

# How did Russia begin?

- In Roman times there is evidence of migration to and from the area of Russia
- those who stayed in Russia spoke Slavic languages; in the far north they spoke Finn and in the far south, Turkish
- Some were farmers, some nomads; they traded with each other
- Climate zones form east-west bands across Russia; east-west travel by caravans, north-south travel by rivers—see page 235.
- The term **Rus** came to refer to Slavic speaking people ruled by the Varangians who lived in cities. Those in Kiev traded with Byzantium rather than Muslim world because the Dneiper flows into the Black Sea—900-1200 is called **Kievan Russia**
- p. 233-234: How Christianity came to Russia

# Mongol Influence 1200s to 1478

- Mongol Golden Horde ruled much of Russia (map p. 301)
- Mongols ruled from far away, granting privileges to the Orthodox Church to help Russians like them more. They used Russian princes to collect taxes—maintaining some traditional Russian authority
- The flow of gold and silver into Mongol hands made local economies suffer
- Novgorod and Moscow submitted to Mongols and received favor
- Effects of the Mongols: bubonic plague, population loss; some say Mongol rule isolated Russia from west (developments), but so did contact with Byzantium (eastern Orthodox versus Latin)
- Ivan III, prince of Moscovy (Moscow) titled himself tsar (caesar) in late 1400s, the Russian tradition outliving the Mongol one.
- Once freed from Mongol rule, Russians conquered areas of Golden Horde and more
- Prince Ivan IV expanded Russia far to the east

# 1500s and 1600s

See map on p. 528

- By end of 1500s Russia ruled largest state in Europe with territory east of the Ural Mountains; Moscow was considered the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rome (by Russians)
- In reality, Russia's claims of greatness were exaggerated. Russia in 1600 was poor, backward, and landlocked.
- Crimea sacked Moscow in 1571, Ottomans controlled the Black Sea, Safavids (Iran) dominated Central Asian trade, couldn't get to Baltic Sea through Lithuania...
- But the Stroganov family explored the far east and gained Siberia, made forts there and lived off animal pelts; During 1600s was used as a penal colony because Russian political structure didn't flow there
- Expansion east worried China; Treaty of Nerchinsk 1689 recognized Russian rule west of Mongolia, not east (but recognized Russia!)
- all this meant diversity—Orthodox missionaries tried to convert Siberians, but Islam won; Siberians were different—herders, caravaners, soldiers
- Cossacks: close-knit bands of riders/fighters; founded many cities

# Rise of the Romanovs

Early 17<sup>th</sup> century Sweden and Poland started causing trouble on the borders—during this “Time of Troubles” Mikhail Romanov became tsar.

- As centralized power increased, freedom of peasants fell
- Serfs could change masters every year, but a law in 1649 tied them to the land—no more changing masters. Soon all slaves were serfs and made up over ½ the population of Russia—like Caribbean slaves, owned by 2% of the population
- greatest Romanov tsar: Peter the Great (1689-1725)--made major changes to size and power of Russia
- remembered for turning from east to west; traveled in disguise to Europe to discover what made them wealthy and powerful;
- Peter wanted a warm water port, couldn't get it, wanted to defeat Sweden to control Baltic Sea-long and costly Great Northern War-victory forced Europe to recognize Russia as a power—in new western territory built St. Petersburg, his “window to the west”
- modeled on German gov't, no beards, increased tax burden on serfs like Europe and America, put Orthodox church under state control

# Rise of the Romanovs

Catherine the Great (1762-1796)

- in a successful war with the Ottomans, won control of the northern shore of the Black Sea
- divided up Poland and acquired much western land
- became exporter of gold, iron, timber

# Romanovs in action

Napoleon's invasion in 1812 and reached Moscow. His defeat by Russia made Europe see Russia differently—Alexander I became more powerful

Russia looked more like the Ottoman Empire than like Europe; it had almost no middle class.

- Alexander engaged in reforms that set modernity in motion
- When Alexander died, there was some confusion over who should succeed him—a failed uprising at the time called Decembrist Revolt
- Alexander's brother Nicholas became tsar next—fear of revolution led him to stifle widespread literacy and education
- Pan-slavism rose—militant political doctrine advocating unity of all slavs
- Russia continued to expand south, which scared Qing China and Japan, Iran and the Ottomans, increasing anti-Russian feelings everywhere
- nationalism of the late 1800s weakened Russia, which was ethnically diverse (45% spoke Russian) with a large Jewish population
- 1861-Alexander II freed the serfs, turning them into communal farmers with no say in gov't, no education, no capital

# Russia and World War I

Glaring weakness of Russia shown in loss to Japan 1904-1905 war

Russia saw itself as protector of all Slavic people in the Balkans

The existence of an independent Serbia threatened Austria-Hungary by stirring up the hopes and resentments of its Slavic populations

• When the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated by a pro-Serbia terrorist/nationalist group, war began:

- Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia
- Russia mobilized troops (needed several weeks) against Austria
- France, in alliance with Russia, mobilized troops
- Germany mobilized troops, planned to hit France then Russia

# Russia and World War I

- the war was especially devastating to Russia—destroyed old society, opened door to revolution and civil war, introduced a new political system

At start of WWI Russia had the biggest army and defeated Austria many times, but were still beaten by the Germans

In 1916 Russia ran out of everything, cities had no food or fuel

- In 1917 food ran out in St. Petersburg and the February Revolution began. The tsar abdicated the throne and a Provisional Government was formed by Kerensky
- Several revolutionary groups formed, mostly Social Democrats
- Mensheviks: like European socialists
- Bolsheviks: radical, devoted to Lenin, wanted to lead the lower class to the revolution
- Ultimately the Bolsheviks won because the peasants feared the return of the tsar



# Civil War and the rise of Communism

- Bolsheviks seized St. Petersburg, nationalized all private land, created a secret police, and ordered peasants to donate all their crops

They made a separate peace with Germany and Austria, costing Russia a lot of territory in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania became independent

In 1918 a 3 year civil war began in Russia: Communists vs. counterrevolutionary armies supplied by the Allies

- By 1921 Communism had won; peasants were afraid of a tsar, and the Red Army led by Leon Trotsky was powerful; 1922 the USSR formed
- Lenin temporarily released the economy from gov't control with his New Economic Policy: peasants could own land, sell crops, free market existed—the economy improved, but Communists fully intended the privatization to be temporary
- the goal was to have peasants pay for industrialization
- When Lenin died, Stalin took over...