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**FROM THE TIME OF TROUBLES TO THE UNITY DAY:
MEMORY, FORGETTING AND RE-IMAGINING THE PAST
IN RUSSIAN HISTORY**

Abstract: This article examines how the memory of one of the largest socio-political crises in the history of Russia (called the Time of Troubles) modified over 400 years. This process is considered as an example of rethinking the traumatic experience of the past and forming a national-patriotic myth on its basis. Several stages of the evolution of the memory of the Time of Troubles are issued: the XVII century – when the interpretation of these events was mainly religious; the XVIII century – when heroic and patriotic ideas about the time of troubles were formed in accordance with the ideals of classicism; the XIX century – the time of the development of the monarchical myth of the Romanov dynasty coming to power; the XX century – when the peasant war and the struggle against foreign intervention became the main dominant in the understanding of events; Modern Russia and the annual celebration of the National Unity Day – a public holiday established in 2005 in memory of the liberation of Moscow in 1612, the main idea of which is the unification of all peoples on the territory of the Russian Federation. It is noted that for centuries in the cultural memory of Russian society, two layers of ideas about the Time of Troubles coexisted. One of them – negative – was the memory of social upheavals and civil war, the other – positive – the memory of victory and overcoming the Troubles, evoking a sense of national pride and hopes for the future.

Keywords: *cultural memory; Time of Troubles; Minin; Pozharsky; Kazan Icon of the Mother of God; revolution of 1917; National Unity Day.*

The beginning of the XVII century was one of the most tragic epochs in Russian history. This period of local wars, intervention, and the deepest economic, political, and social crisis was called the Time of Troubles. After the interruption of the Rurik dynasty and the death of Tsar Boris Godunov, elected by the Zemsky Sobor in 1605, Russia has plunged into a civil war. The boyar clans fought with each other. Service-men, cossacks and peasants rebelled against

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the oppressive supreme power. Sweden and Poland intervened in the war. Russia was occupied by Polish-Lithuanian troops until 1612, when Moscow was liberated by the forces of the Second Volunteer Army. The Time of Troubles ended in 1613 with the election of Mikhail Romanov to the reign and the establishment of a new ruling dynasty. But even after that, up to 1618, hostilities continued between Russia, Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Many scientific works have been devoted to the study of the history of this period. For a long time, the focus of research lay primarily on the causes, driving forces and the main events of the Time of Troubles (Platonov, Skrynnikov, Florya, etc.). Only recently, publications on the problems of commemoration of these events both in Poland and in Russia began to appear (Grala, Shalak, Perkhavko, Krinko and Goryushina, etc.). Research in this area is at an early stage of its development.

Scientists have repeatedly drawn attention to the close connection between collective trauma, memory and the further formation of collective identity (Assmann, Neal, Alexander). It was noted that the tragic events of the past are often perceived as a consolidating experience that unites the community (Oushakine, Eyerman). The preservation of the memory of a common history plays a fundamental role in the formation of nations (Anderson, Nora). Despite the fact that the vast majority of studies of memory and cultural traumas are mainly focused on rethinking the events of the XX century in the present, the study of constructing memory about the Time of Troubles in Russia can also be inscribed in this methodological context. The Time of Troubles was certainly one of the turning points that radically changed not only the life of Russian society, but also the entire course of Russian history. All the subsequent major state upheavals (the Napoleonic Wars, the Revolution of 1917, the Great Patriotic War, the collapse of the USSR) in the collective consciousness often associated with the Troubles. At the same time, the prescription of these events allows us to study the evolution of memory about them in a fairly long chronological perspective and to consider how the ideas about them were reinterpreted in Russian culture for almost 400 years. I will try to highlight in this article the complex process of preserving, rejecting and rethinking the memory of the Time of Troubles, overcoming the negative traumatic experience and ultimately forming a positive national-patriotic myth on its basis.

It is possible to distinguish five conditional stages in the development of visions of the Time of Troubles:

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- I. Ecclesiastical, Providential (XVII century);
- II. Heroic and Patriotic (XVIII century);
- III. Monarchical, dynastic (XIX century);
- IV. Class-patriotic (Soviet period);
- V. National-consolidating (Contemporary vision).

Let us consider in more detail the features of the construction of cultural memory in each of these periods.

I

The church was the main actor forming the memory of the Time of Troubles in the 17th century. In the religious sense, it was God's punishment, sent to people for their sins. The main cause of the Troubles was the murder of the innocent Tsarevich Dimitri by Boris Godunov, which entailed not only the suppression of the Rurik dynasty, but also God's wrath that fell on the country. This perception of events was reflected both in hagiographic works and in folk songs:

"O my God, my God, merciful Savior! . . .
Why is the Lord God angry with us?" ("Grishka Otrepyev" 27)

A similar providential rhetoric was inherent in Russian chronicles of the XVII century.

The liberation of Moscow from the Poles, in turn, was presented as a miracle, revealed by the Mother of God through the prayers of Russian saints (Sergius of Radonezh, Moscow Metropolitans Peter, Alexy, Jonah, etc.). So the reason for the victory over the enemies was not military heroism, but first of all the piety of the Russian army and commanders, as well as the support of the righteous figures of the church. The Kazan Icon of the Holy Virgin was brought to the troops. It became the main church relic, to whose divine help the combat success was attributed. In honour of the victory, an annual church holiday of the Holy Virgin was established (October 22), many churches were erected throughout the country, including one on Red Square in Moscow.

II

The events of the Time of Troubles were merely covered in scientific publications until the last quarter of the XVIII century. M. Lomonosov called the

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times of Boris Godunov and Grishka Otrepyev "the darkest part of Russian history", for which the country will be condemned by foreigners (Lomonosov, *The Complete Works* 232). S. Peshtich even suggested that the ruling circles of tsarist Russia deliberately classified this history in the XVIII century "for reasons of state order, so as to preserve state secrets and maintain the country's foreign authority" (Peshtich 33).

In this situation, the construction of social ideas about the events of the Time of Troubles was largely carried out through their artistic reinterpretation in literature and art, which made it possible to present the struggle against the interventionists in a heroic and patriotic way corresponding to the ideals of classicism. Developed in the art of the XVIII century, the 'pantheon of heroes' of the Time of Troubles was close to the images of Greek antiquity. Minin and Pozharsky, well-known today, did not take the leading place in this row immediately.

In fact, there were more heroes of the Time of Troubles. In particular, Prince D. Trubetskoy played a significant role in the events of 1612. The church feast of the Kazan Icon was dedicated to the capture of Kitay-Gorod by Cossack troops under his command. The icon itself was originally brought to the First Volunteer Army under the leadership of Trubetskoy and Zarutsky. At the Zemsky Sobor in 1613, Trubetskoy was one of the contenders for the royal throne. Therefore, the question: "why are Minin and Pozharsky great people in the minds of Russian people, but Trubetskoy is not?" is certainly worthy of attention.

In both scientific and fiction literature of the mid-XVIII century, Trubetskoy usually appears together with Minin and Pozharsky, thus creating a triumvirate (not a duumvirate) of heroes. The three liberators of Moscow appear in the "A short Russian Chronicler" (Lomonosov, *A Short Russian Chronicler* 41), "The Core of Russian History" (Mankiev 312-323), "Rossiada" (Kheraskov 166), etc. Referring to the events of the Time of Troubles in the poem "Peter the Great" M. V. Lomonosov named only Pozharsky and Trubetskoy among the heroes (saying nothing about Minin).

The efforts of Pozharsky and Trubetskoy,
Looking at the forefathers, at the glory of Ross antiquity,
Finally stopped the attack with victory. (Lomonosov, *Selected Works* 299)

But in the descriptions of the end of the XVIII century Trubetskoy begins to be excluded from the number of heroes. Among them are the history textbook by J. Wegelin (489), a small essay about the Time of Troubles by I. Golikov (10), etc. This tendency can be partly explained based on the general socio-political situation that developed in the Russian Empire at that time. Attention to the feat of the Cossacks and recognizing their decisive role in the liberation of Moscow became undesirable because of their participation in the Pugachev uprising (1773-1775), the liquidation of the Zaporozhian Sich and the Volga Cossack Host. Although there are no documents confirming the existence of any ban on the mentioning of the Trubetskoy, it can be assumed that the trend towards official silencing of the history of the Cossacks influenced the denial of their participation in the events of the Time of Troubles.

The increased attention to Minin's feat, at the same time, should be associated with the personal activities of the historian and writer N. Ilyinsky, who considered the glorification of this "son of the fatherland" his patriotic duty. In the 1790s, he published an ode and a historical essay dedicated to Minin in which he claimed that Trubetskoy did not participate in the battle for the liberation of Moscow. Ilyinsky sent his works to high-ranking officials and appeared the first to petition for the creation of a monument to Minin in Nizhny Novgorod (Ilynsky).

Attention to Minin and Pozharsky in the visual arts played a decisive role in the formation of their images as dominant in the memory of the Time of Troubles. The plots associated with these heroes were included by M. Lomonosov in the list of "Ideas for paintings from Russian History", which formed the basis of the programs of the Academy of Arts of the last quarter of the XVIII century (Lomonosov, *The Complete Works* 365-73). In 1802, the image of the heroic deeds and patriotic virtues of Kuzma Minin and Prince Pozharsky was proposed as a graduation assignment for a sculpture class, and the idea of creating a monument was supported by the "Free Society of Lovers of Literature, Sciences and Arts". The memorial project was prepared by sculptor I. Martos. A special resonance to the creation of the monument was betrayed by the fact that the collection of funds for its installation was declared nationwide. Initially, it was planned to install it in Nizhny Novgorod, but due to patriotic reasons, it was decided to move the monument to Moscow.

As a result, in 1818, a monument to "Citizen Minin and Prince Pozharsky" appeared on Red Square. In the minds of ordinary people, it firmly linked the

history of the liberation of Moscow from the Poles with the names of Minin and Pozharsky, thereby finally displacing from historical memory the memories of Trubetskoy's merits.

III

For a long time, the literary and artistic overthinking of the Time of Troubles was significantly ahead of the scientific study of these events. The first decade of the XIX century includes the poem by S.Glinka "Pozharsky and Minin, or Donations of Russians" (1807), his tragedy "Minin" (1809); the poem by S. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov "Pozharsky, Minin, Hermogenes, or the Saved Russia" (1807), the tragedy of M. Kryukovsky "Pozharsky" (1807), a historical novel by P. Lvov "Pozharsky and Minin, saviors of the Fatherland" (1810), etc. The real bestseller of the XIX century was the historical novel "Yuri Miloslavsky, or the Russians in 1612" by M. Zagoskin. Only during the author's lifetime it survived 8 editions.

The memory of the Time of Troubles and the 'civil feat' of Minin and Pozharsky turned out to be consonant with the ideology of the era of the Napoleonic Wars. The amazing date coincidence – the liberation of Moscow from the Poles in 1612 happened exactly 200 years before the French invasion of Russia in 1812 – made contemporaries look for historical parallels. In the manifesto on the establishment of the Home Guard, Alexander I said: "Let him [the enemy] meet in every nobleman a Pozharsky, in every clergyman a Palitsyn, in every citizen a Minin" (Alexander I 24).

An important feature of the memory of the Time of Troubles in the XIX century was its transformation to the monarchical myth about the coming to power of the Romanov dynasty. In this context, the accession of Mikhail Fedorovich in 1613 was portrayed as salvation from the chaos and ruin caused by the interruption of the Rurik dynasty and jeopardized the very existence of Russia. The Romanov dynasty, in turn, received the symbolic status of saviors from terrible disasters, guarantors of state order and prosperity.

During the reign of Nicholas I, the imperial ideology was based on the theory of official nationality developed by S. Uvarov and expressed by the phrase: "Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality". The closeness of the people and the monarch has become one of the main themes in the official art. In 1836, the premiere of M. Glinka's opera "Life for the Tsar" was held. It was dedicated to the Kostroma peasant Ivan Susanin, who died saving the young tsar Mikhail

Fedorovich from the Poles. Despite the fact that researchers still question the historical authenticity of these events, the image of Susanin quickly became one of the most popular symbols of the Time of Troubles. In 1851, by decree of the Emperor, a monument to Susanin was erected in Kostroma, where he was depicted kneeling and praying at the foot of a column with a bust of Mikhail Romanov. In fact, it was the visual embodiment of the Uvarov triad.

The development of the monarchical myth about the Time of Troubles reaches its apogee in 1913, during the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the House of Romanov. In honor of the anniversary, numerous festive events were organized throughout Russia. Emperor Nicholas II visited historical sites associated with the accession of Mikhail Romanov, and repeated the route of the Volunteer Army from Nizhny Novgorod to Moscow. In Kostroma, he met with peasants – "descendants" of Susanin ("Romanov celebrations"). It was assumed that a grandiose monument to the Romanov family would be built there.

An important role in the implementation of the state memorial policy was still assigned to church veneration. The celebration of the 300th anniversary of the House of Romanov was marked by numerous church processions (more than 100,000 people participated in the procession from the Alexander Nevsky Lavra to the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg). In 1913, Patriarch Hermogenes, one of the main inspirers of the struggle against the Poles, was canonized. Several memorial churches were built, the largest of which was to be the Feodorovsky Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

High public attention to the events of the era of Troubles stimulated the scientific study of these events. In the second half of the XIX century, this topic was addressed by N. Kostomarov, S. Solovyov, V. Klyuchevsky, etc., a major study by S. Platonov appeared. But in contrast to the allegiant and glorifying monarchy perception of the Time of Troubles, which the state authorities sought to create in popular culture, scientists noted deep social and political contradictions that caused the crisis of the early XVII century in the Moscow state and were not fully resolved with the accession of a new dynasty.

Painful negative memories of the Time of Troubles have not been overcome at all. The revolutionary sentiments of the turn of the century caused fear and a premonition of a new Turmoil in Russian society. Such associations were recorded in the diaries of contemporaries in 1917: "A great page of history has turned... The revolution has taken place, the dynasty is over and the century of Troubles begins" (Nikolsky 280); "Again, the crisis of power... Actually, now

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Russia is not controlled by anyone. That's the really Time of Troubles... The second in three hundred years. And again, the state is 'reeling'. Will it perish this time or will it be reborn?" (Knyazev 164); "In 1612, we were saved by a fervent faith and still had a reserve of national feeling, although even then the upper classes of society were not averse to getting closer to the Poles. Now what will save us?" (Bogoslovsky 198) The poet V. Ivanov called the cycle of poems written at that time "Songs of the Time of Troubles". General A.I. Denikin gave a similar name ("Essays on the Russian Troubles") to his memoirs of the events of 1917-1920.

This horror of the expected terrible events, characteristic of Russian society at the beginning of the XX century, can probably be considered an echo of the cultural trauma experienced back in the day.

IV

After the revolution of 1917, the Soviet government again rethought Russian history. Temples and churches were closed, monuments to the tsars and their entourage were destroyed or dismantled, and monuments to the heroes of the revolution were erected on those pedestals.

The image of the Time of Troubles has also changed. In 1921, the first Soviet history textbook written by M. Pokrovsky was published. The events of the beginning of the XVII century were named in it as the "Peasant Revolution", the leaders of which, according to the author, were False Dmitry I and False Dmitry II. Minin and Pozharsky were declared as "agents of commercial capital" and landowners, suppressing the popular movement (Pokrovsky 46-62).

However, since the 1930s, the complicated international situation and the need to search for historical examples for the patriotic education of Soviet people led to the rehabilitation of these heroes. This trend was significantly characterized by Stalin's personal decision to preserve the monument to Minin and Pozharsky on Red Square, only moving it to another place in connection with the construction of the Lenin Mausoleum in 1931. He remembered: "When we moved the monument of Minin and Pozharsky closer to the St. Basil's Cathedral, Demyan Bedny protested and wrote that the monument should be thrown out and that we should forget about Minin and Pozharsky at all. In response to this letter, I called him 'Ivan, who does not remember his kinship'. We can't throw away the history..." (Stalin 435).

At the same time, the events of the beginning of the XVII century received a

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new ideological content in the XX century. The main dominants in their understanding were the peasant war and the struggle against foreign intervention. A number of outstanding historical figures were supplemented by Ivan Bolotnikov – the leader of the peasant uprising of 1606-1607. In 1939, Minin and Pozharsky became the heroes of a film awarded the Stalin Prize (directed by V. Pudovkin, M. Doller). According to the authors, the film was supposed to tell "about the Russian people completely defeated the Polish invaders who encroached on the sacred Russian land" (Amasovich 22-3).

Ivan Susanin, from the "tsar's servant" turned into a defender of the fatherland. It was decided to create a new libretto for the famous opera by M.I. Glinka, adapted to the circumstances of the time. According to one of its redactions, the action was transferred to the era of the Bolshevik revolution. Ivan Susanin was portrayed as an advanced peasant, chairman of the Village Council, the reason for the appearance of Poles was the Russian-Polish war of 1919-1921, and the final anthem (originally glorifying the tsar) sounded like "Glory, Glory to the Soviet system". In the future, such drastic changes, fortunately, were abandoned, and the poet S. Gorodetsky adapted the libretto preserving the original epoch of the events. In the new version, the opera was already sustained in the spirit of the struggle of the Russian people against foreign occupation and glorified the victorious people. Soviet musicologist G. Polyanovsky explained: "The essence of the opera is not at all about saving Romanov. A wonderful patriotic feeling, love for the motherland of a great people, a willingness to give their lives for its independence – that is what is the essence of the opera, its leading thought" (Polyanovsky 5).

The memory of the heroes of the Time of Troubles proved to be in demand in the context of the approaching World War II. In a speech on November 7, 1941, Stalin again mentioned the names of Minin and Pozharsky among the heroes of Russian history, who should serve as an example for posterity. They began to be depicted on propaganda posters and leaflets of the Great Patriotic War. Krinko and Goryushina compiled an extensive list of monuments to Susanin, Minin, Pozharsky and Bolotnikov erected in Soviet times, as well as streets named in their honor (Krinko and Goryushina 209).

Thus, Susanin, Minin and Pozharsky became one of the few national heroes of imperial Russia who were not erased from the cultural memory and state ideology in Soviet times. Nevertheless, it should be noted that their images have been pushed to the periphery of cultural memory. A much more striking

example of the heroic struggle against enemies was the Great Patriotic War, the memorialization of which overshadowed the memory of other military conflicts in Russian history.

V

If the events of the early 20th century are defined by some researchers as a 'modern' Time of Troubles, then the next crisis of power in Russia, which began in the 1980s and led to the collapse of the USSR, is sometimes called the third, 'postmodern' Time of Troubles (Razin 225-6).

Comparisons of the new crisis with the events of the XVII century are still often found in the media, political speeches, popular literature, and scientific articles. As the writer and politician E. Limonov noted, at the end of the 1980s, people were "called to the same thing that they were called to in 1917 and during the time of troubles. Destroy everything and start living again. It happened many times" (Limonov 267).

In the former Soviet society, he [the protester] occupied . . . quite a worthy place. Lecturer, associate professor, professor? What would it be called if we put his social position on the scale of the Time of Troubles? A dyak [clerk]? . . . A serving nobleman? A woman in a shawl and a hat over... who is she? A merchant's wife or a philistine... A handsome man in a sheepskin coat? Of course, a merchant... And in their every word there is anger against the communist *boyars*. (Limonov 264-65)

This comparison, largely exaggerated by the publicist, shows how the memory of the events of almost 400 years ago was actualized in the public consciousness during a new socio-political crisis: "The Time of Troubles is a recurring phenomenon in Russia... It again began in our land since August 1991. Both in the state and in the minds." (Laptev 331) Similar parallels are noted by modern historians, political scientists, sociologists, economists (Razin)

These fears and memories of the historical experience of the Time of Troubles as a trauma present in the public consciousness did not, however, prevent an attempt to create its 'positive' image in post-Soviet state policy. The rejection of the former communist ideology led to the partial return of pre-revolutionary cultural values rejected in Soviet times. First of all, the influence of the Orthodox Church in memorial politics was returned. In the 1990s-2000s,

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churches destroyed under Soviet rule were restored (including the Kazan Cathedral on Red Square in Moscow, the Feodorovsky Cathedral in St. Petersburg, unfinished due to the revolution, etc.), Patriarch Iov, canonized in 1989, was included in the number of national heroes, Patriarch Hermogenes was glorified again, etc. (Krinko and Goryushina) On the other hand, the formation of a new ideology leads to the rejection of the communist legacy.

In line with these two trends was the establishment in 2005 of a new state holiday – National Unity Day (November 4). This event simultaneously became a return to the pre-revolutionary tradition of celebrating the day of the Kazan Icon of the Holy Virgin and the liberation of Moscow from the Poles, and also replaced the soviet holiday – the day of the October Revolution (November 7). Such substitution was not something new for world culture. In the same way, pagan holidays were replaced by Christian ones in the Roman Empire. And although in the early years the establishment of National Unity Day caused a lot of criticism, more and more people celebrate it every year.

It is important to note that in the modern cultural context, the November 4 holiday has received a broader meaning than just that of the commemoration of the liberation from the Poles. The new ideological content of the state celebration is the unity of all peoples on the territory of the Russian Federation, regardless of whether they took part in the events of the beginning of the XVII century or not. Festivities took place throughout the country from the Caucasus to the Far East.

Let's summarize. From the above brief overview, it can be seen that for 400 years in Russia there were two layers of memory about the Time of Troubles. One of them – traumatic, negative – is the memory of social upheavals, devastation and civil war, threatening the destruction of the state. These memories were actualized in public rhetoric during critical epochs (the Revolution of 1917, the collapse of the USSR) and fade in periods of state stability. The other layer – positive, patriotic – is the memory of the victory of Russian troops over foreign invaders, which became in demand during enemy invasions of Russia (the Napoleonic Wars, World War II), as well as the memory of overcoming the Troubles and the revival of Russia inspiring hopes for a prosperous future. In such a positive way, the state authorities have sought to show these events for centuries.

At different epochs, the ideas of the Time of Troubles were repeatedly rethought. A list of main heroes and key events changed. It can be argued that by today the mass ideas about the Time of Troubles have turned into a stable

national-patriotic myth, referring more to ideological doctrines than to real history of the XVII century. This rethought memory of the Time of Troubles and its overcoming, in turn, affects the perception of socio-political processes taking place in the present, makes us strive to avoid its repetition and unites Russian society.

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