

D. O. Smaliakou

Belorussian State University

**INTERCONFESSIONAL DIALOGUE AND RELIGION
IDENTITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLISH-
LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH**

Attitudes taken by Rzecz Paspolitaja Churches towards other confessions incorporated traditional views taken across Europe but also contained several specifically local elements. These offered local clergy one means of expressing the particular identity of their churches, as against the general (Catholic, Orthodox, Uniath or someone else) Church, and even more than this, to define different currents within Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth churches in themselves. These religion identities were expressed as reflection of different attitudes

to other confessions. This type of attitudes gives evidence about active inter-confessional dialog inside Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century.

However this dialog had negative characteristics. Economic competition, political and religion acquisition, blood libels were the factors which influenced on interconfessional communication. Among that, Catholic church has played the ruling role. The Reformational churches had found adherents in Poland-Lithuanian commonwealth in the sixteenth century. Indeed, around the late sixteenth century, a majority of the nobility was not Catholic. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, the Counter-Reformation has completed the triumph. Then, eighteenth catholic bishops continued sit in the Senate of the State. Catholics controlled religion activity and social statuses of other confessions. They regulated building new as well as restoring old churches. As a result, non-catholic were marginalized. Political events also fostered the religion conflict. This increased intensity of pressures on marginal groups in a society that was seeking to achieve religious and national conformity. That's why interconfessional dialog in Eighteenth-Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had negative characteristics.

That situation provided the segregation of each confession from others. This competition served as a factor of unity and formulation of each confession. There were a lot of regulations published in that period. Those regulation restricted interconfessional contacts and served as segregation of current religion identity from others. This means that all Polish-Lithuanian confessions were in broad dialogue and were involved in extensive networks of contacts (Cultural, economical, social).

Economic competitions, social conflicts, synodal regulations and cultural diversity of various religion groups were influenced religion identity formulating as confessional attitudes. Confession became main factor of the social dialog between various religious groups in terms of religion conflict.

This field was investigated by Judith Kalik and Gershon David Hundert (Catholic attitudes towards Jews), Serhii Plokhly (Orthodox attitudes to Catholics, Uniaths and Jews), Francis Dvornik (Christian attitudes to Muslim identity). These researches can be demonstrated as complex view on confessional environment of Eighteenth-Century Rzecz Paspolitaja.