

UDC 94(54).03

THE SEPOY REBELLION OF 1857–1859 AND THE ATTITUDE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS SOCIAL THOUGHTS TO IT**MIHKAIL SHPET, ANDREI KROTOV**
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The Sepoy Rebellion of 1857–1859 and the attitude of representatives of various social thoughts to it are revealed in this article. The author consider the activity of BrhamoSamaj, Sikh sects, Wahhabi sect and the results of their activities during the Sepoy Rebellion.

Throughout the first half of the XIX century the indignation of the British colonial policy grew. It was revealed by the local unrests created by different sectors of society. But they joined each other headed by sepoys in the middle of the XIX century. Colonial sepoy forces was divided into three armies: Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Bengal army was the biggest and was counted 170 thousands soldiers, 140 thousands of which were Indians. Sepoys of the Bengal Army recruited exclusively from Oudh, Bihar and North-Western provinces, and most of them were wealthy peasants, or the sons of small feudal. Despite good payment there were some grievances among them. First, the Indian couldn't get a promotion above the rank of sergeant. Secondly, the sepoys and their families were forced to live in the barracks [1, p. 297]. The grievance were increased by the Wahhabi propaganda: the anxiety caused by the infringement of material interests intensified fears of forced conversion to Christianity, and the abolition of sati, the introduction of education for women, the construction of railroads and telegraph communication was regarded as attempts to destroy the Hindu and Muslim religions and transform India into Christian country [2, p. 375].

Many feudal chiefs had negative attitude to the British policy in India and secretly prepared a major uprising. Many Muslims and Hindu were frightened by the capture of Oudh and other principalities [3, p. 523]. Thus, Hindu and Muslim feudal, that still didn't affect by the policy, began to think over the possibility to keep their possessions. In addition, the officials and dukes had lost special assignation from the Britain for their loyalty [2, p. 375]. What's more, the centenary of the Battle of Plassey was coming and sepoy decided to overthrow the colonial government exactly to this date. Organization of rebellion was started in the United Province and Central India. The date of rebellion was agreed. It also should have started simultaneously in several locations [4, p. 199].

The organizers of the rebellion had to do latent but effective mobilization. So, from the middle of 1856 they began to transfer secret code chapatti. However, the rebellion wasn't organized systematically and had a spontaneous character. The introduction of new bullets to the Enfield rifles was the occasion for the uprising. According to rumors, bullets were greased with lard and beef fat. Thus, both Muslim and Hindu religious feelings were artificially defiled. 85 sepoys, who refused to take the bullets were publicly demoted and sentenced to 10 years in prison 10th May, 1857. It was a signal to start the rebellion. So, the rebellion was supported by the urban lower classes and peasants from nearby villages [5, p. 66].

After smashing the British officers sepoys went to Delhi, where joined with the Delhi garrison in 11th May. After capturing Delhi they went to the Red Fort and forced Bahadur Shah declared himself as the ruler of India and to sign a proclamation, dictated by the rebels [6, p. 550]. In September 1857 the manifest of the rebels was published. It contained the promises of all sorts of benefits and privileges to the merchants and the Muslim clergy who will join the rebellion [7, p. 555].

However, representatives of the various trends of Indian social and political thought reacted to the rebellion ambiguous. In fact, only Doab and some regions of Central India were covered by the rebellion. Maharashtra, Madras, Bengal and Punjab was loyal to the colonial authorities and it was caused by several factors. Firstly, almost all British troops to the beginning of the uprising were concentrated in these regions. Secondly, it had grown a large number of so-called «Macaulay's children». It was a name for the Indians, who have got higher education on British example. Thanks to their cooperation, the colonizers were able to prevent uninvolved sepoys from the rebellion. For example, the sepoy uprising in Bengal headed by MangalPandy was prevented. Pandy himself was executed, forces were disarmed and some soldiers were fired. In Punjab British learned about the upcoming uprising and disarmed the garrisons throughout Punjab. Later Punjabi merchants supplied money and equipment to the British forces. In general, Punjab has become a reliable rear for colonizers [8, p. 290].

What about «BrahmoSamaj» movement in Bengal, it was altogether departed from the socio-political activities and concentrate in the religion aspects. In 1850 there was a split in society on religious grounds. One part of society accepted the Vedas as a basis of their religion, while others considered Vedas as polytheistic and taught that the basis should be the nature of faith and contemplation. Subsequently, the second point of view prevailed and the «BrahmoSamaj» started based on the following tenets: The Book of Nature and Intuition form

the basis of the Brahmaic faith; although the Brahmas don't consider any book, written by man, as the basis of their religion, yet they accept any truth contained in any book; the Brahmas believe that the religious condition of man is progressive the fundamental doctrines of their religion are at the basis of every religion followed by man; they believe in the existence of One Supreme God, a God endowed with a distinct personality, moral attributes equal to His nature, and intelligence befitting the Governor of the Universe, and worship Him alone; they don't believe in His incarnation; belief in the immortality and progressive state of the soul, and declare that there is a state of conscious existence succeeding life in this world, and supplementary to it, as respects the action of the universal moral government; repentance is the only way to atonement and salvation; don't recognize any other mode of reconciliation to the offended but loving Father; they believe in the Providential care of the Divine Father; they avow that love towards Him, and performing the works He loves, constitutes His worship; they recognize the necessity of public worship, but do not believe that they cannot hold communion with the Great Father without resorting to any fixed place at any fixed time; they do not believe in pilgrimages, but declare that holiness can only be attained by elevating and purifying the mind; they do not perform any rites or ceremonies, or believe in penances as instrumental in obtaining the grace of God; there is no distinction of caste among the Brahmas [9, p. 57–59]. As we can see, there wasn't any social or political motives in their dogmatics.

After The Sepoy Rebellion in 1859 the young radical members of community headed by Keshub Chandra Sen decided to use their religious teaching in practice to eliminate all existing religious practices and destruction of caste distinctions. They also stepped up a broad outreach and charitable activities with the aim to turn the «BrahmoSamaj» in a mass social and religious organization. Moreover, Chandra Sen opposed the religious prohibition of marriage between members of different castes, the prohibition of marriage of widows and against child marriage, as well as fighting for the approval of the Indian youth to higher education and for the development of women's education. However, proponents of Chandra Sen met with strong opposition from conservative members of society, who felt his innovations is extremely premature. Conservative part of «Brahmo-Samaj» was headed by Debendranath Tagore and his brother Girindranath Tagore. This has led to the disintegration of society into two parts: conservative and progressive members. As a result, in 1866 «BrahmoSamaj» was divided into two societies: «The BrahmoSamaj of India» headed by Chandra Sen and «AdiBrahmoSamaj» headed by Debendranath Tagore [10, p. 276].

Socio-political organizations of Bengal, Madras and Maharashtra, which were established in the 1840's, represented the interests of the big traders, landlords and the Indian intellectuals. Thus, masses wasn't introduced into this organizations. Socio-political organizations wasn't satisfied with the policy of British colonizers, but they haven't such an aim as to expel British from India. That's why they wasn't involved into different local uprisings against colonial authorities. The economic program of these organizations included the requirement of reducing the tax and the reduction of costs of the colonial administration. The political program included the requirement to expand opportunities for European type of education among Indian society. It would allow Indians to grow their positions in the colonial administrative apparatus. That's why from one hand they were in favor of equal rights for Indians with the British colonial administration in the system, and from this position criticized government policies. On the other hand, they held complete loyalty to the colonial regime and was on position of the maximum possible transfer of the metropolitan orders on Indian land. Thus, The Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 – 1859 pushed the moderate nationalists for further rapprochement with the colonizers [1, p. 337].

Due to the fact, that sepoys took part in the First and Second Anglo-Sikh War Sikh population considered sepoys as occupation troops and didn't support them. Therefore, the Sikhs were willing recruits in the colonial troops, remembering the role of the Bengal sepoys in the defeat of the Sikh state. Moreover, If we'll take the history of Sikh state, Sikhs try to fight off the Mughals from the Pashtun lands. So, the symbolic leader of the rebellion Bahadur Shah, representative of the Mughal dynasty, didn't add sympathies to the Sikhs [11, p. 24].

What about Wahhabis, under the guise of religious preaches they penetrated into sepoy troops. For example, Ahmed Shah was well-known Maulavi in Oudh. Barkat Ahmad launched his activity in Lucknow. In favor of the rebellion they argues, that the command decided to pay all sepoys in Christians [12, p. 87]. During the rebellion the Muslims rebels issued fatwa declaring a holy war against British. The main political credo of the rebels had been formulated in the following terms: The soul belongs to God's, the country - to sultan, the authority – to the soldiers [11, p. 23].

Thus, the rebellion ideas were popular only throughout peasants and low class citizens. Peasants expelled landlords from their soil, smashed government offices and suspended payment of rent to the zamindars. Then peasants communities created their own forces and defend communal lands. Citizens of Doab also took an active part in rebellion. In 1857 released a number of big cities like Aligarh (May 21), Bareilly and Lucknow (May 31), Kanpur (June 4), Allahabad (June 6). In each city the government was organized by them. Khan Bahadur Khan was the head in Bareilly, Nana Sahib in Kanpur, Wahhabi Malawi Liyakat Ali in Allahabad, Wahabi Pir Ali in Patna [1, p. 299].

Sepoys did raids from the Delhi, but didn't take decisive position. As a result, the initiative passed to British. They pulled off troops from Madras, Iran, China and began assault on Delhi in September 14, 1857. It took

them only 5 days to capture the city and fortress. Than British captured Bahadur Shah, who was exiled to Rangoon. Moreover, after capturing Delhi, the Brits released 17 thousands of their troops [4, p. 201]. Until March 1858 Brits repaid last pockets of rebellion in Kanpur, Bareilly, Lucknow and Oudh. After the fall of Lucknow, the last major center of resistance sepoy, the rebels broke into small groups and began to conduct guerrilla warfare in the form of minor clashes with British troops. One of the guerrilla leaders was Tatya Tope was captured by colonizers and was hanged in April 18, 1859 [13, p. 124].

In November 1, 1858 Queen Victoria issued the manifest announced the elimination of the East India Company and the transition control over India to the British crown. Her Majesty promised forgiveness to all feudal lords, who joined the rebellion, except those who were directly involved in the murder of the British soldiers and declared that the new government would respect the possessory rights of the Indian feudal [14, p. 575]. Therefore, feudal elite decided to cooperate with British crown.

The Sepoy Rebellion was doomed to fail from the begging due to a number of reasons. Firstly, many good officers were transferred to the civil service policy. Thereby, sepoy army was weakened. Thus, sepoy commanders wasn't able to solve important strategic tasks and calculate the course of the campaign because of their low experience. Moreover, army wasn't the main force of the rebellion. The main forces of the rebellion were peasants and poor citizens, who haven't any military experience. In addition, the feudal lords didn't launched measures to involve vast majority of peasants. They also haven't a common plan of struggle, unified command and often pursuing personal goals. So, such rebellion centers as Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur have developed spontaneously and operated independently from each other. The rebels also haven't clear goals. They just called to return to the past era of independent Mughal Empire.

What's more, the rebellion was supported not in all regions of India. So, Bengal, Madras, Maharashtra and Punjab remained loyal to the British. For example, in Bengal «BrahmoSamaj» movement departed from the socio-political activities and concentrate on the religious aspects. There was even a split on religious ground. As a result, «BrahmoSamaj» divided into «BrahmoSamaj of India» headed by Keshab Chandra Sen and «AdiBrahmoSamaj» headed by Debendranath Tagore. The socio-political organizations in Bengal, Madras and Maharashtra declared their full loyalty to the colonial regime and called for the maximum possible transfer of the metropolis orders on Indian land. The economic program of these organizations included the requirement of reducing the tax and the reduction of costs of the colonial administration. The political program included the requirement to expand opportunities for European type of education among Indians. Many Indian feudal lords sided with the British. When the colonial government made concessions to the feudal lords, many of them completely moved away from the rebellion. Thus, the fate of the uprising was sealed by the Indians themselves. In addition, British troops were well-equipped and trained. So, they were much more effective than their opponents. The positions of the British were reinforced by the fact that they possessed and controlled the telegraph communication routes.

After the suppression of The Sepoy Rebellion 1857 – 1859 the colonizers were forced to change their policies in India. The East India Company was abolished, and India became a colony of the British crown. In fact, the government was represented by people with the same views as the East India Company. However, the British started their policy more careful making concessions to the Indian feudal lords. In general, a new phase of Britain's colonial policy in India had begun.

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