RUSSIAN NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY DURING THE LATER YEARS OF THE TIME OF TROUBLES (1610-13)

by

EDWYNN PETER GRAYSTONE

A thesis submitted to

The University of Birmingham

for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Centre for Russian and East European Studies

College of Social Sciences

The University of Birmingham

September 2008

<u>ABSTRACT</u>

This thesis examines the concept of national identity, particularly applying the concept to the Russian people during the Time of Troubles. At a time when Russia was under foreign rule, it is striking that all classes of society were willing to work together to re-establish Russia's sovereignty. I use secondary theoretical literature to determine the nature of national identity and whether it can be applied to a pre-modern society. I then examine primary sources, mainly letters between the towns or general proclamations, to ascertain how the writers describe themselves and their main inspirations. This dissertation challenges the modernist opinion that pre-modern identity was largely introverted, owing to the cultural similarities between all Russian people and therefore takes a perennialist viewpoint. As well as the 'traditional' focuses of loyalty such as religion and monarch, I argue that the concept of the 'fatherland' as a focus of loyalty in its own right did exist during the Time of Troubles and that some Russians did indeed see this as their primary focus. Russian nationhood did exist by 1613, although only a minority of the population was part of this nation. It is therefore possible for a pre-modern, agrarian society to achieve nationhood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAE   *Акты, Собранные въ Библіотекахъ и Архивахъ Россійской Имперій Археографическою Экспедициею Императорской Академій Наукъ: Дополнены и Изданы Высочайше Учрежденною Коммиссиею.* Томы Второй и Третій. Санктпетербургъ: Въ Типографій II Отдѣленія Собственной Е. И. В. Канцеляріи (1836).

AI   *Акты Историческіе, Собранные и Изданные Археографическою Коммиссиею.* Томъ Второй 1598-1613. Санктпетербургъ: Въ Типографій II-го Отдѣленія Собственной Е. И. В. Канцеляріи (1841).

CUP   Cambridge University Press

OUP   Oxford University Press

Patyatniki   *Памятники Литературы Древней Руси: Конец XVI – Начало XVII Веков.* Москва: Художественная Литература (1987).

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

A modified Library of Congress system (as detailed in the CREES style sheet) has usually been used for the transliteration of Russian. This has not been done in direct quotes from an original text in English, or in terms that have a standard translation or transliteration from the Russian. Hence Klyuchevskii is referred to as Kluchevsky as writer of his *History* (although not elsewhere) and Moskva is always translated as Moscow. Frequently, Russian passages are quoted verbatim without transliteration for stylistic purposes, to emphasise the spelling in the original source.

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The Time of Troubles was a period of change in Russian history. As a watershed between two periods of relative stability, it experienced civil war, internecine strife and even invasion from abroad, when many groups from both within and outside the country fought for political – and even religious – supremacy. As a historical period, although Russians have always considered it to be important, it has not been studied in particular detail elsewhere until comparatively recently, thus making it an interesting period to research. However, this means that, with a few exceptions, all the non-Russian literature on the period has been published in the last thirty years. Russian accounts (whether in the original language or English translation) are, of course, far more numerous, although some of these may be outdated or show Soviet-era bias. In writing this thesis, I have tried to avoid unnecessary bias by comparing and contrasting different accounts from different viewpoints.

Owing to the very nature of the Time of Troubles, primary sources will also show definite bias. As the period consisted of different groups fighting for supremacy, naturally sources would be biased in favour of their own group. In other words, they would support their own group's supremacy to the detriment of any others'. However, here I feel that it is easier to counteract bias. The aim of this thesis is to examine the nature of Russian identity rather than discuss the events of the period. Therefore, if a national identity does exist, this will be expressed in a wide range of primary sources from a number of different groups. On the other hand, if each group expresses itself differently, this is more likely to suggest that there was no single national identity at the time. Of course, I cannot assume that identity is expressed explicitly in any sources.

People do not instinctively write down how they see themselves! To counteract this problem, of course there is the necessity to read between the lines. Questions must be asked, for example how foreigners are described and how important the rôle of the Tsar is to the writers. Furthermore, reading secondary histories about the Time of Troubles enables me to note how these people understood Russian identity, which I can then check myself against the primary sources. For example, Geoffrey Hosking claims that Russian collective identity before and during the Time of Troubles was based on three points: the Orthodox religion, the Grand Prince or Tsar and the Russian land.[1] The question remains whether I am able to come to a similar conclusion through my own analysis of primary sources. Furthermore, did the events of the Time of Troubles cause any changes in how the Russian saw themselves? It may be that Hosking's viewpoint was accurate at the beginning of the Time of Troubles – but the events of the period changed things. The use of secondary sources allows me to search throughout primary sources for various concepts (for example religion or the monarchy) and note down their occurrences. Comparing these occurrences will provide an idea as to how the writers saw themselves.

The concept of identity is certainly an interesting one to research. In modern Russia, for example, the theory of primordialism, according to which national characteristics are ingrained in a group of people almost genetically and cannot be changed,[2] makes it clear that understanding historical identity is fundamental for understanding modern identity. Essentially, the two concepts are two sides of the same coin. Elsewhere in the world, where primordialism has been rejected as a

---

[1] G Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: From Earliest Times to 2001*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 133.
[2] V Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London: Sage Publications, 1997, p. 4.

scientific theory, it is still possible to say that identity can evolve out of historical characteristics. Modernists, who believe that national identity is a modern concept, which can only be discussed in terms of the age of nationalism,[1] still acknowledge that national identity grew out of a communal, historical identity. For this reason, studying historical identity gives us a good viewpoint as to the origins of modern identity.

Owing to the fact that the Time of Troubles was a time of change, it is particularly exciting to study identity during this period. During a time of stability, people may stagnate or at least not question themselves or their way of life. Primary sources written during such a period are unlikely to express what the writers thought of themselves and their culture. The Time of Troubles forces people to reconsider their loyalties. In a land where loyalty to the Tsar was so ingrained, what would happen when there were different candidates for the throne? Furthermore, would an interregnum affect how people saw their own state? The foreign involvement forced the Russians to compare themselves to the foreigners and establish differences between them; if this had not happened then there could be no logical grounds for countering the foreign threat. It is for this reason that primary sources written throughout the Time of Troubles emphasise differences between the Russians and the foreigners and seek a return to a time free from foreign threat.

In this thesis I look at the concept of Russian national identity during the later years of the Time of Troubles – that is the period of interregnum and foreign intervention. This seems to be the most interesting part of the Troubles, as Russians and foreigners were forced to live together in the land, meaning that this coexistence was not friendly. Identity is frequently defined in terms of the 'other', so in this case

---

[1]E Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984 reprint, first published 1983, p. 55.

the constant presence of foreigners may have reaffirmed the concept of Russian identity, or certainly forced the Russians to determine how the two groups differed. It is possible, of course, that prior to the Time of Troubles Russian collective identity was not questioned but the events of the Troubles made the people reassess who they claimed to be.

One question to which the title of this thesis has already implied an answer is whether the concept of Russian *national* identity existed at the time. Different schools of thought exist, discussed in greater detail at the beginning of chapter one. Certainly, modernists (those who claim that nations can only be considered in terms of nationalism) would claim it could not, as national identity cannot exist without nations and nationalism. However, there are certainly other theories as to the construction of nationhood and identity. Certainly, semantics suggest that national identity requires a nation as its focus. Did indeed a Russian nation exist during the Time of Troubles? The mediaevalist school (which believes that it was possible for nations to exist in the Middle Ages) suggests that this was certainly possible, although a full reading of primary sources is required to answer the question. Certainly, I am able to determine some form of Russian collective identity based on the sources available. The question of nationhood is a larger discussion which will encompass the entire thesis. I will certainly be able to gather information about Russian collective identity from primary sources; from here I can refer to theoretical literature on the ideas of nations and nationhood to answer the question as to whether Russian nationhood existed at the time. Certainly, seventeenth-century Russia is not a modern nation – but it seems clear to many that England had achieved nationhood by this period – so why should this be the only exception? Serhii Plokhy, for example, believes that the changes brought about

by the Time of Troubles did indeed cause Russia to develop into an early modern nation.[1]

Another question is that of religious identity. The title of this thesis, in referring to national *and* religious identity suggests that the two concepts are separate. However, modernists claim that the primary focus of people at this time was indeed their religion[2] and therefore religious and 'national' identity were more-or-less synonymous. However, is this indeed true? Where do other ideas such as the concept of the monarch fit into this theory? Certainly, religion must definitely be a part of Russian collective identity owing to its importance for all people at the time and could indeed be the only thing different Russians have in common. At the other end of the scale, Orthodoxy could be one of several aspects of a multi-faceted Russian collective identity.

At this point I need to clarify exactly what I mean by 'Russian'. Following the break-up of Kievan Rus, the area of modern European Russia was made up of a number of semi-independent principalities with Moscow the *primus inter pares*. The term 'Russia' came into use following the unification of these principalities under the Grand Prince of Moscow. However, at this time there was still confusion. For this reason, I plan to use 'Moscow' to refer to the city of that name, or alternatively the Principality of Moscow. The semi-independent principalities as a whole will be called 'Rus' if they include the whole of the areas formerly under the rule of Kievan Rus or 'Muscovite Rus' if only the territories under the sphere of influence of Moscow are meant. 'Russia' and 'Russian' will, perhaps anachronistically, be used to refer to the unified state. However,

---

[1] S Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, p. 357.

[2] B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn, London: Verso, 1991, first published 1983, p. 11.

this could be misunderstood owing to the fact that 'Russian' does not distinguish between ethnic Russians and civic Russians, i.e. people of other nationalities or ethnicities living under Russian rule. Certainly, seventeenth-century Russia was not as ethnically diverse as, for example, the Russian Empire. However, different ethnic groups certainly lived within the one land. As well as the Russians themselves there were, for example, Finno-Ugric peoples near the White Sea and Chuvash near Nizhnii Novgorod. Furthermore, the conquest of the Tatar Khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan' brought a large number of Tatars under the rule of the Tsar. For this reason, I plan to use 'Muscovy' and 'Muscovite' to refer to the rule of Moscow and the people under it. Hence all Russians are Muscovite but not all Muscovites are Russian. Of course, the ethnic Russians were the most widespread if not the largest ethnic group living in Russia at the time, meaning that all sources may have a strong ethnic-Russian bias. Unfortunately, there is no way round this problem owing to the lack of primary sources focusing on ethnic minorities. It seems very likely that Russians and, for example, Chuvash have many differences – but unless these differences are stated in the sources I read I will not be able to determine them. However, the title of this thesis could equally refer to ethnic Russian identity or collective Muscovite identity.

To lay out this thesis, I use four chapters. In chapter one, I look at the concept of identity in general, focusing especially on national identity. I use theoretical literature to determine a definition of the nation and how it is formed. Using this information, I look at the growth of two Western nations: England and France. This will allow me to develop criteria for nationhood, which I can use later in the thesis in the case of Russia.

Chapter two looks at the theory of the Russian nation, together with the historiography of the Time of Troubles. I have consulted the works of a number of

historians of the nation where they specifically address Russia, discussed in chronological order. These works enable me to gather a number of criteria for Russian collective identity, which I look at in greater detail according to the viewpoints of secondary sources. The historians discussed here include both Russians and Westerners from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day and are discussed thematically. As I stated above, Western historians were not interested in the Time of Troubles until comparatively recently, so far more Russian works are consulted, purely since far more Russian works are available. I compare their opinions of what comprised Russian national identity and how they saw Russian nationhood at the time, in order to give me criteria to look for in primary sources. Of course, I cannot assume that identity will be an important issue for any modern historian, so the use of chapter one, in determining criteria important for nationhood, and the first half of chapter two, in determining criteria important in Russian identity, are essential.

Chapter three is a brief summary of the history of the Time of Troubles. I use the same historians as in chapter two to discuss the events of the period and ask how they saw the Time of Troubles, why it started and why different events took place.

The first three chapters lead on to my own research in chapter four. The research questions from the first part of the thesis enable me to determine my own ideas about Russian national identity. I have read a number of primary sources written at the time, all of which are in published volumes for ease of access. This enables me to determine how the writers describe themselves, the Russians in general and everybody else. Different topics are looked at in turn and, when necessary, I compare the findings of my own research with those of the writers of the secondary sources discussed in the first three chapters. Finally, the thesis ends with a conclusion, in which I explain my

reasoning behind whether the nation of Russia did in fact exist during the Time of

Troubles. Is the term 'national' in fact a suitable term to use, or would it be preferable

to revise the title of this thesis in retrospect following the research done?

CHAPTER ONE:

THE BROADER CONCEPT OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

1. The problem of a definition

The title of this thesis, in referring to Russian national identity, has already made a sweeping statement in claiming that Russia did indeed have a national identity during the period studied. Is this in fact true? To begin with, the very definition of 'national identity' needs to be made clear. It seems that this phrase refers to the identity of a nation (in this case the Russian nation), in other words the features which mark out this nation as distinct from others. However, this does not particularly clarify the phrase in any way as a definition of the 'nation' is still required.

The 'nation' is notoriously difficult to define adequately.[1] In current everyday usage, it is frequently synonymous with the term 'state', for example in the name of the United Nations Organisation, which actually admits sovereign *states* as members, or in the use of the term 'nationalisation' to refer to industries being brought under *state* control. However, many would acknowledge that the word 'nation' is not in fact identical in meaning to the word 'state'. Whereas a state is merely a legal and political organisation, a nation is a community of people, bound together by their common

---

[1] J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds): *Nationalism*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, p. 4.

culture.[1] Owing to its difficulty to define, many definitions of the 'nation' exist.

Frequently, a definition was devised to demonstrate that the definer was a member of a

certain nation whereas another group of people was outside the nation. One of the

most famous definitions of the nation came about in just this way.[2] Stalin's definition

of the nation as 'a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the

basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up

manifested in a common culture'[3] was originally devised against the Jewish socialist

movement in Russia, the *Bund*.[4] National autonomy, one of the aspirations of the *Bund*,

was incompatible with Stalin's ideas of political centralisation.[5] Stalin went on to say

that the removal of just one of his prerequisites meant that the entity could not be

considered a nation.[6] Interestingly, Stalin used the phrase 'stable community' despite

the fact that he should have followed Marx's teaching that class divisions exist at all

stages of historical development. Therefore, introducing Marx into Stalin's definition

means that a nation is unlikely to exist in the first place owing to class antagonism.

One problem with Stalin's definition is the phrase 'psychological make-up'.

What does this actually mean? Perhaps Stalin was being deliberately vague so as to

avoid writing out a long list of prerequisites, or perhaps this was as concrete as he was

able to get. It is perhaps for this reason that Seton-Watson writes, 'I am driven to the

conclusion that no "scientific definition" of a nation can be devised'.[7] In other words,

there is no particular scientific test that can be applied to each and every group of

---

[1] H Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, London: Methuen, 1977, p. 1.
[2] ibid., p. 4.
[3] J Stalin, 'The Nation' in J Hutchinson & A Smith (eds), *Nationalism*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, pp. 18-21, p. 20.
[4] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 4.
[5] ibid., p. 447.
[6] Stalin, 1994, p. 20.
[7] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 5.

people to determine accurately whether they constitute a nation. It is only through the social, rather than pure, sciences that we can gain our definition.

The works consulted in order to determine a definition of the nation were obviously written from a modern perspective, so the question of pre-modern nations may be different. Of course nations exist today but the question still stands as to when nations began to arise. Were pre-Revolutionary France, pre-Conquest England and Ancient Egypt nations, for example?

There are four main viewpoints in modern scholarship as to the origins of nations. These are the primordialists, who claim that nations have always existed and are intrinsic in nature but require some sort of wake-up call in order to gain their national characteristics; the perennialists, who claim that a nation needs to be formed through the actions of history but that the nation itself is not a modern concept;[1] the modernists, who claim that the concept of the nation is entirely modern and therefore nations simply cannot have existed in a -pre-modern era; and the post-modernists, who believe that as we move from the modern to the post-modern period, the very concept of the nation is becoming outdated.[2] The majority of Western scholars at the present time are modernists.[3] We can leave one of these groups out of our discussion immediately. Post-modernists are more concerned with the future of nations rather than their past so will offer little information.

---

[1] J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds): *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, vols 1,2,4, London: Routledge, 2000, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
[2] V Tolz, *Russia*, Inventing the Nation, London: Arnold, 2001, p. 3.
[3] Hutchinson & Smith, 2000, p. xxix.

a. Primordialism

Let us start by looking at primordialism. This viewpoint is normally held by national activists who therefore may well be biased in favour of their own agenda, to the detriment of others.[1] Indeed, primordialism more than any other viewpoint accepts or rejects ethnic groups as nations on grounds of history, size and the existence of a national territory and criticises those groups that it does not class as nations.[2] Possibly for this reason, primordialism has been discarded in the West as an effective viewpoint, although it still exists in Russia.[3] The argument goes that since, for example, the word 'Russian' exists, there must also exist actual people to whom the word refers.[4] The problem is that it seems impossible to believe that ethnicity was already forming in prehistoric times when none of the modern civilisations were even thought of, especially as primordialism considers ethnicity to be unchangeable.[5] Indeed, some primordialists even consider national characteristics to be genetic, inherited in the same way as, say, hair colour. It is little wonder, therefore, that primordialism has been rejected as 'unintelligible and unsociological'.[6] Primordialism can, therefore, also be rejected.

b. Modernism

Let us turn now to modernism. All modernists agree that the nation can only be discussed in terms of the age of nationalism.[7] Nationalism is a modern ideological

---

[1] Tolz, 2001, p. 3.
[2] Tishkov, 1997, p. 3.
[3] ibid., p. 1.
[4] ibid., p. 5.
[5] ibid., p. 4.
[6] ibid., p. 1.
[7] Gellner, 1984, p. 55.

concept which seeks to gain and maintain identity and unity of a nation.[1] Modernists

believe that it is obvious that such ideology did not exist in, say, the Middle Ages.

People living at the time had no need of a national ideology, as their focus was

primarily on their village and their religion. As religious modes of thinking became less

common, a new ideology had to appear to take its place – and that was nationalism.[2]

The question is, when did nationalism come into existence and why? Here, modernist

scholars have come to some sort of agreement. Nationalism arose following the

people's movement in the French Revolution of 1789 to achieve national equality.[3] The

nation replaced the King as the source of common identity; in other words, '[t]he nation

became King'.[4] Just how soon after 1789 is open to debate but all date the origins of

nationalism to be the period at the end of the eighteenth and start of the nineteenth

centuries.[5] A nation could only be formed after the birth of nationalism, as only

nationalism was able to hold it together.

There are debates amongst modernists as to exactly why nations began to form.

Three main schools exist here. The simplest modernist theory is that of Gellner, who

believes that the fall of the pre-modern way of life required the rise of nationalism in

order to fill the ideological hole left behind.[6] Nations formed naturally once

nationalism had taken hold[7]. Gellner also argues that the nation is a product of the

industrial age. In agrarian societies, the ruling classes are completely separated from

the peasantry, who are themselves divided vertically. As social mobility is impossible,

---

[1] A D Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 73.

[2] Anderson, 1991, p. 11.

[3] Seton-Watson, 1977, pp. 6-7.

[4] L Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 166.

[5] Anderson, 1991, p. 11; E Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 3rd edn, London: Hutchinson, reprint 1979 of 1966 edn, first published 1960, p. 9.

[6] Gellner, 1984, p. 39.

[7] ibid., p. 55.

so is nationhood.[1] However, Gellner's claim that cultural homogeneity could not exist

at this time is not necessarily true. Aspects such as religion differed very little between

the people. Anderson, on the other hand, is more cultural than political. He claims that

once nationalism had taken hold, nationalists within an ethnic group were able to

couple this ideology to the group's culture and therefore create an 'imagined

community' of the nation[2]. Finally, Smith believes that the ethnic origins of nations lie

in the past. Pre-modern ethnic groups were able to organise themselves as a group,

which was then able to develop into a nation once nationalism was created.[3] However,

even here there is debate, as some modernists class England as an exception. Smith, for

example, sees pre-Norman England as already mature and 'Englishness' fully developed

at the end of the sixteenth century.[4] However, there seems to be no good reason why

England became a nation so many years before all the other ethnic groups.

c. Perennialism

However much Smith sees the roots of nations in the past, he is still a modernist

as he does not acknowledge that nations can exist without nationalism. On the other

hand, perennialists do claim this. Basic perennialism states that an ethnic group was

gathered together by its common culture (for example traditions, language and

religion) and a unique ethnic identity for the group emerged. The ethnic group then

needed to form a written language and literature and gain political autonomy before it

---

[1] ibid., p. 10.
[2] Anderson, 1991, p. 6.
[3] S Dixon, 'The Past in the Present: Contemporary Russian Nationalism in Historical Perspective' in G Hosking & R Service (eds), *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, pp. 149-77, p. 154.
[4] A D Smith, 'The Origins of Nations' in J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds), *Nationalism*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, pp. 147-54, pp. 148-9.

could be classed as a nation.[1] Perennialists can be subdivided according to when they

believe the first nations to have been formed, for example mediaevalists claim the

Middle Ages for this time.

      Who is right? Certainly, some ethnicities in the Middle Ages had a strong

understanding of who they were and why they were different from other groups, which

we could call their ethnic identity. Many modernists refuse to give these groups

nationhood for the reason that they require nations to be homogenous – in other words

all people within the nation are subject to the same laws and, in theory at least, are

capable of the same goals.[2] As long as different laws apply to different people in a

country, that country can never be a single nation but it may consist of a number of

nations. However, the question then arises: if a society claims to be a nation, what

happens if some people classed as a part of that nation really are given different rights?

Victorian England is classed as a nation by virtually all sources.[3] However, no women

and only some men were able to vote.[4] Does this mean that the voters and non-voters

constituted separate nations? This seems unlikely. A community is always perceived

as a single community regardless of all inequalities.[5] It is possible that the

perennialists and modernists are using slightly different definitions of the 'nation'.[6] A

number of pre-modern entities approximate to a definition of the nation. For example,

if we use Smith's definition of a nation as 'a named human population sharing an

historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a

---

[1] A Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997, p. 3.
[2] Smith, 1994, p. 153.
[3] Hastings, 1997, p. 35.
[4] W Connor, 'When is a Nation?' in J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds), *Nationalism*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, pp. 154-9, p. 158.
[5] Anderson, 1991, p. 7.
[6] Hutchinson & Smith, 2000, p. xxix.

common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members',[1] the Ancient

Hebrews and Mediaeval English fit into most categories.[2] Gellner, a modernist, refuses

to allow the Mediaeval English to be a nation as in agrarian society, the population is

stratified. Moving from one social class (peasant, noble, etc.) to another was virtually

impossible.[3] However, Hastings, a perennialist, claims that the same group satisfies all

of Smith's criteria and therefore why should they not be a nation?[4]

      In conclusion, it seems as if perennialism is more accurate than modernism.

Gellner denies nationhood to agrarian societies as the lowest and largest social class

(the peasants) was itself laterally split. In other words, small groups of peasants looked

inwardly to their own group culture, rather than outwardly to a shared culture.[5]

However, in reality this is only half the truth. It is true that small groups shared much

in common – but that is also true now. Gellner specifically mentions dialectal

differences as separating groups of peasants – but dialects continue to exist and

separate one part of a country from another. By following Gellner, we could well

conclude that natives of Devon and Yorkshire were not part of a common nation.

However, cultural traits exist to link these two groups rather than separate them – and

this was also true in agrarian society. Peasants did, for example, have a shared religion

and government. Furthermore, their way of life was not too different from one group

to the next. Different parts of the country may well have had different traditions – but

there would not have been many differences in the methods of agriculture used

throughout. It seems, therefore, that perennialism – acknowledging the existence of a

---

[1] Smith, 1991, p. 14.
[2] Hutchinson & Smith, 2000, p. xxix.
[3] Gellner, 1984, p.9.
[4] Hastings, 1997, p. 42.
[5] Gellner, 1984, p. 10.

nation before the modern age – is a better school of thought than modernism, as cultural differences have always been contrasted by cultural similarities.

2. __A possible definition__

Does this lead us to a definition of the nation? Seton-Watson eventually comes to the conclusion that a nation exists 'when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one'.[1] In other words, a nation defines itself. This is similar to Anderson's definition of the nation as 'an imagined political community'.[2] It is imagined as all members of the nation know it exists but will only ever meet a small percentage of its members, so can only imagine their existence. Again, the nation defines itself. Other definitions of the nation are founded in more concrete terms but still inadequate in terms of the pure sciences. Hastings defines a nation as a community made up of one or many ethnic groups, possessing a written vernacular literature and political autonomy in a territory of its own.[3] As I stated above, Smith is more specific, stating that a nation is a 'named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members'.[4] These two definitions try to list some of the common characteristics a nation should have, such as culture and politics, but, naturally, other characteristics exist. Furthermore, Smith's requirement of 'a mass, public culture' is

---

[1] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 5.
[2] Anderson, 1991, p. 6.
[3] Hastings, 1997, p. 3.
[4] Smith, 1991, p. 14.

nearly as vague as Stalin's 'psychological make-up'. How shall we define culture? Do all members of the nation have to have the same interests, or does this definition allow for diversity? If so, how diverse can a nation become before it ceases to be a single nation? To use a modern example, the national game in England is association football, suggesting that members of the nation are required to have an interest in this sport. What does this mean for those who do not share this interest? Personally, I feel that the very vagueness of the word 'culture' provides an answer. Sport is merely one part of this culture. Different members of the nation will have differing views on sport but will still remain part of the nation since there are other forms of culture. Likewise, differing views on music and literature will not cause the nation to split. On the other hand, there are some forms of 'culture' which are an important facet of a national identity. Religion is one example – and certainly one of the most important. For example, the fact that Ireland remained mostly Catholic when Great Britain converted en masse to Protestantism during the Reformation was one of the reasons why Ireland could never become a full member of the United Kingdom. The religious difference was too great.[1] Indeed, although the importance of religion has declined in the intervening years, the Protestant-Catholic divide is still a point of conflict. Just which criteria are essential parts of the nation's culture and which are not is a difficult question to answer.

In conclusion, therefore, many of the definitions already stated are too precise, leading to the denial of nationhood to many groups that would call themselves nations. It remains that the 'nation' could be determined in terms of self-definition, coupled with a number of national characteristics. In other words, people will know they are

---

[1] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 32.

members of the same nation, owing to the fact that they do share a territory and culture. However, this in itself causes problems – as if any nation that wants to become one is given the option to do so, then where will it end? This will, for example make it possible for an isolated village to claim nationhood. It may be necessary to impose a lower limit on population, or state that a self-defined nation can only be classed as such if it is accepted as a nation by another nation. This definition makes it seem as if nationhood is an exclusive club, which all groups want to join. This is not in fact far from the truth! Perhaps another criterion needs to be introduced. For every prospective nation, there should be a recognisable regular and sustained discourse of the nation. Such a discourse would portray the nation as the main focus of loyalty, as opposed to other foci such as the monarch or religion. In other words, I need to determine nationhood by noting how people describe themselves in primary sources. In the end, it has already been stated that defining the nation is difficult and I should not think that I would be able to come up with a perfect definition considering that experts in the field have not yet done so. The imprecise definition of the concept of the nation can, perhaps, only be positive. If our definition is too concrete then we risk reducing the number of nations considerably, as none can fit to our strict criteria.

3. <u>The formation of nations</u>

a. <u>England</u>

The question has still not been answered how exactly a nation forms. For this, let us look more closely at England. Many sources class England as the first nation in the world,[1] so all other nations, whether consciously or not, were echoing the English idea.[2]

i. **Pre-conquest England**

For England to become a nation, it first needed to develop its own unique ethnic identity, which it could then use as the basis for its national identity. According to Hastings, '[o]ne can find historians to date "the dawn of English national consciousness" (or some such phrase) in almost every century from the eighth to the nineteenth'.[3] For example, Bede, writing in the eighth century, already saw England as a united, coherent whole,[4] Seton-Watson believed that England had found its national consciousness by the sixteenth century,[5] whereas according to Anderson, England was only finding its national identity at the end of the nineteenth century.[6]

Even for Bede, there was a time when England was not united. When the ancestors of the English invaded Britain a few centuries before Bede was writing, he

---

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 6; Seton-Watson, 1977, pp. 21-33.
[2] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 23.
[3] Hastings, 1997, p. 35.
[4] P Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, p. 6.
[5] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 33.
[6] Hastings, 1997, p. 6.

classed them as Angles and Saxons, separate peoples.[1] However, by Bede's own time,

the Angles and Saxons had become a single ethnicity.[2] However, this is not Bede's own

idea. The belief that the English were a single people existed earlier, for example in the

mind of Pope Gregory I.[3] Brooks believes that the 'Anglo-Saxons' were more-or-less

uniform before their invasion of England, rather than developing this unity

afterwards.[4] It is striking that eighth-century England was not united politically. The

land was subdivided into several independent kingdoms, for example Northumbria and

Mercia. However, spiritually, the land was united by its Christian faith. The Archbishop

of Canterbury already had influence over a far greater area than any monarch of the

time. We must remember that the English Church was indeed divided, into the sees of

Canterbury and York – although this did not seem to cause disunity; the two

archbishops were classed as equals and joint pastors of the English people.[5] Bede

makes it clear that there was only one English Church.[6] As a monk, Bede may well have

been over-emphasising this unity but it is impossible that none existed. The Old

English people, although belonging to different tribes and showing allegiance to

different kingdoms, did, for example, share a common past and common culture and

had a sense that they were a single people.[7] Bede takes it for granted that the English

are now one 'nation'. However, the other peoples living on the same island, that is the

Britons, Scots and Picts, are clearly outside this 'nation'.[8]

---

[1] Bede (ed J McClure & R Collins), *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, p. 326.
[2] ibid., p. xx.
[3] N Brooks, 'Bede and the English', *Jarrow Lecture* 1999, p. 14.
[4] N Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church 400-1066*, London: Hambledon Press, 2000, p. 5.
[5] ibid., p. 131.
[6] Brooks, 1999, p. 12.
[7] Brooks, 2000, p. 21.
[8] Hastings, 1997, p. 37.

One important contributing factor to the foundation of a nation is the formation of a written, vernacular literature.[1] This already existed in pre-Conquest England. According to Whitelock, writing in Old English was widespread in many subjects whereas there was little vernacular literature in Continental Europe.[2] The unification of the land in the tenth century was yet a further step to nationhood. Whereas Bede did not refer to an English kingdom by political name but rather by race (for example he calls Wessex the Kingdom of the West Saxons),[3] the unified land was not the Kingdom of the English but rather England.[4] Etymologically, there is little difference but politically a large barrier has been overcome. The term 'England' means the very country is described in terms of its inhabitants, whereas the term 'Kingdom of the English' merely suggests that the English people are the dominant ethnic group, ruled by a king who may well be of a different ethnicity. Here, the people are described in terms of the land, rather than the land in terms of the people. Furthermore, the 'Kingdom of the English' suggests a vague political entity which could change its boundaries according to the migration of the English people. The term 'England' is more concrete and requires invasion or warfare to change its boundaries. It may be too early to claim that the English were already a nation in the tenth century but certainly they were well on the route to becoming one.

---

[1] ibid., p. 12.
[2] ibid., p. 41.
[3] Bede, 1994, p. 367.
[4] N Banton, 'Monastic Reform and the Unification of Tenth-Century England' in S Mews (ed), *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History 18, Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1982, pp. 71-85; p. 85.

ii. **Post-conquest England**

Following the Norman Conquest, the (Old) English language fell out of use for élite purposes, being replaced by Latin or Norman French. The monarch was once again referred to as 'King of the English' on the coins until the end of the twelfth century.[1] However, English was of course still spoken. In short, little had changed except at a governmental level.[2] The proto-nation formed in pre-Conquest England was still alive, if wounded. Edward I was even able to stir up English national consciousness during his wars with France less than 200 years after the Conquest. He claimed (completely falsely) that the King of France wanted to invade England and destroy the English language completely.[3] France at the time was a multi-linguistic state, with, for example, Breton, Occitan and Flemish being the normal vernacular language in their own parts of the country, Parisian French being virtually unknown. Indeed, France claimed superiority over England owing to its many languages, whereas in England there was only one vernacular.[4]

England's single vernacular was, however, far more conducive to national unity than France's many. The Bretons and Flemings, for example, had little in common and could only understand each other if they spoke a third language. Whereas variations in the English language existed, they were clearly dialects of a common language. Someone from Hampshire, for example, would have had little difficulty in communicating with someone from Lincolnshire. The formation of the Middle English language, in other words the returning of the English language to the élite which they

---

[1] А Л Хорошкевич, *Символы русской государственности*, Москва: Издательство Московского университета, 1993, p. 17.
[2] Hastings, 1997, p. 44.
[3] ibid., p. 45.
[4] ibid., p. 99.

had lost following the Norman Conquest, in the fourteenth century was of 'decisive

importance' to the English nation.[1] It marked out the fact England was different from

the countries in a way which was impossible when the élites of the entire of Western

Europe spoke Latin.[2] The English people were united by their language, ethnicity and

the law of their land. This promoted mutual solidarity and enabled them to describe

themselves as a unique people. A rise in ethnic consciousness required the people to

see themselves as different from other groups and emphasising the differences.[3] Of

course, this fact was not limited to England.

iii. **The Church in England**

Religion also played an important rôle. As we have seen, England was far more

united in the eyes of Bede, a monk, than it ever was politically at the time. This

religious unity continued to the Middle Ages. People from different ends of England

would claim to have little in common, owing to the distance between them. However,

for the churchman, England was one, united by the Church in England.[4] Of course, this

was not a unique criterion to England, as other European states followed the same

Latin-speaking Catholic faith. The Church also provided some form of national focus.

At the time, religious identity was an extremely important part of any ethnic identity,

naturally including English.[5] The rites of the Church coupled with the social aspect it

provided supplied many national customs. Furthermore, since normally only

churchmen were literate, it was they who allowed the continuation of national culture

---

[1] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 29.
[2] Anderson, 1991, p. 56.
[3] Plokhy, 2006, p. 5.
[4] Collinson, 1988, p. 8.
[5] Smith, 1991, p. 6.

through their written records.[1] However, since the Catholic Church straddled political

boundaries, how did England define itself? Indeed, Henry III classed himself as a

European, rather than English, monarch.[2] It seems that, despite any unity which the

Church may have provided, foreigners were acknowledged as foreign. They did not

share the culture and vernacular language of the English and were therefore

distrusted.[3]

The Reformation only made the religious focus stronger. Henry VIII's break

with Rome meant that the Catholic Church in England became the (Independent)

Church of England: a purely English institution. England was no longer part of the pan-

European unity provided by the Catholic Church but was now independent of Rome

and responsible for its own form of Christianity. The Church of England replaced the

use of Latin with the vernacular English in the liturgy and provided an English

translation of the Bible. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many people directly

attribute the formation of English national self-consciousness to the Reformation.[4]

Hastings believes that the translation of the Bible into the vernacular is essential for

any ethnic group (or at least any Christian ethnic group) wanting to become a nation.[5]

It shows that the group is no longer dependent on an unfamiliar liturgical language but

rather that the Bible can be read in the vernacular. Furthermore, if the vernacular is

good enough for God's Word, surely then it is good enough for other literature! The

very nature of Protestantism, in that it put emphasis on the reading and studying of

---

[1] ibid., pp. 27-8.
[2] T Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 5.
[3] ibid., p. 6.
[4] Collinson, 1988, p. 1.
[5] Hastings, 1997, p. 12.

Scripture, meant that literacy began to rise in Protestant countries.[1] Spoken languages

of the Middle Ages became written languages of the early-modern period.

Finally, the idea of government was changing. During the Middle Ages, England

was seen as the patrimony of the monarch, to be ruled as he saw fit. Parliament

existed, but more as an advisory body than anything else. During the sixteenth century,

this idea was challenged. By the reign of James I, England was no longer the personal

property of the monarch but rather the native land of the English people.[2] The

monarch no longer received the land by succession but rather was given authority to

rule by the English people whose land it was. He was therefore required to rule in the

common interest.[3] Charles I challenged this viewpoint and was removed from the

throne as a result.

From the above, there is certainly no point at which we can say that England

became a nation. Indeed, the formation (or even decline) of nations is a process rather

than a single action.[4] We may say that a number of different events contributed to

England's becoming a nation – but no one of these can be the decisive point. The

Reformation proved that England was not dependent on Rome and emphasised the

importance of the vernacular. However, the union of England into a single country with

a single vernacular was just as important. Wales, although administratively part of

England, had a different vernacular language, therefore was not part of the English

nation. Indeed, the Reformation actually emphasised the differences between English

and Welsh. The use of Latin in the Catholic Church meant that English and Welsh alike

used the same liturgy. However, since the Church of England put its emphasis on the

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 53.
[2] ibid., p. 39.
[3] ibid., p. 57.
[4] Hastings, 1997, p. 26.

vernacular, the Bible and Church's liturgy needed to be translated into Welsh for use in Wales, as English was rarely spoken there.[1]

Certainly, we can look at a period in history and see that England was not a nation at that time – and look at a later period and see that it was. England was certainly not a nation when it was first conquered by the Germanic peoples who would later be known as the Anglo-Saxons. Bede's England, on the other hand, despite its political disunity, did show a number of criteria for nationhood, such as shared history and culture. Lack of political unity does not necessarily preclude nationhood as can be seen today where people such as the Kurds straddle political boundaries. The opposite is also true as will be seen below in the case of Mediaeval France. It is, therefore, difficult to say whether Bede's England was indeed a nation but it was certainly well on the way. However, once England was united, the land certainly has most, if not all, of the characteristics of a nation. The Norman Conquest, on the other hand, removed nationhood from the land as the people and the élite were of different ethnic groups and spoke different languages. It took a few centuries for the élite to be assimilated into English culture before the possibility of nationhood arose again. Certainly following the Reformation and the belief that the King ruled on behalf of the people rather than according to his own will, we can see that the English were a nation. The people were united by their land, history and traditions, religion, monarch and strong national identity. Furthermore, they were not subject to any other country or ruler. It is true that not all people had the same legal rights – but if we require this then England could not become a nation until the twentieth century. Certainly, there was an English loyalty to their country and people which could not have existed a few centuries earlier.

---

[1] ibid., p. 72.

b. <u>France</u>

Having seen the rise of nationhood in England, what about other nations? Of course, owing to national differences, the rise of nationhood may well occur in different ways or with different focuses – but primarily, since the criteria for a nation are the same, the rise of nationhood in other countries will be similar to the rise of nationhood in England. Let us take France as the example.

It has already been stated that France had many different vernacular languages. For this reason, although the land was united politically, the people were not. The North and the South spoke different languages and had essentially different cultures.[1] A French ethnic identity was being formed, sparked off by the distancing of the French King and his political policies from the Pope and his[2] – but this was confined to the area around Paris. In fact, there were only two things that united the whole of France – their monarch and their religion. 'French' literature was largely in Latin. This had the advantage that it could be understood by the entire country but had the disadvantage that it could be understood by the whole of Western Europe, since they shared Latin as a liturgical and political language, and therefore could not be seen as being specifically French.[3]

It has already been stated that the vernacular, i.e. a single vernacular language, is a requirement for nationhood. Indeed, the linguistic disunity in France only served to compromise state unity.[4] It is possibly for this reason that there was no sixteenth-

---

[1] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 44.
[2] E M Hallam, 'Philip the Fair and the Cult of Saint Louis' in S Mews (ed), *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History 18, Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1982, pp. 201-14, p. 202.
[3] Hastings, 1997, p. 97.
[4] Kedourie, 1979, p. 70.

century French identity corresponding to the English identity of the time. During a French dynastic crisis in the late sixteenth century, the only requirement was that the new monarch be a Catholic.[1] Whereas a similar crisis took place in England when Elizabeth I died childless, the new monarch, James I was accepted not only because he was a Protestant but also because he spoke English.[2] Note that language as well as religion is important. France, on the other hand was different. The North and the South were only united culturally by the accession of Henry IV de Navarre, who was both a Southerner (and therefore not a native speaker of Parisian French) and a Protestant.[3] The fact that he converted to Catholicism (famously claiming Paris to be 'worth a Mass') only serves to underline the importance of the Catholic religion in the country. Hastings claims that '[t]he unity of the French nation depended upon the mystique of its monarchy in a way that of England never did, and the monarchy's mystique was an intensely Catholic one'.[4] Catholic people ruled by a Catholic monarch became an important facet of pre-Revolutionary French culture. Even as late as 1766, Louis XV declared that the French parliament did not represent the nation; rather he himself was the embodiment of the nation.[5]

The separation of monarch and state did not take place in France until the 1789 revolution. Naturally, the foundation of a republic would force the people's allegiance away from their monarch to a new focus. That focus was the nation itself. With the removal of the King from office, the nation replaced the King as the common source of

---

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 107.
[2] Hastings, 1997, p. 73.
[3] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 47.
[4] Hastings, 1997, p. 99.
[5] ibid., p. 101.

French identity. In other words, the nation itself became King.[1] It is hardly surprising

that such a large political change would have far-reaching consequences. France

became the first country in continental Europe to become a nation[2] and the revolution

sparked off the coming into being of nationalism, which allowed other ethnicities to

achieve nationhood. Whereas England became a nation gradually, France was more

abrupt. The accession of Henry IV left geographical barriers in place which did not fall

until 1789, allowing France to unite under its new national identity, that of the state.[3]

4. **Conclusion**

To conclude, I have determined a number of criteria for nationhood which I will

use alongside primary and secondary sources to determine my own solution. I still

believe that nationhood is largely self-defined, although this self-definition needs to be

acknowledged by other ethnic groups for it to be valid. However, self-definition alone

is insufficient as a would-be nation with no national traits is obviously not a nation.

Some form of national character needs to exist for nationhood to exist. For example,

the people need to share certain traits, such as a shared history. A common vernacular

language, preferably with its own literature, is essential, as this enables the members of

the nation to communicate with each other without difficulty. Primarily, national traits

should show that the nation is different from its neighbours. The concept of the 'other'

can only be valid if there are sufficient differences between the 'own' and the 'other' so

---

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 166.
[2] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 42.
[3] H Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, revised edn, New York, NY: D. Van Nostrand, 1965, p. 24.

that they cannot be confused as being the same. It is certainly possible for a group to be described in terms of what it is not, rather than in terms of what it is – although if this is true then nationhood has not yet arrived. Differences between members of a would-be nation do not necessarily preclude nationhood. A nation can, for example, have different classes of people living within it, or people with different political views. However, all of these people are required to have a common focus. A difference of opinion which is so great that it causes conflict must mean that the people are not part of the same nation. People of a different ethnicity will almost certainly not be part of the same nation. A nation needs a homeland so that the people can live together as a nation rather than being spread out in the homeland of another group, thereby being diluted. Finally – and perhaps most importantly – the nation needs to be the primary focus of the people within it. Communications between people must acknowledge the nation and not subordinate it to any other body, such as faith or ruler.

The question now is how far Russia's identity during the Time of Troubles could be classed as a national identity. Can we see parallels in Russia with the cases of England and France, or did the Russian nation develop differently? The first thing that must be said is that "Russia" did not exist during the Middle Ages. The area now known as European Russia was made up of a series of semi-independent states, with Moscow as the *primus inter pares* of these states. Following the unification of these states by the sixteenth century, the term "Russia" came into use, at first amongst foreigners.

Like most of Mediaeval Europe, Muscovite Rus was a largely agricultural state ruled by an autocrat. However, the history of Russia does not compare with other countries. England had been given a new ruling class when it was invaded by the Normans, which became anglicised over the years. France, although subject to foreign

threat, guarded its independence fiercely. Either way, the homeland of the people

remained constant. Mediaeval Muscovite Rus, on the other hand, saw itself as the

successor state to Kievan Rus, despite the fact that the Grand Prince of Moscow had no

political power over much of this region (it was a part of Lithuania at the time).

Furthermore, the Grand Prince did not rule in his own right but was subject to Mongol

overlordship. It was only in the fifteenth century during the reign of Ivan III that this

overlordship finally came to an end and his grandson Ivan IV declared himself Tsar, to

show that Muscovy was no longer under the control of a foreign ruler. The Mongols

and the Rusians remained two clear ethnic groups throughout this period. In other

words, when England was independent, Muscovite Rus was not.

How do historians of nationhood see Russia fitting in? Most people do not

discuss the Russian case specifically. Their theories of the development of nationhood

must therefore be extrapolated for the Russian case. Since Russia during the Time of

Troubles was an agrarian society, it follows therefore that Gellner, a modernist, would

not class Russia to be a nation owing to its cultural differentiation.[1] The perennialist

view of Russia is somewhat more difficult to determine since this view would depend

on common national traits – and therefore would require an explicit discussion of the

ethnic group in question, or at least an extrapolation from a list of common national

traits which do exist.

Hastings, the main perennialist in this discussion, does not mention Russia

explicitly. Whereas he makes it clear that Western European countries already

possessed nationhood during the Russian Time of Troubles,[2] it seems likely that under

his criteria, Russia would not necessarily be classed as a nation during the Time of

---

[1] Gellner, 1984, p. 10.
[2] Hastings, 1997, p. 118.

Troubles. According to Hastings, an essential criterion for nationhood is a written vernacular literature, which includes a translation of the Bible.[1] However, at the time, no accurate full text of the Bible in Russian existed.[2] Hastings, as a professor of theology, may be biased. Certainly, this criterion does not allow non-Christian ethnic groups to claim nationhood.

Let us look more closely at the concept of Russian vernacular literature at the time. Certainly, texts in the Russian language did exist, for example the proclamations and letters between the towns I will look at as primary sources later in the thesis. At a time when the official state language of England was still Latin, Russia used its vernacular for this purpose. It is, however, debateable as to whether this could be classed as a literature or not. Do these documents have sufficient artistic value to be classed as literature? Certainly, artistic documents did exist at the time – although these were usually of a religious subject, for example the hagiographies of the saints. However, according to Seton-Watson, a true secular literature did not exist until the eighteenth century.[3] According to these criteria, therefore, Russia was not a nation, although it did have some of the aspects of nationhood, for example its religion and ruler as unifying forces in the land. However, of course this is simply extrapolating the ideas of nationhood without looking at the Russian case specifically. The next chapter will correct this and discuss exactly how historians of the nation see the case of Russia.

---

[1] ibid., p. 12.

[2] V O Kluchevsky (trans C J Hogarth), *A History of Russia*, vols 2-3, London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 286.

[3] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 83.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE CONCEPT OF RUSSIAN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

1. Introduction

Determining any form of historical identity is difficult. Primary sources do not generally focus especially on the subject of identity, so the social historian is required to read between the lines and determine identity through how the writers of these sources describe themselves. For this reason, few secondary sources are concerned with identity either. Russian national identity is no exception to this rule. Many works have been written about the Time of Troubles, either as general histories of Russia or works specifically about that period. However, very few of these works are particularly interested in national identity – or indeed any sort of identity – at the time.

This chapter, therefore, has two main rôles. First of all, it will continue the work of the previous chapter by focusing on how historians of the nation see Russia specifically. This will provide a number of points as to how they see the main focuses of Russia's collective identity during the Time of Troubles. I will then discuss how these points are seen from a number of secondary sources written from the viewpoint of historians rather than social scientists.

Whereas England and France have a relatively wide bibliography on the subject of their collective identity, far fewer works have been written about Russian identity. Just because I quoted Stalin in the last chapter does not mean that he was specifically

focused on Russian identity rather than any other! I have, therefore, chosen the

majority of the works available to me. All have been published within approximately

the past 30 years – and three were published within the last ten – emphasising that the

study of Russian identity is – at least for Westerners – a relatively new concept. The six

works will be discussed in chronological order of writing, starting with the earliest. I

hope to look at how the different authors saw Russian identity of the Time of Troubles

and thereabouts and how this ties in with their understanding of the concept of the

nation. In other words, do any of the writers acknowledge that early seventeenth-

century Russia did comprise a nation? I will look at the similarities and differences

between the writers on this subject.

2. Historians of the nation

a. Hugh Seton-Watson

The earliest of all the works consulted, published only in 1977, is by Hugh Seton-

Watson. His is a wide-ranging look at the formation of nations and nationalism and

how the concept spread from Europe throughout the world. He classes Russia as an

'old nation': i.e. it had acquired national identity before the foundation of nationalism in

1789.[1] Indeed, he states that Russia's nationhood is at least 500 years old and maybe

as much as 1000, depending on the definition of 'Russia',[2] meaning that according to

Seton-Watson, Russia must have been a nation during the Time of Troubles.

---

[1] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 7.
[2] ibid., p. 22.

It is clear to see, therefore, that Seton-Watson falls into the revisionist school, as he acknowledges that nations can exist without nationalism,[1] although he does not describe himself as such. Prior to the rise of nationalism, he believes that nations were formed by sharing various nationalistic tendencies, such as state, language, religion and social class. Naturally, these varied from nation to nation and indeed from one period of time to another.[2] In England, for example, the foundation of Anglicanism at the Reformation brought about a state church at the same time as rejecting foreign domination.[3] Likewise, Russia distinguished itself as the only sovereign state whose ruler was Orthodox. All other Orthodox peoples were under the rule of a non-Orthodox sovereign. For this reason, Russia was seen as specially blessed.[4] It is only natural, therefore, that the expansion of the ruler's realm was seen as a crusade against the infidel.[5]

The Russians' religion also came to a front during the Time of Troubles. With the foreign threat to Orthodoxy, their predominant emotion, the Russians were obliged to come to its defence and attack the non-Orthodox foreign interventionists.[6] However, Orthodoxy was not the only thing worth fighting for. Seton-Watson tells us that the Time of Troubles brought forth a strong popular patriotism affecting people from all social classes. This patriotism compelled the people to defend not only their religion but also their homeland.[7] Seton-Watson does not tell us that the land became the primary object of the people's focus; indeed he seems to contradict himself by suggesting that this popular patriotism was not necessarily equivalent to national

---

[1] ibid., p. 7.
[2] ibid., p. 22.
[3] ibid., p. 30.
[4] ibid., p. 81.
[5] ibid., p. 81.
[6] ibid., p. 81.
[7] ibid., p, 81.

consciousness.[1] Indeed, following the election of Michael Romanov, the autocracy once

again became the main object of loyalty as had been so under the Rurikid Tsars.[2]

However, Seton-Watson does go so far as to say that it would be 'doctrinaire to deny

that the people of central Russia had begun to behave like a nation'.[3] It seems that the

fact that the people were inspired to stand together to save their homeland and elect

their own sovereign may be sufficient criteria for the existence of a pre-modern nation.

We must remember that prior to the existence of nationalism, 'nation-builders' could

have no idea that they were actually building nations. The vocabulary just did not

exist![4] Seton-Watson's definition that a nation exists 'when a significant number of

people in a community consider themselves to form a nation'[5] cannot be true before

1789, although he is sure that nations did exist. Another of his definitions, that a nation

is a 'community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity,

a common culture...'[6] does ring true for Russia during the Time of Troubles, as the

people's primary solidarity was to expel the Poles and re-establish Russian sovereignty.

b. Liah Greenfeld

The work by Liah Greenfeld, published in 1992, also explains the growth of

national consciousness in a number of global societies, although unlike Seton-Watson,

she limits her overview to only five, therefore is able to go into far more detail.

According to Greenfeld, national identity derives from membership in a people group,

---

[1] ibid., p. 81.
[2] ibid., p. 81.
[3] ibid., p. 81.
[4] ibid., p. 11.
[5] ibid., p. 5.
[6] ibid., p. 1.

which is defined as a 'nation'.[1] However, national identity must always be

distinguished from other forms of identity such as religion or class.[2]

Greenfeld's sociological school is difficult to determine. Whereas she is a firm

believer that nations can only be described in terms of nationalism,[3] she is also willing

to inform us that England, the first nation in the world, had certainly achieved

nationhood by the end of the sixteenth century.[4] Unlike Seton-Watson, who claims a

date (1789) when nationalism came into being, Greenfeld gives no such explanation.

However, despite the creation of the English nation, many Englishmen remained

outside it.[5] It seems that the early-modern nation is the preserve of the élite only.

Greenfeld starts her section on Russia by declaring that the land became a

nation because of Peter I and Catherine II.[6] She does not go back in time any further

than the beginning of the eighteenth century. This must mean, therefore, that

Greenfeld does not acknowledge the Time of Troubles to be relevant. Indeed, of all the

works consulted for this chapter, hers is the only one that passes over it completely.

Regardless of any social changes that may have taken place at the beginning of the

seventeenth century, these cannot have been sufficiently wide ranging for her. One

criterion she gives for English nationhood, for example, is the fact that England ceased

to be the patrimony of the sovereign and became purely the native land of the English,[7]

meaning that the King received his authority to rule from the nation itself.[8] It is

perhaps for this reason that Russia is not seen as a nation at the end of the seventeenth

---

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 7.
[2] ibid., p. 12.
[3] ibid., p. 3.
[4] ibid., p. 39.
[5] ibid., p. 31.
[6] ibid., p. 191.
[7] ibid., p. 39.
[8] ibid., p. 57.

century. In the early years of the reign of Peter I, the term *gosudarstvo* is still clearly

defined as being the personal patrimony of the sovereign.[1] We remember that the

legacy of the Time of Troubles according to Seton-Watson was that the Tsar once again

became the primary focus of loyalty – and this state of affairs must have continued

throughout all the early Romanovs' reigns. Indeed, Greenfeld goes as far as to say that

Peter I saw the state as an extension of himself as sovereign,[2] a fact that was equally

true during the reign of Ivan IV. It was only through the reforms of Peter I – and

Russia's forced contact with the West – that nationhood came into the land.[3] However,

this does not explain why Russia's forced contact with the foreign interventionists

during the Time of Troubles did not have a similar effect.

Greenfeld does give one nod to the past regarding Russia's nationhood, when

she states that the concept of Russian nationality was firmly embedded in the culture

and did not have to develop (like in, for example, Germany).[4] Perhaps there is

something of the primordialist about Greenfeld. However, even here, Russian identity

is frequently defined in terms of the 'other'. According to Greenfeld, Russian culture

was insufficient to bring about nationhood alone. The concept of *ressentiment* (a

psychological state deriving from repressed feelings of envy and hatred of the 'other')

was the most important factor in defining Russian national identity.[5] I see no reason,

therefore, why Polish intervention during the Time of Troubles may not have

contributed to this. Certainly, the hatred the Russians had for foreigners during the

Time of Troubles may be an expression of *ressentiment.*

---

[1] ibid., p. 193.
[2] ibid., p. 196.
[3] ibid., p. 254.
[4] ibid., p. 277.
[5] ibid., p. 16.

c. <u>Nancy Shields Kollmann</u>

The next work is an article by Nancy Shields Kollmann published in 1997, although originally written as a 1993 conference paper. Its primary focus is social identity in early-modern Russia, thereby including the period of the Time of Troubles. Although she does not state this specifically, Kollmann appears from the article to be a modernist. She claims for example that the use of the term 'national' to describe the Russians' collective consciousness is anachronistic for this period.[1] However, it is impossible to double-check any modernist views as the article itself does not cover the modern period.

The main idea of Kollmann's article is that the Russians themselves are largely diverse and regionally autonomous.[2] Indeed, in social documents of the time, a community was described in terms of its very diversity. Each rank was named separately in letters, for example.[3] Kollmann believes that the fact that Russia was so diverse means that a 'national' identity would have been far less likely than a purely local identity.[4]

Having said this, there were 'national' unifying features rather than just local ones. These include the Russian language, the Orthodox religion and the people's dependence on the Tsar.[5] Kollmann is even willing to claim that the people 'were

---

[1] N S Kollmann, 'Concepts of Society and Social Identity in Early Modern Russia' in S H Baron & N S Kollmann (eds), *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997, p. 38.
[2] ibid., p. 38.
[3] ibid., p. 39.
[4] ibid., p. 44.
[5] ibid., p. 39.

indeed part of a larger social unit that we would call a society'.[1] Having said that, the

main point of focus for the people was religious rather than social.[2] Both of the

previous writers have warned against equating national with religious identity, so

Kollmann is right to be sceptical.

This may have been the case normally – but the Time of Troubles seemed to

bring about a great change. Kollmann even describes the Troubles as a 'national

crisis'.[3] During this period, documents began to appear which invoked their readers to

act 'as all the state'.[4] In other words, the people started seeing themselves as part of a

single Russian whole, rather than more local groups as was usual.[5] Indeed, as well as

asking for the *gosudarstvo* (i.e. the territory of the Tsar) to be defended, proclamations

also intimated that the *zemlya* was separate from the Tsar and the government and

must therefore be public.[6]

It has been agreed that a nation can only exist if the nation itself is the primary

focus of loyalty. Kollmann believes that this cannot have been true during the Time of

Troubles for the simple reason that the language of the time lacked the vocabulary of a

discourse of nationalism.[7] The people did not know what they were defending. Indeed,

Kollmann tells us that the concept of a society was not sufficiently compelling that its

own discourse did appear during the Time of Troubles. Once order had been restored

with the election of Michael Romanov, the idea that anything other than the Tsar could

be the primary object of focus was too new an idea to gain clout.[8] It is possible from

---

[1] ibid., p. 39.
[2] ibid., p. 38.
[3] ibid., p. 42.
[4] ibid., p. 41.
[5] ibid., p. 40.
[6] ibid., p. 41.
[7] ibid., p. 40.
[8] ibid., p. 42.

reading Kollmann to get the impression that a nation began to form during the Time of

Troubles – but owing to the lack of vocabulary to describe it and the people's love of

the old ways, it did not last, or else went underground. Perhaps this explains why

Greenfeld does not acknowledge the rise of the Russian nation until over a century

later.

d. Geoffrey Hosking

The book by Geoffrey Hosking, first published in 1997, is a history of the Russian

nation. For this reason, therefore, it is the first full-length work in this discussion based

wholly on Russia and its people. Interestingly, it is not approached from the viewpoint

of a social scientist but that of a historian. Hosking's work, therefore, is an exception to

the rule that historians are not interested in national identity! The main idea of the text

is not, however, the growth of a nation in Russia – but rather that the growth of the

Russian nation was obstructed by the growth of the Russian Empire.[1] The Empire, by

its very existence, was primarily a multi-national entity and could therefore have no

single national identity. Indeed, Muscovite Rus was already multi-national even before

the conquests of Ivan IV led on the first steps to empire as non-Russian ethnic groups

lived within its borders.[2] Hosking even quotes the Imperial Russian politician Sergei

Witte as saying, '…since the time of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great there has

been no such thing as Russia: there has been only the Russian Empire'.[3] However, of

course, the Time of Troubles took place before the reforms of Peter I. According to

Hosking, did a nation exist at the beginning of the seventeenth century which was

---

[1] G Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire: 1552-1917,* London: Fontana, 1998, p. xxiv.
[2] ibid., p. 3.
[3] ibid., p. 479.

stifled by later change? He seems to think that this is so, declaring that a potential

national identity had been created by the end of the sixteenth century (largely based on

tradition), which was wiped away by later emperors.[1]

Unlike Kollmann, Hosking does not go into detail about the diversity of the

Russian peoples during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, essentially because

Russia at this time still only occupied the Muscovite heartlands. He does not, therefore,

claim that a nation could not exist owing to the diversity of public viewpoints, although

he acknowledges that these did indeed exist. Rather, he emphasises the unity of the

people, declaring that, despite their differing world views, people of all social classes

were united by their reverence for the Tsar and Orthodoxy.[2] Again, these two points

do not in themselves make a nation, especially if the main focus of the people is on their

religion rather than their state. Hosking echoes many historians when he reminds us

that the Russians considered themselves to be under God's special favour, since theirs

was the only national Orthodox church not under Islamic subjugation.[3]

Perhaps rightly for a national historian, Hosking is far more interested in the

government of Russia than the religion of its people. We remember from the previous

writers in this discussion that, during Rurikid rule, the people were unable to separate

the monarch from the state. In other words, it was impossible to have the state as the

primary focus of loyalty without seeing it as the patrimony of the Tsar. Hosking uses

the people's viewpoint of the Tsar when he discusses the downfall of Boris Godunov.

Since he did not ascend to the throne by patrimony, his behaviour could be challenged

rather than tolerated. The events of his reign such as bad harvests and bad government

---

[1] ibid., p. xxiv.
[2] ibid., p. xxvi.
[3] ibid., p. 5.

led the people to challenge his rule and support a pretender. This would have been

unthinkable under a hereditary monarch. If the afflictions that took place under Boris

had in fact taken place under a monarch who had come to the throne by patrimony, the

outcome would have been different as the people would have tolerated these rather

than rising up against him.[1] Hosking reminds us that the régime of Ivan IV left the

country traumatised[2] – but no challenge could be put forward in this case as Ivan had

claimed the throne on the death of his father Vasilii III on the grounds of hereditary

succession and could therefore not be contested.

Hosking believes that the extinction of the old Rurikid ruling dynasty marked a

watershed in the creation of the Russian nation. Until 1598, the state had always been

inseparable from the Tsar. Now, however, the authority of the monarch could no

longer be seen in this way: it had to be more abstract. For this reason, new questions

arose on the rôle of the monarch which needed to be answered.[3] The interregnum

following the deposition of Vasilii Shuiskii in 1610 went even further, as the land now

had no monarch at all – not even an elected one. By rights, Russia should have

collapsed after 1610 as its figurehead, the Tsar, no longer existed. The fact that this did

not happen shows that Russia must have outgrown its reliance on the framework of

dynastic succession. It was the people, rather than the monarch, who restored state

power. Furthermore, since the state had to be reconstructed following the events of

the Time of Troubles, this gives us an indication of the sort of nation that could have

evolved from this period.[4] In other words, the Time of Troubles could well have been

the beginning of the Russian nation, if only subsequent history had allowed such a

---

[1] ibid., p. 59.
[2] ibid., p. 56.
[3] ibid., p. 57.
[4] ibid., p. 60.

nation to evolve. Hosking is unclear as to whether a nation really did exist in 1613

which was stifled by subsequent progress or whether the nation was still developing

but later reforms meant it was unable to do so. Either way, the Time of Troubles shows

that a Russian nation had the potential to exist.

Hosking tells us that the Time of Troubles was the first significant breach in the

Russian patrimonial state. Despite his links to the old dynasty, Michael Romanov did

indeed become Tsar owing to his election. It was the people who had made this

choice.[1] The Time of Troubles shows us that, in times of crisis, the Russian people

could constitute themselves 'as a potential nation' in order to achieve the common

good. The struggle against the threat of Sigismund took place by the will of the people

in order to retain state independence.[2] Although Hosking is unsure that the old

patrimonial state had indeed become a nation, he is certainly sure that steps had been

taken in that direction.[3]

Perhaps the rôle of the Church was also significant. Hosking tells us that the

Patriarch had 'taken the initiative in recreating a unified and sovereign Muscovite

state'.[4] Indeed, the Church emerged from the Time of Troubles enhanced, as it had

proven it was capable of uniting people for the common good.[5] However, from reading

Hosking it is clear that Orthodoxy is not the only point of common identity amongst the

Russian people. Other tradition and the viewpoint that the people were able to work

together for the common good emphasise the fact that a nation could well have existed

by the end of the Time of Troubles.

[1] ibid., p. 64.
[2] ibid., p. 63.
[3] ibid., p. 64.
[4] ibid., p. 225.
[5] ibid., p. 64.

e. Vera Tolz

Let us now look at the work by Vera Tolz, which was published in 2001. This is
another history of Russia as a nation, although, unlike the work by Hosking, written
from a social science viewpoint. Although the author does not clearly define her own
school of thought, she acknowledges that the modernist school is relevant for the study
of Russian nationalism, although she believes that pre-modern ethnic communities also
have something to contribute.[1] It is therefore not surprising that she agrees with
Greenfeld in declaring that Peter I laid the foundations for Russia to become a nation,[2]
although it was not a nation in the eighteenth century.[3] Interestingly, Tolz also seems
to agree with Hosking that building the Russian nation was obscured by the growth of
the Russian Empire. She argues that, although a strong Russian ethnic group existed
during the nineteenth century, it was prevented from becoming a nation by the way in
which Russia modernised itself.[4] Indeed, she quotes the nineteenth-century Pan-
Slavist Danilevskii who believed that, unlike England and Rome, Russia did not have
colonial possessions; rather 'the Russian state is Russia itself'.[5] Since there was no
point where Russia ended and its empire began, the Empire overshadowed the state.

As I have said, Tolz firmly believes in the concept of the Russian *ethnie*. She
claims that it was formed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, largely
united by Orthodoxy, the Russian language and the focus on rule from Moscow.[6]
However, this *ethnie* cannot have been a nation owing to the fact that its traditional

---

[1] Tolz, 2001, pp. 3-4.
[2] ibid., p. 23.
[3] ibid., p. 24.
[4] ibid., p. 6.
[5] ibid., p. 171.
[6] ibid., p. 4.

primary focus was the Orthodox religion.[1] Indeed, Tolz tells us that religion was seen

as the main distinction between people in the period of Muscovite Rus onwards.

Regardless of ethnicity, it was religion that defined people's 'nationality'. The Russians

believed that conversion to Orthodoxy made people Russian. Conversely, a non-

Orthodox person could never be seen as Russian. This viewpoint existed until the

reforms of Peter I when it was challenged and other definitions of 'Russian-ness' were

put forward.[2]

Owing to the Russian focus on Orthodoxy, it was the Church which was the main

focus of national defence during the Time of Troubles.[3] However, it was not the only

focus. Owing to the changes of the Time of Troubles, new concepts appeared. For

example, until the end of the sixteenth century, only the concepts of ruler and Church

existed in the Russian mindset, whereas the loss of a ruler led to the appearance of the

concept of the fatherland and, essentially, the idea that it was possible to betray the

fatherland.[4] This led for the first time to the concept of the Russian land – in other

words the people – which was able to elect a Tsar of its own choosing and was not

accountable to any other person or group apart from itself.[5] Whereas Tolz believes

that Orthodoxy was still the primary focus, it was not the only focus. The idea that the

Russians were able to unite and defend their own land from the Poles since they were

the inhabitants of that land was a completely new idea brought about by the Time of

Troubles. It did not however, overshadow the people's focus on their religion which

explains why Tolz does not believe that Russia could have become a nation during the

---

[1] ibid., p. 24.
[2] ibid., p. 192.
[3] ibid., p. 24.
[4] ibid., p. 5.
[5] ibid., p. 4.

Time of Troubles. What she does acknowledge, however, is that, during the Time of

Troubles, the solidarity of the Russian *ethnie* was tested and found true.[1] Tolz,

therefore, agrees with all the previous writers in this discussion except for Greenfeld,

who claim that the Time of Troubles was a watershed in Russian history as it showed

that the Tsar and the Church were not the only two focuses – but that the concept of the

land or people also existed. She does not go as far as Hosking or Seton-Watson,

however, in believing the Time of Troubles to be the beginning of Russian nationhood.

f. Serhii Plokhy

The final work in this discussion is by Serhii Plokhy, published in 2006.

Essentially, it is a history of the rise of nationhood amongst the three East Slavonic

peoples (i.e. the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians). Interestingly, therefore, it ends

(in Russia at least) with the reforms of Peter I rather than beginning at this period. It is

not surprising, therefore, that Plokhy describes himself as a revisionist, in other words

that he acknowledges that nations can exist before the creation of nationalism.[2] Having

said that, he believes that it is essential for a nation to have a distinct national identity,[3]

which itself developed from its ethnic identity.[4] Plokhy, therefore, agrees with all the

previous writers in this discussion in stressing the importance of identity.

According to Plokhy, the Muscovite identity was emphasised first of all through

the Orthodox religion.[5] Indeed, since Muscovite Rus was the only major independent

Orthodox state, it was in a good position to use its religion as its primary focus when

---

[1] ibid., p. 4.
[2] Plokhy, 2006, p. 4.
[3] ibid., p. 2.
[4] ibid., p. 4.
[5] ibid., p. 147.

developing its identity.[1] Indeed, the beginnings of Russian imperialism, with the

conquest of Novgorod and Kazan', are described by Plokhy as being primarily religious.

These areas were conquered by Moscow to preserve the interests of Orthodoxy.[2]

Religion itself, as the primary focus of this time, was the main criterion of citizenship of

Muscovite Rus. Only conversion to Orthodoxy could put the conquered Kazan' Tatars

on the road to full citizenship.[3]

As much as Orthodoxy was important during the reign of Ivan IV, it was not in

fact as important as the previous paragraph suggests. Plokhy is confusing here, as,

having emphasised the rôle of Orthodoxy, he continues by describing the rôle of the

Tsar in similar terms. It seems that Orthodoxy was not as important as the Muscovite

patrimonial state. Orthodox Lithuanians lived outside the rule of the Tsar and were

therefore defined as the 'other'.[4] Plokhy does not reconcile this with the position of the

Kazan' Tatars. Many of them remained Muslim, so did this mean they were part of the

'other' or not? It seems perhaps that they were not. Plokhy claims that cultural

differences within the borders of Muscovite Rus did exist which were ignored, as all the

people looked to the Tsar as the core of their identity.[5] This would therefore include

Tatars as well as Russians. Perhaps Orthodoxy started the growth of the Muscovite

identity which then shifted its primary focus to its ruler rather than its religion. After

all, Ivan IV created a multi-ethnic state to emphasise his power as Tsar.[6] All citizens of

Muscovite Rus had their sovereign in common, whereas other facets of identity may not

have been the same. Certainly, however, there was a Muscovite Rus identity, at least

---

[1] ibid., p. 158.
[2] ibid., p. 147.
[3] ibid., p. 144.
[4] ibid., p. 153.
[5] ibid., p. 202.
[6] ibid., p. 141.

amongst the élite, as Plokhy describes that this identity led in effect to the birth of a pre-modern nation by the end of the sixteenth century.[1]

Uniquely amongst the writers in this discussion, Plokhy is describing the rise of the Russian nation as taking place before even the changes of the Time of Troubles. I am sceptical. Surely if the primary focus of the people was on the ruling dynasty then a nation could not have existed, as the Tsar would have been seen as more important than the nation. Perhaps Plokhy is emphasising the fact that all Muscovite Rusians had this identity. Previously, local identities were far more important than loyalty to the state and the Grand Prince.[2] Ivan IV's reforms changed all that. It is therefore noteworthy that the reforms of Ivan IV also led in the opinion of Plokhy to the Time of Troubles,[3] where the primary focus of loyalty shifted again, away from the ruling dynasty.

At the beginning of the Time of Troubles, loyalty to the Rurikids was still extremely important. This shows why the pretenders all claimed Rurikid ancestry, as elevating them to the throne would apparently restore Rurikid rule. The same was true of the accession of Vasilii Shuiskii.[4] However, the concept of the elected monarch who, therefore, did not claim the throne by patrimony, was an important change. Since the state was no longer the monarch's patrimony, the state must therefore have been separate from the office of Tsar.[5] Plokhy quotes from a 1626 chronicle, which differentiated Ivan IV, who had an *otechestvo* and Boris Godunov, who had a *derzhava*.[6] Ivan IV ruled by patrimony, whereas Boris took the throne by election and therefore

---

[1] ibid., p. 159.
[2] ibid., p. 120.
[3] ibid., p. 123.
[4] ibid., p. 212.
[5] ibid., p. 213.
[6] ibid., p. 212.

could never see the land in the same way as his predecessors. Plokhy is quick to state

that, following the extinction of the old dynasty, election to the throne was firmly under

the control of the people. Indeed, despite his impeccable Rurikid credentials, Shuiskii

was seen as illegitimate as he was not elected in this way. [1]

However, as much as the Muscovite élite was turning the state into its primary

object of loyalty,[2] there was another object which was far more frequently used. Since

the Tsar had lost his authority, Orthodoxy now arose once again as being the main

value worth fighting for.[3] It was not political propaganda which arose to entice people

to defend their land from the Poles, rather it was religious propaganda which arose to

entice people to defend Orthodoxy from the Poles.[4] Plokhy explains this by

emphasising the importance of Orthodoxy throughout Russia. Secondly, however, the

lack of focus on the state can be explained in linguistic terms. Seventeenth-century

Russian simply lacked the vocabulary to express itself in this way.[5] It could not

therefore emphasise the state so had to emphasise its religion. Plokhy is certain,

however, that the Russians' ethnonational identity did exist and was expressed, despite

the fact that vocabulary did not necessarily allow the Russians to express themselves

fully.[6]

Certainly, however, the idea that the state could be the primary focus of loyalty

did exist. According to Plokhy, the concept of the 'other', in other words the foreign

invaders, emphasised the bonds (whether religious, cultural or political) which united

the Russian people. It was this common identity which enabled the people to resist the

---

[1] ibid., p. 214.
[2] ibid., p. 213.
[3] ibid., p. 219.
[4] ibid.; p. 218.
[5] ibid., p. 220.
[6] ibid., p. 221.

foreign invaders. Instead of disintegrating, the state held together, as the space once

held by the sovereign as primary focus of loyalty was replaced.[1] Plokhy goes on to say,

perhaps contradicting himself, that Russia became self-conscious of the 'other' during

the intervention of the Time of Troubles. It is this self-consciousness which led to

Russian nationhood.[2] In his introduction, Plokhy emphasises that the Muscovite

community, along with the Ruthenians, possessed the characteristics of a premodern

nation after the turn of the seventeenth century.[3] Perhaps, therefore, it was the Time

of Troubles which led to Russian nationhood. The events of the sixteenth century

mentioned above were merely an important step on the way. Plokhy therefore agrees

with the other revisionists in this discussion in emphasising the importance of the Time

of Troubles for the foundation of Russian nationhood.

g. <u>Summary</u>

From the above, it is obvious that there only existed a small number of points on

which the Russians could base their loyalty, giving rise to the basis of a form of

collective identity. All six writers agree that one of the main focuses of Russian

collective identity at the beginning of the seventeenth century was the people's loyalty

to the Tsar and all bar Greenfeld specifically mention the Orthodox faith as uniting the

people. These two points are only natural for a pre-national community, as the only

things that a dissipated community would usually have in common would be their

religion and sovereign, as well as their language. Interestingly, only Kollmann and Tolz

mention the Russian language specifically. Perhaps the other four writers thought this

---

[1] ibid., p. 222.
[2] ibid., p. 357.
[3] ibid., p. 6.

so obvious that they did not think it worth mentioning. Seton-Watson, Tolz and Plokhy

do specifically refer to the concept of the land as separate from the sovereign as being a

new idea which arose during the Time of Troubles. This would also, therefore, be an

important focus of the people and perhaps an important step to take on the road to

nationhood. Finally, only Plokhy mentions the idea of the 'other', in other words that

identity is frequently defined in terms of what a community is not rather than what a

community is. Specifically in this case, the Russians were quick to emphasise the

differences between themselves and the Polish invaders.

3. <u>The viewpoint of secondary sources</u>

Let us now look at how the five points made in the last paragraph are seen by

secondary sources. I have chosen a good cross-section of the works available, by

twelve scholars writing from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, including

the most influential works on the subject. They can be subdivided into three groups.

The pre-Revolutionary Russian historians are Sergei Solov'ev (1859),[1] Nikolai

Kostomarov, Ivan Zabelin (1872), Vasilii Klyuchevskii, Sergei Platonov (1899) and

Pavel Lyubomirov (1917). The Soviet historians are Mikhail Pokrovskii (1920), Pavel

Berezov (1954), Daniil Makovskii (1967) and Ruslan Skrynnikov (1981). Finally, the

two Western historians are Maureen Perrie (1995) and Chester Dunning (2001). The

lack of Western historians stems from the fact that, until recently, the Time of Troubles

was not seen as an important topic of study in the West, so there are few non-Russian

---

[1] The number in brackets explains when the work studied was first published

works available. The period has always been important within Russia, hence the large number of works written over a period of almost 150 years, although historiography varied considerably over this period.

Interestingly, the Russian language is not mentioned except in passing by any of the twelve writers. Perhaps, as I said above, the language is so obvious that none of them thought it worth mentioning! The other points, the Tsar, Orthodoxy, the 'other' (usually the foreign invaders such as the Poles) and the concept of the Russian land will be discussed below.

a. The Russian land

Let us start by looking at the concept of the Russian land. As shown above, the idea that the land was indeed a separate concept rather than tied in with the person of the monarch was a new idea during the Time of Troubles. Klyuchevskii reminds us that, traditionally, the land was seen as the patrimony of the Tsar and therefore the people were the serfs working on his 'manor'.[1] The Time of Troubles changed this as an elected Tsar could not see the land in the same way. This led, in places at least, to the idea that the land itself can be seen as a focus of loyalty. Zabelin[2] and Skrynnikov[3] both emphasise the fact that the *semiboyarshchina* were treacherous for giving the Russian land and its sovereignty into Polish hands. Power therefore had to be retrieved. A number of historians acknowledge the rôle of the national militia in restoring power to the land. Skrynnikov goes on to say that restoring the

---

[1] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 12.

[2] И Забѣлинъ, *Мининъ и Пожарскій: Прямые и кривые въ смутное время*, Москва: В. Ѳ. Рихтеръ, 1883, p. 66.

[3] R G Skrynnikov (ed & trans H F Graham), *The Time of Troubles: Russia in Crisis 1604-1618*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1988, p. 104.

independence of the Russian state was the primary goal of the militia.[1] Other aspects,

such as religion, were obviously less important. However, the militia alone could not

achieve what it set out to do. Zabelin, for example, makes it clear that the Russians had

to unite behind the militia in order to expel the Poles from the land.[2] Normally, the

Russians were divided – but the Time of Troubles enabled them to put aside their petty

differences for the common good. The Stalinist-era (and therefore nationalistic) writer

Berezov even goes as far as to say that the Russians were fighting for the love of their

country and won owing to their patriotism.[3] The other writers do not, of course, go

this far – but certainly the rôle of the national militia in defending the land is lauded.

Solov'ev emphasises the fact that the reconquest of the Kremlin is one of Russia's

greatest national triumphs.[4] The question remains, however, in how far the Russians

knew that they were defending their fatherland and their national independence and

how many just wanted to get rid of the Poles and restore the old order.

b. The 'other'

This leads us on to how the Poles were perceived – the concept of the 'other'.

Many of the writers specifically mention that the Poles were distrusted. Perrie goes so

far as to say that all foreigners were distrusted completely, to the point that Boris was

unable to hire an English midwife for his sister.[5] Klyuchevskii notes that foreigners in

general were completely different from the Russians. Even their customs were too

---

[1] ibid., p. 172.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 88.
[3] П Березов, *Минин и Пожарский*, Москва: Московский рабочий, 1957, p. 282.
[4] S M Soloviev (ed & trans G E Orchard), *History of Russia Volume 15: The Time of Troubles: Tsar Vasily Shuisky and the Interregnum 1606-1613*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1989, p. 284.
[5] M Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995, p. 13.

suspect ever to be imitated safely by any Russian.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, that if the foreigners were seen like this when they were abroad and therefore posed no threat, that they were criticised far more when they were in Russia and seen as detrimental to Russian society. Lyubomirov notes that one of the goals of the national militia was to 'cleanse' the land from the Poles and their influence.[2]

Interestingly, foreigners are not always seen in a negative light. Whereas the militia existed to expel the Poles from Russia, some of the members of the militia were foreigners themselves.[3] Naturally, some of these foreigners would have been mercenary soldiers but not all would have been. It seems that the Russians were willing to accept anyone who shared their wish to liberate their land! Furthermore, there seems to have been a hierarchy of hatred regarding foreigners. Whereas Boris Godunov was primarily anti-Polish, he was willing to join a Polish army to fight the Ottoman Turks.[4] Here, however, there may be a religious aspect as well. The Orthodox Russians and Catholic Poles followed two different branches of Christianity, whereas the Turks were Muslims. Another time when a foreigner was accepted rather than condemned was when the throne was offered to Władysław, who was himself Polish. Here, the offer was conditional on the prince's conversion to Orthodoxy. Whereas above, Plokhy emphasised that ethnicity was more important than religion (a non-Orthodox Russian was preferred to an Orthodox foreigner) here that does not seem to be the case. However, since Władysław did not in fact convert and move to Moscow, perhaps the answer lies here. Certainly, Dunning tells us that the *semiboyarshchina*

---

[1] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 243.

[2] П Г Любомиров, *Очерк истории нижегородского ополчения 1611-1613 гг.*, Москва: Государственное социально-экономическое издательство, 1939, p. 96.

[3] ibid., p. 116.

[4] S M Soloviev (ed & trans G E Orchard), *History of Russia Volume 14: The Time of Troubles: Boris Godunov and False Dmitrii*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1988, p. 29.

were condemned as traitors by Patriarch Hermogen for electing a Polish Tsar,[1] despite the fact that the Patriarch himself had welcomed the decision when it was made. It was the fact that Władysław would not become Orthodox that changed his decision. Pokrovskii, as a Marxist writer who believed that Poles and Russians alike were just interested in protecting their own interests, is sceptical about this. Władysław was at first welcomed as Tsar, despite the fact he was a Catholic Pole. When he was rejected it was due to the exact same reasons.[2]

c. The Orthodox faith

It is still, therefore, confusing as to whether religion or ethnicity was seen as more important. Let us look in more detail at how the Orthodox faith itself is seen by writers of secondary sources. Dunning tells us that Russia, despite being ruled by the Tsar, was in practice really a theocracy.[3] Politics at the time was more God-centred than anything else. Russia was even seen as God's chosen people, the New Israel.[4] The problems taking place in the land during the Time of Troubles were put down to God's wrath on the land. Platonov echoes the views of many writers when he states that Russia lost its Tsar as a direct result of the sins of its people.[5] It was therefore natural that the way to solve the problem was to repent and turn to God – and He would give them the victory.[6] Indeed, many writers emphasise the fact that the Time of Troubles

---

[1] C S L Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2001, p. 414.

[2] M N Pokrovsky (trans D S Mirsky), *Brief History of Russia*, Orono, ME: University Prints + Reprints, 1968, reprint of original two-volume 1933 edition, p. 80.

[3] Dunning, 2001, p. 106.

[4] ibid., p. 32.

[5] С Ѳ Платоновъ, *Очерки по исторіи смуты: Въ Московскомъ государствѣ: XVI – XVII вв.*, 3-е изд, С.-Петербургъ: Я. Башмаговъ и ко., 1910, p. 450.

[6] ibid., p. 514.

increased the people's Orthodox faith. In the words of Kostomarov, it united the people

to rise up against the Poles.[1]

Perrie tells us that the Orthodox faith also explains why, although many of the

pretenders managed to achieve some popular support, none of them were ever

particularly successful, as they were denounced for being enemies of Orthodoxy.[2] Even

False Dmitrii I, who actually managed to gain the throne, remained in office for less

than a year. Solov'ev[3] and Kostomarov[4] both emphasise the fact that he was criticised

by both the Church and the boyars for his religious liberalism and even insinuate that

his disregard for Orthodoxy cost him his life. As much as the people may have wanted

to see a return to the old ruling dynasty, a far more important criterion in the popular

mindset was their religion. No Tsar would behave in that way towards the Church!

During the interregnum, Kostomarov tells us that the nearest thing to a national leader

was Patriarch Hermogen.[5] With the absence of a Tsar, God-centred Russia would

naturally gravitate towards the Patriarch. As the people's spiritual leader, now his

authority enabled them to regain Russian independence.[6]

From the above, it may seem that Orthodoxy was indeed more important than

ethnicity. Kostomarov certainly makes this point clear. The issue of Władysław's

religion was certainly important to the Russians, although it appears that they did not

class his Polish ethnicity as a barrier to being elected Tsar. After all, Władysław's father

Sigismund was originally a Protestant (being ethnically Swedish) and had converted to

Catholicism to take the Polish throne. If the father could do that, naturally the son

---

[1] Н И Костомаровъ, *Смутное время Московскаго государства въ началѣ XVII столѣтія,* Собраніе
сочиненій, кн. 2, Санктъ Петербургъ: М. М. Стасюлевичъ, 1904, p. 533.
[2] Perrie, 1995, p. 56.
[3] Soloviev, 1988, p. 84.
[4] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 151.
[5] ibid., p. 521.
[6] Березов, 1957, p. 189.

could convert to Orthodoxy before becoming Tsar – and Sigismund could not complain.
The fact that he is Polish is not mentioned.[1]

Makovskii, as a Soviet academic, is the only one of the writers who is less
convinced about the rôle of Orthodoxy in Russia at the time. He, in fact, emphasises
that Orthodoxy, although certainly popular, was in fact losing its esteem during the
Time of Troubles.[2] Perhaps this is due to his Soviet distrust of religion. His theory is
that Orthodoxy was not the primary Russian belief, at least amongst the peasants. Far
more important to them was the belief in the true Tsar. Orthodoxy was merely a façade
for their true beliefs.[3] It is difficult to say how accurate Makovskii is.

d. The Tsar

Let us now look in more detail at the Tsar himself. Certainly, the peasants did
have strong beliefs towards the Tsar. Skrynnikov tells us, for example, that they
believed that the Tsar could do no wrong – and always acted with the peasants' best
interests at heart. If, as was common, a Tsar deviated from this, the boyars, as his
council, were blamed instead.[4] Perrie goes even further. Many peasants truly believed
that pretenders were the member of the old ruling dynasty they claimed to be. For this
reason, they refused to renounce their beliefs in them. Frequently, peasants would
prefer torture to rebellion.[5]

Why should this be so? Primarily, it stems from the fact that, as Dunning says,
the true Tsar is chosen by God and is His representative on Earth. Rebellion against the

---

[1] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 479.
[2] Д П Маковский, *Первая крестьянская воина в России*, Смоленск: Министерство Просвещения
РСФСР Смоленский Государственный Педагогический институт имени Карла Маркса, 1967, p. 478.
[3] ibid., p. 475.
[4] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 51.
[5] Perrie, 1995, p. 246.

Tsar is not merely political but rather a religious act. In other words, a revolt against

the Tsar would be seen as identical to opposing God.[1] Perrie explains this further. If a

pretender claimed to be a member of the old ruling dynasty, he then automatically had

a stronger claim to the throne than did the current, elected, ruler.[2] This must mean,

however, that the elected Tsar was in fact no Tsar at all. As Dunning makes clear, the

Russians' religious beliefs meant that opposing the elected Tsar and restoring the true

Tsar to the throne was identical to restoring God's chosen Tsar to the throne.[3]

Eventually, Michael Romanov was elected owing to his ties to the old dynasty.[4] He was,

in the words of Dunning, the 'true Tsar' and his election would lead to the end of the

Time of Troubles.[5]

Why did elected Tsars bring about so many problems? Essentially, they were a

new concept! If the true Tsar was chosen by God, surely he would succeed by

patrimony rather than by election? Furthermore, Klyuchevskii reminds us of the

Russian system of *mestnichestvo* which meant that rank could not be changed. In other

words, the idea of an elected Tsar was completely alien.[6] Furthermore, the experiment

of electing a Tsar was not at first successful. Solov'ev states that Boris Godunov, the

first elected monarch, was incapable of raising himself morally to the position of

royalty. He therefore acted like a boyar throughout his reign.[7] Furthermore, as

Skrynnikov states, boyar rivalry meant that no boyars would admit that a member of

their ranks was worthy of becoming Tsar.[8] It is for this reason that the throne was

---

[1] Dunning, 2001, p. 260.
[2] Perrie, 1995, p. 239.
[3] Dunning, 2001, p. 32.
[4] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 52.
[5] Dunning, 2001, p. 443.
[6] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 55.
[7] Soloviev, 1988, p. 51.
[8] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 163.

offered to a foreigner, as he was of royal blood. However, the precondition that the

Tsar must be Orthodox was still extremely important here, as most of the writers agree,

for example Kostomarov.[1]

The idea of an interregnum was also alien to the Russian mindset. Lyubomirov

notes the etymological link between the Russian for sovereign (*gosudar'*) and state

(*gosudarstvo*). During the Time of Troubles, it was imperative that a *gosudarstvo* be

ruled by a *gosudar'*.[2] For this reason, it is hardly surprising that Solov'ev claims the

most important royal death in Russian history to date to be that of Fedor Ivanovich.

When he died childless in 1598, the following struggles for power sparked off the Time

of Troubles.[3] It was hardly surprising that pretenders claimed to be a member of the

old ruling dynasty! However, it is debateable whether the primary goal of the people

during the Time of Troubles was to restore the true Tsar to the throne, or to prevent

the fall of Orthodoxy. The writers disagree on these points. Perhaps the solution

depends on the primary sources consulted?

---

[1] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 465.
[2] Любомиров, 1939, p. 176.
[3] Soloviev, 1988, p. 1.

4. <u>Conclusion</u>

To conclude this discussion, therefore, the question of Russian nationhood is still unresolved. Naturally, this seems to depend on the writer's school of thought. A modernist would never allow pre-modern Russia to achieve nationhood, whereas the mediaevalist school could allow Russia to be a nation, provided it satisfied other criteria. I have already explained that the Russians did indeed hold certain cultural aspects in common, which explains why Kollmann acknowledges that the Russians could be called a society. However, it is interesting that the entire population of a state may not be members of the nation. Greenfeld tells us that many Englishmen were outside the English nation for many years after its formation.[1] It therefore follows that this phenomenon can also take place elsewhere and something I need to be looking out for. Different people will, of course, have different views and therefore it is clearly possible that some people may acknowledge the nation whereas others will not.

From the works above, it is certainly true that the Time of Troubles was a time of change. For this reason, it seems likely that some people will have changed their views whereas others will have remained true to their traditional values. Which is more widespread – Russia's traditional focal points of ruler and religion, or the new concept of the fatherland as an entity which is able to choose its own ruler and also be betrayed by its people? If the former, it is most likely that Russia during the Time of Troubles was not a nation; if the latter, then it was. Either way, Russia certainly had a strong identity during the Time of Troubles.[2] It is, however, surprising that few

---

[1] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 31.

[2] A N Sakharov, 'The Main Phases and Distinctive Features of Russian Nationalism' in G Hosking & R Service (eds), *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, pp. 7-18, p. 11.

different aspects of Russian collective identity are actually mentioned in secondary

sources. As already discussed, these aspects are the Tsar, the Orthodox faith, the 'land'

(however that is seen) and Russia's attitude towards foreigners as the 'other'. The

concept of social class also seems relevant to some historians, although these tend to be

following Soviet historiographical guidelines. However, as I said, this is an

oversimplification as these concepts are frequently subdivided into other ideas (such

as the concept of the True Tsar), or combined (such as the requirement that the Tsar be

Orthodox). Furthermore, it is obvious that some aspects are more important in the

Russian mindset than others. However, this chapter has given me some guidelines for

what I need to look for in primary sources in chapter four. Can I therefore claim that

Russia's collective identity was indeed a national identity, or was its identity too diffuse

or too focused on 'traditional' aspects of culture such as Orthodoxy for nationhood to

be possible?

CHAPTER THREE:

HISTORY OF THE TIME OF TROUBLES

1. Russia in the sixteenth century

Let us now look in more detail at the history of the Time of Troubles. In particular, how did the events of the time contribute to Russian national identity and how did the people acknowledge this?

Following the collapse of Kievan Rus and the rise and fall of the Mongol Horde, the land of Eastern Europe was made up of a number of independent principalities. [1] Despite the fact that they were not united politically, the different states all acknowledged a common history in Kievan Rus and a common Orthodox metropolitan and therefore saw themselves as part of a Rusian whole. Gradually, from the fifteenth century onwards, many of these principalities were united under the Grand Prince of Moscow (although others became part of Lithuania). It is therefore not surprising that many regional differences were still extant at the end of the sixteenth century. It has even been said that Muscovy at the time was a 'compound structure'.[2] In day-to-day affairs, for example, it was a purely local society, with little interest being shown in events outside the observer's own village.[3] The greatest split was between the

---

[1] D Ostrowsky, 'The growth of Muscovy (1462-1533)' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 213-39, p. 215.

[2] S F Platonov (trans J S Alexander), *The Time of Troubles: A Historical Study of the Internal Crisis and Social Struggle in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Muscovy*, 2nd edn, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1985, first published 1970, p. 2.

[3] Kollmann, 1997, p. 38.

Novgorod Land in the North and the Muscovite Land in the South. Even after its

annexation, Novgorod preserved its separate identity.[1] After all, it had been an

oligarchy rather than an autocracy and was under the sphere of influence of the

Hanseatic League.[2] Therefore it had evolved separately from Moscow. It is precisely

because of these distinctions that the events of the Time of Troubles took place

differently in different parts of the state. For example, Moscow was occupied by the

Poles whereas Novgorod was under Swedish occupation.

The social structure of Russia on the eve of the Troubles is well-known. Apart

from the Tsar and his immediate family, the population was divided into three main

groups, described in terms of their relationship to the Tsar. These were the 'orphans'

(*siroty*), or peasantry, the 'slaves' (*kholopy*), or service aristocracy, and the 'pilgrims'

(*bogomol'tsy*), i.e. the churchmen.[3] The vast majority of the people were the peasants,

who farmed land belonging to the monarch.[4] They had no interest in politics and

simply trusted in the Tsar, as God's representative on Earth, to rule.[5] The rôle of the

service aristocracy was to serve the monarch. However, there were, naturally, varying

degrees of service. Administrators, for example, were seen as lower in rank than were

footmen.[6] The highest ranked of all were the boyars, who counselled the Tsar in his

rule.[7] Service relations were strictly controlled by the concept of *mestnichestvo*, which

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 76.

[2] D J Dunn, *The Catholic Church and Russia: Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, p. 5.

[3] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 6.

[4] R Hellie, 'The peasantry in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 286-97, p. 286.

[5] В Назаров, 'Россия на Распутье', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 6-10, p. 8.

[6] M Poe, 'The central government and its institutions' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 435-63, p. 439.

[7] ibid., p. 460.

defined a courtier's status on the basis of the rank and prominence of his ancestors.[1] This does not mean that rank was entirely set in stone although certainly it was difficult to move up the ladder.

The third group of people was the churchmen, who were themselves divided into two groups: parish clergy and monks or nuns. Parish clergy were little different from the peasantry amongst whom they lived, as they farmed lands in addition to their religious duties.[2] Many monks, on the other hand, came from an aristocratic background.[3] The only real alternative to marriage was joining a monastery.[4] Indeed, some monasteries even placed restrictions on the social class of people wishing to enter.[5] Since the Orthodox practice was to choose its church leaders from amongst the monks, this was where real power in the Church could be found. Religion was extremely important for all Russians; indeed religious icons were the main decoration of Russian homes and were even found in places not lived in, such as the barn or loft.[6] Even the common people donated to monasteries.[7] It is therefore hardly surprising that the Church had such an influence over the people and their lives. Even the Tsar acknowledged his inferiority to God in the Palm Sunday procession, where he went on foot, leading a horse on which the Metropolitan or, later, the Patriarch was seated.[8]

---

[1] S Bogatyrev, 'Ivan IV (1533-1584)' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 240-63, p. 254.

[2] D B Miller, 'The Orthodox Church' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 338-59, p. 339.

[3] ibid., p. 347.

[4] Н И Костомаровъ, *Очеркъ домашней жизни и нравовъ великорусскаго народа въ XVI и XVII столѣтіяхъ и Старинные земские соборы*, 3-е изд, Санктъ Петербургъ: М. М. Стасюлевичъ, 1887, p. 226.

[5] Miller, 2006, p. 348.

[6] Костомаровъ, 1887, p. 68.

[7] Miller, 2006, p. 344.

[8] M S Flier, 'Political ideas and rituals' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 387-408, p. 406.

The people of Russia were generally inward-looking. For example, they saw

everything abroad, or foreign, as the work of the Devil and therefore something to be

distrusted.[1] Religion, furthermore, separated Orthodox Russia from its neighbours.

Russia was the only major country in the world with a largely Orthodox population,

ruled by an Orthodox monarch.[2] Other Christian denominations were considered to be

heretical in some way[3] and people who lived abroad were therefore tarred with the

same brush. Whereas it was certainly acknowledged that Russia was not the only place

where Orthodox Christians lived (the Greek Orthodox relied on Russia as a source of

income,[4] for example), these people were criticised for living under the rule of heretical

faiths. The Russian mindset was that no true Orthodox Christian would ever submit to

a non-Orthodox ruler, which is precisely what the Orthodox outside of Russia had had

to do.[5]

The position of Russia in Eastern Europe meant that it shared borders with the

Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania and with Sweden. These are the two main

countries to appear in both primary and secondary sources and also the countries that

took the most advantage of the problems in Russia during the Time of Troubles.

Relationships with neither country were particularly good. Of course, religion played a

great part in this. Sweden was mostly Lutheran whereas the Commonwealth was

predominantly Catholic. Furthermore, the Orthodox population of the Commonwealth

had strong ties with Rome. The Council of Florence had theoretically united the

Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the middle of the fifteenth century. Although the

---

[1] Костомаровъ, 1887, p. 312.

[2] R O Crummey, 'The Orthodox Church and the schism' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 618-39, p. 619.

[3] Plokhy, 2006, p. 148.

[4] B A Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 155.

[5] Plokhy, 2006, p. 220.

Greek Orthodox Church abrogated the Union in 1484 and the Vatican became
uninterested in the idea, the Ruthenian Orthodox continued to try and revive the
Union.[1] This, coupled with the fact that Ruthenia later became a part of the
Commonwealth in the Union of Lublin, was a cause of the Union of Brest of 1596, in
which the Orthodox hierarchy submitted to Roman authority on condition that they
could keep their Orthodox methods of worship. Although formally, no condemnation of
the Union of Brest appeared until 1620,[2] in practice, this was seen as a threat to the
Russian Church and state. Uniate Christians were Catholic and therefore classed as
enemies.[3] It was feared that their influence would spread across the border. The
Russian Orthodox hierarchy was horrified that its own metropolitan was a supporter of
the Union of Florence and therefore he was arrested and replaced when he had
returned from the Council.[4] Certainly, the Vatican did not acknowledge Russia to be a
Christian country[5] and frequently sought to bring it under the Catholic umbrella.

The Orthodox part of the Commonwealth was also criticised by the Russians on
the grounds of ethnicity. Along with Russia, it could claim descent from Kievan Rus.[6]
In other words, the Commonwealth was not only a threat to religion but also to the
national history of Russia. During the years of Mongol rule, the title of Grand Prince of
Rus was given (by the Mongols) to the ruler of Moscow. In consequence, he was
decreed to be overlord of all Rus; to the detriment of anyone else claiming a similar
title.[7] This mindset lasted beyond the fall of the Mongols, when the Tsar in Moscow
still acknowledged himself to be overlord of all Rus. Other claims were seen as a threat

[1] Dunn, 2004, p. 8.
[2] Gudziak, 1998, p. 223.
[3] Dunn, 2004, p. 13.
[4] Hosking, 2002, p. 81.
[5] ibid., p. 5.
[6] Hosking, 1998, p. 28.
[7] Plokhy, 2006, p. 83.

to the Tsar's authority. Muscovites believed that only they were the true descendants

of the Rus.[1] This, naturally, caused stress between Muscovy and the Commonwealth.

For example, Ivan III called himself Grand Prince of All Rus – but the then Grand Prince

of Lithuania refused to acknowledge this title owing to his own claims on Rus, calling

him by his previous title of Grand Prince of Moscow.[2]

As Poland and Lithuania had always been classed as Muscovy's main

adversaries,[3] Sweden was seen more favourably. Sweden's Protestantism was not

classed as so much of a threat as Catholicism, because Protestants were anti-Catholic

and classed as so heretical to be beyond interest.[4] However, they had still been

opponents during the Livonian War and, naturally, were still seen with distrust for

being a foreign entity. The Russian viewpoint was such that all foreigners were

disliked.[5] There may have been a hierarchy of trust but the fact remains that all

foreigners were seen as detrimental.

2. <u>The causes of the Time of Troubles</u>

Scholarship varies as to the causes of the Time of Troubles. Most of the

historians discussed in chapter two believe the Time of Troubles to have primarily

internal causes. Indeed, most of these historians look to the dynastic crisis of the end of

the sixteenth century as sparking off the Troubles. With the loss of the old ruling

---

[1] ibid., p. 81.
[2] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[3] Bogatyrev, 2006, p. 257.
[4] Dunn, 2004, p. 17.
[5] Soloviev, 1989, p. 171.

dynasty, the traditional method of passing on power – by primogeniture – was no longer possible. Klyuchevskii echoes the viewpoint of many historians by saying that the end of the old dynasty had far-reaching consequences.[1] The lack of a ruler was a completely new experience for the Russian people. The new Tsar, Boris Godunov, was elected rather than born Tsar. He was disliked by some[2] – and seen as a false Tsar, which brought about the pretender phenomenon. False Dmitrii I based his claim to the throne on being the son of Ivan IV, meaning that he would be the true Tsar. In other words, he claimed that he was returning to Russia to take back his throne, illegally occupied by Boris.[3] Only by claiming to be the true Tsar could his campaign have been successful. Indeed, regardless of how much support he may have had, a pretender had no chance of fighting the legitimate ruler.

Pokrovskii, on the other hand, is not interested in the dynastic crisis. The peasants are oppressed regardless of who is on the throne. He sees the appearance of False Dmitrii I as a turning point, as he was a figurehead for a peasant revolt.[4] This is only natural, as Pokrovskii wrote his *History* on class lines. Without such a figurehead, the downtrodden peasants would not have been able to make their mark.

Two of the historians do, however, see the Time of Troubles as having foreign causes. However, even here the importance of False Dmitrii I is paramount. Both Kostomarov and Skrynnikov see him as a Polish minion. He entered Russia to further

---

[1] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 47.
[2] Березов, 1957, p. 22.
[3] Perrie, 1995, p. 63.
[4] Pokrovsky, 1968, p. 72.

Sigismund's plans to conquer Moscow.[1] It was the foreign support of the pretenders

which caused the Time of Troubles.[2]

Solov'ev acknowledges that nobody really understood exactly why the Time of

Troubles began,[3] although he puts it down to criticisms of Boris. All historians see the

importance of False Dmitrii I in the beginning of the Time of Troubles, whether he was

used by the Poles or the Russians to counteract the unpopular rule of Boris, or even

appeared of his own volition to fight against a popular ruler.   The fact remains that as

an alleged member of the old ruling dynasty, his claim to the throne was greater than

that of Boris – and therefore support was assured by those who believed his claim was

true.[4]

The question of whether Russia was divided horizontally (i.e. along class lines)

or vertically is also interesting, although here it is easy to determine the scholarship.

Soviet sources all see the Time of Troubles as a class conflict. Pokrovskii, for example,

acknowledges the confusion during the period as an opportunity for the peasants to

rise up against their oppressors – and the rest of the period was taken up by the

suppression of the revolt.[5] For Pokrovskii, the peasants and the upper classes never

fight on the same side. Skrynnikov, on the other hand, does see the different classes

fighting together – for example both peasants and boyars supported False Dmitrii I.[6]

However, even here, the period is seen as a class war, as the boyars were largely

supportive of the candidacy of Władysław whereas the peasants were firm believers in

---

[1] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 73.
[2] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. vii.
[3] Soloviev, 1988, p. 55.
[4] Маковский, 1967, p. 289.
[5] Pokrovsky, 1968, p. 76.
[6] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 83.

Russian independence.[1] The non-Soviet historians do not see the Time of Troubles in this way. However, here there are two viewpoints. The first is that the conflict is still arranged on class lines – although here that means that the upper classes are engaged in the conflict whereas the peasants are merely passive agents. This is, for example, the viewpoint of Zabelin, who saw the first part of the Time of Troubles as a conflict for power between rival rulers.[2] Eventually, the militia of Minin and Pozharskii was founded to restore national independence – but this body largely ignored the peasantry.[3]

The other viewpoint – and the most common – is that the conflict was vertical – in other words, people from all social classes fought on both sides. Dunning tells us that the pretenders all had support from all social classes.[4] Furthermore, unlike Skrynnikov, Dunning tells us that all social classes later worked to achieve national independence.[5] Hosking is of a similar opinion. He writes that Russians of all social classes were fighting together throughout the entire period, as the Time of Troubles did not cause class divisions.[6]

Since there were different viewpoints concerning the foundation of the Time of Troubles, it is only natural that there are also different viewpoints regarding when exactly it began. Shishkov believes that the Troubles had lasted almost 30 years by the time of the expulsion of the Poles in 1612,[7] suggesting that they may have started with the death of Ivan IV in 1584. Perrie, on the other hand, states that the Troubles only started in 1604 (and in Poland the previous year) with the advent of False Dmitrii I to

---

[1] ibid., p. 128.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 5.
[3] ibid., p. 36.
[4] Dunning, 2001, p. 112.
[5] ibid., p. 415.
[6] Hosking, 2002, p. 137.
[7] А Шишков, 'Очищение от смуты', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 4-5, p. 4.

challenge Boris Godunov.[1] It is interesting that Boris was elected to the throne in 1598

apparently with popular acclaim,[2] but within a few years the tide had turned against

him. Certainly, this power struggle began in 1584; however, there was no indication

that Fedor Ivanovich would not be able to produce an heir who was capable of ruling

the land himself.[3] Whether the Time of Troubles began before or during Boris's reign,

all historians agree that it had begun by his death. The appearance of False Dmitrii I

could have been a turning point, from relatively stable rule to open opposition, or it

could have been a natural progression of feelings towards an unpopular ruler.

3. **The boyar Tsars**

Regardless of varying opinions, however, we may certainly look to the death of

Ivan IV as having an important contribution. His son and heir Fedor Ivanovich was

both childless and incapable of ruling, so actual power was held by the Tsar's wife's

brother Boris Godunov. On Fedor's death in 1598, the Rurikid dynasty, which had

ruled in Moscow for hundreds of years died out and this placed the land into a new

position: having to elect a ruler rather than having him gain the throne by patrimony.

Indeed, it has been claimed that the most important royal death in Russian history up

to the seventeenth century was that of Fedor Ivanovich.[4] The popular mindset was

---

[1] M Perrie, 'The Time of Troubles (1603-1613) in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 409-31, p. 410.
[2] Platonov, 1985, p. 60.
[3] ibid., p. 57.
[4] Soloviev, 1988, p. 1.

that the monarch cannot be elected but must accede to the throne by birth.[1] However, it was obvious to many that Boris Godunov, who had been *de facto* Tsar during the reign of his brother-in-law should now be the *de jure* Tsar. The *zemsky sobor* was convened, which elected Boris Tsar, with the full approval of the people.[2] To counteract the idea that the Tsar cannot be elected, he was described as acceding by birth, owing to his family links with his predecessor.[3]

The beginning of Boris's reign was fairly uneventful. However, opposition to Boris arose at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is possible that this was due to the famine and economic crisis of the time.[4] This could be seen as a sign from God that the wrong man was on the throne! Another suggestion is that Boris failed to raise himself morally to the position of Tsar. As he still felt himself to be a boyar,[5] he was therefore criticised by other boyars. Indeed, by the rules of *mestnichestvo*, they should have had a stronger claim to the throne than he. It is possible of course that Boris had always been unpopular. Certainly, his love for foreigners was seen by some as being detrimental to the land.[6] The final problem was the appearance of a man in Poland who claimed to be Ivan IV's son Dmitrii.

Dmitrii Ivanovich was the youngest son of Ivan IV, born to his seventh wife in 1582. As the offspring of an uncanonical marriage (the Orthodox Church only permitted a man to marry three times), he was seen as illegitimate in the eyes of the law. However, as a member of the old ruling dynasty he could certainly put forward a claim to the throne. The real Dmitrii Ivanovich had apparently died in mysterious

---

[1] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 51.
[2] Platonov, 1985, p. 60.
[3] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol. 3, p. 51.
[4] A P Pavlov, 'Fedor Ivanovich and Boris Godunov (1584-1605)' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 264-85, p. 281.
[5] Soloviev, 1988, p. 51.
[6] Soloviev, 1988, p. 50.

circumstances during the reign of his half-brother Fedor. It was claimed that Boris, acknowledging Dmitrii as a threat to his own power, had ordered his assassination.[1] However, if this claimant really was Dmitrii, he could claim the throne as a member of the old dynasty.

Royal imposture was a frequent occurrence during the Time of Troubles. False Dmitrii I was merely the most successful of a number of men who claimed to be closely related to Ivan IV. Pretenders took the form of a member of the old dynasty in order to challenge the elected monarch on the grounds of hereditary succession.[2] The Russian belief in the true Tsar, chosen to rule by God, found an outlet in the phenomenon of royal pretenders. Indeed, they were the only way to challenge the current monarch. If the monarch was chosen by God, then rebelling against him was identical to rebelling against God, which was blasphemous and unthinkable. On the other hand, if a false Tsar had succeeded in gaining the throne, then it was necessary as part of the people's service to God for them to remove the false Tsar from power and install the true Tsar in his place. Indeed, since the population swore an oath to Boris on his accession in 1598, the only way for them to support False Dmitrii I was to break their oath to Boris.[3] This was something they were only prepared to do if False Dmitrii I really was who he claimed to be. As good Orthodox Christians, it was necessary for the Russian people to support the true Tsar.[4] For this reason, False Dmitrii I based his campaign for the throne primarily on his claim to be the true Tsar.[5] Naturally, his claim was taken seriously by some and he received a large amount of support. Following his

---

[1] Pavlov, 2006, p. 278.
[2] Perrie, 1995, p. 239.
[3] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 129.
[4] Dunning, 2001, p. 260.
[5] Perrie, 1995, p. 63.

appearance in Poland, he entered Russia in 1604, with considerable Polish support, in order to remove Boris from power.

Here is not the place to discuss False Dmitrii I in too much detail. Many scholars have debated his true identity and origins – whether he was a Polish minion or product of a Russian conspiracy against Boris. Certainly, he must have been able to stand on his own two feet, or the Poles would never have agreed to give him support.[1] Following his arrival in Russia, he gradually increased his support, although of course the Tsar retained his own allies. Patriarch Job, for example, remained a staunch defender of Boris and denounced the pretender for bringing foreign 'heretics' into Russia, thereby conspiring to destroy Orthodoxy.[2] Indeed, Boris seemed to be retaining the upper hand completely until his own death in the middle of 1605, after which his own army went over to the pretender. The idea of the Godunov family becoming the new ruling dynasty failed as the new Tsar Fedor Borisovich was killed in a coup only six weeks into his reign,[3] leaving the road open for the pretender to take the throne as Dmitrii Ivanovich.

Dmitrii's reign was short. His Polish support constantly worked against him, owing to the Russian distrust of foreigners. This and the fact that he was engaged to marry a Polish noblewoman made many believe that he was part of a Polish (or Roman) plot to convert Russia en masse to Catholicism.[4] Furthermore, his acts were not those of an Orthodox monarch. He was favourable to foreigners and foreign trade[5]

---

[1] Pokrovsky, 1968, p. 72.
[2] Soloviev, 1988, p. 84.
[3] Platonov, 1985, p. 76.
[4] Березов, 1957, p. 51.
[5] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 145.

and he was liberal in his religious views.[1] He received a great deal of hostility,

particularly from the boyars. Eventually, after he had been on the throne for less that a

year, False Dmitrii I was assassinated in a coup and one of the boyars, Vasilii Shuiskii,

became the new monarch.[2] False Dmitrii I was immediately discredited as a sorcerer

and a heretic,[3] both to show that his removal from office was in the best interests of

Russia and Orthodoxy and also to emphasise the claim of Shuiskii to the throne.

Vasilii Shuiskii was not a popular monarch. He had gained in popularity owing

to his support for Orthodoxy and his campaign against False Dmitrii I[4] and taken the

throne primarily because of his devotion to the old ways and because he was a

Rurikid.[5] However, this was not necessarily enough in the eyes of the people. Both

Godunovs and False Dmitrii I had claimed the throne with the support of the *zemsky*

sobor, which is something Shuiskii failed to do. He was therefore seen by some as

illegitimate as he was not elected in this way.[6] Indeed, the coup which raised Shuiskii

to power was primarily organised by himself. The people of Moscow complained that

they had not given their consent to this change in government![7] Like Boris, he was

blamed for the bad events of his reign.[8] However, Boris was given a few years' grace

before opposition to him appeared. Shuiskii was openly unpopular from the very

beginning. The Russian pretender phenomenon appeared once again. Shuiskii was

acknowledged as a false Tsar, meaning that the true Tsar was somewhere and had to be

---

[1] ibid., p. 151.
[2] Perrie, 2006, p. 415.
[3] Perrie, 1995, p. 103.
[4] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 43.
[5] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 246.
[6] Plokhy, 2006, p. 214.
[7] Soloviev, 1988, p. 136.
[8] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 449.

found and brought to the throne.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, that Shuiskii was

confronted almost immediately by the rumour that False Dmitrii I had in fact escaped

death and was gathering support to retake his throne.[2] In other words, Tsar Dmitrii

must be found. If False Dmitrii I had indeed died, a second False Dmitrii was required

to come forward and lead the campaign against Shuiskii.[3]

False Dmitrii II did not appear immediately, although opposition to Shuiskii

began early on. One of the first rebellions was the Bolotnikov revolt of 1606-7. Its

leader Ivan Bolotnikov claimed that Tsar Dmitrii had made him commander of his army

and appointed him to prepare the way for his return to the throne.[4] The revolt was

eventually crushed but it became clear that conflict would take place throughout the

whole of the reign. However, despite any hostility, Shuiskii remained on the throne. It

seems that his popular nephew Mikhail Skopin-Shuiskii was a great contributor to this,

as he was classed as a great national leader.[5] Although the Tsar was unpopular, Skopin

was not. It is possible that the people tolerated Shuiskii's reign on the grounds that he

was old and Skopin would therefore take the throne within a short time. This may

explain why an attempt to depose Shuiskii in 1609 was unsuccessful. The multitude

declared that they had sworn an oath to serve Shuiskii who was the God-given ruler

and therefore deposition was not an option.[6] However, Skopin died young in 1610,

depriving the Tsar of moral support.[7] Shuiskii was no longer seen to be the true Tsar.

However, it was unclear exactly who the true Tsar was. Some followed Shuiskii and

others False Dmitrii II or another of the many pretenders. Some people even believed

---

[1] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 58.
[2] Platonov, 1985, p. 89.
[3] Dunning, 2001, p. 259.
[4] Perrie, 2006, p. 416.
[5] Soloviev, 1989, p. 132.
[6] ibid., p. 91.
[7] Platonov, 1985, p. 118.

that none of these people was in fact the true Tsar and therefore they were able to change their allegiance between one and another often without breaking any moral code.[1] Eventually, Shuiskii lasted a few months on the throne following the death of his nephew before he was indeed deposed in July 1610. Unlike previous changes of government during the Time of Troubles, his overthrow did not result in the immediate election of a new Tsar and power was taken by the boyar council, known as the *semiboyarshchina*.[2]

4. <u>Foreign intervention</u>

The deposition of Shuiskii marks the beginning of the main focus of this thesis. The land, although *de jure* still a monarchy was in fact in a period of interregnum. It is interesting to see how the concept of a monarchy without a monarch was felt by the people at the time. After it had assumed power, the *semiboyarshchina* negotiated with Poland that Prince Władysław become the next Tsar.[3] After all, the experiment of having elected boyar Tsars had failed. For this reason, surely a foreigner – and indeed a foreigner of royal birth – should be an option.[4] Of course, since Russia was and intended to remain an Orthodox state, Władysław would be required to convert to Orthodoxy before being allowed to take the throne.[5]

---

[1] Soloviev, 1989, p. 27.
[2] Platonov, 1985, p. 122.
[3] Perrie, 2006, p. 424.
[4] В Ананьев, 'Семибоярщина', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 35-40, p. 37.
[5] Платоновъ, 1910, p. 437.

Russian support for a foreign monarch was at first relatively high. Boyar rivalry, for example, meant that no boyar would acknowledge another to be worthy of rising to become Tsar![1] Furthermore, the candidacy of Władysław was supported by the Patriarch (on condition of his conversion to Orthodoxy).[2] However, it soon became clear that the plan to elect a Polish monarch was not going to work. It became common knowledge that Władysław was unwilling to convert to Orthodoxy and, worse, that real power in the land would be held by his father King Sigismund.[3] In other words, this was tantamount to putting the land under Polish domination.

There had always been a foreign presence in Russia during the Time of Troubles. False Dmitrii I, for example, had had a large number of Poles in his army, who stayed in Russia rather than returning home when False Dmitrii I was assassinated. However, it is debatable whether the foreigners were seen as such a threat from the very beginning.

There are three main viewpoints here. The first is that Poland had always been a threat, at least since the beginning of the Time of Troubles. Naturally, this viewpoint is held by the two historians who believe the Time of Troubles to have a Polish foundation. It is also held by Solov'ev, who claims that, owing to Polish support for False Dmitrii I, the Russians had known of the Polish threat from the very beginning. For example, False Dmitrii I is criticised due to his acceptance of foreign customs.[4] The election of Władysław as Tsar did not change the situation.[5] Berezov, on the other

[1] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 163.
[2] С Антоненко, '«Смилуйтесь и умилитесь»', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 116-20, p. 118.
[3] Perrie, 2006, p. 424.
[4] Soloviev, 1988, p. 107.
[5] Soloviev, 1989, p. 121.

hand, saw False Dmitrii I as a Polish pawn,[1] who is used by Sigismund to take advantage of the unrest in Russia.

The second viewpoint is that the Poles, although clearly present, were not seen as relevant until the end of the reign of Shuiskii. Until this point, the Time of Troubles was seen as a wholly internal conflict. According to Zabelin, the offering of the throne to Władysław put Russia under Polish sovereignty,[2] which the people then had to fight against. Platonov waits even later before acknowledging the Poles as a threat. Władysław was a legitimate candidate as Tsar, subject to the terms of his election.[3] However, once Sigismund had made it clear he wanted power for himself, this was seen as a threat to national independence and therefore the Russians started fighting against the foreign threat.[4] Pokrovskii shows his Marxist view by claiming that the majority of the 'merchant capitalists' supported Polish overlordship to protect their own wealth.[5] It was at this point – when the Poles were invited into the land following the deposition of Shuiskii – that the Poles became a threat to the peasantry. Hosking's viewpoint is similar, although less ideologically biased. The election of Władysław took place to preserve the *status quo*.[6] When it became clear that Sigismund wanted power, the conflict took on the character of national liberation.[7]

The third historiographical viewpoint about the Poles is that they were not particularly relevant. Historians who saw the Time of Troubles as a wholly Russian conflict would, of course, acknowledge the rôle of the Poles – but would still see the final years of the Time of Troubles as identical to the beginning: as a quest for a suitable

---

[1] Березов, 1957, p. 39.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 66.
[3] Платоновъ, 1910, p. 437.
[4] ibid., p. 603.
[5] Pokrovsky, 1968, p. 78.
[6] Hosking, 2002, p. 138.
[7] Hosking, 1998, p. 61.

ruler. Although Klyuchevskii does see the years after 1610 as a struggle for

independence, this seems to have been achieved with little effort.[1] Indeed, he spends

more space discussing the election of Michael Romanov than the whole of the struggle

for independence. Makovskii, on the other hand, sees the Poles as another threat for

the peasantry to fight against.[2] To him, the foreign threat is no more hostile to the

peasants than was the threat they were already receiving from the Russian landowners.

Certainly, with the offering of power to Władysław, Sigismund saw his chance to

take control of Russia. As a devout Catholic, his attack was both political and religious:

he saw this as a chance to convert Russia to Catholicism.[3] He had already begun to

besiege Smolensk which was close to his own border. Owing to his own successes and

the fact that Russian power was failing, he already believed that he had conquered

Russia.[4] Throughout 1610, the number of Poles in Russia increased and they were

even able to occupy Moscow.

The foreign threat brought about the writing of many of the primary sources

discussed in chapter four. These are, for the most part, communications from one part

of Russia to another, informing their readers of what is going on and asking for aid.

Indeed, as early as November 1608, letters were being sent which called for men to

fight against the foreign interventionists.[5] The siege of Smolensk contributed to a

number of primary sources emphasising that the besieged would stand firm for their

city and their faith and refuse to surrender. Another common writer of sources was

Patriarch Hermogen. With the land in an interregnum, Hermogen was the nearest

---

[1] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 58.
[2] Маковский, 1967, p. 435.
[3] Perrie, 1995, p. 41.
[4] Platonov, 1985, p. 129.
[5] Н Ф Дробленкова, *Новая повесть о преславном российском царстве и современная ей агитационная патриотическая письменность*. Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР, 1960, p. 9.

thing that Russia had to a national leader.[1] Earlier in the Time of Troubles he had been

one of the first people to criticise False Dmitrii I openly.[2] Now, as Patriarch, he was one

of the guiding forces in the land. He would do anything to fight against any perceived

threat to Orthodoxy.[3] As such, he was seen in the *Novaya Povest'* as the ideal patriot

and the source of the national resistance movement.[4] Although at first a supporter of

the candidacy of Władysław, once he found out that Sigismund wanted the throne

instead, he began to speak out against the Poles.[5] This made him fall out with the

semiboyarshchina who placed him under house arrest – but he was still able to make

his opinions known through his writings.[6] His anti-Polish sentiments remained

throughout the rest of his life (he died, still in captivity, in 1612). For example, he was

willing to bless any campaign against a Polish Tsar.[7] His priests were the whole moral

and mental force in the land,[8] meaning that as their head, his authority was

considerable. Some writings of the time even gave the Patriarch more control than he

actually had, for example claiming him to be the initiating force of the national militia

which eventually expelled the Poles from Russia.[9] It is hardly surprising, therefore,

that there was a rise in religious feeling during the period of foreign intervention. It

was believed that the ruin of Moscow was due to the sins of the people,[10] meaning that

the only way that Russia could regain its own government was through prayer and

---

[1] Soloviev, 1989, p. 204.
[2] ibid., p. 118.
[3] Dunning, 2001, p. 214.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 116.
[5] Platonov, 1985, p. 131.
[6] Perrie, 2006, p. 425.
[7] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 59.
[8] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 21.
[9] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 124.
[10] Маковский, 1967, p. 408.

fasting.[1] Correspondence between the towns frequently exhorted readers to oppose the heretic Poles and stand up for Orthodoxy.[2]

It is interesting that, according to the letters that survive, local interests usually took second place to wider national interests.[3] This is at odds to the fact that day-to-day life before the Time of Troubles was a primarily local affair. It is interesting, therefore, that the threat to the land was able to unite its population. Many primary sources, for example the *Novaya Povest'*, are very clear as to who is a patriot and who is an enemy.[4]

Poland was not the only foreign threat to Russia during the Time of Troubles. Many European monarchs, even as far West as James I of England, considered taking advantage of Russia's fall.[5] However, the other state which actually occupied Russia was Sweden. As Poland and Sweden were mutual enemies, Charles IX of Sweden saw Sigismund's military successes in Russia as Swedish failure.[6] In 1609 he had entered into an alliance with Shuiskii against the Poles[7] Indeed, the people of Novgorod were informed by Charles IX that Polish domination would ruin both Russia and Orthodoxy; for this reason Swedish forces were welcomed into Novgorod.[8] After Sigismund had taken power in Moscow, the Swedes simply stayed where they were and took advantage of the problems that Russia was going through. With opposition to Russian sovereignty on two fronts, something had to be done.

---

[1] Платоновъ, 1910, p. 490.
[2] Soloviev, 1989, p. 203.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 16.
[4] ibid., p. 141.
[5] Dunning, 2001, p. 423.
[6] Platonov, 1985, p. 100
[7] ibid., p. 110.
[8] Soloviev, 1989, p. 98.

5. <u>National liberation</u>

Of course, opposition to the foreigners had always existed – but it was unclear exactly how to organise this opposition. For example, until the death of False Dmitrii II in December 1610, some people saw him as the leader of any opposition whilst others refused to have anything to do with him.[1] Eventually, the people of Nizhnii Novgorod realised that something had to be done.[2] The reason why the national liberation movement came from Nizhnii Novgorod is due to the history of the Time of Troubles itself. Up to the election of Władysław, the majority of the Troubles had been a struggle for the throne in Moscow. The lands to the West, between Moscow and Poland, had been brought into this struggle but the lands to the East, where Nizhnii Novgorod is situated, had not been affected.[3] In other words, when Moscow fell, Nizhnii Novgorod was still prosperous and free of foreign intervention. In 1611, Lyapunov, the governor of Ryazan, began to recruit a militia from various towns, including Nizhnii Novgorod, with the goal of liberating Moscow and restoring a Russian Tsar to the throne.[4] However, this militia was disunited, both in its choice of leader and its choice of Tsar. For example, it had absorbed the remnant of the followers of False Dmitrii II. The disunity brought about the murder of Lyapunov later in 1611 and the collapse of his militia.[5] This was coupled with news of the fall of Smolensk. The national liberation movement was strengthened by hearing first-hand of the defence of Smolensk[6] and its fall was a clear blow. These events led to what Lyubomirov calls the worst part of the

---

[1] Perrie, 2006, p. 425.
[2] Любомиров, 1939, p. 45.
[3] ibid., p. 31.
[4] Platonov, 1985, p. 134
[5] Perrie, 2006, p. 426.
[6] Маковский, 1967, p. 440.

Time of Troubles. Many cities had fallen and the land was overrun by foreign

invaders.[1] Indeed, Sigismund already believed that his conquest of Russia was largely

complete.[2] Furthermore, there was nobody like Lyapunov whom the people could look

to as their leader, [3] except for Hermogen and he was in prison and incapable of leading

an army. However, it became clear that with divisions in the land, it was impossible for

a national liberation movement to achieve its goals. The blood-letting could only stop if

all the people were united.[4] One interesting occurrence during the Time of Troubles

was the emergence of a new mindset amongst the Russians. Whereas beforehand, only

the concepts of ruler and Church existed, this was now joined by the idea of the

fatherland and the ability to betray it.[5] Nizhnii Novgorod was described as the place

where the 'saviours of the Fatherland' began their campaign.[6] Since it remained free of

foreign intervention, a force for national liberation could once again be stirred into

action in that town – and this indeed took place in late 1611.[7]

Minin, a butcher from Nizhnii Novgorod, had been receiving proclamations from

the Patriarch and other sources.[8] He was the first person to realise exactly how

Orthodoxy and Russia could be preserved, although of course many people of the time

knew that this is what needed to be done.[9] He was able to use his position in the town

and the plight of the Russians[10] in succeeding in persuading his fellow townsmen that

something had to be done, which led to the formation of a second militia, led by

---

[1] Любомиров, 1939, p. 44.
[2] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 563.
[3] Platonov, 1985, p. 143.
[4] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 88.
[5] Tolz, 2001, p. 5.
[6] Любомиров, 1939, p. 48.
[7] ibid., p. 45.
[8] Perrie, 2006, p. 427.
[9] С Платонов, 'Ополчение Второе. Победное', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 79-84, p. 82.
[10] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 28.

Pozharskii, who had been one of Lyapunov's generals.[1] Pozharskii was elected by all

the people of Nizhnii Novgorod as their military leader.[2] Since the threat was to the

Orthodox Church, the state, Moscow and the Russian people themselves,[3] the whole

movement understood that, as Orthodox Christians, they needed to liberate the land

from their enemies, or else die in the process.[4] Indeed, ordinary Russians regarded this

as a definite religious struggle.[5] This is not surprising as the predominant unifying

force was indeed the Orthodox Church.[6] Hence, Russians came to the defence of

Orthodoxy and Holy Russia.[7] The other aim of the militia was to restore a Tsar to the

throne in Moscow. The militia vowed to 'serve whomever the Lord God grants'.[8]

Pozharskii established a provisional government in Yaroslavl',[9] where he was able to

draw up further support for himself, discuss the election of a new monarch and plan his

campaign on Moscow.[10] All supporters of the old order were moved by their

knowledge of the militia and the influence of Minin and Pozharskii towards the new

movement.[11] Indeed, Pozharskii and his men gained prestige almost overnight for

fighting against the hated foreigners.[12] It was decided that Moscow should be taken

back from the Poles before a Tsar could be elected. Late in 1612, following the capture

of Moscow itself, the Poles in the Kremlin surrendered and returned the capital of

Russia to Russian hands.[13] The national militia received no threats from the Swedish

---

[1] Platonov, 1985, p. 147.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 34.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 79.
[4] Любомиров, 1939, p. 73.
[5] Dunning, 2001, p. 416.
[6] Hosking, 2002, p. 139.
[7] Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 81.
[8] Perrie, 1995, p. 208.
[9] Perrie, 2006, p. 427.
[10] ibid., p. 428.
[11] Platonov, 1985, p. 149.
[12] Dunning, 2001, p. 416.
[13] Platonov, 1985, p. 153.

forces in Russia as Pozharskii had promised that Prince Charles Philip (Karl Filip)

would be put forward as a candidate for the new Tsar in exchange for peace.[1]

6. <u>Conclusion</u>

The reconquest of Moscow and the Kremlin was classed as one of Russia's

national triumphs.[2] However, the Poles still posed a threat and Władysław still had a

claim to the throne. It was therefore imperative that a new monarch be elected

quickly.[3] Only a Tsar elected by the authority of the whole state would have sufficient

authority to be an adversary of Władysław.[4] For this reason, Pozharskii sent for

representatives from all Russian towns to form the council which would elect the new

monarch.[5] It was decided quickly that no foreigner should be a candidate. Russia had

had enough of foreign intervention and the experience of Władysław had shown them

that only a native Russian would be suitable.[6] In 1613, this council elected Michael

Romanov Tsar. His election was less that he was the people's choice and more due to

his family connection to the old ruling dynasty.[7] After all, the last Tsar of the old

dynasty, Fedor Ivanovich, had Romanov blood as his mother was a Romanov. In the

end, the election of the new monarch – and the foundation of the dynasty which would

---

[1] Perrie, 2006, p. 428.
[2] Soloviev, 1989, p. 284.
[3] Платонов, 2005, p. 84.
[4] Любомиров, 1939, p. 87.
[5] Platonov, 1985, p. 155.
[6] Любомиров, 1939, p. 228.
[7] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 52.

rule Russia for over 300 years – was a direct consequence of the existence of the Nizhnii Novgorod militia.[1]

It is interesting that the concept of monarchical rule itself was not contested during the Time of Troubles.[2] The monarch was seen as too important a figure to alter, even during this time of change. The people believed that Russia must be ruined without a sovereign.[3] It is therefore not surprising that the election of Michael Romanov took place before hostilities ceased. Although his election is normally classed as the end of the Time of Troubles,[4] Władysław still claimed the throne and Russia was still technically at war with both Poland and Sweden. Indeed, since Novgorod was being occupied by Sweden in 1613, it was unable to participate in the election of Michael Romanov,[5] meaning that the new Tsar was not chosen by the 'whole land' after all. Peace was concluded with Sweden in 1617 and with Poland the following year, although the terms of the peace treaty did mean that Russia lost territory to these countries,[6] which is something Patriarch Hermogen campaigned vigorously against.[7] It was only in 1634, following the accession of Władysław to the throne of his father, that he renounced his claim to the Russian throne.[8] Having said this, 1613 is an appropriate time to end the Time of Troubles. The Russian people had been able to rescue the Kremlin and remove their native land from foreign hands[9] and therefore the threat was considerably lessened. The provisional government of Pozharskii was able to become the actual government and the land was able to return to how it had been.

[1] Любомиров, 1939, p. 231.
[2] Perrie, 2006, p. 430.
[3] Soloviev, 1989, p. 288.
[4] Platonov, 1985, p. 164.
[5] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[6] Perrie, 2006, p. 429.
[7] Антоненко, 2005, p. 118-9.
[8] Perrie, 2006, p. 430.
[9] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 12.

Furthermore, with the election of a Russian monarch, the land was no longer under an

interregnum. Since one of the aims of this thesis is to see how the Russians felt when

there was no Tsar, this cannot be tested beyond 1613.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY ACCORDING TO PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Use of primary sources

Since my aim in this thesis is to discuss Russian national identity during the Time of Troubles, the reading of texts written at the time is the most important way of determining this. The usual way of determining identity – asking people with a questionnaire – is of course impossible, so using primary sources is perhaps the next best thing. The problem here is that sources were written according to the writer's will and not mine – and will therefore not necessarily correspond to my own trains of thought. People do not automatically write down their own identity![1] Nevertheless, by reading between the lines and noting concepts which are repeated amongst texts by different authors I may be able to come to some conclusion. More importantly, can I gain the same conclusions from reading primary sources as from reading secondary sources, as noted in chapter two? Petitions and letters perhaps represent the best sources to use. Firstly, they are relatively common and, furthermore, they represent the entire social range and can therefore be seen as giving views from more than one

---

[1] A Fletcher, 'The First Century of English Protestantism and the Growth of National Identity' in S Mews (ed), *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History 18, Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1982, pp. 309-17, p. 309.

social class,[1] although of course they will be biased towards the writers' own opinions. Certainly, the only way to determine historical national identity is to read texts of the time and note down how the writers describe themselves. Although this method is not perfect, there is no better way of doing it as it is impossible to interview the writers.

Let us continue using the same points I looked at in the second part of chapter two. Therefore, I will look at ideas about the land, the 'other', Orthodoxy and the Tsar (or True Tsar). However, I need to go into more details about these. For example, to discuss religion I need to look at the Russians' viewpoints both of the Orthodox faith and also other faiths, whether Christian or not. In addition to these I will look more widely at how the Russians describe themselves and non-Russians. For stylistic reasons, the terms will not be looked at in the same order as they were in chapter two. The concept of the 'land' for example, is so tied in with the Tsar that they will be discussed together.

The texts which I have used date mostly to the period I am focusing on – that is the years between 1610 and 1613 inclusive. My two largest and most comprehensive sources are the volumes of *Akty Arkheograficheskoi Ekspeditsiei* and *Akty Istoricheskie*. These two collections contain many primary sources, dating back to the period of Mongol overlordship and continuing through to the Romanov era. I have looked at all the sources for the years stated. These are on-the-whole short texts, for example letters between towns or proclamations from a wide range of people, for example noblemen, churchmen or claimants to the throne. As such, these sources were generally written with a single aim in mind. The editors of the two collections have given each source a title, explaining the writer, addressee and aim, although of course

---

[1] Kollmann, 1997, p. 35.

these did not exist in the original. However, the texts appear as they do in the original

and only limited notes are provided. As these two collections give a large number of

sources from a number of backgrounds, they are ideal when searching for information.

I have also used the letters and proclamations reproduced as appendices in the

books by Zabelin and Lyubomirov.   These sources do not seem to exist in *AAE* or *AI*.

Notes are given pointing to source of the original text and the library in which this may

be found. Lyubomirov has given limited notes and corrections but Zabelin has not.

Again, these texts date from 1611-13, except for a couple of sources which deal with the

early years of Michael Romanov's reign. Since I used the two writers' monographs as

secondary sources, it goes without saying that any primary sources included as

appendices are also consulted.

Further letters and proclamations have been found in the volume by

Droblenkova. These are all taken from *AAE* and are reproduced with limited notes and

corrections as part of her monograph on the *Novaya Povest'*. Droblenkova sees all these

texts as being a form of *agitatsiya*, in other words these texts were written for the

express purpose of enticing the readers to revolt against the foreign threat. For this

reason, subjects such as loyalty to Russia are common to all the texts. The letters and

proclamations mostly date to 1611, although one is slightly earlier. The *Novaya Povest'*

dates to late 1610 or early 1611[1] and is a longer piece of *agitatsiya*. Its title specifically

describes Russia as 'most glorious' ('преславном') and mentions the 'steadfast defence'

('крепком стоянии') of Smolensk.[2] Its author is unknown – but he makes frequent

references to the power of God and the power of the Russian people to restore Russian

independence.

---

[1] *Pamyatniki*, p. 546.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 189.

The *Novaya Povest'* can also be found in *Pamyatniki Literatury Drevnei Rusi*, as can the other two sources I have used. The first is the *Pisanie Skopina-Shuiskogo*. This dates to late 1612[1] and is essentially an account of the death of Mikhail Skopin-Shuiskii, who died in early 1610. However, it is clearly a religious rather than secular work. It may be seen as having more in common with a hagiography rather than a biography. Indeed, its use of religious imagery is obvious. The *Pisanie Skopina-Shuiskogo* contains little in the sense of *agitatsiya* or news about the Polish threat; however, it is still a useful work as it contains viewpoints of people at the time. The other work is the *Plach* which also dates to late 1612.[2] It is also primarily a religious work. In its title it claims to need hearing by its intended audience, rather than their reading it. Indeed, it is described as a sermon for the benefit of those who hear it ('Въ ползу и наказание послушающим').[3] Its religious imagery is obvious. Unlike the *agitatsiya* mentioned above, which believe that the foreign threat can be counteracted easily with the use of might and prayer, the *Plach* is more negative. Although its title does refer to the Muscovite State as 'most great and most bright' ('превысокаго и пресвѣтлѣйшаго'), the writer has already accepted, as the title makes clear, that Moscow has fallen to the foreigners, naming its capture and final ruin ('о плѣнении и о конечном разорении').[4] To the writer of the *Plach*, Moscow is to be mourned. However, there is still hope, as God is still in control. The people can do nothing more than pray that God will make things right again.[5]

---

[1] *Pamyatniki*, p. 555.
[2] ibid., p. 563.
[3] ibid., p. 130.
[4] ibid., p. 130.
[5] ibid., p. 144.

2. <u>Russia – the name of the land</u>

Let us now turn to the primary sources mentioned above. Before looking in more detail at the aspects of common identity discussed in chapter two, I would like to look more generally at how they describe the Russian people. In other words, since all the primary sources were written by Russians, the question to be answered is how the Russians saw themselves. To begin with, let us look at the name of the state. Many countries have the same name as that of their dominant ethnic group, for example England (home of the English), France (home of the French) and Germany (home of the Germans). Whether the ethnic group takes its name from the country, or the country from the ethnic group, is a more difficult question to answer. Certainly, if the country has the same name as its ethnic group, it seems far more likely that the people class that land as their homeland (perhaps to the detriment of other ethnicities) than if the country's name is different.

Non-Russian writers, especially modern ones, tend to call the land Muscovy.[1] The question is whether this name is used by the Russians. Certainly before the conquest of Kazan' in 1552, Muscovy could have been an appropriate name. The Tatar Khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan' – what we now see as an integral part of European Russia – were under foreign rule and even what was ruled from Moscow had not been Muscovite for long. The Grand Prince of Moscow claimed all the land of Kievan Rus so took it upon himself to conquer the independent principalities around his own, such as

---

[1] Hosking still refers to the land as Muscovy at the end of the seventeenth century: Hosking, 1998, p. 75.

Novgorod and Ryazan.[1] It is as this point where we can say that 'Muscovy' began its transition to become 'Russia'.

It seems likely that during the Time of Troubles, the former independent nature of the states of Muscovy was still very forward in the minds of the people. The *Plach* even refers to Russian Tsardoms in the plural, emphasising that God will spare the remnant of the Russian Tsardoms ('и останокъ бы росъсииских царствъ').[2] We remember that the Tatar rulers of Kazan' and Astrakhan' were called Tsars in Russian. Whereas this form of writing is rare, certainly the former princedoms are referred to individually in a similar way as Moscow. A treaty between Novgorod and the Swede de la Gardie dated Spring 1611, therefore during the period of Swedish occupation there, refers to the *gosudarstva* of Novgorod and Moscow, suggesting they are separate.[3] Elsewhere, in a letter from Kazan' to Perm' of June 1611, Kazan' is referred to as a Great State ('великое государьство Казанское').[4] This is in my mind different from calling the area around, say, Novgorod the Land of Novgorod as this could purely refer to a region which looks to Novgorod as its main settlement. The word *gosudarstvo* is connected etymologically to the word *gosudar'* – sovereign – and suggests an independent or semi-independent region with its own political leadership. According to Plokhy, the term *gosudartvo* retained the two linked meanings of the Tsar's rule and his realm.[5] Although it is true that national government was not strong during the Time of Troubles, certainly Kazan' and Vladimir, for example still looked to Moscow as the seat of government and had not claimed their independence. Novgorod was more

---

[1] А Хорошкевич, 'Россия или Московия?', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 53-7, p. 54.
[2] *Pamyatniki*, p. 144.
[3] AAE II, № 187, pp. 317-18.
[4] AAE II, № 188, pp. 318-27.
[5] Plokhy, 2006, p. 213.

complicated, as it was under Swedish rather than Polish occupation as Moscow was. For this reason, it claimed to be a *gosudarstvo* under Swedish protection.[1] However, it is not clear whether it in fact claimed independence. Perhaps the term *gosudarstvo* refers back to the time when these two cities were indeed independent. According to Khoroshkevich, this fact remained strong in the minds of the inhabitants.[2]

Sometimes, a list is written where more than one *gosudarstvo* appears. For example, in an attachment to a letter written from Ustyug to Vychegodsk in June 1612, the text of the letter makes it clear that it is written to people of the Moscow and Kazan' states. The letter is addressed to, amongst other people, 'всѣхъ чиновъ всякимъ людемъ всѣхъ городовъ Московского и Казанского государьства'.[3] This fact goes together with what is written above – that the former independence of Moscow and Kazan' is remembered in the popular mindset. However, sometimes something more interesting is written. In another attachment to the same letter, incidentally written after Władysław has been offered the throne, the writer talks about the election of a new Tsar, who will rule 'на Владимерскомъ и на Московскомъ и на всѣхъ великихъ государствахъ Росийского царьства'.[4] Two things can be seen in this statement. Firstly, Vladimir is mentioned before Moscow, emphasising its priority to Moscow. This is not too surprising. Vladimir was seat of both the Grand Prince and the Church until both moved to Moscow in the fourteenth century. Even later, the ruler was called Grand Prince of Vladimir rather than Grand Prince of Moscow.[5] The other striking thing is that Vladimir, Moscow and the other states are all classed as parts of the

---

[1] ibid., p. 215.
[2] Хорошкевич, 2005, p. 56.
[3] AAE II, № 208, pp. 352-6.
[4] AAE II, № 208, pp. 352-6.
[5] R O Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613*, London: Longman, 1987, p. 54.

Russian Tsardom. Although they describe themselves as *gosudarstva*, as formerly

separate states,[1] they acknowledged that they were now a single political entity under

a single Tsar – and the name of this entity was the Russian Tsardom. It seems,

therefore that the foreign practice of referring to the land as Muscovy is inaccurate and

that Russia was the name of the land from its early existence. According to

Khoroshkevich, the official name of the state was *Rossiiskoe tsarstvo* from the

enthronement of Ivan IV as Tsar – and the prefix *velikoe* was added later in his reign.[2]

Whereas the word 'Tsardom' seems to appear most frequently, at least as long

as the land has a ruler, it is not always used. The *Novaya Povest'*, for example, often

refers to 'Росийское государьство'.[3] There seem to be no misunderstandings

between calling Russia a state and between calling, say, Moscow a state. I suppose that

both were ruled by a sovereign – the same sovereign in fact – and the memory of

Moscow's former existence as a single entity kept the fact alive that it was a state.

Having stated that Russia was seen as either a Tsardom or state as long as it had

a sovereign, the question then arises what happened during the interregnum. A

gosudarstvo must logically have a *gosudar'*! The people acknowledged this merely

changed the description of their land in their writings, although they are not always

consistent. A letter written in June 1611 from Kazan' to Perm' is written from the

towns of the 'Російскія державы'.[4] The word *gosudarstvo* is replaced by *derzhava*

owing to the fact there was no sovereign. During the period 1611-13 when there was

no Russian Tsar, this form of description seems to be most used. Certainly, the writers

are acknowledging their lack of leadership but refusing to give up their sovereignty!

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 215.
[2] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 190.
[4] ААЕ II, № 188, pp. 318-27.

They are certainly claiming their identity here as being separate from the invading

powers. Russia is still a power, even if it is not a Tsardom or princedom. However, the

other terms mentioned above are still sometimes used during this period, for example

by supporters of Władysław who do not acknowledge the land to be leaderless.

Giving the name of the land an adjectival form as above (Russian State, Russian

Power, etc.) is not the only way the country is described. Occasionally the name

appears as a noun: Russia. This formula does not exist at all at first and becomes more

popular as time goes on. Tolz tells us that the 'modern name *Rossiia*' appeared for the

first time during the seventeenth century, replacing older names such as those

mentioned above.[1] However, the noun is always less used than the adjectival form. For

example, in a letter of April 1612 – and therefore dating to the very beginning of the

national militia – from Pozharskii and his men of war to Vychegodsk, the writer

reminds the readers of the reign of Boris Godunov, who reigned over 'Великую

Росиею'.[2] The coupling of the word 'Great' with any title of the Russian state is

extremely common. Elsewhere, in an open letter to Trubetskoi and Pozharskii, dated

1612, the writer acknowledges that his people are enduring, together with everyone

'по всей Росии'.[3] As I stated in chapter one, the use of a noun to describe a land is far

more significant than the use of an adjective. The 'Russian Tsardom' is merely a land

populated by 'Russians'. Its borders can change according to migration and the

homeland can never be completely fixed. By calling the land 'Russia', a more political

entity has been set up. The land is no longer defined in terms of its people but the

people in terms of the land. Indeed, Plokhy makes the distinction between *Rossiiskaya*

---

[1] Tolz, 2001, p. 5.
[2] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[3] AAE II, № 219, pp. 369-74.

tsarstvo, or similar, which was the official name of the state and specifically referred to the Tsar's realm, and *Rossiya*, or similar, which specifically referred to the territory or population.[1]

Occasionally the 'old' term – *Rus'* – rather than the 'new' term – *Ros[s]iya* – is used. However, this term is less frequent still. According to Plokhy, *Rossiya* is merely the Greek-influenced form of *Rus'*.[2] Perhaps the classical influence was spreading throughout Eastern Europe at the time. Certainly, the term *Rus'* is a hangover from Kievan Rus, from which the Russian State claimed descent. Indeed, Ivan III called himself 'государь всея Руси', despite the fact that the Western part of Kievan Rus was at the time part of Lithuania.[3] A letter written in September 1611 to Swedish 'voevodas' describes the land being fought over as *Rus'*, stating that 'Germans'[4] 'на Русь воевати ходили'.[5] It is unclear exactly why this is done. Sweden had no claim to the legacy of Kievan Rus so the writer would not have been antagonising his readers in this way. However, the Swedes must have known of the rival Muscovite and Lithuanian claims to Kievan Rus. Perhaps the object of the letter was to emphasise Muscovite claims to the area, especially considering Lithuanian-Swedish relations were poor, or to emphasise that the area fought over was more than just Russia. The other option is that the 'old' name of the land was more used by the foreigners. Considering that the letter is written from boyars 'Великія Російскія державы Московскаго государства',[6] certainly there does seem to be a difference between 'Rus' and 'Russia',

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 213.
[2] S Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, Oxford: OUP, 2001, p. 14.
[3] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[4] i.e Swedes.
[5] AAE II, № 195, pp. 334-5.
[6] The wording of this common formula is very interesting and will be discussed below.

suggesting that it is Rus that is being fought over, rather than Russia. Whatever the answer, the term *Rus'* is very rarely found and therefore can be seen as insignificant.

It must be remembered that in modern Russian, two adjectival forms exist: *russkii* and *rossiiskii*, the former denoting the people as an ethnic group; the second denoting the land as a multi-ethnic state.[1] Almost always – but not entirely – the latter is used in writings of the Time of Troubles. The former does exist, however. One example is given in a letter to the Swedes dated August 1611 on the subject of a possible Swedish Tsar. It states that the Swedes do not want to wage war 'на Рускую землю'.[2] It is debateable, however, whether this fact is significant. First of all, the writers of the time did not differentiate between the two adjectives as is done today.[3] Secondly, there was no fixed spelling at the time so an unusual spelling of one word could be mistaken for a spelling of the other. Personally, I think that emphasising the 'ethnic' and 'civil' adjectives is reading too much into a writer. Indeed, this can be seen as anachronistic for the period. If the official name of the state following the death of Ivan IV was 'Великая Российская царство',[4] it is of course most likely that this form of the adjective would be most used.

The question now arises whether more than one formula is used together. I have already discussed when more than one town appears in a list – but Moscow and Russia also appear together from time to time. The most common combined formula has been used above and can also be found, for example, in a proclamation by Trubetskoi and Zarutskii of August 1611, after the death of Lyapunov, which states that is was written from various social ranks 'Великія Російскія державы Московского

---

[1] Hosking, 1998, p. xix.
[2] AAE II, № 193, pp. 331-2.
[3] Personal communication from Vera Tolz, 31st January 2007.
[4] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.

государства'.[1] This poses a problem. Why would these people be emphasising the fact

that they are from the Moscow state of the Great Russian power? The answer lies in

the politics of the Time of Troubles. Both the Polish and Swedish kings had taken

advantage of the situation in Russia to invade. Naturally, each king invaded that part of

Russia closest to his own country, meaning that Sigismund III of Poland occupied

Moscow whereas Charles IX of Sweden occupied Novgorod. When a militia was formed

in Nizhnii Novgorod to liberate the land from the invaders, it technically only had the

support of the area resisting Polish attack.[2] This explains why one writer from

Novgorod, quoted in a letter from Ustyug to Vychegodsk in July 1612 is so adamant that

Novgorod is not split off from the Russian state. In his opinion, 'Великій Новгородъ

отъ Московскаго государьства николи отлученъ былъ ни въ которое время'. He

goes on to emphasise the fact that Russia is indivisible, stating 'быти съ нами въ

любви и въ соединеніѣ подъ одного Государя рукою'.[3] However, as the militia only

represented the one half of the land, it could only issue letters and proclamations from

that half. In other words, the militia needed to make it clear in its proclamations that it

only controlled the Moscow half of the land. Novgorod had to be mentioned

separately.[4] It seems that the writers were oversimplifying, or perhaps merely

referring to each half of the land by its most important town. Khoroshkevich claims

that it was truly only the former State of Moscow which was under the control of the

'national' militia.[5] However, she is oversimplifying here, as the militia was founded in

Nizhnii Novgorod which was originally part of the State of Suzdal'. However, Nizhnii

---

[1] AAE II, № 192, p. 331.
[2] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[3] AAE II, № 210, pp. 356-60.
[4] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.
[5] ibid., p. 40.

Novgorod became ruled from Moscow in 1391[1] whereas Novgorod was not conquered until 1478.[2] Perhaps this period explains why the two towns were seen so differently. Certainly, Novgorod had been the centre of its region whereas Nizhnii Novgorod had always looked elsewhere.

Moscow, as the seat of both the Tsar and the Patriarch, was obviously the most important place in Russia and it is hardly surprising that it appears most frequently of all places mentioned in the sources. Its use in the sources may well be seen as symbolic – representing the seat of government. For example, in a proclamation to Trubetskoi, the writer makes it clear that Sigismund, by occupying the 'Московское государство', can take the great 'Росиское государство'.[3] Certainly, when the concept of the new monarch is mentioned, the writers can emphasise that he will be Tsar 'на Московское государьство'.[4] In other words, his seat will be in Moscow but he will rule over the whole land – not just a part of it. It could well be for this reason that Moscow is used to describe the southern half of the land as mentioned in the previous paragraph and why writers are able to use phrases like 'на Московское государьство и на всѣ государьства Російского царьства'[5] Moscow is clearly the most important out of all the states which make up Russia, so it is the only one that needs to be mentioned specifically. It follows naturally that the emphasis of many texts is the liberation of Moscow. One example was written in February 1611 from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda. The writer demands that Russian people go 'ко царьствущему граду

---

[1] J Martin, 'The emergence of Moscow (1359-1462)' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 158-87, p. 168.
[2] V L Ianin, 'Medieval Novgorod' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 188-210, p. 206.
[3] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 289.
[4] AAE II, № 210, pp. 356-60, dated July 1611.
[5] AAE II, № 188, pp. 318-27, dated June 1611.

Москвѣ на Полскихъ и на Литовскихъ людей пошли'.[1] Once the Russians had recaptured this town, the rest of the land would follow naturally as it could be ruled from nowhere else.

However, there are a few places where the use of Moscow is ambiguous – where it seems to represent more than just a city or the seat of national government. In a letter from Vychegodsk to Perm' of 1611, the writer states that his people have followed the advice of 'всей земли Московского государства'.[2] It is unclear whether he is merely emphasising the number of people from all around Moscow – or whether he is using Moscow as a synonym for Russia. Elsewhere, in the *Pisanie Skopina-Shuiskogo*, the writer claims that Skopin-Shuiskii was mourned by the people of 'всего Московского царства'.[3] Moscow as an independent state was never the seat of a Tsar – merely a Grand Prince. There are a number of possibilities here. The writer could have been acknowledging that the rest of Russia had already been lost to the Poles and therefore Moscow was all that was left. This seems unlikely as Skopin was well-known outside of Moscow. Alternatively, it could be that only Moscow mourned him – other towns were too far away. I do not wish to state that here Moscow is used as a synonym for Russia but of course it is possible. Perhaps preferring to stay neutral, the editor of the text does not comment on this point in the notes! It is possible of course the writer is emphasising the fact that the sovereign ruling over Moscow – and beyond – is not merely a *gosudar'* but a *tsar'* and therefore the term *gosudarstvo* is replaced by *tsarstvo*. The writer is elevating the position of Moscow as the seat of a Tsar.

---

[1] AAE II, № 175, p. 296.
[2] AAE II, № 199, p. 337.
[3] *Pamyatniki*, p. 66.

According to Plokhy, the terms 'Московское государство', 'Московское царство', 'Российское царство', 'Российское государство' and 'Российская держава' were all used, more-or-less synonymously, to describe the entire state.[1] For this reason, we should not be surprised if a term like 'Moscow' is used when we would expect a term like 'Russia'. However, Khoroshkevich does not agree. Certainly, she admits that 'Московское государство' and 'Российское царство' were both in use during and after the reign of Ivan IV – but this is most likely due to the Polish viewpoint of the two terms.[2] I have already said that both Moscow and Lithuania claimed the heritage of Kievan Rus – so naturally did not recognise the claims of the other party. For this reason, when Ivan III started calling himself 'государь всея Руси', the Grand Prince of Lithuania refused to accept this title and continued to call him 'князь Московский'.[3] For this reason, a term like 'Moscow' could be used to placate the Lithuanians, or deny the Tsar in Moscow his political claims. A term like 'Russian' could be used to further the Tsar's political claims, at the expense of the Lithuanians. It seems that Khoroshkevich's opinion is far more accurate than Plokhy's: the two terms are certainly not synonymous!

The title Muscovy, or *Moskoviya* in the Russian – never appears in the Russian sources. It seems likely, therefore, that this is only a foreign title. Certainly the term 'Московское государство' appears frequently in primary sources but this does not necessarily refer to the whole of Russia but merely the city itself, or the land around it. Even in terms such as 'Великія Російскія державы Московского государьства', it is obvious that Moscow is only a part of Russia, although naturally an important part!

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 213.
[2] Хорошкевич , 2005, p. 55.
[3] Хорошкевич, 1993, p. 40.

Only in such phrases as mentioned in the last paragraph does a form of ambiguity creep in. However, I believe that the writers of these texts were able to differentiate between Moscow and Russia as a whole and therefore the ambiguous terms they used were merely for effect. These writers, together with others, were able to emphasise the importance of Moscow. As seat of both the Tsar and the Patriarch it was both the national and spiritual centre of the land and therefore naturally would need to be described in an elevated way. Using Moscow as a synonym for the Tsar, or seat of government, is only natural and continues today when we speak, for example, of the acts of Westminster. Certainly, although Moscow was the head of Russia, it was not all of Russia.

3. <u>The Russians: the name of the people in the land</u>

It follows that the next question arising is the name of the people. In other words, how did the Russians describe themselves? Did the people see themselves more in religious than national terms, as comes across clearly in chapter two, or did a noun or adjective relating to the name of the state ('Russian' or 'Muscovite') exist in general use?

This section of the chapter is unfortunately not easy to research. It is something that secondary sources do not focus on to any great extent. Perhaps Pokrovskii's opinion that 'all bourgeois histories, without exception, relate the *history of the State'*[1] rings true here; they are more interested in the state than the people. However, even

---

[1] Pokrovsky, 1968, p. 237.

Pokrovskii spends no real time on this point, being more interested on the rôle of the peasants rather than their identity.

Just as foreigners generally referred to the land as Muscovy, so they referred to its inhabitants as Muscovites.[1] Margeret, a Frenchman who lived in Russia, criticises this as showing foreign lack of understanding of Russia and its people. He believes this is 'as if one wished to call all Frenchmen Parisians because Paris is the capital of the kingdom of France'.[2] In his experience, a citizen of the Russian state would call himself a *rusak*.[3] Unfortunately I have found no references to this at all in Russian primary sources, so perhaps Margeret, as a non-native speaker of Russian, misheard. It may of course reflect the pronunciation of the Russians Margeret was interacting with. If the ending is swallowed, the word 'руський' could well come out as *rusak*. Alternatively, he may himself be using a foreign term. *Rusak* does not sound Russian but could be Polish or even Ruthenian.

If we take the name of the land as *Rus'* or *Rossiya*, the obvious adjectival term arising is *russkii* which certainly does exist in primary sources. It can be found as an adjective describing objects from Russia. For example, in a list of royal meals dating to 1610-13, one frequently appearing ingredient is described as 'пшено Русское'.[4] This word is further used, both as noun and adjective, to describe the people. For example, a letter of September 1611 written to Swedish 'voevodas' described war between 'Руские люди' and the Swedes.[5]

---

[1] J Margeret (ed & trans C S L Dunning), *The Russian Empire and Grand Duchy of Muscovy: A 17th-Century French Account*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983, p. 7.
[2] ibid., p. 8.
[3] ibid., p. 7.
[4] AI II, № 356, pp. 426-38.
[5] AAE II, № 195, pp. 334-5.

According to Plokhy, the terms that Russians used to describe themselves were generally adjectival – as here *russkii*.[1] In contrast, foreigners were described by nouns, such as *nemets*. Unfortunately Plokhy does not explain the significance of the noun / adjective split. I have looked elsewhere to explain whether this is indeed important but with no success. However, the point that Russians were described using the adjectival form *russkii* certainly seems to be true, although this is not exactly what Plokhy believes. How the foreigners were seen will be discussed later in the chapter. Of course, such terms as 'Руские люди'[2] are common. This example comes from a 1611 treaty of Novgorod with de la Gardie. Following the Swedish occupation of Novgorod and the surrounding area, the writer is looking for peace. One of the conditions for peace is that the Russian captives will be released ('а которые Руские люди взяты въ нынѣшнемъ походѣ въ полонъ, и тѣхъ всѣхъ отпустити'). Sometimes the adjective *russkii* appears without a noun and can therefore be classed as a noun itself. For example, in a letter of February 1611 from Yaroslavl' to Vologda, the writer states they will fight 'съ Русскими' who support Sigismund.[3] I suppose then as in modern Russian, the noun *lyudi* is understood rather than explicitly stated. However, I am as yet unsure whether this is in any way significant.

Having said this, according to Plokhy, the term *russkii* appears rarely to refer to ethnic Russians. He acknowledges that the term is used consistently to describe people living in the territories lost to the Poles after the Time of Troubles, such as Smolensk[4] – although of course that is not particularly relevant to the Time of Troubles itself, as these areas were still classed politically as part of Muscovy. Certainly, the term exists

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 216.
[2] AAE II, № 187, pp. 317-18.
[3] AAE II, № 179, pp. 304-8.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p. 217.

to describe Muscovite subjects; however, they did not often use a single ethnonational term (of which *russkii* is an example) to describe themselves – but rather used political terms such as *moskvich* (a noun rather than an adjective!). According to Plokhy, the term 'Muscovite' was ambiguous as to whether it referred merely to people from Moscow, or to citizens of the whole Muscovite State (i.e. Russia).[1] When the latter meaning is meant, the term is political rather than ethnic.[2] Plokhy also states that the land was not necessarily seen as a coherent whole. Regionalism was common and different areas were frequently described separately.[3] My own research does not necessarily agree. It is true, of course, that a letter written from one town to another will address the citizens of that town as, say, Vologdans – but then this is only natural. A writer would need to define his target audience and write specifically for them, for example different people may need to know different information. A letter addressed to Vologda would naturally be written to the Vologdans, just as a letter written to an individual would be addressed to him and not in vaguer terms. Perhaps the writer needed to define the target audience to state who the letter was *not* addressed to. This explains perhaps the most unusual point about the letters – that each group of people is addressed separately, beginning with the most important church rôles and moving down the hierarchy. For this reason, the salutation of a letter is normally quite long. The question is why this was thought necessary. It is possible, of course, that the reason given above is completely true – that the writer sought to define his target audience by the titles written in the salutation and make sure that nobody else would see the letter. This solution is not completely convincing. Although a letter could well

---

[1] ibid., p. 217.
[2] ibid., p. 214.
[3] ibid., p. 215.

be written to a whole town, it would have to be read out loud owing to the fact that the

majority of the population of the time was illiterate. It would therefore have to be

delivered to a certain individual who would make sure the contents of the letter were

passed on. This individual would have to be trusted by the writer and would therefore

also be trusted to make sure that the letter was read to its target audience and not read

to anyone else. Furthermore, even if a letter was addressed to a certain group of

people, this does not mean that the whole of that group was amongst the intended

recipients. All writers were wary of traitors! One solution, therefore, is that the

different groups had to be addressed individually as they possessed no collective

identity. In other words, a community was described in terms of its diversity.[1] Writing

a letter purely to a town would mean nothing. Again I am unconvinced. In most letters

phrases such as 'to the people of Kazan'' will appear which cannot be explained if there

was no communal identity. Kollmann tells us that, although the whole did tend to be

described in terms of the sum of its parts, the people were united by such concepts as

language, religion and politics.[2] Some proclamations do not even address all groups

individually. One proclamation to Pereyaslavl' Ryazanskii is only addressed to a list of

people of the town ('Въ Переславль Резанской Воеводѣ...').[3] Perhaps the long

salutation, addressing many different groups, was purely for emphasis. The crises of

the Time of Troubles were so great that it was not just the nobility or certain groups of

people who had to act – but rather the entire population. All social classes needed to

work together and that is why they were all addressed individually. Kollmann informs

us that different groups were addressed separately as the goals of petitions were

---

[1] Kollmann, 1997, p. 39.
[2] ibid., p. 39.
[3] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 292.

estate-specific.[1] In other words, addressing lots of groups together suggests that they did have the same goals in mind.

4. <u>Russian religious identity</u>

a. <u>Self-definition as Orthodox</u>

Putting religious rôles first in the salutations served to emphasise the rôle of religion in the eyes of writer and reader alike. For this reason, it is best to discuss religion here. All letters emphasise the Orthodox faith of the writer and assume the same of the reader. For example, a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda dated February 1611 – therefore written when Moscow was under Polish occupation – underlines the fact that all people are standing as one for the Christian faith ('чтоб всем нам топерво за православную крестьянскую веру и за свои души стати заодин').[2] The importance of Orthodox Christianity to all Russians is emphasised in another point in Plokhy – that the Russians generally used religious, rather than ethnonational, terms to describe themselves.[3] Even as late as the nineteenth century, the terms 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' were still seen as more-or-less synonymous in the eyes of the peasantry.[4] How much more so, therefore, was this true during the Time of Troubles! An appeal from Moscow to the regions dated early 1611 describes its readers – all the people of the Muscovite State – as Orthodox and brothers ('Пишем мы

---

[1] Kollmann, 1997, p. 39.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 227.
[3] Plokhy, 2006, p. 217.
[4] Hosking, 1998, p. 210.

к вам, православным крестьяном, общим всем народом Московского

государьства, господам братьям своим, православным крестьяном.').[1] It is their

rôle to protect the Orthodox family. In the *Novaya Povest'*, indeed, references to

Russian people without exception use religious terminology.

The Orthodox religion was extremely important for the Russians. A foreigner

could only fully integrate into Russian society by converting to Orthodoxy[2] It is

therefore not surprising that it was religious rather than political propaganda which

was used to entice people to defend Russia – or rather the Orthodox faith of Russia.[3] A

letter of 1612 to Trubetskoi and Pozharskii underlined the fact that Russia was seen as

the New Israel – and therefore were a special people, chosen by God.[4] This text is quite

complex. It combines contemporary happenings with Biblical events and quotations

from the Bible. It is therefore sometimes difficult to determine exactly what is meant

by certain statements. For example, phrases such as 'доме Израилевъ' could be

ambiguous. Do they refer to the Israelites or the Russians? Certainly, the idea that the

Bible has direct relevance to life at the time is explicit in this text – and it may be seen

that the Russians are the direct successors of Biblical Israel. Here is not the place to go

into details of Moscow as the Third Rome and centre of the True Faith but the

importance of Orthodoxy in Russia and for the Russians is obvious. However,

according to Rowland, the idea of the Third Rome is far less frequent than the idea of

the New Israel.[5] Naturally, this idea shows that God's blessing had been transferred

---

[1] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 228.
[2] Plokhy, 2006, p. 224.
[3] ibid., p. 218.
[4] AAE II, № 219, pp. 369-74.
[5] D B Rowland, 'Moscow – The Third Rome or the New Israel?', *The Russian Review*, vol 55, October 1996, pp. 591-614, p. 591.

from Israel and Jerusalem to Russia and Moscow.[1] Indeed, False Dmitrii I even included a reference to Russia as the Second Israel in his formal royal title.[2] The title of New Israel was inherited from Kievan Rus[3] This reliance on religion was not unique at the time, as many cultures saw themselves as a part of God's plan for history, from Creation to the Last Judgement.[4] For this reason, the Russians sought to find references to God's plan in every happening.[5] As God's chosen people, Russia classed itself as fulfilling Biblical events.[6]I will go into more detail on the subject of religion later in the chapter. Needless to say, the term 'Orthodox' was often seen as a synonym for 'Russian' and vice versa. Indeed, the only true Christians were, it was believed, the Russians.[7] However, this leaves the question of non-Orthodox subjects of the Tsar, who were also members of non-Russian ethnic groups, such as the Tatars and Chuvash. This will be answered later.

The converse of the above is also true: a non-Russian could never be a true Christian. Even supporting the claim of Sigismund was seen as ceasing to be Orthodox.[8] However, the pure adjective or adjectival noun *russkii* can still appear to describe non-Orthodox Russians or, far more frequently, Russian supporters of the Poles. A supporter of Orthodoxy and Russian independence would be described using the term *pravoslavnii*. A supporter of Sigismund would be seen as a traitor to his country and, more importantly, to his religion and therefore could not be described using the same term. The term used to describe these people was usually *russkii*, as

---

[1] ibid., p. 591.
[2] ibid., p. 605.
[3] ibid., p. 596.
[4] ibid., p. 592.
[5] ibid., p. 599.
[6] ibid., p. 595.
[7] Plokhy, 2006, p. 226.
[8] ibid., p. 220.

that is who they are, ethnically. The adjective was normally used to qualify a noun such as 'traitor', to emphasise the fact that they had turned from their roots.

A letter of May 1612 from Pozharskii (after the foundation of his militia) to Vychegodsk emphasises the two sides. Pozharskii and his men are fighting against such people as the Poles, Lithuanians and 'Рускихъ воровъ'.[1] The term *vor* could specifically refer to pretenders or their supporters as was common at the time, or could purely refer to Pozharskii's enemies or traitors to the state, certainly the term *russkii* is used to describe them. Worse in the eyes of the Russians, they are seen in a letter of the year before from Kazan' to Perm' as ruiners of the Christian faith, along with the Poles and Lithuanians – and therefore a force to be rejected ('за истинную христіянскую вѣру на разорителей нашія христіянскія вѣры, на Полскихъ и на Литовсклъ людей и на Рускихъ воровъ, съ вами стояти готовы').[2] Indeed, the *Novaya Povest'* criticises Russian-born supporters of Sigismund more than any other group:[3] they should have known better owing to their background. It seems that a traitor to the Russian and Orthodox cause would have to be described using an appropriate – and accurate – ethnic term and therefore the term *russkii* was chosen.

It could seem from the above paragraph that the term can be used in a negative sense, although perhaps this is reading too much into the nuances of the word. In fact, when a negative sense is required, the adjective without fail will qualify a noun such as 'criminal' or 'traitor', thus emphasising the fact that the people described are against the Russian *status quo*. In fact, it is of course the noun which is negative, as words like 'traitor' would always be seen as such even if they stood on their own. Certainly, *russkii*

---

[1] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[2] AAE II, № 197, pp. 335-6.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 198.

can appear neutral, or even positive. A letter from Kazan' to Perm' of June 1611 discussing the liberation of Moscow from the Poles who were occupying it at the time emphasises that the problems for 'Рускимъ людемъ' are indescribable.[1] These people are almost certainly the Russian Orthodox people living in Moscow. It seems unlikely that they would be criticised, if only for living under Polish rule. The *Pisanie Skopina-Shuiskogo* sees the term as in no way negative. Following the death of Skopin-Shuiskii, the whole 'русский народ' mourned him.[2] This would describe a time when Russia was not under Polish occupation and therefore there is no reason why the term should be seen as in any way negative.

b. Lack of Muscovite uniformity

Of course, Russia at the time was not ethnically, or even religiously, uniform. The Russians were only one ethnic group within their country, which also contained such people as the Mordovians of the Nizhnii Novgorod area.[3] Indeed, Hosking states that 'Russia has usually been a multiethnic empire without a dominant nation'.[4] However, this statement can be viewed with scepticism for this period, considering that the Russians were the most prominent ethnic group – and it is unlikely that the land could be classed as an empire at the time. However, whereas it is true that the ethnic Russians seem to have a greater presence than other ethnic groups, we must remember that it was the indigenous population which were the first to campaign against Shuiskii in their area; the Russians joined them later.[5]

---

[1] AAE II, № 188, pp. 318-27.
[2] *Pamyatniki*, p. 68.
[3] Любомиров, 1939, p. 25.
[4] Hosking, 2002, p. 4.
[5] Любомиров, 1939, p. 32.

The attitude towards non-Russian peoples within Russia seems to vary. In a letter of 1612 to Trubetskoi and Pozharskii, the Tatars and Cherkasy (i.e. Ukrainian Cossacks) are clearly counted amongst the writer's enemies, along with the Lutherans and Latins ('и неразумныхъ и варварскихъ языкъ Татаръ, и округъ борющихъ и обидящихъ насъ злыхъ разбойникъ и Черкасъ').[1] However, seeing them in a negative light is fairly rare. Most of the time, the other Muscovite ethnicities are merely seen in the same light as the ethnic Russians themselves. A letter from Kazan' to Perm' of June 1611 is written to, amongst other people, Tatars, Chuvash and 'the newly baptised' ('новокрещены') – in other words recent converts to Orthodoxy from Islam.[2] It seems that all people living in Russia, except for obvious foreigners, were seen in the same way. An appeal written from Moscow acknowledges *all* Muscovites as brothers ('общим всем народом Московского государьства, господам братьям своим'), working together for the common good.[3] The fact that all people are described as Orthodox Christians denotes that the writer saw all his prospective readers as true Russians. The different peoples within Russia certainly thought of themselves as a part of a single Russian whole, looking towards Moscow as their head. The question is whether this is seen as a political or ethnic unity. Perhaps both are true. For example, the inhabitants of the Seversk region believed that False Dmitrii I had been assassinated without their permission and therefore the new Tsar was unlawful in their eyes.[4] Certainly, writers of the time were quick to distinguish between 'Russians' – that is people living in Russia, not necessarily ethnic Russians – and everyone else.[5]

---

[1] AAE II, № 219, pp. 369-74.
[2] AAE II, № 188, pp. 318-27.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 228.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p. 215.
[5] ibid., p. 217.

The question then arises of how they were described. It seems to me that addressing the ethnic groups by name is akin to addressing different towns or different social classes by name. It does not necessarily mean that these people were seen as different, purely that they are being acknowledged.

The modern Russian language differentiates between the ethnic *russkii* and the civic *rossiyanin* which unfortunately the language of the time did not. Russia lacked the vocabulary to express itself in national terms,[1] so it had to make do with what it had. People of all ethnic groups were therefore described as *russkie*, or as 'people of the Muscovite State', as there was no other umbrella term available to describe them. It is little wonder, therefore, that the Russian culture put so much emphasis on religion, where a sufficient vocabulary did exist and people were able to differentiate between Orthodox people, recent converts from Islam, people of other Christian denominations, or indeed other religions. Let us therefore look into more detail in the Russians' own view of Orthodoxy.

c. The Orthodox faith

It is obvious from primary and secondary sources alike that the Orthodox faith was extremely important for the Russian people. Even Soviet-era texts will mention the Russians' religion, although may well class it as a front rather than a genuine feeling.[2] It seems as if Orthodoxy was the most important thing for any Russian of the time. For example, guests would venerate their hosts' icons before greeting their hosts.[3] Even during the turmoil of the Time of Troubles, the people wanted their

---

[1] ibid.. p. 220.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 99.
[3] Костомаровъ, 1887, p. 180.

religious festivals to continue uninterrupted. Bussow noticed that, although the Polish

occupiers of Moscow had prohibited the Palm Sunday procession taking place, the

residents went ahead with it anyway owing to the importance it had for them.[1] The

question is whether this shows a true faith or merely an attitude set in its ways and

disliking change. Certainly the Russians criticised the Polish occupation of Moscow, so

may well have wanted to antagonise them as much as possible. However, it does seem

as if Orthodoxy was far more important than just mindless ritual. The Russian way of

swearing an oath, for example, was concluded by literally kissing a cross. Therefore,

violating the oath would be seen as violating the cross, which was such a holy thing that

God's wrath would fall on all who did this. Naturally, oaths were not broken![2]

The importance of Orthodoxy for the Russians of the time was so great that

some modern historians have even seen their faith as a substitute for national

consciousness. In Western Europe at the time religion was important but politics and

ethnicity were far greater criteria of national identity,[3] whereas in Russia, national and

religious identity seem to be synonymous.[4] Indeed, we can go so far as to say that the

Orthodox faith was the pivot or core around which Russian society revolved.[5]

We can see this in some detail when we look at the leadership of Russia during

the Time of Troubles. It is obvious from the *Plach* that the only Russian national leader

was Patriarch Hermogen. The Tsar, an important part of Russian identity as will be

shown later, had been removed from office and the chief claimant was Władysław, a

---

[1] C Bussow (ed & trans G E Orchard), *The Disturbed State of the Russian Realm*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, p. 160.

[2] G Fletcher, 'Of the Russe Commonwealth in L E Berry & R O Crummey (eds), *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968, pp. 109-246, p. 174.

[3] S Reynolds, 'Regnal Sentiments and Medieval Communities' in J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds), *Nationalism*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, pp. 137-40, p. 138.

[4] Kollmann, 1997, p. 38.

[5] Л Бородин, '«Выжить надо, коль Смуте конец»', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 103-7, p. 104.

teenager living in Poland who did not have his father's permission to move to Moscow. The Patriarch was the religious leader of Russia and therefore retained the same authority during the interregnum as before. The question now arises whether the Patriarch took the place of the Tsar, or whether the people merely tolerated the lack of a national leader. According to Solov'ev, Hermogen really did take the place of the Tsar,[1] although his rôle was merely to hold the fort until a new sovereign had been elected. The other point of view, from Antonenko, is that the Patriarch, who had experience of leading the country, was seen as the national leader.[2] However, he did seem to see this rôle as merely temporary, until a new Tsar began to reign.[3] The text cited puts the emphasis on the election of a new Tsar ('и выбрати бъ намъ на Московское государство Государя, сослався со всею землею, кого намъ Государя Богъ дастъ'). Interestingly, Hermogen is referred to as a *gosudar'* or sovereign in the *Novaya Povest'*,[4] a title which was usually reserved for the Tsar alone. Perhaps this title appears more frequently in primary sources but I have not read sufficiently to realise this. Certainly, Patriarch Philaret (his successor as Patriarch) was given the title *velikii gosudar'* – although this was most likely owing to his unique position as father of the Tsar, Michael Romanov. It is therefore likely that the people acknowledged Hermogen as their stand-in Tsar and therefore gave him an appropriate title. It is likely that the Russians would just have seen the Patriarch as the leading authority figure in the land in the absence of a Tsar. As Russians, they needed to follow the national authority – and therefore followed Hermogen. This is no contradiction from the above, since they believed that all authority was from God, therefore both the Tsar and the Patriarch lead

[1] Soloviev, 1989, p. 204.
[2] Антоненко, 2005, p. 119.
[3] AAE II № 194, pp. 332-4, dated August 1611.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 197.

Russia as God has chosen them to do so. The people know that God will provide the new Tsar. A letter of December 1610 (after the crown had been offered to Władysław and subsequently taken away again) from the people of Belev to Sapieha emphasises that the people will serve the new Tsar, whoever he may be, as God will provide him ('и кого Богъ подаруетъ, на Москвѣ, на Московское Государьство Царя, и намъ ему Государю служить и прямить').[1]

Platonov believes that the religious focus of the people is greater than their ethnicity. Following the deposition of Shuiskii, a new Tsar had to be elected – and the lot fell on Władysław of Poland, on condition that he converted to Orthodoxy. In other words, a baptised Pole was a legitimate Tsar.[2] However, this seems to be an oversimplification on the part of Platonov. I will be looking into the Russian viewpoint of the Tsar in greater detail later – but suffice to say here that Shuiskii, along with the Godunovs, were boyar Tsars. The experiment of boyar Tsars seemed to have failed, so therefore a man of royal blood needed to be chosen. The Tsar needed to be above his people, whereas a boyar could not raise himself morally to this position.[3] Władysław, son of a monarch, fitted this criterion. Furthermore, Władysław's father Sigismund was born a Protestant but converted to Catholicism to take the throne of Poland. If he could change his religion then there should be no complaints about his son's conversion to Orthodoxy.[4] A similar argument could be used to accept the candidacy of Swedish or other non-Russian royalty as Tsar.

---

[1] AI II № 309, p. 366.
[2] Платоновъ, 1910, p. 437.
[3] Soloviev, 1988, p. 51.
[4] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 479.

The Russians' religious focus is shown once more following the Polish occupation of Moscow. The Patriarch, amongst other people, issued statements calling upon the people to expel the Poles and liberate Russia. These statements were usually written in religious rather than national terms. According to Plokhy, this is hardly surprising as religious terminology was the most frequently used.[1] For example, the writer of a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda of February 1611 states that the Patriarch's blessing ('по благословенью и по приказу святейшаго Ермогена') was given on the campaign for Moscow to liberate the Orthodox Christians who were living there.[2] Indeed, a letter of December 1610 from the residents of Belev to the Lithuanian Chancellor Sapieha informed him that they believed that peace and unity in Russia could only be achieved through God and the Orthodox faith ('что намъ быти съ Московскимъ Государствомъ заодинъ, и жити въ тишинѣ и въ соединеньи и въ православной вѣрѣ, и стояти за православную вѣру').[3] It is even possible to say that the preservation of Orthodoxy and the preservation of the Russian Tsardom itself went hand-in-hand. According to Platonov, many people knew that this was so but Minin was the first to understand how it could be achieved.[4] This explains why Minin's militia was so well-supported: a solution for the preservation of Russia and Orthodoxy had been found.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Tolz classes Orthodoxy as the main thing the people were urged to defend during the Time of Troubles.[5] The people believed that the Time of Troubles was caused by God's will – and only by God's will could it end.

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 218.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 227.
[3] AI II № 309, p. 366.
[4] Платонов, 2005, p. 82
[5] Tolz, 2001, p. 24.

Platonov echoes a popular viewpoint of the time, which is that the land lost its ruler as a result of the sins of the people.[1] An appeal from Moscow of early 1611 explains the causes of the Troubles as God's wrath on the Russian people. The negative situation Moscow and the rest of the land found itself in was entirely due to the sins of the Russian people ('неисцелную язву богопопустным гневом праведным за наше согрешение'). Naturally, God's wrath had fallen upon the land as punishment for their behaviour.[2] In the *Novaya Povest'*, there is only one possible solution: that the people must repent and turn back to God ('Припадем к ним с теплою верою, и со умильным сердцем, и з горящими слезами, некли нам милость свою подадут!').[3] This viewpoint seems to have been widespread at the time. A proclamation of Pozharskii of April 1612, writing at the beginning of his national militia, emphasises that the Russians could only ever get the upper hand over the foreign invaders if this was God's will – and that could only happen if the people returned to God.[4] God is seen as enticing the leaders of the Time of Troubles to act. For example, in a proclamation to Trubetskoi of January 1613, after the militia has achieved its goal of removing the Poles, it is clear that Pozharskii was moved to cleanse the land of the foreign invaders because of his Orthodox faith.[5] Finally, in a proclamation from Trubetskoi to Sol-Vychegodsk of November 1612, God is blessed for giving the people the victory.[6]

Interestingly, there was also a belief that God would never totally abandon the Russian people. A letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda of February 1611 emphasises that the Russians must be victorious in the end, as they trust that God will

---

[1] Платоновъ, 1910, p. 450
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 229.
[3] ibid., p. 204
[4] AAE II № 203, pp. 343-8.
[5] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 287
[6] Любомиров, 1939, p. 238.

spare the Orthodox family.[1] This ties in with the Russians' understanding of the

importance of their own religion. Since the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453,

Muscovy had been the only major independent Orthodox state on Earth. The Russians

apparently knew this and its implication: that Russia was now the guardian of true

Christianity.[2] Conversely, it was well-known, for example in a proclamation from

Nizhnii Novgorod to Vychegda of 1611/12, that the fall of the Muscovite State would

bring about the extinction of the root of Orthodoxy ('… учинитца конечное разоренье

Московскому государству и угаснет корень християнские веры').[3] This

proclamation merely describes something which was common knowledge. In other

words, the people were attracted to fight against the foreign invaders with the

knowledge that if they failed, then the Orthodox religion would fall. This was

something God would not allow – but the people were still expected to fight; God would

work through them. The *Novaya Povest'* makes it clear that prayer to God and the

Saints will allow the Russians to arm themselves against the invaders.[4] It is therefore

little wonder that even before the fall of Shuiskii, the popular viewpoint was that the

foreigners must be opposed for the very reason that the Russians are Christians. A

royal proclamation of May 1610, when Vasilii Shuiskii was still on the throne, expresses

this exact point: as Christians, the Russians must oppose the foreigners ('и за насъ, и за

всѣхъ православныхъ крестьянъ, противъ враговъ нашихъ, Полскихъ и

Литовскихъ людей и Рускихъ воровъ').[5] Even later, letters call on their readers to

protect Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Christians. A letter from Smolensk of September

---

[1] AAE II № 176, pp. 296-302.
[2] Crummey, 2006, p. 619.
[3] Любомиров, 1939, p. 235.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 189.
[5] AAE II № 159, pp. 272-3.

1609, when it was being besieged by the Poles, requests first and foremost that the

Orthodox Christians there are not abandoned to whatever the 'Lithuanians' may do

with them (most likely those who survived the siege would be requested to convert to

Catholicism).[1] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the *Novaya Povest'* calls upon its

readers to fight to the death to defend Orthodoxy. If they died, then they would be

rewarded with eternal life in Heaven. If they surrendered then this would mean

dishonour and the fall of Orthodoxy ('аще и будет нам то, и по смерти обрящем

царство небесное и вечное, нежели зде безчестное и позорное и горкое житие

под руками враг своих').[2] In other words, the Russians must be prepared to do

anything to save the Orthodox faith and prevent Russia from being overrun by the

Catholic Poles. An appeal from Moscow dated early 1611 emphasises the example of

Patriarch Hermogen, who is willing to die for Orthodoxy ('душу свою за веру

крестьянскую полагает несуменно') and declares that true Orthodox Christians will

certainly follow his example ('А ему все крестьяня православные последуют').[3]

Whereas at the start of the interregnum, Władysław was a legitimate contender

for the Russian throne, it soon became clear that his father Sigismund would not let him

take power, as he wanted the throne for himself.[4] Secondary sources believe that rule

by a Catholic would cause the Russian population – or at least its élite – to be

Catholicised[5] and primary sources agree. The proclamation supposedly from Smolensk

calls upon its readers to resist Sigismund, or else allow the entire population to be

---

[1] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 219.
[2] ibid., p. 190.
[3] ibid., p. 230.
[4] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 403.
[5] Т Бохун & Я Кравчик, 'Сто повозок Ходкевича', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 69-74, p. 73.

forcibly converted.[1] Indeed, the Polish invasion had already shown signs of what a

Catholic Russia would become. The writer of the proclamation to Trubetskoi of

1611/12 bemoans the fact that the Poles have destroyed Orthodox churches and holy

icons.[2] A letter from Kazan' to Perm' of June 1611 emphasises that Sigismund invaded

Russia primarily because of his contempt for Orthodoxy and his wish to impose

Catholicism on the land.[3] For this reason, supporting Sigismund or the foreign invaders

was seen as treacherous. Once Władysław had fallen from favour, Russians who

continued to support him were fiercely criticised. A proclamation from the Patriarch

(who had been a member of the group which called for Władysław's candidacy in the

first place!) dated to 1611 declares that the Russians have forgotten their promise to

protect Orthodoxy by electing Władysław ('вы же забывъ обѣщанія православныя

крестьянскія нашея вѣры, въ немъ же рохидомся, … сего не воспомянувше и

преступивше клятву ко врагомъ креста Христова и къ ложномнимому вашему

отъ Полякъ имянуемому царику приставши').[4] The letter is even addressed 'to

former Christians' ('бывшимъ православнымъ христіяномъ'). Indeed, Kostomarov

states that God would never allow a foreigner to become Tsar as this would be harmful

to Orthodoxy.[5]

　　　Plokhy notes that the common viewpoint at the time was that supporting the

foreigners or even a pretender meant ceasing to be Orthodox.[6] This statement is

backed up by the *Novaya Povest'*, which declares that Russian-born servants of

Sigismund must have fallen away from God and Orthodoxy in order to support him ('от

---

[1] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 233.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 286.
[3] AAE II № 188, pp. 318-27.
[4] AAE II № 169, pp. 286-91.
[5] Костомаровъ, 1887, p. 351.
[6] Plokhy, 2006, p. 220.

бога отпали, и от православныя веры отстали, и к нему, сопостату нашему, королю, вседушно пристали').[1] These people were classed as traitors to their religion and to their land; there is little wonder they are criticised so much.[2] The *Novaya Povest'* has some harsh words to say to the traitors, calling them God-deniers and relatives of Satan.[3] However, this is only natural. Later on in the same text, the writer, focusing on faith as usual, states that the worst thing about the traitors is that they wish to destroy the Christian faith itself ('Горши же нам всего учинили, ...и хотят нас всех погубити, и веру християньскую искоренити.').[4] This is not a criticism aimed at foreigners but rather native Russians who have gone over to the side of Sigismund. As stated above, Russia claimed to be the guardian of true Christianity, so it goes without saying that they considered Orthodoxy to be the only true form of Christianity. Non-Orthodox Christian denominations were classed as either not entirely Christian or else blatantly heretical.[5] Uniatism, the system of belief which combined Orthodox forms of worship within the Catholic hierarchy, was likewise classed as heretical. This faith will be discussed in more detail in the next section. It is very likely that Uniatism was seen with great mistrust as it was yet another way of rejecting true Orthodoxy. Naturally, rejecting Orthodoxy was seen as rejecting true Christianity – a very grave sin. Two letters of 1613 written from the Russian priesthood to people in Lithuania who had, in the eyes of the writers, turned away from Orthodoxy bear this out. The readers are criticised for rejecting Orthodoxy. The salutation of one includes the words 'бывшимъ нѣкогда единовѣрнымъ съ нами,

---

[1] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 194.
[2] Plokhy, 2001, p. 292.
[3] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 197.
[4] ibid., p. 203
[5] Plokhy, 2006, p. 148.

нынѣ же, увы!'.[1] They are asked whether they follow the Patriarch and True Church or the Pope and the, apparently heretical, West ('съ кѣмъ единомудрьствоваша въ вѣрѣ, съ Патріархи ли и со всею вселенною, или съ западомъ и съ Папою?'),[2] since Latinism is a heresy which rejects God ('богомерскія Латынскія ереси Римского Папы').[3] Even foreigners visiting Russia understand the people to believe that Orthodoxy is the only true church.[4] It is therefore only natural that the writer of a letter from Perm' to Kazan' of June 1611 calls on his readers not only to fight against the foreigners but also the people who have rejected Orthodoxy. All these people are described together as 'ruiners of the Christian faith' ('на разорителей вѣры хрестьянскіе, на Полскихъ и на Литовскихъ людей, и на богоотступниковъ').[5]

As I said earlier, the Russians frequently described themselves not in ethnonational terms but in religious terms.[6] For the average Russian, the terms 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' were synonymous, as were the terms 'Christian' and 'Orthodox'. In other words, in the Russian mindset, to be Russian was to be Christian and vice versa. Etymologically, the Russian word for 'peasant', *krest'yanin*, is obviously related to the word 'Christian' and indeed in seventeenth-century texts the two words are identical. The Russians' intrinsic Orthodoxy is shown here. Indeed, Tolz claims that regardless of ethnicity, it was religion which made the difference. Converting to Orthodoxy made people Russian no matter where they were born.[7] It is therefore only natural that following the conquest of the Tatar Khanate of Kazan', some of the Muslim

---

[1] AAE III № 328, pp. 481-2.
[2] AAE III № 327, pp. 479-81
[3] AAE III № 328, pp. 481-2.
[4] R Chancellor, 'The First Voyage to Russia' in L E Berry & R O Crummey (eds), *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 9-41, p. 38; Fletcher, 1968, p. 223.
[5] AI II № 329, pp. 395-97.
[6] Plokhy, 2006, p. 217.
[7] Tolz, 2001, p. 192.

residents converted to Orthodoxy, as this was the only way they could gain true

Russian citizenship.[1] However, it was possible to lose this citizenship. Russians who

supported the Polish claim to power were regarded as traitors to Orthodoxy. The

Russians believed that the true religion stopped at the borders of Russia.[2] The *Plach*

quotes Patriarch Hermogen in saying that Orthodoxy has always been hated in other

countries ('Вѣсте сами, яко издавна православная наша христианская вѣра

греческаго закона от иноплеменныхъ странъ ненавидима!').[3] Even Orthodox

Christians outside of Russia were not seen too favourably. This dates back to the

period of open warfare between Muscovy and Lithuania in the late fifteenth century.

As Muscovy developed within its own borders, it lost any ties it may have had with the

Slavs of Lithuania.[4] According to Plokhy, the 'true' religion stopped at the border of the

land, meaning that Orthodox people who lived outside of Russia were seen as not truly

Orthodox.[5] Indeed, Plokhy backs up this claim by stating that religion was the main

reason for the conquest of Novgorod. Its inhabitants, although nominally Orthodox,

were charged with diluting this with Catholicism. Ivan IV had to capture the state to

restore the true faith there.[6] This is explained by the history of Novgorod. It came into

the sphere of influence of the Hanseatic League, so therefore founded a Catholic church

for the purpose of foreign trade.[7] Furthermore, the non-Russian Orthodox had been

subordinated to a non-Orthodox ruler, meaning that they could not be of the true faith.[8]

Foreigners visiting Russia understood this idea. Massa writes that non-Russians were

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 144.
[2] ibid., p. 160.
[3] *Pamyatniki*, p. 142.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p. 160.
[5] ibid, p. 160.
[6] ibid., p. 147.
[7] Dunn, 2004, p. 6.
[8] Plokhy, 2006, p. 220.

classed as non-Christians.[1] Bussow goes one stage further. He states that all people

living outside of Russia will perish eternally for denying God, whether they are

Russians or not, since foreign countries are pagan.[2] Although the Orthodox outside of

Russia were certainly acknowledged as existing – Moscow was willing, for example, to

give alms to the Orthodox under Turkish rule[3] – it seems that Orthodox people under

an Orthodox ruler were the only people the Russian mindset acknowledged to be true

Christians. Since, according to Plokhy, religion was the only value left fighting for,[4] it

made sense that the enemy was portrayed entirely as hostile to Orthodoxy, regardless

of any individual beliefs. Although, certainly, the Russians knew of the existence of

Orthodox people in Lithuania,[5] this knowledge is not expressed in primary sources.

The writers oversimplify to make it clear who the enemy is. For example, in an appeal

from Moscow dated early 1611 when it was under Polish occupation, the writer

acknowledges that Lithuania is the enemy of all Orthodox people ('ото врагов всево

православнаго крестьянства, литовских людей')[6] and then goes on to say that the

Orthodox faith is compromised wherever Lithuanian people rule[7] Of course, he is

referring to Muscovite lands which are under Lithuanian occupation – but the fact

remains that the Lithuanians' homeland can be no better. A letter from Nizhnii

Novgorod to Vologda of February 1611 has a similar viewpoint, describing the

Lithuanians as the enemies of all Orthodox Christendom whom the readers have to

resist ('не погибнути ото враговъ всего православнаго крестьянства Литовскихъ

---

[1] I Massa (trans. G E Orchard), *A Short History of the Beginnings and Origins of These Present Wars in Moscow under the Reign of Various Sovereigns down to the Year 1610*, Toronto: University of Buffalo Press, 1982, p. 61.
[2] Bussow, 1994, p. 83.
[3] Gudziak, 1998, p. 155.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p. 219.
[5] Plokhy, 2001, p. 294.
[6] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 228.
[7] ibid., p. 229.

людей').[1] One possible explanation is that the Rzeczpospolita allowed freedom of religion, which proved to Patriarch Hermogen that true Orthodoxy could not exist there.[2] This was seen in another form following the end of the Time of Troubles when parts of Russia became Polish or Swedish under the peace treaties. The people of these regions now lived in non-Orthodox lands and must therefore have submitted to the non-Orthodox rulers of those lands.[3] For this reason, they must have turned away from Orthodoxy as no true Orthodox would submit to a non-Orthodox ruler.[4] The *Novaya Povest'* makes it clear that the Russians prefer death – leading to eternal life in Heaven – to a life subjected to their enemies. Subjecting to the enemies is not an option.[5] Two AAE documents were written after the accession of Michael Romanov in 1613 and are addressed to people of Lithuania who have, in the eyes of the writers, turned away from the Orthodox faith of their youth, in order that the readers may return.[6]

d. Non-Orthodox people

Let us now look in more detail at how the Russians saw actual non-Orthodox people to be. I have already stated that Orthodoxy was extremely important for the Russians during the Time of Troubles. Indeed, the main distinction between peoples in the Russian mindset was their religion, according to Tolz.[7] However, this was nothing unusual at the time. Smith states that for the greater part of history, religious and

---

[1] AAE II, № 176, pp. 296-302.
[2] Plokhy, 2001, p. 295.
[3] Plokhy, 2006, p. 223.
[4] ibid., p. 220.
[5] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 190.
[6] AAE III, №№ 327-328, pp. 479-82.
[7] Tolz, 2001, p. 192.

ethnic identity were frequently so close they could be seen as identical[1] For example,

in England at the time, Protestantism was such an important facet of English national

consciousness that Catholics, even though they may have been born in England, were

seen as unpatriotic or disloyal to the nation.[2] This is even despite the fact that the

Reformation in England had changed the state religion from Catholicism to Anglicanism

even within the lifetime of some people. In Russia, the people had been Orthodox for

hundreds of years. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a person could only fully

integrate into Russian society by converting to Orthodoxy.[3] The Russians' religion was

so greatly enshrined in popular consciousness that one of the rôles of the priests was

even to safeguard the faith against any threats it may face, for example from the

Catholic Poles, through prayer and exhorting the people to fight against the threat.[4]

Indeed, Catholicism was identified as the religion of Russia's enemies.[5]

Of course, it was well-known to Russian and foreigner alike that other religions

existed in Russia.[6] The former Tatar Khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan' had only

comparatively recently become ruled from Moscow – and their indigenous religion was

Islam. Furthermore, the influx of foreign traders, mercenaries, etc. meant that other

religions had been brought in by these people. Margeret (himself a Protestant) writes

that there is freedom of worship throughout Russia with two exceptions. Firstly,

Catholicism is prohibited; secondly, there are no Jews in the land (although they are

---

[1] Smith, 1991, p. 7.
[2] W B Patterson, 'King James I and the Protestant Cause in the Crisis of 1618-22' in S Mews (ed), *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History 18, Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1982, pp. 319-34, p. 319.
[3] Plokhy, 2006, p. 224.
[4] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 8.
[5] Dunn, 2004, p. 13.
[6] Margeret, 1983, p. 24.

permitted to worship).[1] Naturally, other religions were merely tolerated rather than

welcomed and generally seen as something foreign and therefore to be distrusted.[2]

Russian primary sources only mention other faiths in a negative light. The idea that

Russians could be something other than Orthodox was not something that needed to be

discussed, although as described above, non-Russian ethnicities could, of course, retain

their indigenous faiths without comment.

However, there did seem to be a hierarchy of hatred regarding other religions.

The Russians were far more anti-Catholic than anything else.[3] This could well be due

to their attitude toward the Poles who were their main Catholic neighbours (although it

must be remembered that there were also Protestants and Orthodox living in the

Rzeczpospolita). Protestants (for example the Swedes) had a far greater level of

toleration. One theory behind why this is so is the Union of Brest (1596) where the

Uniate Church was founded. Following the Union of Lublin, which brought Poland and

Lithuania together as the Rzeczpospolita, Orthodoxy became a minority faith in the

land and began to stagnate.[4] Attempts to reform the Orthodox Church eventually led to

negotiations with the Catholic Church concerning direct union with Rome, which

indeed took place at Brest. Following the union, the Uniate Church was seen by the

state as the only legal Eastern Christian body, to the detriment of those Orthodox who

opposed the union.[5] The Russians would have seen this as enforced conversion to

---

[1] ibid., p. 23.
[2] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 243.
[3] Hosking, 2002, p. 140.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p, 163.
[5] ibid., p. 164.

Catholicism. It is not surprising, therefore, that Dunn claims that the Russians built

their national consciousness primarily on their hostility to Catholicism.[1]

I have already stated that the Russians believed Orthodoxy to be the only true

branch of Christianity – and therefore the only true religion. Non-Orthodox

denominations were either not entirely Christian or else blatantly heretical.[2] This is

something that foreigners too picked up on during their stay in Russia. Bussow (a

Protestant) understood that Russians class all foreigners to be pagans.[3] Russian

primary sources go even further. The very pro-Orthodox *Novaya Povest'* described the

Polish invaders and their leader Sigismund as being damned and godless ('окаянники

и безбожники').[4] Naturally, their Catholic faith is the reason for their being seen in

this way. Elsewhere, similar vocabulary is used to criticise and discredit other

Christian denominations. The writer of a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda

believes that adherents to Latinism and Lutheranism have been deceived (he is unclear

by whom) into the eternal ruin of their souls.[5] Elsewhere, Catholicism is referred to as

evil and accursed,[6] thrice-accursed[7] and an anti-God heresy.[8] It is obvious that

Catholicism was seen as being a non-Christian religion. This point is made clear in the

doctrine of conversion. Baptism is seen as essential for becoming a Christian – but

Christian tradition forbids rebaptism (in other words, it is impossible to become a

Christian twice).[9] However, in the Russian mindset, all non-Orthodox people were

classed as non-Christians. Therefore, they could not have been baptised in the first

---

[1] Dunn, 2004, p. 14.
[2] Plokhy, 2006, p. 148.
[3] Bussow, 1994, p. 85.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 192.
[5] ibid., p. 228.
[6] ibid., p. 224.
[7] AAE II, № 202, pp. 341-3. Dated to April 1612.
[8] AAE III, №; 328, pp. 481-2. Dated to 1613.
[9] Plokhy, 2006, p. 224.

place and so were required to be baptised on conversion to Orthodoxy.[1] The Russians'

understanding of baptism had repercussions for False Dmitrii I. The *Plach* echoes the

popular mindset when it classes his wife Maryna as being unbaptised ('некрещену'), as

she was a Pole and a Catholic.[2] As the wife of the Tsar, she would be required to be

Orthodox, which would necessitate rebaptism, which she refused. However, she was

anointed with holy oil as part of her coronation, which took place before the wedding.

This act was therefore ambiguous – suggesting either her royal consecration or her

renunciation of Catholicism.[3] Although the Patriarch had allowed the anointing to

serve the purpose of rebaptism, this may not have been sufficient for some believers.

Certainly, at the time she had no intention of converting to Orthodoxy. Now, Orthodox

church law states that unbaptised people may not enter an Orthodox church.[4] Indeed,

Massa wrote that the Russians believe their churches to be profaned by the presence of

people they regard as 'pagans'.[5] It is little wonder, therefore, that False Dmitrii I, who

had brought his Catholic wife, along with many other unbelieving foreigners into a

church building,[6] was criticised for his ties to Catholicism[7] and for conspiring to

destroy Orthodoxy.[8] A proclamation from Pozharskii and his men to Vychegodsk of

April 1612 goes on at length about the sins and heresies of False Dmitrii I

('безчисленныхъ и богомерскихъ ересей'), emphasising that he wanted to convert

the land to Catholicism.[9] Indeed, since his Polish support depended on his own

---

[1] Plokhy, 2001, p. 296.
[2] *Pamyatniki*, p. 138.
[3] Perrie, 1995, p. 98.
[4] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 33.
[5] Massa, 1982, p. 132.
[6] Platonov, 1985, p. 82.
[7] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 119.
[8] Soloviev, 1988, p. 84.
[9] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.

conversion to Catholicism,[1] criticism was only natural. The author of the *Plach*, written

after his death, goes so far as to call him the God-denying Antichrist ('богоборнаго

анътихриста') because of his behaviour.[2] Certainly, he is seen as a heretic – but

according to Uspenskij, he is also classed as a sorcerer.[3] The fact is that, as a pretender,

he must come from Satan, just as the true Tsar is chosen by God.[4] Indeed, any sort of

mummery or masquerade was assigned an evil, black-magic significance in

seventeenth-century Russia.[5] It is therefore not surprising that Pozharskii goes on to

say that God's mercy killed off False Dmitrii I ('милосердый же Богъ, по своему

неизреченному милосердію, …, вскорѣ его пагубной смерти предалъ').[6]

It follows from the Russians' support of their own belief system that all other

religions were seen as threatening. The presence of foreigners in the land was

therefore a cause for concern during the Time of Troubles. Dunn tells us that the

Russians saw the foreign intervention of the Time of Troubles as Catholic aggression

against them and their state at the time they were most vulnerable.[7] A proclamation

from the Trinity Monastery to Kazan' written in July 1611 claims that 'accursed'

Catholicism has always been the enemy of Christianity ('проклятому Латынству,

искони вѣчнымъ врагомъ христіянскимъ').[8] The presence of so many Catholic

Poles in Russia was seen as a plot to convert the land to Catholicism. Indeed, Sigismund

---

[1] Perrie, 1995, p. 41.
[2] *Pamyatniki*, p. 136.
[3] B A Uspenskij, 'Tsar and Pretender: *Samozvančestvo* or Royal Imposture in Russia as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon' in Ju M Lotman & B A Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, Ann Arbor, MI: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, The University of Michigan, 1984, pp. 259-92, p. 274.
[4] ibid., p. 263.
[5] ibid., p. 272.
[6] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[7] Dunn, 2004, p. 19.
[8] AAE II, № 190, pp. 328-30.

III himself was an ardent supporter of the conversion of Orthodox Russia.[1] The

Muscovite appeal was written primarily to entice the people to fight against this threat,

as the Russians do not wish to be affected by Latinism.[2] According to Klyuchevskii, the

Catholic and Protestant West was far too alien for the Russian mindset. Echoing it in

any way, whether culturally or religiously just could not be done.[3] Therefore, the only

other alternative was to fight. Catholicism itself, rather than the threat of being under

Polish rule, was described in the so-called Smolensk proclamation as being enslaved

('порабощены'), whereas the Russians needed to fight for their freedom.[4] It is

therefore not surprising that False Dmitrii I was criticised as a Polish-backed heretic

who wanted to convert Russia to Catholicism.[5] A proclamation from Pozharskii to

Vychegodsk written in April 1612 claims that False Dmitrii I came into Russia with the

intention to convert the people to Catholicism and replace the Orthodox churches with

'accursed' Catholic churches ('вмѣсто апостолскихъ церквей проклатые Римскіе

костелы учинить').[6] Later on, Ivan Dmitrievich and his mother Maryna were not

wanted as the new royal family as they were classed as accursed.[7] A letter from the

Patriarch dated August 1611, during his imprisonment, makes his opinion very clear on

this point: Ivan is accursed and should not become Tsar ('на царство проклятого

паньина Маринкина сына не хотѣти').[8]

    One interesting point is just how other religions were understood. Although as I

have said, the Russians classed Orthodoxy as the true faith and anything else as

---

[1] Perrie, 1995, p. 41.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, pp. 230-2.
[3] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 243.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 232.
[5] Березов, 1957, p. 51.
[6] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[7] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 76.
[8] AAE II, № 194, pp. 332-4.

accursed, it seems that the average Russian knew very little about other beliefs.

Perhaps the fact that they were seen as foreign and therefore to be avoided meant that

people did not pay much attention to them. The author of the *Plach*, for example, uses

the terms 'Catholic', or 'Latin', and 'Lutheran' as synonyms. Maryna, for example, is

described as an unbaptised Lutheran,[1] although she was of course a Catholic. Of

course, the writer of the *Plach* cannot have honestly assumed that Catholicism and

Lutheranism were the same. Perhaps the solution is just that the writer saw both

Catholicism and Lutheranism to be foreign things. He knew that Maryna was a

foreigner and non-Orthodox. Just which religion she did follow was irrelevant as either

way she was a heretic.

5. <u>The view of foreigners in general</u>

Let us now look more generally at the Russians' perception of foreigners. In

other words, having taken as granted the fact that they were separated by their

religions, did anything else separate them? I have already stated that, in the theory of

identities, the concept of the 'other' as being different from 'us' is a prominent point. In

the Middle Ages, for example, the term 'nation', or *natio*, was addressed to groups of

foreign students at European universities. Their differences separated them into

nations when at university – whereas at home they were no different from everybody

else.[2] Indeed, the concept of the alien 'other' and its differences from 'us' can serve to

---

[1] *Pamyatniki*, p. 138.
[2] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 4.

underline 'our' culture.[1] It seems that different ethnicities were founded by

emphasising the differences between them.[2] The Russians may not have been able to

express what made them Russian – but they were able to express why they were

different from the Poles, for example. This concept of the 'other' explains why the

Russians differentiated clearly between themselves and other Eastern Slavs, in spite of

their shared history in Kievan Rus.[3] Just because they had items in common did not

mean they were of the culture!

The concept of Kievan Rus was important to the Russians. They believed that

the Tsar in Moscow was the direct political descendant of the rulers of Kievan Rus. The

Grand Princedom had been transferred to Vladimir and later to Moscow, where it had

become a Tsardom. Other groups which, quite legitimately, may have claimed descent

from Kievan Rus, for example the Lithuanians, were therefore excluded.[4] Furthermore,

as the whole of the heritage of Kievan Rus was seen to come down to Moscow, the Tsar

therefore claimed as his own the whole of the lands of Kievan Rus, including the parts

which were under foreign rule.[5] This explains one of the reasons why the citizens of

the Rzeczpospolita were so disliked. As Slavs, they too could claim descent from Kievan

Rus. This was seen as a threat to royal power in Moscow and made them doubly

repugnant in Russian eyes, as they were a threat both to religion and national

sovereignty.[6] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Massa writes that the Poles were

---

[1] Hosking, 2002, p. xi.
[2] Plokhy, 2006, p. 5.
[3] Tolz, 2001, p. 5.
[4] Plokhy, 2006, p. 138.
[5] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 14.
[6] Hosking, 1998, p. 28.

'eternal enemies' of the Russians.[1] The *Plach* goes even further, describing the Lithuanian army as thrice-accursed ('треклятаго').[2]

It was not only the residents of the Commonwealth who were seen as negative by the Russians. It seems that all foreigners were disliked. Solov'ev tells us that the Russians 'cannot abide foreigners',[3] whereas Berezov writes that the Russians were able to unite by their hatred of the foreign invaders.[4] It is not surprising, therefore, that Zabelin uses the word 'очищать' to describe the action of removing the foreign occupiers of Moscow.[5] Here, he is using a term widespread at the time. A letter from Ustyug to Perm' of February 1611, for example, calls on its readers to cleanse Moscow from the Lithuanians ('для Московского очищенья отъ Литовскихъ людей').[6] The term also appears in, for example, a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda[7] and a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vychegda, where the Poles are also mentioned.[8] It follows that the foreigners were seen as unclean. Their presence in Russia had, in turn, made the land – and possibly the people – unclean and therefore the call went out to purify the land, which could only be done by expelling all the foreigners. The presence of the foreigners has not only compromised Russia's independence but also, in the words of a letter from Ustyug to Vychegodsk written in June 1612, would cause ruin in the land.[9] It follows, therefore, that the main task of the militia was not to liberate

---

[1] Massa, 1982, p. 9.
[2] *Pamyatniki*, p. 140.
[3] Soloviev, 1989, p. 171.
[4] Березов, 1957, p. 12.
[5] Забѣлинъ. 1883, p. 35.
[6] AAE II, № 174, pp. 295-6.
[7] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 228.
[8] Любомиров, 1939, p. 234.
[9] AAE II, № 208, pp. 352-6.

Moscow but rather to cleanse the land of its enemies.[1] In practice, this would amount

to the same thing – it is only the theory that was significant!

Even before foreigners had entered Russia for malice, it was clear that their

presence in the land was not particularly welcome. Boris Godunov's love for foreigners

was seen as detrimental to Russia[2] and False Dmitrii I's favour towards foreigners and

foreign trade can be seen as one reason for his downfall.[3] Later on, a letter from

Pozharskii to his militia in Yaroslavl' and Vychegodsk claims that it was False Dmitrii I's

favourable attitude towards foreigners that gave the 'Lithuanian' King the opportunity

to invade in the first place.[4] As Klyuchevskii put it, foreign intervention was alien to the

Russians and also destructive to Russian nationality.[5] Even individual foreigners were

not trusted. Massa discovered that no maps of Moscow were available. On asking why,

he was told that the only reason that a foreigner would need a map was to engage in

treason.[6] Even foreigners who could be seen as beyond suspicion were in fact not.

Following the death of Skopin-Shuiskii, his Swedish ally de la Gardie was not allowed

near the body.[7]

The distrust of Russians for foreigners has consequences for Russians who had

to mix with foreigners. The text of an oath made by the people of Nizhnii Novgorod

requires that the oath takers do not follow any orders which may be given to them by

Lithuanians.[8] Furthermore, any Russians supporting or collaborating with the foreign

invaders were classed as similar to them. Zabelin, for example, writes that the

---

[1] Любомиров, 1939, p. 96.
[2] Soloviev, 1988, p. 50.
[3] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 145.
[4] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[5] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 49.
[6] Massa, 1982, p. 130.
[7] *Pamyatniki*, p. 64.
[8] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 224.

semiboyarshchina gave away Russian power into the hands of the Poles[1] and Dunning acknowledges that Hermogen criticised the *semiboyarshchina* for their choice of a Polish Tsar.[2] This idea is clearly found in primary sources. A letter from all ranks of people in Moscow to Vychegodsk dated April 1611, therefore written during the Polish occupation, calls those who invited the Poles to Russia traitors.[3] The *Novaya Povest'* sees no reason why anyone should want to engage in treason of this form. Traitors had to be insane to join the enemy ('ум свой на последнее безумие отдали')![4] It seems as if there was a clear distinction between the 'true' Russians, who wanted their land to be free of foreigners and ruled by a Russian and the traitors who had aligned themselves with foreign interventionists who sought foreign rule over the land. For this reason, Russia was seen as indivisible. Hermogen supported peace – but could only accept peace if there was no loss of territory ruled over by the Tsar in Moscow.[5] Other Russians had similar ideas. The writer of a letter from Kazan' to Perm' dated June 1611 declares that there should be no foreigners in all states of the Russian Tsardom.[6] The Russian distrust of the foreigners went so far that a letter of January 1611 from Vyatka to Perm' declares that all problems the writers suffer are due to the Lithuanians, as it emphasises their actions and contrasts how life has changed under their occupation.[7] Furthermore, False Dmitrii II was still a viable, Russian candidate as Tsar to challenge the candidacy of the Pole Władysław.[8] The same primary source makes this clear, as

[1] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 66.
[2] Dunning, 2001, p. 414.
[3] AAE II, № 185, pp. 315-6.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 203.
[5] Антоненко, 2005, p. 118
[6] AAE II, № 188, pp. 318-27.
[7] AAE II, № 170, pp. 291-3.
[8] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 475.

the readers are invited to swear an oath of allegiance to False Dmitrii II.[1] The

pretender is preferred to the foreigner.

Let us now look at how foreigners were addressed in primary sources. We must

remember that during the Time of Troubles, the most likely foreigners for a Russian to

have contact with were the citizens of the Commonwealth and the Swedes. The former

tend to be described as a single group, with the words 'Polish' and 'Lithuanian' used

interchangeably; the latter almost invariably as 'Germans'. The Commonwealth, a

union of Poland and Lithuania, unfortunately lacked (and still lacks) a single demonym

in either Russian or English, meaning that its citizens can either be described according

to ethnicity, which would also give, for example, the Ukrainians a good criterion for

being mentioned, or else a single term could be used to describe everyone, whether

Polish, Lithuanian or something else.

Looking at the language used above to describe people from the Commonwealth

serves to emphasise this form of address. A letter from Ustyug to Perm' of February

1611 calls on its readers to 'очищати' the land from the Lithuanians,[2] although Poles

would also have been present. It is possible that this is merely a simplification on the

part of the writer. A letter from Pozharskii to his militia in Yaroslavl' and Vychegodsk

claims that it was False Dmitrii I's favourable attitude towards foreigners that gave the

'Lithuanian' King the opportunity to invade in the first place.[3] This term, however,

cannot be seen as merely a simplification. Lithuania had been a grand duchy before

union with the Kingdom of Poland.[4] The monarch of the Commonwealth, therefore,

was still officially described as King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. Therefore,

---

[1] AAE II, № 170, pp. 291-3.
[2] AAE II, № 174, pp. 295-6.
[3] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[4] Hosking, 1998, p. 23.

calling Sigismund the Lithuanian King was inaccurate. It seems that the writer knew that Sigismund was a king but did not undertake to find out his title. Certainly, Sigismund was a foreigner and therefore the writer did not need to describe him totally accurately. It is possible of course that he is being criticised for being foreign. This criticism goes further in the *Plach* where the writer describes Maryna Mniszczówna by her diminutive (Marinka), as a tart and as a Lutheran,[1] when of course she was actually a Catholic. In both examples, the writers knew that Sigismund and Maryna were foreigners and therefore they were described as foreign. Describing them accurately was not necessary. Throughout the *Plach*, the terms 'Polish' and 'Lithuanian' are used interchangeably. The writer was not interested in which foreigners were which – just that they were foreign. It may be remembered that, similarly, writers were uninterested in foreigners' religions and used non-Orthodox Christian denominations synonymously.

In other texts, however, Poles and Lithuanians are mentioned separately. For example, a letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda does make a difference between the two. It states, for example, that the Poles and Lithuanians are evil marauders ('злым похишником').[2] However, as far as I can tell, whenever Poles and Lithuanians are distinguished from each other, they are always mentioned together and therefore always act in the same way as each other. Perhaps here, the writers knew that the Commonwealth was made up of Poland and Lithuania, therefore called its people the Poles and Lithuanians. Naturally, as people from a single state, they would act as a single group.

---

[1] *Pamyatniki*, p. 138.
[2] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 228.

The use of the word 'Germans' to describe the Swedes was for different reasons. Although in modern Russian the word *nemtsy* does mean 'Germans', during the Time of Troubles its meaning was closer to its etymological meaning of 'mute'. It was applied to the Swedes for the simple reason they were unable to speak Russian – and therefore may as well have been mute. In the Middle Ages, the Russian term *yazyk*, meaning 'language', was also used to mean 'people', thus defining an ethnicity by its language.[1] Obviously, the same idea was in use here to describe the Swedes. Indeed, the term was widespread to describe Germanic people in general, so not only the Swedes but also the Dutch and the English could be called 'Germans'. Polish, on the other hand, as a Slavonic language, is much closer to Russian and therefore it may well have been possible for native speakers of one to understand the other, although they were speaking different languages. This may explain why the Poles were not called 'mute'. The use of the term *nemtsy* to describe the Swedes was completely normal and so widespread that one example will be sufficient. A reminder sent to the Vottsk region ('память посланному въ Вотцскую Пятину') advises its readers to oppose the 'Germans' (i.e. the Swedes) as a threat to Novgorod ('чтобъ надъ нами Нѣмецкіе люди которого дурна не учинили').[2] More noteworthy is where the Swedes are actually described as Swedes and not Germans. I have only found one example of this – in the *Skopin-Shuiskii* text, where de la Gardie is described as a Swedish ('свицкому') voevoda.[3] Even here, however, he is also described as 'немецкий' in the same text. As far as I can tell, the only reason for calling him Swedish would be to acknowledge that he was from Sweden. The term *nemtsy* was given to all Germanic peoples for speaking

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 25.
[2] AAE II, № 172, pp. 294-5.
[3] *Pamyatniki*, p. 68.

a language that was not understandable to Russian-speakers and therefore there must

sometimes have been the necessity to differentiate between them. De la Gardie is

called Swedish to show his ethnicity – and later on this is taken as read and he is called

'German' as per the norm. Again, the Russians would have understood that he was a

foreigner but it was not necessary to emphasise constantly which of many foreign

peoples he was a member of.

I said earlier that the foreign groups that the Russians most came into contact

with were the Swedes and residents of the Commonwealth. Therefore it is not

surprising that these groups are the most commonly mentioned in primary sources.

This does not mean that they are the only groups, although references to other peoples

are rare. Of course, non-Russian ethnicities living in Russia, such as the Chuvash and

Cheremis are mentioned, usually on the same side as ethnic Russians. A letter from

Perm' to Kazan' dated September 1611 is addressed to all people 'Казанского

государства', including Tatars, Chuvash, former Muslims, etc. The salutation includes

'и княземъ, и мурзамъ, и служилымъ новокрещеномъ, и Татаромъ, и Чювашѣ, и

Черемисѣ, и Вотякомъ'.[1] However, these were Russian groups of people. Non-

Russian groups are mentioned very infrequently in primary sources. One example is a

letter from Trubetskoi and Pozharskii to the people of Yarensk dated October 1612,

written close to the time when the militia retook Moscow, which declares that the Poles

and Lithuanians entered Moscow with Hungarians ('и съ Венгры').[2] I have been

unable to find out who these Hungarians were – and did the writer mean ethnic

Magyars or a different group from the Habsburg Monarchy? It seems most likely that

rarely-mentioned groups of people were simply not met with very frequently in Russia

---

[1] AI II, № 333, p. 399.
[2] AAE II, № 213, pp. 361-3.

and therefore they were not mentioned for this reason. It is possible, of course, that

other foreigners did enter Russia in small numbers but were confused with larger

groups such as the Poles, or that they were described as, say, Poles as both peoples

were foreign.

From reading the preceding paragraphs, it is possible to come to the conclusion

that all foreigners were despised by the Russians: if they had had the opportunity, they

would not let any foreigners cross into Russia at all. Interestingly, this is not

completely the case. Surprisingly often, foreigners are mentioned in primary sources in

a positive light and certainly they are tolerated more than was earlier apparent. For

example, the Swede de la Gardie was a trusted follower of Skopin-Shuiskii.

Furthermore, in an official proclamation from Vasilii Shuiskii to Charles IX of Sweden,

de la Gardie is praised for being willing to cleanse Russia from its enemies and traitors

('и отъ Полскихъ, и отъ Литовскихъ людей и отъ нашихъ измѣнниковъ наше

Російское Государство очищати').[1] Of course, this document was written when

Russia still had a Russian Tsar and therefore the threat to national independence was

not as great as it became during the interregnum. However, even here, foreigners seem

to play a major rôle in liberating Russia. Lyubomirov tells us that the Nizhnii Novgorod

militia under Minin and Pozharskii was made up of a wide range of people, of all social

classes and also of a variety of ethnic groups, including foreigners.[2] The fact that

foreigners were fighting alongside the Russians is backed up by primary sources. A

letter from Nizhnii Novgorod to Vologda dated February 1611 was written on the

subject of liberating Moscow from the Poles. In the salutation, amongst the people the

letter is addressed from are 'головы Литовскіе, … и Литва, … и Нѣмцы, … которые

---

[1] AI II, № 277, pp. 336-7.
[2] Любомиров, 1939, p. 116.

въ Нижнемъ'.[1] In other words, the Lithuanians, including Lithuanian leaders, and 'Germans' are fighting against the Commonwealth and Sweden. It is most likely that these people were mercenaries who would fight for anyone provided they received adequate payment but the fact remains that they were trusted enough by the Russians to help them liberate their land. This is by no means rare. In another source, a letter of February 1611 from Yaroslavl' to Vologda, it is clear that the Russians in Vologda were supported in their struggle to liberate Moscow by foreigners. In the list of people going to liberate Moscow, we find the phrase 'и иноземцовъ'.[2] Confusing as this may be, the Russians did not divide people neatly into 'us' and 'them' purely on ethnic or national grounds. It seems that anyone with the national goal in mind – that is liberation of the land and restoration of an independent Russian Tsar – could be classed as fighting for the Russians, even if they were of a non-Russian ethnicity and therefore should have been hated. It seems that even a 'hated foreigner' would be accepted if he was willing to fight on the Russian side.

6. **The Russian Tsar**

a. Importance of a monarch

Let us now turn to a concept which has been touched on a number of times in the course of this chapter but never looked at in detail: the concept of the Russian Tsar. In the words of Solov'ev, the strongest bond between all the Russian people during the

---

[1] AAE II, № 175, p. 296.
[2] AAE II, № 179, pp. 304-8.

interregnum was their desire for a new Orthodox monarch.[1] Platonov agrees, believing

that the election of a new monarch should be one of the first things to take place once

Polish power dwindled.[2] Indeed, a proclamation from national militia leader

Pozharskii to the residents of Vychegodsk dated April 1612 states that he had come to

the conclusion that the Orthodox people must unite and choose a new Tsar.[3] Uspenskij

tells us that one description of the Tsar was *zemnoi Bog*.[4] Indeed, Massa observed that

the Russian people 'looks on its tsar as a god'.[5] It is therefore not surprising that the

Tsar was an important part of the Russian mindset. A letter of July 1610 from the

Muscovite boyars to the people of Perm' explaining the deposition of Shuiskii makes it

clear that the resulting interregnum is merely a temporary state of affairs: the first

thing which will be done is the election of a new Tsar to rule the land ('и на

Московское бъ государьство выбрати намъ Государя всею землею').[6] Platonov

tells us that without a Tsar the people had no leader or figurehead. For this reason, the

banner of the new monarch needed to be hoisted quickly to unite supporters of the

restored order and to make sure that elements of disorder did not appear again.[7] It is,

therefore, not surprising that, despite all the problems of the Time of Troubles with

arguments as to the legitimacy of elected monarchs, pretenders, foreign Tsars, etc., the

concept of monarchical rule was itself never debated.[8] The concept of the Russian Tsar

was so important that, although the Tsar himself may have been criticised or disputed,

the idea of monarchy *per se* was never even discussed. Russia had to remain a

---

[1] Soloviev, 1989, p. 268.
[2] Платонов, 2005, p. 84
[3] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[4] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 261.
[5] Massa, 1982, p. 61.
[6] AAE II, № 162, pp. 277-8.
[7] Платонов, 2005, p. 84.
[8] Perrie, 2006, p. 230.

monarchy! Plokhy tells us that the Tsar was indeed essential to the fabric of Muscovite

society 'and, by extension, to its political, social and religious identity'.[1]

b. <u>Monarchy linked with Orthodoxy</u>

Why should this be? It seems that Russia's monarchy was closely linked with its

Christianity. The Tsar was chosen to rule by God. Therefore, he was God's

representative on Earth, or at least in Russia. Bogatyrev writes that when Ivan IV was

crowned as Tsar, he was emphasising that his power was given to him by God alone

and emphasising his continuity of descent from the Byzantine emperors and even the

kings of the Old Testament.[2] Indeed, the Tsar, although a mere mortal, seemed to be

given the attributes of God. Ivan IV claimed that, although as a man he was a sinner, as

the Tsar he was righteous,[3] thus giving himself the sinless state which applies to God

alone. Proverbs of the time emphasise the link between the Tsar and God. The proverb

'only God and the Tsar know' could be seen as attributing God's omniscience to the

Tsar, whereas the proverb 'The will of the Tsar is the will of God and of the will of God

is the Tsar the fulfiller' goes even further to explain that God's will is being done in the

world through the Tsar.[4] Politically, Hellie explains Russia to be an 'Agapetus state', in

other words the ruler believes he is God's representative on Earth and his people agree

with him.[5] Margeret observed that 'there is no law or council save the will of the

emperor';[6] similarly nothing could happen on Earth that was not according to God's

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 159.
[2] Bogatyrev, 2006, p. 245
[3] Hosking, 2002, p. 110.
[4] Both proverbs come from Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 2, p. 36.
[5] R Hellie, 'The law' in M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 360-86, p. 378.
[6] Margeret, 1983, p. 28.

will. Going against the Tsar would be identical to rebelling against God, which was

unthinkable. For example, Patriarch Hermogen wrote in 1611 that, in deposing

Shuiskii, the people had broken their oath which they had sworn on the cross

('преступивъ крестное цѣлованіе, отъѣхали, измѣнивъ Царю Государю и

Великому Князю Василью Ивановичу всеа Русіи'),[1] intimating that they had

rebelled against God by doing this. The true rôle of the people was to serve God and the

Tsar – although there was not necessarily a distinction between the two forms of

service. Zabelin tells us that, at the time, the entire Russian population was split into

three groups. Apart from the priests, who served God directly, the groups were the

'slaves' or service aristocracy and the 'orphans' or everybody else.[2] This emphasised

everybody's links to the Tsar: the 'slaves' served him, whereas the 'orphans' looked to

him for protection and support. Indeed, the land and even the people could not exist

without the Tsar. Klyuchevskii goes as far as to say that, apart from the Tsar, 'neither

the State nor a nation existed'.[3]

c. Separation of ruler and state

This leads us into one of the more confusing concepts in Russian identity: the

idea that ruler and state could not be completely separated. Just as the Tsar was

chosen by God, so God had given the Tsar Russia as his private possession. The Tsar

could never be seen as a servant of the state for the reason that he owned the state and

was the embodiment of the state.[4] This concept does not explicitly occur in primary

sources (perhaps as the writers could not conceive any other means of existence

---

[1] AAE II, № 169, pp. 286-91.
[2] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 6.
[3] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 65.
[4] Poe, 2006, p. 463.

therefore did not even bring it into question). However, a record of the Tsar's court

and servants dating to the period of the interregnum describes everybody in terms of

their service to the Tsar. The rôle of the Tsar himself is not mentioned; rather it is

taken as common knowledge.[1] Many secondary sources do go into considerable detail

about this idea. The land was the personal patrimony of the Tsar and the people

servants of the Tsar working on the Tsar's land.[2] Klyuchevskii goes even further in his

description. He claims that since the land was the Tsar's patrimony, he did not even see

himself as supreme ruler but rather as the seignior of his manorial estate.[3]

The Time of Troubles changed the popular mindset. First of all, it brought the

alien concept of an elected monarch into Russian society. An elected Tsar could not

look upon the state as his own patrimony in the same way as a hereditary monarch, as

he had not succeeded to the throne by patrimony.[4] Katyrev-Rostovskii, writing in

1626, differentiated Ivan IV, who ruled over an *otechestvo*, and Boris Godunov, who

ruled over a *derzhava*.[5] It is clear that he understood the difference between the two

men's reigns – and emphasised that Ivan was a patrimonial monarch whereas Godunov

reigned without authority from his ancestry (and therefore must have been placed on

the throne by the people). Timofeev, indeed, does not class him as a true Tsar, as he

was not born to rule.[6] For this reason, the people began to understand the difference

between the *gosudar'* and the *gosudarstvo*. Whereas beforehand they had been

synonymous, it was now possible to distinguish them.[7] Plokhy declares that the

concept of the state as separate from the office of Tsar was a completely new

[1] AI II, № 355, pp. 422-6.
[2] Dunning, 2001, p. 29.
[3] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 12.
[4] ibid., vol 2, p. 317.
[5] Plokhy, 2006, p. 212.
[6] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 262.
[7] Plokhy, 2006, p. 222.

development in Muscovite political thought – but this development was brought about by the monarchical crises of the Time of Troubles.[1] For this reason, yet another new concept arose in the Russian mindset: the idea of the fatherland (*otechestvo*) and the ability to betray, or support, it.[2] Defence of the fatherland was no longer synonymous with support of the monarch. Thus we are able to find primary sources where the state is described explicitly. A letter from Pozharskii and his men from Yaroslavl' to Vychegodsk dated April 1612 emphasises that there are two things that need saving from the Poles. These are the Orthodox faith and the *otechestvo*.[3] Whereas the land did return to a hereditary monarchy following the establishment of the Romanov dynasty,[4] it is obvious that there must have been a change in the opinions of many. For example, a letter of the Muscovite boyars to the people of Perm' following the deposition of Shuiskii in July 1610 makes it clear that, although the election of a Tsar is an immediate concern, the people will still be able to survive and oppose their enemies without a monarch.[5] The Karamzin Chronograph even intimated that, although Tsars may come and go, the Muscovite State remains.[6] Although the monarch was still God's anointed, he now received his authority to rule from the people.[7] Plokhy suggests that the only legitimate way of installing a new ruler was to have him elected by the *zemsky sobor*. Shuiskii, who was not elected in this way, was classed as illegitimate by some, whereas Michael Romanov, who was, received far more support and indeed stayed in power.[8] Certainly, the idea of an elected, rather than hereditary, monarch became widespread.

---

[1] ibid., p. 213.
[2] Tolz, 2001, p. 5.
[3] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[4] Poe, 2006, p. 435
[5] AAE II, № 162, pp. 277-8.
[6] Plokhy, 2006, p. 213.
[7] Greenfeld, 1993, p. 57.
[8] Plokhy, 2006, p. 214.

However, of course, this was a completely new concept. Ivan IV, for example, claimed that he ruled purely by God's will and not man's.[1] For this reason, the people had to reconcile the fact that election of a monarch must take place according to the will of the people; however, the true monarch *must* be chosen by God. This leads to the confusing statement in a letter from Kazan' to Perm' of August 1611, which states that the writers want a Tsar elected by all the people, whom God gives them ('выбрати бъ намъ на Московское государство Государя, сослався со всею землею, кого намъ Государя Богъ дастъ').[2] This does not seem to be a contradiction to the writer. Many people at the time were convinced of the inter-connection of all events via God, which is something we no longer have.[3] The election of a new Tsar by men would be carried out according to God's will – and therefore God's candidate for monarch would be the candidate who would be voted in. God was still providing the people with their Tsar – just in a different way from in the past.

Despite the above, the concept of an elected monarch was still completely alien to many Russians. For this reason, the elected Tsars of the Time of Troubles made it clear to emphasise that they were, in fact, hereditary monarchs even when it was clear that they were not. Boris Godunov, for example, underlined the fact he was the brother-in-law of the previous monarch Fedor Ivanovich.[4] Later on, Michael Romanov was elected largely due to his family links with the old dynasty. After all, Fedor Ivanovich's mother was herself a Romanov.[5] He emphasises his family links with previous hereditary Tsars in proclamations issued shortly after his succession. In a

---

[1] В Кобрин, 'Лжедмитрий I', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 19-22, pp. 21-2.
[2] AAE II, № 194, pp. 332-4.
[3] Anderson, 1991, p. 24.
[4] Kluchevsky, 1912-3, vol 3, p. 51.
[5] ibid., p. 52.

proclamation soon after his accession in 1613, he underlines the fact he is related to

Fedor Ivanovich, the last Tsar of the old ruling dynasty.[1] In another proclamation to

the people of the town of Romanov dated November 1613, he calls Ivan IV his

grandfather and Fedor Ivanovich his uncle ('... при прежныхъ де Государѣхъ, при

дѣдѣ нашемъ Царѣ и Великомъ Князѣ Иванѣ Васильевичѣ всеа Русіи и при дядѣ

нашемъ Царѣ и Великомъ Князѣ Ѳедорѣ Ивановичѣ всеа Русіи').[2] Clearly, the

concept of hereditary succession was still far more important than anything else.

Palitsyn even goes as far as to claim that God had predestined Michael Romanov before

his birth to become Tsar.[3] In other words, he was not an elected monarch but rather

had ascended to the throne in the same way as Ivan IV.

d. <u>The pretender phenomenon</u>

The concept of hereditary succession also explains the success of some of the

pretenders of the Time of Troubles. The False Dmitriis all claimed to be the son of Ivan

IV. Therefore, as members of the old dynasty, they were far closer to the throne than

the current incumbent. Massa, writing at the time, goes as far as to say that False

Dmitrii I was bound to succeed in gaining the throne, owing to his claims to be the

lawful hereditary ruler.[4] Let us not look too deeply into the concept of pretension for

the throne at the moment. Perrie writes that royal imposture has a 'special

significance' in Russia, partly owing to the concept of the 'true Tsar'.[5] Let us therefore

understand this concept first of all, before returning to the pretenders.

---

[1] AI III, № 6, pp. 4-7.
[2] AAE III, № 14, pp. 15-16.
[3] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 262.
[4] Massa, 1982, p. 70.
[5] Perrie, 1995, p. 2.

The monarch was seen differently in Russia from elsewhere in Europe, although everywhere the ruler was divinely appointed. In the West, for example, God would choose a man to *hold the office* of King. Russia was different. There, the people believed that God chose a man *to be* Tsar.[1] In other words, unlike in Western Europe, the people did not differentiate between the ruler and his office. The ruler was chosen by God to be the True Tsar. Perrie writes that the 'myth of the Tsar' was extremely important in the Russian mindset.[2] It seems that peasants firmly believed in the benevolence of the true Tsar and his ability to protect them and Russia. If, as was frequent, the actual Tsar was far from ideal, this was put down to boyar involvement prohibiting the Tsar from acting as he wanted.[3] Indeed, during the Time of Troubles, the peasants circulated tales of the true Tsar who would protect them from their oppressors.[4] This idea appears from time to time in primary sources. A letter of the people of Zaraisk to royal pretender False Dmitrii III of March 1612 emphasises that the Tsar is expected to help his people and provide for them when they are in need.[5] Furthermore, a proclamation of February 1611, therefore written at a time when some had already rejected the idea of offering the throne to Władysław, from the Moscow boyar duma to its ambassadors to the Commonwealth acknowledges Władysław of Poland as the true Tsar and invites him to take his throne quickly, as this will bring peace to Russia ('чтобъ имъ Великимъ Государемъ нашимъ Российское Государство приняло покой и тишину').[6] Makovskii takes the peasant belief in a true Tsar even further. He writes, 'Народ мечтал о счастливой жизни, а получить ее

[1] Poe, 2006, p. 437.
[2] M Perrie, *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore*, Cambridge: CUP, 1987, p. 1.
[3] Skrynnikov, 1988, p. 51.
[4] Hosking, 1998, p. 64.
[5] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 301.
[6] AI II, № 322, pp. 379-83.

он сможет только с помощью истинного царя'.[1] As a good Marxist he acknowledges that Marx identified this unfailing belief of the peasants in the true Tsar as the real religion of the peasants.[2] This idea was not just confined to Marxist researchers. Some pretenders claimed to be the True Tsar. Their supporters preferred torture and death to renouncing their beliefs in the pretender. Perrie calls this a religious mentality rather than mere political allegiance – although she does not go as far as Marx in her statement.[3]

Why would pretenders claim to be the true Tsar? The answer is simple. As the Tsar was God's representative on Earth, rebellion against him was unthinkable. However, if it was claimed that the current reigning monarch was actually a false Tsar, then it was actually everybody's duty as a good Christian to rebel against this monarch in order to bring the True Tsar to the throne.[4] Uspenskij tells us that religious notions lay at the foot of royal imposture.[5] For example, supporters of False Dmitrii I believed he was the true Tsar and Boris Godunov was a usurper.[6] For this reason, False Dmitrii I did not appeal to any particular group of people but based his campaign on the claim that he was the true Tsar.[7] By doing this, he received a great deal of support![8]

There are two interesting points that can be brought up when looking at the concept of the true Tsar. Firstly, it enabled the people to rebel against an unpopular ruler. For example, Vasilii Shuiskii was seen as evil and unpopular. Dubovik goes as far as to say, 'Василий Иванович Шуйский был, пожалуй, самым непопулярным из

---

[1] Маковский, 1967, p. 277.
[2] ibid., p. 475.
[3] Perrie, 1995, p. 246.
[4] Hosking, 2002, p. 136.
[5] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 260.
[6] Dunning, 2001, p. 116.
[7] Perrie, 1995, p. 63.
[8] Костомаровъ, 1904, p. 116.

российских монархов'.[1] To rebel against him, all that was needed was to class him as

a false Tsar and to find the True Tsar, hence the appearance of False Dmitrii II.[2] The

second point is that, of course, with all the confusion as to who was the true Tsar and

who was false, there was some disagreement on the subject. Some people followed

False Dmitrii II, some followed Shuiskii and some even classed both as equally

illegitimate and could therefore switch their allegiance from one to the other – and

back – without feeling that they had betrayed the true Tsar in any way.[3] In the text of

an oath circulated from Nizhnii Novgorod, the pretender False Dmitrii II is called 'my

Sovereign' and the subject of the oath ('Целую крест государю своему царю и

великому князю Дмитрею Ивановичю всеа Русии').[4] However, in a general

proclamation from Moscow to Perm' of July 1610, written about the time of the

deposition of Vasilii Shuiskii, having False Dmitrii II on the throne is described as being

no better than being under foreign rule – and the readers are advised to oppose either

from happening ('противъ Полскихъ и Литовскихъ людей и противъ того вора,

которой называется царевичемъ Дмитреемъ, чтобъ они государьствомъ

Московскимъ не завладѣли').[5] Obviously different people had different views on the

identity of the legitimate monarch.

So why were the pretenders so popular? The answer goes back to the extinction

of the old Rurikid ruling dynasty in 1598. Members of the old dynasty were

automatically true Tsars by birth, although the elected Tsars of the Time of Troubles

were seen more sceptically. For this reason, the pretenders claimed Rurikid ancestry,

---

[1] В Дубовик, 'Самозванцы', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 31-34, p. 31.
[2] Dunning, 2001, p. 259.
[3] Soloviev, 1989, p. 27.
[4] Дробленкова, 1960, p. 224.
[5] AAE II, № 162, pp. 277-8.

in order that they may claim to be a return to Rurikid rule.[1] Indeed, although

pretenders are common in Russian history, the most striking pretenders appeared

exactly when the natural order of succession was broken: Pugachev (who claimed to be

Peter III) is another example.[2] Their rôle was to challenge the current monarch who

could also be seen as a false Tsar. Indeed, a letter from Pozharskii to Yaroslavl' dated

April 1612 even acknowledges False Dmitrii I as being a legitimate monarch, describing

him amongst the Tsars ('блаженныя памяти Государя Царя и Великаго Князя

Ивана Васильевича всеа Русіи, и Государя Царя и Великаго Князя Ѳедора

Ивановича всеа Русіи, и Царя Бориса, и Царя Дмитрея, и Царя Василья').[3] It is

unclear as to whether Pozharskii truly thought the pretender to be Dmitrii Ivanovich,

as in another letter written in the same month, he writes that God's mercy killed off

False Dmitrii I.[4] One suggestion is that False Dmitrii, together with the other elected

monarchs, is not given the same titles as the hereditary Rurikid monarchs. Perhaps

Pozharskii acknowledged the difference between monarchs by birth and monarchs by

election. What was certain, however, is that a monarch was required. Hermogen's

main aim during the interregnum was to bring the true Tsar ('законный царь') to rule

in the land.[5] Even during this time, pretenders still received support. One example is a

letter of March 1612 from Zaraisk to False Dmitrii III, still acknowledging him as their

ruler ('Царю Государю и Великому Князю Дмитрею Ивановичю всея Руссіи бьютъ

челомъ сироты твои…').[6] In the end, the *Plach* makes it clear that a pretender could

never have succeeded as this was not God's will ('Премилостивыи же богъ нашъ

---

[1] Plokhy, 2006, p. 212.
[2] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 265.
[3] AAE II, № 204, pp. 348-9.
[4] AAE II, № 203, pp. 343-8.
[5] Антоненко, 2005, p. 118.
[6] Забѣлинъ, 1883, p. 300.

Троица не до конъца сему врагу попусти всезлобныи ядъ изълияти, въскорѣ

разъсыпа бѣсовъския его козни').[1] It is interesting to speculate how different

history may have been if False Dmitrii I had not been assassinated. What is true is that

the Tsar was classed as a sacred being.[2] Pretension, therefore, was seen as playing at

Tsar, which was blasphemy.[3] Only the true Tsar was genuinely chosen by God –

anyone else must therefore oppose God and, by extension, the whole Russian Orthodox

faith.

7. <u>Conclusion</u>

To conclude, let us look again at Hosking's view of Russian collective identity.

He states that their identity was based on three points: the Orthodox religion, the

Grand Prince or Tsar and the Russian land. How accurate is his viewpoint, given the

above research? The first two points are very obvious in primary sources, although the

third is not. Whereas there are far fewer references to the Russian land than to the

other two points, certainly the idea is present. For example, primary sources focus

upon the 'cleansing' of the land, as they ask for the readers to help in removing the

foreigners. However, since the other two points appear far more frequently, it is

perhaps possible to say that they are more important. In other words, although the

land is the home of the Russian people and therefore cannot be forsaken completely,

other aspects such as religion are more important. Of course, the question arises of

---

[1] *Pamyatniki*, p. 138.
[2] Uspenskij, 1984, p. 268.
[3] ibid., p. 272.

exactly how Hosking defines the term 'land'. Does he just mean Muscovite territory, or is the term closer to the idea of the 'fatherland'? If the first is true then we see that, although the lands conquered by Poland and Sweden during the Time of Troubles cannot have been let go without a fuss, it does seem as if these areas were now understood as no longer being Russian. I mentioned above the example of letters written to the people of the lands lost to the Commonwealth during the Time of Troubles, which make it clear that, since the readers must have submitted to their new rulers, they are no longer seen as truly Orthodox (and, by analogy, they are no longer truly Russian).

In the last paragraph I insinuated that Orthodoxy was synonymous with Russian nationality. Is this in fact true? Whereas Tolz seems to think so, stating that conversion to Orthodoxy was the only way to become truly Russian, this does not necessarily correspond to what is written in primary sources. Certainly, as stated in chapter two, the Orthodox faith was extremely important. Plokhy writes that Russians generally described themselves using religious, rather than national, terms and the *Novaya Povest'* without exception refers to the people as Orthodox. Proclamations made it clear that the Time of Troubles began since the people had turned away from God and would continue until the people repented and turned back. For this reason, opposition to the Catholic Poles was an absolute necessity.

Conversion to Orthodoxy was certainly seen in a positive light. For example, in 1610, Władysław of Poland would have been accepted as Tsar if he had converted to Orthodoxy. The opposite is also fairly obvious: conversion away from Orthodoxy was unthinkable and therefore as much as possible had to be done to prevent the Orthodox Russians from being conquered by the foreigners, as this would mean that Catholicism

would spread throughout the land. Indeed, the *Novaya Povest'* goes as far as to say that being ruled by Sigismund itself is not as bad as the Orthodox faith being compromised if he took power.

So is it in fact true that 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' were seen as synonymous terms during the Time of Troubles? Some primary sources do indeed see things in this way. For example, the *Novaya Povest'* does not refer to its readers as 'Russian' but as 'Orthodox', whereas other texts may refer to the people as 'Russians'. However, this is not the full story. Even the *Novaya Povest'* acknowledges that there are differences between the two concepts. Naturally it criticises Sigismund and his followers – but it criticises the Russian-born followers of Sigismund most of all, as presumably they should have known better. These people are criticised for rejecting the Orthodox faith of their youth. Whereas it is obvious that they are ethnic Russians, they are not described as such and other texts do indeed use the word *russkii* to describe such people. It seems fairly obvious that these people, as traitors, could not be described as 'Orthodox' as they were seen as anti-Orthodox. However, as they were ethnically Russian they had to be described as such. I have shown that it is true that the most common umbrella term to address ethnic Russians was indeed 'Orthodox'. Whereas 'Orthodox' was a synonym for 'Russian', the opposite was not true, as 'Russian' could equally refer to traitors as supporters of the cause.

However, it is equally true that non-umbrella terms were used to describe the people. I have shown that the salutations of correspondence were often quite long, as each social class and group was of necessity addressed separately. This does not show social disunity but rather serves to emphasise that each rôle in society was important and therefore addressed separately.

What about Orthodox people who were not Russian? The question is fairly straightforward as we remember that, in the Orthodox viewpoint, Orthodoxy was seen as the only true form of Christianity. For this reason, 'Orthodox' and 'Christian' were synonymous. The Russian viewpoint was generally that all foreigners were non-Christians and therefore the people there do not know God. Despite this fact, the Russians did acknowledge that there were Orthodox people living outside their own state, for example the Ruthenians. However, these people were classed in the same way as non-Orthodox foreigners for the reason that they followed a non-Orthodox monarch and therefore their faith must be compromised. Certainly, since 'Orthodox' was used to describe the Russian people, it could not be used to describe foreigners who were Orthodox.

The final group of people we need to consider is 'Russians' – that is subjects of the Russian Tsar – who were not ethnic Russians. These were seen ambiguously by the writers of primary sources. It seems as if non-Russian ethnicities within Russia were simply called by the name of that ethnicity. Whether they were then seen in a positive or negative light would depend on the writer. I have shown above examples of when Tatars, for example, were counted amongst the writer's enemies and also when they were counted amongst the addressees and therefore must have been trusted. Whereas these people are more likely to support, rather than oppose, the Russian cause, it seems to me that, just as ethnic Russians could be seen as traitors depending on whom they supported, it is also very likely that some members of other ethnicities followed Sigismund and therefore were rejected in the same way. However, most of the primary sources I have consulted refer primarily to 'Russians'. It is unclear whether these are ethnic Russians or Russian subjects; perhaps the non-Russian ethnicities were

acknowledged as Russian, therefore the writers did not see the need to mention them separately; or simply that there were none about. Since this thesis is based on the sources that I have read, perhaps finding an all-Russian, rather than ethnic Russian, collective identity is hampered by the sources. This point is made even more complicated by the fact that there were some Muscovite citizens who were not Orthodox; for example the Tatars of Kazan' were Muslim until their state was conquered by Ivan IV – and even afterwards many of them retained their original faith. There are a number of possible solutions here. The first is that the non-Orthodox subjects were ignored which does seem likely as they are frequently not mentioned explicitly in primary sources, although of course this may have been due to the fact that there were none in the area. Alternatively, they may have been counted amongst the Orthodox population and therefore the writer saw no need to mention them separately: therefore counting them amongst other groups such as 'the people who live there'. Plokhy believes that conversion to Orthodoxy was the only way to gain true citizenship, so perhaps these people were left out of primary sources as they were not classed as true Russian citizens? Certainly, the non-Russian ethnicities are never, as far as I have seen, been described specifically as non-Orthodox.

The question remains, therefore, whether 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' can be counted as synonyms. The answer is only up to a point. Certainly, the word 'Orthodox' could be used to refer to Russians. The fact that the true faith apparently stopped at the borders of the Russian state meant that there were no other Orthodox people anyway and therefore 'Orthodox' could only mean 'Russian'. Whether people were described in religious or ethnic terms depended on the writer. However, the term 'Russian' did not necessarily mean 'Orthodox'. Russian-born followers of Sigismund,

for example, could never have been described as Orthodox as they were seen as traitors to the true faith. However, since they were ethnic Russians, then it was only natural that they were described as 'Russian'. Religion and ethnicity were clearly separate in this sense.

The third of Hosking's three facets of Russian collective identity was the monarch. Indeed, at the beginning of the Time of Troubles, the state was seen as the patrimony of the ruler and the people as his subjects or even servants. However, the Time of Troubles brought about a new concept in the Russian mindset: that monarchy does not have to succeed from father to son but rather that the Tsar can be elected. This also brought about a separation of Tsar and state (and therefore brought about a new idea in the concept of the 'land'. In the simplest terms, an elected monarch could not class the land as his patrimonial estate as it had not passed to him by descent. Instead of serving the Tsar because he was their patrimonial ruler, the people began to serve the Tsar because he ruled by their will. I mentioned above that the Karamzin Chronograph intimates that the State can continue regardless of who is the monarch, perhaps showing that ruler and state were indeed completely separate by the end of the Time of Troubles, by suggesting that the state remained, regardless of the changes of monarch and dynasty. Certainly, the state itself is explicitly mentioned in primary sources. I have mentioned sources which refer to the *Moskovskoe gosudarstvo* as a definite focus of loyalty, rather than other forms of loyalty such as the Orthodox religion. Certainly here we can use the etymological link of *gosudarstvo* to *gosudar'* to argue that the primary focus of loyalty was in fact the monarch. However, this argument does not completely hold water. I have also given examples of

correspondence emphasising the *otechestvo* as one of the main focuses of loyalty. Here, the focus is wholly on the fatherland and the monarch is not under consideration.

Having said that, the concept of the Tsar was indeed extremely important. Firstly there is a link to the Russians' religion in that he was seen as God's representative on Earth. This ties in with the secondary sources mentioned in chapter two, where it is even stated that Russia is not a monarchy but a theocracy: the Tsar rules in God's name. Something which did not change throughout the entire Time of Troubles was the fact that rebellion against the Tsar was seen as identical to rebellion against God, since the Tsar was chosen by God. The fact that during the Troubles the crowned monarchs were challenged by a number of pretenders claiming to be the true Tsar meant that sometimes it was difficult to know who the true Tsar was. Just because a man was on the throne did not mean that he was the true Tsar! If he was not, then a true Orthodox believer would fight to remove him from the throne in favour of the true Tsar. Indeed, some people preferred torture and death to renouncing their beliefs in a pretender, as they assumed this person to be God's chosen ruler. This shows us why pretenders claimed to be a member of the old ruling dynasty. The throne passed to elected monarchs as this dynasty had died out. However, if a member of this dynasty could be found, then he would have a huge claim to the throne, as a patrimonial monarch.

The concept of monarchical rule *per se* was never even debated during the Time of Troubles. Even during the interregnum, the people could not imagine an alternative to rule by the Tsar. Even before the Time of Troubles, the proverb 'Without the Tsar the land is a widow; without the Tsar the people are an orphan' showed just how important the monarch was. Primary sources written during the interregnum show a

yearning for the new monarch. I have shown that Pozharskii, the leader of the national militia which would later restore Russian independence, sent out letters calling on people to unite and elect a new Tsar, thereby supporting his cause. The myth of the true Tsar meant that only the true Tsar could bring peace to Russia. His absence during the interregnum had brought about foreign domination in the land, which was something all writers hoped to bring to an end.

As much as Hosking's view of Russian collective identity is reasonably accurate, he does leave out one major point I have come across which is the Russian hatred of foreigners, although this is mentioned by other writers in chapter two. Klyuchevskii tells us, for example, that the West (i.e. Poland) was too alien to be trusted. Following foreign ideas was seen as being anti-Russian. Foreigners entering the land were tolerated but distrusted. The foreign invasions during the Time of Troubles only served to increase animosity between the Russians and the foreigners. The *Plach* is not alone in describing Polish forces laying waste to villages and destroying monasteries, which would naturally be seen as a negative act. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that primary sources see the invaders as having made the land unclean as they themselves are unclean. I have shown that the verb *ochistit'* is used to describe the removal of the invaders, as its primary meaning is to cleanse the land. In other words, the unclean presence is removed and the land is returned to its former state. It is possible, therefore, that Hosking saw the Russians' hatred of foreigners as being implicit in another of his three points, for example religion (the reason they were unclean is because they were not Orthodox). The foreigners were hated so much that people connected with them were criticised similarly. One source describes all people who invited the foreign invaders into Russia as traitors. This is a common viewpoint. In the

face of the foreign threat, Russians were expected to defend their own land rather than support the invasion.

However, ethnicity did not always divide clearly in this way. Some letters are specifically addressed to foreigners as well as native Russians in the salutation. I have mentioned, for example, sources which describe foreigners as fighting for Russia rather than against. It seems most likely that these foreigners were mercenaries and therefore would fight for anyone – but the fact remains that they were fighting on the side of the Russians and not criticised for being there. Although these people would not have been classed as identical to the Russians, certainly they were accepted. It seems that ethnicity, although a barrier, could be overcome provided the foreigners were willing to behave in a way pleasing to the Russians. 'Hated foreigners' were not always hated!

The election of Władysław of Poland as Tsar further underlines the fact that ethnicity was not seen as an insurmountable barrier in the Russian mindset. We remember that many people of all social classes, including the Patriarch himself, supported his candidacy in the beginning. The condition was that he convert to Orthodoxy. In other words, religion seems to be stronger than ethnicity is here. Only later, following Sigismund's invasion, was it decided that the new Tsar must be a native Russian – and this is most likely owing to Sigismund's contempt for Russia and Orthodoxy. The *Novaya Povest'* further suggests that religion is the most important thing to fight for when it states that of all the atrocities that Sigismund could commit in Russia, the fact that the Orthodox faith will be compromised is the worst. Is it true, therefore, that Russian national identity was to all extents and purposes identical to its religious identity?

Certainly, religion was extremely important to the Russians. Reading through any primary source will show the significance of Orthodoxy in the mind of the writer. However, in a land where churchgoing was the norm and the monastic population considerable, this is only natural. I asked above whether Orthodoxy was synonymous with Russian nationality and have still not come to an adequate conclusion. However, I did state that 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' were not synonymous, suggesting that the Russians were able to distinguish between their religion and their nationality, even if they were unable to define explicitly what this difference was. Certainly, Orthodoxy is not the only point brought up in primary sources. For example, although God has a part to play, the Tsar will bring peace. Even references to 'cleansing the land' only mention Orthodoxy implicitly, suggesting that the land is also seen as important. The writer could easily have said that the presence of the foreigners was compromising Orthodoxy and therefore they had to be taken away – but he did not. Certainly, Russian national identity was not wholly religious. Although it was an extremely important point – and is certainly the most common idea to appear in primary sources – it is not the only point which is come across. Perhaps the fact that many primary sources were written by churchmen, who would naturally have been biased towards the continuation of Orthodoxy, explains this idea. However, other points certainly do exist and therefore I am able to say beyond reasonable doubt that Russian national identity was not based wholly on the Russians' religious beliefs.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

We are now in a position to reassess the question whether Russia during the Time of Troubles could be classed as a nation. To summarise my research, in chapter one, I looked at different theories regarding nationhood ranging from primordialist to modernist. I stated there that the perennialist theories, in which ethnic characteristics do not immediately lead to nationhood (as in primordialism) but neither require other happenings to occur in order for nationhood even to be possible (such as the modernist idea that nationalism is a prerequisite for nationhood), seem to be the most accurate. Of course, I may have an ulterior motive here, given that modernism does not allow for Russian national identity to exist for over 200 years after the date which is the focus of this thesis, although I do not see this to be the case. Researchers such as Liah Greenfeld and Hugh Seton-Watson acknowledge, for example, that England was already a nation in the sixteenth century, which is well before the age of nationalism. I see it is only right that other nations will exist, or at least be in the process of coming into existence, around this time, whereas if England was the only nation for hundreds of years I class this as a contradiction. For this reason, this thesis was written according to perennialist theories, although of course they do not automatically grant an ethnicity nationhood purely because they display a number of strong ethnic characteristics.

Chapter two began by discussing seventeenth-century Russia in terms of its nationhood. Here, none of the theoretical literature consulted actually gave Russia nationhood during the Time of Troubles. However, Hugh Seton-Watson seemed unsure on the point and Serhii Plokhy did believe that the Troubles were a catalyst which ushered in nationhood soon after peace had been concluded. Certainly, all the writers

acknowledge that certain aspects of collective identity did indeed exist at the time – and nearly all acknowledge that the Time of Troubles was indeed a watershed in Russian history.

Interestingly, many of the same points discussed by the historians of nationalism were also brought up by the historians of Russia in the second part of chapter two. This is despite all the differences of historiographical school, ideology or even place of birth. Certainly, the number of secondary sources consulted was deliberately wide to try and remove any historiographical or ideological bias. In Soviet writings, for example, the ideology which the writer had to follow changed from work to work depending on the laws of the time. Even in non-Soviet works, when the writers were not bound by any official ideology, differences in focus can be seen. This is to be expected as different people naturally have different viewpoints. The majority of works consulted for this chapter were of Russian or Soviet provenance for the simple reason that the Russian people have been interested in their own history for far longer than any other people have. Foreign works, however, are not bound by the same expectations as are Russian works: a Russian may well keep in mind that he will be criticised by his own compatriots, whereas a foreigner will not need to worry about this. I should, therefore, have preferred to use more Western sources – but unfortunately none were available.

It is striking, however, that similar points were brought up time and time again, regardless of ideology or viewpoint, although no individual point was brought up by all the works consulted. This, once again, is to be expected, as the same primary sources would have been used by all the writers. This enabled me to note down how the writers of secondary sources saw Russian identity at the time. I determined that the

aspects of Orthodoxy, the Tsar and, to a lesser extent, the fatherland were the most frequent aspects of Russian identity to come out, although it was fairly obvious that the Russians were comparing themselves with the 'other' – in this case the Poles, Lithuanians and Swedes – and emphasising differences between the groups. This is why hatred of foreigners is also very obvious in secondary sources, owing to the fact that they are the 'other'. I was therefore able to make a note of this list of facets of Russian collective identity to use in my own research.

Chapter three was primarily a study of the history of the Time of Troubles. In terms of this thesis it was put in more to set the scene for my own research rather than to pose specific research questions. For example, it is not sufficient merely to read primary sources and answer my research questions from them without any context. I also needed to take into consideration the origin of the primary sources in question – in other words taking note of the author, place of origin and date of origin. Frequently, external events such as the siege of Smolensk or the captivity of Hermogen may affect a text as they may alter the opinion of the writer. Furthermore, it is possible that regional identities may be stronger than a national identity, or that collective identity may change over time. The purpose of chapter three was to put these changes into context and not assume that there was merely a single Russian national identity throughout the entire period.

The first three chapters led on to my own research in chapter four. Having determined by chapter one that Russian nationhood was certainly possible I tried not to let this influence my viewpoint. For this reason, my research in chapter four was wholly to ascertain how Russian collective identity could be determined, leaving the question of nationhood for this conclusion. I used the aspects identified in chapter two

as my starting points and read primary sources looking for these aspects. Furthermore, with the understanding that the writers of secondary sources were writing histories rather than determining identities, I also looked for how the Russian writers described themselves and how they saw the 'other', meaning the foreign interventionists. I have no regrets about my choice of primary sources. All have been published meaning that most, if not all, will have been used by prior researchers. Determining which of any unpublished primary sources to use would have been a long process as I am unfamiliar with the Russian archives and would need to learn how to read seventeenth-century Russian handwriting. However, I am on the whole satisfied with the sources I was able to consult as I have been able to draw adequate conclusions from them and indeed agree on the whole with the ideas in the secondary sources. My main problems are those which I am unable to solve, given that I am unable to communicate with the writers except by reading their sources. It is obvious that the primary sources come from a small number of people, who put forwards their own viewpoints. Nobles, churchmen and ethnic Russians are vastly over-represented, to the detriment of other Muscovite ethnicities and common people. For this reason, I do not feel that I am completely accurate in determining Russian national identity, as such an identity would require all people from all social classes to be represented. Certainly, I cannot say that I have been able to determine Muscovite collective identity in any way. However, I do not feel that this would have been possible from the beginning. Orthodox Russians and Muslim Tatars were already separated by their beliefs, suggesting that they had little in common. I was able to use a small number of foreign primary sources but even here their main focus is on élite Russians.

From the sources consulted, Orthodoxy is obvious as a primary focus of the people. The *Novaya Povest'*, for example, is not alone when it uses 'Orthodox' as a synonym for 'Russian'. We remember that in the Russian mindset, Orthodoxy was the only true form of Christianity. Indeed, since the Russians believed that they were blessed specially by God as the only true Christian land, they saw themselves as guardians of the true faith. This explains why *ochistit'* is frequently used to describe the action of removing the foreigners from the land. The presence of 'heretic' foreigners has polluted Russia and it became necessary to cleanse the land from their presence. Catholics were seen as part of a Vatican plot to convert Russia to Catholicism. Uniates were also seen with suspicion, as they had already submitted to the Pope.

However, Orthodoxy alone does not explain why the foreign threat was criticised so much. We remember that Lithuania as well as Russia claimed the heritage of Kievan Rus. In other words, the Commonwealth was itself a threat to Russian identity. Since the Russians believed that the legacy of Kievan Rus had travelled down the ages ending up in Moscow, they could not acknowledge that any other ruler was able to claim it. This explains why the Tsar believed Lithuania to be a part of his realm, as it was formerly part of the lands of Kievan Rus. The other opinion – that Moscow should be conquered by Lithuania – was not an option to the Russians, despite what the Lithuanians might think.

This leads us onto the concept of Russian rule, which was given to the Tsar by God and only by God. Throughout the Time of Troubles, it is striking that the concept of monarchical rule was never even debated – meaning that the wish of Pozharskii's militia to elect a new monarch as soon as possible was only natural. However, the concept of the elected monarch was debated. Although the only Tsar of the Time of

Troubles who truly succeeded by hereditary succession was Fedor Godunov (the least successful of them all), all the Tsars except for Władysław emphasised their links to the old Rurikid dynasty, claiming that they were indeed the rightful Tsar by hereditary succession. The fact that only Michael Romanov received support of the whole land suggests that the people did not agree with the Tsars' claims. Indeed, the very reason why the throne was offered to Władysław in the first place was that the experiment of electing a boyar to become Tsar had failed and therefore a Tsar of royal birth needed to be found – and therefore had to come from abroad. It was only later, when it became clear that a foreign Tsar would provide an excuse for foreign overlordship, that this idea was scrapped in favour of electing a Russian Tsar. This does show that foreigners were not hated as much as some sources claim, although of course Władysław was required to convert to Orthodoxy. Furthermore, he was young and therefore could be influenced.

As much as Michael Romanov was claimed to be chosen by God and succeeding by hereditary succession, certainly the concept of how the monarch ruled Russia did change during the Time of Troubles. Whereas before the Time of Troubles, the *gosudar'* ruled his *gosudarstvo* and the monarch could not be separated from the state, the events of the Time of Troubles changed all this. Boris Godunov, for example, could not look upon Russia as his patrimony in the same way that his predecessors as Tsar could do, as he had not gained the throne by patrimony. For this reason, words like *derzhava* came into use to describe the realm and *otechestvo* no longer just meant the patrimony of the monarch but also could be used to describe the land of the people. The Tsar could now be separated from his realm as the two concepts no longer passed from father to son in the old way.

It is now possible to answer the question as to whether we can see the Russia of the Time of Troubles as a nation. Following on from the perennialist theories mentioned in chapter one, I will be brief and accept that for a state to be classed as a nation, the people need to accept the nation itself as the primary focus of loyalty. Certainly, before the Time of Troubles this was not the case. Orthodoxy and the Tsar – two points that were not easy to separate – were obviously the primary focus. However, owing to the changes of the Time of Troubles, the Russian primary focus also changed. The former rôle of the Tsar was broken down into its component parts, for example. Certainly, primary sources do mention the fatherland (*otechestvo*) and the people (*lyudi*). There are still frequent references to the Tsar and Orthodoxy but now many sources do focus upon the foreign threat to the state (*gosudarstvo*) rather than these two things. Owing to etymology, it is likely that the sovereign (*gosudar'*) is also implicit whenever the state is mentioned. However, during the interregnum, the term *derzhava* also came into use, thus emphasising that the realm was not necessarily connected with the ruler.

According to primary sources, there are too many focuses on Orthodoxy to be able to say that the people's primary focus was indeed on the nation. However, many primary sources were written by churchmen who would naturally class Orthodoxy as the main facet of their identity. The majority of the population was unable to write and therefore the opinions of these people have not come down to me. It seems it is safe to say that, if Russia was not a nation by the end of the Time of Troubles, it was certainly on its way there. It is even possible to say that some people did have the nation as their primary focus. Perhaps Russia was a nation, although only some of the population were actually members of this nation. Certainly according to primary sources there

were a number of possibilities that could have been seen as the writer's primary focus.

Perhaps they did feel this way, or maybe they wrote in a way that they knew would be

understood and acted upon. The problem with studying historical identity is that

primary sources are all that I have and therefore I am unable to clarify any point that

may be ambiguous or which I find interesting and would like more information about. I

will therefore conclude by being bold and declaring that a Russian nation did exist in

1613, although a large proportion of the population – perhaps even a sizeable majority

– did not realise this. By claiming this, I am only predating Plokhy by a few years. The

changes of the Time of Troubles had shown the Russians that there were alternatives to

their old ways of thinking and that it was possible to separate ruler, state and religion.

Certainly, as Plokhy states, it is definitely possible for a nation to exist only amongst the

élite – and this appears to be the case in seventeenth-century Russia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources:

S H Baron (ed & trans), *The Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967

Bede (ed J McClure & R Collins), *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford: OUP, 1994

L E Berry & R O Crummey (eds), *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968

C Bussow (ed & trans G E Orchard), *The Disturbed State of the Russian Realm*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994

G Fletcher (ed A J Schmidt), *Of the Rus Commonwealth*, Ithaca, NY: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1966

S E Howe (ed), *The False Dmitri: A Russian Romance and Tragedy: Described by British Eye-Witnesses 1604-1612*, Cambridge: Oriental Research Partners, 1972, reprint of 1916 edn

The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum by Himself: Translated from the Seventeenth Century Russian by Jane Harrison and Hope Mirrlees, with a Preface by Prince D. S. Mirsky, London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf, 1924

J Margeret (ed & trans C S L Dunning), *The Russian Empire and Grand Duchy of Muscovy: A 17th-Century French Account*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983

I Massa (trans. G E Orchard), *A Short History of the Beginnings and Origins of These Present Wars in Moscow under the Reign of Various Sovereigns down to the Year 1610*, Toronto: University of Buffalo Press, 1982

S A Zenkovsky (ed & trans), *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1963

Primary sources (Cyrillic):

Акты историческіе, собранные и изданные Археографическою коммиссиею, Томы второй и третій, Санктпетербургъ: Въ типографій II-го отдѣленія собственной Е. И. В. Канцеляріи, 1841

Акты, собранные въ библіотекахъ и архивахъ Россійской имперій Археографическою экспедициею Императорской Академій наукъ: Дополнены и изданы высочайше учрежденною коммиссиею, Томы второй и третій. Санктпетербургъ: Въ типографій II отдѣленія собственной Е. И. В. Канцеляріи, 1836

Н Ф Дробленкова, *Новая повесть о преславном российском царстве и современная ей агитационная патриотическая письменность.* Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР, 1960

Памятники литературы древней Руси: Конец XVI – начало XVII веков, Москва: Художественная литература, 1987

Secondary literature:

B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn, London: Verso, 1991, first published 1983

P Avrich, *Russian Rebels: 1600-1800*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1973

K Baedeker, *Russia: A Handbook for Travelers*, No place: Arno Press, 1971, reprint of 1914 edn

M M Balzer (ed), *Russian Traditional Culture: Religion, Gender and Customary Law*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992

J Barber, *Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928-1932*, London: Macmillan, 1981

P L Barbour, *Dimitry: Called the Pretender: Tsar and Great Prince of All Russia, 1605-1606*, London: Macmillan, 1967

S H Baron & N S Kollmann (eds), *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997

E M Boyle & G Gerhart (eds): *The Russian Context: The Culture Behind the Language*, Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2002

P R Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage, 1991

J Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd edn, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993

N Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church 400-1066*, London: Hambledon Press, 2000

N Brooks, 'Bede and the English', *Jarrow Lecture* 1999

P Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York, NY: OUP, 1992

M Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths*, New York, NY: Random House, 1969

N L Chirovsky, *An Introduction to Ukrainian History. Volume II: The Lithuanian-Rus' Commonwealth, the Polish Domination and the Cossack-Hetman State*, New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1984

L Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, London: Pimlico, 1994

P Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988

J Cracraft (ed), *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*, Lexicon, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994

R Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613*, London: Longman, 1987

D J Dunn, *The Catholic Church and Russia: Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004

C S L Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2001

B Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000

F J Fleron, Jr & E P Hoffman (eds), *Post-Communist Studies and Political Science: Methodology and Empirical Theory in Sovietology*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993

M T Florinsky, *Russia: A Short History*, 2nd edn, London: Coller-Macmillan Ltd, 1969, first published 1964

J T Furhmann, *The Origins of Capitalism in Russia: Industry and Progress in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1972

E Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984 reprint, first published 1983

G Gerhart, *The Russian's World: Life and Language*, 3rd edn, Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2001

L Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993

J Grix, *Demystifying Postgraduate Research: From MA to PhD*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2001

B A Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998

A Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997

Hayashi T, *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia*, Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2003

G Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire: 1552-1917*, London: Fontana, 1998

G Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: From Earliest Times to 2001*, London: Penguin, 2002

G Hosking & R Service, *Reinterpreting Russia*, London: Arnold, 1999

G Hosking & R Service (eds), *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998

S E Howe, *Some Russian Heroes, Saints and Sinners: Legendary and Historical*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1916

T Hunczak (ed): *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974

J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds): *Nationalism* Oxford: OUP, 1994

J Hutchinson & A D Smith (eds): *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, vols 1,2,4, London: Routledge, 2000

J E Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004

A Kappeler (trans A Clayton), *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, Harlow: Longman, 2001

E Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 3rd edn, London: Hutchinson, reprint 1979 of 1966 edn, first published 1960

V A Kivelson, *Autocracy in the Provinces: The Muscovite Gentry and Political Culture in the Seventeenth Century*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996

V A Kivelson & R H Greene (eds), *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003

A M Kleimola & G D Lenhoff (eds), *Culture and Identity in Muscovy 1359-1584*, UCLA Slavic Studies, New Series, vol III, Moscow: ITZ-Garant, 1997

V O Kluchevsky (trans C J Hogarth), *A History of Russia*, vols 2-3, London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1912-3

H Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, revised edn, New York, NY: D. Van Nostrand, 1965

N S Kollmann, *By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999

H G Lunt, *Concise Dictionary of Old Russian (11th-17th Centuries)*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970

F Maclean, *Holy Russia: A Historical Companion to European Russia*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1978

T Mann, *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*, New York, NY: OUP, 1998

A G Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography*, revised edn, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975, first published 1939

A G Mazour, *The Writing of History in the Soviet Union*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1971

P McNeill, *Research Methods*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge, 1990, first published 1985

W K Medlin & C G Patrinelis, *Renaissance Influences and Religious Reforms in Russia: Western and Post-Byzantine Impacts on Culture and Education (16th – 17th centuries)*, Geneva: Libraire Droz, 1971

S Mews (ed), *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History 18, Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1982

D Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000

D B Miller, 'The Velikie Chetii and the Stepennaia Kniga of Metropolitan Makarii and the Origins of Russian National Consciousness', *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 26, 1979, pp. 263-382

N Moore, *How to do Research*, 2nd edn, London: The Library Association, 1987

A M Pankratova (ed), *A History of the USSR: Part One.* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947

W H Parker, *An Historical Geography of Russia*, London: University of London Press, 1968

M Perrie (ed), *The Cambridge History of Russia Volume I: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006

M Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001

M Perrie, *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore*, Cambridge: CUP, 1987

M Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995

J J Pettman, 'Nationalism and After' in T Dunne *et al*, *The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999*, Cambridge: CUP, 1998

R Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 2nd edn, London: Penguin, 1995, first published 1974

S F Platonov (trans L R Pyles), *Boris Godunov: Tsar of Russia*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1973

S F Platonov (trans J S Alexander), *The Time of Troubles: A Historical Study of the Internal Crisis and Social Struggle in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Muscovy*, 2nd edn, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1985, first published 1970

S Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, Oxford: OUP, 2001

S Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006

M T Poe, *'A People Born to Slavery': Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000

M N Pokrovsky (trans D S Mirsky), *Brief History of Russia*, Orono, ME: University Prints + Reprints, 1968, reprint of original two-volume 1933 edition

E Pond, *Russia Perceived: A Trans-Siberian Journey*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1981

A Preobrazhensky (ed), *The Russian Orthodox Church: 10th to 20th Centuries*, Moscow: Progress, 1988

P Riley, *Language, Culture and Identity: An Ethnolinguistic Perspective*, London: Continuum, 2007

G Rowell (ed), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, Wantage, Oxon: IKON, 1992

D B Rowland, 'Moscow – The Third Rome or the New Israel?', *The Russian Review*, vol. 55, October 1996, pp. 591-614.

T Sanders (ed), *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession and Writing of History in a Multinational State*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999

H Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, London: Methuen, 1977

R G Skrynnikov (ed & trans H F Graham), *The Time of Troubles: Russia in Crisis 1604-1618*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1988

A D Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000

A D Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991

J Smith (ed), *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture*, Helsinki: SHS, 1999

A A Sokolsky, *A History of the Russian Language*, Madrid: Imp. Taravilla, 1966

S M Soloviev (ed & trans G E Orchard), *History of Russia Volume 14: The Time of Troubles: Boris Godunov and False Dmitrii*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1988

S M Soloviev (ed & trans G E Orchard), *History of Russia Volume 15: The Time of Troubles: Tsar Vasily Shuisky and the Interregnum 1606-1613*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1989

V Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London: Sage Publications, 1997

E M Thomson, *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987

V Tolz, *Russia*, Inventing the Nation, London: Arnold, 2001

T Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996

B A Uspenskij, 'Tsar and Pretender: *Samozvančestvo* or Royal Imposture in Russia as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon' in Ju M Lotman & B A Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, Ann Arbor, MI: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, The University of Michigan, 1984, pp. 259-92.

P Ustinov, Peter, *My Russia*, London: Macmillan, 1983

G Vernadsky, *The Tsardom of Moscow 1547-1682*, A History of Russia V, Part 1, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969

J L Wieczynski, *The Russian Frontier: The Impact of Borderlands upon the Course of Early Russian History*, Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1976

R Wittram, *Russia and Europe*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1973

A Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and their Culture*, London: John Murray, 1989, first published 1987

N Zernov, *The Russians and their Church*, London: SPCK, 1945

Secondary literature (Cyrillic):

С Антоненко, '«Смилуйтесь и умилитесь»', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 116-20

П Березов, *Минин и Пожарский*, Москва: Московский рабочий, 1957

Л Бородин, '«Выжить надо, коль Смуте конец»', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 103-7

Т Бохун & Я Кравчик, 'Сто повозок Ходкевича', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 69-74

В Волков 'Один из десяти', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 97-100

Ю В Готье, *Смутное время: Очерк истории революционных движений начала XVII столетия,* [Москва]: Государственное Издательство РСФСР, 1921

И Забѣлинъ, *Мининъ и Пожарскій: Прямые и кривые въ смутное время*, Москва: В. Ѳ. Рихтеръ, 1883

В Кобрин, 'Лжедмитрий I', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 19-22

А И Копанев и др, *Очерки истории СССР: Конец XV – начало XVII вв*, Ленинград: Государственное учебно-педагогическое издательство Министерства просвещения РСФСР ленинградское отделение, 1957

Н И Костомаровъ, *Смутное время Московскаго государства въ началѣ XVII столѣтія,* Собраніе сочиненій, кн. 2, Санктъ Петербургъ: М. М. Стасюлевичъ, 1904

Н И Костомаровъ, *Очеркъ домашней жизни и нравовъ великорусскаго народа въ XVI и XVII столѣтіяхъ и Старинные земские соборы*, 3-е изд, Санктъ Петербургъ: М. М. Стасюлевичъ, 1887

П Г Любомиров, *Очерк истории нижегородского ополчения 1611-1613 гг.*, Москва: Государственное социально-экономическое издательство, 1939

Д П Маковский, *Первая крестьянская воина в России*, Смоленск: Министерство Просвещения РСФСР Смоленский Государственный Педагогический институт имени Карла Маркса, 1967

С Ф Платонов, 'Ополчение второе. Победное', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 79-84

С Ф Платонов, *Смутное время*, Петербург: Время, 1923

С Ѳ Платоновъ, *Очерки по исторіи смуты: Въ Московскомъ государствѣ: XVI – XVII вв.*, 3-е изд, С.-Петербургъ: Я. Башмаговъ и ко., 1910

А Л Хорошкевич, *Символы русской государственности*, Москва: Издательство Московского университета, 1993

А Хорошкевич, 'Россия или Московия?', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 53-7

А Шишков, 'Очищение от смуты', *Родина*, ноябрь 2005, стр. 4-5