

# RUSSIA

5th -9th Century	Eastern Slavs moved into the vast practically uninhabited area of present day European Russia and the Ukraine from; <i>1. Central Europe</i> <i>2. Asia</i>
9th Century	<b>Kievan State.</b> In 882 Oleg - the ruler of Novgorod (Rurik's son) ceased Kiev. The Varangian mixed with the Slavic population. In the Kievan State; <i>1. The Varangians created a loose unification of Slavic territories under a single ruling prince (and under one dynasty)</i> <i>2. The Orthodox Church provided the "State Religion"</i>
1054-1242	Kievan State became weak due to the feudal system (several important Boyars) and several divisions
1242	Kiev was sacked by the <b>Mongols (the Golden Horde)</b> and most people were killed. The Eastern Slavs were unified under one strong supreme ruler - the Mongol Khan!
1242-	Beginning with the prince of <b>Novgorod, Alexander Nevsky</b> , the small insignificant principality of Moscow became important. <b>Ivan I</b> [ <i>"Ivan the moneybag"</i> 1328-1341] became famous for buying property, loaning money to smaller districts and than joining forces with the Mongols to defeat Ivan's most serious rival - the Prince of Tver. Of gratitude the Mongols made; <i>1. Ivan the general tax collector for all Slavic lands</i> <i>2. The Prince of Moscow received the title "Great Prince"</i> <i>3. Ivan managed to get the "metropolitan of Kiev" - the head of the Orthodox Church of all Eastern Slavs to move to Moscow</i>
14th – 15th Century	An attempt to get rid of the Mongols succeeded in 1380, but just after a short time the Mongols struck back. <b>Timur the Lame</b> sacked Moscow killing a lot of people and thus was the Mongolian order restored. The problems did not end here - the period was filled with wars and intrigues...
1462-1505	It was <b>Ivan III ("Ivan the Great")</b> that completed the work started by Alexander Nevsky. In 1480 Ivan stopped all tribute paid to the Mongolian Khan. He continued by buying Rostov and he defeated the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom. Ivan III was an absolute ruler and he became the Tsar (or Czar which is the Slavic contraction for Caesar - Emperor). Ivan saw himself as; <i>1. The heir of the Roman Empire (with the fall of Constantinople 1453 - the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (or the Byzantines) the Russian ruler saw Russia as the "Third Rome"). To emphasize this claim Ivan married the daughter of the last Byzantine Emperor!</i> <i>2. Leader of the Orthodox Christianity - now calling himself the leader of "Holy Russia"</i> <i>3. The head of a new dynasty - the Tsardom became hereditary</i> <i>4. As a sign of this heritage the Byzantine Double Eagle now became the state symbol of the Russian Empire</i>

1533-1584

**Ivan IV ("Ivan the Terrible")**. His father died when he was three years old and his mother died when he was eight (might have been poisoned by Boyars). During six years Boyar advisers ruled the Empire. At age sixteen Ivan pushed his advisors aside - and he took the title Tsar. He then married Anastasia of the Romanov family. Ivan is famous for several different things;

1. *He defeated the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan 1552-1556*

2. *He abolished the distinction between hereditary Boyar private property and land granted for service. This step that actually was started by his father transformed the entire nobility into service nobility*

3. *With the death of Anastasia the "Reign of Terror" started. Ivan and his secret police (Special corps dressed in black and riding black horses - forerunners to the modern dictators secret police) struck and killed many of the leading Boyars*

4. *Peasants fled into the wilderness - some of them formed outlaw armies from these relatively free groups - "Cossacks"*

5. **Enserfment** – Serfdom was the Boyars and Tsar's answer towards these Cossacks

6. **Tsar Ivan IV claimed that the Tsar owned Russia's trade and industry** - just as he before had claimed all the land. He now took over mines and industries and made **all important commercial activities a Royal monopoly**. The development of Russia was very different compared with the developments in Western Europe where a new Capitalist Middle Class were gaining strength and security in their private property. Much of the way it was done was due to Russia's Mongol heritage.

1584-1598

**Feodor I** – the "**Bellringer**": Said to be a very weak leader (he received his name from traveling around in the country and ring church bells... - he was extremely religious). He left the governing to his brother-in-law Boris Godunov who then became the real leader of Russia. When Ivan IV died Feodor had his little brother Dmitri and the boy's mother (Ivan's seventh wife) sent into exile in Uglitj (about 120 miles north of Moscow). Dmitri died there in 1591. Dmitri's mother and some contemporary Boyars accused Boris of having him killed (he was found with a cut throat). Other Boyars spread the rumors that the boy was not dead which caused confusion Russia would experience four "**false Dmitri's**" who all claimed throne after Boris Godunov's death.

Now started the **Time of Troubles** (Russian: Смутное время, *Smutnoye Vremya*) which would last to the establishment of the Romanov Dynasty in 1613.

1598-1605

**Boris Godunov** (1598-1605). He was a strong leader but when he took over the reign several of the Boyar families started to intrigue against him. Boris Godunov was still elected by **the Great National Assembly**. One of the reasons he received their support was his **generous policies towards the Orthodox Church**. It was during his government that the Russian **Orthodox Church received its patriarchate**, which placed it on an equal footing with the ancient Eastern churches and emancipated it from the influence of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Boris **continued Ivan IV's policy against the Boyars** (Boris Godunov had made his career in Ivan's secret police so he was well educated in this kind of business...). He built a lot of forts along the north-eastern and south-eastern borders and he **re-colonized Siberia**. Boris Godunov also made a law that **banned peasants to move between landowners**. This led to the institution of serfdom even for the former peasants. He wanted Russia to modernize and benefit from western education so he imported foreign teachers on a great scale. He was also the first to send young Russians abroad to be educated. To further open up towards the west Boris Godunov encouraged English merchants to trade with Russia by exempting them from tolls. Famine and widespread starvation led to **civil war** 1604. During this war Boris died of a stroke after a period of illness.

1605 **Feodor II** (Boris Godunov's son). Murdered after four months in power by Boyars. Feodor was then 16 years old...

1605-1606 **False Dmitri**. One of the leaders behind the "removing" of Feodor II. He claimed that he was Ivan IV's youngest son (who had been murdered 1591 – see previous page). The reign of Dmitri was short. Before a year had passed a conspiracy was formed against him by an ambitious Rurikid prince (knyaz) called Vasily Shuisky. The false Dmitri was murdered soon after his marriage in the Moscow Kremlin, together with many of his supporters – especially Poles. The reaction to the massacre in Poland was strong, but it was decided to postpone revenge against those events.

1606-1610 **Vasili IV**. The chief conspirator, Vasily Shuisky, seized power and was elected tsar by an assembly composed of his faction, but neither the Muscovite boyars, nor the Commonwealth magnates, nor the pillaging Cossacks, nor the German mercenaries were satisfied with the change. He only avoided deposition by the dominant boyars because they had no-one to put in his place. Only the popularity of his heroic cousin, Prince Mikhail Skopin-Shuisky, who led his armies, and soldiers from Sweden, whose assistance he purchased by the cession of Russian territory, kept him for a time on his unstable throne. After the combined Russo-Swedish forces were destroyed at the Battle of Klushino, Shuisky was forced to abdicate. False Dmitrii II wasn't able to gain the throne, however, because the Polish commander, hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski put forward a rival candidate in the person of Sigismund III's son, Władysław.

1610 **Władysław**. To him some people in Moscow swore allegiance on condition of his maintaining Orthodoxy and granting certain privileges to them. On this understanding the Polish troops were allowed to enter the city and occupy the Kremlin.

The Polish king, however, opposed the compromise, deciding to take the throne for himself and to convert Russia to Roman Catholicism. This scheme did not please any of the contending factions and it roused the anti-Catholic and anti-Polish sentiments of the nation. At the same time it was displeasing to the Swedes, who had become rivals of the Poles on the Baltic coast, and they declared war on Muscovy, supporting a false Dmitri of their own in Ivangorod.

1610-1612

Russia was now in a very critical condition. The throne was vacant; the great nobles (boyars) quarrelled among themselves; Orthodox Patriarch Hermogenes was imprisoned; Catholic Poles occupied the Moscow Kremlin and Smolensk; the Protestant Swedes occupied Novgorod; and enormous bands of brigands swarmed everywhere.

The severity of the crisis produced a remedy, in the form of a patriotic rising of the nation under the leadership of Kuzma Minin, a Nizhny Novgorod merchant, and Prince Pozharsky. After battle for Moscow on October 22, the invaders retreated to the Kremlin, and on 24-27 October the nearby Polish army was forced to retreat. The garrison in the Kremlin surrendered to the triumphant Pozharsky. November 4 Russia officially celebrates the anniversary of this event as a **Day of National Unity**.

A Grand National Assembly elected Ivan's sixteen-year-old grandnephew **Michail Romanov** to be the new hereditary Tsar!

1613-1645

**Michail I** was the first Russian tsar of the house of Romanov, being the son of Feodor Nikitich Romanov,. He was crowned on the 22nd of July 1613. The first task of the new tsar was to clear the land of the robbers infesting it. Sweden and Poland were then dealt with respectively by the peace of Stolbovo (February 17, 1617) and the Truce of Deulino (December 1, 1618). The most important result of the Truce of Deulino was the return from exile of the tsar's father, who henceforth took over the government till his death in October 1633, Michael occupying quite a subordinate position. Tsar Michael suffered from a progressing leg injury (a consequence of a horse accident early in his life), which resulted in his not being able to walk towards the end of his life. He was a gentle and pious prince who gave little trouble to anyone and effaced himself behind his counsellors. Sometimes they were relatively honest and capable men like his father; sometimes they were corrupted and bigoted, like the Saltykov relatives of his mother. Alexei I acceded to the throne at the age of sixteen after his father's death on 13 July 1645...

### **Powerful rulers helped Russia grow**

During the 15th and 16th centuries two famous Russian rulers-Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible- extended the power of Russia and centralized its government. A period of unrest known as the Time of Troubles followed the death of Ivan the Terrible in 1584. It ended in 1613 when a popular assembly elected Mikhail Romanov as czar. The Romanov dynasty was to remain in power until World War I.

### **Peter the Great tried to westernize Russia.**

Mikhail's grandson Peter I, usually called Peter the Great, came to the throne in 1682 (although he did not become sole ruler until 1696). One of the greatest figures in Russian history, Peter was tall, strong, and full of enthusiasm. He had a violent temper and could at times be extremely cruel. But he also possessed an excellent mind and a strong determination to work for Russian progress.

Peter was greatly impressed by European technology; he took a trip in disguise to Prussia, to the Netherlands, and to England, where he visited workshops and shipyards. When he returned to Russia, he took with him a large number of scholars, craftsmen, and engineers. He

was determined to modernize Russia and to introduce European customs, by force if necessary. He tried to end the Asiatic practice of secluding women and encouraged the men to adopt European breeches instead of flowing oriental robes. He also decreed that men should cut off their long beards, and even carried a pair of scissors with him to snip off the beards of men he met in the street. However, Peter did more than attempt to change fashions. He founded scientific institutions, reformed the calendar and alphabet, and sent young men to Western Europe to study. He created a small navy and modernized the army. A staunch mercantilist, he started new industries in order to make Russia more self-sufficient.

Peter the Great, like most other European rulers of the time, believed firmly in absolutism. He completely removed all traces of local self-government and authority. Under him the Russian Church became a tool of the central government and a strong supporter of Russian absolutism.

### **Peter extended Russian boundaries.**

The goal of Peter the Great and later Russian rulers in foreign affairs was to obtain "*windows on Europe*"—that is, seaports on the Black Sea or Baltic Sea that would enable Russia to trade with western Europe by water. To gain these "windows," Peter had to wage war against the Turks in the Black Sea area and against the Swedes, who controlled much of the Baltic region.

In 1695 and 1696 Peter sent expeditions against the Turks at Azov on the Sea of Azov. The second expedition won this port for Russia, but Peter lost it to the Turks again in 1711.

In 1699 Peter allied Russia with Poland, Saxony, and Denmark against Sweden. Denmark and Saxony began the Great Northern War by attacking Swedish possessions in 1700. Charles XII of Sweden retaliated by invading Denmark and crushing Peter's army at Narva on the Gulf of Finland. Peter was confident of success, however, and in 1703 laid the foundations of St. Petersburg, his new capital, on a region of the Baltic shore he had captured from Sweden. The war later turned in favor of the Russian forces, which in 1709 won a smashing victory at Poltava in southern Russia. From that time on, Sweden was increasingly hard pressed by enemies, which by then included several German states. When the war ended in 1721, Sweden had lost nearly all of its possessions along the Baltic, and Russia had not only secured its Baltic "window" but had also become the dominant power in northern Europe.

### **Catherine the Great continued Peter's policies.**

Several weak rulers followed Peter the Great, who died in 1725. His grandson came to the throne as Peter III in 1762. He was mentally unfit to rule and antagonized many persons. His wife, a German princess, led a rebellion and seized the throne for herself, taking the title Catherine II. (She later became known as Catherine the Great.) Her husband was murdered in prison, probably with Catherine's consent, but she announced gravely that he had died of colic. By the time of Catherine's accession to the throne, the philosophical doctrines known as the Enlightenment had spread through the intellectual circles of Europe. Several European rulers who tried to put into practice some of the new ideas about political liberty and religious toleration were called enlightened, or benevolent, despots. Catherine, gifted and well educated, corresponded with learned men in Western Europe and considered herself an enlightened ruler. Although she continued Peter's westernization policy by improving schools and modernizing laws, she was rigid in her opposition to any reforms that threatened the absolutism of her rule. The condition of the peasantry actually became worse; Catherine extended serfdom to over a million peasants who had formerly been free.

Catherine, like Peter the Great, wanted to expand Russian territory, especially in the south, where the Ottoman Empire seemed unable to offer effective resistance. She goaded the Turks to war in 1768, and by 1774 had won back Azov and territories on the Crimean Peninsula, as well as free access to the Black Sea and the right to protect Christians living within the

Ottoman Empire. A few years later she seized the Crimea, bringing about a second war with the Turks in 1787. A treaty signed in 1792 confirmed Russian ownership of the Crimean and other Turkish lands north of the Black Sea. During the same period Russia took part in the division of Polish territory. When Catherine died in 1796, Russia had not only won its Black Sea "window" to the West but had become one of the great powers of Europe.

### Paul I – reform attempts

Paul I was the Tsar of Russia from 1796 until his assassination 1801. Officially, he was the only son of Peter III and Catherine the Great, although Catherine hinted that he was fathered by her lover Sergei Saltykov. Paul remained overshadowed by his mother for most of his life. He adopted the laws of succession to the Russian throne, rules that lasted until the end of the Romanov dynasty and of the Russian Empire (no female succession). He also intervened in the French Revolutionary Wars and, toward the end of his reign, added Kartli and Kakheti in Eastern Georgia into the empire, which was confirmed by his son and successor Alexander I.

Paul I's attempts to force the nobility to adopt a code of chivalry alienated many of his trusted advisors. The Emperor also discovered outrageous machinations and corruption in the Russian treasury. As he had revoked Catherine's decree allowing corporal punishment of the free classes, and directed reforms that resulted in greater rights for the peasantry and provided for better treatment for serfs on agricultural estates, many of his policies greatly annoyed the noble class and induced his enemies to work out a plan of action. A conspiracy was organized, some months before it was executed, by Counts Peter Ludwig von der Pahlen, Nikita Petrovich Panin, and Admiral de Ribas, with the alleged support of the British ambassador in Saint Petersburg, Charles Whitworth.

On the night of 23 March 1801, the assassins charged into Paul's bedroom, flushed with drink after dining together, and found the emperor hiding behind some drapes in the corner. The conspirators pulled him out, forced him to the table, and tried to compel him to sign his abdication. Paul offered some resistance, and Nikolay Zubov struck him with a sword, after which the assassins strangled and trampled him to death. Paul's successor on the Russian throne, his 23-year-old son Alexander, was actually in the palace at the time of the killing; he had "given his consent to the overthrow of Paul, but had not supposed that this would be carried out by means of assassination". General Nikolay Zubov announced his accession to the heir, accompanied by the admonition, "Time to grow up! Go and rule!" Alexander I did not punish the assassins, and the court physician, James Wylie, declared apoplexy the official cause of death.

