

Russia

Prior to 17th century, however, Russia was a backward power, not really part of Europe. They couldn't seriously trade, or launch naval expeditions, because they lacked warm water ports.

1533-1584 — Rule of **Ivan the Terrible**. Crazy, he executed all rivals. He did expand the Russian territories and centralize the government, and gained an outlet to the Baltic Sea. To weaken the power of the hereditary nobility, Ivan created a second class of military aristocrats, dependent solely on the Tsar — over time, they became the most powerful class in Russia. To ensure them a supply of workers, he 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.

1584-1613 — Time of Troubles: no direct heir (Ivan killed him). This period was characterized by popular revolts and invasions.

1613 — 1st of the Romanov line, Michael Romanov, was elected by the Russian nobles; his family would rule Russia till 1917. The country still remained divided, with **boyars** (Russian nobility) and **streltsy** (palace guards) too strong. Under Romanov rule, the government was strengthened and the country expanded by military conquests. However, in 1680s, Russia was still a backward and disorganized state.

1682-1725 — Rule of **Peter the Great**. The major architect of the Russian absolutist state. He came to the throne as a child amid a very contested succession, and had to overthrow his sister Sophia, who had been appointed as regent. Peter believed in a strong monarchy and westernization — at the beginning of his reign, he went on tour of Western Europe to inspect their industry.

Peter's four goals:

- Taming boyars and palace guard corps
 - Achieving secular control of church
 - Reorganizing the state administration
 - Developing the economy
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- 1722 — he created the **Table of Rank**, which tied noble privilege to rank within the bureaucratic hierarchy. Peter also killed a goodly number of the strelsky. He required all aristocrats who owned land and serfs to serve the state in either the military or the civil administration and promoted them based on ability rather than birth. Through this way, Peter bypassed the traditional aristocracy and created a class of nobility he could control.
 - 1721— Peter replaced the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church with a **synod** (council) headed by a layman — who would rule church in accordance with needs of the state. The Russian Orthodox church had traditionally been subservient to the state, as was the Orthodox tradition, but under Peter it became almost a branch of the government.
 - He set up a small cabinet to oversee trade, and copied France's mercantile system to the letter, supervising the building of new industries and a fleet to trade on the Baltic.
 - In the 1690s and 1700s, Peter invaded the Ottoman Empire and Sweden to gain his **warm water ports** for trade. He won against Sweden. Russia got Estonia, Livonia, and a part of Finland. Peter built **St. Petersburg**, his grand new capital, in his new territory, facing west. It was modeled on Versailles.
 - Peter's succession was also a mess for the same reason as Ivan's — Peter killed his only son. This led to 30 years of fighting before the Russian monarchy could once again seize control. But Peter set Russia on new path. From his time on, Russia was recognized as a great European power, and on a slow road to modernization.
 - Russia in 1740s: Still a backward economy, but improving trade; strong Tsar despite problems, aristocracy in line but in complete control of peasants

I. Westernization and empire

A. A "window on the west"

1. Peter I (reigned 1682-1725): known as Peter the Great
 - a. Fascinated with technology he found in the foreign quarters of Moscow
 - b. As tsar, imposed program of rapid modernization
 1. industries incorporate the most advanced science and technology
 2. Russians sent abroad to study
 3. Peter himself traveled to Europe to study government, military, and industry
2. **Peter's reforms: progressive but autocratic**
 - a. **Military reform: to build powerful, modern army**
 1. Offered better pay and modern weapons to peasants
 2. Aristocratic officers ordered to study mathematics and geometry
 3. Built largest European army; defeated Sweden
 - b. **Bureaucratic reform: to facilitate collection of taxes**
 1. Only nobles educated to serve as government officials
 2. Table of Ranks allowed social mobility for civil servants by merit and service
 - c. **Social reform: challenged established customs**
 1. Abolished the seclusion of women; encouraged social mixing of the sexes
 2. Ordered subjects to wear western clothing; ordered men to shave beards
3. St. Petersburg, the "window on the west"
 - a. New capital on the Baltic Sea built by Peter in 1703
 - b. Headquarters for Russian navy, administrative center for government

B. The limits of westernization

1. Catherine II (reigned 1762-1795)
 - a. Married Peter's grandson, an unpopular tsar; replaced him as ruler
 - b. Continued Peter's policies of westernization; appointed educated officials
 - c. Attracted to the ideals of the Enlightenment; corresponded with *philosophes*
 - d. Rejected any changes that would weaken her autocratic rule
2. Pugachev's rebellion in Caucasus (1773-1774)
 - a. Cossacks, exiles, peasants, and serfs protesting taxes
 - b. Killed thousands of nobles, officials, and priests; crushed by imperial army, 1774
3. The end of Catherine's reforms
 - a. Pugachev's rebellion and French Revolution soured Catherine on reform
 - b. Reversed policy of westernization; tried to restrict foreign influence in Russia

C. The Russian empire in Europe

1. Poland-Lithuania, a dual republican state; two societies, one king and parliament
 - a. Poland-Lithuania was Roman Catholic, whereas Russia was Orthodox
 - b. Slavic Orthodox minorities in Belarus and Ukraine
2. Absorption of Ukraine
 - a. Ukrainian peasants sought union with Moscow
 - b. Long revolt against Poland ended, 1667; Ukraine and Kiev absorbed into Russia
3. Southern expansion of Russian empire into Ottoman territories
 - a. Tsarist forces pushed into Balkans, welcomed by Greek Orthodox minorities
 - b. Further expansion halted by England and France

- D. The Russian empire in Asia
 - 1. By late eighteenth century Russia controlled Volga River to Caspian Sea
 - a. Georgia: Orthodox Christians; absorbed into Russian empire, 1783
 - b. Armenia and Azerbaijan also annexed
 - 2. Siberia less hospitable, but rich in resources, especially furs
 - 3. Native peoples of Siberia lived by hunting, fishing, or herding reindeer
 - a. Some groups welcomed Russian trade
 - b. Yakut people resisted and were brutally crushed; 70 percent of population killed
 - c. Smallpox reduced more than half of total Siberian population
 - 4. American and Pacific explorations
 - a. Vitus Bering led two maritime expeditions across Asia to the Pacific Ocean
 - b. Other Russian explorers pushed further into Alaska and west Canada

II. **A society in tension**

- A. Muscovite society before westernization
 - 1. Rural life centered on peasant villages
 - 2. In European Russia, serfs bound to land of nobles, the crown, and monasteries
 - 3. Law Code of 1649 placed serfs under strict control of landlords
 - a. Serfs were not slaves but could be sold as private property
 - b. Also fixed occupational castes; sons forced into trades of their fathers
 - 4. Catherine gave nobility greater control over lands and serfs
 - a. Nobles supported her reforms in exchange
 - b. Most Russians were now subject to harsh and arbitrary rule of noble landlords
- B. The growth of trade and industry
 - 1. European trade with Russia began in mid-sixteenth century
 - a. Europeans bought Russian furs, leather, and grain
 - b. Russians bought western European armaments, textiles, paper, and silver
 - 2. Industrial development was primary goal of Peter the Great
 - a. Invited one thousand engineers, shipbuilders, officers, teachers, technicians to Russia
 - b. About two hundred new industrial plants opened: iron, arms, textiles, glass, paper
 - c. No urban working class; factory owners allowed to draft serfs

III. **Cultural clashes**

- A. Crisis in the church
 - 1. Efforts to reform the Russian Orthodox Church led to schism
 - 2. Tsarist control over the church tightened between 16th and 18th centuries
 - a. State control over church strengthened by the religious schism
 - b. Peter the Great made the Orthodox church a state department
- B. Westernization and the Enlightenment in Russia
 - 1. Peter's westernization included art (e.g., ballet), literature, and ideas
 - 2. Peter recognized the role of education in western progress
 - a. Created the first secular education system; elementary schools in capital cities
 - b. Founded academy of sciences
 - c. Catherine expanded elementary schools to all children except serfs, even girls
 - 3. Catherine introduced the ideas of the Enlightenment to Russia
 - a. Introduced western literature; promoted Russian literature
 - b. Promoted inoculation against smallpox
 - 4. The intelligentsia, a new unofficial social class of intellectuals
 - a. Encouraged by Catherine, but always subject to government censors
 - 5. Intellectual and cultural experimentation ended after the French Revolution