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**The Cossack Andrey Sulyak
(Regarding the Part of Native Moldavians in the
Haidamak Movement of 1734)**

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**Казак Андрей Суляк
(к вопросу об участии выходцев из Молдавии в
гайдамацком движении 1734 г.)**

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Immigrants from Moldavia (Rusins and Moldavians) called themselves Vlachs (Moldavians) by their state affiliation. They took an active part in social and political life in Ukraine since the time of Bogdan Khmelnytsky.

At the beginning of the Great Northern War, Russia in concert with Saxony waged hostilities on the Polish territory in accordance with the Treaty of Narva on the anti-Swedish alliance (1704) concluded between Rzeczpospolita Polska (Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth) and Russia.

Russia was to withdraw its troops from the Polish territory as well as from the right-bank Ukraine under the Treaty of the Prut, (July 12(23), 1711) and the Treaty of Adrianople (June 13 (24), 1713). On September 23, 1711, Peter I decreed that the Cossacks should leave the Transdnier Ukraine (right-bank Ukraine) and together with their regiments, their Military Government and Administration, with Cossacks' wives, children and their goods and chattels should move to Little Russia and join "the local regiments, at the Cossacks' discretion". Besides, "the inhabitants of all towns, villages and boroughs are to be transferred to Little Russia; the lands must always remain unpopulated and no people must be resettled to the aforesaid lands

by the Poles". The Tsar's Decree was forwarded to Bila Tserkva Colonel Anton Tansky (a native of Moldavia). The Decree was carried into effect. The resettlement had been completed by 1714.

After coming back, the Polish gentry had to attract the population from some other Polish regions (from Galichina, in particular), natives of Moldavia, Old Believers (Lipovane or Philippons [*Lipoveni* – Rom.]) et al. They were promised to be exempt from many of their duties (manual labour and dues) for a period lasting from 15 to 30 years.

The situation gradually became intolerable for "live stock": by the middle of the 18th century slave labour in the Podolia Province in terms of working days exceeded 100 days a year (sometimes 200 days and even more); the situation in Volhynia was even worse. The absence of economic rights was aggravated by religious persecution – the Articles of the Union of Brest were forced on people everywhere. It evoked resistance from the local population.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Haidamak movement started primarily in Volhynia and Podolia to stand up against the order established by the ruling classes. At the same time, there was also a great deal of plunder in the region. Since 1713 Jewish merchants, gentry estates, towns, villages and "shtetls" had been frequently assaulted in Podolia and Brazlav Voivodeships. The term "haidamaks (haidamakas)" was coined in the Universal (decree) sent to the inhabitants of the region in 1717 by Ian Haletsky appointed as a military governor of the Ukrainian Voivodeships.

At first, robbers' gangs that appeared in the right-bank Ukraine at the beginning of the 18th century were called "haidamakas". Only by the first half of that century did people begin using the term in regard to peasant movements, when by-and-by runaways or discontented peasants gathered round the core groups formed by haidamak robbers. For the first time the nature of the Haidamak movement acquired the elements of a class struggle only in 1734.

The Haidamak uprising of 1734 was triggered by the feud in Rzeczpospolita Polska. At the beginning of 1733, August II, Prince-Elector of Saxony, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania passed away. While electing the new king, the Sejm split up into two factions: a bigger one which consisted of Stanislas Leshchinsky's (Leszczynski) supporters and a smaller one led by August III, Prince-Elector of Saxony, August II's son. Russia supported August's candidature (the French king was Leshchinsky's son-in-law), as it did not want strengthening France's role. The Russian troops entered the Polish territory. The majority of the Polish nobility in the south-western region took Leshchinsky's side, they formed confederations in the Volhynian, Podolian, Kievan and Brazlav counties. Moreover, a bigger part of magnates in those

voivodeships supported August III's candidature. A civil war broke between the gentry and rich landowners. Both parties to the conflict involved peasants into the struggle. The gentry incited peasants to start riots in the magnates' estates and their bands attacked the estates. Some of the gentry formed small gangs of peasants, cossacks and homeless gentry who got broke and engaged in plundering disguised as political struggle. Rich landlords used home reserves consisting of cossacks and Vlachs, against the gentry.

At the end of 1733, the Russian Corps under the command of Count Shakhovskoy entered the right-bank region "for the devastation of the territories of Stanislas Leshchinsky's supporters". A considerable part of troops went deeper into Poland. Some detachments consisting mostly of Little Russia's Cossacks stayed in the Volhynian, Podolian, Kievan and Brazlav voivodeships to counter Leshchinsky's supporters. The Russian troops' struggle against the Polish gentry made local population come to a conclusion that upon driving away the gentry the Russian troops would form Cossack regiments that were to become part of Little Russia's Hetmanate. It was rumoured that Russian commanders issued deeds on behalf of Empress Anna Ioannovna enabling deed holders to rob and exterminate noblemen and Jews and to make a vow in loyalty to her. The fact that Russian colonels took under their command the Cossacks from the estates of the Saxon Party supporters helped nail down those guesses.

After the Russian Colonel Polansky had occupied Uman, he sent out circular letters to the heads of militia detachments offering joint action against Leshchinsky's Party. This circular letter was somewhat misconstrued by militiamen and peasants. On receiving it Verlan (Vyrlan), a native of Moldavia, the head of estate Cossacks from Shargorod, Lubomirsky's estate, put his squadron on the alert, declared himself a colonel, called together militiamen from the neighbouring estates and recruited peasants, ladling out military ranks. He divided his militia into small platoons called "tens" (taking into account their coming from different villages); each platoon elected its leader. These "tens" were entered into the Cossack Army registers. Verlan announced that he received a personalized decree from a Russian colonel, allegedly ordering to exterminate people of different origin and creed, such as Poles and Jews; moreover, according to Verlan, after their extermination the region would belong to Russia. Verlan made his regiment swear allegiance to Empress Anna Ioannovna.

Estate Cossacks, inhabitants of Vlachian military settlements, haidamak groups, Zaporozhian Cossacks, peasants, impoverished gentry, church lectors and many others gathered in his camp. Verlan and his cohorts went through the Brazlav and Podoloian counties

exterminating gentry and Jews and making the local population swear allegiance. He occupied Brody and Zhwanets and sent his small military groups towards Kamenets and Lvov.

After the unconditional surrender of Danzig on June, 26 (July 7), 1734 Leshchinsky's cause was lost and he defected to Prussia.

The noblemen of the Ukrainian counties were the first to come to the Russian Headquarters and acknowledge guilt. They consented to August III to be elected and asked the Russian Military Authorities to suppress peasants' unrest. On July 1, the Russian commander-in-chief issued the Manifesto "To All Residents of Rzeczpospolita Polska, Who Recognized the Power of His Majesty King August III", in which the commander promised to take drastic measures against those "regular and irregular Russian volunteer detachments" causing offence to peaceful citizens.

Russian Army detachments were sent to suppress uprisings and catch fugitives.

Those suspected of committing crimes were escorted to Polish courts and sentenced to death or to different kinds of punishment. Punishment was often quite lenient because the gentry wanted to retain their serfs.

The rebellion being suppressed, peasants, in fear of reprisals, joined haidamak gangs. Commanders of Polish forces and landlords persuaded them to join territorial militia, formed several regiments and made them swear allegiance to Rzeczpospolita Polska.

Led by Verlan, instigators of the rebellion and their detachments consisting mostly of Moldavian natives retreated to Moldavia and took away their loot. Disregarding the requests for their extradition, the Moldavian Gospodar (King) returned only part of loot to Brazlavian and Podolian gentry. Other rebels including a lot of peasants escaped to Tatar and Zaporozhian steppes and formed numerous gangs there.

There are some interesting details in the judicial acts of the trials of haidamakas that show the structure of haidamak detachments. The case files of the trial of the insurgents A. Sulyak, G. Vorobets and P. Demianovich contain "The Register of His Honour Stephan Keefa and of His Squadron". Unfortunately, its number of the rebels is incomplete because, according to Verlan's special messenger A. Sulyak, he stopped entering names in the register when the number of the peasants joining the Squadron became too large.

Keywords

Cossack, Bukovina, Sulyak, Moldavia, Verlan, Haidamaks, Rusins, Vlachs, Moldovans.