

# History of Russia



# The Construction and Collapse of Kiev, 882-1240

'Let us seek a prince who may rule over us, and judge us according to the Law', said the warring tribes of ancient Russia to each other in 862 according to the *Primary Chronicle*.

And so: 'They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes: these particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some are called Swedes, and others Normans, English and Gottlanders...'

As the old story continues, the tribes then said to Varangian Russes: 'Our whole land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us.'

Three brothers in particular were chosen, and the eldest of them, Riurik, settled in Novgorod and began the princely dynasty that was to rule over Kiev from 882 onwards.

Discussion of the basis of the Kievan economy as agriculture or commerce has important implications for the typification of its society.

At the same time, the international setting of Kiev will have to be sketched in, to the east as well as to the west.

Kiev had contact with the greatest of contemporary Western civilisations - Byzantium, and close contact with the Arabic and Turkic cultures of the Middle East and Central Asia.

- Riurik's successor, Prince Oleg, came down from Novgorod with an army of Varangians and Slavs to capture Kiev in or about 882 and taked Kiev.
- Having established himself in Kiev, Oleg set about the fulfilment of three principal tasks:

**The first** was the subjugation of those tribes which constituted centrifugal forces in the nascent feudal state.

**The second** was the prosecution of wars against rivals for dominance to the east and west.

**The third** was the commencement of a series of campaigns against Byzantium which constituted a kind of struggle for recognition.

Oleg led Kiev a considerable way towards the realisation of these three aims;

the culmination of his reign was probably the expedition against Byzantium **in 907**, which produced treaties giving the Russians privileges and guarantees.

# ***Invasion and Disunity, 1240-1462***

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mongols under Chingis (or Genghis) Khan began the great conquests that brought upon the Russian principalities the much-lamented Mongol or Tatar 'yoke'.

At the same time as the 'Mongol yoke' was being imposed, other invaders - Swedes, Teutonic Knights and Lithuanians - were attacking the Russian principalities from the western side. Such an additional challenge together with a great problem of internal disunity called for heroic leaders to arise from among the Russian people. Some, such as Alexander Nevsky and Dmitrii Donskoi, did appear at critical moments.

After their conquest of Northern China and Central Asia, the Mongols fanned out to establish their control over a vast area of Western Eurasia, including Transcaucasia and the Russian principalities. An early scouting raid led to the first encounter with Russian forces in the south-east at the river Kalka in 1223, the Mongols enjoying an overwhelming victory. The death of Chingis Khan in 1227 brought a lull, but ten years later a large army under his grandson Batu Khan embarked on a more thorough campaign.

# ***Consolidation under Moscow, 1462-1645***

The period from the middle of the fifteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century is known in the Western world as that of the formation of nation-states, of great geographical discoveries, of the Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

Parallel developments occurring at the eastern extremities of the Western world clearly demonstrated that remoteness by no means constituted complete separation in this period any more than in its predecessors. Under such powerful tsars as Ivan III or Great (1462-1505) and Ivan IV or Terrible (1533-84), the hold of Moscow was strengthened over much of Great Russia if by no means over the whole of the future Empire.

- Centralized state occurs when Ivan III (1462-1505). If it were attached to Moscow Yaroslavl, Rostov, Novgorod, Tver, Vyatka. Ivan III stopped paying tribute to the Great Horde (the largest part of the disintegrated Golden Horde).
- Ahmad Khan tried to weaken the power of Moscow and started a campaign against it. But after "standing on the Ugra" in 1480, when the Tatars did not dare to attack the Russian troops, Ahmad stepped in the desert and died. Horde's yoke fell.

- Ivan IV became grand duke in 1533 in 3 years. Regent was his mother Elena Glinskaya, and after her death in 1538 boyar rule began, accompanied by the struggle of seigniorial groups. In 1547, Ivan IV was crowned tsar. In 1547 as in Moscow there was an uprising against Glinsky, relatives of the king, oppress the people. It gave rise to a series of reforms - fiscal, military (among other things created strelets army), the creation of orders (future ministries), chosen conducted Rada - the approximate range of the king (AM Kurbsky, AF Adashev Sylvester). a new Code of Law was published (1550), in 1549 it convened the first Zemsky Sobor - Congress of representatives of the main classes of Russia. The reforms strengthened the centralized state.



## **The main directions of Russian foreign policy and the growth of its territory in the XV - XVI centuries.**

- In the reign of Ivan IV in 1552 after a long siege Russian troops took Kazan, in 1556 was annexed Astrakhan without a fight. In 1558 began the Livonian War for the Baltic states. After Russia's victory over the Livonian Order in the fight intervened Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark, Poland later. In 1571 Crimeans burned Moscow, but in 1572 was defeated.
- In 1579 in Russia invaded the Polish King Stefan Batory. After an unsuccessful siege of Pskov he concluded Yam Zapol-sky world (1582). In 1583 the treaty of plussa with Sweden was signed. Livonian War ended in defeat for Russia - Ivan the Terrible had overestimated their strength.
- In 1581 began a campaign of Ermak in Western Siberia, which was conquered in 1588 in Siberia an influx of Russian immigrants, was founded fortress Tyumen (1586), Tobolsk (1587), Surgut (1594).

Activity both internal and external was directed whenever possible towards increasing the government's wealth, to the distress and even ruin of many of its subjects. Under the appalling strain, which was compounded by a dynastic crisis at the end of the sixteenth century, Moscow fell apart during the Time of Troubles. Boris Godunov (tsar from 1598 to 1605) was the most notable of a rapid series of rulers, several of whom were no more than puppets in the hands of the Poles and other invaders. Recovery only partly occurred by the end of the reign of the first Romanov, Mikhail or Michael (1613-45).

Thanks for your attention