

Preface

The Russian embassy of 1613–1614 to James I of England was one more link in the long chain of political relations of the Russian state with England. This was a political embassy, and the reader of its reports will search in vain for the Muscovy Company business assumed in English historiography to be the core of the relationship between the two countries. To a certain extent foreign policy in early modern Europe (particularly for the Dutch Republic) was predicated on commercial interests, and indeed the Company was one element in Anglo-Russian relations. However, for most of Europe at that time other issues played an equal if not an overriding role in the formulation of policy. From the very beginning of Anglo-Russian relations political issues came into play, ones that involved not only the bilateral relationship, but the whole of northern Europe, Russia, Poland, the Scandinavian kingdoms, and to a certain extent the Empire. In Elizabeth's time growing conflict with Spain above all required the Queen's government to become involved with each one of these powers to a greater or lesser extent, with the aim of finding enemies of the house of Habsburg wherever possible and parrying hostile moves in seemingly distant parts of Europe. James I's political agenda reflected his personal commitment to peace and his general support of Protestantism, as well as his fear of growing Dutch naval strength. All these factors came into the play with England's policy regarding Russia.

The political aspects of Anglo-Russian relations at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries have been for the most part overlooked by Western historians whose interests have centered on the history of the English Muscovy Company. The basic work of T. S. Willan not only focused on the Company but was very skeptical of any suggestion of political interests at play. The natural interest in the Company's history continued by Samuel Baron, Geraldine M. Phipps, and others has tended to reinforce Willan's view, perhaps unintentionally. In part the problem is the general neglect of English foreign policy in the north: standard works like those of R. B. Wernham generally ignore the area, and the writings of Scandinavian, Russian, and Polish historians remain unknown in the English-speaking world. Only Norman Evans has explored any aspect of the political relationship in recent

years.¹ Thus the story of commerce, whether to Archangel or Danzig, has appeared to be the whole story. It is not. In Russian historiography the situation is different. Though Inna Liubimenko's pioneering work at the turn of the century also stressed the commercial relationship, Soviet historians of Russian foreign policy in the period do not. For them, the basic emphasis is on the political rivalry with Poland, and other affairs are considered in that context. Thirty years ago Ia. S. Lur'e suggested in a brief article that Anglo-Russian relations in Elizabeth's reign were not primarily commercial, but that idea has gone unnoticed in the West.² Our contention is that he was right, but that the full context of England's relations with northern Europe must be considered to make sense of the problem. Although commerce was important, other issues hinging on the configurations of continental alliances dominated politics at Whitehall from two decades before the Spanish Armada to the years immediately preceding England's involvement with the Thirty Years' War. Well outside the narrow confines of Muscovy Company business, the crown was rapidly becoming absorbed with the larger problems of alignment between the Habsburgs and their enemies and the criss-crossing alliances among the Catholic and Protestant states. In short, religious and political issues were instrumental in molding England's diplomacy with the Scan-

1. T. S. Willan, *The Early History of the Russia Company 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956); Samuel Baron, "Ivan the Terrible, Giles Fletcher, and the Muscovite Merchantry," *S[lavic] E[ast] E[uropean] R[evue]* 56 (October, 1978), 563-585; id., "The Muscovy Company, the Muscovite Merchants and the Problem of Reciprocity," *Forschungen zur Geschichte Osteuropas* 27 (1979), 133-155; Geraldine M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick: English Merchant-Diplomat in Seventeenth Century Russia* (Newtonville, Massachusetts, 1983); R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Emergence of the English Nation 1485-1588* (New York, 1966); id., *After the Armada: Elizabethan England and the Struggle for Western Europe 1588-1595* (Oxford, 1984); Simon Adams, "Spain or the Netherlands? The Dilemmas of Early Stuart Foreign Policy," in Howard Tomlinson, ed., *Before the English Civil War*, London, 1983, 79-102; Norman Evans, "The Anglo-Russian Royal Marriage Negotiations of 1600-1603," *SEER* 61, 3 (July, 1983), 363-387.
2. Inna Liubimenko, *Istoriia torgovykh snoshenii Rossii s Angliiei*, part 1, XVI-i vek, Iur'ev (Dorpat/Tartu), 1912; and id., *Les relations commerciales et politiques de l'Angleterre avec la Russie avant Pierre le Grand*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études: Sciences historiques et philologiques 261 (Paris, 1933); Ia. S. Lur'e, "Russko-angliiskie otnosheniia i mezhdunarodnaia politika vtoroi poloviny XVI v.," in A. A. Zimin, V. T. Pashuto, eds., *Mezhdunarodnye sviazi Rossii do XVII v.* (Moscow, 1961); B. N. Floria, *Russko-pol'skie otnosheniia i baltiiskii vopros v kontse XVI—nachale XVII v.* (Moscow, 1973); and id., *Russko-pol'skie otnosheniia i politicheskoe razvitiie Vostochnoi Evropy vo vtoroi polovine XVI—nachale XVII v.* (Moscow, 1978).

dinavian states, Poland, and Russia at this time to a much greater extent than is generally realized.

Partly, it must be said, this obfuscation was a result of the nature of the evidence, wherein the Muscovy Company figures so predominantly in the few remaining extant records in England. Indeed, because of that one-sided evidence the interests of the country have usually been portrayed as synonymous with those of the Company. And while it is true that for purely practical reasons of linguistics and cultural experience the company personnel did much of the counseling with the English government concerning negotiations with the Russian state (naturally pressing their own interests wherever possible), and over the years handled much of the hospitality for visiting delegations, it is likewise true that newsletters and ambassadorial dispatches from persons outside the merchant community reveal other aspects of the story. Now with Ziuzin's report to the Tsar translated and published in the West, historians can, for the first time, begin to understand Russian political objectives in conjunction with English foreign policy aims in the early seventeenth century. The complaint about the paucity of documents by one of the pioneers of Anglo-Russian studies, Inna Liubimenko, has been assuaged.

That we can now look at all sides of the question of Anglo-Russian policy in the early decades of the seventeenth century is to a certain extent a tribute to the spirit of *glasnost*. It was, however, some years before the actual advent of *perestroika* that our friend and colleague, Sergei Kashtanov, supplied us with a copy of the rotoprint edition of Ziuzin's embassy report from which Paul Bushkovitch could begin the tedious work of translating Nikolai Rogozhin's Russian edition into English. During a visit to Moscow in September 1989, Viktor Buganov agreed to contribute an introduction based on Soviet archive material and M. P. Lukichev gave the project his blessing. The edition is truly a joint venture.

For some time it had been apparent to us that the motives for an alliance between King James and Tsar Michael were not solely economic, but this was a difficult matter to examine given the limitations of English archives. Now that the official instructions to Ziuzin and the English responses to them are available the picture is clear. We find, as one would expect, that those responses are part of a larger policy framed to deal with all of Europe and Scandinavia. And, not surprising at that juncture, that policy had to a great extent evolved from confessional and political rather than commercial interests.