

Russian Absolutism



Ivan IV “Ivan the Terrible”

(1547-1584)



became Tsar at age of 3 and watched rival groups of nobles who sought to control the country
when he took charge, he saw treason everywhere
Ivan took land from the nobles (boyars) and gave it to his own loyal people (oprichniki)
these boyars were then kicked out of or dispersed throughout the nation

The Time of Troubles

(1598-1613)



a time of noble feuds over the throne, peasant revolts, and foreign invasions

Russia suffered a famine from 1601–1603 that killed 1/3rd of the population

Michel Romanov

(1613-1645)



Painting by Grigory Ugryumov of the 16 year-old Mikhail being offered the crown at the Ipatiev Monastery in 1613

Russia defeated Poland in 1612
wanted their country to do better
needed a great leader

letters were sent throughout the land
deputies came to Moscow to select the new tsar

the Romanov family were related to former tsars
it was decided that 16 yr-old Michel was the best choice
couldn't find him

[was hiding in a monastery with his mother]

messengers were sent to tell him that he was the new Tsar

[The Romanov dynasty ruled Russia until 1917.]



Peter the Great

The Early Years

Tsar Alexis I died in 1676

his son, the weak and sickly Feodor III took his place

he died in 1682, leaving no heir

a dispute arose over who should inherit the throne

Ivan V, was next in line for the throne
[was chronically ill and of "infirm mind"]

the Boyar Duma (Russian nobles council) met

they chose Alexis' 10 yr-old son Peter to become Tsar
[with his mother as regent]

his half-sister Sophia was very opposed

she and others insisted that Peter and Ivan be joint Tsars

Sophia acted as regent and exercised all power

she ruled as an autocrat for seven years



Peter the Great/Peter I

As Acting Regent

(1682-1725)



forced Russian nobles to adopt Western European ways

sent Russians abroad to learn, esp. shipbuilding, naval warfare, foreign languages, and mathematics

built new capital in St. Petersburg on the Baltic Sea coast
it would be more accessible to the West

expanded borders:

took control of Siberia, Alaska, and
the eastern end of Baltic region

changed the Russian government:

created central bureaucracy under his control
brought Eastern Orthodox Church under his authority,
ruled by a Holy Synod

Fun Fact: Peter the Great was GREAT - very tall (nearly 7 ft)

Peter the Great/Peter I

Results of his Reign

(1682-1725)



*Peter the Great on his death bed, 1725,
by Nikitin*

economic changes instituted by Peter

created the dvorianie, a new class of feudalistic nobles

given land and control of the serfs on the land

promised to work for the government until death

they didn't pay taxes - the peasants did

gave incentives to increase production in areas such as
mining and metalworking

workers tied to their trade like serfs were to the land

overall effects of his reign:

divided those who wanted to continue old Russian
ways and those who adopted Western culture

brought Russia into mainstream European culture

“Catherine the Great”/Catherine II

(1762-1796)



after Peter's death in 1725, Russia was ruled by a series of
weak rulers

Catherine seized the throne from her weak husband, Peter III

originally thought of freeing serfs

she changed her mind when they revolted against her

freed nobles from their required government service,
allowing them to treat their serfs as they wished

when they tried to revolt, she crushed them mercilessly

defeated Ottoman Turks to secure warm-water port of Black Sea and took territory from Poland

was the most renowned and the longest-ruling female leader of Russia

reigned from July 1762 until her death in 1796 at the age of sixty-seven

her reign was called Russia's Golden Age