

Forum: Historical Crisis Committee

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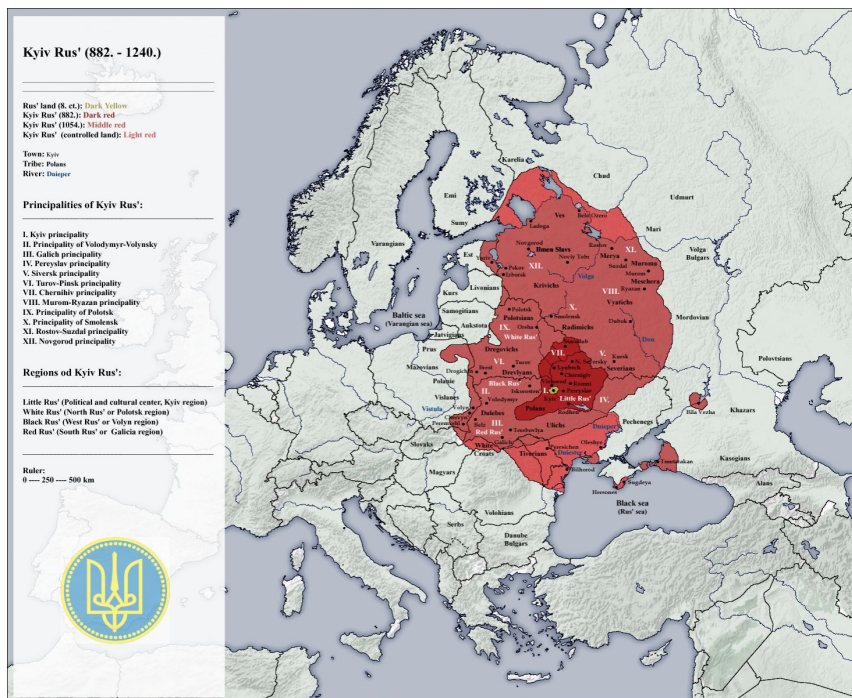
Introduction

Russian history begins with the East slavs in the early part of the 9th century, as a part of the movement that brought the Danish to England. A Scandinavian people known as the Varangians cross the Baltic Sea and landed in Eastern Europe. The leader of the Varangians was warrior Rurik who led his people to the city of Novgorod on the Volkhov river. Rurik's successor Oleg extended the power of the city southward. In 882, Oleg gained control of Kiev, a Slavic city that had arisen in the 5th century. This control of Kiev marked the first establishment of a unified, dynastic state in the region which came to be known as the Kievan Rus'. The Kievan Rus' was a loose federation of Eastern slavic tribes in Europe. This empire would flourish for the next three hundred years.

By 989, Oleg's grandson Vladimir I was the ruler of a kingdom that spread as far south as the Black Sea and the Caucasus Mountains, and east toward the lower regions of the Volga River. As a state religion, Vladimir decided upon Greek Orthodoxy, therefore allying with Constantinople. Vladimir was succeeded by Yaroslav the Wise. Under his reign, the Kievan Rus' empire would experience its peak. Yaroslav established laws, created alliances with other states, and promoted the arts. He then decided to divide his kingdom among his children, instructing them to cooperate; however, none of the desired occurred.

After Yaroslav's death in 1054, Kievan Rus' began to falter and had broken up into regional power centers, made worse by the invading Cumans (Kipchaks). During the 12th century, Yuri Dolgorukiy, one of the regional princes, held a feast at his lodge overlooking the

confluence of the Moskva and Neglina rivers. This would be the earliest mention of Moscow, the small settlement that would become the largest city in Russia.



I. Kyiv Rus' (882-1240)

Moving into the 13th century, Kievan Rus' continued to struggle and was destroyed by the arrival of the Mongols. In 1237 Batu Khan, grandson of Jenghiz Khan, launched an invasion into Kievan Rus'. Over the next three years the Mongols would destroy all of the major cities of Kievan Rus' except Novgorod and Pskov. The princes were forced to send tribute to the Tatar State which later became known as the Empire of the Golden Horde. More invasions were to come: the Swedish in 1240 and the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, a branch of the Teutonic Knights, in 1242. Both invasions were defeated by the great warrior to be known as Alexander Nevsky, a prince of Novgorod who earned his name from the victories over the Swedish on the Neva River.

Over the next century, very little seemed to happen in Russia; however, the Mongols began to have more influence and by the 14th century, their influence had spread to Moscow. To combat Mongol influence in the city, the patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church moved to

the city, transforming it into the spiritual capital of Russia. As Moscow gained power, the Russians began to feel they could challenge the Tatars directly, and in 1380 Prince Dmitri Donskoy from Moscow did just that. His defeat of the Mongols at Kulikovo field made him an instant hero; however, two years later the Tatars regained rule of the city. Another century passed and Moscow was finally strong enough to throw off a Tatar rule for good. At the time, in 1480, the ruler of Moscow, Grand Duke Ivan III, also known as Ivan the Great, began by taking control of Moscow's rival cities and soon took control of the entire country. However, it would not be until the reign of his grandson, Ivan IV (the Terrible), that Russia would become a unified state.

Ivan the Terrible succeeded his father as the next Grand Duke of Moscow in 1533 at the age of three. His mother served as regent until she died when Ivan was eight. For the next years, a series of regents were chosen from among the boyars. It was not until 1547 that Ivan adopted the title of Tsar and decided on his goals of demolishing the power of the boyars, reorganizing the military, and preparing to crush the Tatars. 1552 was the year he conquered Kazan, followed by Astrakhan in 1556, destroying the Golden Horde while doing so. His campaigns opened areas of Russia for expansion and it was under his rule that the colonization of Siberia began. As Ivan grew, his temper worsened and throughout the 1560s he carried out horrifying campaigns against the boyars, confiscating land and killing those who displeased him. His temper led him to striking and killing one of his sons, Ivan, in 1581.



II. Russia, 1584. Under Ivan the Terrible

Ivan the Terrible's other son Fyodor succeeded him when Ivan the Terrible died in 1584, and Fyodor left his brother-in-law, Boris Godunov, to rule the country. It didn't take long for Godunov to begin to work to secure the succession for himself. In 1591, he murdered Fyodor's younger brother Dimitri and when Fyodor died in 1598, Godunov was made Tsar. However, his rule struggled to be accepted as entirely legitimate. Soon after, a man claiming to be Dimitri rose in Poland, and in 1604 he invaded Russia. Godunov died suddenly the next year, beginning the "Time of Troubles". For the next eight years, two men claiming to be Dimitri made claims to the throne, both supported by invading Polish armies. Finally, in 1613, the Poles were driven out of Moscow and the boyars selected Michael Romanov as the Tsar. The Romanov dynasty ruled Russia for the next 304 years.

Throughout the first generations, the Romanovs continued to centralize power. However, they did very little to keep Russia's economic and political life up to speed with the changes happening in Europe. Peter the Great would change all that.

Peter was his father's youngest son and the child of his second wife. When Peter's father Tsar Alexis died in 1676, Peter's brother Fedor became Tsar, but only until his early death in 1682. Peter's mother's family helped Peter to be chosen over his brother Ivan to be Tsar but it didn't take long for Ivan's family to strike back. With the support of the Kremlin Guard, Ivan's family initiated a coup, resulting in a joint Tsar-ship, with both Peter and Ivan under the Regency of Ivan's older sister Sophia.

In 1689, Sophia attempted another coup; however, she was defeated and confined to the Novodevichy Convent. When Ivan died six years later, this left Peter as the only possessor of the throne. Instead of finding residence and rule in Moscow, he embarked on a Grand Tour of Europe. He spent about two years meeting monarchs, conducting diplomacy, and travelling, including working as a ship's carpenter in the Netherlands. When he discovered the techniques of Western European industries and state administrations, he was determined to modernize the Russian State and to westernize society. In 1698, while still in Europe, Peter heard of another attempted rebellion by the Kremlin Guard led by Sophia, despite her confinement. Peter returned

to Russia, defeated the coup, and hung all the rebels. The very next day he began his program to recreate Russia.

His programs took Russia by storm: first he banned all traditional Muscovite dress for men, introduced military conscription, established schools, replaced the church with a holy synod, simplified the alphabet, improved the manners of the court, changed the calendar, changed the title from Tsar to Emper anor and hundreds of other reforms and restrictions. Next, in 1703, he transferred the capital from Moscow to a new city to be built on the Gulf of Finland. Over the next few years at extreme human and environmental cost, St. Petersburg was created.

After Peter's death in 1725, Russia experienced a large number of rulers in short succession, none of whom had much opportunity to leave a lasting impression. Many of Peter's reforms failed to stick, and it was not until Catherine the Great that Peter's dream of making Russia into a great European power was in fact achieved.

When she was 14 years old, Catherine was arranged to become Karl Ulrich's wife, Peter the Great's grandson and heir to the throne as Grand Duke Peter. In 1744, Catherine arrived in Russia and married her younger cousin, Peter. Peter was a neurotic worshipper of Prussia, Russia's enemy, who Catherine also viewed as an enemy. At the time Russia was ruled by Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great. Elizabeth's reign stabilized the Russian monarchy, and eventually paved the way for Catherine.

Empress Elizabeth died on December 25, 1761. Peter became emperor of Russia, ended Russia's participation in the War, and allied with Frederick II of Prussia. Peter clearly showed his despise of Russia and love for his native nation Germany. Nonetheless, due to Catherine's intelligence and charm, she gained the support of much of the Russian army and public opinion of both capital cities: Moscow and St. Petersburg. Eight days after she was proclaimed the empress and autocrat in the Kazan Cathedral of St. Petersburg, Peter was assassinated, probably by her supporters. In 1762, she was crowned new Empress of Russia under the name Catherine II.

After Catherine was crowned, the main problem she had to deal with was refilling the

treasury of Russia that had been empty since Elizabeth's death. Suspicions and uncertainties upon the death of Peter made it necessary to maintain discretion and stability between dealings with other nations. Catherine kept friendly relations with Prussia, the old enemy of Russia, along with remaining allied with France and Austria. In 1764, Catherine solved the problem of uncertain boundaries and weak governance in Poland by declaring one of her lovers as King of Poland.

Catherine tried several times to reform Russia. In 1767, she called a commission with delegates from all social classes in order to frame a constitution for the nation. Nonetheless, the draft of the constitution was considered too liberal and it became a dead idea in Russia. In 1768, Catherine took Russia to war with Turkey as a means to find a way to change the policy of the country. In 1774, Russia won the war against Turkey. During Catherine's reign, Russia did not become involved in the European War due to Catherine's arranged territorial agreements with other European nations. Catherine's peak of glory came in 1787 during a trip to Crimea where many diplomats came to honor her.

Catherine the Great, as well as all powerful European figures, felt threatened by the French Revolution. Furthermore, during her last years, Catherine realized that she had no suitable successor to rule over Russia during such unstable period.

In June of 1812, Napoleon began his Russian campaign. The majority of continental Europe was already his control and his invasion of Russia was an attempt to force Tsar Alexander to accept the terms of a treaty Napoleon had suggested four years earlier. Napoleon gathered nearly half a million soldiers. The Russians under Marshal Kutuzov could in no way defeat his army in a direct confrontation. Instead, the Russians began a defense campaign of strategic retreat, destroying the land as they fell back. As time went on, Napoleon's supply was running short and his strength began to decline. By September of 1812, Marshal Kutuzov had managed to reduce the French Army to less than a third.

Although the Russian's plan was succeeding, if they did not engage in direct battle and continued their strategy of retreat it was clear that Moscow would soon belong to Napoleon. The Tsar insisted on battle, and on September 7th with the French army only 110 km from city, the

two armies met at Borodino Field. By the end of the day, 108,000 men were lost and neither side had gained a decisive victory. Kutuzov withdrew his forces, causing the citizens of Moscow to begin a panicked exodus. When Napoleon's army arrived on the 14th of September they found a city lacking supplies and wondered how to combat the oncoming winter. The same night as arrival, fires broke out in the city, leaving the French with little shelter.

After waiting in suffering for Tsar Alexander to negotiate, Napoleon ordered his troops to begin the march home. The south route was blocked by Kutuzov's forces, and the French in no shape for battle decided on the long devastated route of the invasion. Winter soon kicked in and temperatures dropped below freezing, food was scarce and the march was five hundred miles. Only ten thousand men survived. The campaign helped Russia to be viewed as a leading power in post-Napoleonic Europe. However, even though Russia emerged as more powerful than ever, its internal tensions began to increase.

Since the reign of Ivan the terrible, Russian Tsars had followed the policy of taking power away from the nobility and placing it into their own hands. In the Decembrist Revolution of 1825 a group of young reformist military officers tried to get Russia to adapt to a constitutional monarchy by preventing Nicholas I from succeeding Alexander. The group failed dramatically and Nicholas obtained the position of tsar. His successor Alexander II chose to abolish serfdom in 1861, however, it didn't bring much change among the conditions for the peasants. As Russia industrialized there were attempts by lower classes to gain more freedom, provoking fears of anarchy within the political system. Along with becoming more industrialized, larger, and more complicated the inadequacies of the autocratic Tsarist Rule.

Over the nineteenth century Russia had expanded its territory and power. Its borders now stretched to Afghanistan and China. The ports in Vladivostok and Port Arthur had created profitable areas for commerce. Furthermore, the creation of the Trans-Siberian Railway linked Russia with its new eastern territory.

In 1894 Nicholas II took over as Tsar, Nicholas was not recognized as the brightest of political leaders and his ministers were known for being reactionaries. The increasing Russian presence in the east provoked Japan and in 1905, Japan attacked. Russia experienced a series of

defeats that decreased the already dissolving support for Nicholas' government. This forced Nicholas to give concession to the reformers which included a constitution and a parliament (Duma). Through the industrialization of the major western cities, new workers were brought to the west and they soon began to organize political councils, also known as soviets. It was due to these soviets united by the Social Democratic party that Nicholas was forced to accept reforms in 1905.

After the war with Japan ended Nicholas tried to reverse the new freedoms, and his government became more reactionary than ever. People were unhappy with Nicholas and as they gained strength Nicholas countered with increased repression. In 1912 the Social Democrats split into two, the radical Bolsheviks and the comparatively moderate Mensheviks.

Definition of Key Terms

Bloody Sunday: Event that occurred in 1905 Russian soldiers inadvertently opened fire on demonstrators, turning them against the tsar. Arguably the event that triggered the start of the Revolution.

Bolsheviks: Military organization constructed under leadership of Leon Trotsky, led by Vladimir Lenin, it was the Russian communist party that took over the Russian government during WWI.

Boyars: A boyar was the highest rank of the aristocracies, second only to the Tsars.

Golden Horde: The army of Mongol Tartars that overran eastern Europe in the 13th Century.

Kadet: A member of the Constitutional Democratic Party.

Mensheviks: The party which opposed to the Bolsheviks.. The Mensheviks wanted a democratic party with mass membership.

Muscovite: A native or citizen of Moscow.

Tsars: The title of given to rulers or emperors of Russia from the sixteenth century until the

Russian Revolution. The word has its origins from the word “Kaiser” used as a title for German and Austrian emperors. Even further, it comes from the word “Caesar” which was a title used by Roman emperors, especially those from Augustus to Hadrian.

Tatars: A member of a Turkic people living in Tatarstan and various other parts of Russia and Ukraine.

State Duma: Russian assembly with legislative functions, and lower house of the Parliament of the Russian Empire. The word Duma comes from the Russian word “Dumat” which means “to think” or “to consider.” Was created in 1905 after an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government in order to give more “power” back to the people.

General Overview

The year is 1917 and tensions are rising between the Bolsheviks and the Tsar family, ruled by Tsar Nicholas II. At this time the Tsarists have power over all institutions and all major economic entities. The leader of the Bolsheviks, Vladimir Lenin, along with the support of the nobles, hopes to change the future of Russia and create a system that is fair for all. Russia has recently joined World War I and is seen as a stable power with a fast growing economy. However, strikes and protests have been on the rise. There has been a previous attempt to overthrow the government in 1905, and although unsuccessful, it led to creation the State Duma. The main purpose of the State Duma was to create the sense of a more democratic state. This was the case until Tsar Nicholas issued the “Fundamental Laws,” giving almost all the power within the Duma to the Tsar. Currently, the Tsar controls everything in Russia, the nobles have very little, and the Bolsheviks are determined to create change.

World War 1

Initially the outbreak of the war in August of 1914 put to rest the ongoing social and political protests as it helped to focus the Russians on a common enemy; however, this patriotic unity did not last long. Hundreds of thousands of Russians were casualties of war. Just five

months into the war, almost 400,000 Russian men had already lost their lives. The unexpected large death tolls resulted in many peasants and men from working-class backgrounds being called up to fight. Adding on to the loss of men was the loss of rifles, ammunition, and food. No longer than a year after the start of the war, men were being sent into the battlefield without arms, hoping they could equip themselves with the weapons of fallen soldiers. The war was putting strains on Russia and the people were beginning to react. By the end of 1915, there were signs the economy was failing under the economic stress of the war. Russia was experiencing food shortages and rising prices. Furthermore, inflation dragged already low incomes further down. Everyone from the peasants to the working class found it difficult to buy food, if it was available. St. Petersburg, the capital, struggled due to poor transportation networks, and people continued to suffer. As the problems worsened, strikes and crime rapidly increased. According to a report by the St. Petersburg “Department for Protecting the Public Security and Order”, the Okhrana, warned of “the possibility in the near future of riots by the lower classes of the empire enraged by the burdens of daily existence.” Tsar Nicholas was blamed for all the crises, and the support he had began to dissolve. In November of 1916, the State Duma warned Nicholas, stating that “a terrible disaster would grip the country unless a constitutional form of government was put in place.” However, Nicholas chose to ignore the warnings.

The Rise of Communism in Russia

The Bolsheviks, originally known as the Bolshevists were a fraction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) which had split from the Menshevik fraction in 1903. The RSDLP was a revolutionary socialist party first formed in 1898 to unite the various revolutionary organisations of the Russian Empire into one party. The fractions broke off in 1912 after the Bolsheviks had organised a Bolsheviks-only Prague Party Conference, while formally expelling Mensheviks and recallists from the party. Hence, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, split from the RSDLP and declaring themselves an independent party called the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

Bolshevik-Menshevik Split

The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were two parties that branched out from the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The division of these two parties occurred when Georgi Plekhanov was elected chairman of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The delegates moved their meetings from Belgium to London, where their meetings would be overseen by authorities. The reunions always aroused violent arguments, and it became clear that the Party had become divided between two groups: The Bolsheviks ('majority') and the Mensheviks ('minority'). Both groups rooted from the same ideals of wanting to overthrow the Tsarist regime and abolish the capitalism in the country. However, the Bolsheviks, who were led by Lenin, wanted to establish an authoritarian regime. On the other hand, the Mensheviks led by Martov, promoted a more loose approach to the governing of the nation; a sort of organized democratic party where members could vote upon points.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Bolsheviks

A radical party, led by Vladimir Lenin, splitting from the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903. They believed in fast change, and disliked the idea of working together with other parties and more centrist organisations. The Bolsheviks also supported the idea of dictatorship in order to accelerate the transition to socialism. Furthermore, they placed an emphasis on the working class from which it gained a large portion of its support.

Mensheviks

A political group that like the Bolsheviks, split from the Russian Social Democratic Party, however, the Mensheviks were less radical than the Bolsheviks. They believed in moving towards a socialist state that was open to all who wished to join and which would be ruled and organized in a democratic manner. Unlike the Bolsheviks, they were open to working with other parties such as the Kadets and the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

Tsarists

The Tsarists were the supporters of the Tsarist regime. Mostly consisted of the old land aristocracy and a number of senior military figures.

Socialist Revolutionary Party (Labour party)

The Social Revolutionary Party was the main socialist faction in Russia. The party was more moderate than the Bolsheviks but less than the Mensheviks. Their radical stance on reform included redistributing land to the peasants and removing the Tsar, helping them draw the majority of their support from the peasants, helping them have a much larger base than other parties in Russia. The SRs were known for being violent, at times killing around 500 people who opposed their cause. They were also the Bolsheviks' closest allies.

Constitutional Democrats (Kadets)

The Kadets dominated the first Duma in 1906 but changes throughout World War 1 caused other groups to gain attention. They advocated for radical change in Russian government toward a constitutional Monarchy. This put the Kadets at sharp odds with the Bolsheviks who wanted a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Octobrists

The Octobrists after the 1905 revolution were the centrist party in the Duma. The party believed in a constitutional Monarchy, in which the Tsar would listen and accept rule by the Duma. The Tsar would not be removed from power. Their views and support of Stolypin's reforms were unlike the views of the left-wing and the liberal Kadets.

Progressive Party

The progressive party was a group of moderate Russian liberals organized in 1908. Throughout the fourth Duma they were a part of the progressive bloc, made up of moderate conservatives and liberals. The bloc tried to pressure the imperial government into accepting a series of reforms

that were aimed at increasing public confidence in the government and improving the management of World War I.

Timeline

Date	Description of event
800s	Eastern Slavs arrived and settled in different parts of Russia.
862	Rurik, who ruled the Varangians founded the Rurik Dynasty and built a trading settlement close to Novgorod. The region became known as the Land of Rus.
1200-1480	Russia was conquered by the Mongols, which were led by Genghis Khan. They were freed from the Mongols by Ivan III (also known as Ivan the Great).
1547	Ivan the Terrible, the Grand Prince of Moscow, became the first Tsar.
1762	Catherine the Great became empress and Poland was divided between Austria, Russia, and Prussia.
1812	Russia defeated Napoleon Bonaparte's troops when they entered the country.
1853	Crimean War- Russia fought and lost against an alliance of France, Sardinia, Britain, and Ottoman Empire.
1867	Alaska was sold to the United States of America.
1898	Marxists founded the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.
1903	Vladimir Lenin became leader of the Bolshevik political party.
1914	Beginning of World War I, where Russia fought against Austria and Germany.
1917	The Russian government ruled by Tsar Nicholas II was overthrown by

revolutionaries.

Future of Russia

Constitutional Democrats

The 1905 Revolution led to a series of constitutional reforms in Russia, with the Russian Empire becoming a constitutional monarchy. With a constitutional monarchy in place, it is possible that the country's perspective might shift from an agricultural superpower to an industrializing superpower. This is highly possible because the nation would now be free from the old Empire's authoritarian peasant laws. If this were the case, relations between Germany and Russian would be different. The German Empire had plans that clearly mentioned going to war with Russia in 1914 as they knew that if they waited, Russia's industry and railroad would rival or even outdo Germany's. If Germany was smart, they'd seek either an alliance or at least a treaty outlining that neither would attack the other in the event of a German war with France.

No Communist Revolution

Without communism, millions would continue to die in the Civil War and subsequent purges would still be alive. Yet, Russia would lack the industrial drive that turned the USSR into the West's greatest rival for much of the 20th century. A lack of Soviet Russian support would mean Communism would shrink in the world. Without a Communist power to scare the West, we could see a wider spread acceptance of state policies between nations without it being labeled "Communist." Even before the rise of the Soviets, Otto Von Bismarck laid out some of the first Welfare state policies to appease his people and keep radical Socialists in Germany controlled.

When the Committee Begins

It is March 2, 1917. Tsar Nicholas II has just abdicated. The Provisional Government has formed, made up of previous members of the State Duma, who you will be representing. Tensions are high, and the future of Russia is uncertain. The Bolsheviks are lurking in the

background, seeking to undermine the Provisional Government's power. The atmosphere in Russia is volatile, with World War I, food shortages, and uncertainty of the new government all weighing heavily on the population's mind. It is up to you to keep control of this tenuous situation, while keeping your own personal agendas.

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Appendix or Appendices

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