

# 19 THE SOVIET UNION AND JAPAN

## 1914 — 1997

### PLAYING TECHNOLOGICAL CATCH-UP WITH THE WEST

#### COMMENTARY

Chapter 19 compares the different paths to technological power, economic development, and social and political modernization followed by two of the great powers of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russia and Japan. As the author points out in the chapter introduction, the two countries were radically different from one another in many ways. Russia, at the beginning of the century, was huge: the largest country in the world in total land area. It was rich in natural resources. It had a long, albeit turbulent, history of connections —cultural, religious, economic, and military —with the great powers of Europe, and since the reign of Czar **Peter the Great**, had been counted as one of them. Its population was ethnically and religiously diverse, including Finns, Balts, Armenians, Turkic peoples and Tatars (Mongols), along with numerous Slavic groups besides the majority Great Russians, inside its borders, which had been steadily expanded since Peter's time. Japan, on the other hand was small, and located on the periphery of East Asia. It had virtually no natural resources: even agricultural land was in short supply in an archipelago that was mostly volcanic mountains. Although not totally cut off from the rest of Asia and the world, its **Tokugawa shoguns** had maintained a highly effective policy of isolation since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ethnically and culturally, it was one of the most homogeneous societies on earth. At the same time, however, there were some striking similarities. Both countries had developed relatively sophisticated and effective government bureaucracies, based on the Russian nobility and the Japanese **samurai**, respectively. Both had large labor pools of rural peasants, while on the other hand both had a number of provincial commercial centers. And both nations were shocked out of their technological backwardness at exactly the same time, between 1853 and 1856, when Russia was defeated in the **Crimean War** by Britain and France and Japan was forced to open its harbors to western trade and cultural influence by the power of the United States Navy. Thus, both countries began playing catch-up at the same time and for the same reasons.

The interesting pattern of similarity and contrasts continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well. Both Czarist Russia and **Meiji** Japan embarked on the path of technological transformation through programs of government directed capitalism and the importation of large quantities of foreign capital and expertise. Both sought to expand their trade and territory at China's expense, which led to conflict between them (the **Russo-Japanese War** of 1904-05) and a humiliating defeat for Russia. World War I proved a turning point for both countries, but in very different ways. Japan benefited economically and territorially, as the war spurred industrial production and resulted in the acquisition of many of Germany's Pacific outposts. And with Europe and the United States otherwise occupied, more inroads were made on the Asian mainland. For Russia, the war brought government collapse and the **Bolshevik Revolution**. Promising Peace, Land, and Bread **Lenin** and the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917 and, under Lenin's successor, **Josef Stalin**, imposed a system of forced agricultural **collectivization**, centralized economic planning, and rapid, state-run industrialization that was to modernize Russia overnight; help the nation survive German invasion and the loss of 20 million people in World War II; and transform the country into a leader in military might and space technology. Japan, on the other hand, was to become an aggressor nation in World War II, attempting to create her own **Co-Prosperity Sphere** in East Asia, in order to supply her growing population and *zaibatsu*-dominated economy. Whereas the war led to the creation of a Russian communist empire in eastern Europe, it led to the loss of all Japan's overseas territories, including Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan.

During the **Cold War**, the Soviet Union forcibly exported its political and economic system to Eastern Europe and set itself up as a model of socialist development for countries of the **Third World**. Japan, on the other hand, underwent its second major political and social transformation in less than a century, as American occupation forces imposed democratic parliamentary institutions and American business methods (which the Japanese were to adapt and improve upon) and helped the country recover from its wartime devastation. Economic prosperity and world technological leadership followed. The chapter compares the development and problems of the two countries from the 1960s through the 1990s, including the break-up of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the slowdown of Japanese economic growth. In the end, Spodek concludes, both systems were successful to a point -- the Japanese much more so than the Soviets -- but both had to face severe internal pressures and contradictions. In addition, while both countries systems were exported and copied -- the Communist Party of China initially modeled itself on the Bolsheviks, while

the new nations of east and southeast Asia were to copy Japan -- neither system was completely adaptable to foreign soil: each was unique to its own society and time.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### A. The Contrasting Experiences of Russia and Japan

### B. Russia: 1914-1990s

1. The build-up to revolution
  - a. State-directed industrialization under Nicholas II
  - b. The Russian peasantry: backward and oppressed
2. Lenin and the Russian Revolution
  - a. Lenin and revolutionary organization: *What Is to Be Done?* (1902)
  - b. Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905
  - c. The First World War and the March Revolution of 1917
  - d. The October Revolution, 1917: Peace, Land and Bread
  - e. Civil war and Bolshevik victory
3. State planning, 1920-53
  - a. Stalin's Five-Year Plans
  - b. The collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the *kulaks*
  - c. Phenomenal growth of Russian industry
4. Women workers in the Soviet Union
5. Exporting the revolution?
  - a. Trotsky vs. Stalin
  - b. Domination of eastern Europe and the Cold War
6. Russian state power and oppression
  - a. Stalin's purges of the party leadership
  - b. The Cheka/KGB and the Gulag Archipelago
7. Khrushchev (1953-64)
  - a. Khrushchev denounces Stalin's policies
  - b. Struggling for historical truth under communist dictatorship: What Do We Know? How Do We Know?
    - i. SPOTLIGHT: Soviet Socialist Realism
    - ii. SOURCE: *The Gulag Archipelago*
  - c. Khrushchev's domestic policies: the space program, Virgin Lands
  - d. Foreign policy: the Hungarian Revolt, the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis
8. Brezhnev (1964-82)
  - a. Bureaucracy and economic stagnation
  - b. The Brezhnev Doctrine
9. PROFILE: Pope John Paul II
10. Gorbachev (1985-91)
  - a. *Glasnost* and *perestroika*
  - b. Arms limitation agreements with the U.S.
  - c. Dismantling the Soviet empire
  - d. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War
11. Yeltsin (1991-99)
  - a. Establishment of democracy and a market economy
  - b. Tradeoffs: crime, profiteering and declining living standards in the 1990s
  - c. The war in Chechnya

- C. Japan: Fragile Superpower, 1914-1990s
1. Before World War I
    - a. Meiji-era industrialization
    - b. Wartime economic growth
    - c. Japan bridges the dual economy
  2. FOCUS: Economics in the Comic Books
  3. Social consequences of wartime economic growth: the *zaibatsu*
  4. Militarism
  5. The run-up to the Pacific War, 1930-37
  6. The Pacific War, 1937-45
    - a. Japan attacks China, 1937
    - b. Alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy
    - c. War with the United States, 1941
    - d. The Co-Prosperity Sphere and early Japanese victories, 1941-42
    - e. Allied counter-offensives, firebombing and defeat, 1942-45
  7. The Occupation, 1945-52
    - a. Democratic political reforms
    - b. Economic and educational reforms
    - c. FOCUS: Historical Revisionism in Japan
  8. Continuities, 1952-73
  9. The Oil Shocks of 1973 and 1979
  10. Controlling pollution
  11. International investment finance, 1989-2000
    - a. Rapid growth and expansion
    - b. Economic problems
  12. Generational shifts, 1989-2000
    - a. Politics
    - b. The Work Ethic
    - c. An aging society
    - d. Women in the workforce: How Do We Know?
  13. Japan as a model: How Do We Know?
    - a. Japan and East Asian nations
    - b. Problems with the East Asian model

D. Conclusion

## IDENTIFICATION TERMS

For each term, students should be able to provide an identification or definition, an approximate date, a geographical location (if relevant) and —most important— a concise explanation of its significance in the context of the question. Terms that appear in the *Study Guide* are listed in **bold** font in the first column.

<b>M.I.T.I.</b>	<i>What Is To Be Done?</i>	Nikita Khrushchev
<b>Chernobyl and Minimata</b>	Bloody Sunday	socialist realism
<b>Co-Prosperity Sphere</b>	Russo-Japanese War	Mikhail Gorbachev
<b>Rape of Nanjing</b>	<i>duma</i>	<i>glasnost</i> and <i>perestroika</i>
<b>collectivization</b>	March and October Revolutions	dual economy
<b>Leon Trotsky</b>	Peace, Land and Bread!	Manchukuo
<b>Brezhnev Doctrine</b>	<i>Cheka/KGB</i>	Pearl Harbor
<b><i>zaibatsu</i></b>	Reds and Whites	Midway
<b>New Economic Policy</b>	Five-Year Plans	Douglas MacArthur
<b>trade frictions</b>	<i>kulaks</i>	oil shocks
Alexander II	Ukrainian famine	Liberal Democratic Party
Sergei Witte and Peter Stolypin	Comintern	Total Quality Management
<i>mir</i>	<i>Gulag</i>	<i>karoshi</i>

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading and studying Chapter 19, students should be able to:

1. Explain and compare the background causes, procedures and results of Russian and Japanese modernization in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
2. Discuss the long-term and immediate causes of the Russian Revolution and the reasons for the Bolshevik victory.
3. Understand the different policies regarding Soviet economic development and the spreading of Communism espoused by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin.
4. Discuss Stalin's Five-Year Plans and their impact on the Soviet economy, the Russian (and Ukrainian) people, and the performance of the U.S.S.R. in the Second World War.
5. Trace the changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policy under the Cold War leadership of Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev.
6. Understand the background causes of Japanese imperialism and militarism and the origins of World War II in the Pacific.
7. Explain the impact of the United States Occupation after World War II on the Japanese government, society and economy.
8. Understand the reasons for Japan's economic resurgence in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century; the social, environmental and political costs of her economic success; and the reasons for the slowdown of the 1990s.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR LECTURE TOPICS

1. Trace and compare the parallel paths to modernization pursued by the Russian and Japanese elites, c. 1850-1905.
2. Explain the evolution of Marxist thought and socialist political organization in Russia, from Plekhanov to Lenin, explaining how Lenin sought to modify and adapt Marxian communism to the political and economic realities of Russia.
3. Discuss the important events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the reasons for Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War.
4. Discuss Stalin, his policies and purges, his role in World War II, Stalinism and de-Stalinization.
5. Explain the background to Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and their contribution to the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.
6. Discuss the economic, social and political background of Japanese imperialism and the origins of the war with the United States. Explain the various reasons for the failure of Japan's political and military policies.
7. Trace the reasons for Japan's post-war economic boom, differentiating and explaining the relative importance of domestic cultural and social factors and the political and economic effects of the American Occupation.

## TOPICS FOR ESSAYS OR CLASS DISCUSSIONS

1. According to the text, Josef Stalin won the power struggle against Leon Trotsky after Lenin's death—and then adapted Trotsky's programs. To what extent was this the case? Which programs, in particular, did Stalin adapt?
2. Why did Japan's plan to create a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere fail, even before her defeat in World War II? How realistic do her policies seem to have been?
3. What were *glasnost* and *perestroika*? Why did Mikhail Gorbachev undertake them? Why did these reform policies lead to the break-up of the Soviet Union and the downfall of communism in Russia?
4. What were the goals of the United States occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur? What specific measures were undertaken to achieve them? How successful was the program, according to the text?
5. Group work: Compare the roles and status of women in the Soviet Union with those of Japanese women in the later post-war era (c. 1970-1990). In which society did women achieve greater equality with men?
6. Describe the characteristics of Socialist realism in art? What purposes was it designed to serve? What techniques does it employ to serve those purposes? (Cite specific examples from the text.)
7. Using Josef Stalin's own words and those of his contemporaries (from the chapter), describe and explain his apparent goals and the methods that were used to achieve them.
8. Group work: The labor camps of the *Gulag Archipelago*, as described by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, have often been compared to Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps, as described by Elie Wiesel (Chapter 18). How valid is the comparison? In what ways were they similar? In what respects did they differ? Cite specific evidence from Wiesel and Solzhenitsyn to support your answer.

9. **Debate:** It has often been argued that, in the long run, Japan was actually the victor in World War II, in that she eventually achieved her goals of national security and economic domination of the rest of East Asia. Comparing the aims and methods of Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere of the 1940s with Japan's sphere of economic influence in Asia and role in the world economy from the 1960s to the present, is this a valid argument? What role did the war actually play?
10. **Current events and issues:** As discussed in the text, historians in both Russia and Japan have struggled to revise their respective nation's 20<sup>th</sup> century history. Compare the process of historical revision in each country. What has been the principal issue in Russia? In Japan? How have historical assessments and interpretations been revised, and why?
11. **Current events and issues:** Discuss the post-Cold War problems of the new Russian Republic. In what respects are they the result of long-term factors in Russian history? Of the lingering effects of Communist rule? Of inability to adjust to capitalism and democracy? Cite specific examples.

## TEXT RESOURCES

Timetables, charts and graphs:	The Soviet Union and Japan The Russian Revolution: Key Events Stalin's Soviet Union: Key Events	(pp. 642-3) (p. 645) (p. 648)
Large photographs or illustrations:	Distribution of Bolshevik leaflets, 1917 Lenin and Josef Stalin, 1922 Class struggle: anti- <i>kulak</i> demonstration Moscow power parade Summary executions in the Pacific in World War II Toyota factory robotics	(p. 644) (p. 646) (p. 647) (p. 655) (p. 663) (p. 670)
Maps:	Post-war Europe: NATO and the Warsaw Pact The break-up of the Soviet Union World War II in the Pacific East Asia since 1945	(p. 650) (p. 658) (p. 664) (p. 667)
SPOTLIGHT:	Soviet Socialist Realism	(pp. 652-3)
PROFILE: 656)	Pope John Paul II	(p.
FOCUS: 660)	Economics in the Comic Books	(p.
SOURCES:	Historical revisionism in Japan Alexander Solzhenitsyn, <i>The Gulag Archipelago</i>	(p. 668) (p. 654)

## ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SOURCES (*Documents Set & www.prenhall.com/Spodek*)

- 19-1 Vladimir Lenin: the rhetoric of societal upheaval
- 19-2 Smashing the icon: Khrushchev's Secret Speech
- 19-3 Three days in August: the coup against Gorbachev [from Mikhail Gorbachev, *The August Coup*]
- 19-4 Hideki Tojo's Imperial War Conference: casting the die
- 19-5 Caught in the crossfire: Gwen Terasaki's account [from Gwen Terasaki, *Bridge to the Sun*]
- 19-6 Post-war Japan: purpose, values and self-esteem
- www Post-Soviet Hangover: Yeltsin's New Order

## AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES (videos, DVDs, CD-ROM, and websites]

*The Demise of Western Communism: Fall of a Giant:* Films for the Humanities & Sciences. [video; 24 min. color]

From The Europeans series, this video reviews the Cold War confrontation between Communism and the West and narrates the events that led to the downfall of the Soviet system in Russia and eastern Europe.

***History and Culture of Japan:*** <http://www.pacificu.edu/up/as/japan.html> [website]

This site contains information on and links to all areas of Japanese history, culture, society and geography.

***Japan: the Tarnished Miracle: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.*** [video; 18 minutes, color]

This film reviews the effects of the recent economic slowdown in Japan, in conjunction with a survey of the country's most pressing social and environmental problems.

***Pacific Century — History and Culture of Japan:*** <http://wwwuis.edu/~www/crowley/singapore/html> [website]

This site contains an index to links on all aspects of 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese history, politics and foreign relations.

***Russia on the Web:*** <http://www.valley.net/~transnat/> [website]

This page serves mainly as a link to many other 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia-related websites, including ones on Nicholas and Alexandra, the Russian Revolution and Mikhail Gorbachev.

***The Russian Revolution:*** <http://www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/russ/rusrev.html> [website]

This site contains documents, photographs, maps and other contemporary sources relating to the Russian Revolution.

***Soviet Archives:*** [gopher.tamu.edu:70/11/.dir/soviet.archives.dir](http://gopher.tamu.edu:70/11/.dir/soviet.archives.dir) [website]

This page contains recently declassified documents from the Soviet Archives, covering the period from the Bolshevik Revolution to the failed coup against Gorbachev in 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

***WWW Virtual Library: Russia and Eastern Europe:*** <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb/> [website]

This is the University of Pittsburgh's Russian and east European history webpage. It contains links to numerous other sites.