same thing was true for Muscovy. Even Tsar Aleksii had plans for the Polish crown. As we can see, the situation was very complex and only due to Khmel'nyts'kyi's talent as a military commander he remained all the time as a representative of a power, and was not neglected by the other powers, because everyone needed his help. This, of course, was the reason why the Hetmanate remained as an entity. But, on the other hand, since there was no time to organize the internal problems and the time was too short, and this very complex

situation did not allow the achievement of international recognition.

The failure in 1656 proved how difficult it was, because as long as Muscovy or Poland or Turkey needed the help of Khmel'nyts'kyi, they would recognize him, but in the moment when they could make arrangements without him, they would forget him. This was the reason that finally the only solution it seemed to the leaders of the Ukrainian policy was to create, first of all, a kind of an autonomous state with the system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, so this Hadiach Union came into being. Unfortunately, the Hadiach project remained only a project.