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The Polish and Jewish People in the Work of Peasant Self-Government in the Right-Bank Ukraine in the Second Half of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries

Udział Polaków i Żydów w pracy organów samorządu wiejskiego na Prawobrzeżnej Ukrainie w drugiej połowie XIX – początku XX wieku

ABSTRACT

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 was the beginning of global reformations that dealt with the administrative and territorial division of the empire. According to the new division, the lowest territorial unit was a rural community (territorial community) in Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia guberniyas, the highest – volost. The control of rural communities was performed by peasant self-government – volost and rural government which were formed and provided by peasants (members of the community). However, excepting community affairs, the legislator charged the peasant self-government to execute a number of urgent functions in the government (fiscal, legal, police, static and educative functions). For that reason, the peasant authorities were degraded to the position of the lowest link in the hierarchy of the government. The peasant self-government was restricted by the

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resolutions and circulars of Ministry of Interior, general-governor, general, governor in peasant affairs and „myrovyi poserednyk”. As a matter of fact, the talent acquisition to the peasant self-government office was implemented with a number of restrictions established by the „Regulation on the peasants withdrawal from serfdom” in 1861.

The specific characteristic of the right-bank Ukraine was the diversity of area, after the Ukrainians the second most populated were the Jewish people, the third – Polish. An impressive part of Polish and Jewish nationalities lived in peasant community so that there was a problem of their participation in the work of peasant self-government. Avoiding putting „chuzhynziv” (people who were not the members of peasant community) in the main positions of rural administration, the restrictions were implemented on the spot. Still, the position of clerk (pisar) was accessible for those wishing to work in volost or rural government. The article deals with the problem of human resourcing and the presence of Polish and Jewish nationalities in the peasant self-government in the South-Western region¹ of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th centuries. The way of rotating workers in the rural administration, their level of education, professional achievements, employment and remuneration terms are emphasized in the article. Moreover, certain cases of working Jewish and Polish as clerks in rural administrations are described.

Key words: peasant self-government, volost, rural community, the right-bank Ukraine, South-Western region, the Polish and Jewish people, myrovyi poserednyk, governor

STRESZCZENIE

Zniesienie pańszczyzny w 1861 r. było początkiem globalnych przemian, dotyczących podziału administracyjnego imperium. Zgodnie z nowym podziałem w województwach kijowskim, podolskim i wołyńskim najniższą jednostką terytorialną była „gmina wiejska” (hromada terytorialna), najwyższą – włość. Zarządzaniem gminami wiejskimi zajmowały się organy samorządu wiejskiego – zarząd włości i wsi, które tworzyli i zapewniali ich działalność chłopci (członkowie hromady). Jednak oprócz spraw hromady, ustawodawca zobowiązał samorząd wiejski do pełnienia szeregu funkcji niezbędnych w zarządzaniu publicznym (skarbowa, prawna, policyjna, statystyczna, oświatowa). Więc, administracje chłopskie zostały faktycznie najniższym ogniwem w hierarchii zarządzania publicznego. Samodzielność samorządu wiejskiego ograniczały uchwały i okólniki Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych, Generał-gubernatora, gubernatora, komisarze prowincjonalni ds. obecności oraz mediatora. Nawet dobór kadr dla instytucji samorządu wiejskiego odbywał się z uwzględnieniem szeregu ograniczeń przewidzianych w „Przepisach o uwolnieniu chłopów od pańszczyzny” z 1861 r.

Cechą szczególną Ukrainy Prawobrzeżnej było zróżnicowanie narodowe regionu, na drugim miejscu po Ukraińcach byli Żydzi, na trzecim Polacy. Znaczna część przedstawicieli narodowości polskiej i żydowskiej żyła w środowisku chłopskim, więc pojawił się problem ich udziału w działalności samorządu wiejskiego. Aby uniemożliwić „obcym” (nie członkom hromady, osobom innej wiary) zajmowanie ważnych stanowisk w administracjach wiejskich, wprowadzano lokalne ograniczenia. Jednak stanowisko pisarza urzędowego pozostawało stosunkowo dostępne dla osób pragnących pracować we włości lub w zarządzie wsi.

¹ South-Western region (South-Western Krai) – in the Russian Empire in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the part of Western region, the common name for three guberniyas (Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia).

Proponowane badanie dotyczy problemu obsady kadrowej i obecności przedstawicieli narodowości polskiej i żydowskiej w samorządach wiejskich w południowo-zachodnim regionie Cesarstwa Rosyjskiego w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w. Scharakteryzowano kolejność rotacji pracowników administracji wiejskich, ich wykształcenie, poziom profesjonalizmu, warunki pracy i płacy. Opiszano niektóre przypadki służby Żydów i Polaków w charakterze pisarzy urzędowych w administracjach wiejskich.

Słowa kluczowe: samorzady wiejskie, gmina, gromada wiejska, społeczność chłopska, prawobrzeżna Ukraina, Kraj Południowo-Zachodni

INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of the „Regulation on the peasants withdrawal from serfdom” in 1861, changes were introduced to the administrative and territorial division which primarily related to peasants. Additionally, the system of government undergone a transformation, the government gave peasants the right to be autonomous in the economic and administrative matters. The formation and upkeep of rural administrative units were put in the hands of the communities so that the government was relieved of supporting them. Meanwhile, the governance was concerned about the possibility of losing control over the village – the main tax resource. In order to prevent potential disobedience of peasants, the legislator approved rather weird construction of „peasant self-government”, principles of which were involved restricting the „self-government”. Due to that the rural communities were not autonomous at the stage of acquisition. The purpose of this article is to analyze the problem of participation of Polish and Jewish nationalities in peasant self-governments in the South-Western region in the second half of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th centuries.

HISTORIOGRAPHY REVIEW

The introduction and functioning of peasant self-government are of interest to the society of pre-revolutionary Russia. In particular, the subject of discussion encompassed regulations concerning the creation of a new administrative division, the introduction of peasant community and volost. K. Aksakov declared against excessive interference of state authority in the election of members of peasant self-government².

² К. Аксаков, *Замечание на новое административное устройство крестьян в России*, Лейпциг 1861, s. 76–77.

The poet and publicist M. Ogarev said about non-independent of peasant self-government³. Such researchers as S. Latyshev and A. Yanovskiy, in their texts published in the „Encyclopedic dictionaries of Brockhaus and Efron” analyzed the legal terms of volost and rural government, as well as the scope of their cooperation with the governance⁴. However, the participation of the Polish and Jewish people hasn't become so far the main subject of the research. After January Uprising in 1863, anti-Polish rhetoric was spread in press which existed during the second half of the 19th century. In particular, „Vestnik of Yugo-Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii” press published articles of chauvinistic content, characterizing negative impact of the Polish on the formation of peasant self-governments⁵.

The Soviet historiography studied the activity of rural administrative units without emphasizing their ethnic composition. A feature of the Soviet researches was the definition of „kulak” formation of peasant self-government. In spite of one-sided negative assessment of peasant establishments, as „the organ of peasants oppression and exploitation”, the Soviet works provide valuable materials of analytical nature. In this vein, scientist S. Bodnarevskiy analyzed the activities of volost establishments, determined the structure of peasant administrations, items of their costs and revenues, wage rates⁶. Researcher D. Poida in his monograph dedicated to peasant struggle for its land in the right-bank Ukraine, analyzed the population of this region. The scholar also studied the Polish presence among various classes which made it possible to notice the Polish transition from nobility to peasantry⁷.

In modern peasant studies, Ukrainian researches have paid considerable amount of attention to the study of peasant self-government. Thus, the object of study of scientist I. Verkhovtseva were the organs of the aforementioned self-government (1861–1917) of European regions

³ Н. Огарев, *Разбор нового крепостного права обнаруженного 19 февраля 1861 года в положениях о крестьянах, вшедших из крепостной зависимости*, Лондон 1861, с. 82–83.

⁴ *Сельское общество*, в: *Энциклопедический словарь*, т. 29, *Сахар – Сем мудрецов*, ред. К.К. Арсеньев, Ф.Ф. Петрушевский, Санкт Петербург 1900, с. 377; С. Латышев, *Волость*, в: *Энциклопедический словарь*, т. 7, *Волатюк – Выговские*, ред. К.К. Арсеньев, Ф.Ф. Петрушевский, Санкт Петербург 1892, с. 93–98.

⁵ *Интересный мировой посредник*, „Вестник Юго-Западной России” 1863, август, с. 202–209; *Первый крестьянский праздник*, „Вестник Юго-Западной России” 1863, Июль, с. 102; *Из Житомира*, „Вестник Юго-Западной России” 1863, Июль, с. 104–108.

⁶ А. Боднаревський, *Волосне управління та становище селян на Україні після реформи 1861 року*, Київ 1961, с. 72–73.

⁷ Д. Пойда, *Крестьянское движение на Правобережной Украине в пореформенный период (1866–1900 гг.)*, Днепропетровск 1960, с. 26.

of the Russian Empire⁸. The researcher analyzed the processes of rotation in peasant administrations and noted the lowest level of education of their workers⁹. Thesis work of historian A. Kasian devoted to volost ruling in the right-bank Ukraine in the second half of the 19th century, touches upon a question of Polish presence in the organs of peasant self-government. However, we consider A. Kasian's statement about „non-Ukrainian” nature of volost ruling on the right-bank to be exaggerated¹⁰. The works of researcher Yu. Zemskyi are devoted to the problem of Polish factor in the right-bank Ukraine¹¹. In one of monographs, the scholar studied the role of Polish declassed nobility in the society of the South-Western region, and pointed to its social and partly cultural assimilation with Ukrainian peasantry¹². A thorough analysis of the situation of declassed nobility was made by French scientist D. Beauvois in his study about the struggle of Polish elite for the influence in the South-Western region in the second half of the 19th century¹³. Russian researcher L. Horizontov described the main stages of struggle between Russian statehood and Polish historical tradition in the 19th century. He touched upon the issue of removing Polish from public service in the Russian Empire¹⁴.

THE DISPLACEMENT OF POLISH FROM PRIVILEGED STATUS, THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION

The socio-political situation in the Russian Empire changed for the worse through for the inhabitants of Polish nationality in the second half of the 19th century. Discrimination policy against the Polish people,

⁸ І. Верховцева, *Між корпоративністю і бюрократизмом: самоврядування селян у Російській імперії (друга половина XIX – початок XX ст.)*, Черкаси 2018, с. 9.

⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 167–177.

¹⁰ А. Касян, *Волосне управління на Правобережній Україні (1861–1917 рр.)*, Черкаси 2017, с. 102.

¹¹ Ю. Земський, *Особливості генези польського націоналізму в Правобережній Україні середини XIX ст.*, „Гуманітарний Журнал” 2009, 3–4; *idem*, *Еволюція польсько-російських взаємин в Правобережній Україні в контексті націоналізації свідомості в Російській імперії середини XIX ст.*, „Наукові Записки Національного Університету. Острозька Академія. Серія Історичні науки” 2011, 17, с. 116–126.

¹² Ю. Земський, *Польська, російська та українська еліти в змаганнях за Правобережну Україну середини XIX століття*, Хмельницький 2011, с. 114.

¹³ Д. Бовуа, *Гордиев узел Российской империи: Власть, шляхта и народ на Правобережной Украине (1793–1914)*, Москва 2011, с. 705, 711, 720, 727.

¹⁴ Л.Е. Горизонтов, *Парадоксы имперской политики: поляки в России и русские в Польше*, Москва 1999, с. 45, 64.

introduced by Nicholas I, continued to manifest itself during the 19th century and was not abolished even during the World War I. Thus, the representatives of Polish nationality were removed from leading duties on the public service, restricted access to higher educational establishments¹⁵. In the second half of the 19th century, the situation of the Polish people in the Empire was complicated by the reaction of the governance to Polish rebellion in 1863 that reflected on the right-bank Ukraine. The rebellion in Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia guberniyas was evident through the formation of armed groups, conflicts with police and military¹⁶. The sympathy of local nobility for rebels was also expressed by means of peaceful actions – women were wearing mourning clothes and set a memorial service for those killed in January rebellion¹⁷. All this led to the appropriate steps of starting the rebellion – reducing the number of the nobles, restrictions on possessing the land, removing from public duties. Thus, in the decree of December 10, 1865, the Polish people were forbidden to buy land in nine western guberniyas, including guberniyas in the South-Western region¹⁸. In the decree of July 4, 1863, it was no longer possible to recognize cases of noble Polish birth¹⁹, so those who did not prove their aristocratic status became taxable (peasants or bourgeois). „Chynshovyky”²⁰ were also enlisted to the peasantry, among which 13,200 were ethnic Polish²¹. They mostly lived on the landlord’s leasehold and did not have the possibility to buy allotment. Peasant communities were unwillingly admitted to „chynshovyky” and due to lack of communal ownership of land in Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia guberniyas, new members of the community were not provided with land²².

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 45.

¹⁶ Державний Архів Хмельницької Облaсті [dalej: ДАХМО], фонд [dalej: f.] 73, орус [dalej: op.] 1, sprava [dalej: spr.] 6, s. 48; Державний Архів Житомирської Облaсті [dalej: ДАЖО], f. 497, op. 1, spr. 8, s. 6.

¹⁷ Державний Архів Вінницької Облaсті [hereinafter: ДАВіО], f. 200, op. 1, spr. 313, s. 7.

¹⁸ *Полное Собрание Законов Российской Империи* [dalej: ПСЗРИ], собрание второе, т. 40, отделение второе, 1865, Санкт Петербург 1867, nr 42759, s. 326–327.

¹⁹ ПСЗРИ, собрание второе, т. 38, отделение первое, 1863, Санкт Петербург 1866, nr 39825, s. 757.

²⁰ „Chynshovyky” – is a category of rural population (personally free) that paid money tax for the use of state land or private lander – „chynsh”. See in detail in: А. Гурбик, *Чиншові селяни*, w: *Енциклопедія історії України*, т. 10, Т–Я, red. В.А. Смолій et al., Київ 2013, s. 553.

²¹ In 1870s the total number of „chynshovyky” in the right-bank Ukraine was 266984 people. See in detail in: Д. Бовуа *op. cit.*, s. 727. There were 132511 people of Catholics and 13200 of ethnic Polish among „chynshovyky”. See in detail in: Д. Пойда, *op. cit.*, s. 26.

²² ДАЖО, f. 498, op. 1, spr. 71, s. 172.

From the mid-1860s to the beginning of the 20th century the number of the Polish in peasantry grew almost twice. So, in 1860s–70s there were 92,026 ethnic Polish among all peasants (including „chynshovyky”), and there were 156,086 people in the beginning of the 20th century. The total number of Polish in Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia guberniyas as well as their part in peasantry and administrative structures are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Polish population and its representation in peasantry and administrative structures in the right-bank Ukraine in the beginning of the 20th century²³.

	Volhynia guberniya		Podolia guberniya		Kyiv guberniya		Total	
	Number of people	%	Number of people	%	Number of people	%	Number of people	%
Residents of Polish nationality	184,161	6,16%	69,156	2,27 %	68,791	1,93%	322,108	4.5% of all population of the region
Polish of peasantry	102,540	55,68%	31,327	45,3%	22,219	32,3%	156,086	48,46% of peasants of Polish nationality
Workers of admin.	346	0,18%	205	0,30%	173	0,25%	724	0,22% of peasants of Polish nationality

So, in the second half of the 19th century, the Polish people faced the problem of preserving noble privileges in the South-Western region. Unwillingness to go down social ladder brought Polish to the presence of „free professions” like advocacy, medicine, pharmacy and merchants²⁴. But, not all declassed nobility had the opportunity to get proper education and start their own business, so for most military service seemed to be a good option²⁵. Some representatives of Polish nationality worked in the administrative structures, mainly office workers. Thus, the establishments of peasant self-government, volost governance and peasant government became one of the options to obtain the means of subsistence for the intelligent category of Polish population.

²³ The table is made by researchers calculating В. Палієнко, *Місця історичного розселення польської людності в кінці ХІХ – початок ХХ ст.*, Київ 1998, s. 6–22; Д. Пойда, *op. cit.*, s. 25–26; Д. Бовуа, *op. cit.*, s. 652.

²⁴ Л.Е. Горизонтов, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 45.

THE STRUCTURE OF PEASANT SELF-GOVERNMENT

Peasant self-government was introduced by the „Regulation on the peasants withdrawal from serfdom” in 1861 and extended to all categories of peasants (former serfs, state peasants). According to the administrative division, the lowest territorial unit was rural community²⁶ which was the part of the highest administrative unit – volost²⁷. That’s why, peasant self-government took place on two levels – of a volost and of a rural community. A volost government was carried out by three levels of authority: volost assembly, court and government. The volost governance was the executive branch of peasant self-government in volost, which was formed of an elder (starshina), his assistant, tax collector and all chiefs of villages (village starost)²⁸. All candidates mentioned above were elected through volost peasants who owned land, farm, and permanently lived within volost, not younger than 25 years old, of no criminal background. The election of candidates took place once every three years, except for a tax collector (annually). Re-election of servants was not prohibited on the assumption of their agreement. The candidate could resign from the position offered by the community only in three cases: 1. if he was over 60 years old; 2. if he had served three-year term; 3. if he was poor health²⁹. Hired workers, such as keepers, public watchers (churchwarden, head of grain warehouse, etc.), clerks were appointed by the chiefs of administrations³⁰.

The rural community was managed by rural gathering and rural government which consisted of a starost, a tax collector and workers: a village clerk, keepers and public watchers of public structures³¹. Volost government was headed by a volost elder, the rural one was headed by a starost. These candidates were approved by state servants and such a leader for the peasant administration in the South-Western region

²⁶ „Rural community” is an administrative and economic union, consisted of one or more villages, small villages. See in detail in: Федорова Н., *Сельское общество*, в: *Петр Аркадьевич Столыпин: Энциклопедия*, ред. В.В. Шелохаев, Москва 2011, s. 399–403.

²⁷ Volost is an administrative and territorial unit that included rural communities, numbered from 300 to 2000 people. However, in the late 19th century, the number of inhabitants in one volost increased to 19000 people. See in detail in: Л. Беловинский, *Иллюстрированный энциклопедический историко-бытовой словарь русского народа*, Москва 2007, s. 102.

²⁸ *ПСЗРИ*, собрание второе, т. 36, отделение первое, 1861, Санкт Петербург 1863, nr 36657, s. 154 (Стаття 87).

²⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 158.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, s. 147.

was a „myrovyy poserednyk”³². The main responsibilities of „myrovyy poserednyk” were: to control over introduction and activities of peasant self-government, to remove or approve servants elected to the peasant government, to give permission to run volost meetings, to considerate all complaints against peasant servants. So, a peasant self-government was formed through elections of rural community members but was under the control of state government.

THE ROLE OF VOLOST CLERK (PISAR) IN THE STRUCTURE OF PEASANT SELF-GOVERNMENT

A clerk was important figure in peasant self-government. He dealt with paperwork of the structure: he registered the orders of volost elders, verdicts of volost gatherings and volost court, made lists of family, reserve and retired military ranks, warriors, military cavalry. He also recorded tax collection in his tax notebook, income and expenditure books³³. Also, volost structures participated in supporting volost educational and medical institutions and kept relevant documents, which were designed by the clerk³⁴. It was possible to obtain sales and purchase agreements, obtain a property in volost government, appropriate books were kept with the recording of witnessed documents³⁵. N. Astyrev aptly pointed out that, in fact, a clerk conducted all cases directly related to six ministries: the ministry of internal affairs, finance, military, justice, education and state property³⁶. The clerk was personally responsible for the authenticity of paperwork of rural structures and in case of violation, he was punished with fine, dismissal or arrest³⁷. The clerk, as an employee, reported to an elder or starost, but in fact he became the head of those structures where the elected servants were illiterate. The illiteracy of heads of peasant administrations was the problem of imperial scale, so there was 41%

³² „Myrovyy poserednyk” – government man in the Russian Empire who took charge of peasant governance. See in detail in: А.Я., *Мировые посредники*, в: *Энциклопедический словарь*, т. 19, Мекенен – Мифу-Баня, ред. К.К. Арсеньев, Ф.Ф. Петрушевский, Санкт Петербург 1896, s. 424.

³³ *ПСЗРИ*, т. 36, nr 36657, s. 155.

³⁴ ДАХМО, f. 75, op. 1, spr. 24, s. 35.

³⁵ ДАХМО, f. 72, op. 1, spr. 62, s. 24.

³⁶ Н. Астырев, *В волостных писарях. Очерки крестьянского самоуправления*, Москва 1886.

³⁷ Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України м. Київ [dalej: ЦДІАК], f. 442, op. 186, spr. 271, s. 16.

of illiterate volost foremen and 81% of illiterate rural heads in 1880³⁸. Instead of signature rural servants put a seal with applicable prints „volost elder”, „rural starost”, „volost court”³⁹. However, the possession of seals did not guarantee the power in the hands of rural leaders. We meet many cases became with the participation of volost clerks in various scams, where „wise” servants skillfully forged for their own gain. For instance, in 1905, Tereshchenko, a clerk of Mliiv volost of Cherkasy uyezd of Kiyv guberniya, wrote down the decision contrary to the volost court decision and gave it to the judges for the confirmation with the seal. As the judges could not read, the mistake became known only when it was time to enforce the ordinance⁴⁰. In 1887 the case of Romanovskiy, volost clerk of Skvirskiy division L. Susky was given publicity. Taking advantage of illiteracy of tax collectors, he forged reports, and having found any shortcomings, he forced the collectors to cover from their own funds⁴¹.

Nevertheless, clerk’s work in peasant administrations was not paying a big fortune for an educated and honest person. In the late 19th century, a clerk at a volost governance received 290 rubles per year, an assistant of volost clerk received 30 rubles per, a peasant clerk received 42 rubles per year⁴². The amount of salaries increased and in 1912–1913 clerks received 300 to 600 rubles per year⁴³. However, the salary of a clerk in comparison with the employees of guberniya governments (such as an accountant or secretary received 750 rubles per year in the end of the 19th century⁴⁴) was lower, moreover, the amount of work and responsibility increased every year.

THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH TENURE IN THE POSITION OF A CLERK (PISAR)

According to the „General regulation” of 1861, a clerk was assigned by the chiefs of peasant administrations themselves⁴⁵. However, „myrovyy poserednyky” very often intervened and recommended their own

³⁸ I. Верховцева, *op. cit.*, s. 167.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 177.

⁴⁰ ЦДІАК, f. 442, op. 704, spr. 199, s. 2.

⁴¹ ЦДІАК, f. 442, op. 617, spr. 170, s. 1–7.

⁴² Based on the data from the journal of Kyiv guberniya in peasant affairs. See in detail in: ЦДІАК, f. 442, op. 701, spr. 383, s. 18–20.

⁴³ С. Боднаревський, *op. cit.*, s. 72.

⁴⁴ С. Мещеряков, *Уровень материального положения чиновников ключевых институтов управления Оренбургского края во второй половине XIX – начале XX в.*, „Известия Самарского Научного Центра Российской Академии Наук” 2014, 16, 3, 2, s. 404.

⁴⁵ ПСЗРИ, t. 36, nr 36657, s. 158.

candidates. In fact, the direct supervisor of the volost was the „myrovyy poserednyky”. He took an oath of faithful service from the volost head, had the authority to punish or remove him from office, or dismiss any employee of the peasant administration⁴⁶. Also a „myrovyy poserednyky” was overseeing the appointment of clerks. The invasion in the work of peasant self-government was not condemned by either the presence of guberniya or the governors of the region, as they were interested in preventing „unreliable” persons from entering peasant structures. The Jewish people were the most politically „unreliable” in the South-Western region. Mostly literate residents of towns and sometimes villages, the Jewish helped peasants in writing the documents they needed. For example, in 1895 Faim Rovinskyi, a teacher of Jewish children in Pavolochki of Skvurkyi uyezd, wrote appeals, letters to the government structures and sometimes complaints against volost and peasant servants for locals of the surrounding villages⁴⁷. A Jew could be hired as a clerk in case of lack of educated candidates among members of peasant community. Thus, in 1901, Jew Khaim Kapitanskyi was a clerk in Mankovskyy volost governance of Uman district of Kyiv guberniya. Volost elder explained that Khaim was assigned temporarily, as volost documentation urgently needed to be put in order because they could not find a candidate for the position of clerk for a long time. By the decision of Kyiv gubernskyy in peasant affairs, Khaim was dismissed from the position of a clerk. It is interesting that in this case volost peasants complained about the service of a Jew in Mankovskyy volost governance, suspecting dishonesty in running fees. The investigation showed that the Jewish clerk made a mistake only in the calculation of land taxation which led to the reduction in the amount of peasant tax. Servants who assumed funds, were tax collectors elected from peasants⁴⁸.

There was no official ban on Jews holding positions in peasant self-government. But, Jews in the service of volost government caused distrust not only among the peasantry. Provincial government was wary of non-Christians serving as clerks, that’s why it made allowances in gaps in law. In the „Regulation on the peasants withdrawal from serfdom” it was stated that representatives of non-peasant estates, residents of other communities were allowed to work as clerks and other hired positions on the

⁴⁶ К. Мацузато, *Из комиссаров антиполонизма в просветители деревни: мировые посредники на Правобережной Украине (1861–1917 гг.)*, „Український Гуманітарний Огляд” 2003, 9, s. 75.

⁴⁷ ЦДІАК, f. 442, op. 615, spr. 194, s. 2.

⁴⁸ ЦДІАК, f. 442, op. 700, spr. 56, s. 2.

assumption of proper reputation⁴⁹. Therefore, by separate decrees peasant governmental authorities, and sometimes governors, restricted the access of „undesirable” persons to peasant self-government. In particular, in Podolia guberniia, by personal recommendation of the governor, Jews and even converts to Christianity were not allowed to become clerks⁵⁰. In Kyiv and Volhynia guberniyas, the assignment of clerks took place only with the approval of „myrovyyi poserednyk” in the end of 19th century.

SERVICE OF THE POLISH PEOPLE IN PEASANT ADMINISTRATIONS

Representatives of another nationality, the Polish, applied for the place of volost clerk. Before the reform in 1861, the Polish were observed as of peasant servants in the right-bank Ukraine. According to the revision in 1839, it is known that in Kyiv and Podolia guberniyas most of uyezd and volost authorities who ruled the peasants were Polish⁵¹. After reforming the peasant government, according to rather chauvinistic publication „Vistnik of South-Western and Western Russia”, the work of peasant self-government in the right-bank Ukraine was usurped by the Polish⁵². However, inspection conducted in 1898 for the presence of Polish and Catholic employees in volost government in Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia guberniyas showed a small percentage of them. There were 30 volost clerks in Kyiv guberniia (Polish by nationality, but of Orthodox faith), there were 9 clerks of Polish ethnicity in Podolia, who got Orthodoxy, but their wives were Catholic and there were no clerks of Polish origin in Volynia, but 18 of them were married to Polish Catholics⁵³. Persons who were threatened with losing their jobs due to ethnic or religious „unreliability” appealed to governor general not to dismiss them, justifying their position in every possible way. The former volost clerk of Radomyshl uyezd, G. Shuliavskyyi of Catholic faith asked not to dismiss him from the post of commissioner secretary, as it was his only source of income. Petitioner pointed to his previous work as a clerk in volost government and begged to consider his large family – a wife and five children who were of Orthodox faith⁵⁴. Later, V. Krezhanivskyyi, volost clerk from the same uyezd, who was married to a Polish woman, appealed to the

⁴⁹ ПСЗРИ, т. 36, nr 36657, s. 158.

⁵⁰ ЦДІАК, ф. 442, оп. 693, spr. 368, s. 36.

⁵¹ Л.Е. Горизонтов, *op. cit.*, s. 45.

⁵² А. Касян, *op. cit.*, s. 101.

⁵³ ЦДІАК, ф. 442, оп. 697, spr. 306, s. 6–9.

⁵⁴ ЦДІАК, ф. 442, оп. 694, spr. 34, s. 27.

governor general's office to allow him to continue his service. The public servant exonerated himself by saying that he did not live with his wife and did not know anything about her residence⁵⁵. Mostly, appeals to the governor general did not turned out successful for those who were fired.

So, the number of volost clerks with Polish roots or family ties with Polish women in 1898 was not significant, which is 57 people in 562 volost in South-Western region⁵⁶, which was about 10% and those who were later dismissed. Restrictions of Polish people from service of public posts led to their removal from work in peasant self-government.

CONCLUSIONS

Peasant self-government formed after the introduction of the „Regulation on the peasants withdrawal from serfdom” in 1861 became the lowest link in the hierarchy of governance. Representatives elected from rural communities were assigned to the peasant administrations. However, the law did not prohibit to hire people from other communities or classes. Jewish and Polish workers were sometimes hired to serve in volost and rural authority. Jewish service was not approved by the peasant community, so cases of hiring the Jewish people to volost government were rather an exception. Recruitment of the Polish to the posts of volost clerks is more common and there are some objective reasons: 1) Polish people took the third place in population after Ukrainians and the Jewish on the territory of South-Western region; 2) a significant number of declassed nobles who descended the social ladder were literate; 3) level of literacy among peasants in guberniyas of the right-bank Ukraine was quite low in the second half of the 19th century, ranging from 15 to 20 percentage⁵⁷. However, the number of volost clerks of Polish origin was less than 10% at the end of the 19th century. So, there is no sense to speak about the significant influence of the Polish factor on the work of peasant self-government. Undoubtedly, the low proportion of Polish and Jewish volost and rural structures was a result of imperial policy of removing them from public administration. Not least important were unsatisfied conditions of work related with increasing workload and scanty earnest.

⁵⁵ ЦДІАК, ф. 442, оп. 697, spr. 306, s. 12.

⁵⁶ І. Верховцева, *op. cit.*, s. 313–315.

⁵⁷ О. Крижанівська, *Вплив реформи 1861 р. на освіту селян України (друга половина XIX – початок XX ст.)*, в: *Проблеми історії України XIX – початку XX ст. Збірник наукових праць*, т. 28, ред. О.П. Реєнт et al., Київ 2018, s. 239.

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