

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

1. As we already know Napoleon Bonaparte became the charismatic leader of France at the end of the French Revolution, and he made the French people *supernationalist*.
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 main goal to defeat this enemy.
3. Unable to strike at Britain directly, Napoleon decided to prevent British merchants from selling goods to Europe. He forced Austria and Prussia to join his "Continental System" of trade, and convinced Russia as well.
4. For a while, the deal held, but the tsar backed out of the deal because Russia wanted trade with England.
5. In 1812, therefore, Napoleon assembled an army of 700,000 men (the largest in European history up to that time) to invade Russia.
6. 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."
7. 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.
8. Retreating from Moscow in the Russian winter, Napoleon lost more men. He barely escaped from Russia with 10,000 soldiers left.
9. 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.
10. He was exiled to a small island off of Italy called Elba.
11. 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.
12. 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. The humiliations suffered by Russia led to a desperate attempt to remake its government and to "catch up" to Europe.
2. The first humiliation was that Russia's army could not resist Napoleon militarily. They really only won in the end because of Napoleon's own mistakes.
3. The next humiliation was the *Crimean War* of 1853-6. Crimea is a peninsula (almost island) that had been taken from the Ottoman Empire by Catherine the Great, but in the

Crimean War, France and Britain sent a fleet there 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 believed that one reason why Europe was stronger was that its people were freer. 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) were "emancipated" (freed). This was a big step, but progress would be slow.
5. 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." 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.
6. When World War I finally arrived (1914), Russia was in a desperate state.
7. Supernationalist Germany was the main aggressor in this war, and Russia again 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 (gave up power). This left a great vacuum of power in Russia, ready to be filled by a new charismatic leader...