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Who Counts as “People” (*narod*)? A Reconsideration of *vox populi* in the First Russian Time of Troubles (*Smutnoe vremia*)

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Abstract

This article is intended as a thought experiment on the meaning of the Russian concept *narod*, generally translated “people,” during the Time of Troubles (*Smutnoe vremia*) of the early seventeenth century. The topic is significant, since in this period the Muscovite politico-religious elite propounded a notion of *vox populi* as a legitimizing and even decisive force in determining the right course of action for the entire realm. Two closely related concepts, the so-called *zemskii sobor* (Assembly of the Land) and the idea of Holy Russia or Rus', have been much debated in historiography. I argue that these historiographic discussions could benefit from more emphasis on the fundamental linguistic concepts of the time, as distinct from the later conceptualizations of historians. The present reconsideration of the meaning of *narod*, or who was included within notions of “the people,” suggests that language as much as anything else played a role in the dramatic historical shifts that have shaped Russian culture to this day.

Keywords

Time of Troubles – Russian Orthodox Christianity – *zemskii sobor* – *vox populi* – people – *narod* – Holy Russia

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It may be that the voice of the people is the voice of God in fifty-one cases out of a hundred; but in the remaining forty-nine it is quite as likely to be the voice of the devil.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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Within the extensive historiography on the Time of Troubles (*Smutnoe vremia*) of the early seventeenth century, the so-called *zemskii sobor* (Assembly of the Land) features prominently. In 1598, the non-hereditary monarch Boris Godunov was allegedly chosen, according to roughly contemporary documents, by “the whole land” (*vsia zemlia*) and “all Orthodox Christians” (*vse pravoslavnye khristiiane*) or “all Orthodox Christendom” (*vse pravoslavnoe khrest'ianstvo*).¹ Official propaganda boldly asserted, *Glas bo naroda, glas bozhii* (“For the voice of the people is the voice of God”) – a statement that would be repeated upon the selection (*izbranie*) of Mikhail Romanov in 1613.² *Vox populi* in fact formed an innovative and integral part of all politico-religious legitimization efforts during this period of turmoil, helping to justify the frequent changes of rulers.³

Ruslan Skrynnikov regarded the *zemskii sobor* as an important influence on the development of Muscovite political structures in general and on events of the early seventeenth century in particular. Like most historians, he usually tended to take the existence of such an institution for granted, highlighting its important role at key moments of the *Smuta* (Troubles).⁴ His work thus interacts with a large literature that has considered and debated virtually every

1 *Akty Arkheograficheskoi ekspeditsii* (hereafter *AAE*) vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1841): 1–13.

2 *AAE*, 2: 14; *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter *PSRL*), vol. 14.1 (St. Petersburg, 1910), 19–22, 129; *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov* (hereafter *SGGD*), vol. 1 (Moscow, 1813): 622.

3 See Isaiah Gruber, *Orthodox Russia in Crisis: Church and Nation in the Time of Troubles* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2012), esp. ch. 3.

4 E.g.: Ruslan Skrynnikov, *Rossia nakanune Smutnogo vremeni* (Moscow: Mysl', 1980), ch. 11; Ruslan Skrynnikov, *Minin i Pozharskii: Khronika Smutnogo vremeni* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1981), ch. 28.

aspect of the *zemskii sobor*, its history, development, composition, and elitist or “democratic” character.⁵

However, as is sometimes pointed out, contemporary Russians did not know of any body by the name of *zemskii sobor*. Documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries speak instead in the terms noted above: the “land,” the “whole land,” “all Orthodox Christians,” and so forth. Whether or not this is significant depends on the perspective of the individual researcher, but it is important to note that the concepts shaping contemporary Muscovite understanding were different than the terms used in modern historiography. To put it bluntly, there was no such thing as a *zemskii sobor* in the mindset of the time. What existed was something different.

Lest I fall prey to the easy accusation of splitting hairs over semantics, I will simply point out here that semantics do matter. The whole system of meaning expressed by any language exists in an intricate interrelationship with psychological and societal phenomena. Thus, if we wish to understand Muscovite society better, we must certainly start with the native concepts of that society, and not with our own reconceptualizations. The temptation to rely on our own language and concepts is unavoidable to some extent (and this applies to modern Russian as well as to foreign languages). Yet we should be conscious of the distortion that our own concepts just as inevitably introduce into historical representation. Even the term “Time of Troubles” is a far cry from the original *Smutnoe vremia*, which had a rather different content as well as set of associations.⁶ Many of the most basic terms of the time (e.g., *tsarstvo*, *izbranie*) cannot be translated satisfactorily without losing major denotative and connotative elements – as well as creating new associations that did not exist in the original historico-linguistic context. A fuller explanation is thus always necessary even to approximate the original understandings.⁷

5 See virtually all works on the Time of Troubles, and also especially: S.F. Platonov, *K istorii moskovskikh zemskikh soborov* (St. Petersburg, 1905); V.I. Koretskii, “Zemskii sobor 1575 g. i chastichnoe vozrozhdenie oprichniny,” *Voprosy istorii* 5 (1967): 32–50; S.O. Shmidt, *Stanovlenie rossiiskogo samodержavstva* (Moscow: Mysl, 1973), pp. 120–261; M.N. Tikhomirov, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo XV–XVII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), pp. 42–70; L.V. Cherepnin, *Zemskie sobory Russkogo gosudarstva v XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978); Donald Ostrowski, “The Assembly of the Land (Zemskii sobor) as a Representative Institution,” in *Modernizing Muscovy: Reform and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, ed. Jarmo Kotilaine and Marshall Poe (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 117–142.

6 See Gruber, *Orthodox Russia*, pp. 8–11.

7 Cf. the recent appearance of new semantic dictionaries of biblical language designed to clarify the original concepts, their ranges of meaning, and their associations within the context of a

All this may seem obvious and self-evident. Yet if one wishes to understand what Muscovite propagandists intended by *Glas bo naroda, glas bozhii* (the equivalent of the Latin proverb, *vox populi, vox Dei*), it is important to know what they meant by *narod* ("people"). If one wishes to understand the development of the *Smutnoe vremia*, it is important to recognize how such a key phrase – novel in the Muscovite context – could be perceived by various types of people. The role played by the populace during this period was undeniably significant, not least via multitudinous revolts; there may be some link to the rhetoric employed by the center at the beginning of the period.

Moreover, the Time of Troubles appears to have given rise to a number of other new political and religious ideas that grew in force throughout the seventeenth century. I have argued elsewhere that the "fragmentation of Orthodoxy" that occurred during the period helps to explain an oft-hypothesized link to the subsequent *Raskol* (Church Schism).⁸ Others have examined the development of a notion of Holy Rus' or Russia that apparently emerged or at least became prominent during the *Smutnoe vremia*.⁹ This notion arguably encompassed the entire Russian land and people in its conception of sanctity, potentially even representing a competing force to the official bastions of Orthodoxy in the capital.

In order to understand such developments correctly, historians of early modern Muscovy must avoid being overly influenced by their own anachronistic linguistic concepts (e.g., *zemskii sobor*) or their own preconceived positions about such ideologically charged understandings as "Holy Russia." The existence of historiographic debates on these matters can actually impede understanding of the texts themselves and thus of historical actuality. For instance, prejudging the *zemskii sobor* as either elitist or democratic in character is likely to dramatically alter one's understanding of historical documents that in fact make no mention of any *zemskii sobor* (by that name). I therefore propose to reconsider the notion of *glas naroda* ("the voice of the people") in relative isolation from these modern debates. Such an experiment may result in worthwhile new understandings of the historical sources themselves.

textual corpus. The concepts utilized in biblical translations are often remarkably different, thus distorting the impressions received and conclusions drawn by the reader.

8 Gruber, *Orthodox Russia*, pp. 156–172, 190–195.

9 See esp. Michael Cherniavsky, "Holy Russia: A Study in the History of an Idea," *American Historical Review* 63.3 (Apr. 1958): 617–637; Chester Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2001), pp. 115, 476.

The first question to ask is, who could be included within the Muscovite conception of *narod* or “people”? Both Sreznevskii’s *Dictionary of Old Russian* and the more recent *Dictionary of the Russian Language of the Eleventh to Seventeenth Centuries* extrapolate from source documents to present a range of possible meanings for the word. To summarize and simplify these definitions, *narod* could refer at the time to: a clan or larger ethnic group (including a nation); a multitude, crowd, gathering or other group of people united in some way; human beings generally; or the populace of a polity.¹⁰ The plain meaning of the word suggests that *glas naroda* might well have been intended in a broad sense to refer to all the people of the realm. Yet such a notion sounds shockingly democratic for a monarchical and/or oligarchic society such as early modern Russia.

Another possibility does exist, though it is impossible to read the minds of those who lived 400 years ago with complete accuracy. The word *narod* may have been intended in a quite limited sense in a particular context, but nonetheless understood much more broadly by its audience. When claiming that the voice of the people equated to the voice of God, the Muscovite elite may have intended only the “strong in Israel,” that is to say, the righteous within the country.¹¹ In the eyes of a privileged elite convinced of its own superiority, this might in effect signify only themselves or a very small segment of the population. Yet even in the works of Ivan Timofeev, the phrase “strong in Israel” could refer to persons of any social class who took it upon themselves to resist evil authority.¹² Furthermore, in any event the word *narod* could readily be understood to include the whole populace. Hence, even if the authors of Russia’s version of *vox populi* did intend it in a limited sense to refer only to a specific gathering or small group, nonetheless their words could easily have been interpreted as referring to the entire populace, the entire national collective. This may have influenced the course of events during the Troubles, which included nearly incessant popular revolts.

A similar point could be made with regard to the formula “all Orthodox Christians,” which likewise appears in the documents concerning Boris

10 I.I. Sreznevskii, *Materialy dlia slovaria drevne-russkago iazyka*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1902), pp. 320–321; *Slovar’ russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 214–215.

11 The phrase “strong in Israel” is borrowed from 2Samuel 1:17–27. My thanks to Don Ostrowski for this suggestion.

12 Rowland, “Towards an Understanding of the Political Ideas in Ivan Timofeyev’s *Vremennik*.” *Slavonic and East European Review* 62.3 (July 1984): 396; Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 203–207.

Godunov's election in 1598. The fact that *khristianin* (*krest'ianin*) had by this time come to mean "peasant" as well as "Christian" indicates a strong association with the common people.¹³ The religious and political elite may have viewed itself as the preeminent representatives of the nation and the faith. However, the language itself clearly preserved space for all strata of individuals to be included within any mention of the Orthodox Christian nation or people.

These considerations may help somewhat in attempting to understand how the chief ideologues of the realm came to assert such a dangerous and inflammatory idea. They may actually have failed to perceive fully the radical nature of their claim that "the voice of the people is the voice of God," being already accustomed to regarding their own class as representative of both the people and God. Still, it has remained mysterious where this idea came from in the first place and how it ended up in the Muscovite toolkit of political legitimation, serving this role uniquely during the Time of Troubles.

Ruslan Skrynnikov once argued that the Russian elite became familiar with English political notions via the important trade arrangements between the two countries in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ I agree with Charles Halperin that this statement should be regarded as inference rather than fact.¹⁵ Interestingly, however, the history of the term *vox populi* and of its appearance in Russia does furnish circumstantial evidence in support of Prof. Skrynnikov's hypothesis. A summary of what is known about this somewhat obscure and complicated story follows.

Prior to the Time of Troubles, Muscovite legitimation of the tsar's accession did not rely on the voice of the people. The documents concerning the accession of Ivan IV spoke of *vsenarodnoe mnogoe bezchislnoe mnozhestvo pravoslavnykh khristian* ("an all-popular great innumerable multitude of Orthodox Christians"), but gave this crowd no voice whatsoever in choosing the tsar. The people's presence supported Ivan's accession only silently and implicitly, and the true justifications for rule were of course found elsewhere: heredity or paternal inheritance, in conjunction with God's will as shown by the sanction of the Church.¹⁶ After the Time of Troubles, the rulers again had little or no use

13 Sreznevskii, *Materialy*, 3 (1912): 1403–1404.

14 Ruslan Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terrora* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1992), pp. 197, 241, 523–524.

15 Charles Halperin, "Ruslan Skrynnikov on Ivan IV," *Dubitando: Studies in History and Culture in Honor of Donald Ostrowski*, ed. Brian J. Boeck, Russell E. Martin, and Daniel Rowland (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2012), pp. 204–205.

16 *Dopolneniia k Aktam istoricheskim* (hereafter *DAI*), vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1846): 41, 44, 50, 52.

for the popular voice.¹⁷ In the context of Russian history, therefore, the notion of relying explicitly on the voice of the people to represent the voice of God in choosing a tsar during the Time of Troubles was quite novel and perhaps even revolutionary.¹⁸

Where did this idea come from? How did it reach Russia? As far as can be discerned, and contrary to what is often assumed, extant classical and Byzantine sources do not mention *vox populi, vox Dei*. The proverb has its first known attestation at the end of the eighth century CE, when Alcuin of York denounced it in his letter to Charlemagne, adding, “The unruliness of the common herd is always akin to madness.”¹⁹ In the late tenth century, a violent political controversy over the accession to the archbishopric of Reims prompted Frankish bishops to assert that the voice of the people was not *always* equal to the voice of God, even if (as they thought) *vox populi, vox Dei* had been written in Scripture.²⁰

In the Bible, the voice of the people and the voice of God do appear together in the context of choosing a king, but with a very different significance from that ascribed to *glas naroda, glas bozhii* during the Russian Time of Troubles. In 1 Samuel 8, “the people” (Hebrew *ha-‘am*, roughly equivalent to Russian *narod*) reject the words of God’s prophet and clamor instead for a king to rule over them. God speaks and tells Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people [*qol ha-‘am*], to all that they say unto you, for it is not you they reject, but me they reject from being king over them” (1 Samuel 8:7). In this story, the voice of God does therefore coincide partly with the voice of the people – but not because the people are considered right or just. To the contrary, the voice of the people in this instance is clearly identified as a voice of rebellion and sin against God himself. The biblical text provides no justification for viewing the popular voice as according with God’s actual desires, but in fact states the opposite. Moreover, other Scriptures such as Exodus 23:2 explicitly warn against

17 See: Gruber, *Orthodox Russia*, p. 178; Rowland, “Toward an Understanding,” pp. 395–396; Dunning, *Russia’s First Civil War*, pp. 114–115, 443–447.

18 The chronicles of Kievan Rus’ do contain hints regarding semi-popular “election” of princes, but (to my knowledge) nothing so clear as *vox populi, vox Dei*.

19 George Boas, *Vox populi: Essays in the History of an Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 8–13; Milton Anastos, “*Vox Populi Voluntas Dei* and the Election of the Byzantine Emperor,” *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. Jacob Neusner, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1975): 182 n. 2.

20 Alain Boureau, “L’adage *vox populi, vox dei* et l’invention de la nation anglaise (VIIIe–XIIIe siècle)” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 47.4/5 (1992): 1077.

following the “many” to do evil – anything but an unequivocal endorsement of *vox populi*.

Still, beginning in the eleventh century, the proverb began to be used in a positive sense in the English political context, in particular to justify the accession of kings. Alain Boureau views such usage as highly significant for the construction of the English nation and the formation of its unique characteristics, calling the phrase “un véritable énoncé collectif de la nation anglaise.”²¹ For the next several centuries, it is primarily within the English political context that one finds *vox populi*, *vox Dei* used to make or break rulers, even though controversy over its legitimacy would also continue. In the fourteenth century, Walter Reynolds, Archbishop of Canterbury, apparently cited *vox populi*, *vox Dei* to justify the deposition of Edward II.²²

In the interpretation of several historians, periodic emphasis on the voice of the people developed a sense that English monarchy depended on popular consent. By the sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) courted the people and depended heavily on advisers, an occurrence prompting Patrick Collinson and others to speak of a “monarchical republic.”²³ Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English and French literature contain many references to *vox populi*, with some authors endorsing and others denouncing it.²⁴

Notions such as *vox populi*, *vox Dei* can also be encountered in other cultures around the world. An ancient Chinese proverb states, “Whatever the people see

21 Boureau, “L’adage,” pp. 1084–1087.

22 Boas, *Vox populi*, pp. 22–24; Philip Hamburger, *Law and Judicial Duty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2008), p. 74.

23 Patrick Collinson, “The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I,” in his *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon, 1994); John McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

24 E.g.: Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica or, Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenets and Commonly Presumed Truths*, 3rd ed. (London: Ekins, 1658), 1: iii, 8; Thomas Scott, *Vox populi, or Newes from Spayne* (London, 1620); William Prynne, *Vox Populi, or the Peoples Humble Discovery of His Majesties Ungrounded Jealousies and their own Loyaltie* (London, 1642); *Vox Populi, or, The Supplication and Proposals of the Subjects of this Miserable Kingdome* (London: John Playford, Inner Temple, 1647); James I of England, *Vox Regis, or The Difference Betwixt a King Ruling by Law and a Tyrant by his own Will ... which may be an Appendix to Vox Populi* (London: Francis Smith, 1681); *Vox Populi, or, The Peoples Claim to their Parliaments Sitting to Redress Grievances and Provide for the Common Safety* (London: Francis Smith, 1681); Joseph Boyse, *Vox Populi, or, The Sense of the Sober Lay-Men of the Church of England* (London: Randall Taylor, 1690); Boas, *Vox populi*, pp. 27–35.

is what Heaven sees; whatever the people hear is what Heaven hears.”²⁵ The Japanese term *Tensei-jingo*, apparently coined in the Meiji period, has roughly the same meaning as the Latin phrase and has been used to argue for granting more importance to the popular voice.²⁶ By now the idiom is so commonplace and universal that it may seem unmysterious. Yet it is important to keep in mind that this was certainly not the case in sixteenth-century Russia. Not only was *glas naroda, glas bozhii* (*vox populi, vox Dei*) completely exceptional in the corpus of Muscovite political rhetoric, but it contradicted the main thrust of Orthodox political legitimacy to that point. Moreover, in a striking coincidence, the formulators of political propaganda during the Time of Troubles used this phrase with essentially the same meaning it had taken on in late medieval and early modern England. The common people – not only the elite – were accorded the right of choosing a ruler for themselves. To appreciate this point, we may revisit the important question of who exactly was meant by “the people,” both in the West and in Russia.

According to George Boas, author of a monograph on the conceptual history of *vox populi*, “No one has been quite sure what he was referring to when he spoke of the People!”²⁷ Yet Boas continues to argue that “the people” did not include *everyone*, either for proponents of the popular voice or for its detractors. In general, he states, “the people” has always stood in contrast to the ruling elite; the term refers essentially to the governed *in contrast to* their governors. In ancient Rome, for instance, the *populus* was considered distinct from the *Senatus*, the ruling body. A similar meaning was carried through all iterations of *vox populi, vox Dei* in medieval and early modern Europe. Boas asserts that “the people” are not necessarily the same as “the poor,” although the distinction between poor and rich does form part of what he terms the ever-present contrast between the people and the “anti-people.”²⁸

Documents of the Time of Troubles illustrate that the word *narod* may have carried a similar meaning in those cases when the “voice of the people” was used to legitimize new rulers. In this exceptional period, the legitimacy of the tsar really was considered to be founded on the expressed will of the people as a whole, including common subjects. In 1598 a Russian delegation presented to Elizabeth I of England the following reasons for the accession of Boris Godunov:

25 Gruber, *Orthodox Russia*, pp. 217–218 n. 58.

26 *Vox populi, vox Dei / Tensei-jingo* (Tokyo: Bilingual / Kodansha Intanashonaru, 1997), p. 9.

27 Boas, *Vox populi*, p. 39.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 39–71.

... по милости божей и по приказу ... царя и великого князя Федора Ивановича ... и по благословению ... царицы и великие княгини иноки Александры Феодоровны ... а за прошеньем и молением святейшого Иова патрарха ... и митрополитов и архиепископов и епископов, и всего освященного вселенского собора, и за челобитьем многих государских детей и царевичей разных государств ... и за многими прозбами бояр наших, и okolnichich, и князей, и воевод, и дворян, и приказных людей всех городов московского государства, и всего народа крестьянского, множества людей росийского царствия.²⁹

... according to the mercy of God and according to the order ... of Tsar and Grand Prince Fyodor Ivanovich ... and according to the blessing ... of Tsaritsa and Grand Princess the nun Aleksandra Fyodorovna ... and for the sake of the request and prayer of the most holy Patriarch Iyov ... and the metropolitans and archbishops and bishops, and the whole sanctified universal [church] council, and for the sake of the petition of many sovereigns' children and tsareviches of various dominions ... and for the sake of the many entreaties of our boyars, and okol'nichi, and princes, and commanders, and noblemen, and chancellery people of all cities of the Muscovite dominion, and all the Christian people, the multitude of persons of the Russian tsarstvo.

As seen from this excerpt, the common people (*ves' narod krest'ianskii*) appeared as a separate category in a long list of different types of people of the Russian state. As in West European parlance, the *narod* or “people” was clearly considered distinct from all the other categories of persons, who collectively could be said to constitute the “ruling class.” A multitude of official records from the sixteenth and seventeenth century express the same distinction. Given this context, it is all the more remarkable that the so-called *Sobornoe opredelenie* (“Conciliar Determination”) of mid-1598 stated quite plainly: *glas naroda, glas bozhii*, “the voice of the people is the voice of God.”³⁰ Regardless of the authors' intended meaning, this statement could easily have been understood to mean that the collective will of the common people – in contrast to that of the ruling elite! – would represent God's verdict.

29 *Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskago gosudarstva s Anglieiu*, vol. 2 [= *Sbornik Imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva* 38] (St. Petersburg, 1883), p. 262.

30 *AAE*, 2: 14.

Such a conclusion appears controversial in historiography, I suggest, only due to preconceived notions about the *zemskii sobor* and opinions about Holy Russia. Yet the elasticity of the very word *narod* at least implies the possibility of such a broad meaning, even if it does not necessarily dictate so “democratic” an interpretation. Thus, rhetoric and language itself created a realm of possibilities within which Muscovite minds structured various interpretations and courses of action. If it is true that the 1598 statement about *vox populi* found more resonance with its audience than the authors themselves intended, then the leaders of the realm may have to a certain extent cut their own legs out from under themselves unintentionally. We know that the saying was repeated officially in 1613 and that notions of the popular voice figured prominently in all intermediary legitimizations. Might not the constant repetition of such propaganda have had an unintended impact, opposite from that desired by those in power?

The fact that Muscovy and England had extensive diplomatic and commercial relations during the sixteenth century, when *vox populi* was a common theme in England, is suggestive evidence in favor of Skrynnikov’s hypothesis concerning transference of political ideas. I have not found direct evidence of exchanges on the topic between representatives of the two countries.³¹ Still, it may be that the Russian elite borrowed this notion from the West for use during the Time of Troubles. Perhaps the greatest irony of the *Smutnoe vremia* – from an official point of view, the “rebellious time” – is that the rulers themselves gave the people the best possible justification for *smuta*, or rebellion. The common people seemingly learned from official propaganda, no less, that their voice was equal to the voice of God himself. Read out in churches and proclaimed throughout the realm, this notion provided an easy way to legitimize Orthodox rebellion.

31 For one possible hint, see: Iurii Tolstoi, ed., *Rossiiia i Angliia, 1553–1593* (St. Petersburg, 1875), p. 188; Isabel de Madariaga, *Ivan the Terrible: First Tsar of Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), pp. 299, 436 nn. 4–5.