

HISTORY OF UKRAINE

Period Prior to Kyivan State|

Period of Statehood (879-1360)|

Period of Lithuanian & Polish Rule (1360-1599)|

Cossack Period (1599-1712)|

Decline of Ukrainian Statehood & Culture (1712-1783)|

Ukrainian Renaissance (1783-1913)|

Ukraine-1914 Onward

Ukraine or "The Ukraine"

IV. Cossack PERIOD (1599-1711).

Although Zholkewski failed to destroy the Cossacks, he left them considerably weakened and divided, often fighting among themselves. Hetman Samiylo Kishka united all the Cossack forces and, after leading them in a successful naval expeditions against the Turks and land raids on Moldova. This helped to restore the former Cossack spirit and power.

In 1599, the Polish king, having difficulty with a war with the Walachians in Moldova, had to rehabilitate Cossacks in order to secure their help. Later he would use them in a war with Sweden. Kishka died in one of the battles with the Swedes but the Cossacks continued to fight under the other hetmans. When this war ended in 1603, Cossacks demanded and obtained equal status with the Polish military units and secured authority over large area of Ukraine adjacent to the Dniro river.

Cossack power continued to grow with raids on lands controlled by Moscow—by helping the numerous pretenders for Moscow throne (1604-1613)—and the Black Sea expeditions, in their boats called Chaykas. These took place on coast of Turkey, Crimea and the mouth of Danube in Moldova (1613-1618). Each 'Chayka' was manned by about 60 Cossacks and was armed with 4 to 6 cannons. With fleets of between 30 and 80 Chaykas, the Cossacks destroyed or captured many Turkish galleons and plundered Turkish cities during times when the whole of Europe was trembling against the might of the Turkish Empire.

It is estimated that the number of Cossacks fluctuated between 10,000 and 40,000 depending on circumstances. Their centre was the Sitch—an armed camp in Zaporizhia, located "beyond the cascades" of the river Dniro. The Cossack Army was divided into regiments, consisting of between 500 and 4000 men, led by colonels. Each regiment had its own banner, trumpeter and drummer. Regiments were divided into companies of 100 men led by captains which were further subdivided into 'kurins' of 10 men led by 'atamans'. There was also a small artillery force and orchestra. The Commander in Chief was a hetman, elected by and responsible to Cossack Council called the Rada.

In the spring of 1618 hetman Petro Sahaydachnyi with force of about 20,000 Cossacks marched on Moscow, conquering many towns and fortresses on the way. Near Moscow he joined up with Polish forces under prince Wladyslaw, who pretended for Moscow throne. They failed to capture Moscow, but managed to secure peace terms favorable to Poland.

The Poles, no longer endangered by its enemies, again turned their attention to pacification of the Cossacks. Sahaydachnyi wanted to avoid hostilities and in 1619 agreed to reduction of Cossack force to 3,000. This did not please Zaporozhti (Cossacks in Zaporizhia), who then replaced Sahaydachnyi by hetman Borodawka. Sahaydachnyi, who retained control of Cossacks on the mainland, dedicated himself to promotion and defense of Ukrainian culture and Orthodox faith by diplomatic means; Borodawka continued with traditional raids on Turkey.

When, in 1620, Poland got into difficulties in war with Turks (in Moldova the Polish army was defeated and Zholkewski killed), Poles again called on Cossack help. Borodawka was keen to oblige but Sahaydachnyi, pointing out the unfair treatment of Ukrainians, tried to restrain the Cossacks until they received a better deal from the Polish king. However, the Cossacks became impatient and under Borodawka marched on Moldova to fight the Turks. They lost many men and blamed it on Borodawka's inefficient leadership and strategy. When Sahaydachnyi returned from his negotiations with the king, the Cossacks

dismissed, tried and executed Borodawka and elected Sahaydachnyi as hetman of all Cossacks.

In 1621 a big battle against the Turks took place on the South side of the Dnister River near Khotyn with participation of 40,000 Cossacks and 35,000 Polish soldiers. It ended with the retreat of the Turkish army. Cossacks got full credit for this victory but very little in way of compensation and again the Poles insisted on the reduction of their numbers.

Sahaydachnyi, wounded in Khotyn battle, died on 10th April 1622. Under his successors Cossacks continued to defend Orthodox faith, resisted exploitation of Ukrainian land and peasants by the Polish landowners and terrorized the Turks with their raids across Black Sea. Polish king, although unable to suppress the Cossacks, continued with a policy of conversion of the Ukrainian population to Catholicism by persecution of people of the Orthodox faith. In 1624 Orthodox Church authorities asked Moscow for help but Moscow was not strong enough to get involved in hostilities with Poland.

Later, in 1624, the Cossacks secured an unexpected alliance with the Crimean Tatars, who rebelled against the Turkish sultan. While the Turks sailed against the Tatar rebels, the Cossacks twice raided Constantinople and plundered both shores of Bosphorus. They then returned and helped the Tatars to expel the Turks from Crimea, thus securing friendly neighbors in their struggle against Turks and Poles.

Unfortunately, in 1625, when many Cossacks were away on one of their maritime expeditions against the Turks; Polish hetman Konietzki attacked and forced Cossack hetman Zhmaylo to accept terms, whereby the Cossack register was to be reduced to 4,000 men. The Cossacks did not like this compromise and replaced Zhmaylo by hetman Doroshenko. Doroshenko was a capable leader and administrator and maintained a reasonably peaceful relationships with Polish authorities. He even managed to restrain 'unregistered' Cossacks from raids on Turkey. However when Turks attacked Crimea, the Cossacks went to help the Tatars and Doroshenko fell in one of the battles there.

Succeeding Cossack hetmans continued to uphold peaceful conditions until 1629 when Konietspolski returned from war with Sweden and settled his soldiers on Ukrainian land, who started to make trouble. He also tried to eliminate the 'unregistered' Cossacks.

In the spring of 1630, Cossacks from Zaporizhia led by hetman Taras Fedorowych went on the march and caught up with the Polish forces and the 'registered' Cossacks stationed in Korsun. The Cossacks from Korsun went over to Fedorowych, citizens rebelled and the Polish soldiers had to flee. This signaled a general uprising, which eventually turned into a war in defense of the Orthodox faith.

The reaction of the Polish administration was brutal and widespread. Konietspolski enlisted a notorious hood, Lashch, to attack and massacre people in churches, towns and villages. However, this made the Cossacks, and Ukrainian population at large, more determined to get rid of the Polish yoke.

A decisive battle took place in mid 1630 near Peryaslav where the Polish forces suffered a major defeat and Konietspolski had to make peace with the Cossacks.

After death of Polish king Sigismund III Vasa (in April 1632) Ukrainian nobles and politicians intensified their efforts to gain a better deal for Ukraine by diplomatic means. The new king, Ladislas IV, was more sympathetic to their cause, mainly in order to counteract the influence from Moscow on Ukrainian scene. Although the Catholic Church and the landowners resisted any concessions, Ukrainians managed to make some progress in spiritual and cultural fields under the newly elected archbishop Petro Mohyla.

The new king appreciated the Cossack's potential and used them in wars with Turkey, Moscow and Sweden. The Cossacks proved themselves to be just as efficient fighters on the Baltic Sea as on the Black Sea; but the Polish senate did not want war with Turkey and constructed a fortress called Kodak near Zaporizhia in order to block the Cossack access to the Black Sea. This fortress was destroyed by Cossacks led by hetman Sulyma in 1635, but 'registered' Cossacks, in order to

avoid retaliation, captured Sulyma and handed him over to the Poles. In spite of his distinguished service in war with Turks and efforts of the king and pope to save him, Sulyma was executed and his body was cut up and hung on four corners of Warsaw streets.

The betrayal of Sulyma did not gain Cossacks much reward from Poles. This led to an uprising under hetman Pavliuk in 1637, but Polish field marshal Pototski suppressed it. Another unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Polish occupation was made by the Cossacks, in 1638, under hetmans Ostryanin and Hunya. After that the Cossack movement fell under Polish control, Kodak fortress was rebuilt and it appeared that the Poles might have finally gained unchallenged domination of Ukraine.

A lengthy period of peace, which followed, made it easier for the Poles to maintain control over Ukraine. Cossacks were no longer needed as a defense force. The Polish senate and nobles managed to curtail king Ladislas' ambitions for aggressive wars. Polish soldiers were on hand to keep a lid on the simmering discontent of the Ukrainian population.

Deprived of protection from the Cossacks, peasants were exploited on land as serfs, city dwellers were reduced to a state grudging conformity. Political, cultural and religious matters were under Polish control and commerce was predominantly in hands of Jewish merchants, storekeepers and innkeepers.

An incident in 1646 started a chain of significant events with great consequences. The farm of Cossack captain, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, was destroyed and his family harmed by local government officials in Subotiv. Angry and distraught, Bohdan decided to organize an uprising. Conditions for it were very ripe, and in 1647 Khmelnytskyi went to the Sitch where he was elected as Cossack hetman. Fueled by rumors of imminent war, volunteers streamed to Zaporizhia to join the free Cossack forces. This alarmed Polish authorities and an army, which included 'registered' Cossacks was sent to restore Polish control. However these Cossacks went over to Khmelnytskyi and the Polish force was annihilated on the steppes near Zaporizhia in May 1648. Cossack victories, with popular support

continued. Even the Tatars, who were dissatisfied with their treatment by the Poles, joined in. Marching westward, the main Cossack force reached and besieged the city of Lviv and the fortress town Zamostc. Practically the whole of Ukraine fell under Cossack control.

In the meantime king Ladislas IV died and his brother king Casimir V made peace with Cossacks, agreeing to all their demands. Victorious Khmelnytskyi with his army retreated and in January 1649 entered the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv to a triumphal acclaim as liberator. When the king's emissaries arrived in Kyiv they insisted that Ukraine must remain part of Polish Kingdom and offered only to increase number of 'registered' Cossacks and concessions to the Orthodox Church. This angered Khmelnytskyi because he now wanted full independence and freedom for all Ukrainian people. He told the emissaries that he would liberate the whole of Ukraine and said, "standing on the river Vistula I will say 'sit there and be quiet Poles' and I will expel all dukes and princess beyond the Vistula and if they start to bolt I will even find them there for sure". He then set out to create an independent Ukrainian Cossack State.

In response the Polish army marched on Ukraine. After encountering a large force of Cossacks and Tatars they retreated to a strong fortress Zbarazh and were besieged there. Cossacks near Zboriv blocked their reinforcements. The Poles where nearly defeated there but were saved by the Tatars, who defected from the Cossacks after generous promises from the Poles. Faced with the combined force of Poles and Tatars, Khmelnytskyi had to settle for the increase of the Cossack register to 40,000 and concessions to the Orthodox Church only (Treaty of Zboriv in Aug 1649).

This did not satisfy the Ukrainian population and soon Khmelnytskyi had to fight again for their freedom. After coaxing the Tatars again over to his side he defeated the Polish army at Korsun in 1650. However later he was again betrayed by the Tatars and in August 1651 had to make another agreement with Poland, this time decreasing Cossack register to 20,000 and without concessions to the Orthodox Church.

This agreement was treated by Khmelnytskyi only as a period of respite and in spring 1652, with Tatar participation, he went on the march again. After a period of bloody and exhaustive battles and another betrayal by the Tatars, Khmelnytskyi decided to seek help from Moscow. In January 1654 he met with emissaries from Moscow in Peryaslav who promised help in defense of Ukraine from Poland if the Cossacks swore allegiance to their tsar. An agreement was reached based on set of conditions, which in effect guaranteed Ukraine independence, connected to Moscow only by virtue of common monarch. It worked well in a military sense as the Poles were expelled from Ukraine and Belarus, however there was no consensus in the political sphere. Ukrainians wanted relationships with Moscow as equal, independent partners, whereas Moscow considered Ukraine as an acquisition of another country by its growing empire.

Khmelnytskyi was very disappointed by such attitude and behavior from his allies and began to look around for other friends. In 1655 Swedish king Karl X requested and obtained Cossack help in his war with Poland. When the Swedes occupied northern Poland, the Polish king made peace with Moscow and tried also to attract the Cossacks over to his side. But Khmelnytskyi, because of previous experience with Poland and Moscow, decided to stick with Sweden and at the beginning of year 1657 resumed hostilities with Poland. Unfortunately Khmelnytskyi got very sick and the Cossacks led by colonel Zhdanovytch, unable to achieve any significant victories, returned home. Khmelnytskyi died on 27th June 1657.

He wanted his son to succeed him but, as Yurasj was yet too young and inexperienced. The Cossacks elected Ivan Vyhowskyi as their hetman. At first Vyhowskyi conducted a neutral policy toward Poland, Moscow and Sweden but eventually, aggressive behavior of Muscovites on Ukrainian territory pushed him toward Poland. In September 1658, in Haydach, he signed an accord by which Ukraine fell under jurisdiction of the Polish king, albeit as an autonomous country.

With help from Poland and the Tatars, Vyhowskyi defeated Moscow's forces in Ukraine, but in September 1659 a large section of Cossacks rebelled,

accused Vyhowskyi of trying to sell Ukraine to Poland and elected Yurasj Khmelnytskyi as their hetman. Soon all Cossacks united under Yurasj and forced Vyhowskyi to resign. After entering into another treaty with Moscow, the Cossacks and the Russians, in the summer of 1660, marched on Poland. However this campaign did not go very well and when the Russian forces were defeated, the Cossacks had to submit to another union with Poland.

Although Ukrainians resented Moscow domination, Polish authorities failed to capitalize on it and did nothing to gain popular support. The Cossacks on Leevoberezhie (Left Bank), that is on the east side of river Dnipro, went over to the Moscow side; Yurasj Khmelnychenko resigned in 1663 and his place was taken by Pawlo Tererya. Tererya was a Polish supporter therefore he could not extend his authority to the Left Bank where the Cossacks elected hetman Ivan Brukhowetskyi.

At the beginning of 1665 the Cossacks overthrew Teterya, thus freeing territory on Pravoberezhie (Right Bank), that is on the West Side of the river Dnipro, from Poland. Unwilling to come under Moscow domination the Cossacks turned for support from the Tatars by electing Petro Doroshenko as their hetman. In 1667, by the treaty of Andrysovo, Ukraine was partitioned along the Dnipro River: the western side (Right Bank) went under Polish control, while the eastern side (Left Bank), including Kyiv, became the autonomous hetman state or Hetmanate under Russian protectorate. Zaporizhia still remained under independent Cossack rule, who elected their own chieftains and followed their own impetuous policies.

On the Right Bank, Doroshenko accepted Turkish sultan Mohammed IV as his superior in exchange for help to liberate Ukraine from domination by Poland and Moscow. Later, in the spring of 1668, the Cossacks on the Left Bank rebelled against Moscow resulting in the whole of Ukraine coming under the control of Petro Doroshenko. Unfortunately later in 1668, when Doroshenko was occupied with a family matter, the Russians attacked and once again the Left Bank fell under their domination, with Demyan Mnohohrshnyi as hetman of Cossacks of that part of Ukraine. Polish forces also invaded Ukraine from West but, in the spring

of 1671, the Turkish sultan sent in a large army and helped Doroshenko to expel the Poles from western Ukraine.

Doroshenko then started negotiations with Mnohohrishnyi about unification of Ukraine. This did not please Moscow; Mnohohrishnyi was tried (on trumped up charges) and sentenced to exile. The new Left Bank hetman Ivan Samoylowytsch was hostile to Doroshenko and, with help from Moscow, marched on Right Bank Ukraine. He received a considerable support there because the Turks and the Tatars antagonized the population by trying to promote their Muslim religion. Doroshenko was this time unable to obtain help from Turks as they were busy in war with Poland and retreated to his holding of Chyhyryn. On 15th March 1674. Samoylowytsch was proclaimed hetman of the whole Ukraine under a Moscow protectorate.

This is one of the best known and loved paintings in Russia and Ukraine. It shows the Cossacks of Zaporozh'e composing as insulting a reply as possible to a Turkish demand for surrender (1675).

Doroshenko was ready to surrender but after receiving support from Zaporozhtsi, encouragement from Poland and help from Turks decided to keep on fighting against Samoylowych and his Russian backers. This war, with raids and plunders by Turks, Tatars and Poles caused a mass exodus of people from the west to the Left Bank. Abandoned by his people Doroshenko surrendered in September 1676.

The Turks then recalled Yurasj Khmelnychenko, who continued to struggle for the Right Bank until 1681, when the Turks replaced him by the Walachian Warlord Duky. In 1683 the Right Bank was taken over by the Poles under Yan Sobyeski, who was supported by the Cossacks in a war with the Turks, which figured significantly in the rescue of Vienna in 1683. For their services, Cossacks were rewarded with land grants in southern Ukraine. People then began to return from the east, which further helped Sobyeski to fight the Turks. But still, the Cossacks resented Polish supremacy and Paliy, with the other Cossack Colonels, planned an uprising and unification with the Cossack on the Left Bank.

Over there Samoylowych tried to avoid anything which may displease Moscow, but at the price of continuing loss of independence. The Uniate church disappeared and the Orthodox Kyivan metropolitanate itself was transferred in 1986 from patriarchal authority of Constantinople to that of Moscow. Arts and education progressively lost its traditional Ukrainian character. Also granting them land possessions ensured loyalty to Moscow by some of the Starshyna (senior Cossack officers), which led to renewed exploitation of peasants.

Samoylowych himself started to adopt autocratic style of rule and even wanted to introduce his dynasty, which antagonized most of the Cossack Starshyna. Therefore, when in 1686 Moscow joined with Poland in war with Turkey, they blamed Samoylowych for the failed expedition against the Tatars in Crimea. Samoylowych was exiled to Siberia, where he died two years later.

On 25th July 1687 Ivan Mazepa was elected as new Cossack hetman. For the first few years Mazepa continued with policies of his predecessor; also built and renovated churches and monasteries. Literature, art and architecture, in the distinctive Cossack Baroque style, flourished under his patronage and the Kyivan Mohyla Academy, the first Ukrainian institution of higher learning, experienced its golden age.

However he neglected needs of peasants and ordinary people, who bore the brunt of Moscow's domination. Attempted uprisings by Petryk took place between years 1693 and 1696. He gained support from the Tatars but failed to gain the support of the Cossacks. Eventually a Cossack, for monetary reward from Mazepa, assassinated him. However discontent continued and population started to shift to Zaporizhia and to the Right Bank, where colonel Paliy was looked upon as a peoples hero due to his successes in uprising against Poles.

In 1695 Moscow restarted war with Turkey and Crimea and the Cossacks had to fight wherever Tsar Peter sent them to. The Tatars exposed Ukraine to devastating raids. In 1700 Tsar Peter joined Poland in a war with Sweden in order to gain access to the Baltic Sea and the Cossacks had to march to the distant north,

were many of them died in battles and from brutal treatment by the officers from Moscow. They were also used as manual labor in the construction of fortifications. To make things worse, arrogant Russian regiments were pillaging Ukrainian towns and villages and abusing not only general population but also Cossack leaders.

All this disturbed Mazepa and he began to have few second thoughts about his alliance with Moscow. By the end of 1705 the war with Sweden went bad and in 1706 Swedish king Karl XII concluded peace with Poland thus leaving Moscow alone in this war. Consequently Tsar Peter ordered Mazepa to defend Ukraine without help from Moscow and to destroy the Polish nobles on the Right Bank, who supported the Swedes.

Mazepa used this opportunity to take over this part of Ukraine. But there was a popular Cossack colonel Paliy. Mazepa solved this problem by inviting Paliy to his place, where he was imprisoned and handed over to Tsar Peter, who sent him to Siberia for collaboration with the Swedes.

At the end of 1707 Tsar Peter ordered Mazepa to hand over the western lands to Poland. Mazepa did not obey, using all possible excuses to retain control of that part of Ukraine. While still pretending to be faithful to Tsar Peter, he conducted secret negotiations with Swedish and Polish kings. When in autumn of 1708 king Karl approached Ukraine and promised help in liberation from Moscow, Mazepa decided to switch sides. Unfortunately Moscow became aware of this plot before Mazepa could organize and inform the Cossacks and the population in general about the reasons and the advantages of his plan. Tsar Peter moved swiftly on Ukraine, destroying most of Mazepa's supplies and armaments and ruthlessly eliminated the people suspected of collaboration with Mazepa and the Swedes. He started extensive rumors that Mazepa intended to return Ukraine to Polish domination.

This resulted in most Cossacks siding with Moscow and they subsequently elected a hetman submissive to Moscow—Ivan Skoropadskyi. The church stayed also on Moscow's side. Only Cossacks in Zaporizhia came out in support of Mazepa and his remaining four thousand troops.

The superior Muscovite forces routed Zaporizhia in May 1709 and next month, supported by Cossacks, loyal to Moscow, defeated Mazepa and theSwedes in a battle near Poltava. Heartbroken Mazepa fled to Moldova where he died on 22nd August 1709.

Mazepa supporters did not give up hope of liberation from Moscow. In April 1710 they elected Orlyk as their hetman and continued the struggle, with the help from Sweden, Poland and Turkey for many years to come. They also drafted many interesting resolutions concerning a proposed Ukrainian government, based on democratic principles.