

Individual essay contest
**“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World.
Time for Equal Opportunities”**

**“The Time of Troubles’ in Russia and imposters
through the eyes of foreigners”**

«Смутное время в России и самозванцы глазами иностранцев»

"Kornilovskaya secondary school" of the Tomsk region



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Thesis plan

This essay is devoted to the difference in the perception of the period of the Time of Troubles in Russia, in relation to the interventionists and the Russian people.

For a complete picture, it is proposed to recall the reasons and preconditions for the Time of Troubles.

Analyze the Time of Troubles based on the reports of historians from different countries.

Try to see the situation of this period through the eyes of the invaders.

Consider only the initial period of the turmoil, because it seems one of the most confusing period.

Has anyone ever wondered why many historians disagree about the same event? There are many conflicting points of view of scientists from different countries and eras about the Time of Troubles in Russia. It is also known that many rulers of different periods try to embellish their leadership, to remove the "superfluous". If we compare the information about this period in Russian sources and sources of other countries, we can find a discrepancy in some facts. I found it interesting enough, and I decided to try to see Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries through the eyes of foreigners. Here we can identify the problem: the difference in perception of the period of the Time of Troubles, relative to the interventionists and the Russian people. To solve the problem, I decided to set the following tasks:

1. Remember the causes and prerequisites of the Time of Troubles;
2. Analyze the period of Turmoil based on the reports of historians from different countries;
3. Try to see the situation of this period through the eyes of interventionists.

Still, I want to start with a little backstory of the Troubles. There were many reasons, such as the consequences of the Oprichnina, the desire of the boyars to influence the government, the aspirations of different groups of society to improve their lives. These prerequisites made other countries think, because our state was in a position where it was easy to influence the authorities. Nevertheless, the main reason was the death of the last heir to the throne. The mysterious conditions of the death of Tsarevich Dmitry have disturbed the thoughts of Russian historians still nowadays. Impostors from different countries decided that this is a great reason to take the Russian throne, because there are no influential people at the top of power. At the Zemstvo Assembly, the influential boyar Boris Godunov was chosen as the ruler. However, the problem was that only representatives of the Moscow lands attended this Zemstvo Assembly, but other territories did not participate. Because of it, the southwestern territories (modern Ukraine) that had recently been annexed to the

Russian state were opposed to the newly elected tsar. The situation was profitable for the impostors, because these territories would support them in the offensive against the Moscow government later.

What was happening in Poland at that time? At that moment, the son of Ivan 4 appeared in Poland in 1602. He was Grishka Otrepyev. Some sources claim that the Romanovs sent him. However, we will never know, because many rulers, including noble boyars, cleaned up history, as I said earlier. Nevertheless, is it possible to consider that Grigory Otrepyev and False Dmitry 1 were one person? According to some sources, Otrepyev did not pull on the role of an impostor, because Grigory was already over 30, and the impostor was just over 20 years old. Hence, the difference is 10-12 years.

There is also a relationship of false tsarevich and Mary Mniszek. A young monk and voivode, Grisha fell in love with Yuri Mnishek's daughter. That person was dishonest, so he agreed to the conditions that Grigory offered him:

1. After the accession to the throne, issue 1 million zlotys for the repayment of Mnishek's debts;
2. Give Marina full ownership of Novgorod and Pskov;
3. Promote the conversion of their future subjects to Catholicism.

After that, the engagement took place. Mnishek gathered an army for Grigory to march on Moscow. However, as many people are mistaken, the army was not sent by Sigismund 3, who was the ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He reported the imposture to Boris Godunov and said that he was not involved in it.

Here I want to quote a report by a Polish historian, Professor Jerome Gral of the University of Warsaw, who refutes the erroneous facts of Russian historians: "When he [Grigory Otrepyev] entered Moscow, he did not enter with the Polish army, but with a detachment of mercenaries. There is a big difference between an elementary gamble and a state intervention. Poland as a state was not very interested in Russian affairs. Yes, this does not fit into the usual school

scheme, but it is so. The most significant enemy of Poland at that time was Sweden". Anyway, the False Dmitry went to Moscow. Although the first battle of Dubrovichi with Godunov's troops was lost. Grigory was supported by the southwestern lands (the Cossacks) and discontented peasants. The Cossacks were the "main power" of that time, as Gyula Swak said, because they were the main part of the troops of the False Princes and were the main lever of the uprisings.

The reign of False Dmitry 1 was not marked by anything special, according to some historians. Still there is an opinion that he was adequately wore a "cap of Monomakh". For example, the Russian historian D. SWAK says: "In any case, it is indisputable that to qualify him as a Polish puppet would be tantamount to reviving the worst historiographical traditions. However, it may be "unpleasant" for historians who put national priorities at the forefront, False Dmitry I have been "tsar and Grand Duke of all Russia" for about a year. In addition, as a king, he was no worse and no more talented than many of his predecessors and heirs. His short reign showed that he responsibly wore the "Monomakh's cap", seriously believed in the "God-given power", and this prevented him from clearly looking at his capabilities and realistically assessing the situation" [1]

My explanations were made by studying various literatures, including foreign historians. Unfortunately, I have not found any concrete views of the interventionists on imposture and the Time of Troubles. As a result, I decided to draw some conclusions on my own.

Russia seems a huge and powerful for all countries. We had everything: vast territories, labour and natural resources. The people were uneducated. On one hand, it was even profitable, that stupid people are easier to manage. The mysterious death of Tsarevich Dmitry forced the nearest countries to rush towards Russia, so it was a chance to get powerful territories and a strong nation. I cannot say that the interventionists were greatly inspired and excited by

the culture and heritage of the Russian state, but the spirit of our people could be directed in the right direction. Finally, let us move on to imposture. In fact, this phenomenon was not first discovered in Russia. There is a version that Grigory Otrepyev borrowed this idea from the Portuguese False Christians, because the Pope of Rome first drew such a direct parallel between the two cases [1]. How did the Poles feel about their countryman and his attempt to seize power? As mentioned earlier, the Supreme Power of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had nothing to do with the act of G. Otrepiev. Nor did they think to seize the throne of Moscow. On the contrary, there is information that Sigismund 3 wrote a letter to Boris Godunov and said that he was not involved in the invasion of his territory and announced to him about the impostor. Definitely, why interfere in a conflict with another country, when they themselves had now problems bigger than the Russian mess (the war with the Swedes) [4].

I want to note, that the Polish initiative to the Moscow throne became clear later. Moreover, the Russian boyars themselves invited Vladislav (the son of the Polish king) to their throne. In addition, this was an ill-considered step on the part of Russia, because friendly relations with Sweden, which has repeatedly helped Russia in the fight against Poland, simply broke through. Of course, it is not necessary to say that the Swedes were gracious and friendly to us and only helped us for this reason. Their help was a move that they directed against the main enemy - Poland, without trying to help us more. Another interesting fact is that the Swedish troops assisted to Russia, while demanding payment from us. Of course, it was very profitable, but it was mean.

Based on this, we can conclude that in general, Russia was viewed with certain contempt. In many ways, we were different from other countries. However, this is our story-full of mysteries and incidents.

In my essay, I considered only the initial period of the troubles, because it seemed to me the most confusing. I was able to see the appearance of False Dmitry 1 on our throne from Russian and foreign sources. Of course, we should

not forget that there were other false princes at that time, but Grigory Otrepyev still plays a more significant role.

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