IV. Integrating European and Russian History

A. Supernationalist France under Napoleon

1. We have seen that Russia is a supernationalist culture today. The main reason for its desire to have power over other countries is that it was attacked by supernationalist Germany in the *World Wars*.
2. Supernationalist Germany, the main aggressor in the *World Wars*, was not, however, the first supernationalist country in Europe. The first was France. It was French supernationalism that triggered German supernationalism, that in turn triggered Russian supernationalism, in a tragic "cycle of violence."
3. The main culprit in starting this modern sequence of nations hating and attacking one another was the French leader Napoleon. Napoleon ruled France from **1799 to 1815**. During his reign he completely conquered Germany, temporarily making himself and emperor over most of Europe, and even engaging in a devastating invasion of Russia.

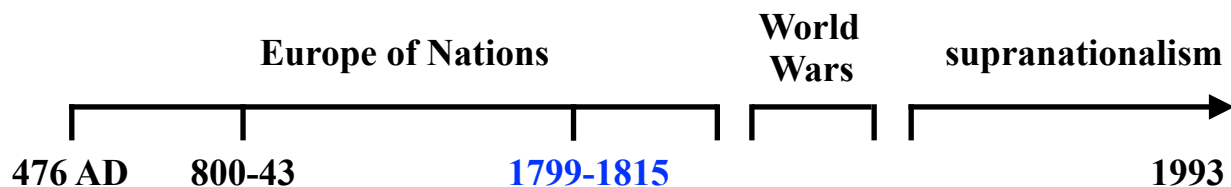B. The Second Charlemagne (And More!)

1. One of the reasons why Napoleon conquered Europe was he wanted to be a second Charlemagne. Napoleon was fascinated by history. He believed that conquerors like Charlemagne were the most important people in history.
2. To make himself into a new Charlemagne, Napoleon copied the first unifier of Europe in many ways. One famous thing Napoleon did is lead a French army over the Alps into Italy, as Charlemagne had once done in order to reach Rome. A famous painting of this exploit by the artist Jacques-Louis David shows him leading the expedition over the mountains, with his name inscribed on the rocks next to Charlemagne's.
3. Like Charlemagne, Napoleon united Europe by force. After conquering Italy, he went on to conquer all of Germany.
4. At that point, he made a deal with the tsar of Russia not to invade his country, if only Russia would stop trading with Napoleon's greatest enemy, Great Britain.
5. When Russia backed out of the deal, Napoleon assembled the largest army ever created in European history, called the "*Grande Armée*" (French for "Big Army"!) of 700,000 men.
6. He invaded Russia with this army, making his way all the way to Moscow.
7. Russia was not able to directly resist Napoleon's army, so the Russians practiced a defensive strategy called "scorched earth". An army the size of Napoleon's normally needed to loot the countryside of the conquered country in order to support itself. (Think of the *Grande Armée* as a huge city on the march, needing food and water.) The Russians took all they could with them and retreated, burning everything else. Farms and cities were put to the torch. Napoleon's army had nothing to steal. When he reach Moscow, even that city was on fire and its leaders had retreated further into the huge countryside of Russia.
8. Napoleon realized too late that he could not stay in Russia under such conditions and he began to retreat. The Russian winter set in, and his army, now half-starved, had to suffer

tremendous cold as it made its way back to Europe. Only then did the Russians begin to attack.

9.   By the time Napoleon escaped from Russia he had barely 10,000 men left! Most had died of starvation or frozen to death.

10. Soon the other nations of Europe grasped the opportunity to rise up and join Russia in a great alliance to finally rid themselves of Napoleon. Although Napoleon was a military genius, he could not withstand the power of all the other European countries and he was eventually defeated once and for all in **1815** (at the famous Battle of Waterloo).

11. Like Charlemagne before him, Napoleon thus *temporarily* united Europe by force. And like Charlemagne before him, he failed.

12. This greatly reinforced the separateness of France and Germany in particular. The Germans were especially embarrassed and angry about being conquered. Thus, their culture began to become *supernationalist.*

13. As for Russia, the invasion by Napoleon was the first time Russia was dominated by a European conqueror since it had joined Europe in the time of Peter "the Great." Napoleon did not make Russia supernationalist all by himself, but when Germany decided to get revenge on France in the *World Wars* and try to force all of Europe to become German, it also attacked Russia. Being attacked three times—in the Napoleonic Wars, World War I, and again in World War II, which the Russians refer to as the three great "patriotic wars"—drove Russia to a desperate desire to not be a victim of European aggression ever again.

14. With Europe weaker than ever after World War II, Russia took advantage of the situation to conquer Eastern Europe, which it held onto as a supernationalist ruler until **1991**.

C. The Importance of Napoleon

1.   The importance of Napoleon to European history is that he sparked the rise of German supernationalism, which led to the *World Wars*, and that he was the first to attack Russia in the "patriotic wars" that made Russia supernationalist after the *World Wars.*

2.   In the story of the Europe of nations, the role that Napoleon play to expand the separateness of France and Germany by a second failed violent union, and thus brining Europe close to the World Wars, can be shown by adding him to the European timeline.

Europe of Nations   **World Wars**   **supranationalism**

476 AD   800-43   1799-1815   1993

3.   In the story of the *Rise of Mother Russia*, one could also add the *Napoleonic Wars* in this way, but simply adding the dates **1799-1815** to that diagram separately would only make it

seem like that history has a separate set of events, when, in fact, the two histories are *interconnected* by Napoleon. The *Napoleonic Wars* are the first of three wars that drove Russia to supernationalism. To symbolize this impact on Russia, we will color-code the timelines (green for Europe and pink for Russia) and draw the Napoleonic Wars as a line connecting the two timelines. Next that line will run along the line for Russia history to symbolize the extended domination of Russia by Europe (both France and Germany) until the end of the *World Wars*. Finally, to symbolize the domination of Europe by Russia after the *World Wars*, we will draw a pink line down from Russia to run along the top of European history until 1991. Here is the full representation of what we have learned so far:

Rise of Mother Russia   **WWs**   **supernationalism**

c.862 AD   1700-22   **1991**

Europe of Nations   **WWs**   **supranationalism**

476 AD   800-43   1799-1815   **1993**