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**Albert Borowiak, *Powstanie kozackie 1638*
[‘The Cossack insurrection, 1638’], Zabrze, 2010,
Wydawnictwo Inforteditions; 176 pp.**

2010 saw the appearance of many studies dealing, broadly speaking, with the history of Poland in 16th to 18th centuries¹; more specifically, a number of books on the Cossacks came along.² This pour-out of studies ought to be regarded in most positive terms, deeming it enjoyable – particularly for those keen on, or professionally involved in, the epoch and its Cossack-related issues. The book by Albert Borowiak³ deals, as we can read in the publisher’s note attached, with the “little-known military actions in Ukraine, known to historiographers as the Cossack uprising of 1638, or, the Ostranica [*resp.* Yakiv Ostryanin] and [Dmytro] Hunya rebellion”. As the author emphasises, “the Cossack insurrection of 1638 is a topic that has not as yet been depicted in the form of a monograph” (p. 6). Additional incentive was provided by an article once written by Mr. Borowiak, which, as he self-critically remarks, “did not fully explore the subject-matter which otherwise deserved, I believe, a separate book-form study” (p. 7, footnote 6). The deliverables this author has set for himself included to explain the reasons for the Cossack rebellion of 1638; describe of the attempts at pacifying the Zaporozhe area at that time; discuss the 1638 *sejm* ordinance on the Zaporozhe army; present the course of battles fought in Ukraine between the Crown army and the Cossack insurgents, between April and August 1638; describe the settlement of Maslovyi-Stav, 1638; and, perhaps most importantly, to define the actual purposes behind the insurgents’ action: what were they after while embarking

¹ I Cf. e.g.: P. Krakowiak, *Dwa sejmy w 1666 roku* [‘Two sejm assemblies of 1666’], Toruń, 2010; A. Rachuba, *Konfederacja wojska litewskiego 1657–1663* [‘The confederation of the Lithuanian army, 1657–63’], Zabrze, 2010.4

² A.B. Pernal, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów a Ukraina. Stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1648–1659* [‘The Commonwealth of the Two Nations and Ukraine: their diplomatic relations in 1648–59’], Kraków, 2010; *Hetmani zaporoscy w służbie króla i Rzeczypospolitej* [‘The Zaporozhe Hetmans in the service of the King and the Commonwealth’], ed. by P. Kroll, M. Nagielski, M. Wagner, Zabrze, 2010.

³ The author deals with the history of military science and affairs, with special focus on Polish and Cossack aspects thereof in 16th-17th centuries.

on the fighting against the Commonwealth? Why could they count on mass support of the Dnieper-basin-area people?

Let us take a closer look at whether, and how, the author has managed to find answers to these questions and meet these delineated goals. The volume totals 175 pages and consists of five chapters⁴, preceded with an introduction, conclusion, annexes, list of maps and layouts, and bibliography of the sources and studies used. As for the technicalities, the volume has been edited quite conscientiously, without an excessive amount of stylistic, typing and the like errors, with a genuine graphic design.

As to the substance and content: the reasons for the outbreak of the 1638 Cossack insurrection are discussed in the first two chapters. It is a well-known fact that war shapes new human behaviours and in various ways transforms the existing social relations. This was also true for Ukraine, once it finished its wars with Moscow in mid-1630s. A numerous 'quota' appeared in that area of Cossacks released from their military service, who demanded being listed as members of the Zaporozhe army. For the Cossacks, this register was a matter of priority, attractive also for a broader 'rabble' who desired to be so listed. The listing primarily implied being released from the obligations under the serfdom system. Expeditions to the Ottoman Empire territory, attractive as they were for the Cossack band (on equal basis with getting registered with the 'Register of the Zaporozhe army'), were banned by *sejm* (diet) constitutions of 1635, with the Cossacks being subject to strict control from Stanisław Koniecpolski, Grand Hetman of the Crown, and individual Ukrainian *starosts* (i.e. 'subprefects'). Construction of the Kudak stronghold was commenced, from which the moving along the Dnieper River, and the Zaporozhe Sich itself, were to be controlled.

Another reason for the persisting unrest in Ukraine, as emphasised by the author, was that a quarter army, which would have otherwise have cracked the whip on the unsatisfied element – so-called *vypishchyki* people, did not station in the Dnieper-basin-area. Also, the appearance of a charismatic individual, Pavel Pavluk, as a leader of the discontented community, contributed to sustained tension in Ukraine. All this has contributed to the outbreak of a new uprising.

Once again this time did the Commonwealth manage to subdue the rebellion by pacifying Ukraine, smashing the Cossack troops in the battlefield, at Kumeyki, and 'transacting' with them at Borovica. The fight was going on, however, assuming the form of revenge for "the tyrannies, murders, and ravens committed by the Cossacks" (p. 18). The methodology of the said pacification was the kill "ten as the example for one-hundred, and one-hundred, as the warning for one-thousand" (p. 19, footnote 56). The spiral of mutual hatred was thus ascending, efficiently fed with the lust

⁴ Chapter 1 – 'The situation in Ukraine in 1635 to March 1638; Chapter 2 – 'The Zaporozhe Army ordinance'; Chapter 3 – 'Krzemieńczuk [Kremenchuk] – Holtva – Lubnye'; Chapter 4 – 'Lubnye – Żolnin [Zholnin]'; Chapter 5 – 'Starzec – the last fights'.

for reprisal against the enemy. The flame of rebellion was additionally fuelled by the stationing on the winter quarters of the quarter troops ‘supplying themselves’ around the local villages and hamlets. For the locals, at whose abodes “worms have eaten whatever one had sewn, and of the winter-crop there was very little; ... had it not been for the spring-crops, buck-wheat and millet, the people would have perished of hunger” (from a period quote; p. 35), these facts became in themselves the reason to rebel. Religious as well as national motifs appearing among the Cossacks and the locals – peasantry and bourgeoisie alike – are worth our attention. Their reminiscences are traceable in the *universals* (proclamations, manifestos) of the uprising leaders of 1637 – Pavel Pavluk and Karp Skidan. It is also meaningful that the Cossacks preparing themselves for a new rebellion requested the Tartars and the Don Cossacks for assistance. All those aspects contributed to the formation of a proverbial powderkeg which only needed a sparkle to explode. And, the sparkle came along indeed – in the form of the ‘Ordinance of the Zaporovsky Register Army, being in the Commonwealth’s service’, one of the constitutions of the year-1638 *sejm*.

The circumstances of bargaining and disputing around it, the shaping of concepts of how to resolve the Cossack ‘problem’, the views on the Cossack question of Stanisław Koniecpolski, Grand Hetman of the Crown, the chief father of the instrument in question, and, its detailed provisions with respect to the Cossacks, plus the latter’s attitude to this novel piece-of-legislation being put into effect, are all discussed in chapter 2. As Mr. Borowiak puts it, “not only could this constitution be any satisfactory to the Cossacks: it certainly must have triggered a will to resist. It proved unpopular not only among the *vypishchyki* [...] but also among those register-listed themselves. It was aimed against the rabble. Unfortunately, the defeat also affected the ‘staid’ – the Cossack loyalist party, as it crossed out the previous Polish achievements in the shaping of a party devoted with its heart-and-soul to the Commonwealth.” (p. 49)

The third chapter is a review of actions taken by both parties to the conflict in its first phase, starting with the outbreak of the warfare, through the siege of Holtva by the Cossacks, up to the Lubnye battle which was won by the Crown army. The description of this stage of the fighting is preceded by a detailed profile of the commanders of both combating parties, with a precise quantitative and qualitative description, and characteristics, of individual units taking part in the battles. The source base for the section in question was the Crown Treasury Archive resources, the abundant correspondence between Polish top and lower-tier commanders, as well as the correspondence of Moscow voivodes, plus diaries of Szymon Okolski, a participant of the combat with the Cossacks.

The following, fourth, chapter offers a review of the decisive stage of fighting – i.e. from the siege of Lubnye, through the fights fought near the Mikhaylovskiy monastery, to the flight of the main Cossack forces, led by Jacek Ostranica, toward Lu-

koml and Żołnin (Zholnin). The climax of this section is the description of the battle of Żołnin of 13th June 1638.

The defeat inflicted thereat to the Cossack troops by the Crown forces and court banners came out as a decisive moment in the ongoing fighting, making the Cossack forces withdraw to the Starzec range where between 22nd June and 8th August 1638 the resolving struggle was waged between the two parties; this last phase of the fight is covered by chapter 5. The capitulation of the Cossack troops at Starzec concluded the more-than-three-months' uprising in Ukraine. The warfare in its entirety was crowned by conclusion, on 6th December 1638, of a settlement at Maslovyi-Stav. For the Cossacks, the personal appointments for the posts held with the Zaporozhe army appeared the most painful. The higher commanding staff consisted thenceforth of Polish nobility exponents, and only the lower-ranking *asavuls* and centurions in individual regiments were allocated to the Cossacks. The author summarises this particular section as follows: "Unfortunately, the Commonwealth rulers were quite wrong by believing that the new order of the Zaporozhe army could be satisfactory to the Cossacks. They could see no embitterment or regret in the Zaporozhe people. They did not see that the *molojets* felt deeply harmed by what the *sejm* had resolved, and by the terms of the Maslovyi-Stav settlement. They only accepted them as they were in a tight spot, but had no intent to quit their rights or freedoms. In their blackest dreams, the Crown elites did not suppose that the Zaporozhe army ordinance could become one of the reasons for the outbreak of an insurrection that would shake the Commonwealth." (p. 156)

To sum up, Albert Borowiak can be said to have met the objectives he has set for himself while compiling his monograph. He has broadly discussed the ways of settling the Cossack question as proposed by Hetman Koniecpolski, as well as the Zaporozhe army ordinance adopted at the diet of 1638. The numerical force of individual banners of the quarter army in the late 1637/early 1638 was specified, for the first time. The political situation in the Black Sea region is also characterised, which resulted in that the insurgent did not receive help from the Tartars or the Don Cossacks, which could otherwise have tipped the scales at them in their battles against the Crown army and Ukrainian magnates' private troops. The central value of the present study lies in its minute and detailed presentation of military operations between the encroachment of the insurgents in April 1638 on the so-called settled Ukraine and the capitulation of the Cossack army at Starzec in August 1638.

The reader, if so interested, will also find in this book more detailed information on the armaments (e.g. artillery) used e.g. by the insurgents, along with source/bibliographical indications of use in recognising the seventeenth-century weaponry. Consequently, lovers and hotheads of the history of Polish and Cossack military affairs, as well as the history of Cossack people, should be satisfied with the final outcome of the author's effort. Also, professional historians specialised in things Cossack have now got a reliable volume discussing a stage in the Polish-Cossack history.