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PEREYASLAV RADA: BETRAYAL OR REUNIFICATION WITH RUSSIA

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The Pereyaslav Rada of 1654 still causes a lively discourse in society at all levels. Representatives of the Ukrainian nationalist movement accuse Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi of betraying the Ukrainian movement and thereby enslaving the Ukrainian state of the Cossack period. Representatives of the so-called «Russian world» use the Pereyaslav Rada in their narratives to demonstrate that Ukraine belongs to Russia. The outstanding Ukrainian historian Vyacheslav Lypynsky in his monograph «Ukraine at the Turning Point, 1657-1659. Notes on the History of Ukrainian State Building in the 17th Century» speaking about the Pereyaslav Treaty states that it is necessary to distinguish historical fact from the myths that subsequently appeared around it [3]. In this report, we will try to historically and objectively answer the question: «What is the place of the Pereyaslav Rada in the history of the formation of Ukrainian statehood?».

Before moving on to the Pereyaslav Treaty itself, we consider it necessary to examine the historical situation of the time in order to clarify the preconditions of this agreement, because as Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky notes: «Pereyaslav was only one of the episodes, though obviously important, in the

diplomatic game of the great Hetman and did not differ fundamentally from other, earlier and later, Cossack treaties with Poland, Turkey, or even Sweden» [5, p. 323]. One of the parties to the Pereyaslav Treaty was the Cossack Hetmanate, which emerged in the wake of the biggest Cossack uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [6, p. 105]. Initially, the Cossack Hetmanate, was able to take control of the lands of the Naddniprianshchyna, Transnistria, Sivershchyna and Zaporizhzhia [2, p. 15-21].

And here we need to turn to the maps of that time to understand the position of the new state, which was surrounded by four stronger opponents, namely: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Grand Duchy of Moscow (Muscovy), the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, of course, was an enemy of the Cossack Hetmanate, so there could be no discussions on mutual aid with them. Consequently, the first ally in the Hetmanate's struggle for the release of the Polish yoke was the Crimean Khanate, with whom Bohdan Khmelnytskyi won his first significant victory [1, p. 380]. A series of successful victories by the alliance of the Cossack Hetmanate and the Crimean Khanate forced the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to make concessions, resulting in the Treaty of Zboriv (1649), which granted a number of privileges and freedoms to Ukrainian peasants and Cossacks. However, the peace was short-lived, as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not intend to grant independence to the Ukrainian territories, so the war continued with even greater force, resulting in the signing of the Treaty of Bila Tserkva (1651), which was already more favourable to the Polish nobility than to Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, whose power was limited to the Kyiv province.

The unsuccessful military campaigns, as well as the unreliability of the allies, the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate, prompted the search for other allies, among which only the Grand Duchy of Moscow remained. Let us look at Pereyaslav Rada`s historiography. The fact is that the original documents of the text of the Pereyaslav Treaties have not been preserved (some scholars suggest that official documents never existed at all), and various copies and translations suggest that the treaty was falsified.

Why is it so profitable to mythologize (falsify) the Pereyaslav Rada? Based on the article by Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky «Pereyaslav: History and Myth», we will make an assumption about the importance of the Pereyaslav Rada for the Grand Duchy of Moscow of that time, because: «Poland`s losses have turned into Russian gains. Before the Cossack Revolution, Poland-Lithuania had a military advantage over Muscovy. ... A fundamental change in the balance of power occurred when Hetman Khmelnytskyi brought

Ukraine «under the high hand» of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, the second ruler of the Romanov dynasty. It is true that for decades, Moscow`s control over Ukraine remained rather weak and that it was exercised only in the eastern half of the country, on the Left Bank. However, it provided the Tsarist state with a base for further expansion towards the Black Sea, the Balkans and Central Europe. Thus, Pereyaslav was a decisive stage in the ascent of the enclosed duchy to the level of a great European power. This also applies to the internal transformation of the Semi-Asian Muscovy into the modern Russian Empire. Ukraine has become Russia`s first «window on Europe», where Ukrainian cultural influences have helped pave the way for Peter the Great`s modernization reforms» [4, p. 119].

However, the Pereyaslav Treaty did not complete the search for allies who could help the Cossack Hetmanate to resolve his state-building interests. According to Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky, the Grand Duchy of Moscow did not meet the needs of the Cossack state: «Soon after Pereyaslav, disagreements and disappointments appeared in the relations between the Zaporizhian Army and its nominal Moscow ruler. In response, Khmelnytskyi took a new course in foreign policy. Avoiding a hasty break with the tsar, he planned to create an alliance between Ukraine and a bloc of Protestant states that included Sweden, Brandenburg-Prussia, Transylvania, and a Calvinist party in Lithuania that opposed a union with Poland. ... The premature death of the great Hetman in 1657 prevented this bold plan from being implemented. Nevertheless, the alliance of Khmelnytskyi with King Charles X Gustav of Sweden has become a precedent for the alliance of Hetman Ivan Mazepa with Charles XII against Peter the Great in 1708» [4, p. 121]. In our opinion, the Pereyaslav Treaty does not differ significantly from other agreements of the Cossack period of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, because it did not end the search for allies of the Cossack Hetmanate. We agree with Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky that: «This myth arose in later times, on the ruins of the Ukrainian Cossack State. It retroactively gave a new meaning to the Pereyaslav Treaty of 1654 – a meaning that Khmelnytskyi and his contemporaries did not give or foresee to this treaty» [4, p. 122].

Thus, in historiography, there are different opinions about the Pereyaslav Rada. Some accuse Bohdan Khmelnytskyi of beginning the process of enslavement of Ukrainian lands by the Grand Duchy of Moscow and later by the Russian Empire; others praise him for reuniting Ukraine with Russia. But the essence of this treaty is much simpler. Bohdan Khmelnytskyi did not consider the Pereyaslav Rada to be anything but military aid to defeat his enemy, the Polish nobility. At the same time, thanks to this treaty, the Grand Duchy of Moscow expanded its territories closer to the Black Sea and resolved

the issue of the power of its eternal enemy, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Subsequent interpretations of this agreement by the Russian side were aimed primarily at reinforcing in the minds of the masses that the Cossack Hetmanate, was the ancestral land of the Russian Empire. And the resentment of Ukrainian leaders for the death of the Ukrainian state was extrapolated to Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, not to the Grand Duchy of Moscow (Russian Empire), which was slowly erasing any ideas of an independent Ukraine.

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