

SUMMARY

Patriotism, Sacrifice, Unity. The 1863 Society in the January Uprising Documents

The ideology of the 1863 January Uprising has not been the object of separate research. It has usually been analysed together with the history of the Uprising, i.e. its origin, course, events and their influence on the situation and the outcome. The ideology was an important factor responsible for the attitudes, opinions, decisions taken by the leaders and the participants as well as the opponents. This aspect of the fight for independence in 1863 requires further detailed analysis and reflection. The thoughts on the ideas of the Uprising can be of use in the search for the factors determining history, attitudes, opinions, the actions of the society and its particular groups, ideological environments, the social and political elite in times of upheaval, which often result in important, multifaceted changes in different spheres of activity.

The terms “patriotism, sacrifice, unity” contained in the title of this dissertation refer to the system of political values, which conspiracy and uprising elites wanted to create in the society. The people who formed this elite held different posts in particular conspiracy societies and in civilian and military administration of the insurrectionary state. The creators, the promoters and the leaders of social projects also belonged to this circle. The system of political values was to be the foundation for the community based on the need for free, independent state, resistant to destructive, external forces, such as rival social programmes imposed and offered by different centres of power: a) the administration of the Kingdom of Poland seen as part of the Russian rule, b) the administration of the other partitioning powers, Prussia and Austria and their political proposals, c) Polish ideological environments, called loyalists and legalists, which rejected military fight as a method of regaining independence and preferred various forms of compromise with the partitioning powers, which would allow to preserve identity and cultural autonomy, assert the right to use Polish language and ensure civilisational development and technological progress.

This book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the problem of search for political identity by secret societies and is based on the publications in the papers which were not censored. The articles were published in 1861–1862, before the Uprising started. The reflections in this chapter are to introduce the main trends in the discussion on the aims and political actions, social problems and the stance towards *branka*, the conscription into the Imperial Russian Army.

The second chapter shows the idea of the society which can be seen in the Uprising documents and the role it was supposed to play during the fight. The chapter starts with

the thoughts on the social representativeness of the conspiracy and insurrectionary authorities. It also explores the following issues: a) the idea of the future state, b) administering conspiracy and insurrectionary movement, c) taxes and other financial supplies, d) military duties, e) social support for the uprising, f) restrictions, prohibitions and sanctions in the formation of social attitudes, g) pluralism, a diversity of attitudes and opinions. Political opponents often denied secret societies and insurrectionary authorities the claim to represent the whole society. They were shown as usurpers of the power and called “political criminals”. A form of a democratic law state, which has existed in Polish society since the Small Constitution of 1992, confirmed by the Constitution of 1997, poses a question to what extent secret societies and insurrectionary state represented society, its needs and views. The answer to this question stems from the last thirty years of Polish statehood.

The third chapter presents the ideas of particular social groups which can be seen in the documents of Central National Committee, Temporary Polish National Government and National Government.

The final chapter is dedicated to the selected social problems, in particular the rights and duties of the citizens, which were discussed in the press published during the Uprising.

The January Uprising was an important social experience. Its character was multifaceted and was the consequence of: a) a big social movement, which manifested itself in the discussion about freedom and supported many initiatives to regain it, such as forming secret societies and administrative institutions of the secret state, b) a military movement, whose armed forces attacked Russian army, c) direct terror, aimed at particularly hated Russian and Polish officials of the Kingdom of Poland and people considered traitors, d) diplomatic activities undertaken by the insurrectionary authorities, supported by societies, mainly those in exile.

This book attempts to answer the question concerning the idea – the vision of the society in the mentality of the authorities of secret societies and the 1863 Uprising. The analysed documents and press articles indicate many factors which influenced this picture. The first was the need to fulfil the aims stated in the declarations: regaining independence and modernising social relations. Both problems were complex and demanded suitable logistic preparations. When the uprising started, an appeal was made to support and take part in the movement, to take over important strategic points, to admit peasants to insurgent forces. As the first days of the uprising showed, it was a major misconception. There were no victories which would allow to conquer a particular territory and proclaim a state there. The fighting continued and led to a conclusion that further military actions, even at a smaller scale, would produce desired results. The insurgent governments received international support from different social circles. The events on Polish soil, especially in the Kingdom of Poland, were of considerable interest to European public. The insurgence required a specified organisation of the secret state, which was to mobilise the society and ensure that the fight would continue. What was expected from the society, was stated in the government and insurrectionary laws. The fate of the uprising depended on society’s attitude. Requirements towards society were laid down in the documents prepared by the secret societies and insurgent governments. They were to become the main factor determining the results of the military and administrative activities. Patriotism, understood not only as a love for the country, but as acceptance of political vision, which saw military fight as the only way to regain independence, was considered a particularly desirable quality. Different views and actions could lead to the exclusion from national community.

Patriotism had a specific political colour. In the narrative of conspiracy and insurgent elite, it could not be connected with the stance loyal to the partitioning powers and with legally implemented political reforms. Its formula was dependent on its connection with a specific ideology. It was subject to the awareness of the addressees it was directed at. Such was the definition of patriotism, formulated by priest K. Mikoszewski. In his opinion, patriotism was an agreement to accept social changes, a resignation from nobility privileges, a cooperation with other social groups, such as peasants.

The ideology and the programme documents of the uprising used a notion of a nation. It referred to the common history from the times of the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth, which shared the past, culture and the memory of a state within the borders of 1772. The foundation for the reborn state was to be tolerance towards national differences, language and religion. In this context the nation was the same as the state. The projected state was to be based on the tripartite division of powers. The laws were to be passed by representative institutions, chosen in elections. The executive power (the administration) was to serve the society. The education system of the new state was to be developed enough to provide all social groups with formal learning, enabling peasants' sons to pursue careers. The state was to be founded on the respect for property rights, the costs of administration and army were to be low. The military units were not supposed to be enlarged and the state's function was to protect its citizens. There were no plans for foreign expansion, which usually requires a large army.

The insurgent and conspiracy elites considered themselves representatives of the whole society, convinced that their mission was to fulfil the needs of the nation. They searched for arguments which would confirm their representativeness. One of the most common was the belief that members of different social groups belonged to insurrectionary institutions. The elites planned projects, developed programmes, administered various issues connected with the insurgent movement and military actions. The society was seen as a specific factor which enabled putting such ideas into practice.

The January Uprising started on the initiative of the Reds, representing a democratic movement. During the dictatorship of M. Langiewicz, the liberal – conservative Whites joined the insurgent forces. From the beginning of March 1863, a unique alliance of associations representing different ideologies co-operated to regain an independent state. Only loyalist and legalist did not enter into the association. Therefore, the ideology of the insurgent state is the result of a symbiosis of different ideas and ideologies: democratic, liberal and conservative.

The insurgent ideologists showed the necessity to fulfil numerous duties by the society, which was expected to supply people for the insurgent armies and administration and funds to arm the soldiers and the troops. Support for military and civil actions was needed, as well as mass solidarity among all social groups. It was a great responsibility and the situation of the insurgents had influence on the problem of civil rights. The stance of the authorities towards the society was formed on the ideology of duty. During the war, discussion on civil rights often seemed an unwanted topic. Civil responsibilities were to ensure that the idea of independence would be put into social practice. The society at war needed warriors, who would sacrifice themselves for freedom and offered their lives on the altar of the homeland. This theory of society's responsibilities appealed to emotions as arguments based on rationale did not always produce expected results. Although emotional motivations were especially intensive when ultra-red lawyers and the September Government (so-called

Chmieleńszczycy) were in power, they could also be seen when A. Giller, K. Majewski and R. Traugutt were the leaders. As all insurgent governments used emotional arguments, it must have been an important factor forming political views and stances. Defeats in battle led to increasing demands for the society, which might have resulted from the belief that people did not make expected efforts to support military actions. It was another consequence of how the insurgent authorities imagined the society. The assessment of current social and military situation resulted in re-evaluating the roles particular groups played in the society. R. Traugutt's government decided that, given the lack of people and money from the gentry, peasants should play a major role. Another factor, which had influence on the perception of the society, was the rivalry between the conspiracy and insurrectionary programme and other political projects. Some decisions about social issues resulted from such motivation. The uprising authorities wanted to create an ideal society. In this Utopian vision, difficult to develop in reality, particular members of the society were supposed to be guided by patriotic reasons, obey the orders, show obedience to those taking decisions, show understanding towards other social groups, fight together with them and care about the common good.

During the uprising, different forms of self-organisation of the society, such as associations, and the demonstration of identity, such as papers, were treated with reluctance. Attempts were made to limit such activities. The idea of equality, one of the most important elements of insurgent state thought, made the formation of civil society possible. Its distinguishing feature was subjectivity, which enabled citizens to express their opinions freely, take stances and make political choices. The reluctance to enlarge civil liberties was caused by negative Polish political experiences. The main one was the loss of independence in 1795, seen as the result of the excessive subjectivity of Polish society. The experience of the *liberum veto* state impeded liberal ideology which emphasised the autonomy of an individual. It was believed that only a society which was obedient, disciplined and subordinated to a centralised structure would be able to regain independence. Restrictions on discussions about civil liberties, forms and limits of personal freedom, free speech and press were considered a remedy to foreseen anarchy, which could be the consequence of liberal ideas. The idea of equality was to alleviate social differences and inspire the fight for freedom. The autonomy of an individual was valued if it served this fight.

The insurrectionary documents considered punishment one of the most important methods of forming civilian stances. Courts inflicting punishment were to condemn unpatriotic behaviours and eliminate those who did not obey the political rules imposed by the authorities. Punishment was considered an important education tool, which enabled the formation of the required attitudes in societies. Such ideas alluded to the practices of the revolutionary Jacobin state. It needs to be emphasised that this factor played a key role in forming social attitudes in other state systems. Restrictions, penalties and executions of sentences caused different reactions and aroused contrasting social emotions.

When the policy of subsequent insurgent governments is analysed, several features should be indicated. The first, on which the whole structure was founded, was the idea of equality. This rule was to be the basis for the formation of the society of equal opportunities, regardless of varied social groups which formed it. These groups were expected to respect each other, work together and establish friendly relations. More was expected of richer and more historically experienced groups, such as gentry, believed to have better economic and intellectual potential than the others, which was connected with historical conditions.

Other social groups, especially peasants, needed numerous measures that would allow them to reach a higher level in development and education seen as the first major step to the formation of modern society.

The ideology of the uprising, conveyed in the legal papers issued by the government, was one of the most important components of Polish state thought. Democratic ideology played a dominant and organisational role in it. It was based on the idea of equality before the law, mutual respect between social groups and their cooperation, the idea of the common good, restrictions on individuals and the idea of a republican state. The reinstatement of the subjectivity of the society was to occur after the fight was finished. The reborn and rebuilt state was to be based on the idea of parliamentarianism, sovereignty of the people and representativeness. The time of uprising required a centralised state and a society organised accordingly. The society was expected to make sacrifices and show generosity. Liberal values included respect for property. It could be seen in the idea of compensation for the losses suffered by the gentry, which were to be recouped by the state treasury. The gentry was to retain its position in the society. Such approach was connected with conservative values and indicated that, in spite of the equality before the law, different social groups of various status would form the society. The ideology of insurgent state was therefore a conglomerate of different systems of values.

The ongoing fight was a factor which created forms of communication between society and the authorities of secret associations and the uprising. The commanders wanted to eliminate activities that had not been planned or agreed on with them, as they were considered as a serious threat to the intended aims. A rule was applied that during the fight the autonomy of the society had to be precisely directed. The commanders realised that the society was under pressure from the Russian army and administration. It was expected to make decisions guided by patriotism. Such assumptions did not include various social fears caused by many factors to a smaller or greater extent. The system of control and punishment was not always an effective tool for forming the desired stances. The insurgent state had well-developed structures of local and central administration. The effectiveness of information between them was varied. Continuing the fight required a society integrated around the objectives, loyal in achieving them, respecting the dignity of an individual and of particular social groups. The elites were convinced that unity, integrity and unanimity are necessary conditions for the efficiency in such difficult circumstances.

In the events of 1863–1864 one can see the examples of heroic deeds and morally doubtful stances, projects, which were well-developed and executed, ideas and programmes, which were Utopian and could not be applied in society. The system of restrictions and penalties, existing in law and activities of the insurgent authorities, aroused many emotions and controversies. Many social environments were involved in the uprising and the reflections about this experience returned in various forms of cultural work and inspired social programmes. The January Uprising, like many turning points in history, was judged both positively and negatively. Its unambiguous interpretation does not seem possible.

The uprising left a deep mark on Polish social thought. The main aim of it was to regain independence. The idea of the society of people who were equal, who achieved aims set by the authorities, who were able to submit to the ideals among which patriotism was the dominant and ordering factor, became a significant contribution to various trends of Polish political thought. The insurgent state was to be an intermediate stage on the way

to a democratic and liberal state, which would be founded on the rule of law, the idea of equality, the tripartition of power, the existence of representative institutions, which would ensure the sovereignty of the society in drawing up constitutional rules. The education system would serve all social groups, ensuring tolerance towards different nationalities, languages, religions and safeguarding respect for property. Such ideas were to empower the society and render it an important partner of the authority.

Translated by Bożena Lesiuk