Bartosz Staręgowski, Armed forces of noble self-government of viovodeships Poznań and Kalisz in the period of Jan Kazimierz rule (1648–1668)

SUMMARY

Appointing own armed forces by regional parliaments had a great influence on the increasing the role of nobile in governing contemporary Poland. The process of increasing the role of regional parliaments and their power at the expense of central government lasted two years. At the same time, Polish armed formations of the nobility's self-government were shaping and invigorating in the military structures/army. The process also included/involved the armed formations of the nobility's self-government of both voivodeships of Greater Poland that is Poznań and Kalisz, debating together in Środa.

Depending on the armed formations of the self-government, the beginning of their shaping started at different time. The oldest formation, which was mass levy, had been known since the Middle Ages, county troops took its real organizational shape in the first half of 17th century, though there were attempts to organise them earlier, whereas the latest formation was measuring expeditions. They were to be a substitute for facing problems mass levy. During the reign of Zygmunt III and Władysław IV, mass levy and county army were modified and adjusted to the needs of both voivodeships of Greater Poland. A county troop was appointed by the parliament in Środa both as a support for state army and territory self-defence. The recruitments of county troops fought in 1619 in the campaign in Ukraine, in 1621 at Chocim and in 1635 took part in the armed demonstration against the Swedish. The civil defence formed on the basis of them ensured the safety of voivodeships of Greater Poland against the foreign armies crossing the boarder and during the following interregnums. Only once in the years 1587-1648 the expedition of mass levy was organised and it was supposed to support the army in the fight with the Turks at Chocim. Though the organising of it started, the expedition did not even reach the place of concentration. In 1627 during the province assembly in Środa a sensible model of territory self-defence based on mass levy was adopted. However, it was never realised. The subject of measuring expeditions was rarely raised during province assemblies. However, apart from the province assembly in Łęczyca in 1589, it was only discussed only more of a suggestion.

The period of the reign of Jan Kazimierz was the time of intensified conflicts, both external and internal. In the years 1648-1654 the Republic of Poland was struggling with the rebellion of Cossacks in Ukraine. Quite sizeable recruitment of county troops, which actively and successfully participated in fights, were appointed several times to fight with the enemy. The expeditions of mass levy were appointed a few times but only the one in 1651 had a chance to reach the place of concentration and it even participated in military actions. The organising of territory self-defence was also abandoned and apart from the year 1648, the decisions concerning safety was in the hands of local officials. Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships did not also join the expedition of lans in 1653, saying they had to support costly first military units in the Polish Republic.

Swedish incursion into the Republic of Poland in the years 1655-1660 made the voivedeships of Greater Poland take certain military action. Though the defense plan assuming fighting with the Swedes at he border of the Noteć River with the use of mass levy and lans soldiers was made during the province assembly in Środa, the Swedish army, which was better equipped and used to fighting, destroyed the Polish army and forced its way across the lines of defence, causing panic in the Polish ranks. The local nobility representatives signed a surrender treaty at Ujście, giving the Greater Poland away to the Swedish protection. Some of them were

absolutely against it and were going to continue their fight. In the face of cruelty and abuse on the part of a Swedish soldier, the Greater Poland society started to join in groups and fight. In 1656 the Greater Poland citizens signed the act of confederation in Wroclaw, showing the direction of further fighting with the occupying forces till its total driving from the provinces. Until September 1656 all guerrilla formations fighting with the Swedes had a spontaneous character. It was for the first time after many years that during the two sessions of the Greater Poland province assemblies in September and October, it was decided to give the proper organisational formula to the fighting army. A decision was made to organise a mass levy with the aim of army demonstration in the March of Brandenburg and make the Brandenburg elector terminate the alliance with the Swedish.The parliament from 7th October appointed also the infantry expedition of lans to support the garrison of recaptured towns. In 1657 during the province assembly in Środa, the gathered nobility made a decision to put up the cavalry expedition of lans. The soldiers took part in Stefan Czarniecki expeditions at Pomerania, in the siege and retaking Poznań from the hands of enemy.

Finally, the Swedish were moved away from the Greater Poland but the price both voivodeships paid for it was very high. Great economic destruction, loss of people, plagues and army requisition left their mark on the social and economic structure. What is more, political problems also appeared. The conflict between the king and a big part of the Greater Poland nobility was growing. At the time of the outbreak of Lubomirski mutiny in 1665, the nobility representatives of both voivodeships supported Lubomirski. In the years 1665-1667 they appointed an illegal mass levy, which was supposed to be used to fight with the king. It participated in the battle at Mątwy, where the army of rebels defeated the king. All self-government formations were strongly politically marked and used in the current fight. It did not change until the abdication of Jan Kazimierz

Writing about the armed formations of the voivodeships of Greater Poland, it is essential to mention commanding staff. During the reign of Jan Kazimierz, they were lead by 122 people. A lot of them made a military and political career. A great part did not only limit to one formation but they served in many. Thanks to this, it was possible to capture some model of self-government commander who gained the trust of the regional parliament and the local nobility.

In the context of the functioning of self-government armies, we can observe an active participation of Greater Poland people. By forming them, at the same time they also participated both in the process of the functioning of the army and the whole country. Some negative phenomena could not be avoided, such as the boycott of some decisions concerning organising some formations, individual interests harming state interests of the current Polish country and also not glorious acts made by soldiers and their commanders. The people of Greater Poland persistently supported the local individuality and its important part for them was the right to appoint their own armed forces.

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