



"Time of Troubles"

- ❑ After Ivan the Terrible, his son Fyodor Ivanovich, the last tsar from the Rurik dynasty, became the Russian tsar in 1584. His reign marked the beginning of that period in Russian history, which is commonly referred to as the "Time of Troubles". Fyodor Ivanovich was a weak and sickly man, unable to govern the huge Russian state. Among his confidants, Boris Godunov gradually stands out, who after the death of Fedor in 1598 was elected to the kingdom by the Zemsky Sobor. A supporter of hard power, the new tsar continued an active policy of enslaving the peasantry. A decree was issued on enslaving slaves, and then a decree was issued on the establishment of "lease years", that is, the period during which the owners of the peasants could initiate a claim for the return of the fugitive serfs to them.
- ❑ During the reign of Boris Godunov, the distribution of land to servicemen was continued at the expense of possessions taken to the treasury from monasteries and disgraced boyars. In 1601-1602 Russia suffered severe crop failures. The deterioration of the situation of the population was facilitated by the cholera epidemic that struck the central regions of the country. The disasters and discontent of the people led to numerous uprisings, the largest of which was the Khlopok uprising, which was hardly suppressed by the authorities only in the fall of 1603. Taking advantage of the difficulties of the internal situation of the Russian state, the Polish and Swedish feudal lords tried to seize the Smolensk and Seversk lands, which were formerly part of the Great principality of Lithuania. Part of the Russian boyars were dissatisfied with the rule of Boris Godunov, and this was a breeding ground for the emergence of opposition.

- ❑ Under the conditions of general discontent, an impostor appears on the western borders of Russia, posing as Tsarevich Dmitry, son of Ivan the Terrible, "miraculously escaped" in Uglich. "Tsarevich Dmitry" asked for help from the Polish magnates, and then to King Sigismund. To enlist the support of the Catholic Church, he secretly converted to Catholicism and promised to subordinate the Russian Church to the papal throne. In the autumn of 1604, False Dmitry with a small army crossed the Russian border and moved through the Seversk Ukraine to Moscow. Despite the defeat at Dobrynichy in early 1605, he managed to revolt many regions of the country.
- ❑ The news of the appearance of "the lawful Tsar Dmitry" raised great hopes for changes in life, so city after city announced the support of the impostor. Meeting no resistance on his way, False Dmitry approached Moscow, where by that time Boris Godunov had died suddenly.
- ❑ The Moscow boyars, which did not accept the son of Boris Godunov as tsar, made it possible for the impostor to establish himself on the Russian throne.
- ❑ However, he was in no hurry to fulfill the promises made to him earlier - to transfer the border Russian regions to Poland, and even more so to convert the Russian people to Catholicism. False Dmitry did not justify the hopes of the peasantry either, since he began to pursue the same policy as Godunov, relying on the nobility. The boyars, who used False Dmitry to overthrow Godunov, now waited only for a reason to get rid of him and come to power. The reason for the overthrow of False Dmitry was the wedding of the impostor with the daughter of the Polish tycoon Marina Mnishchik. The Poles who arrived at the celebrations behaved in Moscow as in a conquered city. Taking advantage of this situation, the boyars, led by Vasily Shuisky, on May 17, 1606, raised an uprising against the impostor and his Polish supporters. False Dmitry was killed and the Poles were expelled from Moscow.




- ❑ After the murder of False Dmitry, the Russian throne was occupied by Vasily Shuisky. His government had to fight the peasant movement of the early 17th century (the uprising led by Ivan Bolotnikov), with the Polish intervention, a new stage of which began in August 1607 (False Dmitry II). After the defeat at Volkhov, the government of Vasily Shuisky was besieged in Moscow by the Polish-Lithuanian invaders. At the end of 1608, many regions of the country came under the rule of False Dmitry II, which was facilitated by a new surge in the class struggle, as well as the growth of contradictions among the Russian feudal lords.
- ❑ In February 1609, the Shuisky government concluded an agreement with Sweden, according to which, for the hiring of Swedish troops, it ceded part of the Russian territory in the north of the country. At the end of 1608, a spontaneous national liberation movement began, which the government of Shuisky was able to lead only from the end of the winter of 1609. By the end of 1610, Moscow and most of the country were liberated. But back in September 1609, an open Polish intervention began. The defeat of Shuisky's troops near Klushino from the army of Sigismund III in June 1610, the uprising of the urban lower classes against the government of Vasily Shuisky in Moscow led to his fall. On July 17, part of the boyars, metropolitan and provincial nobility, Vasily Shuisky was dethroned and forcibly tonsured a monk. In September 1610 he was extradited to the Poles and taken to Poland, where he died in prison.

After the overthrow of Vasily Shuisky, power was in the hands of 7 boyars. This government was called the "seven-boyars". One of the first decisions of the "seven-boyars" was the decree not to elect representatives of the Russian families as tsar. In August 1610, this group concluded a treaty with the Poles standing near Moscow, which recognized the son of the Polish king Sigismund III, Vladislav, as the Russian tsar. On the night of September 21, Polish troops were secretly admitted to Moscow. Sweden also launched aggressive actions. The overthrow of Vasily Shuisky freed her from allied obligations under the treaty of 1609. Swedish troops occupied a significant part of the north of Russia and captured Novgorod. The country faced a direct threat of losing its sovereignty.

Discontent grew in Russia. The idea of creating a national militia to liberate Moscow from the invaders appeared. It was headed by the governor Procopius Lyapunov. In February-March 1611, militia troops besieged Moscow. The decisive battle took place on March 19. However, the city has not yet been liberated. The Poles still remained in the Kremlin and Kitai-Gorod. In the autumn of the same year, at the call of the Nizhny Novgorod citizen Kuzma Minin, a second militia began to be created, the leader of which was Prince Dmitry Pozharsky. Initially, the militia attacked the eastern and northeastern regions of the country, where not only new areas were formed, but also governments and administrations were created. This helped the army to enlist the support of people, finances and supplies of all the most important cities in the country.





In August 1612, the militia of Minin and Pozharsky entered Moscow and united with the remnants of the first militia. The Polish garrison suffered enormous hardships and hunger. After a successful assault on Kitay-gorod on October 26, 1612, the Poles surrendered and surrendered the Kremlin. Moscow was liberated from the invaders. The attempt of the Polish troops to take Moscow again failed, and Sigizmund III was defeated at Volokolamsk.

In January 1613, the Zemsky Sobor, gathered in Moscow, decided to elect 16-year-old Mikhail Romanov, the son of Metropolitan Filaret, who was in Polish captivity at that time, to the Russian throne.

In 1618, the Poles invaded Russia again, but were defeated. The Polish adventure ended with an armistice in the village of Deulino in the same year. However, Russia lost Smolensk and the Seversk cities, which it was able to return only in the middle of the 17th century. Russian prisoners returned to their homeland, including Filaret, the father of the new Russian tsar. In Moscow, he was elevated to the patriarchal dignity and played a significant role in history as the de facto ruler of Russia. In a fierce and severe struggle, Russia defended its independence and entered a new stage in its development. In fact, this is where its medieval history ends.