

“Revolts” in the *Kuranty* of March–July 1671

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INTRODUCTION

The *kuranty* are the surveys of the foreign press prepared for the Tsar and Boyar Council starting in the middle of the 17th century. It is impossible to determine when the practice of their compilation began, since it developed gradually over many years. The *kuranty* began to be compiled on a regular basis in 1665, when a contract was concluded between the foreigner Jan van Sweeden and the Chancery of Privy Affairs (the organ concerned with questions of personal interest to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich) for the organization of the Riga post, which was to supply Moscow on a bi-weekly basis with foreign newspapers.¹ Starting in September 1668, the Riga post arrived weekly, and beginning in March 1669 a second post, located in Vilna, also began to operate weekly.² The *kuranty* were read to the Tsar and members of the Boyar Council. In the second half of the 17th century, they were the basic source of operative information for the Russian government about the political situation in Europe.³ The *kuranty* used in this manner were filed in the archive of the Diplomatic Chancery. Today, the main collection of them is preserved in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA, f. 155).

The main aim of our essay is to show which articles in the European press concerning social conflicts such as disorders, plots, revolts, uprisings and popular

1 *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, ed. Imperatorskoi Arkheograficheskoi komissiei, t. 21. Dela Tainogo prikaza, kn. 1 (Sankt Peterburg, 1907), stb. 1065.

2 I. P. Kozlovskii, *Pervye pochty i pervye pochthmeistery v Moskovskom gosudarstve*, 2 toma (Varshava, 1913), 2: 36–37.

3 E. I. Kobzareva, “Izvestiia o sobytiakh v Zapadnoi Evrope v dokumentakh Posol'skogo prikaza XVII veka” (Dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kand. ist. nauk, Moskva, 1988 [unpublished]), 178.

movements attracted attention from the Russian government during a specified period, viz. from March to the beginning of July 1671.⁴

Previous research has touched upon representations of revolts in the kuranty on more than one occasion. The first translated news items studied by Russian scholars were reports about the uprising of Stepan Razin. As early as 1857, A. Popov commented on the Russian authorities' attempts to prompt Sweden to punish those who spread rumours about the uprising of Stepan Razin and the dispute between Aleksei Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon in the European newspapers.⁵ Subsequently, N. N. Bantysh-Kamenskii and G. Forsten explored this subject.⁶ A significant part of the kuranty containing news about the Razin uprising has been published.⁷ Other social conflicts were less elaborately examined. The American scholar D. C. Waugh in his dissertation noted the kuranty reports of the 1660s, which described disturbances in the Ottoman Empire.⁸ The materials of the kuranty featuring news about various social conflicts in England have been studied in detail. The Russian scholar E. I. Kobzareva examined the information about England received and translated in Russia from 1642 to 1688 in her (unpublished) doctoral dissertation.⁹ S. M. Shamin analysed the reports in the kuranty concerning the uprising in Moscow in 1682.¹⁰ However, no one has yet undertaken to analyse all of the news in the kuranty about social conflicts for a particular period.

For our analysis we have chosen the kuranty ranging from March through the beginning of July 1671. We selected this period because at that time Russia was shaken by a major revolt led by Stepan Razin. The European press reported about

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- 4 The relevant documents are kept in RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7 (most documents); *ibid.*, 1665 [!], ed. khr. 12 (just one set of kuranty that ended up in the archive in the wrong chronological order).
 - 5 A. Popov, *Istoriia vozmushcheniia Stenki Razina* (Moskva, 1857), 81–82.
 - 6 N. N. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Obzor vneshnikh snoshenii Rossii (po 1800 god)*, ch. 4 (Moskva, 1902), 190–191; G. Forsten, “Snosheniia Shvetsii i Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVII v. 1648–1700” [chast' 4], *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* (June 1899): 278–339.
 - 7 A. G. Man'kov, ed., *Inostrannye izvestiia o vosstanii Stepana Razina. Materialy i issledovaniia* (Leningrad, 1975), 80–151.
 - 8 Daniel C. Waugh, “Seventeenth-Century Muscovite Pamphlets with Turkish Themes: Toward a Study of Muscovite Literary Culture in its European Setting” (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1972).
 - 9 Kobzareva, *Izvestiia*, 145–199.
 - 10 S. M. Shamin, “Kuranty kak istochnik po istorii Moskovskogo vosstaniia 1682 g.” (to appear).

the Razin uprising from the very beginning, but no *kuranty* for the last months of 1670 and the first two months of 1671 have been preserved (the *kuranty* compiled between July 6 and the beginning of September 1671 are also missing). According to the German press historian Martin Welke, the Razin revolt was one of the most frequently reported events in the German newspapers of 1670–1671.¹¹ The translators of the *kuranty* usually did not leave out these reports in their news bulletins for the Tsar and boyars.

Our primary inquiry is not so much concerned with reports about revolts in Europe in general, but rather the way in which European news about events in Russia came back to their starting point. The existence of published studies on the given theme has substantially facilitated our work. In the first part of our paper we examine *kuranty* materials about social conflicts in Poland / Ukraine and in Western Europe; the second part is devoted to the uprising of Stepan Razin.

The translations in the *kuranty* of reports written in German were derived for the most part from Berlin newspapers: *B. Einkommende Ordinari und Postzeitungen*¹² and *Mittwochischer / Sonntagischer Mercurius*.¹³ In all likelihood, the compilers of the *kuranty* used the Königsberg newspaper *Königsb. Sontags / Donnerstags Ordinari PostZeitung* as well, but only five complete issues and one fragment of that paper have been preserved in Moscow for all of 1671.¹⁴ Only one of them relates to the period we examined,¹⁵ and that issue was not used as a source for any of the translations. However, since the Königsberg paper was very popular in the Diplomatic Chancery in the 1660s,¹⁶ there is no reason to think that the

11 Martin Welke, "Rußland in der deutschen Publizistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (1613–1689)", in *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, Historische Veröffentlichungen, ed. Osteuropa-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin, vol. 23 (Wiesbaden, 1976), 105–275, 203.

12 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 2.

13 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 3.

14 One of the six complete copies that have been preserved, No. 104, is in duplicate (RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 1). No. 102 is not complete; only pp. 1–2 and 7–8 are preserved. This fragment is bound in together with newspapers from Berlin; see RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 2, fol. 141–142. For a detailed survey of all printed German newspapers from the 17th century in RGADA see V. I. Simonov, "Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. Jahrhunderts im Zentralen Staatsarchiv für alte Akten (CGADA), Moskau", *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1979), 210–220.

15 *Königsb. Sontags Ordinari PostZeitung* No. 14 (RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 1).

16 See *Vesti-Kuranty 1656 g., 1660–1662 gg., 1664–1670 gg. Ch. 2: Inostrannye originaly k russkim tekstam. Issledovanie i podgotovka tekstov Ingrid Majer* (Moskva, 2008), 78–79.

situation changed significantly in 1671. Due to the poor preservation of the newspaper, we probably did not identify any “Königsberg originals”.¹⁷ As for the Dutch kuranty originals for 1671, we could identify Russian translations from newspapers printed in Amsterdam, Haarlem (near Amsterdam) and The Hague. Unfortunately, not many editions printed during the period under consideration are still preserved in Moscow.¹⁸ Since so many 17th-century newspaper issues have been lost forever (not only in Russia, but also in other countries), we could trace the foreign originals for less than 50% of the kuranty texts quoted in this article.

In order to understand which news about revolts attracted the interest of the Muscovite government, it is necessary to establish which of the newspapers that arrived in Moscow were translated and which were not. We can be most confident about this in those cases when translations of articles from specific issues of a European paper are found in the kuranty. In these cases we can surmise that the omitted publications were irrelevant to the translators.¹⁹ The matter is more complicated in the cases when there is no translation in the kuranty from an issue of a newspaper that was nevertheless received in Moscow. Then it is necessary to decide whether the articles of that issue were omitted because they were of no interest to Russian diplomats or whether the file of the kuranty in which they were found has been lost.

In this context we analysed the degree of preservation of the kuranty for the relevant period, viz. March – July 1671. The schedule of the Riga and Vilna posts meant that foreign newspapers for the compilation of the kuranty were obtained about eight times a month (four times each via the Riga and the Vilna postal line).

17 No copies have been preserved in other repositories either; see Else Bogel & Elger Blühm, *Die deutschen Zeitungen des 17. Jahrhunderts. Ein Bestandsverzeichnis mit historischen und bibliographischen Angaben*, Studien zur Publizistik. Bremer Reihe. Band 17:III (München etc., 1985), 109.

18 For an exact survey of all printed Dutch 17th-century newspapers still preserved in RGADA see Ingrid Maier, “Niederländische Zeitungen ('Couranten') des 17. Jahrhunderts im Russischen Staatsarchiv für alte Akten (RGADA), Moskau”, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (2004), 191–218. Moreover, two (probably unique) issues – which we saw only after the 2004 article was printed – can be found in RGADA, f. 155, op. 2, ed. khr. 45 and 46: *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 14 and *Amsterdamsche Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 15, both printed April 8, 1681.

19 It is possible that in cases when the quantity of information was large, the translators might omit also those materials which would have been included in the kuranty in other circumstances, where there was a smaller amount of pertinent information. In any event, the compilers of the kuranty did not omit new information about subjects which directly touched upon Russian interests.

However, in practice, for the period of the 1670s–1690s the *kuranty* were compiled less frequently. The reasons for this might vary, although in the first instance they relate to the shortcomings of the postal service. Since the European newspapers passed through several postal stations on the road to Russia, a delay at any of those stations meant that several issues of one and the same newspaper might arrive in Moscow on the same day, and therefore could be translated on the same occasion. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that the *kuranty* were not compiled in cases where the newspapers did not contain any new information of interest to the Russian government. In the period of interest to us, March to July of 1671, there are four to nine “issues” of the *kuranty* compiled each month (see Table I).

Table I. Kuranty compilations from March to the beginning of July 1671

	<i>March</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>
<i>via Riga post</i>	2	2	2	4
<i>via Vilna post</i>	3	2	5	5
Total	5	4	7	9

From Table I we can conclude that the *kuranty* for May and June – seven and nine compilations, respectively – have most likely been preserved in their entirety. It might even be that all sets compiled during March and April have been preserved to our time. In those months, on account of the melting of the snow and the spring “roadlessness”, the mail always functioned significantly worse than in other months; hence, the *kuranty* were compiled less frequently.

Let us turn now to the analysis of the *kuranty* texts.

SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN EUROPE

The political elite in Moscow was extremely interested in the European press reports about the struggle of the Cossacks in Western Ukraine under Hetman P. D. Doroshenko against Polish rule. Doroshenko, who could not hope to deal single-handedly with the Polish army and those Cossacks who sympathized with Poland, placed Ukraine under the control of the Turkish sultan. This provoked a war between Poland and the Ottoman Empire along with its subject, the Crimean Tatars. In a letter from July 21, 1667, Sultan Mehmed IV had informed the Polish King Jan Kazimierz that if he wished to preserve peace with the Ottoman Empire, he should

refrain from any attempt to bring the Cossacks under his control.²⁰ Poland had no wish to lose the Ukrainian territories which remained under its rule. The start of the inevitable war was delayed by the fact that until September 1669 the Turkish army was occupied in the war over Crete.

It is no exaggeration to conclude that the events on the eastern borders of the Polish state attracted more attention on part of the Russian government than did any other matter of foreign affairs. In fact, Russia and Poland were obligated by a treaty of alliance to help one another in the event of an invasion by the Turks or Tatars;²¹ hence, Russia was directly involved in the events. It is difficult to determine the entire number of publications on “Ukrainian popular movements” in the kuranty on account of the fact that Doroshenko’s actions resulted in war between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. In many instances, it is impossible to separate these events. As a whole, the news about the situation in Ukraine, the diplomatic negotiations between Poland and its enemies (Turkey, the Crimea and the Cossacks), articles on the mustering of armies and their funding, and descriptions of military actions constituted no less than 27–28% of the contents of the kuranty for the given period.²² These reports permitted the readers or listeners to follow the events in all their details. In the European press, the “Ukrainian problem” received significantly less attention. Only in rare cases could a quarter of any issue of a German newspaper be devoted to this subject, whereas news about the Ukraine in Dutch newspapers was still more limited.

The news in the kuranty about Poland allows us to follow the gradual exacerbation of relations between the Polish King and the Ukrainian Cossacks (who were under his rule), an accelerating conflict that became more complicated because of external interference by Turks and Tatars. During the winter of 1670–1671, there was still a serious chance to preserve peace. This becomes evident from a news item sent from Warsaw on January 23, 1671, and translated for the

20 B. N. Floria, “Nachalo otkrytoi osmanskoj ekspansii v Vostochnoi Evrope (1667–1671 gg.)”, in *Osmanskaia imperiia i strany Tsentral’noi, Vostochnoi i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy v XVII v.*, ch. 2 (Moskva, 2001), 78.

21 Floria, *Nachalo*, 77.

22 The following method of calculation has been used: all the kuranty of the period under study have been copied into the computer, and the total number of characters taken to equal 100%. Then all information not connected with the given theme has been excluded and the number of characters in the remaining text calculated. The given method has some minor faults. For instance, in articles which as a rule contain information on several topics it is not always possible to separate them from one another. Moreover, sometimes difficulties arise in interpreting the text of reports. This problem is especially severe in the analysis of the numerous reports about the course of the Polish sejms.

kuranty.²³ It said, among other things, that the Polish ambassador Karvovskii, who had been in the Crimean khanate for some time, had received the khan's promise that he would preserve peace, at least under certain conditions. Karvovskii was also said to carry with him original letters written by the Cossack leaders Khanenko and Doroshenko, "from which their unsteadiness becomes evident". Since the Warsaw message undoubtedly was written by a correspondent whose sympathies were with the Polish King, the above mentioned "unsteadiness" can be understood as the rival Cossack leaders' lacking the will to subordinate themselves to the Polish King.

In mid-spring there was still hope for peace, as becomes clear from a correspondence under the headline L'vov (= Lemberg), March 6.²⁴ An envoy from the Ukrainian Cossack hetman Doroshenko to the Polish King had been killed in Podolia. Although the Polish Field Crown Hetman (from 1668), Prince Dymitr Jerzy Wiśniowiecki (1631–1682), wanted to see the supposed killer sentenced to death, further development of the "Ukrainian matters" showed that this did not contribute to the improving Polish-Ukrainian relations. The newspaper article and its Russian translation end with a sentence regarding huge troop contingents in Turkey and the worthless statement "but what their intentions are we do not know".

Later on, toward the end of March, the threat of war became apparent and the news that reached the Russian readers was not only about sabre-rattling, but it also contained reports about minor encounters. In April it was clear that a serious war was imminent. A news item in the kuranty datelined Warsaw, April 11, reads as follows:

There is bad news from the borders with the Tatar, Cossack and Turkish territories. Not long ago Tatars and Cossacks have caused this state [i.e., Poland] huge devastation. It is reported that the Tatars have gathered 4000 men, the Cossacks 2000 [...] Moscow's ambassador was dismissed. He is very dissatisfied, since he received the king's charter²⁵ not from the king's hand, but from the chancellor's.²⁶

23 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 5v–6. The Russian text was translated from a Dutch newspaper, *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 6, 1671, p. [2] (RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 6, fol. 4v).

24 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 47–47v. We have identified the original article for the Russian translation in the Berlin newspaper *Mittwochischer Mercurius* No. 12, 1671, p. [1] (RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 3, fol. 27).

25 In the Dutch original the Russian word *gramota* is used (in the slightly distorted form *Ramotta*).

26 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 89v–90. The translation is made from a Dutch newspaper, *Amsteldamsche Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 17, 1671, p. [1].

The threat of an upcoming war might have been diminished by a constructive agreement with Russia, but apparently such a settlement was not achieved. Another article, under the headline Warsaw, May 1, clearly shows that the absence of internal accord in Poland was an extremely serious obstacle when it came to the organization of any successful resistance against the aggressor. When the fortress Kamenets Podol'skii (which played a key role in controlling Podolia) already was in serious danger of being besieged, the Polish government was unable to collect the necessary troops or to pay the German mercenaries, as the Russian political elite could read in this news item from Warsaw:

This crown is under great danger on the part of the Cossacks, Tatars and Turks, since their [i.e., the Cossacks'] highest hetman Doroshenko has united his forces with some thousand Tatars against Kamenets Podol'skii. His majesty the King has ordered a general mobilization of the Republic, but this will not be possible to get through before the wedding of Prince Dmitrii [i.e., Dymitr Wiśniowiecki, the Field Hetman of the Crown]. Meanwhile much harm will be done to this state. Two days ago an envoy arrived from Moscow; his intentions are not known. In Radom the Polish soldiers have received their pay, but not the German ones. The latter say that they are going to take this matter into their own hands.²⁷

The defeat of the Polish troops and the conquest of Kamenets Podol'skii by the Turkish sultan one year later, in 1672, became a natural consequence of this situation. However, these events are already beyond the chronological limits of our study.

Another national liberation movement whose successes were followed attentively in Moscow was the conflict between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Hungarian conspirators – in particular counts Péter Zrínyi (in the printed newspapers and in the kuranty usually called *Serini* / *Sirini*), Kristóf Frangepán, and Ferenc Nádasdy – who requested military aid from the Ottoman Empire in their struggle to re-establish the rights and freedoms of the Hungarian nobility. This made the Holy Roman Empire a potential ally of Russia and Poland. Furthermore, if the Turkish army moved against the Empire, not against Poland, then Russia would be spared the immediate prospect of a conflict with one of the most powerful armies in Europe at that time. Against this background it is no surprise that reports about the relations between the Emperor and the Hungarian conspirators occupied nearly 6.5% (22 entries) of the contents of the kuranty in the given period. That number of translated reports made it possible for a Russian reader or listener to

27 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 112–112v. The original could be located in the Berlin newspaper *Mittwochischer Mercurius* No. 1671/18, p. [2] (RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 3, fol. 35v).

follow in some detail the emerging events. In particular the reports included in the *kuranty* tended to conclude that the Turks did not want to support the Hungarian conspirators: it was too important for them to maintain the relatively good relations with the Empire following the Truce of Vasvár concluded on August 10, 1664. Reports sent from Vienna at the beginning of February spoke of the Turks' unwillingness to support the Hungarian nobles:

From Vienna February 1. Our courier, who has already been expected for three days, has returned from Turkey bringing news that the Turks will not accept the Hungarians as their subjects and do not wish to quarrel with us about that. Thus it is anticipated that there will be no conflict with the Turks.²⁸

Later, there was news about how the Turks were handing over to the Emperor his subjects which had fled to them, or were ordering the Prince of Transylvania Michael Apafi to execute them:

From Vienna April 21. From Upper Hungary is news that prince Obavti [= Apafi], on the orders of the Sultan, decreed that several of the Hungarian traitors who wished to flee to Transylvania be beheaded. Also the border pashas have written to the Imperial border commanders of their hope that they would not admit any Imperial traitors and give them refuge.²⁹

From the Empire, from Vienna May 9. One of Prince Michael Apafi's men came to us in Vienna from Hungary and informed us that the Turks wish to hand over all Imperial traitors, and several Imperial regiments have been sent to receive these fugitives. But the French ambassador to the Sultan has insistently requested that the Sultan not order the Imperial traitors to be handed over. However, the Sultan has not listened to him and ordered that all the traitors be given back.³⁰

Very rarely did the translators in the Diplomatic Chancery omit any articles about the planned (and later carried out) execution of the Hungarian conspirators:

From Vienna April 15 [...] The main conspirators were sentenced as follows: Count Nadasty first is to have his hand cut off and then his head; so likewise Franshipalni [= Frangepán], but Count Sirinii's sentence may be reduced because he willingly confessed his guilt, to wit that

28 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 6v. The original is in *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdagse Courant* No.1671/7, p. [2] (*ibid.*, ed. khr. 6, fol. 6v).

29 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 104v.

30 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 134–134v.

he wanted to catch the Emperor and hand him over to the Turks. So it is expected that he will be sentenced to imprisonment for life. But others expect that he too will be executed, because after admitting his guilt he conspired with Nadasty about betrayal. Among them no one committed as great an evil as Count Nadasty, because he killed his wife for refusing to poison the Emperor.³¹

This, incidentally, seems highly unlikely – that Count Ferenc Nádasdy, who had been the High Judge of the Crown Court, ordered his own wife to poison the Emperor and then killed her for refusing to do so.³²

From Vienna May 3. Now the Hungarian traitors have been executed: Count Nadasty and both Counts Francipani and Sirini have been beheaded after their profound expressions of repentance. Before his execution, Count Nadasty wrote to the Emperor and abjectly petitioned for his benevolence, especially regarding his innocent children, that they not be tainted by his treachery. And Count Serini before his death removed his golden chain decorated with diamonds and containing holy relics and handed it over to the Imperial commissioner in order that he give it to his son. And Count Francipani wrote a book while in prison from his deep intellect, and now they wish to publish the book. And the Emperor decreed that 2000 requiems be performed for those executed. Also, in the city of Pressburg, they executed by sword the gentleman Hanov and his companion, and those who are still in custody will soon meet the same fate. The Turkish pasha in the city of Großwardein has captured 17 fugitive Hungarians, and the Sultan has ordered him to hand over to the Imperial Commissioner those individuals and others who fled from Transylvania to the Ottomans, because the Turkish Sultan did not wish to place those fugitives under his protection.³³

All these reports would not leave any doubt in the minds of Russian kuranty readers that the Turks would not support the uprising in Hungary in the near future and thus would have their army free to campaign against Poland. If one compares the

31 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 100v–101.

32 The information about the planned poisoning of the Emperor (that should have taken place in 1666) was also printed in a contemporary pamphlet, albeit with some reservation about the reason of the death of Nadasty's wife: “[...] (deßwegen Sie selbst/ wie man glaubt/ hernach mit Giffit hingerichtet worden) [...]”. See: *Warhafftige und ausführliche Relation, Wie die Ungarischen Rebellen Zu Wien in Oesterreich/ Als auch Zur Wienschen Neu-Stadt Und zu Preßburg Am 30. Aprilis Anno 1671. Zur verdienten Straffe gezogen worden.* P. [3]. Six pages of this pamphlet are accessible on www.vd17.de (VD 17 No. 14:002279R; accessed June 23, 2009).

33 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 116v–117v; the original is in *B. Einkommende Ordinari und Postzeitungen* No. 1671/74 (ibid., ed. khr. 2, fol. 56v).

relative quantity of news in the *kuranty* to that in the European newspapers about Hungarian events, it turns out that the German newspapers were contained more, but the Dutch less than in the *kuranty*.

News about disorder in the Ottoman Empire was related to what, for Russia, was the critical problem of Turkish expansion in Eastern Europe. Such reports constituted about 2% (10 articles) in the *kuranty* of the period under examination. If some substantial internal political crisis were to begin in Turkey, then the Turkish army would be unable to embark on an invasion. Reports concerning unrest of local inhabitants of various regions of the Ottoman Empire and concerning the attempts of the Sultan's mother to arouse the janissaries against her son gave the Russian government reason to hope for such a turn of events. Here are two of the most characteristic reports:

From Venice February 28. They write us from Constantinople that the Sultan's mother is diligently trying to depose the Sultan himself and all his officials. On account of that, she has been haranguing all the janissaries. Moreover, we are told that in the city of Kaschau, the local inhabitants have begun a revolt and attacked the pasha's chambers with a great shout and wanted to kill the pasha on account of his having imposed on them high taxes and even more fiscal exactions for the Sultan, and for his arbitrary rule. And the pasha, upon seeing them, ordered all their money to be tossed out the window. And that barely pacified them. Likewise in Macedonia a revolt against the pasha has broken out which he managed to quell with money.³⁴

From Venice March 21. Letters to us from all places are in agreement that all efforts to reconcile the Sultan with his mother have failed, and his mother with particular zeal has enlisted the Constantinople janissaries on her side. As a result, disorders are expected which will mean that the Sultan will not attack any Christian monarch.³⁵

There is no doubt that the articles on disorders in Turkey were of great interest to Russian diplomats, just as they were to the readers of the European press. The relatively small number of such news items can be explained by the fact that the events reported in those articles had no serious consequences. The proportions of reports in this thematic group in the *kuranty* and in the European newspapers are roughly identical.

The remaining conspiracies and uprisings in (Western) Europe in the period under examination were of secondary significance to the authorities in Moscow,

34 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 38v–39.

35 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 59v. The original is in *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 1671/7 (National Archives, Kew, SP 119/61/42).

since they did not affect Russian interests directly. In the kuranty, they appeared merely as part of the general panorama of European political life. The quantity of information about these events did not exceed one per cent of the surviving documents. On the basis of this evidence, it was impossible to understand the substance of the conflicts noted in the kuranty and figure out their causes. On four occasions, for instance, the kuranty included correspondence concerning the struggle of the free city Braunschweig against the Princes of Lüneburg (House of Guelph). Braunschweig had received its city status back in the 15th century. In 1671, the Prince of Lüneburg annexed it, but in the articles included in the kuranty, the matter was presented as though the inhabitants of the city had rebelled against their ruler.

In actual fact, Duke Rudolf August (1666–1704),³⁶ after a long siege by an army of 20,000 (commanded by Count von Waldeck) and some 80 cannon, had seized/conquered the city and deprived it of its traditional independence.³⁷ The city's independence had been defended by about 3,000 individuals (using 137 cannon) – effectively, there was no way Braunschweig could maintain its position as a free city without outside military assistance. The fact that part of the inhabitants of Braunschweig sympathized with the Duke weakened the city's defences and helped the Duke achieve his goals. On June 11, Braunschweig submitted to the Duke's demands, and on June 12, the city gates were opened to his army of some 5,000 men (the rest of the Duke's army left). On June 16 there was a ceremony of taking the oath of fealty to Duke Rudolf August and his brother Anton Ulrich. The city had to pay 3,000 thalers (later 4,000) per month in addition to providing grain, money for the officers and quarters for more than 3,000 men. All of the city's arms, military supplies, and silver were confiscated. The previous city statute was annulled; the autonomy of this formerly free Hanseatic city came to an end.

In the articles selected from European newspapers for the kuranty, there is unqualified sympathy with the policies of the Duke. The defenders of the city's freedoms are described in negative colours: the lower classes revolted; they killed the commandant; drunks are wandering around [...] One must suppose that the Duke himself provided the information about the conflict:

From Hamburg May 30. We have been informed from the camp outside Braunschweig that the inhabitants of that city have asked their rightful Lüneburg princes for a respite of one day.

36 The son of the famous Duke August, the book collector and founder of the Wolfenbüttel library, Herzog August Bibliothek.

37 See Richard Moderhack, *Braunschweiger Stadtgeschichte. Mit Zeittafel und Bibliographie* (Braunschweig, 1997), 119–122.

And they have proposed the following terms: 1. that they wish to be as before under administration of the Lüneburg princes; 2. that all their villages will be handed over to those princes; 3. that in compensation for their guilt they will give those princes 6 barrels of gold and accept that the princes' troops be quartered at city expense. And in the city the lower classes rebelled and killed their commandant, and wander around all the time drunk, and the Burghers and Councilmen are frightened of them.³⁸

From Lüneburg June 3. The Army of the Prince of Braunschweig is besieging the city of Braunschweig and bombarding it with large artillery. And peasants have brought more cannon to the camp on 4,000 horses. And those of the city inhabitants who begin to speak about making peace are threatened with death by the rabble.³⁹

From Stockholm May 14. [...] The city of Braunschweig is under siege and two colonels and a major have been killed. And Brandenburg emissaries have gone to the city and persuaded the burghers that they should throw their lot in with the Braunschweig princes. Also emissaries from Lübeck, Hamburg and Bremen have come. The outcome of all this will soon be known. May the Lord bring about a good result.⁴⁰

From Wolfenbüttel May 30. Our Braunschweig and Lüneburg troops with artillery have arrived outside the city of Braunschweig and invested it with force. From within the city they can inflict no damage on the besiegers even though they fire on them constantly. It is anticipated that we will begin to bombard the city with fire bombs. To the great regret of our Prince they are opposing him with arms and fire; and hence yesterday a herald was sent to them in the city demanding that they abandon their evil thoughts. The leading people in the city are inclined to do that, but the rabble will not listen to them, and whoever talks of peace they call a traitor and beat.⁴¹

One can imagine that it would have been impossible for those who heard such news – i.e., the Tsar and boyars – to make sense of the reasons for the conflict or the course of the military actions. Out of the mass of correspondence printed in the Western newspapers on the subject (in some German as well as in Dutch issues there were as many as five different articles on the Braunschweig conflict), the Russian translators selected either irregular publications⁴² or, more probably, those

38 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 147v.

39 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 152v.

40 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 159–159v.

41 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 159v–160.

42 Thus, for example, from the Berlin newspaper *Mittwochlicher Mercurius*, Week 25, was translated a newsletter from Warsaw of June 19 (fol. 156–157; in the kuranty this article

in which the conflict was described precisely as a revolt of Braunschweig against the city's lawful ruler. Such a strange selection of news is easy to understand in the context of Russian realities during the reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. By the 1670s, Russian rulers had not had to deal with independent or politically autonomous cities for over a century, even though the inhabitants of various Russian cities often rebelled against the exactions of royal administrators. For example, in 1650, Pskov and Novgorod revolted. The government's troops were forced to lay siege to them. However, during the revolt there were conflicts between the more radically inclined "masses" and the city elite in both cases. Thus, the compilers of the *kuranty* selected for translation not the more precise information but that which more readily fitted into the accepted structure of social relations.

It also would have been difficult for a Russian audience to understand the only report in the *kuranty* for the period under study concerning a conspiracy in Spain. Here, the matter concerned the struggle between the natural son of Philip IV, Juan Jose of Austria and his opponents for influence over the King of Spain, Carlos II, who was still a minor:

From Spain, from the city of Madrid April 3. In recent days in this city they have found a letter containing the discharge of lord Dekardov,⁴³ who was recently executed. The letter says that he was not guilty in the disputes which arose between the Queen and lord Juan of Austria regarding the Queen's confessor lord Eberhard.⁴⁴ And when the King's halberdiers by royal

was combined without a new heading into another Warsaw communication of the same date whose original we have not located). In the same issue are four articles about the conflict between the city of Braunschweig and the Dukes of Lüneburg under the following headings: *Wolfenbüttel vom 13./23. dito (Junii)*; *Hannover/ vom 13.23. dito (Junii)*; *Hamburg/ vom 16.26. dito*; *Ein anders/ vom vorigen*. The last article contains extremely important information about the events in Braunschweig, but this article is not in the *kuranty*: "Gleich itzo kömmt der Braunschweigische Bote aus selbiger Stadt/ berichtet/ daß am verwichenen Dienstage Ihre Hochfürstl. Durchl. von Wolfenbüttel/ in Begleitung des Printzen von Oranien und anderer Fürsten und Herren/ daselbst eingezogen. In ermeldter Stadt sind 6000. Mann zu Fuß/ und 100. zu Pferde/ ligen alle auf den Wällen. Die Huldigung ist am Freytag geschehen/ und *imputiret* der Pöbel alles dem Rath/ der ihnen nicht von Ihre Hochfürstl. Durchl. *Postulatis* fürgebracht. Die Herren und dero Völcker sind schon voneinander."

43 "Dekardov" is a transliteration of *Antonio de Cordoue* in the original (see footnote 45); apparently, the Spanish family name *Córdoba* (Italian form: *di Cordova*).

44 Johann Eberhard Nidhard / Neidhardt, 1607–1681, later (from 1672) Cardinal Nidhard. The Queen's advisor after the death of King Philip IV, forced by Juan of Austria to leave Spain in 1669.

decree had been sent to the residence of the executed [i.e., “Dekardov”] in order to look for that letter, they found there another letter, in which he [“Dekardov”] indicated that he planned to poison the lord Juan of Austria. In addition he wanted to place gunpowder under the royal chambers. On account of this report the king and queen wish to leave those chambers for the time being until the gunpowder be found.⁴⁵

The article does not permit drawing any kind of intelligible picture of the situation at the Spanish court. It is possible that the compiler of the *kuranty* was attracted by the fact of the supposed mining of the royal palace.

A month later the *kuranty* included one more report concerning a planned attempt on a certain king’s life – this time, true, the planned attack concerned a period which antedated the newspaper entry by some 65 years:

From Rome May 9. Last week the Jesuits informed the Roman Pope about 40 individuals of their order whom they termed martyrs and brought him their portraits in order that he enrol them in the list of martyrs. And afterwards the Pope learned the truth: that the English King had executed those Jesuits because they had tunnelled under his palace and placed there a barrel of gunpowder, and the Pope thus turned down the petition citing the fact that they had been punished for criminal activity and not because of their Christian faith.⁴⁶

Certainly not all readers of this news article understood that it deals with the “Gunpowder Plot” of 1605, when English Catholics (among others, the Jesuit Father Henry Garnet)⁴⁷ organized an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the life of the English King James I. Apparently the compilers of the *kuranty* took that information to be “current”. A plot aiming to kill the King of England was in and of itself a sufficiently noteworthy event to attract attention. In this instance, the information was doubly interesting for the Russian government, because the assassination attempt was organized by the Jesuits. The Russian government was very suspicious of that order, since they were active in spreading Catholicism among the Orthodox population of those parts of Ukraine and Belorussia which

45 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 110–110v. The original is in the Hamburg newspaper *Europäische Sambstägige Zeitung* No. 16 (State Archives Stralsund, E4O 511o).

46 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 150v–151.

47 Born 1555, executed on May 3, 1606.

were under Polish rule. News about Jesuit activity was regularly included in the kuranty.⁴⁸

THE RAZIN UPRISING

A significant part of the kuranty in the period studied (6.7% of the total volume or 32 entries) consists of news about the uprising initiated by Stepan Razin.⁴⁹ A larger part of the materials, both in the quantity of text and the number of entries, was given over only to the “Ukrainian” subject matter. Also, in the European press – especially in the German newspapers – the Razin rebellion played an important part, although it probably occupied less space than in the kuranty, especially in the Dutch newspapers, which were printed at quite a temporal distance from the events (as opposed to German newspapers from the relevant period), from the corpus of which every third or fourth issue contained news about the uprising in the Volga region.⁵⁰

Of course, the Russian government possessed much more information about this uprising than the compilers of the European newspapers. Therefore, the inclusion of such news in the kuranty could not broaden the knowledge of Russian diplomats about the activities of the rebels. The reason for the interest in the event lay elsewhere: the translations showed what was being written about the Russian state in Europe, that is, they enabled the Russian leaders to learn something about the image of Russia abroad.

This interest in Russia’s image was not purely theoretical. The success or failure of Russian embassies depended on how Russia was perceived in Europe. Moreover, the Russian government actively undertook to attract to Russian service foreign specialists – soldiers, doctors, mining specialists, artists, musicians, etc. Negative press about Russia either made the hiring of such specialists more costly or even impossible. News about victories by Razin also might have forced European merchants involved in long-distance international trade (especially that through Arkhangelsk) to refuse travelling to Russia. This is the key to why the picture

48 S. M. Shamin, “K voprosu o vliianii inostrannoi pressy na dukhovnuiu zhizn' russkikh liudei v XVII – nachale XVIII vv.”, *Vestnik tserkovnoi istorii* (2007), No. 2, 139–149, 140.

49 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 6v–7, 9v, 14, 20v–21, 23, 24–26, 30, 40v–41, 49v–50, 51–51v, 55–58v, 70, 70v, 88, 101–101v, 102v, 103, 113–113v, 118–118v, 122v, 128, 134, 158v, 166.

50 Approximately 640 German newspapers from that time are preserved, containing more than 180 news items about the Razin uprising. See Welke, *Rußland*, 203.

painted by the kuranty could not please either the Tsar or the boyars. Even though there were quite varied publications in the press, many articles substantially exaggerated the successes of the rebels and understated the victories of the Tsar's armies. For instance, the Hamburg newspaper *Nordischer Mercurius* wrote about the fact that especially news sent by correspondents in Riga could not be trusted at all; in their newsletters, people who had never been in the army, who were no longer in active service and even people who had already died could be named as having been taken captive, etc.⁵¹

In fact, at the time when the kuranty we are discussing were compiled, the peak of the rebellion had already passed. On the 1st–3rd of October 1670, Razin had been severely wounded and his army crushed in a decisive battle near Simbirsk. On April 14, 1671, the Cossacks captured Razin and handed him over to the authorities. The leader of the rebellion was executed in Moscow on June 6, 1671. While the unrest continued yet for some time, it no longer presented a threat to the state. Nonetheless, the European press right up to the summer of 1671 continued to publish "news" about the victories of Razin. The translation of a newsletter from Hamburg (dated June 6 – the day of Razin's execution) reads as follows: "Couriers report from Livonia and from Moscow that the traitor Razin is again gathering his forces and seizing cities".⁵² Other articles reported about the political isolation of Russia and its actual collapse. News items of this kind were fraught with very serious image problems for the Russian authorities and substantially weakened the position of Russian diplomats in international negotiations. Here are the most striking examples:

From Warsaw January 31. There is news from Moscow that the disorders there are still going on and that Razin has taken Astrakhan' and Kazan' as well as about 50 other places. He is said to have with him about 200,000 men. A Swedish emissary is said to have arrived there to negotiate a treaty, calling him the Tsar of Astrakhan. Allegedly the Persian shah also is interfering in this unrest on account of differences [with Russia] over the Caspian Sea.⁵³

From Vilna February 26. Here there is definite news that plenipotentiary ambassadors from the Muscovite state have been sent to his Majesty the King in order to seek assistance against Stenka Razin. And in exchange they wish to offer the Poles Smolensk and all of Ukraine. And Stenka Razin wishes to send his emissaries to the King, so that he will not aid Moscow.

51 Welke, Rußland, 204.

52 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 158.

53 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 6v–7. The original is in *Haeghse Dynsdaeghse Post-tydinge* No. 14, from The Hague (ibid., ed. khr. 5, fol. 8).

And this gives the Polish crown hope that all which Moscow had seized from it will be returned.⁵⁴

From Prussia March 3. They report from Vilna that they are awaiting the return of their envoy from Moscow, and it is expected that he will bring news as to whether the Russians will surrender Smolensk, Bykhov and Kiev or wish to fight. The latest letters from Riga indicate that the Tsar ordered the removal of the largest artillery detachment from Smolensk on account of the news that Stenka Razin has submitted to the Poles and Swedes.⁵⁵

From Wismar March 27. From Riga they report that several regiments of cavalry have been ordered from Sweden to Riga, but it is not known for what purpose, whether to help his Majesty the Tsar or because they wish to obtain some compensation. With regard to the troops of his Majesty the Tsar, the letters affirm that they have all been defeated, and the rebel has sent to his Majesty the Tsar six demands that must be agreed to by his Majesty the Tsar if the rebel is to desist from attacking in the future, i.e.: 1. that the Tsar shall name him Tsar of Astrakhan' and Kazan'; 2. that the former Patriarch be restored to his place in Moscow; 3. that the rebel be given 20 millions in gold; 4. that ten princes be handed over to him; 5. that an image of him is to be painted and erected; 6. that he receive tribute on an annual basis.⁵⁶

It is impossible to see a communication of actual information in the last of these texts. There are no documents confirming that such negotiations should have taken place. Much later, in 1672, Russian diplomats told their Swedish colleagues: “[...] it is not true that the bandit Stenka Razin should have sought opportunities to communicate with his Majesty the Tsar and submitted demands concerning the above-mentioned points.”⁵⁷

The text with the six alleged demands by Razin has to be seen as a composition of an inflammatory nature, similar in function to the fabricated “letters of the Turkish Sultan”, rather curious examples of anti-Turkish propaganda.⁵⁸ The authentic letters of Stepan Razin and his cohorts have been thoroughly studied. In them, Razin always presents himself as the ally of the Tsar or of his son Aleksei Alekseevich (already deceased at that time). The leader of the rebellion purports to be carrying out their instructions – to decimate the boyars and other “evil perverters” of the Tsar’s will.⁵⁹ Such an attitude toward the powers was called

54 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fols. 24v–25.

55 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fols. 25–25v.

56 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fols. 56–57.

57 Popov, *Istoriia*, 82.

58 See Daniel C. Waugh, *The Great Turkes Defiance: On the History of the Apocryphal Correspondence of Ottoman Sultan in its Muscovite and Russian Variants* (Columbus, Ohio, 1978).

59 V. I. Buganov, *Razin i razinitsy* (Moskva, 1995), 12–45 and *passim*.

“naive monarchism” in Soviet historiography. It was common to all peasant movements in the Middle Ages. In any event, we cannot see in the “ultimatum of Stepan Razin” a work by a Russian author. The European newspapers, however, identify for us the source of its spread, the city of Riga in Sweden’s Baltic provinces.

Why did bogus newsletters about the weakness of the Russian state appear in the European press? The Soviet historians A. L. Gol’dberg, A. G. Man’kov and S. Ia. Marlinskii suggested that “no occasion was missed to distort specifically and intentionally information about the situation in Russia and compound the horrors in order to prepare popular attitudes abroad for the event of an intervention in the internal affairs of Russia by a European state.”⁶⁰ However, we disagree with this viewpoint. There are no facts attesting any preparation by the governments of Poland or Sweden, Russia’s European neighbours, for an incursion into its territory, so it would not be necessary to “prepare” the European public opinion for such an incursion. The reason for spreading such reports must be sought elsewhere. In the 1650s and 1660s, Russia engaged in wars with Poland and Sweden. The inhabitants of Poland and the Swedish Baltic provinces feared their eastern neighbour and disliked her. This was fertile soil for the fabrication of reports that could be damaging to the Russian government, since news about Russia’s impoverished situation might discourage the entrepreneurs of Holland, England and Hamburg from trading with her, and thus automatically give an advantage to their Polish and Baltic colleagues.

The Russian government reacted fiercely to such publications. At the end of 1670, the foreigner von Staden (who was in the service of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich) was commanded by the Russian government to induce the Swedish side to punish “gazetteers” who printed unseemly talk about the Tsar himself, about the former Patriarch Nikon and about Stenka Razin. As an example of such a publication, the Russian diplomats adduced a text about

how the former Moscow Patriarch gathered a large army and intended to march against his Muscovite Tsarish Majesty, the reason being that the Tsar had dishonoured him and removed him from the Patriarchal rank for no reason at all, and without considering that he, the Patriarch, was a wise and learned man and in every regard better and more worthy than the Tsar himself. And the reason for the Patriarch’s removal was that he had allowed Lutherans, Calvinists and also Roman Catholics to enter the Russian churches, something that in earlier times had been looked upon as unchristian acts. Moreover, from the borders of Russia this news has come, that his Majesty the Tsar is seeking to make peace with Stenka Razin, something which Razin is inclined to do only on the following conditions: 1) that the Russian

60 Man'kov, *Inostrannye izvestiia*, 88.

ruler honour him as Tsar of Kazan' and Astrakhan'; 2) give him from the royal treasury 20 barrels of gold for his army; 3) hand over to him, Stenka, eight of the Tsar's closest boyars, whom he intended to execute for their misdeeds; 4) that Patriarch Nikon, who was now with him, be restored to his rank.⁶¹

According to the Russian diplomats, this text was printed in the "Riga newspapers" from November 19, 1670.⁶² Obviously this is another variant of the report cited above (from Wismar on March 27, 1671), about the "ultimatum of Stepan Razin"; the report had in fact been received in Wismar from Riga (see above, "From Riga they report [...]").

On December 29, 1672, during negotiations in the Diplomatic Chancery in Moscow with the Swedish envoy A. Eberschildt, it was asserted that

other faults have been committed on the side of his Royal Majesty, concerning which the above-named Colonel of the Tsar's, Nikolai von Staden, declared in Riga to the subjects of his Royal Majesty, who control the printing houses and print newspapers and write falsely and much that impugns the honour of our Great Sovereign, his Majesty the Tsar. They print and write and thus by means of their publications and letters foster disputes, and hostility and vexation between our Great Sovereign and their most powerful sovereign, his Royal Majesty. And an excerpt from some newspapers was shown the envoy to indicate which were the articles in question [...].

The envoy responded: "Those news letters are printed near Riga in Königsberg; in Riga there are no news letters in German ordered to be printed by the subjects of his Royal Majesty, but only ones in Swedish."⁶³

As we can see, the Swedish diplomats re-directed the complaint to the publishers in Königsberg.

The subject of the Riga publications about Razin was raised many years later by Russian diplomats. In 1676, during the Russo-Swedish negotiations on the River Meuzitsa (the border between the Russian and Swedish possessions in the Baltic

61 Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Obzor*, 190–191.

62 A newspaper printed in Riga as early as 1670 is not known. The oldest preserved issue of any newspaper printed in Riga dates from January 1681; see: V. I. Simonov, "Aus der Geschichte der periodischen Zeitung in Riga im 17. Jahrhundert", *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1984), 172–179 (reproduction of the title page on p. 173); Bogel/Blühm, *Die deutschen Zeitungen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 140–141. Probably a newspaper from another city had printed the incriminating text under the headline "From Riga [date]".

63 *Krest'ianskaia voina pod predvoditel'stvom Stepana Razina*, t. 3 (Moskva, 1962), 285–286.

region), the Swedish diplomats were again put on notice that during the rebellion of Stepan Razin, in Riga and other Swedish cities, newspapers in which the honour of the Tsar was impugned were published: "[...] and such papers filled with falsehoods were spread throughout Europe."⁶⁴ The last time this accusation was aired in Russo-Swedish negotiations was in 1684.⁶⁵ By then, the uprising of Stepan Razin was already history. Mentioning him was not an actual offense, but a means of putting pressure on the Swedish negotiation partners.

It is not impossible that the Russian government devoted particular attention to publications impugning the Tsar's and the country's honour in order to put forward complaints concerning these publications in diplomatic negotiations later on. A hint in this direction might be attributed to the fact that some articles about the defeat of the rebels were not translated. Thus, three articles (the first three in the newspaper) were selected for the kuranty from No. 12 of the Berlin newspaper *Sonntagischer Mercurius*: from Lemberg (today L'viv, Ukraine) March 6, from Warsaw March 13, and from Prussia March 21. All these articles concerned events in Ukraine (in particular, the activities of the Cossacks) and in connection with that the activities of the members of the Polish sejm. The translators ignored the remaining articles printed in that issue of the newspaper – with news from The Hague, Nürnberg, from the Lower Rhine, from Hamburg and Brussels. A brief report about the rebellion of Stepan Razin on the fourth page of the newspaper (contained in a second communication from Hamburg dated 14/24 March) was among the omitted ones. It stated that Stepan Razin had been defeated, and 100,000 of his men had been killed.⁶⁶

Quite curious is also the way in which a report from Danzig was treated. The Russian kuranty version states: "From Gdansk February 4. They write in various letters that the traitor Razin calls himself king of Astrakhan' and Kazan'."⁶⁷ The Dutch original for this article has been located. It is longer than the Russian translation; the author here adds his doubts as to whether this is accurate

64 Forsten, *Snosheniia Shvetsii i Rossii*, p. 321.

65 K. A. Kochegarov, *Rech' Pospolitaia i Rossiia v 1680–1686 godakh. Zakliuchenie dogovora o Vechnom mire* (Moskva, 2008), 270.

66 The "Russian" information in that newspaper issue reads as follows: "[...] Die grosse Theuring in Moßkau sol nun meist von dar ab- und nach Wolgoda und Archangel kommen seyn/ da doch vor diesem von selbigen Orten eine grosse Quantität von Korn nach Moßkau gebracht worden. Daß der Rebell Roharzin [sic! = Razin] geschlagen/ und das Landvolck/ welches ihm in der Länge von 200. Meilen/ zwischen der Stadt Moßkau und Wolgoda/ zugefallen/ von der Moßkowitzischen Armee bey 100000. niedergesäbelt worden/ davon wird von einigen Moßkowitzisch-gesinneten viel gesprochen [...]."

67 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 6v.

information: “[...] but this is not believed to be true”⁶⁸ – however, these doubts were not translated into Russian. Thus only the part which could have been adduced as a complaint in negotiations with Dutch diplomats was translated.

In all likelihood, the Russian government not only protested against such publications through diplomatic channels but sent its own information about the situation to the European press. The following kuranty item supports such a hypothesis:

Translation from Dutch newspapers.

From Moscow January 26. Here there are letters from the regiments of his Majesty the Tsar which write how the bandit Stenka Razin has arrived at the city of Simbirsk with 20,000 men. And from the 4th of September through the 3rd of October they launched 15 terrible assaults on the city. But thanks to the zeal of the defenders and the manly boldness of the general Ivan Bogdanovich Miloslavskii all of these assaults were turned back. And when the general prince Iurii Nikitich Boriatinskii arrived from Kazan’ and joined forces with the besieging soldiers, the bandit was clobbered and himself wounded and barely escaped in a boat. And only a few people escaped with him. 500 people were taken alive who were executed on the spot, and for this service his Majesty the Tsar rewarded that lord Ivan Bogdanovich Miloslavskii with a high rank. Afterwards the military forces of his Majesty the Tsar defeated the bandits in many places and took back from them the places they had seized. And this disorder has now completely ended. And the merchants can once again set out for this state.⁶⁹

The article contains many precise details. It encompasses a whole month of military actions at Simbirsk (from September 4 through October 3). Moreover, the compiler of the information knows not only of the victory over Razin but about the fact that general Miloslavskii was rewarded for that victory. This latter fact does not allow us to see in the article a letter sent after the raising of the siege of Simbirsk directly from the battlefield. Rather, the article is based upon an official communication of the Russian authorities.

68 “Dantzich den 4 Februarij. Met eenighe brieven heeft men, dat den Rebel Stephanus Ratzin, den Titul van Koningh over Astracan en Casan, sich soude toegeeyghent hebben: maer het selfde wert niet voor seecker aenghenomen [...]” *Amsterdamse Dingsdaegse Courant* No. 1671/7, p. 1. The original is in RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 4, fol. 6. We cannot be absolutely sure that the Russian version is made exactly from this Amsterdam newspaper, since there is only one overlapping news item; of course, the same (or a very similar) report could also have been published in another issue of a Dutch newspaper.

69 RGADA, f. 155, op. 1, 1671, ed. khr. 7, fol. 40v.

The peculiarity in the dating of the report is also consistent with this hypothesis. It was sent from Moscow approximately three months after the battle, when the "news", to put it mildly, was already dated. If we suppose that here we do not have "fresh news" but the refutation of false reports about the victories of Razin, then such a delay in no way seems strange. One can see in the text of the report the purpose for which it was compiled: in the last line its author declares "merchants can once again set out for this state", that is, merchants can again ply their trade. If our hypothesis is correct, then the placing of such a publication in a Dutch newspaper at the end of January, when the merchants trading with Moscow were deciding whether or not to go to Arkhangelsk during the current year, was completely appropriate.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the *kuranty* compilations shows that the Russian government was very interested in conspiracies, revolts and uprisings in various European countries. This interest was fed both by the needs of foreign policy and by simple curiosity. All of the European social conflicts, which were widely reported in the European press, were also registered in the *kuranty*. However, the interest of the compilers of the *kuranty* in such events was unbalanced. Even in those cases where the events greatly interested the Russian government, material which was repetitive and of secondary importance was omitted.

The closer to the borders of Russia the event, the greater the attention it drew. In those instances, when the events touched Russian interests, the *kuranty* included a sufficient number of publications to allow the Russian authorities to understand the details of what had happened. In the remaining cases the compilers of the *kuranty* merely described the event. In these instances, the *kuranty* could seriously distort the substance of what was happening, as was the case with the taking of Braunschweig.

The inclusion in the *kuranty* of news about the rebellion of Stepan Razin was connected with the fact that the Russian government was concerned about its image in Europe. The Muscovite authorities fought the dissemination of negative publications by two means: they registered complaints to the publishers through diplomatic channels and they sent letters to the publishers of newspapers with their own description of the events.⁷⁰

70 The authors are very grateful to Daniel Clarke Waugh (Seattle) for his valuable help in translating an earlier version of this paper from the Russian.

