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Introduction

There are subterranean passages

In 2007 archaeologists and employees of district department of emergency services were trying to clear Yuravichi’s mystery of hidden subterranean passages to Mozyr and Kiev as never before. They dig the ground under the arches of being restored Catholic church and collegium and also around them manually either with excavator. Volunteers from Pollesky agricultural college and Kalinkovichesky lyceum, students of Belarussian and Polish universities helped them to do it. To make the search more effective they used the gadget invented by scientists of Belarussian Ministry of emergency services – infrared imager. It can define voids in the ground from a bird’s eye view. But the search was made in vain. They have not found anything around stone buildings of collegium and the church, though it seemed the subterranean passage was about to show up. So are there Yuravichi undergrounds which are expected to have connection with Mozyr and even with Kiev? They are haven’t still founded yet. Why still? Because according to sources of information they do exist. There goes the evidence. When I was reading the decription of Yuravichi in the article “Opisanie cserkvei i prihodov Minskoi Eparhii. IV. Rechickiy V’ezd (Minsk, 1879) I payed my attention on the next lines which had not been noticed before: ” Long long ago on the Yuravichi’s mountains there was Yuriev – the town with fortress Vidolichi and Orthodox Cloister with Mother of God miracle-working icon“. According to the legend this icon appeared in Yuravichi and the date of appearance is also known so we can believe that the authentic miracle-working icon appeared in Yuravichi Orthodox Cloister.

During the disasters which Tartar invasion brought to Russian lands the town and the Cloister were razed to the ground. Only their names were left in folklore: Vidolichi and Cserkovishche mountain. A lately founded subterranean passage in the mountain is the evidence of the legend certainty. This finding was mentioned in the document which was printed 130 years ago so it is logical that the archaeologists and posse picked out the wrong place to dig out. Cserkovishche and the church and collegiums are divided by the ditch which used to be the riverbed of Pripyat in subglacial period. Nowadays it is the road from Yuravichi to Hoyniki. The distance between them is some hundred meters. Historically Cserkovishche is more ancient than the church and collegium. According to the previously mentioned article the construction of Yuravichi Catholic Church was finished in 1715 while the Orthodox Cloister near Yuriev and Vidolichy fortress were ruined and burnt out during the Tartar invasion which started in the beginning of XII century and lasted for the next 3 centuries. Exactly at that time people built subterranean passages in their fortresses to escape from treacherous enemies. In the XVIII century when the stone Catholic Church was built on the adjoining mountain opposite Cserkovishche there was no need of subterranean passages because the church was defied with 3-metre-high stone walls with loopholes towers. This is why the archaeologists should find the subterranean passages at the site of Cserkovishche which is situated in Yuravichi mountain behind the early man site in Vidolichi street. The legends about Yuravichi subterranean passages have been existing since the Tartar invasion and based certainly on the facts.

On the Eve of the Storm (Напярэдадні буры)

In 1834 Yuravichi consisted of town(51 homesteads) and village(66 homesteads). Yuravichi was the center of Yuravichesky volast in Rechitsa uyezd of Minsk province. Bagumila Harevich was the owner of Yuravichi at that time and Yuravichi also was a country estate of Askery. The peasants of Bagumila Harevich were reduced to poverty so they were ragged and ate orach and nettle. And then they had to do corvee work for 123 days a year and do labor conscription for 20 days a year(the duties were building and maintaining roads, bridges, weirs and landowners' projects. The peasants were also supposed to pay metayage which included 3 pounds of dry mushrooms, three fourth of dry bilberries, one fourth of dry nuts, geese and chicken. They also paid quitrent for using landowner's land and hayfields. Some of the serfs had the privilege to bark lime-trees for making bast shoes, dig clay for making tableware and cut down pine stubs for making torches of splinters. In 1836 the wooden Orthodox Church of St.Mary was built in Yuravichi In 1846 Yuravichi became an ancestral land of Askery. The town and the village numbered 115 homesteads at that time. On the 19th of February 1862 the tsar emancipation manifesto was proclaimed from the Yuravichi church's ambo. It proclaimed the emancipation of the serfs on private estates and of the household serfs. Vladimir Isaenko describes this event in his book "Yuravichi nad Pripyatiy" : " The peasants were amazed. They gathered, clamoured and made plans. Free soil is good, but it's still shared and it's going to be divided from time to time. Freedom is even better but quit rent remains and new taxes imposed. Nevertheless the peasants write and signed the paper to the Tsar where they promised to serve forever and expressed their gratitude. Soon after it the January uprising broke out. The dignity of peasants awoke but they were lack of deliberateness.

The governor-general M.Muravyev suppressed the uprising in a tough way, established martial law, carried out measures to undermine the influence of nobility and church. Later it led to further split between nobility and orthodox peasants. The parochial priest described the event in his complaint: "A hundred of Cossacks came to Yuravichi to cut down the altars in the Catholic church, break the statues of twelve apostles and the organ costing more than 6 thousand rubles. In 1864 in the building of local Catholic church Orthodox church started to work. Egan Shencs from Barbarova started to serve there. From 1866 till 1916 minister Aleksander Birukovich was serving there. The reconstruction of church to an orthodox one was conducted under the direction of province architect S.Ivanov from 1872 till 1874. The document of acceptance was signed on the 18th of September 1876 and the church was called "Cserkov Presvyatoi Bogorodicsi"(the Most Holy Mother of God Church). Ignatii Melej(grandfather of popular Belarussian writer Ivan Melej) was the chairman of council in Yuravichi at that time. He was concerned about education of local inhabitants. Due to his effort a public college for men opened there in 1865. A public college for women opened in 1875. In 1874 the lands of Yuravichi were set out on sale. Many peasants were dreaming of buying a part of it. D.I.Lucskevich the old resident of Uravichi describes that event in the book "Pamyat.Kalinkovicheskiy rayon" (Minsk., Yrojai, 1999): "When the lands of Yuravichi were set out on sale representatives of peasants went to landowner Soltan. They argued for a long time because they had little money. It seemed they came to an agreement to buy 1000 dessiatinas (measure of land = 10,900 sq. metres or 2.7 acres) for less than 40 rubles per one. They also bought 3 fields, market gardens near Vidolichi , the forest near Litvin and the pasture. One unsophisticated peasant who was pointing the chairs asked the landowner if he could take them. The landowner turned red and told them to get away. The peasants bended down and jumped out of the place. In 1874 the estate went to Bakunenok for 20 rubles per dessiatina. But for peasants it turned into a long struggle for their rights with the landlord to pasture cattle, to mushroom and berry and harvest wood…" A rich peasant from Radul Ivan Bakunenok became the owner of Yuravichi lands (3950 dessiatinas). Reapers who worked on Bakunenka got 15-20 kopecks

working 14-16 hours a day; mowers got 25-30 copecks. According to the 1897 population census the population of the town was 1,320 and there were 201 homesteads, the church, a chapel, 2 prayer schools, 40 stores, 4 leather workshops, 2 taverns. The village was inhabited by 600 people and there were 108 homesteads, a chapel, 2 public schools, a postal-telegraph office, a pharmacy, a bread store, 2 wind mills, a horse mill and a tavern. A farm of the same name was located between the town and the village. The old resident of Yuravichi A.I.Kozlovsky describes the prerevolutionary town in the book “Pamyt. Kalinkovicheskiy rayon” : Yuravichi was different at that times. Things were humming and there were more people. You could see a lot of stores, mills, workshops. Potters, blacksmiths worked here. In the end of the ditch which was popularly called “Na Libedi” behind Kavalchykov there was a windmill. Its owner was Fedor Lucskevich. The other windmill’s owner was Olka Karchava. A horse mill’s owners were Esel Katcsen and his son Girsh. Three blind horses turned millstones. They made cereals, fine-ground and coarse-ground flour and vegetable oil. The vegetable oil was produced with a special roller to get oilcake. There were three kinds of cereals and barley was grinded to white flour. Many people gathered near the windmill so a kind of a house was built there for those who were waiting in line. The house of Vladimir Ivanenko is located at that place now. The brickworks was located at Haudarovski ditch. Yankel Fridman and Pinya Kofman burnt bricks there. Zyama Zilbershtein owned several stores. One of them was a dining hall during Soviet times. Ilya Kofman also had a store. The train that transported goods from Pripyat was owned by Zus Mikulicski. Elka Buhman owned a pharmacy where Aron Gucsevich was a pharmacist. In general all the trade and cottage crafts were controlled by Jews. Besides the Catholic and Othodox churches there were three synagogues in Yuravichi. Old Christian graves were over the bridge along the road. Over the sawmill, there are sand mills. People often found crosses around them. The chapel was located near the graves. One day people had found a sabre when digging the grave but later they realized it had been the act of sacrilege so they put it back. At the site of the kindergarten there were even 4 chapels! Jewish gardens in Yuravichi were very large and generous. Apple trees of different kinds grew and bore there but especially famous kind was “Raneti” – now there is no such a kind. The synagogue was located in the present-day Varoyskogo street where Buglak is leaving now. Firstly Jewish graves were in the centre of the town near the estate of Kozlovsky. People always found silver cups there. Then the graves were relocated to the mountain on Vidolichi where you can see tombstones now. At “Bazarnaya Ploshchad” there was an open market. A street lamp was lighted to light up the area. People kept guard there.

Parochial Revolutionaries (Местачковыя рэвалюцыянеры)

Russian social-democratic revolution ideas in the beginning of the 20th century reached the town Uravichi. Social oppression of parochial peasants and Jewish became so unbearable that the youth started to gather in groups, read political leaflets and going over to public fights.

According to the historical chronicle “Pamyat. Kalinkovichesky Rayon” the revolutionary-minded group in Yuravichi consisted of Yulian (brother and sister), Anisim, Leonid, Victoria and Polina Kozlovsky, Gerol Myalanich, Semen Kachanovsky, Afanasiy, Ivan, Pavel and Yakov Telesh, Domenik Lucskevich, Aron Gurevich, Mihail Gorchanko and others. The peasants were tired of unbearable order and opposed the landowner. Mihail Gorchanko describes it in the chronicle: “If want to pick mushrooms you have to work for the landowner for 3 days. The same thing for harvesting wood, fishing… We could pasture cattle for free but the landowner made a new order so you had pay for everything like pasturing, washing and transporting cattle through the landowner’s lands. Violators

were caught by guards on the horses or by foresters while there were no jobs and the jobless rate was high. Making 30-40 copecks a day was pretty good for an auxiliary worker. At the height of harvest time mower could make 25-30 copecks a day, a reaper could make 15-20, a teenager could make 5-10 copecks. But fines were exacted in rubles. Afanasiy Telesh remembers that time: At Krivensky ditch in Vidolichi parochial revolutionaries started to hold a rally. Gerol Myalanich had distinguished speech against so-called “money-bags”. One hot day in July 30 people gathered and went to fields. Some of them were holding sticks, the other ones were holding their hands in their bosom pretending they got a gun. The landowner Bakunenko who had been keeping his eye on them was frightened. We told him: “How much will you pay mowers? –“ 75 copecks”. “What about reapers?” – “40 copecks”. Well, our claim is paying reapers 75 copeck and paying mowers a ruble. But for now we go on a strike. Bakulenka had to accept it. But authorities did not. Interrogations, raids, searches and arrests started..

Soon Yakov and Pavel Telesh were put into Rechitsa prison. The report to the secretary of the interior said that in Yuravichi disturbances of peasants led to a strike and its masterminds were peasants Pavel and Yakov Telesh. In October Yuravichi dwellers took part in skirmish with gendarmes in Mozyr. The end was tragic: soldiers fired back on the peasants. 5 citizens were killed, 17 – injured. Arrests started again. The soldiers caught Ivan and Andrew Telesh. Yulian Kozlovskiy had time to escape. The arrested people were beaten but they could not lay the fault on them. The village constable Chernyak was notably cruel. He burst into the houses of revolutionaries, beat their fathers to get the information about the rebels. But it had its effect. Cruel repressions took place in the country more often. Gerol Myalyanich was sent into exile where in 1917 he died soon. According to the military court’s penalty Valatkovich was hanged on July 6,1906 in Bobruisk fortress. Yulian Kozlovsky escaped to Austria where tsarist government reached him but he succeeded to escape from the prison making a sap with his friends. Then he went back to his hometown but provocateur Pikovski betrayed him. Yulian was sent to convict prison for 7 years where he died trying to escape for 3 times before that.

Revolutionary Committee Takes Power (Рэўкам бярэ ўладу)

German Battle 1918 (Барацьба з германцамі і гайдамакамі)

Polish Intervention (Польская інтэрвенцыя)

Start of Peaceful Life (Пачатак мірнага

жыцця)

Young People at the Forefront (Моладзь у авангардзе)

New Life (новае жыццё)

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