

A HISTORY OF EXPANSION

Birth of an Empire

Slavic people first

Vikings came and settled with the Slavs

Mongols came in the mid-1200's and took control until the 1500's – Ivan The Great kicked them out...became "czar"

Early 1500's – Ivan the Great wanted to expand Russia

By late 1600's, the Russian empire went all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

Next 400 years Russia expanded

About 55 miles per day, eventually reaching North America (Alaska)

All of this land meant Russia controlled many different people with different cultures.

Russia Lags Behind Western Europe

Yes...Russia grabbed a lot of land, but it was still behind-the-times in other ways

- Little science
- Old-No technology – many people still lived in hut-like buildings.

Peter The Great – czar (1682 – 1725)

- Very curious as a boy.
- Met traders from England, France, Italy, other parts of Europe
- Wanted to change Russia to be more like those places...MODERNIZE Russia!!!

Secretly left Russia in disguise to learn about the ways of other European countries. Did not tell the people he met that he was the Russian czar.

Learned all he could, and then returned to Russia.

- Built an entire new city he called St. Petersburg.
- Moved the capital from Moscow to this new city.
- Built a bunch of warships and increased the size of his army.
- Built better military weapons for his army.

SHOW VIDEO – Peter the Great

But even though Peter helped modernize Russia at the time, it still lagged behind the European nations during the Industrial Revolution.

Other nations had quick access to resources and industrialized much faster.

When Russia began to industrialize, the same problems happened to it that happened to the other European countries:

- Bad working conditions
- Low wages
- Filthy cities

The citizens got frustrated at the government and the businesses to the point that they began to look at other, more fair styles of government.

Communism became a popular idea with some influential people. The idea of communism is to create a society where everyone is the same. There are no lower and upper classes.

- Everyone owns property together
- Everyone shares the wealth
- All the necessary jobs are taken care of.

The Rise And Fall Of The Soviet Union

During WW1, some people finally got fed up enough to revolt against their czar.

- It first started with a small group of people that wanted communism. Then the movement spread.
- Russian Revolution happened that ended the rule of the czars.
- The Communist Party took control of all government and economic decisions – the Party leaders were in charge.

Buuuuuut...there was a problem. If everyone is the same, then who gets to lead? These problems were discussed and discussed for a long time. By 1922 a new nation called the USSR, or Soviet Union was formed.

BUILDING A COMMAND ECONOMY

Communist leaders...

Returned the capital to Moscow

Created a “**command economy**” – where the central government makes all important economic decisions for the country.

Soviet Union’s government leaders decided...

- What products factories would make
- What crops farms would grow
- What prices merchants would charge for their goods
- Where workers would live
- How much the workers would be paid

A Harsh Reality

To feed the people, large collective farms had to be created.

Collective farming – large teams of workers farm VERY large areas of land to grow food that the government gives to the people.

By 1939, 9 out of 10 farms were large collective farms controlled by the government (the state).

Problems:

FOOD

- Only the most important crops (according to the state) were grown. Sometimes not enough.
- Had to wait in loooooong lines to get food. When the food was gone, you were out of luck.
- Millions of people starved to death in famines because there wasn't enough food.

SHELTER

- Housing was simple, not lavish, and basic things like electricity and heat were not always turned on.
- If you wanted to move to another home, you had to ask the state – the wait could be up to 15 years.

WANTS

- If you wanted a car, you had to apply to get one – this could also take years.

WAGES

- The state paid you a wage, but you might be able to earn a bonus if you worked in certain manufacturing jobs and made more products than the state asked.
- The wage was never enough to buy whatever you wanted, only what you needed. You had to sacrifice and save for a long time even to buy one thing.

Show: COMMUNISM video

52 minutes long...use video notes