

State-Arcanum and European Public Spheres: Paradigm Shifts in Muscovite Policy towards Foreign Representations of Russian Revolts

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In the 16th and 17th centuries, public interest in social unrest was steadily growing. Contemporaries perceived revolts increasingly across state borders. The development of newspapers played an important role in the dissemination of such representations. European governments challenged by domestic revolt often tried to influence and, if possible, monopolize revolt representations.¹ These efforts were generally limited to the internal spheres of debate. There seemed to be no point in trying to exert concrete influence on foreign representations. But the internal interpretation of the events was decisive for the definition and adjustment of the relationship between rulers and subjects. We know little about the extent to which the concerned governments saw to international coverage. Probably they cared about their reputation abroad, and this contributed to a certain parallelism of the development and normative shifts in dealing with rebellious subjects. Questions of legitimacy were debated in an international context. Manuals of statecraft and works of political philosophy addressed to a larger reading public and tackled political and ethical problems on a more general scale.²

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- 1 Cf. Andreas Würzler, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit. Städtische und ländliche Protestbewegungen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1995).
 - 2 This did not necessarily mean that violence against subjects was branded as illegitimate. Clemency towards internal rebels could also be regarded as a token of weakness and thus diminish a government's weight in the eyes of its diplomatic or military allies and/or adversaries. It seemed not always compatible with the idea of absolutist rule and a strong sovereign, and consequently it could have a negative impact on a country's position within the larger constellation of powers.

In general, governments could influence foreign interpretations of revolts in their realm only insofar as they adjusted their policies and sometimes tried to conform to more or less universally accepted standards of legitimacy. However, in the case of the Russian Empire we can observe a gradual shift to more particular and increasingly systematic attempts at moulding foreign perceptions. Certainly this is true not only for representations of revolts: the claim to self-representational monopoly also extends to other spheres concerning the image of the Russian government and state. But I argue that the Tsarist government was particularly sensitive to foreign descriptions of revolts in Russia – and of the way it handled them. It was the preoccupation with such descriptions and the rather successful attempt to muzzle foreign coverage that contributed to a dynamical process of estrangement that ran counter to the simultaneous efforts at Europeanization.

A major shift can be observed in the aftermath of the second and last uprising of the strel'tsy (musketeers) in 1698, which ended up in the complete abolition of this particular military (and social) estate of the Muscovite empire.³ Nevertheless, this shift was not an abrupt one. It was preceded by a gradual development of what we could call a particular representational policy, but it was also accompanied – and maybe even triggered – by noteworthy changes in foreign patterns of depicting Russian revolts in general. An isolated snapshot of the echo of the strel'tsy uprising would not be sufficient. The dynamic it engendered has to be put into a long-term perspective, which can be done here only in a very cursory way.

In this article, I will therefore try to tell two stories, which are intimately linked together and at the same time oddly detached from each other. The *first one* is that of foreign representations of Russian revolts: it traces some European perceptions of social unrest and uprisings in Russia and explores the underlying paradigms that shaped the narratives based on the observers' and their (potential) readers' cultural and experiential backgrounds. As the material is abundant, this story can be told in more detail than the *second one* that deals with the Russian government's policy towards these foreign depictions, i.e. with its explicit or implicit reactions to the foreign literary and journalistic treatments of these most delicate issues of Russian domestic politics. Explicit evidence is scarce. These issues of representational policy were rarely raised in written form. Apparently, they were a matter of taboo in Russia. That's why we can often only guess about the motives of the government's

3 The abolition of the strel'tsy helped complete military reform that had been underway since about the 1630s. For the history of military reform in the 17th century see Carol Belkin-Stevens, *Soldiers on the steppe. Army reform and social change in early modern Russia* (DeKalb, 1995), who regards the process as being triggered from the steppe frontier, where besides the Cossacks in the open fields the strel'tsy regiments stuffed the fortresses.

representational policy. Where we can find articulate reference to content, it was expressed in terms of “true” and “false”: foreign authors were accused of lying, but generally it remains vague what exactly was the bone of contention. Of course, there is distortion in these foreigners’ reports, probably much of it involuntary, based on inadequate information and misunderstandings. But the Russian government’s negative reactions are far from being limited to actual deformations of historical facts; and on top of that certain deformations seem to be more than welcome. This vagueness is the reason why the two stories may occasionally appear as detached from each other.

Without excluding other sources my main focus will be on German accounts. The German newspaper-system of the 17th century was the most substantial in terms of diversification, editions, print run and reception.⁴ German papers were highly commercialized and disposed of a whole network of correspondents, among whom one can even find non-German residents or travellers to Russia. Still more important than the overall significance of German-language journalism in early modern Europe is the fact that since at least the first half of the 17th century the Muscovite ambassadorial office (*posol'skii prikaz*) acquired mainly German newspapers and translated relevant parts of them that were read to the Tsar and his diplomatic staff. Many of these readers’ digests (called *kuranty*) have survived.⁵ Muscovite politicians thus used Western (mainly German) newspapers as a source of information on international affairs, but also to learn what foreign powers thought about Russia. This makes German accounts particularly relevant for an enquiry on what we might call the Russian government’s representational policy.

In a *first* part I will present paradigms of the foreign depiction of revolts in Russia and sketch some directions of their development until the end of the 17th century. The material is well exploited: internal sources on Russian revolts are scarce and scholars of social unrest in Muscovy have largely relied on foreign accounts such as diplomatic records, travelogues, leaflets and even newspapers, to reconstruct the course of such events. My focus is a different one. Rather than in the actual events of revolt, I am interested in recurring patterns that allow for conclusions on experiential backgrounds, implicit understandings and interpretative frameworks employed by the eye-witnesses and second-hand disseminators, who were themselves not entirely familiar with Russian culture, and who were writing for an almost ignorant audience. From this angle, stereotypes and distortions are not

4 400 Jahre Zeitung. Die Entwicklung der Tagespresse im internationalen Kontext, ed. Martin Welke (Bremen, 2008).

5 In second place after the German papers were the Dutch ones. All other languages were rather rarely translated. See *Vesti-kuranty*. 1656g., 1660-1662gg., 1664-1670gg., ed. Ingrid Maier and Sergei I. Kotkov (Moskva, 2009).

a problem. On the contrary, they are often even more revealing than descriptions that stick closely to historical facts (although it is often hard to distinguish between myth and reality when the same documents inevitably serve as cornerstones for an allegedly factual reconstruction by historians).⁶

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is probably not a coincidence that it was a German text that caused a scandal: Johann Georg Korb's diary. The author was secretary of an imperial embassy to Moscow (1698/9) and had witnessed the brutal mass repressions staged against the strel'tsy accused of large-scale rebellion upon Peter's I return from his great embassy to the West. The diary was published about two years later (in 1700 or 1701) with emperor Leopold's I privilege. This book, dealing (amongst other aspects) with the strel'tsy uprising of 1698, encountered severest diplomatic reactions in Muscovy and entailed a far-ranging and long-lasting shift in Russian representational policy, which in turn had considerable consequences on subsequent foreign representations of Russian revolts. The conflict, however indirectly, reveals much about the Muscovite government's shifting conceptions of Arcanum and of what was sayable in (different) public realms. In the *second* part of this paper, I therefore analyse Korb's description and interpretations of the strel'tsy revolt and of the ensuing waves of governmental repression. His interpretation is regarded in the light of its continuity with former foreign accounts on earlier Russian revolts rather than in terms of rupture.

In contrast to that, the Russian diplomatic reaction, the pressure the Muscovite government exerted on the imperial court in Vienna to obtain a revocation of the book, and the measures it would undertake with regard to future representations of Russia, reveal, if not complete discontinuity, at least a new quality and intensity of interference into foreign representations of Russia. In the *third* part of this article, I therefore turn to the Russian government's point of view. I try to explore its motives and describe the practical consequences that Russian foreign-policy makers have drawn from the scandal. I will argue that the consequences were not limited to the response to Korb's book and to diplomatic relations with Vienna, but that they were more long-lasting and gave birth to what I would call a new proactive foreign-media policy. The prohibitive impact of this policy can be seen from the representation or rather non-representation of the revolts of the early 18th century, mainly the Astrakhan rebellion and the Bulavin uprising. Here the grip of Russian media policy seems to have already been quite palpable. In the 18th century large-scale revolts became rarer in Russia as well as in the rest of Europe. But the memory and apprehension of such events was still vivid. This might be one reason

6 For a reevaluation of stereotypes in mutual perceptions as a source of cultural history see Gabriele Scheidegger, *Perverses Abendland - barbarisches Russland. Begegnungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im Schatten kultureller Missverständnisse* (Zürich, 1993).

for revolts being increasingly debated as threatening potentials that had to be prevented. At the same time, the interpretation of revolts as a phenomenon of backwardness became more and more prominent. Since at least the 16th century Muscovy had the reputation of a barbarian and savage country. Now a developmental factor was brought into play. This was immediately related to a reevaluation of the monarch in the person of Peter I, who was regarded as the promoter of Enlightenment. This strengthened an interpretation of revolts as a manifestation of backward resistance against progressive projects of reform and civilizational missions, which I deal with in the *fourth* and concluding part.

FOREIGN REPRESENTATIONAL PATTERNS OF MUSCOVITE REVOLTS IN THE 17TH CENTURY

There is no need to emphasize that the 17th century was rich in revolts. This is true for Muscovy as well as for most European countries, and well beyond Europe.⁷ Observers were familiar with manifestations of social unrest and sometimes even engaged in explicit cross-country comparisons. In spite of all regional differences, observers apparently considered the situation in middle and Western European countries to be comparable. Was this also the case for Russia, independently of all exotic (or barbarian) flavour it had for most Europeans? To a large extent the country was still a *terra incognita*. Interestingly, in his voluminous history of civil wars (*guerre civili*), written in the early 1650s and referring to most recent events, the Italian Maiolino Bisaccioni did include chapters on the Ottoman Empire and Poland/Ukraine, but not on Muscovy, although the country was haunted by revolts no less than others at the time.⁸ By contrast, in 1689/90 the Hamburgian Kern-Chronik, an annual journal giving a month-by-month discussion of current events, published an “Appendix concerning the most noteworthy and outstanding revolutions and changes of the state, from 1600-1690, through all kingdoms and estates of the whole world” that includes, after the most familiar European countries, a chapter on Muscovy, then, in order: on Hungary, Persia, India, China, even Japan and on what the editors call a “barbarian revolution” in Morocco.⁹ If the

7 For the discussion of a general crisis of the 17th century see *The general crisis of the seventeenth century*, ed. Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M Smith (London, 1997).

8 Maiolino Bisaccioni, *Historia delle guerre civili di questi vltimi tempi* (Venetia, 1655).

9 Appendix zu dieser Kern-Chronica: Betreffend die fürnehmsten und sonderbahresten Revolutiones oder Staats-Veränderungen dieses itzigen Seculi, von Anno 1600 biß 1690. Durch alle Königreiche und Stände der gantzen Welt. In: *Historischer Kern oder kurtze Chronica Der merckwürdigsten Zeit- und Wunder-Geschichte/ so sich im Jahr 1689 zuge-*

extension to “all” countries indicates a process of representational globalization, but would not necessarily mean an increased familiarity with Russia in particular, it is remarkable that in the succession of the chapters Muscovy figures before Hungary. It shows an increased sense of Russia’s belonging to a European community of states.¹⁰

Most foreigners travelling to, or even permanently living in, Muscovy resided in the capital. Some traders also lived in the Northern commercial centres like Novgorod and Pskov. Their depictions of Muscovite revolts have to be differentiated. Urban riots, such as the town rebellions of 1648-50 were fairly familiar to many of them. So they often qualified the actors of urban unrest as “commoners”, “*die Gemeine*” or “*der Gemeine Mann*”, expressions that establish terminological equivalence with European models. That dwellers of Russian towns were far from enjoying privileges and rights comparable to other European ones was not a problem, and in Western countries, terms like *der gemeine Mann* were not limited to townspeople. The huge uprisings in the periphery were much further away from the foreigners’ mental and cultural universe. These revolts – quite misleadingly labelled as “peasant wars” in Soviet historiography – were generally led by Cossacks, a social stratum (or even estate) that did not correspond to Western standards.¹¹ The Cossack revolts were also far away in a literal sense. Whereas foreigners often became immediate eyewitnesses of the town rebellions they wrote about, this was hardly ever the case for the rebellions in the periphery.¹² This naturally had an impact on their judgment. They mainly had to rely on government information and propaganda. Often their personal contacts were quite limited to representatives of the Muscovite elites, so that they had little access to rumours circulating among the “commoners”. This resulted in relatively gloomy portraits of the actors, who were often depicted as scoundrels or traitors, conforming to their indiscriminating qualification as *vory* [criminals or traitors] by Russian authorities.

tragen. Mit den vornehmsten Conterfaiten der itzo im Krieg befindlichen Potentaten/ und sonst vielen Abrissen der merckwürdigsten Belagerungen. (Hamburg, 1690).

- 10 Such synopses have apparently been written by authors who had not visited Russia and compiled their information from the accounts in regular newspapers and from travelogues written by eye-witnesses.
- 11 This was true for Ukraine as well and it would thus be interesting to compare Western Europeans’ perceptions of Russia and Ukraine.
- 12 A notable exception is Fabritius for the Razin uprising. See Arkadii G. Man’kov (ed), *Zapiski inostrantsev o vosstanii Stepana [Timofeevicha] Razina* (Leningrad, 1968): 14-83, 132-156 (German original with Russian translation).

In contrast to this negative pattern, in descriptions of town rebellions such as those of 1648, 1662 and partly even 1682, many foreigners tried to go beyond the one-sided interpretational schemes offered by proclamations of the authorities. They asked for the reasons for the insurgency, described the misery of the people and did not even refrain from explaining the observed resistance as more or less legitimate, because it was directed against the ubiquitous abuse of power and systematic embezzlement practiced by high-ranking government officials at the public expense.¹³ Even more so, in such narratives the corrupt behaviour of government officials is often contrasted with the actions of the insurgents, who are depicted as explicitly avoiding selfish behaviour in their own ranks. Looting was a matter of revenge, not of robbery. Luxury items pillaged from the detested targets of violence were ostentatiously destroyed, not stolen. Much emphasis was put on just and impartial distribution of goods or money according to actual or imagined rights or privileges and, of course, on the constant appeal to the Tsar, who was at rare critical moments even obliged to engage into direct negotiations with the insurgents. Lawful conduct was of paramount importance for the protestors, and those who violated their basic ideas of justice were often tried and severely punished, especially if they came from the insurgents' ranks or pretended to do so.¹⁴ To be sure, foreigners did not explicitly justify the insurgents' violence – and revolts in Russia tended to be much more violent than in Western Europe, where the subjects had more legal channels at their disposition. But they manifested understanding. This understanding and relative sympathy towards the urban insurgents is even more noteworthy, as foreigners had often become themselves targets of revolt. What historians often attribute to people's ingrained xenophobia was not necessarily seen as such by the foreigners immediately concerned. In contrast, many of them were well aware of their trading privileges that put Russian urban dwellers at a disadvantage. For instance, the Swedish ambassador Pommerening, whose residence burnt down completely in the Moscow uprising of 1648, even asserted in his account to Queen Christina that it was not the insurgents, but the people of the Tsar's odious favourite Morozov, who put fire to almost the

13 This was the way how foreigners painted officials such as Pleshcheev, Trakhaniotov Morozov in 1648, or the strel'tsy officers like Griboedov and others in 1682.

14 This aspect is also emphasized in a recent study on revolts in Russia, *Volksaufstände in Rußland. Von der Zeit der Wirren bis zur "Grünen Revolution" gegen die Sowjetherrschaft*, ed. Heinz-Dietrich Löwe (Wiesbaden, 2006). The evaluation is largely based on foreigners' accounts, particularly for the town uprisings. However, this foreign perspective is not reflected as such here.

whole town because their master hoped to take advantage of the chaos to better escape from the people's anger.¹⁵

For the mighty revolts on the periphery, the picture is different. Foreigners, who had rarely seen the insurgents with their own eyes, describe them as bad characters with basically evil intentions, devoid of any sense of justice and order. But still another explicative pattern is noteworthy: the emphasis on the multinational character of the Empire. Incontestably, Russian revolts in the periphery enjoyed significant support from many non-Russian peoples, both peasants and nomads, whose territories had been more or less recently incorporated into the Muscovite state. Especially at the beginning of Russian rule, these movements were often separatist and seemed to aim for a *status quo ante* of independence, but more often they fought for inherited (or imagined as such) privileges under the Tsar's rule,¹⁶ similar to the claims of their Cossacks allies. The multinational dimension became an increasingly important motive in many accounts of revolts by foreigners. This is apparently due to a particular European interest in this dimension. Several factors seem to be important:

- 1) Many, but by far not all, of these non-Russians were Muslims: Tartars, Bashkirs, Kalmyks, etc.), and their participation in Muscovite revolts was somehow related by some to European aspirations to win Muscovite support for the struggle against the Ottoman Empire.
- 2) Especially in newspapers we can observe an increasing sensibility to the idea of "nations". The term had not yet acquired our modern-day all-inclusive meaning and the non-Russian ethnic groups of the Muscovite empire could certainly not be equated to what German-speaking contemporaries dubbed "Nationen".¹⁷ But observers of Russia seemed to draw at least parallels.
- 3) The multinational dimension inspired some Europeans' imagination and attracted their taste for exotic flavour. Perhaps except for the Tartars, heirs of

15 Report to Queen Christine, June 6, 1648. In: Gorodskie vosstaniia v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVII v. Sbornik dokumentov, ed. K. V. Bazilevich (Moskva, 2003): 36-39.

16 For a very instructive overview of the non-Russian nationalities of the Middle Volga, including their insurgent activity from the 16th to the 18th century cf. Andreas Kappeler, Russlands erste Nationalitäten. Das Zarenreich und die Völker der mittleren Wolga vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert (Köln, 1982). For the nomad Bashkirs of the Ural region, who were much later incorporated into the Russian Empire, cf. Irek G. Akmanov, Bashkirskie vosstaniia (Ufa, 1993).

17 On the emergence of the idea of nationhood in late Middle ages and early modern times see Caspar Hirschi, Wettkampf der Nationen. Konstruktionen einer deutschen Ehrge-meinschaft an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit (Göttingen, 2005).

the Mongols that had once terrified Europe, these people were almost unknown to Europeans. They seemed so radically different – much more than the Russians who were at least Christians –, that their ethnonyms alone opened fertile grounds for the imaginary, for spine-chilling stories as well as for more benign associations.

During the enormous revolts stirred up from the Cossack periphery – those of the Time of Troubles (1604-1615) and those relating to the Razin uprising (1667-1671) – the non-Russian peoples incontestably played an important role. Abroad, one was well aware of Muscovite expansion and the increasingly multinational character of the emerging empire. Corresponding to the significance of the event, the narrative of the conquest of Kazan' and Astrakhan figured prominently in the historical narratives of most Western travellers' accounts. But they did not necessarily give attention to the multinational dimension of revolts. Numerous observers, for instance, hardly took note of the insurgent activity of the non-Russian peoples of the Middle-Volga region during the Time of Troubles.¹⁸ These commotions in the periphery were completely overshadowed by the events in the centre, where the False Dmitriis and their numerous supporters aimed for the Kremlin. Foreign interference, particularly open Polish and Swedish intervention and their sovereigns' claims to the Muscovite throne, were deemed much more important, especially from a Western point of view. And, interestingly, the neglect of the non-Russian periphery in Western accounts like Margeret's and Petreius', published shortly after the events, was often perpetuated in Russian chronicles composed from the 1630 on.¹⁹

18 The Dutch merchant Isaac Massa (1586-1643) is an exception. See Isaac Massa, *Kratkoe izvestie o Moskovii v nachale XVII v.* (Moskva, 1936). But whereas he relates at length the history of the conquest of the Khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan under Ivan IV. (in the early 1550s), he only cursorily mentions joint actions of the “Nogais, Chermis Tartars together with the Mordvins” in the Time of troubles, during which he was in Moscow almost until the end of Vasilii Shuiskii's reign. Massa was well informed about the multi-ethnic dimension of the emerging Russian empire. He managed to publish two articles on Siberia at his lifetime, whereas his major account on the Smuta remained unpublished and would only be edited in the 19th century. I thank Andreas Kappeler for drawing my attention to Massa's reference to the events in the Middle-Volga-region.

19 Only the *Novyi letopisets* mentions for 1606/07 that “Mordvins, apiculturists, Boyar kholopy and peasants” and for 1608-11 that “people from downstream, Mordvins and Cheremisy” besieged Nizhnii Novgorod. Then it mentions the clerk Nikanor Shul'gin in Kazan', who refused to participate in the Opolchenie (the people's volunteer militia set out to liberate Moscow from the Poles) and then (in 1613) to kiss the cross for the new

In contrast to the events of the Time of Troubles the Razin rebellion (1667-1671) did not have a real international dimension – except for Razin’s Persian campaign and for the participation of some Zaporozhian Cossacks. But the growing dissemination of newspapers throughout Europe already made it a media-event and, as the contemporary Justus Martius’ put it in his doctoral dissertation in 1674: “the whole Europe lived for some time in anxious expectation of its outcome”.²⁰ An Ottoman dimension was pitched high by foreign observers. The *Northern Mercurius*, a newspaper published in Hamburg that obtained information on Muscovy via Riga, emphasized the significance of the Tartars, who are even mentioned in the first place, before the Don-Cossacks, as the instigators of the revolt.²¹ Furthermore, the correspondent suggests a strong implication of the Ottoman Empire. He calls Razin “Prince Stephan Razin Ottoman” and presents him either as an ally, or as an instrument of the Sultan. As to the Tartars, this connection seems self-evident to him. In many German accounts “the Tartars” make their appearance as odious brutes raping government officials’ wives and daughters after their husbands were executed by Razin. This “big tyrant”²² would have been particularly fond of having these wives bound naked on horseback to hand them over to the Kalmyks “who are the ugliest among the Tartars”.²³

Tsar Mikhail Romanov. According to the chronicle he tried to rally the people of Kazan' and then of Arzamas, because he wanted to rule in Kazan'. The chronicler suggests that these attempts were rather unsuccessful. *Khroniki smutnogo vremeni*. Bussov, Konrad; Elassonskii, Arsenii; Gerkman, Elias, ed. A. Liberman (Moskva 1998): 312, 328, 366, 369, 378, 381.

- 20 “[...] domi periculum adiit, nec unquam major calamitas fuit, quam cum auctore Stephano Răzino turbae motusque existerent (g): nam iis non modo Moscovia metu percussa, sed etiam tota Europa expectatione futuri eventus aliquandiu suspensa fuit.” *Zapiski inostrantsev o vosstanii Stepana Razina*, 39.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 92-96. At the beginning, in a correspondence dating from August 20, 1670, published Sept. 6, the fall of Astrakhan is even exclusively attributed to a Tartar rebellion. 100.000 Tartars were said have conquered the town, the Cossacks and Razin are not even mentioned.
- 22 The term indicates that Razin is recognized as a sovereign, although a bad one who abuses his power.
- 23 *Relationis historicae semestralis autumnalis continuatio*. *Historische Beschreibung der denckwurdigsten Geschichten, so sich [...] vor und zwischen jüngst verflrossenen Franckfurter Fasten biß an und in die Herbst-Meß dieses lauffenden 1671. Jahrs [...] zugetragen*. Franckfurt-am-Mayn, 1671. In *ibid.*, p.98-99. It is conspicuous that in English accounts Razin gives the wives simply to “his soldiers” for rape. “A Relation concerning the Particulars of the Rebellion raised in Muscovy by Stenka Razin. Its Rise, Progress, and Stop:

Although Razin allegedly aimed for Moscow and the Kremlin, the main message of the accounts from Riga focuses on his activity in the south-eastern periphery, especially on the non-Russian territories around the former Khanats of Astrakhan and Kazan'. The most imminent threat to the Muscovite state, they said, was thus to be thrown back to its territorial status of 1554, i.e. to the time before the annexation of Astrakhan and probably even Kazan' (1552). This would entail the loss of Siberia and its rich natural resources. Access to Siberia would be barred by something comparable to a new important Ottoman outpost ranging from the Khanat of the Crimean Tartars through the southern Russian steppe far into the black-earth agricultural region of the Middle-Volga.²⁴ In the same light, another German account from Frankfurt (Main) asserts that Razin had negotiated with the Muscovite crown and presented a whole catalogue of claims, among them to be recognized as king of Kazan' and Astrakhan.²⁵ In fact, such negotiations had never taken place. Razin probably had offered his services to the Persian Shah in the first phase of his campaign (1667-1669). But he did not seek an alliance with the Sublime Porte or the Crimean Tartars – nor were the non-Russian participants of his movement. This “misinterpretation” figures mainly in the accounts originating from the Holy Roman Empire that was actively seeking for the inclusion of Muscovy into a Christian military alliance against the Turks.

And these newspaper accounts made their way (back) to Moscow. They were translated for the foreign office and read to the Tsar. Of course, Moscow was shocked by the Razin revolt. But the German interpretations in terms of cooperation between Cossacks and non-Russian nationalities under Muscovite rule with the Sultan might have had a particular impact on the Tsar. And Russian foreign policy indeed underwent a radical turn after A.L. Ordin-Nashchokin's dismissal from the foreign department (1671). Whereas this latter's ultimate priority had been prevalent against Sweden in the Baltic Sea, his successor A.A. Matveev abandoned North-Western aspirations to finally put into practice the anti-Turkish alliance that

together with the manner of taking that Rebel, the Sentence of Death passed upon him, and the Execution of the same.” See: *Ibid.*, 91-106, 96.

24 The correspondents do not hint at the Ural population, mainly nomadic Bashkirs, Muslims like the Tartars, whose resistance to Muscovite rule was ferocious throughout the 17th (and still during parts of the 18th Century). It is true that their territory was hardly touched by the Razin uprising, but they had initiated a big and long-lasting revolt only some six years earlier (1662-64), it would have been easy to include them into this supposed Turk-inspired campaign of conquest. But apparently the Bashkirs were still completely out of sight for European observers. On the Bashkir revolts see Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstaniia*.

25 *Relationis historicae... Zapiski inostrantsev o vosstanii Stepana Razina*, 99.

the middle-European powers had desired for such a long time. Of course it would be exaggerated to attribute the fundamental shift exclusively to the foreign representation that related the Razin revolt to the Ottoman Empire, but it apparently did play a certain role.

We can also find emphases on the actions of non-Russian peoples in foreign accounts of the strel'tsy revolt in 1682, which was so entangled with the fight of the different court factions for the succession to the throne after Fedor Alekseevich's death in April 1682, that the spectre of a second Time of Troubles (*Smuta*) began to haunt Moscow. This revolt, during which the strel'tsy temporarily took hold of the Kremlin and killed many high-ranking boyars on May 15-17, 1682, was in fact an urban uprising and it took place in the capital. There was no link to a simultaneous Bashkir uprising against Russian rule and colonisation in the Ural region, which had been going on since 1681. References to the Bashkirs can be found in a letter to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland Cardinal Cybo. The representative of the Curia was well informed, as he attributed the rebellion to the attempts under Tsar Fedor Alekseevich to convert the Muslim Bashkirs to Christianity.²⁶ In contrast to earlier guarantees to respect the religion of the non-Orthodox, the Tsarist government had started in 1680-81 to foster Christianization. It resorted to draconian measures, such as the confiscation of the land of non-Russian nobles who refused to convert. As a corollary, their peasants' were enserfed. The new policies aimed mainly at the sedentary peoples of the Middle Volga (Muslim and pagan), but the nomad Bashkirs were well aware of what was happening to their Muslim neighbours: they reacted with alarm and violent revolt, when in November 1681 the decision was taken to establish a new eparchy in Ufa, which heralded a new intensity of Orthodox encroachments upon the nomadic Muslims' religious self-determination.²⁷

Naturally, the Curia was particularly sensitive to religious matters in Russia. Given Moscow's reluctant opening towards Western influence, the Vatican did not abandon hopes to win over the country to the Roman Catholic Church. It was certainly an attractive idea (and illusion) to overcome the schism with what had been the most important branch of Eastern Christianity since the fall of Constantinople. But apart from that, in an age of reformation and counter-reformation and after the devastations of the Thirty Years' War, religious conflict was a major explanation for the era's violent social conflicts in general. Therefore it is all the more astonishing that the foreign observers, including the Vatican,

26 Letter dated 21 October 1682. In: *Monuments historiques relatifs aux règnes d'Alexis Michaélowitch, Féodor III et Pierre le Grand czars de Russie*. Extraits des archives du Vatican et de Naples, ed. Augustin Theiner (Rome, 1859): 238.

27 Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstanija*, 83-85.

completely neglected the intra-Orthodox conflict that fuelled the uprising, especially in its later phase. They did not even mention the rebel leader Khovanskii's attempt to rehabilitate Old Belief.²⁸ This apparently had to do with their profound misunderstanding of what Nikon's church reforms and the Old Believers' resistance to them really meant for Russian Orthodoxy. Certainly the continuation of the reforms and the simultaneous dismissal of the Patriarch (1666) had contributed to this confusion. (The reason for his destitution was not liturgical reform but dissension about the primacy of worldly or ecclesiastic power, a dissension that was never fully acknowledged).²⁹

Whereas the representatives of the Vatican were quite accurate in making a clear distinction between the events in Moscow and what happened in the Ural and Volga regions, it is again the Kern-Chronik published in Hamburg that relates the strel'tsy's movement to both the Bashkir uprising and the first Russo-Turkish war that had in fact already been brought to an end in the truce of Bahçesaray in 1681:

In Moscow things looked quite badly. Some restless people abused the musketeers' uprising to arm themselves and to fish in troubled waters. The Turks and the Tartars took hold of many islands in the black sea and in the Dnepr, to the great harm of the Cossacks, as the rightful masters of these. The Bashkir Tartars who are subjected to the crown of Moscow, rebelled and went into battle with a huge force, in order to relieve themselves of the Muscovite yoke; a militia was sent to steer this rebellious people, and [the Bashkirs] were defeated twice, but thereupon they [the Bashkirs] withdrew to their neighbours, the Kalmyk Tartars, whose king, himself on horseback, and with considerable auxiliary troops, came to the assistance of the Bashkirs, so that they gathered an army of 50.000 men, and went directly for the main town Kazan.³⁰

Indeed, Bashkirs and Kalmyks, both Muslim nomads, were acting in concert. The Kalmyks in the Southern steppe beyond the Jaik, were not yet subjected to Muscovite rule, but their raids for booty onto the adjacent Muscovite territories were a quite common practice. But sedentary non-Russians also joined the Bashkirs, which, in this case, consisted mainly of the indigenous peoples of the Middle Volga region, namely Tartars and Mari (Cheremisy), who could still profit

28 Ivan Khovanskii was a high-ranking boyar, who took sides with the insurgents. The uprising lead to his promotion to the top of the streletskii prikaz (musketeer's office) and he became the most popular leader of the rebellious strel'tsy. For this reason the revolt is often called Khovanshchina – also in Musorgskii's famous opera (1883).

29 Foreigners' perceptions of Nikon's church reforms and Old Belief have been examined by Aleksandr Lavrov's in his presentation at the workshop this volume is based on.

30 Kern-Chronik (August 1682): 90-91.

from their former revolt-experience during the Razin uprising. It was not least due to the chaos in the capital that the regional authorities were not able to cope with the situation. The auxiliary forces they demanded from Moscow did not come and they were forced to employ a mixed strategy of stick and carrot: as usual the Don and Jaik Cossacks were mobilized to fight against the Kalmyks, and at the same time regional officials in Ufa and Kazan' tried to persuade the Bashkirs to surrender voluntarily and thus be sure of the Tsar's grace and the guarantee of their privileges. But the Bashkirs remained suspicious. Previous experience had shown them that it might be naïve to rely on Moscow's promises. In its Bashkir epicentre the revolt thus continued until 1684. The emphasis on conflicts with the Turks and the Crimean Tartars in the Black sea area and on the territories of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and the implicit assumption that all these Muslim activities must be related, have to be ascribed to the apprehension that after the first Turkish war the Russians had again made their peace with the Ottoman Empire. Invoking and exaggerating the Turkish danger and relating it to multi-national and internal revolts imbued with religious conflict, was time and again an attempt to win over Moscow for a crusade alliance against the Sublime Porte (and in 1686, with Moscow joining the Holy League, this seems to have been successful).

Of course, most attention was attracted to the events in the capital. Here, foreigners were on the scene. And here the dynastic succession itself was at stake. All accounts connect the strel'tsy's insurrection against their superiors to the power void that was due to the fact that after Tsar Fedor's death on April 27, 1682, his two potential successors were minors and would be unfit for rule at least for a few years. Ivan was 16 and mentally insane; his half-brother Peter was only ten. This opposed the family clans of their respective mothers: the Miloslavskiis for Ivan and the Naryshkins for Peter.³¹ The final decision to crown both, which was taken in the heat of the strel'tsy revolt, was at least a temporary victory for the Miloslavskiis with Ivan's sister Sofiia emerging as the new regent. Subsequent Russian memoir literature under Peter I (after his accession to power in 1689) cited Sofiia as instigator of the strel'tsy's murderous enterprise, a view that has often been reproduced in historiography. But in contrast to that, the foreigners did not demonize Sofiia and regarded the outbreak of the strel'tsy uprising as largely independent from the factional struggle within the high nobility. According to the established narrative of the town revolt, they recognized the strel'tsy's claims as

31 And indeed, the revolt broke out only a few days after Fedor's death. The question of succession was disputed; and the highest nobility was divided between the elder but insane Ivan and the younger but healthy Peter. The final decision to crown the two of them was a novelty in Russian and European history. Their sister Sofiia was victorious: she managed to get the regency.

legitimate: the commanders had misappropriated the pay for the troop and had forced their subordinates to work on their private estates. Tsar Fedor's initiatives to redress these abuses had been cut short by his death. His death thus triggered two parallel but separate phenomena: the boyars' fight for succession and influence, and the strel'tsy's protest against their superiors' abuses, against their regime of egoism and narrow self-interest.³²

Foreign accounts often depicted this arena of court-struggle in terms of conspiracy and palace revolution, at the time a common master narrative for denouncing revolts, especially in England, where regicide had a certain tradition. However, in the overall-framework of this narrative the *London Gazette*, which turned out to be relatively uninformed in those days, drops a keyword that will become increasingly important during the following years:

Our Letters from Moscow give the following account: That the late Czar Alexis [sic! in reality Tsar Fedor is meant] who Married with a Polish Lady, having by her means taken a great Affection to the manners and customs of this Nation, and designed to introduce them among his own Subjects, the more *to civilize them*, had thereby raised a great hatred in the Boyars, and other great Men against him, who resolved to Poyson him and his Queen, and effected it by the means of a Jew.³³

The regicide attributed to "a Jew" is not so astonishing here, as anti-Judaism was widespread all over Europe: during the chaotic May days the strel'tsy indeed made a chase on foreign (including Jewish) physicians who were suspected of having

32 See the accounts and correspondences of the Danish commercial agent Heinrich Butenant in Petr N. Krekšin, *Peters des Grossen Jugendjahre. "Kurze Beschreibung der gesegneten Taten des grossen Gosudars, des Kaisers Peters des Grossen, Selbstherrschers von ganz Russland"* ; nebst einem Anhang aus zeitgenössischen Stimmen, nämlich Heinrich Butenant, Patrick Gordon und Otto Pleyer, zu den geschilderten Ereignissen (Stuttgart 1989), of the Danish diplomat Hildebrandt van Horn, Hildebrandt von Horn, "Doneseniia koroliu Dani. Moskovskoe vosstanie 682g. glazami datskogo posla", *Voprosy istorii* 1986, no.3 and of the Dutch resident van Keller in M. I. Belov, "Pis'ma Ioanna fan Kellera v sobranii niderlandskich dokumentov", in *Issledovaniia po otechestvennomu istochnikovedeniiu. Sbornik statei posviashennyi 75 letiiu S.N.Valka* (Moskva, Leningrad, 1964), 374-383. Cf. also Aleksandr S. Lavrov, "Politicheskaya bor'ba v Rossii 1680-kh godov v doneseniiakh Khil'debrandta fon Gorna. (istochnikovedcheskie zametki)", *Vestnik S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta Serii 2 (istoriia)* 16, 3 (1999).

33 *London Gazette*, Monday August 14 to Thursday 17, 1682, headed: Warsaw, July 25.

provided the boyars with poison to murder the Tsar.³⁴ It is rather remarkable that “the Boyars” are globally identified as the culprits, which even adds to the legitimacy of the strel'tsy's preoccupation with settling accounts with the “traitors”. According to this narrative, the boyars wanted to get rid of the Tsar – for a noteworthy reason: they opposed his Westernization policies. But the spectre of Westernization is not connected here to religion and to fears of Western attempts to introduce Catholicism³⁵ as it was the case in earlier foreign accounts of the Time of troubles: Here the issue is the goal of “civilizing” Russia and Russian subjects, including the boyars themselves. This aspiration is mainly ascribed to Fedor's first Polish wife, Agaf'ja Grushetskaya, who was indeed the first Tsaritsa to appear in public at all, even in Western clothes. And, with the Tsar's approval, she was the first to summon the boyars to cut their beards, a measure of Westernization that would be taken up in a ruder and more coercive way by Peter I after his return from the first great Embassy to Western Europe in 1698.³⁶

The discourse about recalcitrant, backward subjects roused up by a modernizing and civilizing Tsar, would become prevalent in the following years under the impact of early Enlightenment. This changed the face of revolts in foreign representations. More and more foreign accounts depicted revolts as manifestations of backward resistance to the civilizing efforts of a centralizing state.

The leading circles in Russia seemed to be aware of an ever increasing European interest in the exotic “tribes” and “backward” ethnic groups of the Empire. Apparently they also tried to exploit such Western curiosity, which can be seen from a strange news item in the kuranty (the translations from Western newspapers for the Tsar and his diplomatic staff) from the same troubled period of 1682. It purports a revolt of the Siberian “Irgen' tribe”. These “savages” would have rebelled “for the sake of the sable fur” (apparently questions of hunting rights, trading privileges, tributes, taxes, etc.). Stepan Shamin, who has discovered this item in a dossier of kuranty dated 1st May, assumes that the report had been launched by Yazykov, a supporter of the Naryshkin clan, who tried to use Western newspaper coverage (real or fake) as an instrument in the factional struggle. The report says that “the important Man, Sir Kholopov, was sent to the Enisei with troops, in order to extinguish the fire” of the rebellion. Apparently Yazykov wanted

34 A vivid account of that is supplied by Heinrich Butenant, who was suspected to shelter a physician, because he was his neighbour and friend. See Wahrhaftige Relation der traurigen undt Schrecklichen Tragedy hier in der Stadt Moscau furgefallen auff Montag, Dienstag undt Mitwochen, den 15, 16 undt 17 May jetzigen 1682-ten Jahres. In: Krekšĭn, Peters des Grossen Jugendjahre, 160–76.

35 Here the whole question of Old Belief is again completely ignored. See above.

36 Hans-Joachim Torke, Die russischen Zaren. 1547 - 1917 (München, 1995): 137.

to get a rival out of the way. According to a later complaint by Kholopov, it was on Yazykov's initiative that Tsar Fedor had assigned to him this Siberian mission. But after Fedor's death the order had fallen into oblivion. Therefore Yazykov tried to remind Fedor's successor(s) of the decision *through foreign newspapers*, i.e. through publicity in the West. Once the message was printed in Western newspapers, he could be sure that it would soon figure in the *kuranty*, since virtually any message relating to Russia was translated. It was more difficult *to persuade Western correspondents* of the relevance of Kholopov's nomination into the Trans-Baikal region. Why should it be of any interest to Western readers? Why should a newspaper print such a message? Here the combination of wild tribes of the Far East with the issue of revolt was suitable bait.³⁷

We don't know exactly whether this revolt of the Irgen' tribe in the Trans-Baikal region had really taken place or if it was made up as a news item. But be that as it may, the case highlights a conscious gamble with the Europeans' attention to the multi-ethnic dimension of the Muscovite Empire.³⁸ The news item corresponded to an emerging paradigm in foreign accounts that ascribed a close relationship between backwardness and revolts. Backwardness was seen particularly in the exotic tribes of the Russian Wild East that seemed to prompt European fantasies in a similar way to perceptions of the various peoples in the overseas colonial world.³⁹

JOHANN GEORG KORB'S DIARY AND THE SECOND REVOLT OF THE STREL'TSY, 1698

When the second strel'tsy revolt took place (in June 1689) and Emperor Leopold's delegation under F.A. v. Guarient und RääI sojourned in Moscow (from April 1698 to July 1699), Peter's reign was consolidated. Nine years earlier he had taken over the regency from his half-sister Sofiia – after she had waged a complot against

37 S.M. Shamin, "Kuranty kak istochnik po istorii Moskovskogo vosstaniia 1682 g.", in *Problemy istochnikovedeniia*, ed. S. M. Kashtanov (Moskva, in press).

38 Ibid. finds the case particularly noteworthy, because in his eyes this information on the far-away Siberian ethnic groups had not been of any interest for European readers – this in order to emphasize the aspect of instrumentalization. But in fact, if this was true, the message would have hardly been published. In my view, the occurrence indicates to what degree the ethnographical interest had increased and how Russian elite members were sufficiently aware of this European trend to be able to make use of it.

39 The topos of (European) civilization as opposed to Asiatic barbarism can be found in many foreigners' accounts on Russia. See for instance Jenkin's account who outlined the struggle of civilization with the Timurian Mongol barbaric heritage.

him.⁴⁰ His nominal co-regent and half-brother Ivan V was dead (since 1696), and so was his mother (since 1694), who had influenced his government in the first years of his reign. Peter was on his first journey abroad (“incognito”) to study the European navies. He only returned after the message of the strel’tsy’s mutiny had reached him in Vienna. This came when he had realized during negotiations with Leopold I. that his plans to activate the Holy League for his struggle against the Crimean Tartars and the Ottoman Empire were thwarted.⁴¹

The strel’tsy’s revolt of 1698 was a far-ranging event, not so much because of the size and amplitude of the uprising itself, but because of its aftermath: the complete abolition of the old Muscovite military estate that helped to accomplish the army reform initiated under the first Romanov Tsar, as well as the diplomatic scandal caused by the publication of the diary that Johann Georg Korb, the imperial delegation’s secretary, had held during the stay in Moscow and that I will analyze in what follows. The artistic echo of the uprising is considerable, partly because it became intimately interwoven with Peter’s legendary cutting of his boyars’ beards and the introduction of Western garments at court: a symbol of Peter’s break with Old-Moscow.⁴² Apparently, the mutiny itself was relatively small-scale in comparison to the following requital. Recently historians have even doubted

40 On the confrontation between the regent Sofia and her half-brother Peter in 1689 and the alleged conspiracy see Lindsey Hughes, *Sophia, Regent of Russia. 1657-1704* (New Haven, 1990): 221-241; Aleksandr S. Lavrov, *Regentstvo tsarevny Sofi Alekseevny. Sluzhiloe obshchestvo i bor’ba za vlast’ v verkhach Russkogo gosudarstva v 1682-1689gg.* (Moskva, 1999): 157-190.

41 *Handbuch der Geschichte Rußlands, Band 2 Vom Randstaat zur Hegemonialmacht, 1613-1856*, ed. Manfred Hellmann and Gottfried Schramm (Stuttgart 1986), 243-244. The Reich was absorbed by the controversy over the Spanish succession. This was an inversion of the situation earlier in the 17th century, when the Reich tried unsuccessfully to win Russia for an anti-Ottoman coalition. The Reich’s refusal to engage in a common war against the Turks would contribute to Peter’s I reorientation towards the North, to his concentration on the access to the ice-free Baltic Sea, by which he picked up the thread of A.L. Ordin-Nashchokin’s foreign policy of the 1660. This would lead to the Great Northern War (1700-1721).

42 Cf. for instance Albert Lortzing’s popular opera “Tsar and carpenter”, first performed in 1837 in Leipzig. The break with Old-Moscow is the central motive in Olaf Brockmann, “Der Bruch Peters mit Alt-Moskau. Korbs Diarium und Diplomatenberichte aus Moskau zu den Ereignissen der Jahre 1698 und 1699”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 38, 4 (1990): 481-503, who interprets Korb’s diary in this light.

whether it merited the appellation of a revolt at all.⁴³ Four strel'tsy regiments had been directly transferred from Azov to the Polish-Lithuanian border, where they had to serve as guards under extremely miserable conditions. The situation still aggravated as a consequence of crop failure and delayed in kind wages. In spring 1698 they thus sent some 175 representatives to Moscow. There Peter had established a temporary boyar government for the time of his absence. Suspicious of the strel'tsy, he had instructed this government to keep the regiments at any rate away from Moscow.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the government reacted with nervousness, but in the end it satisfied the strel'tsy's claims and they returned to their garrisons at the border.⁴⁵

Only when Peter branded the boyars' softness in a letter from abroad and ordered a transfer of the regiments to other garrisons and exemplary punishments of the "deserters", the boyar government revised its former measures and put Peter's orders into practice. The strel'tsy refused to hand over the "deserters", but they set off to their new garrisons. Only on the way they apparently decided to take in Moscow along the way to visit their wives and families whom they had not seen for more than 18 months. – Home leave had already been a major request of their preceding petition. When their commanders refused, the strel'tsy deposed them and elected new ones. Now the boyar government set out an army detachment against them. The encounter took place at the New Jerusalem Monastery, some 60 km to the North-West from Moscow. Patrick Gordon, Peter's Scottish favourite, was among the military commanders and led the negotiations with the strel'tsy. He described the events in his diary (that remained unpublished at the time): The strel'tsy handed over a petition in which they asked for a permission to come to Moscow in order to "visit their houses, wives and children" and "to petition for their necessities".⁴⁶ When this was not granted they persisted. After further unsuccessful negotiations, the government forces opened fire; the mutineers were

43 On the course of the events cf. Alexander Moutchnik, "Der 'Strelitzen-Aufstand' von 1698", in *Volksaufstände in Rußland*, 197-222; Sarah Schiffmann, *Aufbruch der Strelitzen im Jahre 1698. Ursachen, Verlauf, Unterdrückung, Folgen* (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1932); Brockmann, *Der Bruch Peters mit Alt-Moskau*.

44 In 1697 there had been a conspiracy, into which some strel'tsy were accused to be involved. On the 1697 Tsykler affair see Hughes, Sophia, *Regent of Russia*, 248-249.

45 For a detailed historiographical account see Moutchnik, *Der "Strelitzen-Aufstand" von 1698*.

46 *Tagebuch des Generals Patrick Gordon, während seiner Kriegsdienste unter den Schweden und Polen vom Jahre 1655 bis 1661 und seines Aufenthaltes in Rußland vom Jahre 1661 bis 1699*, ed. M. A. Obolenski and Moritz Conrad Posselt (Leizig, 1853): 195. The entry refers to June 17.

apparently reluctant to launch an offensive, and it came to a very short skirmish, in which they were rapidly defeated. Requitel and investigation followed immediately.⁴⁷ But only in autumn, when Peter hastily returned to Moscow from Vienna and took the investigations into his own hands, was the decisive link to Sofiia as instigator of the “conspiracy” finally “established”: allegedly she had summoned the strel'tsy to the capital in order to be restored to the throne.

Peter did not conceal his massive application of torture: the innumerable executions were staged publicly and apparently foreign ambassadors, including the members of the imperial delegation, were even invited to assist. That's why Korb could give an eye-witness account of the punishments. Although the requital seemed particularly ferocious, neither torture, nor the publicity of repression was much at odds with contemporary “European standards”.⁴⁸ Although he did not spare the lurid details of Peter's crackdown on the strel'tsy, Korb therefore did not expect to provoke a scandal with the publication of his diary. And he had some reason not to expect such a ferocious reaction. His diary appeared only at the end of 1700 or in 1701, although previously, in 1698 and 1699, right after the events, several reports on the executions had been published in German newspapers and journals. These reports astonishingly resembled Korb's later diary-publication and maybe even stemmed from his quill.⁴⁹ As in the diary, cruel details were not withheld. For example, the accounts described at great length how imperial Ambassador Guarient was invited to the Kremlin for three consecutive dinners: the opulent meals were accompanied by executions. According to one report of the *Kern Chronik*, 1.300 persons were beheaded on the first day, 700 on the second, and on the third day, the hangman cut off noses and ears of 400 more insurgents who were then exiled to forced labour in Siberia, all this in presence of the Tsar and the ambassador who were virtually at table.

The Tsar ordered a considerable number of the rebels to be hanged on girders that were fixed in the embrasures in the city wall. Many of them got a brand on their cheeks and many of them were sent to Siberia into eternal misery. The Tsar's blood brother and many boyars had their hands sawed off or had to suffer other humiliations.⁵⁰

47 This account is based on *Ibid.*, 192ff.

48 On repression standards cf. Karl Härter's contribution to this volume.

49 I am grateful to Martin Welke for having drawn attention to this circumstance and for having shared his source-findings with me.

50 Die gestraffte Revolten, *Kern-Chronik* (November 1698). “Ein groß Theil der Rebellen ließ der Czaar an Balcken hengen/ welche er rings der Stadt-Mauer aus denen Schieß-Löchern stecken lassen. Viele wurden auff denen Backen gebrandmahlet/ und eine große

Interestingly enough, these reports *did not cause any scandal* in Russia.

But they were widely read abroad. Leibniz, for instance, an avid reader of newspapers and journals, had already manifested a particular interest in Russia. Already in 1698 he commented on the repressions of the *strel'tsy* in a letter to his Swedish correspondent: "One could imagine that the Tsar has done that in order to tacitly reproach Emperor Leopold I that he is not absolute enough to do similar things. [...] It's a pity that this grand duke who has so many laudable qualities is not yet able to get rid of his penchant for cruelty." And as his correspondent had already expressed apprehension that Russian military priority might shift from the Black Sea towards the Baltic and notably to Sweden, Leibniz added ambiguously:

But instead of quarrelling with Sweden, which might become bad for him [i.e. for Peter I], I would recommend him to turn his weaponry against the Levant and to subjugate the barbarians, the Kalmyks for instance, who don't yet recognize him [as their sovereign]. It is true that the conquests he could make in this direction would render him still more formidable. But as he does not seem to remain with his arms folded, it would be better for Christianity, if he was occupied further away from us.⁵¹

In a letter to Nicolaas Witsen, the mayor of Amsterdam, Leibniz is less critical and refers to the domestic disorder that forced the Tsar to re-establish internal peace by such atavistic means, "a custom originating still from the Scythes."⁵² The ambivalence of Leibniz's evaluation of Peter I, an enormous admiration for his reforms in general coupled with certain bewilderment about these cruel acts, corresponds more or less to the general tone of Korb's diary. Admiration for the reform-Tsar was definitely prevailing, although Peter had so far done little that made him stand out from his predecessors – apart from his appearance abroad that indeed earned him the most sympathy from the European *hommes de lettres*.

Menge nach Syberien in das ewige Elend geschicket. Der Zaarin leiblicher Bruder und viele Bojaren mußten sich die Hände absägen/ oder eine andere Schmach anthun lassen."

51 Draft of a Letter to Sparvenfeld, December 27, 1698 in French, quoted in Woldemar Guerrier, *Leibniz in seinen Beziehungen zu Russland und Peter dem Grossen. Eine geschichtliche Darstellung dieses Verhältnisses nebst den darauf bezüglichen Briefen und Denkschriften* (Hildesheim, 1975): 39.

52 Letter of March 14/24, 1699. Quoted from Mechthild Keller, "Wegbereiter der Aufklärung. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz' Wirken für Peter den Großen und sein Reich", in *West-östliche Spiegelungen. Russen und Rußland aus deutscher Sicht und Deutsche und Deutschland aus russischer Sicht von den Anfängen bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Mechthild Keller, Ursula Dettbarn and Lev Zinov'evich Kopelev (München, 1985), 400.

What distinguished Korb's diary from formerly published German newspaper records on the retaliation against rebellious *strel'tsy*? What was it that provoked the scandal? Certainly, the bone of contention has to be searched for in the author's *description* of events rather than in his attempts to *explain* why things happened as they did. However, in coherence with our cursory look at the paradigms of preceding foreigners' approaches to interpreting revolts in Russia, I will start with Korb's "aetiology", his search for adequate interpretations and explanations of what happened. Probably the scope and cruelty of the retaliation seemed excessive to him, at least in comparison to the seeming harmlessness of the mutiny itself. Indeed, normally even in cases of much fiercer insurrection, as in 1682, the Tsarist government contented itself with executing the ringleaders to set a warning example, and to grant an amnesty to the rest. It seems as if Korb was rather puzzled by the sudden cruelty that, on the first glance, hardly fit with his positive image of the enlightened monarch. In his attempt to justify the cruelty of repression he thus tends to enlarge the rebellion and the depravity of its underlying motives.

How to Reconcile the Russians' "Inborn Servitude" with the Occurrence of Revolt

Korb's diary with its regular entries for almost every day of the embassy's stay in Moscow contains not only information on the mutiny and its aftermath. The author covers various topics, jumping erratically from one to another. Only the first part of the published book is the actual diary. It seems not to have been considerably reworked for literary purposes, although Korb translated his originally German entries into Latin. This actual diary is less prone to interpretation and explication than thematic second part that starts with a coherent narrative of the *strel'tsy*'s rebellion. Certain points mentioned before in the diary reoccur here, but Korb also added new aspects and attempts at interpretation. In subsequent chapters Korb portrays court-life, customs and traditions based on what he has seen and experienced in Moscow and its environment.⁵³

In this sense this two-part book is much more comprehensive than the newspaper reports. And although many depictions seem to be quite well-balanced and far from a simple black-and-white-scheme, Korb generally sticks to a

53 The most detailed study on Korb's diary is Friedrich Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris in Moscoviam und Quellen, die es ergänzen. Beiträge zur moskowiisch-russischen, österreichisch-kaiserlichen und brandenburgisch-preussischen Geschichte aus der Zeit Peters des Grossen* (Vaduz, 1965), a doctoral dissertation that was originally published in 1909-1910.

widespread Western view of the Russians' barbarianism,⁵⁴ superstition,⁵⁵ excessive cruelty, penchant for tyranny, the leading circles' inclination to corruption and embellishing military defeats,⁵⁶ as well as to the ubiquitous habit of lying. In a chapter on the "Russian character" Korb also reproduced existing Western stereotypes of the Russians' almost natural servitude and inborn servility. He explicitly and affirmatively quotes John Barclay's *Icon animorum* with his comments on

this race, born for slavery [that] becomes ferocious at the least trace of liberty; placid if oppressed, and not refusing the yoke, they of their own accord confess themselves slaves of their prince. He has the right to their wealth, their bodies, and their lives. Humility more sordidly crouching the very Turks entertain not for their Ottoman sceptre.⁵⁷

It is the idea of "tyranny without a tyrant" – an Aristotelian response to an apparent conceptual dilemma. In the categorisation of the different forms of government, tyranny was understood as a short-lived, illegitimate form characterized by the ruler abandoning the common good for the sake of his private benefit. This form of rule sooner or later provoked the resistance of the subjects, whose inborn sense of liberty would urge them to remove the illegitimate monarch. However, what was perceived as tyranny in Russia seemed astonishingly permanent and stable, similar to what Aristotle at his time observed in the Empires of the Orient. Aristotle's solution of the problem was simple: the "barbarian" subjects lacked the sense of freedom that was so fundamental to the Greeks. Government of the state was assimilated to the despotic rule of the household, where private interest was (quite

54 For the theme of barbarianism in European ethnographical accounts of Russia see Marshall T. Poe, 'A people born to slavery'. Russia in early modern European ethnography, 1476-1748 (Ithaca, NY, 2000).

55 Cf. the entry for August 10 and 11, 1698. Johann Georg Korb, Diary of an Austrian secretary of legation at the court of Czar Peter the Great, trans. Marshall Poe (London, 2003), 165-167.

56 See the entry for August 19, 1698. *Ibid.*, 168-169.

57 *Ibid.*, 516. Korb has taken the quotation from John Barclay's (1582-1621) *Icon animorum* (8th chapter on the Russians' national character): "servituti gens nata, ad omne libertatis vestigium ferox est; placida, si prematur, neque abnuunt jugum; ultro fatentur Principi se servire. Illi in suas opes, in corpora, vitamque jus esse. Sordidioris reverentiae humilitas Turcis non est in suorum. Ottomanorum sceptrum [...] Magnatibus, licet ipsi serviant, in minores suos & plebejos, quos per contemptum nigros homines, & Christianos [in the sense of krestiane, peasants] communiter appelland intolerabilis fastus est, & vulgus horum maxime supercilium timet." Cf. Dukmeyer, Korbs Diarium itineris, 2: 49.

naturally) paramount. Instead of striving for freedom the subjects loved their servitude, so that tyranny became a permanent institution and even functioned as such without an explicit tyrant at the head of the state.⁵⁸

Korb seemed to see the Russians more or less in this light. He thus describes episodes from Moscow in the Tsar's absence, that illustrate the idea of *tyrannis sine tyranno*: for instance the fate of a woman who had shown compassion towards a strelets in the pillory. When passing she let slip a sigh: "Alas! Which mortal knows whether you were guilty or innocent"? This was enough for another passerby to denounce her exclamation "to the Boyars as an indubitable indication of treason." Korb was bewildered:

A woman's pity for condemned and public criminals was deemed dangerous. So she was forthwith dragged up, along with her husband, to an examination. Now, when it was proved that there was nothing more in question than unreflecting and womanly compassion for the unfortunate, and that there was no trace of deliberate malice, they were indeed exempted from the penalty of death, but nevertheless condemned to exile. Thus thoughtless and guileless liberty of the tongue is chastised where subjects are coerced to obey through fear alone.⁵⁹

This fits with Korb's depictions of the leading Boyars' tyrannical behaviour. Even B.A. Golitsyn, Peter's former educator and head of the government in the Tsar's absence, who was often visited by the Ambassador Guarient, Korb's superior, boasted in the presence of his foreign guests of his despotic regime at home towards his servants and family.⁶⁰

The Muscovites' compliance with this sort of arbitrariness seemed to be rather at odds with the very possibility of rebellion and revolt. And like many other foreigners who subscribed to the idea of Russian servility, Korb had some problems classifying the uprising. He was aware of this contradiction, although he did not explicitly address it. In his chapter on "the Russian character" he thus sketches a situation of general depravity and falsehood:

Devoid of honest education, they esteem deceit to be the height of wisdom. They have no shame of lying, no blush for a detected fraud: to such a degree are the seeds of true virtue proscribed from that region, that vice itself obtains the reputation of virtue.⁶¹

58 Poe, A people born to slavery.

59 Korb, Diary of an Austrian secretary, 156-157 (Entry of July 24, 1698).

60 Ibid., 158-160 (Entry of July 25 and 26, 1698).

61 Ibid., 517.

This habit of lying is illustrated in a description of a scuffle that took place between German ambassadorial servants and some Muscovites. It ended with the interference of a contingent of soldiers who brought the Germans to the military guard, where the officers (also mainly Germans) considered them innocent and released them all. However, the following day the Russians scufflers wrongfully accused Guarient's servants of having made use of weapons in the brawl:

One of the Muscovites went about showing his wounds, and having suborned witnesses at a cheap rate, contended that he bore the marks of a sword that had been drawn against him: the falsehood of which being evident to our eyes, we could not but marvel prodigiously at the corrupt morals of this people, and how their abominable custom of lying and perjury is allowed to go unpunished. Search for false witnesses where you will among the Muscovites, and you will find them. For fate hath instituted such a universal perversity of reason in Muscovy, that it is very nearly the index of a superior intellect to be able to cheat.⁶²

But rebellions and revolt do not necessarily ensue from lying, fraud and ubiquitous crime. Even if these deviant practices turn out to be extremely widespread, they remain individual rather than collective.⁶³ Fraud and other criminal acts aim at small egoist benefit, whereas in their descriptions of 17th century Russian town rebellions many foreign observers point at the circumstance that collective agency was accompanied by an orientation towards a common good, which implicitly challenged the authorities, especially when a tyrannical ruler or more often his evil councillors lacked precisely this such a dedication to the common good.⁶⁴

Reasons for the Revolt as Suggested by Korb's Account

On these premises Korb felt compelled to speculate as to possible reasons for the strel'tsy revolt. Why such an act of resistance, and resistance against what, if the Muscovite subjects were "natural slaves", who had no idea of freedom and actually

62 Ibid., 155-156 (entry July 24, 1698).

63 On criminality in Moscow see Christoph Schmidt, *Sozialkontrolle in Moskau: Justiz, Kriminalität und Leibeigenschaft 1649-1785, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europas* 44 (Stuttgart, 1996). Foreign images of criminality and deviant behaviour are quoted in the Introduction. The separation between criminality and rebellion was in reality not as strict as this conceptualization suggests. Robber gangs sometimes linked the two phenomena and fitted more or less to Hobsbawm's paradigm of the Social bandits. At least vaguely they often defended a notion of social justice. But this dimension is ignored in representations by foreigners, differently from their depictions of town revolts.

64 See above.

loved their servitude? Korb's explanatory attempts go in different directions that are not always reconcilable with each other: he refers a) to celestial constellations; b) to the major "ringleader" Sofiia; c) to an "infection" from Polish unrest; d) to the multi-ethnic character of the empire and finally, and apparently related to this multi-ethnic dimension, e) to the circumstance that in Russia people would not fight against, but to retain a servitude that seemed endangered by Peter's enlightenment policies.⁶⁵

a) Comets as Harbingers of War and Revolt

The link between ignorance and servility was almost classical, but Korb relates this *topos* to astrological questions:

In their schools positively the only labour of the schoolmasters is to teach the children how to write and shape letters. The height of learning consists in committing to memory some articles of their creed. They despise liberal arts as useless torments of youth, they prohibit philosophy, and they have often publicly outraged astronomy with the opprobrious name of magic. It is criminal to introduce the calendar of Vo[i]gt the astronomer into Muscovy, because this general proposition, Moscau wird seinem Ungluck auch nicht entgehen (neither will Moscow escape her ill-fortune), he presaged rebellion to the Muscovites.⁶⁶

J. H. Voigt (1613-91) was at the time one of the most popular German mathematicians and astronomers (and astrologists) writing on comets. He regarded them as harbingers of disaster. This general assumption since Antiquity had been made an object of new scientific enquiry by outstanding scientists such as J. Kepler and H. Cardanus. Given the appearance of comets immediately before the Thirty Years' War (1618), the plague in Hamburg, along with the numerous revolts and civil wars in the mid-17th century this idea had become particularly widespread.⁶⁷

65 Curiously, Korb did not even evoke one of the most widespread explanations in foreign records on the events: an interpretation of Peter's absence in the light of his alleged attempt to reunite rally the Orthodox Church to Rome and thus to betray the Muscovite religion of his fathers and of the population at large. Many reports that go along with this idea combine it with a social differentiation, saying that the Boyars' and many representatives of the clergy stirred up the population against the Tsar by propagating that he aimed at converting his country to Catholicism. For a synopsis of these accounts see Dukmeyer, Korbs Diarium itineris, 1: 179-184.

66 Korb, Diary of an Austrian secretary, 518-519.

67 Already Cardanus (1501-1576) was convinced that comets stirred up the human bile. In this sense Johannes Kepler ascribed the Portuguese King Sebastian's impulsive and imprudent military campaign of 1577 in North Africa (that ended up in a defeat and finally

Voigt's prognostics of earthly events based on stellar phenomena were quite detailed, and in this sense he had predicted uproar in Moscow. Korb enumerates Voigt's calendar among other Western scientific achievements. In Russia, such calendars were highly popular. This made their predictions extremely dangerous in the eyes of the government. Therefore, Sofiia's government forbade them shortly after the 1682 strel'tsy uprising.⁶⁸ According to Korb the Russian authorities said "that evil spirits, at whose suggestion and showing astronomers may sometimes guess about the future what is beyond mortal ken, must have helped him [Voigt] in this black art."⁶⁹

The Russian authorities apparently feared unrest, not least because such announcements risked frightening and stirring up the population. In our eyes, this seems rather rational: superstition and popular beliefs were perceived as a mighty force that was able to foment uproar and should therefore be bridled.⁷⁰ But for Korb (and his well-read European contemporaries) proscribing such calendars meant rejection of *scientific knowledge* and was a clear indicator of superstitious obscurity, absolutely equivalent to the rejection of fine arts and many other

cost the king's life) to the apparition of a comet. The impact on royal blood was particularly high, so that Sebastian did not want to listen to his soberer counsellors' warnings. Bisaccioni, *Historia delle gverre civili di qvesti vltimi tempi*, the contemporary "historian" of the transnational political crises around 1650 explicitly relates the numerous revolts of the mid-17th century to comets. Not only were scientific observers prone to such explanations of human behaviour. Politicians also resorted to these scientific insights. At the negotiations for the Westphalian Peace of 1648 the Swedish delegate Salvius referred to "the disposition of the stars" that might have been the reason why "in the whole world one hears about the people's revolt against their sovereigns: for instance in France, England, Germany, Poland, Muscovy and in Turkey." Georges Livet, *La guerre de trente ans* (Paris, 1966): 121.

68 See S.M Shamin, "Evropeiskaia astrologiia i russkoe pravitel'stvo v XVII stoletii", in *Estestvennonauchnaia knizhnost' v kul'ture Rusi*, ed. A.Iu. Samarin (Moskva, 2005).

69 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 519.

70 Repercussion of astrological beliefs on actual human behaviour could really be a catalyst of revolt. For instance in the wake of the Swiss peasant war (1653) the fire-tail of a comet was interpreted as the symbol of a sword announcing imminent war. Andreas Suter, *Der schweizerische Bauernkrieg von 1653. Politische Sozialgeschichte - Sozialgeschichte eines politischen Ereignisses* (Tübingen 1997), 94-95 affirms that the ensuing excitement and apprehension has contributed to heated atmosphere that led into the confrontation.

achievements of the Enlightenment.⁷¹ And in spite of all interdictions, Moscow still had not escaped uproar. Concerning the paradox of inborn slaves revolting against servitude, natural (or astronomical) law was thus an explanation of revolt that did not need people's striving for justice or freedom.

However, stars and comets were only causes of causes and most of Korb's explicative efforts involved deliberate human agency, although in an inverse sense. Well informed by Patrick Gordon and other military commanders, Korb listed the strel'tsy's grievances: their lack of adequate rations and consecutive half-starvation, as well as the long separation from their families in Moscow. But these limited motives did not seem sufficient to him. The unspoken question he tried to answer was: If the strel'tsy revolt had such a limited and presumably rather easily remedied cause, would Peter's retaliation have been so ferocious? As an admirer of Peter as an enlightened monarch Korb was convinced that there must have been much more at stake.

b) Ringleaders – Sofiia as the Clandestine Instigator

Revolts could not develop without ringleaders: this was *opinio communis* in early modern Europe and maybe until now. And the more important the ringleaders, the more dangerous a revolt could become.⁷² In Sofiia, the revolt had a high-ranking ringleader who strove for nothing less than the crown. Korb subscribed to Peter's indictment against his half-sister and reproduced the official scenario of her alleged secret correspondence with the strel'tsy from her ecclesiastical imprisonment. Through a beggar woman, Sofiia would have transmitted her instructions in a loaf of bread.⁷³ Probably Korb still doubted if this scenario was sufficient to convey to his readers the dangerousness of the situation that alone would legitimize Peter's brutal reprisal. So he awkwardly introduced a flashback to the 1682 uprising that served to outline the whole potential of the 1698 events. His description of the 1682 events was certainly influenced by Heinrich Butenant's narrative. The German merchant and commercial agent of the Danish crown had been an eyewitness and almost a victim of the uprising: his description had circulated in German publications for years. But Korb did not adopt the Butenant's rather positive evaluation of Sofiia. Rather he made her image conform to the negative view propagated by Peter's government. Korb thus tried to show how the strel'tsy had been Sofiia's puppets in 1682, with the cruel slaughters of a considerable part of the

71 The same argument can be found in Olearius' account that strongly influenced Grimmels-hausen's *Simplicissimus*. Cf. Mechthild Keller, "Simplizianische Moskowienfahrt. Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen", in *West-östliche Spiegelungen*, 377-378.

72 Cf. Karl Härter's contribution to this volume.

73 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 413-418.

highest court-elite⁷⁴ as a result. The impending repetition of this scenario in 1698 called for severest counter-measures.

However, this “historically informed” picture seems not to avoid perplexity about the causes, especially given the premises that Korb was convinced of Peter’s outstanding qualities and presented the Tsar as a sovereign who wanted and did the best for his people and who acted for the sake of the common good, different from the tyrannical type of rulers. Korb wanted to go beyond a simple designation of a culprit and tried to explore more profound motives for resistance. He apparently wanted to explain *why* the strel’tsy could have stood up for the power-hungry Sofiia and, principally, why they assisted her *against the enlightened Tsar Peter*, in whose policies Korb saw the burgeoning of far-reaching reform.

c) Revolt as an Epidemic that does not Stop at State Borders

Korb’s introduction to his chapter on the strel’tsy revolt is an attempt to find and explore deeper reasons for the uprising. Apparently, Korb identified revolts as *trans-border-phenomena*, something similar an infection that could spread like a wildfire, even across state-frontiers, and even if (as in the given case) the subjects on both sides of the frontiers lived under different political systems with different social structures and with monarchs who were far from equal in terms of their actual powers.

By a common sport of fortune it very often happens that when a friend would extinguish the houses of his neighbours which the flames are devouring, his own is involved in the same peril. And so it is not without reason that we deplore a calamity that may befall ourselves as often as Ukalegon hard-by is on fire.⁷⁵

Everybody knows that when the Poles were about to proceed to the vote for the election of a monarch to the throne of their widowed Republic, their struggles were divided between two candidates. These wild gusts bursting beyond the narrow limits of the Diet, among this fiery people [lit. lively/ vivid tribes/peoples (lat. apud vividas gentes)], burning as they are with subtle and active intrigue, menaced a tempest fraught with universal danger.⁷⁶

74 Ibid., 436-443.

75 Ukalegon was one of the Elders of Troy, whose house was set on fire by the Achaeans when they sacked the city. His name in Greek is translated as “who doesn’t worry” and has become synonymous for a “neighbor whose house is on fire.”

76 “Quae procellae ex Comitiorum freto exaestuant, apud vividas gentes, subtilique, & exerto ambitu ferventes, funestam omnium discriminum minitabantur tempestatem.”

The Czar of Muscovy, roused by the proximity of the peril, ordered a strong body of troops under the command of General Knes Michael Gregorowicz Romodanowski, to lie in observation upon the frontiers of Lithuania, so as to be able, should public disorders arise out of the strife of private individuals, to settle them promptly and repress with strong succours the disturbers of the public peace, and force them the more efficaciously into the reverence due to their lawfully elected king.

But how wonderful are the vicissitudes of fortune and of human affairs! The flood burst in wild rage upon him, who rashly thought to brave the unruly inundation that menaced the quiet of a neighbouring nation. Four regiments of Strelitz, which lay upon the frontier of Lithuania [inspired by the Polish neighbours], had nefariously plotted to change the sovereignty.⁷⁷

Korb's account evoked serious troubles, almost civil war in the terminology of natural catastrophe: wildfire, storm on the sea, tempest, inundation, etc.⁷⁸ Of course, Peter stationed his strel'tsy garrisons at the border, not out of human kindness towards his Polish neighbours, but as a supporting measure for his active interference into the Polish struggle over succession to the throne. Peter had his candidate, August of Saxony (the "lawfully elected king"), and succeeded in imposing him on his neighbours, and that with the aid of military threat. The strel'tsy regiments at the frontier played an important role in this menacing scenario.⁷⁹ But it is not likely that Korb's introduction on Poland was meant as an ironic criticism of Peter's interventionism. Such intervention was perceived as rather normal and, beyond that, Peter's engagement corresponded to the general interests of the Reich that favoured: August to keep out the French-backed candidate Prince Conti, who would have dissociated Poland-Lithuania from the anti-Ottoman front in Eastern Europe.⁸⁰ In any way, the Polish-Lithuanian republic and its political system with its powerful aristocracy and its weak elected king was not viewed as an enlightened model. By contemporaries it was rather seen as an

77 *Ibid.*, 391-392.

78 These metaphors, modes of explanation, were widespread in 17th century literature on revolts. See Peter Burke, "Some Seventeenth-Century Anatomists of Revolution", in *Storia della Storiografia* 22 (1992): 23-35 on the mainly Italian historians writing on the uprisings and civil wars of the mid 17 century crisis.

79 K. Piwarski, "Das Interregnum 1696/97 in Polen und die politische Lage in Europa", in *Um die polnische Krone. Sachsen und Polen während des Nordischen Krieges 1700-1721*, ed. J. Kalisch and J. G. Gierowski (Berlin, 1962), L. R. Lewitter, "Russia, Poland and the Baltic 1697-1721", *The Historical Journal* 11, 1 (1968).

80 Even though the Germans were busy with the debate over Spanish succession and therefore did not engage in a coalition with Russia to wage war against the Turks, the Reich remained interested in an eastern-European anti-Ottoman stronghold.

appalling example of chaos and inability to act (due to the magnates' *liberum veto*), which was a strong argument for absolutism as the most rational and progressive form of government.⁸¹

d) The Multi-National Dimension as a Fermenter of Extreme Violence

According to Korb “political fermentation” came from those “tribes” or “peoples” who were “seething with rage”. The multi-“tribal” dimension of the Polish “inundation” seemed particularly prone to spill onto Russian territory, for the Empire was to an even greater extent multi-national. For this reason, it is important to take into account *how* Korb introduced his clumsy digression on the 1682 events:

Others have already stated that the Russians are sprung from the Roxolanes, the name being only slightly altered. More recently the river Moskva, which flows past the metropolis of Muscovy has given rise to their name of Muscovites. Nor have there been wanting men of genius to describe the times when this race, whom some will have it came from beyond seas, grew to their mighty strength from small beginnings, from their first royal feat in Novgorod and Kiev, the Wlodimir, and lastly Moscow. By the tyranny of Ivan Basilowicz which served him to subdue to himself so many vast neighbouring regions, the kingdoms of Casan and Astracan, either by the death of their rulers or their imprisonment, Muscovy grew to its present immensity of empire, the very hugeness of which has often already proved a source of misery, and the incurable wounds of which the restless minds of the people are constantly tearing open before the heal.⁸²

Only after this focus on territorial expansion into the terrains of wild peoples, and on the perils of separatist stirrings, did Korb come to the “1682 civil dissensions” and the accompanying “fearful internecine cruelties in rapine, and slaughter, and pillage”.⁸³ When reading Korb’s account, one feels slightly bewildered by his sudden historical flashback to the “Roxolanes” and the annexation of Kazan’ and

81 For foreign views of the political system in Poland see Elida Maria Szarota and Adam Kersten, *Die gelehrte Welt des 17. Jahrhunderts über Polen. Zeitgenössische Texte* (Wien, 1972).

82 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 436. The Latin text reads: “Joannis Basilidis tyrannide, qua tot amplissimas vicinas Provincias Casani, Astrachanique regna Principum morte, aut captivitate sibi subjugaverat, i eam, quae nunc est, amplissimi Dominatus magnitudinem adolevit, quam hucusque sua moles saepe afflixit, cujus insanabilia vulnere inquietae subditorum mentes periculissima sui avulsione nec dum passa sunt ducere cicatricem.”

83 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 436–437.

Astrakhan. This seems rather awkward and out of context. But apparently it was meant to stress the general potential for conflict of the Muscovite Empire's multi-ethnic composition. For Korb this should help explain the amplitude of the 1682 uprising, although the events themselves were not related to any multi-ethnic dimension and Korb was not able to establish such a link.

e) Resistance to Enlightenment – Struggle for the Maintenance of Servitude

The significance of the non-Russian peoples seemed to be at the core of Korb's (mostly implicit) aetiology. It is the reading of revolts as manifestations of retrograde resistance against the civilizing process imposed from above. We have seen an earlier glimpse of such an interpretation in the *London Gazette* that tried to explain the upheavals of 1682 as a response against Tsar Fedor's inclination to Western, notably Polish, habits and his attempts to "civilize" his people.

In Korb's eyes revolt in Russia could also not be explained by a misled fight against servitude, as it had often been done in accounts of European revolts.⁸⁴ "Inborn slaves" could certainly not be seduced by the fallacious prospect of freedom and justice. Rather he believed the Russians to love their servitude and to struggle against those who wanted to deliver them from tyranny, who vouched for progress and enlightenment (like Peter). Korb could build on many earlier travelogues, whose authors had noted with stupefaction how Russians deliberately sold themselves into serfdom, when he wrote:

The slavery laws are in vigour among the Muscovites. Some become slaves by captivity, others are so by birth, many from being sold by their fathers, or by themselves: for if they be manumitted by their dying masters, so accustomed are they to slavery, that they make themselves over as slaves to other masters, bind themselves slaves for a sum of money.⁸⁵

Korb actually reverted to a well-established stereotype, when he underlined that in Russia a father could sell his son into bondage four times.⁸⁶ Only Peter I had

84 For this pattern of a fight against servitude see for instance the following treatise: Wahrhaftig-Abbildender Aufruhr- und Empörung-Spiegel. In welchem Alle unruhige und verwegene Köpffe gahr leicht und eigentlich zu erkennen seyn/ beydes Ihnen selbst zu nöthiger Betrachtung/ und allen redlichen/ Gottfürchtenden/ ihr Vaterland liebenden/ ... Gemüthern zu nützlichem Gebrauche vorgestellet (Friedberg [i.e. Hamburg], 1687).

85 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 522.

86 This assertion comes from Herberstein and has since be repeated in many travellers' accounts, but also in political philosophy. Still in the 16th century Bodin has taken it up in his major work, *Les six livres de la République*. See Poe, *A people born to slavery*, 173.

attacked these evils, Korb noted admiringly, but at the same time these efforts on behalf of his people's freedom and maturity incurred hatred against him:

However [...], now that Muscovy possesses a monarch whose intellect is so highly gifted by nature, and who is urged on by the wonderful stimulus of glory, people opine that a milder statute will be substituted for this very crude authority of parents over their sons. Though, in truth, the nation itself has such a dislike of liberty, that it seems to exclaim against a happiness for which it was not created, and is so inured to its slavish condition that it will scarcely endure the prudent and kindly solicitude of the Prince for his dominations and his subjects to be carried out to the full extent.⁸⁷

Korb assumed that these objections to “happiness” could get extremely violent. According to the manifestations of this sort of violence could already be observed in the revolt of 1682. In retrospect Korb thus presented the 1682 events as a revolt against Peter's accession to the throne, since initially Peter alone had been nominated Tsar. Therefore he interprets the *strel'tsy's* refusal to take an oath on Peter in 1682 as an act of resistance against the breakthrough of enlightenment. As we have seen, this is rather at odds with the representation of that time, since Peter had been a child and the party of his family (the Naryshkins) stood rather for tradition and for the rejection of foreign influence, whereas the Miloslavskiis (with Ivan as their candidate) had proved to be open reform-oriented. Many reform projects had been initiated under Fedor and under Sofiiia's regency (until 1689). The early years of Peter's actual reign, i.e. the first half of the 1690s, witnessed in reality a revocation of many of these reform initiatives. The government ordered the eviction of the Jesuits from Moscow, the persecution of the Kievian Uniates and even the suppression of the “regiments of the new order” [*polki novogo stroia*]. This made the initial phase of Peter's regency a period of Orthodox and xenophobe intolerance, with notable setbacks on the reform process, even in the military domain, which would later be at heart of the Tsar's reform efforts.⁸⁸

But whereas for Herberstein this was a sign of Russian despotism, Bodin quoted such passages approvingly, since he made Muscovy a model for his idea of sovereignty.

87 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 523-524.

88 For de la Neuville, apparently a French diplomat in Polish service, Peter is the embodiment of cruelty and Asiatic backwardness, whereas Sofiiia and especially her lover and policymaker Golitsyn are the guarantors of progress. This is even more noteworthy as he was on a diplomatic mission in Moscow at the time of the coup d'état of 1689 that led to the end of Sofiiia's regency. In his account that has apparently been written up at the beginning of the 1690s (first published in 1698) Neuville well purports Sofiiia's assassina-

All this seemed now to be forgotten, and Korb described Peter as if he was born as the enlightened reform Tsar. In contrast to him, all his predecessors appeared to Korb as the obscure representatives of a tyrannical and unenlightened past:

The Czar is endeavouring, by means of various arts and sciences, to frame a better state of things in his kingdom. If success should crown the prudent efforts of good counsel, people shall shortly be astonished at the fair edifice that will stand where there was nothing but huts before; unless some misfortune should happen or a *defection of the people*, or perhaps even simply the very barbarity of their inclinations should render them incapable of bearing their own good fortune, or make them grudge to their posterity a lot so happy, and envy the labours of the present for the profit of future generations.⁸⁹

Thus Korb considered even the people's jealousy towards the future, towards their own children and grandchildren's generation, as a motive for opposition to Peter. The events of 1698 bore a similar potential as the 1682 revolt, and apparently Peter's wrathful reprisals were necessary, all the more so as the boyars subscribed to the same tradition of tyranny as the commoners.

The Ignominious Role of the Elites: Boyars and Clergy

Korb made clear that Peter often could not rely on his boyars, who also resisted his reform measures – not only the cutting of beards, which Korb regarded as symptomatic, but also more profound changes. General corruption and depravity forced Peter to take ruthless steps. Returning from abroad, he learned at a banquet that his commander-in-chief, A.S. Sheyn, had promoted colonels and other officers for money, regardless of their merits. This was a major infringement of one of Peter's principal reform aims, the establishment of a meritocracy, as well as the struggle against corruption and haggling for positions. Following Korb's account, Peter's

wrath had grown to such a pitch that he drew his sword, and facing the general-in-chief, horrified the guests with this threat: "By striking thus, I will mar thy malgovernment." Boiling over with well-grounded anger, he appealed to Prince Romodanowski, and to the Dumnoi Mikitim Mosciwicz; but finding them excuse the general-in-chief, he grew so hot that he startled all the guests by striking right and left, he knew not where, with his drawn sword. Knes [Prince] Romodanowski had to complain of a cut finger, and another of a slight

tion attempt on Peter's live. See Foy de La Neuville, *Zapiski o Moskovii* (Moskva, 1996) with Aleksandr Lavrov's informative introduction.

89 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 519.

wound on the head. Mikitim Moscovicz was hurt in the hand as the sword was returning from a stroke. A blow far more deadly was aiming at the general-in-chief, who beyond a doubt would have been stretched in his gore by the Czar's right hand, had not General Lefort (who was almost the only one that might have ventured it), catching the Czar in his arms, drawn back his hand from the stroke.⁹⁰

However choleric Peter behaved in this episode, Korb considered his outburst of rage justified: corruption was so ingrained among the Muscovite elites that extraordinary action was indispensable to have any chance of making them grasp to what extent they acted wrongly and, in the long run, of uprooting this evil.

Representatives of the clergy were presented as equally or even more untrustworthy. The clergy had been given custody of Peter's half-sister Sofiia, an issue of highest delicacy directly related to the 1698 uprising:

The Patriarch cast upon others the blame that the Czarine was not yet shut up in a monastery, and the consequent contempt of the Czar's commands: his Majesty the Czar's indignation at which was so fiery that he ordered the archimandrite and four popes, to whose charge the Patriarch imputed it, to be set upon little carts (sboseck) by soldiers, and dragged to Bebraschentsko [Preobrazhenskoe, a village near Moscow, where executions were staged] by night.⁹¹

In Korb's record these scenes were Peter's first confrontations after his return to Russia that predicted the brutal reprisals that would follow. But on top of that, Korb contended that priests had pronounced their benediction over the insurgents' deeds and were ready to carry icons in order to get commoners of the capital to join the uprising. Thus the clergy were not spared in the executions, even though this meant breach of a taboo:

The ignominious gibbet cross awaited the popes, by way of reward in suit with the thousands of signs of the cross they had made, and as their fee for all the benedictions they had given to the refractory troops. The court jester, in the mimic attire of a pope, made the halter ready, and adjusted it, as it was held to be wrong to subject a pope to the hands of the common hangman.⁹²

The Tsar's dissatisfaction with some Orthodox Church clergy must have attracted the attention of Guarient's delegation, as Rome, the Emperor, Jesuit circles and

90 Ibid., 184-185 (Entry of September 14, 1698).

91 Ibid., 192 (Entry of September 19, 20, 1698).

92 Ibid., 431 (7th execution, October 27).

others still hoped for Russia's conversion to Roman Catholicism.⁹³ Korb refrained from any speculation about this point. Moreover, in a conflict where the patriarch reproached the Tsar for his heavy use of torture in the interrogations of the rebels, the chronicler clearly took sides with the Tsar, although otherwise he was reluctant to admit the necessity of such cruel measures. Korb saw the unreliability of major representatives of the court-elites as the main reason why Peter personally interfered in the interrogations of the *strel'tsy's*:

The very Grand Duke himself, in consequence of the distrust he had conceived of his subjects, performed the office of inquisitor. He put the interrogation, he examined the criminals, he urged those that were more pertinaciously silent, to be subjected to more cruel tortures; those that had already confessed about many things were questioned about more; those who were bereft of strength and reason, and almost of their senses, by excess of torment, were handed over to the skill of the doctors, who were compelled to restore them to strength, in order that they might be broken down by fresh excruciations.⁹⁴

The same mistrust seemed to be the reason why Peter compelled his boyars to carry out numerous death sentences and closely observed their performances. “[A]ll the Boyars, Senators of the realm, Dumnoi, Diaks, and so forth, that were present at the council constituted against the rebel Strelitz, had been summoned by the Czar's command to Bebraschentsko, and enjoined to take upon themselves the hangman's office.”⁹⁵ Serving as executioner was extremely disgraceful and degrading for the members of the aristocracy. They could have refused to obey in this matter, if the Tsar himself had not assumed this odious job on the very first day: “Five rebel heads had been cut off in that spot by an axe that was swung by the noblest arm of all Muscovy.”⁹⁶ The summons of the boyars to take an active part in the execution became both an act of humiliation and a test of loyalty.

Foreigners as Peter's only Trustworthy Support

In the diarist's eyes, the Tsar's well-founded mistrust of his boyar entourage and of representatives of the Orthodox high clergy helped to explain why *foreign servitors* had become Peter's main allies in the struggle against ubiquitous depravation. In his separate chapter on the *strel'tsy's* revolt, Korb emphasized that Patrick Gordon's diplomatic skills had prevented a worse outcome of the confrontation between

93 Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 1: 167-214.

94 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 409.

95 *Ibid.*, 429-430 (5th execution: 23rd October, 1698).

96 *Ibid.*, 424 (The First Execution, 10th October, 1698).

rebellious strel'tsy and his loyal Muscovite troops at the New Jerusalem Monastery. Korb singled out German Lieutenant-Colonel von Grage, whose accuracy and precision would have broken the rebels' resistance immediately: "The Strelitz saw safety nowhere; arms could not protect them; nothing was more appalling to them than the ceaseless flash and roar of the artillery showering its deadly bolts upon them from the German right."⁹⁷ Similarly the diarist describes a banquet at this same von Grage's residence, where the Tsar himself deigned to be present (in spite of swollen cheeks by toothache): "The Czar never showed himself more frankly gay; perhaps because none of the Boyars or anybody else was present to trouble the sensations of joy with evil eye."⁹⁸

Such comments were not devoid of patriotic pride on Korb's part, but they also remind us of the dreams of leading Enlightenment thinkers in Germany about their close collaboration with the Tsar for the sake of civilizing Russia. However, as Korb and others before him depicted the situation, the Russian people were far from being a *tabula rasa*, onto which it would be easy to inscribe a new progressive and enlightened code that would henceforth determine their thinking and behaviour.⁹⁹ Deep-rooted evils tended to make the Russian people not only less receptive to Enlightenment ideas, but foreign observers made them out as the principal cause of stubborn resistance against anything progressive. The Tsar favoured "progressive foreigners", whereas the Russian people hated them for their "progressiveness". Foreign accounts quoted this among the central motives of the rebellion. Korb referred to an interrogation of Sofiia's ladies-in-waiting, one of whom

97 Ibid., 401. Probably these two armies were also his main informants on this encounter in which he had naturally not assisted. For the similarities with Gordon's account of the suppression of the uprising at Novoerusalinskii, cf. Brockmann, *Der Bruch Peters mit Alt-Moskau*; Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 2: 100.

98 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 191 (Entry September 18, 1698). "Liberius nunquam animi fui alacritatem Tzarus ostendit; forte quod Bojamen aliorumque, nemo aderat, qui invisio aspectu gaudii sensum turbaret."

99 This was Leibniz's idea as he expressed it in his memorandum of 1708 that he addressed to Tsar Peter. He emphasized the hugeness and thus the importance of the empire reigned by Peter that "encompassed almost the whole North of our hemisphere". And "since most of it is still *tabula rasa* and the new pot that has not yet assumed foreign taste in studies, many mistakes that have invaded [our sciences] can be avoided and improved, especially because everything is canalized by the mind of a sage ruler". Tat'iana Anatol'evna Oparina, *Inozemtsy v Rossii XVI - XVII vv. [očerki istoricheskoi biografii i genealogii]* (Moskva 2007): 402.

after threats and a few strokes with the knout, confessed that the hatred which all Muscovites bear to General Lefort, and all Germans in general, was the main cause of the pernicious design; for to such a degree has nature made most Muscovites barbarians that they cannot bear virtue to be imported by foreigners.¹⁰⁰

All this conveys Korb's and others' idea that in his struggle for reform, enlightenment and the common good of the Russian people, Peter I could only count on the faithful assistance of his foreign servitors. The representatives of his immediate Russian entourage were either unreliable, or even supported a recalcitrant people, whose stubborn resistance to any novelties questioning their inherited barbarism, egoism and indecency needed to be countered with resolute and, if necessary, brutal measures.

DIPLOMATIC SCANDAL: A SHIFT IN THE TSARS' INFORMATION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON WESTERN COVERAGE OF RUSSIAN REVOLTS

As a whole, Korb's book provides an enthusiastic description of tsar Peter's actions and initiatives – and it contrasts his luminous image with the dark reality of his country. In fact, the Russian population had hardly ever been described differently. Apart from that, the antagonism between the Tsar and his country legitimated Peter's occasional cruelty as necessary recourse to the stick. Why then did the publication of Korb's book in 1700/1 result in such a huge diplomatic scandal?

But I have to start with a very short summary on what the Russian government's reaction actually was. At the beginning of 1701, Russian Ambassador Prince P.A. Golitsyn learned in Vienna about Korb's diary. Immediately he wrote a furious letter to inform Peter I about the deed of “culprit Guarient”, the Imperial Ambassador and chief of the 1698 delegation to Moscow. Although the diary was published by Korb under his name, Golitsyn took Guarient for the author and deemed him responsible for the publication – politically and personally.¹⁰¹ Golitsyn had the diary quickly translated into Russian and sent it to Peter, together with the

100 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary*, 201 (Entry of October 6 and 7, 1698).

101 In fact, Korb definitely was the author. This can be clearly determined from Korb's personal documents in the Amberg district archive. The similarities between the diary and Guarient's accounts sent to Kaiser Leopold, is due to the fact that Korb was also responsible for the correspondence with Leopold I. See Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Staatsabteilung Rußland I, 18 (1698). I am particularly grateful to Aleksandr Lavrov, who provided me with his copies from the Amberg archives.

Latin original. Golitsyn's personal translator seemed to have had some difficulty with the Latin text. Normally, he translated between from Russian into German and vice versa, maybe Dutch as well, as did most translators at Muscovite foreign office. The translation was inexact, full of mistakes. At the same time the translator deliberately left out the most delicate passages that might have offended the Tsar, such as paragraphs about his active participation in the executions.¹⁰² Thus Peter received a truncated version. However, he still set a whole machinery against the book and its alleged author in motion.

Moscow demanded that Guarient should be relieved of his functions and never again sent to Moscow. And what was even more important, it claimed that the book should be forbidden and withdrawn from the market. But the Emperor refused to put Korb's book on the Index, for he had given the publication his blessing in form of the imperial seal. In response Russian diplomats bought all copies they could get a hold of and burnt them (which is why the original Latin edition is a rarity to this day). Concerning Guarient, the situation was not that different. To dismiss him would have meant a loss of face for the Emperor. In his letter to Peter, Golitsyn complained about the protection the ambassador enjoyed from high-ranking nobles, namely from the earl of Kaunitz. In the end it was Guarient himself who yielded to the pressure and refrained from further missions to Russia. Muscovite diplomacy was not unsuccessful, but its victories were Pyrrhic in central aspects. The *auto-da-fé* did not extinguish public interest in the book, on the contrary. In educated circles, the few surviving copies were passed around, and the content was widely debated.

But again: why such a harsh reaction altogether? What was the bone of contention for Peter and his court? Why did they attack this book at that particular time? In the historical literature, the objections to blunt descriptions of the executions have been put forward as the main motive. But the executions were staged in public, and in the presence of foreign delegates. Apparently Peter even aimed at Western reception of these brutal events. As we have seen, Leibniz even supposed (and he did so well before the publication of Korb's diary) that Peter wanted to boast of his absolutist power over his subjects in front of the Emperor.¹⁰³ Another argument focuses on the representation of Peter's personal participation in the executions: Korb was the only contemporary who referred to these scenes. This alone, goes a current argument in historiography, would have undermined the Tsar's dignity and have been enough for him to do anything he could in order to

102 Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 1: 10-13. Dukmeyer has consulted the translation in Moscow.

103 See above.

prevent the circulation of the book.¹⁰⁴ But on the other hand, even after the scandal over Korb's diary Peter would still not refrain from referring to his direct implication in such bloody events. More than a decade later, in 1711 he would tell the Danish envoy Just Juel about his scientific observations during the course of decapitations. He described in detail the execution procedure against one rebel. His case had been exceptional, for, after having been beheaded, his corpse straightened up and remained erect for a minute or so. This account "is credible", notes Juel:

I heard it from the lips of the Tsar himself, and the Tsar is not prone to inventions. To conclude, the Tsar, who judges soundly on everything, expressed the idea that this criminal undoubtedly had narrow veins – a circumstance that slows down the hemorrhaging and thus longer conserves vitality in the body. Similar phenomena, occurring for the same reason, can be observed with birds, and particularly with hens, that sometimes continue to run for quite a while after their heads have been chopped off.¹⁰⁵

Given such vivid accounts, it seems unlikely that Korb's descriptions of the executions provoked the strong reaction against his book. Peter was rather concerned to propagate his mercilessness abroad – and he relied to a considerable extent on foreigners' accounts to purport his fame. Both at home and through his trip abroad, when supposedly incognito, he invested a lot into disseminating the image of himself as a Tsar who literally took into his hands the destiny of the country. This activity was probably the main novelty he embodied; and it earned him greatest reverence among European enlighteners.¹⁰⁶ Even his cutting off of "five rebel heads" fitted into this model. Active and vigorous initiative included "over-due tasks", such as punishing those who remained stubbornly opposed to the

104 On Peter I's active participation in the execution see *Ibid.*, 2: 101–163. Dukmeyer gives detailed appreciation of the different views expressed in historiography until the end of the 19th century. For more recent treatments of the matter see Reinhard Wittram, *Peter I. Czar und Kaiser; zur Geschichte Peters des Großen in seiner Zeit* (Göttingen, 1964), 1: 178; and Brockmann, *Der Bruch Peters mit Alt-Moskau*, 501–503.

105 See Juel's diary entry of January 30, 1711, *Zapiski Iulia Iusta, datskogo poslannika pri Petre Velikom (1709–1711)*, in Lavry Poltavay, ed. V. P. Naumov (Moskva 2001), 235. However, it has to be said that Juel refrained from publishing his diary. See below. If Peter I boasted of his cold-bloodedness in front of the Danish diplomat, this latter might have suspected that the Tsar wanted such stories to be circulated through rumors, but not in print. Like anybody else, Juel seems to have been alarmed by the Korb scandal.

106 So Leibniz was particularly impressed when he learned that Peter carpentered himself in the Netherlands. In a letter from 1697 he wrote admiringly to Sparvenfeld: "il travaille de sa propre main". Keller, *Wegbereiter der Aufklärung*, 400.

country's common good and future development. It was the amputation of rotten limbs designed to save the organism from degeneration. Beyond that, Peter did so for pedagogical reasons. According to Korb's narrative, Peter had to teach and discipline his disloyal and anti-reformatory boyars. Obliging them to emulate him in performing the strel'tsy's executions was a most effective means of putting them into their place.

Visual Representation as the Bone of Contention?

In view of the fact that the cruelties in Russia had been described in newspapers well before the publication of Korb's diary, I would argue that the scandal over Korb's book was provoked mainly not by textual, but by visual portrayals. The book contains quite a detailed copperplate engraving of the galleys with the hanged strel'tsy all around the town wall. Perspective is awkward and the engraving artistically poor. But everything is presented in a very orderly and graphic manner: collective galleys each for ten persons are placed neatly in a row, and smaller galleys for two persons each are pointing out of the embrasures in the town wall. In the background, one can see another huge collective galley built in a rectangle and placed close to the fence of the New Virgin Monastery court. In the garden immediately in front of the walls of the monastery, a smaller galley with three more victims is placed – apparently those who were hanged near the window of the monastery, where Sofiia was taken into custody. In another fenced-in area within the town walls people are shown being tortured and others executed with axes. In the foreground, apart from crying wives and a group of men that apparently welcoming an arriving high dignitary in a carriage pulled by six horses (the Tsar?), two women (probably Sofiia's ladies-in-waiting) are depicted as buried alive with only their heads showing up out of the ground. The illustration represents more or less what was described in the Diary (and in several German newspapers of 1698 and 1699), although some characteristic aspects of the cruelties seem to be missing, for instance the innumerable fires, on which the strel'tsy were roasted to make them confess their crimes.

“So what?” one might ask. Visual representation of the like was widespread in European books, broadsheets, newspapers and other publications at that time. It was common to illustrate punishments of such crimes of lese majesty, much more than illustrating the revolt itself. This was part of the practice of *damnatio memoriae*. The defamation aimed at obliteration of mass-crime and treason.¹⁰⁷ Punishment was visualized as deterrence, which was supposed to have a more immediate impact

107 Cf. Angela Rustemeyer, *Dissens und Ehre. Majestätsverbrechen in Rußland (1600-1800)* (Wiesbaden 2006): 253-254.

than written texts in an age of essentially oral communication. Also, illiterate persons clearly understood – and literally saw – what had happened to the traitors. When preparing the copperplate engravings for his book (or when ordering them), Korb conformed to standards of visual representation he knew from his own cultural background. The picture resembles many other visual representations of executions in the aftermath of 17th-century revolts, often commissioned works created by professionals on the basis of a written text alone.¹⁰⁸

However, Russian standards of visual representation differed fundamentally from those of its Western neighbours. Neugebauer, former tutor of Peter's son Aleksei who had been recently fired, wrote a pasquinade, in which he pointed up Peter's anger at Korb's book and noted in particular the "clean copper where his Majesty the Tsar is standing with axe and sword slaughtering [one of the rebels]."¹⁰⁹ In fact, on the copperplate there are people with axes chopping off heads, but it is not at all clear that Peter I is supposed to be one of these executioners. This can only be deduced from the text. Be that as it may, even without the portrayal of the Tsar as executioner the picture was perceived as an enormous offense. Visual tradition in Russia was dominated by hagiographic representation of saints in icons and by panegyric portrayals of the sovereign, which also closely followed the hagiographic model. Acts of secular violence were an extraordinary object for engravings, and pictures of punishment scenes were practically unknown.¹¹⁰ Punishments were staged in public, as had been done in the reprisals for the *strel'tsy* uprising, similar to many cases of punishments for former revolts in Muscovy. These were vivid and appalling examples that spoke a clear language. The scenes continued to live in the spectators' memories – and certainly they spread rapidly in whispering campaigns: nonetheless they were not visually fixed once and forever and could not be re-regarded.

One innovation is noteworthy in this context: the erection of pillars of shame, i.e. a symbolical representation of punishment. Apparently, these pillars were meant

108 See Karl Härter's contribution to this volume. At our workshop André Krischer has shown similar pictures for England.

109 At the same time Neugebauer referred to the depictions of the princesses that would have disgusted Peter. His judgment is interesting, but it would be highly problematic to take Neugebauer for an objective informant, for he apparently tried to revenge himself for the treatment he had suffered. In this sense he also predicted further publications that would present Peter and the Russians in a still less favorable light. Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 2: 17-18.

110 On the visual representations of the Tsar see Frank Kämpfer, *Das russische Herrscherbild. Von den Anfängen bis zu Peter dem Großen; Studien zur Entwicklung politischer Ikonographie im byzantinischen Kulturkreis* (Recklinghausen, 1978).

as a belated response to columns the strel'tsy had built in 1682 on what is now Red Square, when they had held power for a few months. The columns of 1682 were actually intended to justify the insurgents' actions against a range of high-ranking boyars. The names of these "traitor-boyars" [*vory-boyary*] were engraved on the columns, thus presenting them as traitors to the Tsar(s) and the common good. Thus the previous killings by the strel'tsy were qualified as righteous *executions*, i.e. as legitimate *juridical* measures.¹¹¹ In function these columns resembled the pillars of shame in Western and middle-European countries in early modern times, where they were erected at the places of the culprits' razed houses and sometimes lasted for centuries.¹¹² However, in Russia before 1682, pillars of shame were unprecedented. In 1698 Peter apparently ordered them to be built in order to stress the indictment of the strel'tsy for ongoing criminal activity and high-treason. But they failed to become a regular institution and were not followed up in the further course of the 18th century.¹¹³

However ephemeral they in the long run, Peter's pillars stood for a fixation and perennization of memory, in some way analogous to pictures. However, since the representation was abstract and rather symbolic than concrete, the pillars were apparently not regarded as equivalent to a drawing, as found in Korb's publication. Pictures had an immediate sensual and emotional appeal, especially in a largely oral culture with an overwhelming majority of illiterates. In medieval and early modern Russia, pictures were expected to be an *iconography* in the most literal sense. They belonged to the domain of worship. Conversely, church and worship, matters of religion were to be kept away from fundamentally secular concerns such as the punishment of traitors. This could be seen from Peter's reaction to the patriarch's attempt to calm his fury with the icon of the Holy Virgin:

[The patriarch] thought the best thing was to take an image of the Most Blessed Virgin, the sight of which might remind him [the Tsar] of the common lot of man, and bring back the common feelings of pity to a mind that was almost degenerating into savagery. But the weights of real justice with which his Majesty the Czar measured the magnitude of this heinous crime were not to be altered by this exhibition of sham pity. For it had come to that pass that Muscovy was only to be saved by cruelty, not by pity. Yet is this severity of

111 Volksaufstände in Rußland, passim.

112 In the case of the Frankfurt Fettmilch uprising (1612-16) the pillars of shame remained until the 19th century. See Rudolf Frank, Vincenz Fettmilch: Eine historische Erzählung aus der Geschichte der freien Stadt Frankfurt am Mein (Leipzig, 1861): 1.

113 A. V. Lavrent'ev, "Moskovskoe 'stolbotvorenje' kontsa XVII veka. Pervye grazhdanskie pamiatniki v Rossii i politicheskaia bor'ba v èpokhu Petra I.," Arkhiv russkoi istorii 2 (1992); Rustemeyer, Dissens und Ehre, 254.

chastisement falsely called tyranny; for sometimes even equity and severity are one and the same: more particularly when disease or obstinate gangrene has taken such firm hold of the members that there remains no other remedy for the general health of the body politic than iron and fire to cut them off. Thus the Czar's invective against the Patriarch was not unworthy of his sovereign office: 'What wilt thou with thy image? Or what business is it of thine to come here? Hence forthwith, and put back that image in the place where it should be venerated. Know, that I reverence God and his Most Holy Mother more earnestly perhaps than thou dost. It is the duty of my sovereign office, and a duty that I owe to God, to save my people from harm, and to prosecute with public vengeance crimes that tend to the common ruin.'¹¹⁴

The Tsar urged the Patriarch to bring the icon immediately back to its place, the church. He thus made a clear distinction between ecclesiastical and worldly matters. Taking the icon away from its place of worship seemed an undue intrusion into secular space, a sacrilege, an abuse of a sacred object exclusively used for worship. In his reflection on the necessity of cruelty Korb tried to clear Peter of the reproach of tyranny. At the same time his interpretation of the confrontation between the Patriarch and the Tsar demonstrates that the diarist was completely unaware of the significance of pictures in Orthodox culture. Icons were not mere symbols, but the depicted persons and events were deemed to be really present.¹¹⁵

The execution of priests was probably one of the most unprecedented undertakings in Peter's orgy of repression. The extraordinary measures have also to be seen as a response to an abusive use of *pictures* to arouse rioters, since the beheaded priests were accused of having led the insurgents *with icons*. Peter's court regarded the illustrations depicting the executions and torture scenes in Korb's book as a similar encroachment of iconography into the secular sphere. Apart from the explicit authorship that linked the book to the imperial embassy (and made it easier to intervene than with regard to anonymous news correspondents) it was the visual

114 Korb, *Diary of an Austrian secretary, 199-200* (Entry October 6, 7, 1698).

115 In fact, there had been earlier attempts to curtail the flow of information through diplomatic channels. We know about Moscow's attempts to take action against Swedish "hack writers" who were accused of having spread the rumour of an alliance between Razin and Nikon in 1670/71. See S. M. Shamin, "Klevety mnogie' o Rossii (o pervykh popytakh russkogo pravitel'stva borot'sia protiv rasprostraneniia v evropeiskikh informatsionnykh izdaniakh negativnykh i lozhnykh svedenii o Moskovskom gosudarstve)", XXV Pushkinskie chteniia. A. S. Pushkin i Rossiia. Sektsiia 4: Sovremennaia kul'turologiia i mezhkul'turnaia kommunikatsiia (Moskva, 2006). This attempted intervention had taken place on a smaller scale, but probably it is not a coincidence that it was a representative of the church who was concerned.

representation of the secular act of punishment that distinguished Korb's publication from standard accounts in newspapers that the court had subscribed to and that generally did not contain illustrations.¹¹⁶ Visual representation was undoubtedly an extremely delicate issue in the medieval and early modern Russian tradition. When Peter saw the illustrations in Korb's book, he reacted, similar to his diplomats, with an instant defensive reflex. In the longer perspective this reflex action was not counter-balanced by a sober reconsideration.

A Revaluation of Public Opinion? Guarient's Unsuccessful Quest for Justification

While the iconographic dimension of the scandal over Korb's book hints at deep-rooted traditions and expectations that were unwittingly offended, we can see aspects of change in Tsarist government's positions on publicity and to the public sphere. These changes can be seen from Guarient's correspondence with Muscovite officials. Like everything else, the letters remain vague about the actual bone of contention, but Guarient's strategies of defence and justification reveal a lot about the shifting paradigms.

First of all the ambassador denied his authorship. In a letter to Peter's prime minister, Fedor Golovin, he dissociated himself from Korb and took a more or less juridical stance. He refused responsibility for a work that was not written by a subject of the Emperors crown lands (Korb came from Neumarkt in Lower Bavaria):

116 An objection against my emphasis on the importance of visual representation could be made with regard to two other publications. Paul Rycaut, Giovanni Battista Donado, Michele Foscarini and Berengano, *Der Neu-eröffneten Ottomannischen Pforten Fortsetzung. Oder: Continuirter Historischer Bericht ... Beydes aus deß Herrn Ricaut, Donado, Foscarini, Berengano, &c. Und andern glaubwürdigen Schrifften und Uhrkunden, aus dem Frantzösischen, Italienischen und Holländischen in das Hoch-Teutsche übersetzt und zusammen getragen; Zugleich mit kunstreichen Kupffern und wahrhafften Conterfaiten ... außgezieret* (Augsburg, 1700) contains an engraving representing Sofia's monastery with the gallows around. And another description of the Muscovite state, a small brochure that was published about a year after Korb's diary, *Der Moszkowitische Staat Unserer Zeit. Worinnen unpartheyisch beschrieben Dieses grossen Reichs Beschaffenheit und weitläufftigen Gräntzen...*; Insonderheit, Was bey dem Liefvländischen Kriege zeithero zwischen Moßkau und Schweden... vorgegangen sey (Cölln, 1702) reproduced Korb's illustration even on the cover; See also Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 1: 17. I can only presume that the brochures, published in Augsburg and Cölln (Brandenburg), went unnoticed by Russian diplomats.

I beg you not to accuse me of an affair that is not mine: I have no part in that, neither by my words, nor by my deeds. It is the story of my secretary and it would have been impossible to forbid him to print anything even without my knowledge, because he is not born here, but in another region of the Reich.¹¹⁷

In a letter of the same day (24.12.1701) to P. P. Shafirov, the chief translator of the Tsar's foreign office [*posol'skij prikaz*] and one of Peter I's leading diplomats, Guarient repeated his argument, but the ambiguity of his further reasoning deserves closer attention:

Since in this book there is not a single letter from my quill, and since I have *reported to His Imperial Majesty in a completely different key* in regards to the Tsar's grace [than Korb has done in his book] and the imperial ministers are also informed differently, I hope that in Moscow *you will laugh about such an account* and will not accuse me of it [the account]. [...] On the other hand, in my opinion, the book contains many laudable things, apart from some ridiculous and untrue descriptions.¹¹⁸

Guarient's defence has to be situated at the threshold of a new era in imperial diplomatic relations with Russia. This does not mean that *the ambassador's argumentation* was new. It rather appealed to old and well-tried patterns in bilateral relations with Russia. What was new is that *it did not work anymore* for the Russian court. Guarient basically downplayed the significance of Korb's book: why did the Tsar and his diplomats care about this diary? Even if the book was full of lies,¹¹⁹ the essential thing was that he, the imperial Ambassador, had informed the Emperor and his ministers correctly. This was what counted and what prevented imperial diplomats from getting a faulty negative image of the Muscovite court. If Leopold I had ever read this book, he wouldn't have paid attention to it, said Guarient, as the Emperor relied on the information he got through his diplomatic channels. Consequently his attitude towards the Tsar remained unspoilt and absolutely positive. Relevant in Guarient's reckoning was the Emperor, his court and diplomatic corps, i.e. *the policy-makers*. This position did not necessarily reflect

117 Quoted from *Ibid.*, 1: 12.

118 Quoted from *Ibid.*, 1: 13. Guarient waited for this laughter in vain. A few months later he wrote directly to Peter I. to give up and announce his decision to resign from his position as ambassador.

119 Guarient does not entirely condemn the book. If his foremost concern towards Shafirov is to repudiate the accusation against him by renouncing the authorship of the book that has caused such a scandal, he nevertheless tries to rehabilitate Korb's book through a loophole, saying that it contained "many laudable things", see above.

Guarient's personal opinion, but an adopted strategy reflecting what he anticipated to be his interlocutors' point of view.

Guarient's strategic choice was not ungrounded; it was based on experience with Muscovite diplomats and their behaviour in the past. Western newspapers (*kuranty*) were translated at the Tsar's court in order to learn what Western *politicians* knew and thought (including their views about events in Russia). To the Tsar publicity had been important only insofar as it reflected the policy-makers' extent of knowledge. In the 1660s the imperial diplomat Meyerberg, one of Guarient's predecessors, mocked his Muscovite colleagues for referring to Western newspapers as to the Delphian oracle.¹²⁰ Accounts in the press only mattered as a source of information for diplomats and politicians. But Guarient claimed that through his secret bulletins the Emperor was much better informed than through newspapers or a book like Korb's. The ambassador was convinced that the Muscovite court did not consider public opinion and public debate to be an independent force that had to be reckoned with.¹²¹ In the European imagination the Tsar was the incarnation of unlimited autocracy, who would not (and did not need to) care about his own population's opinions: there were not even newspapers in Muscovy. Why then should the Tsar care about public opinion abroad? In this sense, Guarient thought or hoped that he only had to clear up a misunderstanding: he assured his correspondents in Moscow that Korb's book did *not* reflect the reports he, Guarient, had sent to the imperial court in Vienna during the Embassy (hence the dissociation from his secretary Korb) and that the contents of the book were far from being a source of the Emperor's view of Russia and its monarch.

But this reasoning no longer cut any ice with the Tsar. Guarient was not listened to and in 1702 he gave up. Once again he wrote directly to Peter I. Reaffirming his innocence, he concluded "I have finally renounced the position of ambassador to your court that was offered to me, in order not to meet your discontented eye and not to harm affairs."¹²² Guarient's defence was based on a miscalculation. It turned out that for the Muscovite court, public opinion had become a force to reckon with; this was new. But did it mean that the old way of policy-making over the

120 Quoted in *Vesti-kuranty*, 1: 9.

121 David Hume was not even born and if governments already realized that they rested to a certain extent "on opinion", as the Scottish philosopher would later claim it in his path-breaking *Treatise on the Human Nature* (1739/40), this was principally a question of domestic policy. The state-run *Gazette* in France, founded still in the 1630s, was a manifestation of the state's attempts to influence his citizens' opinions through propaganda. Nobody would have tried to bridle public opinion abroad (only in cases of personal insult it was a question of honour to intervene).

122 Quoted from Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 13.

population's heads was abandoned? To answer in the affirmative would be jumping to conclusions. For what we can observe is a concern with public opinion *abroad*.

One reason for this shift in the priorities of Muscovite diplomacy was certainly Peter's recruitment policy. The increased efforts to attract foreign specialists to Russia to work indeed addressed a Western public well beyond the field of political decision-makers. Peter's government was afraid of dissuading foreign specialists from coming to Russia. But it was not mainly the brutal reality of punishment that was deemed prone to repel the candidates; it was the visual representations of such scenes of state violence. This was definitely a wrong assessment: a picture as it was printed in Korb's book was absolutely familiar to occidental Europeans. It would hardly bias him exceedingly against Muscovy.

Although much of the scandal had probably been provoked by cultural differences and ensuing misunderstandings, the affair entailed a more general confrontation concerning the idea of publicity and the public sphere. In the immediate aftermath of the scandal Russian media policy made a quantitative and qualitative leap that would greatly affect foreign relations for generations.

A NEW RUSSIAN MEDIA POLICY

In the Korb case, the intervention was purely to prohibit: Muscovite diplomats demanded that the book should be forbidden and destroyed. In the short term this strategy remained unsuccessful.¹²³ In addition to the intransigence of the imperial court in Vienna that would not allow a loss of face by giving in Russian demands, the affair stirred up curiosity in European educated circles. The scandal attracted interest in the diary, rather than keeping potential readers away, however difficult it was to get access to the few remaining copies. An episode reported in 1705 by the English ambassador in Muscovy Charles Whitworth shows that Peter did not give up. Whitworth wrote to his compatriot Wich in Hamburg about the Tsar's fury when learning of a recent article published abroad, whose author asserted "that great numbers of people had been put to death by strange Torturers for a Rebellion" in Smolensk. Peter raged: the accounts of "both the Execution and the Rebellion were entirely false, nor was there any the least Ground for such a scandalous

123 The Europäische Fama asserted that, thanks to his persistence, Golitsyn had worked a prohibition of the book. But this is quite doubtful and seems to be rather a piece of Russian propaganda, for Huyssen, who apparently had a function analogous to Böttiger's, was particularly influential in this journal and prescribed what had to be written on Russia.

report.”¹²⁴ The message for the ambassador was clear: Peter was not willing to tolerate such interference into the representation of his country.

Such restrictive interventions were not entirely new. But from there on they were increasingly accompanied by *proactive* measures to create images and to shape public opinion. This was an innovation. At first glance the new policy only aimed at internal Russian representation. At the end of 1702, less than two years after the Korb affair, the first newspaper was issued in Russia, the *Vedomosti* [Gazette, Bulletin]. If reforms of dress and ceremonial largely copied what Peter had seen in Western Europe, his *Vedomosti* (Gazette) were far away from German or Dutch counterparts that had to assert themselves into the pluralism of the printing market. Maybe the paper rather followed the French model of the state-run *Gazette*, founded in the 1630s by Théophrast Renaudot under the auspices of Richelieu and Louis XIII.¹²⁵ Even more so, during the first years of the *Vedomosti*'s existence, the Tsar wrote most accounts himself. He apparently attached great importance to this matter. Printed in Moscow and in the new capital (St. Petersburg), the paper had very limited circulation (wavering between fewer than 100 and 4000 copies in 1702-1728).¹²⁶

For instance, in July 1708 contemporaries could read a report on the current revolt of the Don Cossacks under Bulavin in the *Vedomosti*. The chief rebel was presented as an apostate (*bogootstupnik*) and traitor (*vor*) who

planned an uprising in the Ukrainian towns and among the Don-Cossacks. He assembled several traitors [*vory*] and accomplices and sent ‘letters of enticement’ [*prelestnye pis'ma*] into many towns and villages to summon [the people] to become his treacherous accomplices [*vorovskomu edinomyshleniiu*]. And many such traitors and all the Don-Cossacks rallied to him, some out of need, some because they were under a spell [*prelesti*]. And in a throng the assembled went on to many towns and villages – for ravage and in order to urge still more people to join them.

But the Tsar sent his troops under the command of Prince Ya.F. Dolgorukii, in order to “catch Bulavin and to destroy his evil treacherous council.” Then the report

124 The letter is dated May 13/2, 1705. Quoted from Astrid Blome, *Das deutsche Rußlandbild im frühen 18. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur zeitgenössischen Presseberichterstattung über Rußland unter Peter I* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 44-45. We know neither the article nor what it refers to and if something comparable did or did not take place.

125 For the history of the French Gazette see Gilles Feyel, *L'annonce et la nouvelle. La presse d'information en France sous l'Ancien Régime, 1630-1788* (Oxford, 2000).

126 Ingrid Maier, “Pervaja russkaja pechatnaja gazeta i ee inostrannye obrazcy”, in *La Russie et les modèles étrangers*, ed. Serge Rolet (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2010).

enumerated the successes of the Tsar's force, stressing how many rebels were beaten or killed. But probably *the* decisive message of the account was that Bulavin, in a militarily hopeless situation, committed suicide. Today the story of Bulavin's suicide on July 7 is considered a rumour.¹²⁷ But it is important to note that this rumour was apparently launched *by the Russian government* – via its newspaper. The chief rebel's alleged suicide was a suitable means of discrediting him and with him the remnants of the rebellion not yet extinguished in some places.

In Russia it was a novelty to write about revolts that were still going on. Formerly, the population not immediately in danger of being won over to the rebels' side had been provided with official information on current revolts only by priests in their sermons.¹²⁸ Written secular accounts had been rare and the medieval-style chronicles had only emerged many years after the events. Abandoning former taboos, Peter's new media policy seemed, at first glance, to adopt European standards: similar to Western governments it tried to assert an interpretative monopoly, in order to forestall the propagation of alternative narratives through whispering campaigns.¹²⁹ But due to widespread illiteracy and the low print run the pillars of shame were more likely to reach the population.

This makes it likely that Peter's account on Bulavin in the *Vedomosti* aimed not least, and maybe even primarily, at a foreign public. Concomitant measures were taken in order to influence public opinion abroad. Peter's government opened a proverbial second front and started to install "watchdogs" at critical spots that were particularly prone to disseminating news on Russia. We know that shortly after the Bulavin events and the subsequent Russian victory against the Swedes at Poltava (1709), Johann Friedrich Böttiger was put into action in Hamburg. He was resident in Hamburg and paid by the Russian court. He was a key figure in observing and eventually curtailing the German press on anything related to Russian themes. His tasks seem to have been multiple. Of course, he issued official disclaimers, when a newspaper had touched upon a subject that was deemed delicate by the Russian government. But in these cases, the damage had already been done. His main

127 *Vedomost'* no. 8. Moskva [Pechatnyi dvor], July 20, 1708. The paper was issued in 300 copies. Cf. <http://imwerden.de/cat/modules.php?name=books&pa=showbook&pid=2154>, consulted 12.11.2009. For the classification of the suicide story as a rumour see Blome, *Das deutsche Rußlandbild*, 256; Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Der Aufstand der Don-Kosaken unter Kondratij Bulavin, 1707-1708", in *Volksaufstände in Rußland*, 255.

128 This was namely the condemnation of the insurgents and particularly the pronouncement of the anathema against the leaders in liturgy. See Rustemeyer, *Dissens und Ehre*, 254-255. As to the war of information within the realm of revolt see André Berelowitch's contribution.

129 Würgler, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit*.

activity consisted in preventive measures. These were both reactive and proactive. On the one hand he tried to prevent unwelcome news about Tsarist Russia from spreading; on the other hand, he increasingly fed newspapers with “proper” news from the Russian court. In this sense he and his colleagues in other places can be seen as the extended arm of the press policy pursued by the *Vedomosti*. Often publishers did not even realize being provided with “information” from representatives of the Tsar’s court.¹³⁰

Apparently Böttiger did not only focus on the press. Even a German baroque composer like Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) in Hamburg seems to have come into trouble. In 1710 he wrote his opera *Boris Goudenow* about the prelude to the Muscovite Time of Troubles (Godunov’s reign was 1598-1605). Mattheson’s libretto followed the typical intrigue-, love- and power-pattern and did not even include the story of the first False Demetrius, who had conquered the throne from the Godunov family. But the very subject was suspect. It might have included social upheaval and the challenge to dynastic legitimacy, which was particularly dreadful when staged in an *audio-visual* representation. Mattheson was in contact with Russian circles in Hamburg. He had met Böttiger, who must have given him to understand that the Russian government did not approve the production of the opera. We don’t know exactly what happened, but in the end Mattheson refrained from putting the work on stage. The premiere would not take place until 2005 (!) in Hamburg. In his autobiography the composer referred only vaguely to “certain circumstances” that had made him withdraw the opera.¹³¹

130 Blome, *Das deutsche Rußlandbild*, 20-21. Residents with similar tasks seem to have been working in England and France. See *ibid.*, 46.

131 Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte, woran der Tüchtigsten Capellmeister, Componisten, Musikgelehrten, Tonkünstler etc. Leben, Wercke, Verdienste etc. erscheinen sollen* (Hamburg, 1740), 197, quoted from Stephen Stubbs, “Johann Mattheson - the Russian connection. The rediscovery of Boris Goudenow and his other lost operas”, *Early Music* 33, 2 (2005): 283-292, 286. Cf. also Dorothea Schröder, *Zeitgeschichte auf der Opernbühne. Barockes Musiktheater in Hamburg im Dienst von Politik und Diplomatie (1690 - 1745)* (Göttingen, 1998), 38, 80, who supposes that “Russian tradition” forbade the portrayal of tsars living or dead on the theatrical stage. But this seems unlikely, if we consider that Lope de Vega’s *El Gran Duque de Moscovia y Emperador Perseguido* on the Demetrius topic had been staged already a hundred years earlier. Not only appeared the False Demetrius on stage (whom Lope considered as the true Tsar!), but also Boris Godunov and Vasilii Shuiskii. On Lope de Vega’s piece cf. Ervin C. Brody, *The Demetrius legend and its literary treatment in the age of the baroque* (Rutherford, 1972). See also Maureen Perrie’s contribution to this volume. For pictures of the Muscovite sovereign see Kämpfer, *Das russische Herrscherbild*. We rather have to as-

Korb's account itself was remembered for a long time in Europe,¹³² which seems to have been traumatic for the Russian government. Peter's administration made any effort to correct this supposedly negative image by "proactive" representational measures. The main strategy consisted in attributing petty motives of revenge to the author, which would explain his nasty "lies". Still, even before the installation of the Russian emissary in Hamburg, the protestant and pro-Petrine *Europäische Fama* tried to discredit Korb's book. The journal claimed that both, Korb and Guarient, had denied their authorship, but that Guarient had at least financed the publication in his Catholic overzealousness. In reality it would have been "the papal missionaries in Moscow, Dr. Carbonarius and Dr. Pleyer" who had

scrawled it [the book] and filled it with so many unfounded things and untruths, for they were jealous that the Protestant religion enjoyed so many privileges in Moscow, almost more than theirs [the catholic religion], of what the connoisseurs of the Muscovite state can give the best account.¹³³

Shortly after Peter's death (1725), at the beginning of Catherine's I reign, a mysterious treatise in form of a *Conversation between Three Friends who come together in one Town, Namely between Menard, Talander and Varemund* delivered such an explanation of the diary's malevolence. Apparently the treatise was commissioned by the Russian government, probably still under Peter I,¹³⁴ in order to refute a whole range of allegedly slanderous rumours supposedly circulating abroad. The dialogical form and even the protagonists' grecophile names were characteristic of European Enlightenment discourse. Not only form and content, but also the language, suggest that the pamphlet might have been first published abroad

sume that the sensibility of Russian authorities has augmented considerably, especially in the times of Peter I., who was particularly concerned with image building.

132 Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 1: 17-33.

133 *Europäische Fama*, 51. Theil, 1706, reprinted in 1710. Quoted from *Ibid.*, I, p.19-20.

134 Could this have been a reaction to David Fassmann's very popular *Conversations in the realm of the dead* ("Gespräche in dem Reiche der Todten")? Fassmann started to issue this regular publication in 1725, just after Peter's death and gave fictive conversations, generally between Ivan IV and Peter I. He drew much of his information on Peter from Korb's Diary and was thus an important disseminator of Korb's representations on Russia, especially because he successfully addressed to a larger public. Cf. Eckard Matthes, "Das veränderte Rußland und die unveränderten Züge des Russenbilds", in *West-östliche Spiegelungen*, 109-135.

and only then translated into Russian (probably from German).¹³⁵ In the tale one Varemund,¹³⁶ a lieutenant, who left his home country (which remains unspecified) for service in Russia, where he eventually became a major general, then “enlightens” his compatriots. Influenced by anti-Russian pasquinades his two friends are full of prejudice about his host country. Talander refers to:

a book published in Latin under the name of the secretary of the imperial inter-nuncio Gvarnent’s [sic!] Embassy, in which all occurrences that have taken place at court during their stay in Moscow, are described at length in day-to-day entries. Among them turn up several very strange ones, many full of bloodshed, from which the reader gets insight into the extraordinary behaviour of this court and into the cruelty of this government¹³⁷ [... particularly] the brutal execution of several regiments of the former Russian infantry, called strel’tsy.

In contrast to all the other foreign slanderers of the Russian Empire, whose pasquinades turn out to be acts of vengeance by people, who came to Russia as specialists (often military) and have been punished or simply degraded for misdeeds and committed crimes, Menard claims “that such a stranger [like Korb] had no reason to write anything but the truth in his diary.”¹³⁸

In response, Varemund maintains that Korb’s book was written “with malicious fervour” and was full of “exaggerations and lies”. Varemund justifies at length the brutal repressions against the insurgent strel’tsy who at any occasion had

135 “Razgovor mezhdru trekh priiatelei soshedshikhsia v odnom gorode, a imenno Menarda, Talandra, Varemunda”, *Russkii vestnik* T.4, no. 12 (1841). I am referring to the 19th century reprint of the pamphlet. To judge from the context the pamphlet must have been written between May 1726 and March 1727. Cf. the arguments on http://gorchev.lib.ru/ik/Predystoriya%20SPb_1703god/B2_Razdel_2/2_2_07.html, consulted March 27, 2010. Unfortunately I could not find the original publication, neither foreign nor Russian. The editors do not indicate their source: they only note that it “has probably been composed on the initiative of the government that wanted to refute unofficially the calumnies and false rumours on Russia that were circulated by malicious people abroad”. But the complementary information they provide, namely that “a part of it has been published, a long time ago, in one of the Muscovite journals, but here it is printed in its entirety” strengthens my hypothesis that the original text was published abroad in a foreign language, most probably German to judge from the numerous (completely un-Russian) foreign words.

136 Varemund, German: wahre Mund, “true mouth”, i.e. the one, who tells the truth.

137 Ibid., 320-321.

138 Ibid., 336-337.

manifested their “wilfulness and insubordination” through dangerous rebellions. The fervent defender of Peter’s policies picks up the rumours that had circulated during the 1682 uprising when he asserts that the strel’tsy had attempted the life of the sovereign, not only in Peter’s reign, but earlier during his father’s (Tsar Aleksei) and brother’s (Tsar Fedor) reigns. Although Peter had declared an amnesty in the strel’tsy’s favour after previous revolts, they had abused his goodwill with malicious aforethought. In view of the extraordinary threat they presented, Peter had been forced to proceed in an extraordinary way, “to set an appalling example.” He would not be able to relieve the country “from these rebellious strel’tsy [*ot tekh rebeliatnikov Strel’tsov*], until the very name of the strel’tsy infantry was abolished.” Furthermore,

subsequent uprisings in Astrakhan¹³⁹ and elsewhere showed clearly that even the cruelty, with which [the regime] had proceeded against them at that time, did not heal them of their *inborn* wilfulness and insubordination [*ot vkorenno go v nikh svoevol’stva i neposlushaniia*] and would not retain them

from their evil deeds. Varemund remains vague about what Korb’s lies precisely were, but in response to his interlocutor’s question about the *reasons* for the dairy author’s “malice” he explains: “it was said in Moscow that the commission [i.e. Guarient’s Embassy] had not been successful at the Russian Court.” As the peace of Karlowitz (1699) had been “made without Russian participation”, the Tsar had “concluded a two-year armistice with the Turks” separately. In Varemund’s opinion this armistice ran counter to the Emperor’s interests: “maybe the envoy wanted to take revenge for the failure of his commission.”¹⁴⁰

How did publishers abroad react to these attempts of intervention by Peter I and his successors? Did they comply with Russian lobbyists’ interventions? One has to

139 The Astrakhan uprising (1705-06) was mainly a matter of the townspeople, merchants, commoners, but indeed, as the main military guard of the town, the strel'tsy played an important role again. However, the strel'tsy of the South probably had not that much in common with the Moscow strel'tsy, who had not been admitted to their homes and families. On the Astrakhan uprising see Nina Borisovna Golikova, *Astrakhanskoe vosstanie. 1705-1706 gg.* (Moskva, 1975).

140 *Razgovor mezhdru trekh priiatelei*, 336-338. From Varemund's explanation it does neither become clear why he regarded Guarient's Embassy as a failure nor in what respect the Russian separate armistice with the Ottoman Empire was such a problem for the Roman Emperor and his delegation. On Russian foreign policy with regard to the peace of Karlowitz see *Handbuch der Geschichte Rußlands*, 257-259 with further bibliographical references.

take into account that ideas about public opinion on parts of the Russian government differed quite fundamentally from those of publishers in the Reich. Guarient's half-hearted efforts to protect his secretary had not impressed his Russian addressees: in spite of some "untrue description" Korb's book "contained many laudable things."¹⁴¹ This implied that since errors were almost inevitable, they were pardonable. The reader would judge for himself about the value of the accounts. The argument corresponded to the position adopted by the publishers of several German newspapers when defending themselves against disclaimers issued by Russian emissaries like Böttiger, who accused the papers of distorting facts. Due to the curtailed flow of information, claimed many publishers, arriving news accounts from Russia were often contradictory. Under these circumstances, they would print what they received, even contradictory information, in order to leave it for readers to judge on their own. Short introductory comments informed readers about both, the scarcity and contradictoriness of available information, and about the pluralist approach the newspaper adopted to cope with those constraints.¹⁴² In contrast to that the Russian government held that there was only one (its own) "truth" and that everything else had to be rigorously suppressed.

We have seen that Guarient's justifications showed willingness to compromise. In contrast to him, some newspaper agents resisted and tried to keep to their pluralism, at least initially. But pluralism was not a matter of principle; it was a matter of commercial interest. Boring and monotonous articles would not sell and readers were curious to read about Russia. But at the same time, among the readers were merchants engaged in long-distance trade with Russia. They became particularly prone to compromise, once they realized that Peter's government was not kidding. Readiness to yield to Russian pressure in the field of censorship extended well into the political sphere, for the whole commercial community profited from trade activity. Facing increasing complaints from the Russian government that threatened to sanction their commercial privileges, the merchants of Hamburg who traded in Russia did not refrain from petitioning to the Senate and from demanding the arrest of the news printer in order to "satisfy His Majesty the Tsar".¹⁴³ And they were heard. At the beginning of the 1720s, the Hamburg Senate even issued a general law interdicting publishers from printing news items on Russian affairs that were not preapproved by the Russian resident-censor. Without the Russian government's approbation nothing could be published any more. This

141 Dukmeyer, *Korbs Diarium itineris*, 1: 13.

142 For examples of such introductory remarks see Blome, *Das deutsche Rußlandbild*, 40-52.

143 Quoted in *ibid.*, 45.

had far-reaching consequences for the media coverage on Russia, apparently not only in Hamburg.¹⁴⁴

However, it would be too easy to interpret this confrontation in terms of the proverbial East-West dichotomy. It was rather a clash of the emerging state-Arcanum with a market of unbridled public opinion, which was closely entangled with commercial interests. The numerous newspapers in the Reich published extensively on all sorts of seditions, but tellingly not on those taking place within their own principality or town. Public interest in these events was enormous and rulers proved to be simply incapable of muzzling publishers outside their realm, although they might have wished to do so. During seditions both sides, authorities and rebels alike, therefore tried to win over newspapers and other disseminators of information in neighbouring principalities. The search for legitimacy took thus place under conditions of competition, and sometimes in a veritable war of information.¹⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, the rugged political landscape of the Reich imposed conditions that differed from the informational monopoly (or the monopoly of silence) in Russia.¹⁴⁶

144 See *ibid.*, 50-51.

145 This was not so much different in Russia, but the use of the written word was more limited and both sides resorted to prohibitive measures. Reading the appeals of the other side, and sometimes even talking about the very fact of its issuing of appeals was frequently punished severely during the Razin revolt. See André Berelowitch's contribution to this volume. On the concept of a "war of information" see the ongoing PhD of the sociologist Dario Chi at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS).

146 Dutch newspapers were similarly commercialized. In the United Provinces, diplomatic records were even considered public documents: throughout the 16th and 17th centuries every member had access to them. Since 1651 financial questions had been excluded from publication and only at the end of the century secrecy became obligatory. See Belov, *Pis'ma Ioanna fan Kellera*, 377-378. Elsewhere, diplomatic records made their way into the press as well during the 17th century: residents sent reports not only to their sovereign, but also to newspapers that published them often without specifying their source of information. A major change thus occurred around the turn of the century, roughly at the same time when Peter started his media-political campaigns in the context of Korb's publication.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FOREIGN COVERAGE OF SOCIAL UNREST IN RUSSIA

What were the consequences of this new media policy? To what an extent did it have an impact on the coverage of social conflict in Russia abroad?

Foreign accounts of 17th-century revolts had been numerous and substantial, to the extent that scholars use them to the present day as first-rate sources. For the revolts of the 18th century, the accounts dried out and almost disappeared. The boundary between arcane and public information became more clear-cut. The Danish envoy Just Juel is a case in point. He stayed in Petersburg from 1709 to 1711, and like most diplomats, he kept a diary in which we can find Peter's I above-mentioned "scientific" observations on hens' and humans' (i.e. executed rebels') behaviour immediately after decapitation. But while predecessors like Butenant had published their accounts as a matter of course, Juel wrote a little preface to the King Frederic IV stating that his notes were definitely *not* designed for the public: "If I wanted to make them generally accessible through the press, of course I would take precautions and remove all paragraphs in which the Tsar and his subjects are painted in a not too attractive light." He was even convinced that, if the Tsar took notice of the diary, he would complain to the Danish king and accuse him of "deliberately disgracing the Russian nation."¹⁴⁷

The effect was already palpable during the Astrakhan (1705-06) and the Bulavin (1707-08) uprising. For German readers, the nature of the Astrakhan uprising remained vague: the regime's application of both carrot and stick were presented in a quite schematic way. In 1706 German newspapers stressed the government's clemency. The *Hamburger Relations-Courier* reported that "the Astrakhan rebels have finally submitted, and a part of them has been pardoned and released from punishment". There was no comment on "the other part". The accounts in the *Europäische Fama* were virtually panegyrics to the Tsar. According to its editor Sinold von Schütz, one of the first publishers who absolutely toed Peter's line, news about a huge rebellion in Muscovy in 1706 could not be anything but false rumours ("*Spargamente*"). In one editorial he played down the scope of the events and asserted that the Russian subjects "were too much devoted to their sovereign and understood too well that his fatherly sorrow aimed only at the prosperity and cultivation of the great Muscovite Empire for such to occur." Nevertheless, he could not deny that something had happened; so he praised "his Majesty the Tsar's unrivalled mercy, with which he pardoned the accomplices", with the effect that "the said Astrakhan rebels were ashamed of their own vice. So they reaffirmed their submission and promised to compensate for the 'eyesore of

147 Zapiski Julja Justa, 417.

rebellion' by more braveness and unswerving fidelity, declaring their readiness to joyfully sacrifice their lives for the sovereign's glory"¹⁴⁸ Only after considerable delay, when the town rebellion on the Volga had already been over for almost two years and the Bulavin uprising already in full swing, did the *Hamburger Relations-Courier* mention the "stick" that has been applied to (another group of?) the rebels. It stated the execution of "300 of the Astrakhan and Azov rebels", whose "hanged corpses were exposed in the most exclusive streets."¹⁴⁹

The German coverage of the Bulavin revolt (1707-08) had even less to do with the actual events in the huge region of the Don Cossacks. The *Hamburger Relations-Courier* and the *Kern-Chronik* unanimously reported a *peasant* rebellion. The miseries that generally drove peasants into revolt were much more familiar to Western authors and readers than the situation of the Cossack hosts, from which the movement actually emerged. The factually wrong assertion about the peasants' role as instigators and principal actors of the uprising led to observations on the flight to the peripheries of the empire, a centrifugal movement that was indeed characteristic of peasants' reactions to serfdom and encroachment of the state. The Russian peasants, so goes the account, "had fled to the Don and wanted to live like the Cossacks". Then the Cossacks refused to accept them and even served instead as the principal tools of repression,¹⁵⁰ in one account even in cooperation with Tartars. Consequently the peasants could be subdued and "brought back to their obligations." In reality the Don-Cossacks were the main instigators and actors of the rebellion. Cossack unrest was mentioned, but vaguely and, strangely enough, only for the years preceding the actual Bulavin uprising. The long-lasting Bashkir uprising in the Urals region (1704-11) occurred as well.¹⁵¹ But Bulavin's name was mentioned neither in relation to the "rebellious peasants" or insurgent Cossacks, nor to the Cossack repressive force that was said to have defeated the peasants. Bulavin was quoted as the leader of "rebellious Tartars" (apparently others than those who allegedly supported the subjection of the rebellious peasants). They would have

148 Europäische Fama, 50. Theil (1706): 133. A shortened version is reprinted in *ibid.*, 55. Theil (1706): 505.

149 Hamburger Relations-Courier 19 (2.2.1708), quoted from Blome, *Das deutsche Rußlandbild*, 255.

150 This is grist to the mill of Soviet historiography and the hypothesis of class-struggle, peasant war and clear-cut social division between the peasant refugees that had recently arrived and the upper class of the well-established and prosperous Cossacks. Cf. Viktor I. Buganov, *Bulavin* (Moskva, 1988). Nevertheless, even though this fitted well the interpretative framework of Marxist historiography, Soviet historians were serious enough not to rely on such sources.

151 Hamburger Relations-Courier (16.3.1708).

tried to rally support from the Ottoman Empire. And in the end Bulavin, their leader, was said to have committed suicide.¹⁵² This was purported months before he actually died and before his “suicide” was propagated in the *Vedomosti*. We do not know if this rumour was launched by the Russian government already at that time in order to downplay the significance of the movement. Anyway, most of these Western representations of Russian revolts after the Korb scandal were vague and painted a confusing and contradictory picture. Many different resisting groups were mentioned: peasants, Cossacks, Tartars and Bashkirs. But as reported in Germany their actions seemed to have been completely chaotic, uncoordinated and rather senseless. The different groups often struggled internally against each other. Nothing concrete was said about their motives, grievances or claims – a notable difference from the accounts of the 17th century.

In contrast to the profoundly evil image of the *strel'tsy* that was held up by Peter's government, many foreign representations, when depicting the very existence or potential for revolt in Russia, increasingly referred to a civilization-backwardness pattern. Peter was the incarnation of the enlightened sovereign. Resistance to his efforts at modernizing the country was presented as a manifestation of profound backwardness. If persuasion turned out to be fruitless, the struggle against backward resistance justified the use of violence, especially if the larger project of modernization was endangered. The following reflections in the *Europäische Fama* on prejudice, justice and violence are paradigmatic, especially for how they relate these questions to the character of particular peoples and nations:

The *stubbornness* of the human heart, the obstinacy and the *foolish love of old habits* often tempt the subjects into *ignorant disobedience*, into secret and irresponsible attacks and into a dangerous rebelliousness. The greatest monarchs could never be sure, *if justice had not given them the sword*, with which they could punish and eliminate the troublemakers who *disdain general order and peace and good institutions*. Frequently violent means are more necessary for one *nation* than for another: this has to be taken into account. For a good government one does not only need clemency, but sometimes one has to be severe and resort to force. Some peoples are *so deeply submerged in prejudice*, that [this prejudice] *cannot be removed by rational reasoning*; all the more if those who think they are conserving religion, i.e. the clergymen, try to win over the spirits of the credulous with all sorts of teachings that are adverse to the state [my emphases, M.G.].¹⁵³

152 Hamburger Relations-Courier (2.2.1708).

153 Europäische Fama 212. Theil (1718), 628-29. Quoted from Blome, Das deutsche Rußlandbild, 262.

Peoples (*Völcker*) and nations (*Nationen*) are distinguished on the basis of their developmental level. Prejudice, ascribed to some peoples more than to others, is partly related to religion, whose adepts are presented here almost as the preachers of backwardness, in contrast to the state that appears as the promoter of reason and rationality. This view would fit into claims about the priests' alleged key role in the strel'tsy uprising (as they were said to have led the rebels with icons). The accusation of the clergy as the exponent of backwardness also justified the enhancement of state power to the detriment of the Orthodox Church, insofar as the Patriarchate was replaced by the Holy Synod and the administration of church property handed over to the Monastical Prikaz, i.e. to a state office.¹⁵⁴ But while curtailing the clergy's powers in the Orthodox centre, Peter allowed missionaries to act freely in the periphery among the Islamic and pagan tribes. If they had hardly been touched by Peter's predecessors,¹⁵⁵ the Church now launched huge campaigns of forced Christianization, for instance among the Muslim Bashkirs, a major provocation that fuelled their revolt of 1704-1711. Western representations, normally not particularly favourable towards the Orthodox Church, then seemed to justify its missionary activity in the light of a *civilizational gradient* between more or less backward peoples of the Russian Empire. In the centre the influence of the Orthodox Church was already considered backward and therefore harmful: for this reason, Peter was thought to be right when curbing the clergy's power there. But in the more backward periphery the influence of the Church was still the harbinger of progress. In this light, to quote just one example, Swedish officer Johann Bernhard Müller¹⁵⁶ described the Ostyaks and Voguls, nomad pagan tribes roaming between the Urals and the Enisei, almost as animals, which was not an entirely new slant: "They lick their wounds like dogs." According to his account there would be no hope "that they will ever be *civilized*",

154 For a survey of Peter's church policy see Handbuch der Geschichte Rußlands, 333–40.

For a more detailed account see James Cracraft, *The church reform of Peter the Great* (London, 1971).

155 This imperial practice of expansion and rule with a rather tolerant religious policy was inherited from the Mongolian system of rule. The imperial centre contented itself with co-opting the elites of the conquered peoples and did not interfere into the internal socio-economic, cultural and religious structures of the newly incorporated territories. Such an allowance of heterogeneity seems to have been an alternative to the Western model of homogenization in early modern times. See Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (München, 2001).

156 Müller had been captured after the battle of Poltava, sent to Tobol'sk, and in 1712 charged by Peter to travel to the Siberian North along the Ob'.

*unless it be by embracing the Principles of Christianity, and submitting to these Regulations which the Metropolitan is now endeavouring to introduce among them in order to bring them to a more regular way of Life than they have led hitherto. If this laudable Attempt takes Effect, there is no doubt it will at the same time considerably alleviate their extreme Poverty and Misery, which is in great measure owing to their irregular Life.*¹⁵⁷

This perspective that development should relieve them of an animal-like existence was a new dimension, characteristic of Enlightenment projections. Only Christianity could bring these savages from ignorance and push them from the darkness and obscurity of their brutish nature towards the light of civilization. And for nomad heathens it seemed not to make a difference that the promoter of Christianity was the Orthodox Church. However, those Ostyaks were not ready to voluntarily give up “the Vanity of the idolatrous Worship of wooden Images”, in order “to adore the true living God”:

[T]hose People, prepossessed with the Antiquity of that Service, *opposed* all the Metropolitan’s Endeavors, alledging, that their Ancestors had, Time out of Mind, maintained the Worship of their Sheitans [idols], and fared well by it; that as for themselves, they were from their Childhood brought up to it, and were *unwilling* to change it for another, which would make them believe the Souls of their Ancestors to be in a State of Damnation, or at best in a very dubious Condition: So that at first they seemed resolved rather *to venture upon the last Extremities*, than to renounce the Religion and Customs of their Fore-fathers. [...]

Those who lived *in more remote Parts*, shewed *still greater Obstinacy* in forsaking their Idolatry. Some Priests of their Sheitans were very active in countenancing the Sticklers for the ancient Worship, by making them believe, that the Idol had foretold what would happen, eight Days before the Metropolitan’s Arrival, and warned them to withstand the Attempts of the Christians, which he [the idol] would certainly baffle and disappoint by his powerful Protection.

Müller would not specify exactly what it meant when these peoples stood up to “all Extremities in maintaining their Religion”. We can only guess about the extent of violence the Orthodox missionaries resorted to in order to break the resistance of the population. To judge from foreign accounts the aim of the civilizing project

157 I quote from the English translation of Weber's account that reproduces large sections of Müller's descriptions of Russian Christianization efforts. Friedrich Christian Weber, *The present state of Russia. In two volumes. Being an account of the government of that country, both civil and ecclesiastical; of the Czar's forces by sea and land, ... The whole being the journal of a foreign minister who resided in Russia at that time. With A description of Petersburg...* (London, 1722-23), 2:70.

justified all means, even if, in the end, “the pious Zeal and convincing Arguments” of the metropolitan “were of such Weight with those People, that they also consented to the burning of their Idol.”¹⁵⁸ In confrontations with idolaters, the Orthodox missionaries were viewed as champions of progress and of a civilizing mission. The greater the opponents’ backwardness, the more crucial were their ringleaders. Only the “priests of the Sheitans” could transform that stubborn backwardness of the nomad population into a dangerous rebellious force. They thus had to be neutralized, no matter by which means. Using violence for that purpose was far from being taboo, although non-violent methods were preferable.

In similar key the Danish envoy Just Juel depicted Peter’s cordial treatment of “a Siberian prince, who was called tsarevich like the Tsar’s son”, because “his ancestors had been Tsars of Siberia, before they came under Russian dominion”. This Siberian prince often accompanied the Tsar or his ministers on their travels – all this at the expense of the court. According to Juel, Peter did so “partly out of pity, and partly [out of fear] that [the tsarevich] might make his way back home, stir up a rebellion and try to regain the status and power of his ancestors.”¹⁵⁹ Such illegitimate lust for power had to be nipped in the bud and potential ringleaders had to be contained and neutralized. But the breeding ground that made them so dangerous was ignorance and backwardness. In order to foment uproar and revolts shamans, the tsarevich and others could rely on a backward and credulous population, who did not understand that they were only being exploited by evil villains, whereas the enlightened Tsar and his missionaries were fighting for their bright future. This made it a paramount task to civilize the local population.

EPILOGUE

Such interpretations by foreigners seemed to be acceptable to Peter’s and his successors’ governments, especially when the observers wrote about potential rather than actual upheaval. Benign methods of education were to be highlighted, while a scenario of looming backward revolt constantly threatening the government’s civilizing efforts pre-emptively legitimated harsh measures of repression.

Peter I was actually perceived as the first enlightened monarch in Europe, well before Frederic II of Prussia or Joseph II of Austria and Catherine II of Russia. This image was fostered by Russia’s stereotypical barbarism which was gradually transformed into backwardness. From the vantage point of Western perceptions of

158 Ibid., 2: 89-91.

159 Zapiski Iulia Iusta, 58-59.

Russian revolts we have seen that this shift announced itself already before Peter's actual reign. But Peter's personality became the main focus that helped to crystallize the crucial dichotomy of a backward population and an enlightened ruler, who would be able to launch an effective *mission civilisatrice*. The ferocity of repression might have been a temporary irritating factor for some – and Leibniz showed slight irritation in his correspondence –, but in comparison to other European countries this sort of reprisal was not exceptional at all: just at the same time “domestic state violence” reached a climax in Louis XIV's France with the repression of the Huguenot Camisards in the Cevennes¹⁶⁰ – and France was rather seen as a model of absolutist progress. No doubt, Peter's active participation in the executions that Korb referred to in his Diary was extraordinary. But Peter was generally perceived as an extraordinary monarch. His reputation as a sovereign who took into *his own hands* the destiny of his country was largely supported by his own self-representation. To a certain extent, Western, especially German, perception of Peter I helped to bring about Enlightenment thinking and the very idea of *aufgeklärter Absolutismus* (enlightened absolutism). The current English (*enlightened despotism*) and French terms (*despotisme éclairé*) sound even more paradoxical to our ears. But they mirror what leading enlighteners deemed necessary towards a “backward” population such as the Russians, and even more so the savage non-Russian peoples further to the East. The image of Peter's government and policy thus had a cathartic effect to the emergence of such notions.¹⁶¹

The Russian government's attempts to monopolize representation of revolt or, more precisely, to obliterate memory and put the very event of revolt under taboo, remained dominant throughout the Enlightenment period, while contacts to the West significantly intensified. This policy of taboo culminated in Catherine II's reaction to the Pugachev uprising (1773-75). Immediately after the repression of this last and biggest revolt since the Time of Troubles that again started from the Cossack periphery and temporarily took hold of huge territories, including vast peasant-dominated black-earth lands – Catherine II forbade any mention of these events for half a century, to the effect that Pushkin would be the first Russian to write on this major social upheaval. But such a practice was not exceptional, neither. All over Europe governments tried to impose *damnatio memoriae*,

160 Howard G. Brown, “Domestic State Violence. Repression from the Croquants to the Commune”, *The Historical Journal* 42, 3 (1999), 597-622.

161 Grosso modo this is the line of the argument in Astrid Blome and Volker Depkat, *Von der 'Civilisierung' Rußlands und dem 'Aufblühen' Nordamerikas im 18. Jahrhundert. Leitmotive der Aufklärung am Beispiel deutscher Rußland- und Amerikabilder* (Bremen, 2002), referring simultaneously to the Wild West and the Wild East.

generally by an exclusive representation of public punishment and executions, in order to supersede anything related to the rebels' very actions and (maybe even, to a certain extent, legitimate) motives. Like in Russia, success was limited. Dissident narratives of the events, including panegyrics of revolt-leaders were bequeathed orally, often in folklore.¹⁶² But it was extraordinary that a government tried to manipulate and control foreign representations of domestic revolts. And for this reason the Russian diplomacy's harsh reaction to the publication of Korb's diary aroused much curiosity all over Europe. Again there had been precedents in the second half of the 17th century. But in the Korb case the consecutive measures of establishing Russian resident-agents such as Bötticher in Hamburg who were in charge of muzzling foreign representations made clear that Peter was not kidding. And this foreign-press policy seemed to have a long-lasting impact throughout the whole 18th century, when foreign accounts of Russian revolts became almost insignificant, sometimes merely inexistent. Of course, the Pugachev-revolt of 1773-75 was a major event that could not be ignored in Europe. But Catherine's commemorative prohibition definitely scared European commentators. The few accounts of the events were published anonymously.¹⁶³

The case of Korb's Diary played an important part for this shift of paradigms in foreign coverage of Russian revolts. Of course, the Russian government's foreign-press-policy was still amplified by the experience of the great Northern war, when both sides tightened their propaganda measures, both restrictive and proactive. Nevertheless, I would argue that the Korb scandal was due to a considerable extent

162 This clandestine commemoration has been studied by Suter on the example of the Swiss peasant war (1653). Suter, *Der schweizerische Bauernkrieg von 1653*. To be sure, for Russia we know of such narratives, poems and songs, for the big Cossack revolts, see Aleksandra Nikolaevna Lozanova, *Pesni i skazaniia o Razine i Pugacheve* (Moskva, Leningrad, 1935), but not for the strel'tsy uprising of 1698. Often popular commemoration centered on the officially defamed leaders. For 1698, such outstanding leaders seem to be lacking, at least in official memory.

163 Apart from newspaper reports there seem to have been only two detailed accounts of the events, one in French, sort of a historical novel published immediately after the end of the revolt, one in German, probably written by the famous geographer Gerhard Friedrich Müller, who worked in Russian. His friend Anton Friedrich Büsching waited until Müller's death, and even then he published the account only anonymously. "Zuverlässige Nachrichten von dem Auführer Jemeljan Pugatschew und der von demselben angestifteten Empörung", in *Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie*. angelegt von D. Anton Friedrich Büsching, Königlich-Preussischen Oberconsistorialrath, Director des Gymnasiums im grauen Kloster zu Berlin, und der davon abhängigen beyden Schulen. Achtehnter Theil (Halle, 1784): 3-70.

to cultural misunderstanding, notably the incompatibility of visual cultures. The first thing Russian diplomats and Peter himself could see in Korb's Latin work was the copperplate with the panorama of Moscow entirely dominated by gallows, execution and torture scenes. For European spectators this was a completely usual form of representation. For Russians it was not. For them such pictures were shocking, since they did not correspond at all to their own visual culture that remained largely dominated by iconography and ecclesiastical representation, where even the suffering of the Christ was depicted only in very veiled symbolical forms. In this domain further research will be necessary, especially focusing on zones of contact between Western and Orthodox visual cultures. A focus on contact zones: clashes and conflicts on the one hand, rapprochement and syncretism on the other, would be particularly promising strategy in order to decipher the particularities of the early modern visual languages that are far from disclosing themselves easily to 21st century observers.

