Anything Going On in Russia?
Themes in Russian History

Not part of general development of Europe

- Eastern Orthodox

- Mongols had invaded in 1200s – Russia under Asian domination for 250 years

Expansion by conquest:

- Geography

  Need for warm-water ports

  Commerce and communication difficult

The necessity of a strong, central government.
Kievan Rus

- Begun by invasion of Viking tribes – also known as Slavs – from north of the Baltic.
- Both trade partner and sometime enemy of the Byzantine Empire.
Viking Invasions
Rulers of the Kievan Rus
Vladimir I (980)

- Extremely war-like ruler of Kiev. Invited missionaries from Judaism, Islam and Christianity to offer reasons for conversion.
- Married the Byzantine emperor’s sister.
- Brought Christianity and Greco-Roman civilization to Russia.
Rulers of the Kievan Rus

Yaroslav I (1010 – 1054)

📍 Created a Russian law code based on Justinian’s Code.

📍 Instituted a Golden Age of Kievan Russia. Built churches and a new capital city.

📍 Allied Russia with the rest of Europe by marrying his children to European rulers.
Early Byzantine Influences: Orthodox Christianity

Expansion of Byzantine culture northward was through conversion of Kiev to Orthodox Christianity
Influenced by Byzantine Politics

- Russia adopted the concept of divinely inspired monarchy with close relations to state-controlled church
- Were unable to adopt the Byzantine trained bureaucracy however
Early Byzantine Influences: Cyrillic Alphabet

Byzantine missionaries, Cyril and Methodius sent to convert eastern Europe and the Balkans created the script

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Russian Expansion

[Map of the European continent showing territorial changes in 1237, with labels for major cities and regions.]
The Mongols Invade Russia

Tartars conquered Russian cities during the 13th century and left Russian church and aristocracy intact, as long as tribute was paid.
Russia in Bondage

- The Russians became vassals of the khan of the Golden Horde, a domination which lasted for 250 years.
- Peasants had to meet the demands from both their own princes and the Mongols, and many sought protection by becoming serfs, changing the Russian social structure until the 19th century.
- Some cities like Moscow benefited from Mongol rule by increased trade, but when the Golden Horde’s power weakened, it led the resistance.
- Although Mongols remained active in the region through much of the 15th century, Moscow became the center of political power in Russia.
- The Mongols influenced Russian military and political organization, but most significantly isolated them from developments in Western Europe → did not experience the Renaissance or Reformation.
Regional Effects: Russia under the “Golden Horde”

Destroyed most cities & demanded high tribute.

- However, the Mongols left Russia largely to its own devices & few Mongol officials were there (INDIRECT rule). Russia had lots of independent principalities, each required to send tribute …or else.

- New places --like Moscow (Muscovy) to the north --began to grow with the Mongols’ implementation of a postal system, financial structures, & census. Moscow became a cultural & economic center.

- Armenians, Georgians, & Russians thought Mongols were a punishment from God who “fetched the Tartars against us for our sins.”

- Limited Russia’s interaction with Western Europe (e.g. Russia was isolated from the cultural effects of the Renaissance) --a period of cultural decay except in northern Russia.
Mongols in Russia

**Good:**
- Centralization politically
- Protected Russia from attacks (Teutonic Knights)

**Bad:**
- Russia cut off from political, economic, and intellectual development
“Third Rome”

• Russians re-emerged after Mongol control ended in the 15th century and claimed to be the successors of the Roman and Byzantine states

• Moscow was considered to be the “Third Rome”
Ivan the Great (1462-1505)

Absolute ruler. Took the title of czar

Czar – Absolute ruler of Russia: from Roman word – Caesar

Defeated the Mongols, who had gained control of Russia

Extended Russian territory
Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584)

• Ferocious to those who opposed him
• POSITIVES → Did expand the Russian territories AND centralize the government, AND gained an outlet to the Baltic Sea.
• BUT → Passed a series of laws binding the formerly free peasants to their land as serfs.
  – Serfdom, which had disappeared from England and Western Europe, was now a new and permanent part of Russian life.
• His death led to the “Time of Troubles”
  – no direct heir (Ivan killed him)
  – Russia in bad shape → Civil wars
Serfdom in Russia

- The worst!
- Peasants started out free, and slowly were gobbled by serfdom
- Closer to slave plantations in New World than to serfdom of the west
  - Landlord could reclaim serf up to 15 years after escape
  - If you killed another man’s serf, you just had to give him another one
  - 1625 → lord allowed to sell his peasants!
Russian Orthodox Church

- A tool of the tsar
- Instilled superstitious feelings
- The Old Believers
  - People who were so superstitious they did not want ANY change made to the Bible (not even spelling corrections!)
The Romanovs

• Started in 1613 → Would rule Russia until 1917
• Elected 17 year-old Michael, thinking he was too young to be a source of conflict
• The country still remained divided, with *boyars* (Russian nobility) and *streltsy* (palace guards) too strong.
• In 1680s, Russia was still a backward and disorganized state.
Peter the Great
Russia
Beginning

• 1682 becomes tsar

• Starts social revolution of Russia
Before Peter the Great

- Women secluded and wore veils
- Men had beards and skirts
- Crude manners
- Drunkenness abounded
- Superstition was high
- Life didn’t have much value
  - Murder
  - Kidnap
  - Torture

Common
Backwards

• Learning a sin (geometry especially!)
• Calendar date back to the start of the world
• Ability to predict an eclipse was magic
• Clocks were amazing inventions brought from the west
Western Exposure

• German quarter of Moscow
• Archangel – only sea port
• Spent time in W. Europe, especially Holland and England.
  – Became aware of backwardness of own country
  – Learned about / to do technology and machines → “real work”
  – Visited workshops, mines, commercial offices, art galleries, hospitals, & forts
  – Mixed well with lower class
Cultural Changes By Peter the Great

- Traveled in disguise throughout the Netherlands and England to search for the key that made Western European Societies wealthy and powerful
- After he returned home to Russia, he abolished the older Russian fashions which were similar to those of the Orientals and ordered French styles to be worn throughout Russia
- Houses were to be built of stone and brick
- He paid special attention to ships and weaponry while in Western Europe
- Made no moves to abolish serfdom as Russia was dependent on the labor
Goals

• Did not care about culture → wanted only state & army that could compete with the West
• Partly defensive
• Partly expansionist
  – Needed seaports, “windows to the west”
• All but 2 years of his reign Russia would be at war!
War & Russia

• Modernized army

• Old army – streltsy (mostly nobles)
  – Rebel against state – Peter liquidates them

• Peter rebuilds army from ground up
  • Uniforms like west
  • Organized
  • Modern weaponry

• Holds Russia together with military might
The Great Northern War

- 1700-1721 against Swedes
- Russia gains Baltic seaport!
- Used Russian winter to defeat them (this will happen again → Napoleon & Hitler)
St Petersburg

- A city much like Versailles (built at same time)
- Chief window to the west
- Nobles required to have homes there
- Favorable to merchants
- Symbol of new Russia
- Capital of Russia until 1917
Internal Changes

- All reform requires money
- Taxes
  - Heads
  - Poll taxes
  - Land
  - Inn
  - Mills
  - Hats
  - leather
- Burden falls mainly on peasants
- Borderline people now classified as serfs
- Coffins
- Right to marry
- Sell meat
- Wear beard
- Be an Old Believer
Mercantilism

- Encourages exports
- Industry to support army
- Gave companies serfs to use as labor
Serfs in Industry

- Not tied to land
- Mines
- Towns
- Un-free labor
- Even management had to do what tsar says
Administration

• Overseeing
  – Tax collection
  – Recruiting
  – Economic controls
  – “Serf hunting”
  – Repressing internal rebellions
  – Church → Holy Synod (council headed by a layman)
  – Tsar at head of it all
  – All nobles required to work in army or civil admin.
Social Revolution

• New government
  • A party system (a body of men working zealously for the new system with personal interest in its preservation)

• New Russia
  • Contempt for old
  • New schools
  • Simplified Russian alphabet
  • First newspapers
  • 1st book on etiquette
    – No spitting
    – No gnawing on bones
    – Respectful to ladies
    – Converse pleasantly
  • No beards!
• Forced men to shave beards to conform to European styles (baroque style)
  – Some men saved their beards after they were shaved and placed them in small coffins for fear that they would not be allowed to enter heaven without them
  – Decreed that gentlemen, merchants, and other subjects, except priests and peasants, should each pay a tax of one hundred rubles a year if they wished to keep their beards; the commoners had to pay one kopek each.

• Peter attempted to bring women out of the normal seclusion of upper class Russian women, by requiring they be brought to social gatherings with their husbands
Results

• Some resisted, moving too fast

• Hated foreign influence
  • Church against tsar
  • Own son against, Alexis, said would stop all when he was tsar . . . Peter puts him to death
  • Peter says tsar can choose his own heir
• But changes hold – new culture forced on Russia
• Sets up future of Russian empire
• But only changes the aristocrats
  – Spoke French
  – More European than Russian
  – Peasants and serfs not connected! Strangers in their own country