

## H. Russia in the Napoleonic Period (1799-1815)

1. As we already know (see above, p.12) the French commander Napoleon Bonaparte became the charismatic leader of France during the chaos of the French Revolution. He then proceeded to rally the French people to become *supernationalist* and attack all of France's enemies.
2. Thanks to his military genius, Napoleon defeated all France's enemies but Britain, which was the world's great naval power. It became his most important goal to defeat this enemy.
3. Unable to strike at Britain directly, Napoleon resolved to use his army to take over the continent, and deny British merchants access to Europe's markets. His plan to cut Britain off from all trade with Europe is known as the "Continental System."
4. He defeated Austria and Prussia, to dominate central Europe.
5. Then, he made a deal with the Tsar of Russia, Alexander, to divide up Europe, and jointly enforce a refusal to trade with Britain.
6. Meanwhile, Napoleon had to fight the Peninsular War against Portugal, and Spanish independents, to try to enforce the Continental System in Iberia.
7. For a while, the deal held, but the tsar eventually reneged on the deal because Russia wanted trade with England and defied Napoleon on this point.
8. In 1812, therefore, Napoleon assembled an army of 700,000 men (the largest in European history up to that time) to invade Russia.
9. As this army marched into Russia, however, it began to run out of food, especially because the Russians burned all their crops rather than let the French get a hold of them—a method of war known as "scorched earth tactics."
10. By the time Napoleon entered Moscow (which was deserted) his army had already dwindled to far fewer than he started with, even without fighting any major battles.
11. Retreating from Moscow in the Russian winter, Napoleon lost more men. He barely escaped from Russia with 10,000 soldiers left.
12. Seeing that France was now greatly weakened, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Britain all worked together. They defeated him in the Battle of Leipzig, also known as the *Battle of the Nations* of 1813, and finally forced his surrender in 1814.
13. He was exiled to a small island off of Italy called Elba.
14. When he escaped and rallied a new French army against his enemies, he was defeated once and for all at the Battle of Waterloo of 1815.
15. This time, he was exiled to the island of Saint Helena in the south Atlantic, where he lived the remainder of his days.



Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in the Russian of 1812 winter devastated the remainder of his army, and led to his ultimate defeat.

## I. Russia's "Century of Humiliation"

1. The French invasion of Russia in 1812 was the beginning of a century of terrible outcomes for Russia in the European and global balance of power. The humiliations suffered by Russia, much like the humiliations suffered by China, led to a desperate attempt to remake its government and to "catch up" to Europe.
2. Although Napoleon was ultimately defeated, the horror of the war and the fact that Russia could not resist Napoleon militarily were the first part of this humiliating period in history.
3. The next was the *Crimean War* of 1853-6. Crimea is the peninsula that Russia most recently took from Ukraine in 2014 in the lead-up to the current war. It had been taken from the Ottoman Empire by Catherine the Great, but Russia's advance against the Ottomans caused Britain and France to combine forces to prevent Russia from taking over all of Eastern Europe. In the Crimean War, France and Britain sent a fleet to Russia itself and with the advantage of steam ships, railroads, telegraphs, and modern weapons, they were able to defeat Russia on its home soil.
4. Russia's leaders tried to recover from this defeat by making Russia more like its European enemies. They reasoned (correctly) that European technological innovation was a product of greater freedom. So in 1861, the Tsar issued the *Edict of Emancipation* announcing that serfs (farmers who were tied to the land and who were nearly slaves all but in name) were "emancipated" (freed). This was a big step, but progress would be slow, while Europe was moving ahead rapidly with what historians call the *Industrial Revolution*.
5. Russia was still a cardinal culture in its own way. Its conquests of Siberia, Finland (during the war with Napoleon), Crimea, and Poland, were all signs of its great ambition, even if it wasn't the equal of Britain or France.
6. Like other European empires, Russia wanted to create an empire in Asia. It attempted to take control of Korea from Japan, another country greatly impacted by its contact with Europe that also desired to be a "great power." Russia's navy sailed from Europe all the way to Asia, which was an impressive feat for that era, but the Japanese navy proved too advanced in the *Russo-Japanese War (1904-5)*. Again the Russians were humiliated, and this time by a non-European power, which made it worse in their eyes.
7. When World War I finally arrived (1914), Russia was in a desperate state.
8. Recall (see p.14, above) that supernationalist Germany was the main aggressor in this war, but it was triggered by a contest between supernationalist Russia and Austria, both of whom wanted to control southeastern Europe.
9. Again Russia found itself unable to compete with Europe's great powers. It suffered by far the most casualties, including perhaps 3 million dead. The tsar accepted responsibility for this calamity and he abdicated. This left a great vacuum of power in Russia, ready to be filled by a new charismatic leader...