

Good russian culture essay example

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Avvakum was a country priest in Nizhni Novgorod, born of religious parents and orphaned at a young age. He is known for his support of the old ecclesiastical ways brought by the zealots. Avvakum was a preservative of the old strict rules of fasting, praying and ensuring proper moral behaviors. His support for the old ways was against the ideas of Nikon, a Patriarch whose support was for the religious ways of the Greek Orthodoxy. Avvakum was the leader of the preservatives, while Nikon led the other group adopting new religious ideas. According Riha, the differences between the two groups that led to the suffering of Avvakum (Riha, 1964).

Avvakum was brought up in a Christian family and started praying to God at a very tender age. He married Anastacia a maiden who lived in his village as he started his priesthood. Eight years after exercising his priesthood, he was ordained as an archpriest of the Orthodox. It was at this time that his hardships in the service of God begun (In Fedotov, 1948). Avvakum presents his side in the schism conflict by narrating all his ordeals during the conflict. It is from the following narration by Avvakum that we get to see how he gives his side of the story.

Avvakum believed in justice, following and enforcing good morals, and when one of the officers took a house helper from a widowed woman, he implored the officer to return the daughter to the mother. The officer was very mad with the priest and started torturing using his men to beat him. One of the officer's men was furious with him that he bit the priest's hand and exiled him from the village giving him nothing for the journey. Despite all the torture, Avvakum did not relent on his religious rules and travelled to Moscow to the Tsaar (Ginsburg, 1956).

Avvakum was vocal and strict on what he believed was right and did not hesitate to criticize what he saw being wrongly done by the people. He was sent away from his home for the second time where he had returned because of his beliefs (Lantzeff, 1972). As he was fleeing, he served at Volga, but only for a short time after he was assaulted for confronting the people over their evil deeds. At that time, there were other priests who were also being exiled, and they all met at Moscow and appointed Nikon as the Patriarch (Lanz, 1929).

The old believers led by Avvakum used two fingers while the established ones used three fingers. The difference created a wide rift between the two groups, and it led to the deaths of many archpriests and imprisonment of many more by the Patriarch. Avvakum continued to champion for what was right and steer clear from the atrocities that were being committed by the established group led by the now evil Patriarch (Avvakum, 1963).

It was in an effort to pressure the old believers to forsake their religious ways and join the established that Avvakum was degraded, beaten, tortured, imprisoned and locked away from people. Despite all their ways to try to force Avvakum to forsake his religious ways, by both discussions and evil means he did not forsake what he believed was right before God.

It is through exposing the cruelty of the Nikon led established group that Avvakum tells his side of the schism conflict. Avvakum stands strong in accordance with the ecclesiastical rules of fasting, praying, and good morals to the end.

Boris Godunov was a close companion of Ivan the fourth for whom he served as a trusted adviser. The relationship between the two was strengthened by

the marriage of their children. Ivan's son Feodor married Boris' daughter Irina bring Boris close to the leadership (Margeret, 1607). Boris Godunov is described as a comely person who is easy and quick to misleading or wrong counsel, but very rash at the end to the source of the counsel. He was well-favored, not learned, revengeful, and a superb orator (Pushkin, 1964).

Boris ensured a good relationship with Elizabeth 1 of England and after the death of the King of Poland; there was an opportunity for Boris to take the kingship as well as that of Muscovy. Boris helped to tighten Muscovy's hold on western Siberia with Muscovites troops camping permanently in the area. Boris reign was marked with a series of calamities and crisis that hit the country. Feodor' government was forced to manage with social-economic crisis that affected the region. Famine and high taxation led to the peasants migrating to foreign neighbor countries in search of better lives. The migration of the peasants worsened the situation further by creating a labor shortage in the region and reducing the amount of tax revenue that was being collected. The administration of the region enjoyed the high revenue diverting it for various sectors of the economy. The Noblemen were unable to plough their land due to lack of labor, and consequently, there lacked support for the military that was being provided by the nobles. Boris tried to cut down the tax to curb the migration of the peasants and even allowed the nobles to take back forcefully any migrating peasants. The migration of people to southern and eastern areas presented a problem to the authority due to the Cossack warrior band in the regions that posed a threat (Pushkin, 1953).

When Feodor died, there was no other male heir to the throne of the Russian

country, and Boris was the next rightful person in line. Although Boris had become a Tsar, he had no hereditary right to inherit the kingdom and that created a problem with the Boyars who refused to acknowledge his authority. Since the Russian culture was that the king be succeeded by an heir of his bloodline Boris faced a challenge since there were no Blood ties with Feodor (Mussorgsky, 1900).

Boris developed a strong system to counter the opposition, but that did not help to avoid crisis and disasters that faced the country. There were drought and famine during his time giving the period the name " Time of Troubles". Although his administration did much to help manage the problem, it did little to control the mass revolt and law disorder around the country. Despite desperate measures to and from the authority to supply relief supply to the people, the system did not workout well. Hungry citizens all over the country protested against Boris ruling, and the opposition capitalized on the crisis to gain followers.

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