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B. F. Porshnev

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This is the first English translation of important writings on the Thirty Years' War by the great Soviet historian B.F. Porshnev. Little is known of the Muscovite contribution to the conflict and Paul Duker – arguably Britain's senior historian of *ancien régime* Russia – has selected the most valuable areas of Porshnev's unparalleled archival research to fill a crucial gap in the literature of the seventeenth century. In placing this work in the context of Porshnev's larger undertaking, Professor Duker's substantial introduction assesses Porshnev's critics and evaluates his contribution to our understanding of the Thirty Years' War and of relations between Eastern and Western Europe at the time. This significant reinterpretation of a fascinating period will interest both Russian specialists and historians working on one or more widespread areas of seventeenth-century European politics.

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# Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630–1635

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B.F. Porshnev

*Edited by*

*Paul Dukes*

*University of Aberdeen*

*Translated by*

*Brian Pearce*



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521451390](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521451390)

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Moscow

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First published 1995

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630–1635/  
Porshnev, B. F. (Boris Fedorovich), 1905–1972;  
edited by Paul Dukes; translated by Brian Pearce.

p. cm.

ISBN 0 521 45139 6

1. Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648. 2. Russia – History – 1613–1689.

I. Dukes, Paul, 1934–. II. Title.

D271.R8P67 1996

940.2'4 – dc20 95–10293 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-45139-0 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-45139-6 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

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## Editor's introduction

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Boris Fedorovich Porshnev was born in 1905 in St Petersburg. He graduated from Moscow University, and worked in Moscow in several institutions after some years of school teaching in Rostov-on-Don. From 1943 he was a senior research associate of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences, although he also taught at Moscow University. In 1940, he defended his doctoral dissertation on 'Popular Revolts in France before the Fronde (1632–1648)': published under the same title in 1948, it was awarded the State Prize in 1950 and, later, translated into both German (1954) and French (1963). A man of several passionate interests, ranging from social psychology to the yeti, Porshnev polemicised widely.<sup>1</sup>

*Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630–1635* is Brian Pearce's translation of Chapters 4 to 8 of a work originally published in 1976. Although it clearly bears the stamp of the time and place in which it was written, the book retains much of its value as an essential part of its author's general thesis concerning the political relations of West and East Europe during the epoch of the Thirty Years' War. First broadcast to the wider academic community in a paper given at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stockholm in 1960,<sup>2</sup> this thesis was then due to be enlarged in a trilogy. Sadly, in 1972 Porshnev died before his plan could be fully realised: indeed, only one part, the third, came out in his lifetime – *France, the English Revolution and European Politics at the Middle of the Seventeenth Century (Frantsiia, Angliiskaia revoliutsiia i evropeiskaia politika v seredine XVIIv.)*, 1970.<sup>3</sup> The second part, which was to consider the crisis and break in relations between Western and

<sup>1</sup> See the obituaries in *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1, 1973, p. 218; *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, No. 1, 1973, pp. 219–221. Little of Porshnev's work has hitherto been translated into English, although see, for example, *Social Psychology and History*, Moscow, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> B. F. Porshnev [sic], 'Les rapports politiques de l'Europe occidentale et de l'Europe orientale à l'époque de la guerre de Trente Ans', *XIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Rapports IV, Histoire moderne*, Göteborg–Stockholm, Uppsala, 1960, pp. 136–163.

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Dukes, 'Russia and Mid-Seventeenth Century Europe: Some Comments on the Work of B. F. Porshnev', *European Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1974, pp. 81–88.

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Eastern Europe and their influence on the continental war in the 1630s, was foreshadowed by several articles but has yet to see the light of day. Even the first part was published posthumously, albeit after its preparation was completed by the author himself.

Chapters 4 to 8 of the first part, which have been renumbered 1 to 5 in this translation, constitute the heart of the book, while the original first three chapters may be seen as introductory, setting the scene for the drama to follow. However, although they have been excluded, they should not pass without any notice at all, and therefore a brief summary of them follows here. In turn, they are concerned with 'Europe', 'Germany' and 'Prologue to European War – the Counter-Reformation in Germany, 1617–1629'.

Sixteenth-century Europe confronted the old Imperial power of the Habsburgs in West and East with a newer national absolutism, especially in England and France, and the growth in influence of the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy. Internal strife, part social, part religious, impeded the resolution of international conflicts. The Peace of Augsburg of 1555, extending toleration to the Lutheran princes of North and North-East Germany, was motivated at least partly by the Imperial desire to devote a greater effort to the solution of foreign problems. From 1556 to 1582, the Holy Roman Empire's *Ostpolitik* was aimed at the reduction of the threat emanating from Muscovy and Ottoman Turkey, and this involved some diminution of the rivalry with Poland. An important moment was the outbreak in 1558 of the Livonian War, in which Ivan the Terrible attempted to break through the Imperial blockade to the Baltic Sea. By 1569–1570, a barrier had been erected against Muscovite expansionism consisting of Sweden, the newly united Poland–Lithuania and Ottoman Turkey. However, not all the action was against Ivan the Terrible: indeed, in 1572, there was talk of a Muscovite–Habsburg alliance against Turkey along with a two-way partition of Poland–Lithuania between the allies. But negotiations broke down over the question of Livonia. Meanwhile, to the west, the English, the French and the Dutch were all able in various ways to overcome the blockade that the Habsburgs would have liked to enforce in that part of Europe. Although the division of the Habsburg lands between Spain and Austria in 1555–1556 meant to some extent a division of labour, such problems as the maintenance of the 'road' along the Rhine and of stability in the Netherlands were of concern to both branches of the family.

By 1582–1583, Ivan the Terrible's grasp for the Baltic in the Livonian War had met with final failure, and the Tsar died in 1584. Boris Godunov met with little or no more success in 1590. In 1593, the Turks exerted new pressure up the Danube, and an Imperial envoy strove in that and the

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following year to establish a firm peace between Sweden and Muscovy so that the latter might combine with the Empire against the Turks. As before, however, the fate of Livonia proved to be a stumbling block. Godunov made another unsuccessful attempt for a foothold on the Baltic from 1600 to 1603, again vainly trying for the support of the Empire against Poland–Lithuania.

Now, Muscovite Russia was virtually to fall apart during the Time of Troubles, with intervention from both Poland–Lithuania and Sweden. A succession of Polish puppets was installed as tsars, and there was widespread social dislocation. However, Muscovy was saved from complete collapse by the rivalry between Poland–Lithuania and Sweden and more general European tension as well as by a patriotic revival culminating in the election as tsar of Mikhail Romanov in 1613. The new government made peace with Sweden at Stolbovo in 1617, and with Poland–Lithuania, after a final incursion, at Deulino in 1618. Meanwhile, having made a twenty-year truce with the Ottoman Turks in 1606, the Imperial Habsburgs were restrained by a threat of war with France and other difficulties from taking their hopes of expansion to the East any further. Along with the Spanish branch of the family, the Imperial Habsburgs were now poised for the commencement in 1618 of the Thirty Years' War.

Narrowing his focus, Porshnev suggested that German historians had put forward two principal theses about the Thirty Years' War: that it was the consequence of the Holy Roman Emperor's attempt to unify Germany; and that France – 'the eternal enemy' – exploited the tension between the Emperor and the princes to divide and weaken Germany even further. They had blamed the war, along with foreign enemies – especially France, for all the negative features of later German history. But Porshnev asserted that two counter-theses could be put forward: that the aggressors were in fact the Habsburg powers, especially the Empire; and that the war was largely concerned with the Imperial attempt to suppress the opposition to this aggression by the Protestant princes. Hostilities in Germany were in the first instance not so much because of intervention from outside as because of internal circumstances. There were four categories of contradiction: state, between the Empire and the princes; confessional, especially between Catholics and Protestants; national, involving principally Germans, Slavs and Hungarians; and social, between the classes. The first category was the most noticeable, and the last – the least, but their actual importance was the other way round.

Of course, the pretensions of the Emperor as defender of world order were huge, while the princes could make for themselves considerably lesser claims. Yet it could be said that the Emperor and the princes were



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two sides of the same feudal edifice, the material foundations of which, never strong, were now in the process of disappearing.

Leadership of the Reformation had come more from the princes than the burghers, and the confessional division of the Empire followed a pattern defined by the borders of the principalities rather than the disposition of the towns: to put it simply, the South was Catholic, the North-West was Calvinist, and the North-East was Lutheran. There could therefore never be princely unity, and even the principle introduced in 1555 by the Peace of Augsburg – *cuius regio, eius religio* (whoever's region, his religion) – could never be applied strictly.

The shortfall was to a considerable extent the consequence of the national question. There were age-old tensions between the Germans and the Slavs, while for Czechs and Hungarians, among others, freedom of conscience became the symbol of national independence. The Czechs and Hungarians were conscious of taking the brunt of Turkish aggression, and such awareness also contributed to the circumstance that the Austro–Czech–Hungarian Habsburg monarchy was not only the largest component of the Empire but also the main threat to its political balance.

The 'most national movement in the whole history of Germany' had been the Great Peasant War ending in 1525, with its participants ignoring frontiers, but this was also a class struggle. The continuance of such social struggle could be seen in the entrenchment of serfdom, a process stretching from after 1525 up to about 1650, after the end of the Thirty Years' War. Although it varied in its nature according to the basis of the peasant's position in the system of land ownership, there was a considerable amount of tension evident before 1618 and intensified by the taxation, billeting and pillage of the Thirty Years' War, which, although a European war, was fought largely in Germany. The extent of the terror was difficult to estimate with any degree of exactness, but there could be no doubt that the war could be characterised as 'a punitive expedition against the German peasants'. If Karl-Friedrich von Moser had been justified in his observation made a century or so later that each nation had its own basis for motivation – France: the honour of the monarch; Holland: trade; England: freedom; and Germany: obedience – the last of these was a consequence of the terror inflicted during the Thirty Years' War.

Turning to the Counter-Reformation in Germany from 1617 to 1629 as a prologue to war throughout Europe, Porshnev argued that there had been a persistent myth, encouraged by the Prussian school of historians, but accepted by many of their French and English colleagues, that the conflict as a whole had largely consisted of an attempt by the Habsburg Catholic–feudal reaction to dominate Europe, which had succeeded only

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in encouraging the intervention of foreign powers in Germany. To be sure, up to 1629, hostilities could indeed be characterised as centring around the Catholic reaction, but 1630 marked an important turning-point, and after that, hostilities continued basically between two coalitions. There were, as had often been accepted, four main periods in the Thirty Years' War: (1) the Czech–Palatinate, 1618–1623; (2) the Danish, 1625–1629; (3) the Swedish, 1630–1635; (4) the Swedish–French, 1635–1648. However, the greatest change of direction in the war was undoubtedly marked by the invasion of Pomerania by Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden in 1630.

The famous Defenestration of Prague in 1618 had not actually marked the war's outbreak, for Ferdinand of Styria, soon to become Holy Roman Emperor, had already in 1617 launched aggression against both the French and the Czechs. The Czech Revolt following the Defenestration had produced the first reverses for the Habsburg camp, but it had bounced back, with emphasis on the cause of the Counter-Reformation, and the growing realisation that the outcome of the war would depend largely on money and mercenaries.

In 1624, a saviour for the Imperial cause arose in the shape of Albrecht Wallenstein, a fantastic entrepreneur who managed to raise a considerable army, and then to put it to effective use. While France, England and the Dutch Republic held back from full involvement in the conflict, the efforts of Wallenstein and others took the Habsburg–Catholic forces to a zenith of success by 1628–1629. But then the activities of the French in Italy, and of the Dutch on land and sea were enhanced at the end of the Danish period of the war by the vigorous entry of the Swedes. This is where the translated chapters of Porshnev's book take up the story. The foregoing summary of the first three, introductory chapters has inevitably given emphasis to a fault detected by some readers of the full 150 pages or so of the original Russian text: over-simplification to the point of caricature of the complex realities of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. On the other hand, at the very least, the summary serves perhaps to make clear one of Porshnev's fundamental assertions, the neglect in much historical writing on the period under discussion of the part played by Eastern Europe, especially Muscovy, in the affairs of the continent as a whole.

Admittedly, vigorous assertion can lead to over-assertion, and other exaggerations in his argument are not difficult to find. Perhaps the most serious of them is his estimate of the extent of the subsidy given by Muscovy to Sweden through grain transactions (one calculation of the profit obtained in this manner by the Swedish Crown from 1629 to 1633 amounting to 160,000 reichsthalers as opposed to the sum of 2,400,000

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reichsthalers arrived at by Porshnev<sup>4</sup>). On the other hand, again, while errors and misunderstandings should always be pointed out, at least some allowance must be made for the difficult circumstances in which a Soviet historian would be working in the 1970s. Furthermore, not even Porshnev's sternest critics would deny that he was making a worthwhile point, or rather enlarging upon a point already made by several other historians, although their work could at the same time indicate another of his faults – the tendency to claim a greater degree of originality for his work than it actually possessed. G. V. Forsten and D. Norrman,<sup>5</sup> to name but two, both foreshadowed the theses put forward in this book, even if not giving the same emphases, nor, to give Porshnev his due, making anything like as much use of the Russian archives as did he.

Going back even further into the past, indeed right back to the period that the book discusses, we might question the very possibility of originality in the work of any historian, at least in the sense that, if he or she is revealing some truth about the past, then this is not so much discovery as rediscovery. However, to look forward rather than back, his successors have been enabled by the contribution of B. F. Porshnev, added to that of others including those named above, to give a full consideration to problems of European history in the epoch of the Thirty Years' War. If Porshnev could first formulate his ideas on this subject during the years of the Second World War and then develop them and work towards the completion of his trilogy during the subsequent years of the Cold War, how much more should we be able to take advantage of the new opportunities for investigating the history of the entire continent of Europe that have opened up in the early 1990s. Further assessment of the role of individuals such as Alexander Leslie<sup>6</sup> and Jacques Roussel as well as further consideration of Porshnev's basic question – 'Is it possible to

<sup>4</sup> Lars Ekholm, 'Russian Grain and Swedish War Finances 1629-1633', *Scandia*, Vol. 40, 1974, pp. 101–103. Paul Bushkovitch, *The Merchants of Moscow, 1580–1650*, Cambridge, 1980, p. 158, writes that 'Nor was the amount of money involved in the sale and purchase of grain for the Smolensk War tremendous, when compared with the total turnover at Archangel . . . The grain sales by the treasury in the 1620s and 1630s to Sweden, which were partly an attempt to support the Swedish effort in the Thirty Years' War, were also not very large by Archangel standards, although the total of this activity in the years 1627–34 was larger than usual.' On the other hand, a work cited by Bushkovitch in support of this assessment also gives some indication of the importance to Sweden of the Russian grain trade. See A. Attman and others, eds., *Ekonomicheskie svyazi mezhdru Rossiei i Shvetsiei v XVIIv.: dokumenty iz sovetskikh arkhivov*, Moscow–Stockholm, 1978. No doubt, the final word on this subject has yet to be spoken.

<sup>5</sup> G. V. Forsten, *Baltiiskii vopros v XVI i XVII stoletiiakh (1544–1648)*, 2 vols., St Petersburg, 1893–4; David Norrman, *Gustav Adolfs politik mot Ryssland och Polen under Tyska kriget (1630–1632)*, Uppsala, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Paul Dukes, 'The Leslie Family in the Swedish Period (1630–1635) of the Thirty Years' War', *European Studies Review*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1982, pp. 401–404.

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think of the history of one country on its own?<sup>7</sup> – should now present fewer obstacles while losing none of their importance.

### Acknowledgements

In Moscow, to L. A. Nikitina for a copy of the book, and to K. B. Porshneva for facilitating translation rights. In Aberdeen, for help in preparing the typescript, to Cathryn Brennan, Cathy Fourie, John Hadden, Andrea Hannah, Alan McAdam and especially Gillian Brown and Sandra Williams; for advice on some aspects of the translation of the Author's preface, to James Forsyth; for advice on some aspects of the Introduction, to Howard Hotson; for proof-reading, to Alexeia Grosjean. Further afield in the UK, to Douglas Matthews for the index as well as to Brian Peace for the translation. A final acknowledgement, my own ultimate responsibility for errors of omission (including Slavonic diacritical marks) and commission, wherever they may not be attributed to B. F. Porshnev himself, or his editor.

<sup>7</sup> For example, there could be further investigation of the international impact of the Smolensk War. Certainly, there was a series of pamphlets produced on this subject in both German and Spanish. See *Wahre und gründliche Relation . . .*, September 1633; *Fernere und gründliche Relation . . .*, [October 1633]; *Gründliche und wahre Relation . . .*, January 1634; *Gründliche und wahrhaftiger Bericht . . .*, February 1634; *Glaubwürdige Zeitung . . .*, 1634; *Gründlicher Bericht . . .*, 1634; *Fröliche und gewisse Zeitung . . .*, 1634. They are located in the City Archive, Gdansk. And see *Las Continuas Victorias . . .*, 1634; *Relacion Verdadera de la Insigne Vitoria . . .*, 1634, both located in the British Library. The most complete study in English is Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, London, 1984.

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## Author's preface

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This book is part of a trilogy. The author's intention was that three monographs were to constitute a single study of the system of European states during the epoch of the Thirty Years' War. It has so happened that in 1970, the third, i.e. the chronologically concluding part – the monograph *France, the English Revolution and European Politics at the Middle of the Seventeenth Century*<sup>1</sup> – was published before the others. Now the first book is put in the hands of readers.

The theme of the second monograph in the trilogy, already basically prepared, is the crisis and rupture in relations between Western and Eastern Europe and also in the fortunes of the general European war. Its principal parts are: I. The peasant–Cossack rising in the Moscow state called the *Balashovshchina* (1633–1634);<sup>2</sup> II. The Peace of Polyanovka of 1634,<sup>3</sup> the crisis of Russo–Swedish relations and the Treaty of Stuhmsdorf of 1635,<sup>4</sup> the open entry of France into the war with the Habsburgs; III. The epic career of Jacques Roussel,<sup>5</sup> Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy

<sup>1</sup> A résumé of the work was already given by me at the XI International Congress of Historical Sciences at Stockholm in 1960. See *XIe. Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Stockholm, 21–28 août 1960, Rapports, IV: Histoire moderne*, Uppsala, 1960, pp. 136–163; Russian translation – ‘Politicheskie otnosheniia Zapadnoi i Vostochnoi Evropy v epokhu Tridtsatiletnei Voiny’, *Voprosy istorii*, No. 10, 1960. However the completion of the work has been delayed for many years.

<sup>2</sup> Fragments have been published: 1. ‘Sotsial’no-politicheskaia obstanovka v Rossii vo vremia Smolenskoï voiny’, *Istoriia SSSR*, No. 5, 1957; 2. ‘Razvitie “balashovskogo” dvizheniia v fevrale–marte 1634g.’, *Problemy obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Rossii i slavianskikh stran: sbornik statei k 70-letiiu akad. M. N. Tikhomirova*, Moscow, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> A fragment has been published: ‘Na putiakh k Polianovskomu miru 1634’, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, politika, diplomatiia XVI–XVII vv.: sbornik statei k 80-letiiu akad. I. M. Maiskogo*, Moscow, 1964.

<sup>4</sup> The theses have been published as papers delivered on: 1. ‘Shvedskoe posol’stvo v Moskvu v 1634g.’, *Tezisy dokladov vtoroi nauchnoi konferentsii po istorii, ekonomike, iaziku i literature Slavianskikh stran i Finliandii*, Moscow, 1965; 2. ‘Stumsdorfskii mir 1635g.: ego istoriografiia i istoricheskoe znachenie’, *Tezisy dokladov 4-i Vsesoiuznoi konferentsii po istorii Skandinavskikh stran*, Part 1, Petrozavodsk, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> A fragment has been published: ‘Iz istorii rusko-frantsuzskikh sviazei v epokhu Tridtsatiletnei voiny’, *Frantsuzskii ezhegodnik, 1958*, Moscow, 1959. See also the special section 4 ‘V masshtabe individual’noi zhizni’ in the concluding part of the book *Frantsiia, Angliiskaia revoliutsiia i evropeiskaia politika v seredine XVIIv.*

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and Islam, the struggle for unity against Catholicism of the other Christian churches in the 1630s; IV. The position and role of Turkey in East and West European politics in the 1630s.

This summary of the second link in the trilogy is completely necessary here as a conceptual bridge between the book now presented and that which came out in 1970 and is concerned with the 1640s.

In the origin and outcome of the whole work a special part has been played by the theme of the role of Russia, i.e. of Russian diplomacy and the so-called Smolensk War (1632–1634) in the history of the Thirty Years' War. The author has taken upon his shoulders the whole unenviable burden of the discoverer . . . My suggestion of the well-founded nature of a research project such as this has met with a sceptical attitude. I for my own part have not only seen the positive qualities of the theme, which have been confirmed by subsequent searches in archival and published sources, but have also been attracted in scholarly endeavours by that aspect which may be called discovery. To be sure, historiographical tradition has excluded and made appear improbable the combination of these two subjects. The maximum allowed by the conventional mould for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been the study of the commercial links between Russian and Western merchants.

Of course, there could be no talk of the actual influence of the military-political power of the Muscovite state on Western Europe previously: therefore, it is easy to see that making such an encroachment on tradition and providing a solid foundation for my attempt has constituted a discovery. It arose in my mind during the process of lighting upon and comparing more and more new documentary data, but I cannot fail to mention that it was prompted during the years of the great historical clash between our country and Nazi Germany – the inheritor of everything reactionary that had accumulated over the many centuries of German history.<sup>6</sup> Just such a reappraisal of the 'Russo-German' historical theme during the stormy years of the war encouraged in particular a reconsideration of the problem of 'Russia and the Thirty Years' War' (and a number of other questions about Russia's place in the historical past among European political forces).

If a general title be thought necessary for my trilogy, I would adopt for such a purpose the heading for one of the introductory parts of the third book, namely: 'Is it possible to think of the history of one country on its own?' The epoch of the Thirty Years' War is here only a specific historical fact, serving as a kind of experimental material for appraising this

<sup>6</sup> See B. F. Porshnev, 'Zavoevatel'nye avantiury v istorii Germanii i gitlerovshchina', *Bol'shevik*, No. 14, 1943; B. F. Porshnev, 'Über die gewissen Tendenzen in der deutschen Geschichte', *Sowjetliteratur*, No. 1, 1947.

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question. Consequently, on the plane of the system of European states in process of formation at that time under the heading could be put a subheading: 'From the example of the epoch of the Thirty Years' War'.

In order to correlate the idea of the 'system of states' with concrete historical reality, it is necessary as thoroughly as possible to point out the untruthfulness of the traditional, usual and unnoticed omissions and contradictions. Thus, in the third book I showed the falsity of the almost universally held opinion concerning the mutual indifference and gulf between the French Fronde and the English Revolution. However, it has turned out to be both a more complicated and more worthwhile task to fill in the gulf between the political history of Russia and the rest of Europe, in a word, 'to reunite Europe' as regards the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The word 'reunite' is used here by no means in the sense that would exclude the examination of antagonisms and conflicts but rather in the sense of a scholarly grasp of this subject in its entirety. The history of historical science has for various reasons involved a significant exclusion of Russian history from 'universal history', especially in such a relatively early period as that known as the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries . . . Overcoming the traditional isolation of Russia from Europe must necessarily mean revision and enhancement of the historian's methods themselves – especially those of the historian of international relations. Thus, theoretical and concrete researches clearly interact in the given case, with the rejection of the artificial division of historical science into 'universal' and 'national'.

Turning to the study of 'Russica', I have also met with certain specific methodological difficulties. In particular, here is one of them, sufficiently characteristic. Western historians do not at all consider it unscholarly when citing texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to somewhat modernise both the language and the orthography. This way of quoting from sources is generally acceptable, even in the historians' most academic publications. There are weighty reasons for this. What was the norm in earlier stages of history for one language or another has not disappeared completely and given way to new norms, but is preserved for a long time in poorly educated and peripheral social circles. Therefore, archaic texts are accepted by us unwillingly and haughtily: they are associated with contemporary archaisms and provincialisms. The image of the author of a text is transformed in our consciousness from 'old' to 'old-fashioned', and we condescendingly forgive him for a certain inadequate education, clumsiness and provinciality, or, on the other hand, too, a somewhat amusing affectation. But in fact, there was nothing of this within the linguistic culture of the text's own time. Western historians do not want their readers to have a sense of their ancestors as

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0521451396 - Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630-1635

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'naive' – they translate their speech into the language of a member of the contemporary elite. Nobody sees in this a violation of the interests of historical science, and only philological specialists are interested in unaltered old texts. The stubbornness of devotees of 'Russica', justifying itself by academic propriety, renders the history of Russia of preceding centuries somewhat odd. Some scholars have noticed this psychological bias and have tried to alter the tradition of citation, thus substituting in the reader's perception an intelligent author for a quaint ancestor. And so M. N. Tikhomirov has arrived at the conclusion that it has become necessary to quote Old Russian texts in historical works (of course, we are not talking about philological editions) in translation into contemporary Russian language, but he has not met with understanding for this view ... To be sure, the translation of old texts into contemporary Russian demands that one does only what is absolutely necessary as well as with the greatest care, but what I have said explains why I associate myself with M. N. Tikhomirov (with whom I have discussed this question), and why I offer to the reader all quotations from Russian documents of the seventeenth century in a minimally modernised version or with the citation in brackets of parallel versions.

This textological question is only a small illustration of the many difficulties in the path of the historian restoring the place of Russia in the system of European states.

In this task, my choice of the period of the Thirty Years' War has not been accidental. It was the first pan-European war. At least, though having started as one of the 'wars of religion', it brought to the surface by the beginning of the 'Swedish period' profound political contradictions on a continental scale and attracted participants less and less characterised by their confessional tendencies. By that very fact the Thirty Years' War was very important for the historical elucidation of the idea of 'Europe'.

At the same time, it is necessary to recall that the Thirty Years' War was not an isolated or newly arisen historical phenomenon. It belongs in the complex of other, preceding armed conflicts which expressed in the political sphere the profound and radical processes of the genesis of capitalism within the womb of feudal Europe. Several deeply different wars preceded the Thirty Years' War and historically prepared for it or were merged with it. Above and beyond all others was the war of the Netherlands for independence from Spain. This war began with the Dutch Revolution and finished with the Peace of Westphalia. Another root was constituted by the armed conflicts which went on at the end of the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the Mediterranean, where the key question was the struggle for control of that sea between Turkey and Spain, as well as Austria, the Italian



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commercial republics and France. Later, there was the complex armed struggle for the littoral of the Baltic Sea. And, finally, there were the armed clashes between Russia and Poland, mainly on the principal basis of the struggle for the territories of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and West Russia.