THE TULA KREMLIN

For a number of centuries the history of Tula wa closely linked with the formation of the Russian state. In 1380 the famous Kulikovo Battle which led to the expulsion of the Tartar-Mongolian hordes from the Russian territory was fought to the South-East of Tula.

After joining the Moscow state in 1503, Tula’s importance increased greatly. It became a strong fortress in the defence line of the Moscow state. A wooden fortress was built and by 1521 the Tula Kremlin had been completed.

The Tula Kremlin differs from others in that its outline is almost rectangular.

The square lay-out of the Tula Kremlin walls is explained by the fact that when they were built the development of artillery made it more convenient to deliver direct fire from symmetrically disposed towers.

The walls are up to three metres thick and almost 11 metres high. Four towers

out of nine have gates. The walls and towers have about 300 loop-holes. Usually the Kremlin was not heavily garrisoned but due to its strength and reliability it could stand up to long sieges.

Within the Kremlin stands the Cathedral of the Assumption\* built in 1762-64.

Its five cupolas are typical of Russian cathedrals of the 17-th century. Its frescoes,

painted by masters from Yaroslavl are the last copies of frescoes in ancient Russian

churches.

In 1552 the Tula Kremlin withstood a severe onslaught by the Crimean Khan

Devlet Girei, whose troops several times outnumbered the fortress defenders. The

town’s inhabitants and a garrison of 200 men beat off all attacks of 30-thousand-

strong troops. Moscow troops, which approached the town two days later, drove off the enemy and defeated him near Tula.

Fifty years later the Tula Kremlin became the stronghold of the troops of Ivan

Bolotnikov, a peasant leader. For four months rebels against the princes and boyars

defended themselves within the Kremlin walls against the tsar’s troops. When the

long siege did not wear down the defenders, the attackers flooded the town by damming the river and forced them to surrender. Ivan Bolotnikov was kept prisoner and killed. In the Kremlin one can see the monument to the peasant leader.

\*Cathedral of the Assumption – Успенский Собор.

1. What was the history of Tula linked with?

2. What happened in 1380?

3. What did the Kulikovo Battle lead to?

4. What happened in 1503?

5. What material was the first Tula fortress made of?

6. What outline has the Kremlin? How is this fact explained in the text?

7. How many towers has the Kremlin?

8. What battle did the Tula Kremlin withstand in 1552?

9. Who had the larger army?

10. Who helped the Tula defenders?

11. How long did the peasants under Ivan Bolotnikov defend themselves within

the Kremlin walls?

12. What did the attackers do with the army of Bolotnikov and Bolotnikov himself?