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THE UKRAINIAN ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNION OF LUBLIN

The Lublin Union was signed on 1 July 1569 at the Seim of Lublin creating the single state of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The provisions concerning the Ukrainian territory constituted an important part of the document, since most of the territories of modern-day Ukraine belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, accordingly, were to be included into the newly formed state.

The processes around the Union have not been studied exhaustively in the national historiography. M. Hrushevsky was one of the first to cover the topic of the Lublin Seim and the Union. In his work "History of Ukraine-Rus" the historian provided a detailed description of these events and presented them as bearing negative consequences for further life and development of the Ukrainian people. Soviet historians saw the Union as an armed occupation of Ukraine by the Poles. Modern researchers of this problem include N. Yakovenko who published the article "The Gains and Losses of the Union of Lublin", V. Vasilenko, and N. Belous.

The purpose of this article is a brief study of the process of entering the Ukrainian lands into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and their position pursuant to the conditions of the Lublin Union of 1569.

The Lublin Seim was convened by the Polish king Sigmund II August and began on January 20 in the city of Lublin. The interests of the Ukrainian territories at the Congress were advocated by senior officials, including starosts, vaivodes, cornets, provincial ambassadors and the nobility. The most influential delegates from Ukraine

were representatives of princely families, among them Konstantin Ostrozhsy, Alexander Czartoryski, Andrew Vishnevetsky, Bogush Koretsky and others. However, despite this wide range of representatives of the Ukrainian lands, they did not play a crucial role in the Seim debates. The probable reason for this was understanding the weaknesses of Lithuania, both in economics and politics, and the desire to strengthen Ukraine's defense capacity on account of a more powerful state – the Crown of Poland.

On March 5, 1569, the Seim adopted the Act of Accession of Podlasie, on May 27 the same resolution was approved in respect of Volyn province. The issue of the remaining territory of Ukraine-Rus remained unsolved. Kyiv region was included into the previously annexed lands, and after June 6, when Prince of Ostroh swore allegiance to the king and the Crown, Bratslav Voivodeship joined Poland. Thus almost the entire territory of Ukraine was under the rule of the Polish Crown.

The king provided guarantees of the entirety and integrity of the annexed lands, as well as the stability of their administrative and judicial structure. The Union also took into consideration national, cultural and religious needs of the Ukrainian people. The rights of Catholics extended to the Orthodox population. The resolution of the Seim stipulated the preservation of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of life, including the judicial proceedings, administrative authorities or local regional councils. However, the Polish was set forth as the language of the Seim. According to the main documents of the Seim, the Ukrainian lands were attached to Poland as equal and free territories.

Thus, the question of the impact and consequences of the Lublin Seim remains quite controversial. Although the king left all spheres of life almost unchanged within the Ukrainian lands, we cannot view further Polish domination in Ukraine as having beneficial effects on the history of the Ukrainian people.

References

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