

Russian Empire in Comparative Perspective (1856-1917). The Challenges of Modernity and Nationalism

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General overview

This course aims to place the history of the Russian Empire in comparative perspective. It is conceived as a continuation of the course “Russian Empire in Comparative Perspective. Emergence and Evolution to 1850” elaborated in the course of the author’s participation in another ReSet project: “History of the Russian Empire: Beyond Regional and National Narratives.” Changes of the historical context justify some modifications in the format of the course in comparison with the previous one, which nevertheless do not change its comparative character. After the defeat of the Russian Empire in the Crimean war, its expansion in Central Asia and the Far East represented a new stage of great power struggle, in the course of which Russian imperialism adopted many features of the colonial powers like Great Britain and France. This explains the extension of the number of comparative cases from two to four. On the other hand, many of the topics singled out for weekly discussion have to take into consideration geopolitical aspects of interaction of between colonial and continental empires reflecting among other things their place in a wider system of interaction. Many of the processes taking place in the Russian Empire were conditioned by its inclusion into world system at both political and economic levels.

The choice of 1850 as a chronological boundary is explained by the fact that the middle of the 19th century was marked major social, political and cultural transformations in the Russian Empire as well as in the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empires that serve as principle comparative cases. The reforms of the 1860s in Russia, just like the *Tansimat* period in the Ottoman Empire as well as the transformations targeted by the 1848 and culminating with the 1867 *Ausgleich* in the Habsburg Monarchy transformed the traditional institutional setting in the three continental monarchies and created the minimal preconditions for the processes of modernization in various social spaces. The examination of the applicability of the concept of modernization for the history of empires is one of the main challenges of the course. Motivated by the desire of the imperial elites to mobilize hitherto untapped resources under pressure of the more advanced Western European powers, the reforms of ancient regime undertaken in Russia, Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy in 1850s-1870s have created social spaces for the emergence of political ideologies and mass movements that threatened to reverse traditional social and ethnic relations. The discussion of these processes in continental and colonial empires cannot avoid the perennial historiographic and ultimately philosophic debate on Russia’s putative uniqueness/similarity with the rest. Reforms of ancient regime, colonialism, indirect rule and the use of religion and ethnicity in imperial policies serve as the basic dimensions, in which Russian Empire is compared to other continental and colonial powers.

The second part of the course is devoted to the confrontation of empire with nationalism, which in fact is yet another form of clash between empire and modernity. The introductory discussion aims at familiarizing the students with the major contemporary theories of nationalism. The relative strengths and weaknesses of primordialists, modernists and constructivists will be examined in an attempt to overcome the limitations of each of the approaches. The principal goal of the discussion in this part of the course is to evaluate the advantages and dangers of adopting these methodologies to the history of continental empires. “National” dimension of the imperial policies is an important corrective to the still numerically predominant “centralist” visions of imperial history. Understanding of the history of imperial borderlands makes this dimension still more important. The discussion will start with an

examination of peculiarities of the national movements in continental empires as opposed to the maritime empires. The role of the emerging national movements and their correlation with economic, social and political developments is the next problem to be addressed. The strategies of the dynasties and imperial bureaucracies in respect of various national movements, the construction of a hierarchy of threats and the respective adjustment of imperial policies provide possible developments for the discussion of this week. The World War One world war and revolution(s) are approached as realizations of explosive potential of modernization and nationalism that precipitated the collapse of the continental empires. Devoted to these issues, the last two lectures serve as a natural conclusion of the whole course.

This course is designed to fit the academic and didactic requirements of the traditional History of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe read during the third year of the University undergraduate program in History. As the title of the course indicates, the discussion will center on the Russian Empire, with the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires as well as the two major colonial powers, Great Britain and France, serving as comparative cases. The distribution of the literature for each section will reflect this structure of the course, with roughly 50% of listed readings devoted to the Russian case, and the other 50% are devoted to comparative cases. The course will consist of the twelve weekly lectures and twelve seminars lasting two academic hours each. The discussion during the seminars will be based on specially assigned readings listed below the description of each weekly session. The readings are divided into “A” and “B” categories to indicate the level of complexity and specialization. Evaluation will be based on student participation in the seminar discussions as well as mid-term and final papers.

Part I An Empire as any Other?

Week one: Modernization Theory and its Discontents

Topics for discussion:

- Modernization theory and its relation to the classical sociological tradition
- World-System analysis as an alternative for modernization theory
- The concept of multiple modernities

Readings A:

1. W. W. Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1960.
2. Wallerstein, “World System Analysis” in *The Essential Wallerstein*, New York: New Press, 2000, p.129-149.
3. S. N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring, 1999), pp. 283-295

Readings B:

1. Wallerstein, “Rise and Future Demise of Capitalist World System” in *Capitalist World Economy: Essays*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, 1-37.

Week two: Great Power Struggle and Imperial Borderlands

Topics for discussion:

- Morphology of imperial space: core areas, frontier zones, borderlands
- Macro-system of continental empires
- Colonial powers, Continental Empires and geopolitics

- Permeability of imperial frontiers
- Complex frontier zones

Readings A:

1. Dominic Lieven, "Imperia na pereferii Evropy: Sravnenie Rossii i Zapada," in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel'noi perspective*, 71-93.
2. Alfred J. Rieber, "Comparative Ecology of Complex Eurasian Frontiers," in A. Miller, Alfred J. Rieber (eds.) *Imperial Rule*. Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004, 179-210.

Readings B:

1. Dominic Lieven, *Empire. Russian Empire and its Rivals*. New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 2001

Week three: Reforms of Ancien Regime in Russia and Other Continental Empires

- What caused continental empires to modernize?
- Political and economic modernization
- Unintended consequences of modernization
- Modernization and traditional monarchical authority: institutional and ideological aspects

Readings A:

1. Andreas Kappeler, *Rossia – mnogonatsional'naia imperia*. Moscow: Traditsia – Profess-traditsia, 2000, Chapter VIII, 208-240.
2. Dominic Lieven, *Empire. Russian Empire and its Rivals*. New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 2001, Chapter 1.
3. Alfred J. Rieber, "The Politics of Autocracy," Alfred J. Rieber (ed.) *Letters of Alexander II to Prince A. I. Bariatinskii*, The Hague: Mouton, 1966

Readings B:

1. W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia*. DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990.
2. R. H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*. New York: Gordian Press, 1973.

Week four: Russia as a Colonial Power

Topics for discussion:

- Legitimizing colonial rule
- The function of the metropolis in colonial empires compared to the role of core areas in continental empires
- Changing position of Siberia in Russian imperial space
- Debating Russian orientalism
- Russian imperialism in the Far East

Readings A:

1. Andreas Kappeler, *Rossia – mnogonatsional'naia imperia*, chapter V, "Kolonial'naia ekspansia v Aziiu," 124-155.
2. Adeeb Halid, "Russkaia istoria i spor ob orietalizme"; Nathaniel Knight, "O russkom orientalizme: otvet Adibu Khalidu"; Maria Todorova, "Est' li russkaia dusha u russskogo orientalizma?" in V. I. Kabytov, Paul Werth, A. I. Miller (eds.) *Rossiskaia imperia v zapadnoi istoriografii*. Moscow: Novoie izdatel'stvo, 2004,

Readings B:

1. Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism. The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy 1860-1914*. Lemington Spa: Berg, 1997, 86 – 101; 186-220.

Week five: Indirect Rule in Colonial and Continental Empires

Topics for discussion:

- Why indirect rule?
- Empire, local elites and the position of other social groups
- Strategies of cooptation and limits of assimilation of the local elites
- The mechanisms of indirect rule in colonial and continental empires
- Indirect rule and perpetuation of local particularism

Readings A:

1. Hans Peter Hee, “Elity i imperskie elity v gabsburgskoi imperii, 1845-1914,” in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel’noi perspective*, Moscow: Novoie Izdatel’stvo, 2004, 150-176.
2. Selcuk Ashkin Somel, “Osmanskaia imperia: mestnyie elity i mekhanizmy ikh integratsii,” in *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel’noi perspective*, 177-206.

Readings B:

1. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism How the British Saw their Empire*. London: Penguin Books, 2001

Week six: Uses of Religion and Ethnicity in Imperial Policies

Topics for discussion:

- Traditional ethno-confessional structures in continental empires
- Politicization of religion and ethnicity
- Modern ethnographic science in the service of empire
- The politics of census of imperial population

Readings A:

1. Alan W. Fisher, “Enlightened Despotism and Islam Under Catherine II.” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1968), 542-553
2. Robert Gerasi, *Window on the East. National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*. East Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001 (the chapter discussing Ilminskii’s system)
3. Nathaniel Knight, “Nauka, Imperia i narodnost’: Etnografii v Russkom geograficheskom obshchestve, 1845-1855,” in *Rossiskaia imperia v zapadnoi istoriografii*,

Readings B:

1. Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire*. Chapter IV “Narodnost’: Russian Ethnographers and Mountaineers”
2. Roderick H. Davidson, *The Millets as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman State*, in in Bernard Lewis, Benjamin Braude, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, New York: Longman, 1982, Vol. 1, 319-339.
3. Kemal Karpat, “Millets and Nationality: the Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era,” *Ibid.*, 141-169.

Part II Challenge of Nationalism

Week Seven: Approaching Nationalism

Topics for discussion:

- Transition from traditional to modern society and nationalism

- Modern nationalism and “primary feelings”
- Nationalism and 19th century political ideologies
- Nationalism and the state
- Constructing, inventing and imagining the nation

Readings A:

1. Miller, “Natsionalizm i formirovanie natsii. Teoreticheskie issledovania 80-kh – 90-kh godov” in Miller A. I. (ed.) *Natsia I natsionalizm*. Moscow: INION, 1999.
2. Miroslav Hroch, “Ot natsional’nykh dvizhenii k polnost’iu sformirovavsheisia natsii: protsess stroitel’sstva natsii v Evrope,” 121-145.

Readings B:

1. Ernst Gellner, in Benedikt Anderson (ed.) *Natsii i natsionalizm*. Moscow: Praksis, 2002,
2. Benedict Anderson, *Voobrazhaemye soobshchestva*. Moscow: Kanon-Press Ts, 2001, 26-70.
3. Clifford Geertz, “Integratsionnaia revoliutsia: iznachal’nyie chuvstva i grazhdanskaia politikav novykh gosudarstvakh,” in Idem, *Interpretatsia kul’tur*. Moscow: ROCCPEN, 2004, 293-361.
4. Anthony D. Smith, *Naționalism și modernism*. Chișinău: Epigraf, 2004.

Week eight: Empire and the nationalisms of the “captive” nations

Topics for discussion:

- The correlation between “primary feelings” and the “invention” of the nation
- The role of the emerging public sphere: education, press, theatre.
- The role of the imperial capital in the development of national movements
- The timing of constitutional reforms and industrialization as factors of development of nationalisms in the ethnic borderlands

Readings A:

1. Josef Chlebowczyk, *On Small and Young Nations in Europe. Nation-Forming Processes in Ethnic Borderlands in East-Central Europe*. Warsaw: 1980, 24-58.
2. Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992, Chapter 17, “Eastern Galicia: A Bastion of Ukrainianism,” 307-335.
3. Theodore Weeks, “My ili Oni? Belorusy i ofitsial’naia Rossia, 1863-1914gg.” In *Rossiskaia imperia v zapadnoi istoriografii*,
4. A. I. Miller, *Ukrainskii vopros v politike vlastei i v russkom obshchestvennom mnenii. St Petersburg*. Aleteia, 2000, Introductionon, 6-61,

Week Nine: Imperial Rulers and the nationalisms of the “dominant” nations

Topics for discussion:

- Historical narrative of state and nation
- The policy of russification and its limits
- Imperial rulers and the “Pan” ideologies

Readings A:

1. A. I. Miller, “Imperia i natsia v voobrazhenii russkogo natsionalisma,” In idem, *Imperial Romanovykh i natsionalizm*, 147-170.
2. Idem, “Russifikatsia ili russifikatsii?” 54-77.
3. Kemal Karpat, “Formation of Modern Nationhood: Turkism and Pan-Islamism in Russia and the Ottoman Empire,” in Idem, *Politicization of Islam*. 2001, 276-307.

Readings B:

1. Andreas Renner, "Izobretaiushee vospominanie: Russkii etnos v rossiskoi natsional'noi pamiati," in V. I. Kabytov, Paul Werth, A. I. Miller (eds.) *Rossiskaia imperia v zapadnoi istoriografii*. Moscow: Novoie izdatel'stvo, 2004,

Week ten: "Official Nationalisms"

Topics for discussion:

- Representation of power in the 18th and 19th centuries
- Official nationalisms and the nationalisms of "dominant" nations: what is the difference?
- Nationalizing dynasties and its impact on traditional charisma of power

Readings A:

1. Benedikt Anderson, *Voobrazhaemye soobshchestva*, Chapter 6, "Ofitsial'nyi natsionalizm i imperialism", 105-132.
2. Richard Wortman, *Stsenarii Vlasti*. Moscow: OGI, 2005, Vol. 2,
3. Kemal Karpat, "Ottomanism, Fatherland and the 'Turkishness' of the State," in idem, *Politicization of Islam*, 328-352.

Readings B:

1. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. London : I.B. Tauris, 1998,

Week eleven: Empires and the Great War

Topics for discussion:

- Ethnic violence provoked by war
- Social and psychological effects of military mobilization
- The process of nationalization in the army

Readings A:

1. A. I. Miller, "Pochemu vse kontinental'nyie imperii raspalis' v khode Pervoi mirovoi voiny," <http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2006/04/11/miller2.html>
2. Mark von Hagen, "The First World War, 1914-1918," (Manuscript), 94-113.

Readings B:

1. Peter Holquist, "Rossiskaia katastrofa (1914-1921) v evropeiskom kontekste: total'naia mobilizatsia i "politika naselenia"," in *Rossia XXI*, No. 11/12, 30-42
2. Erik Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire. the Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Week twelve: Revolution: Death or Rebirth of Empires?

Topics for discussion:

- Revolution in the capital and its impact on the national movements in the borderland territories
- National movements in the civil war
- Political language of the peasantry. The problem of representation
- Marxism and the national question or what made the creation of the USSR possible
- Imperial legacy and Marxist ideology

Readings A:

1. Andreas Kappeler, "Obrazovanie natsii i natsional'nye dvizhenia v Rossiskoi imperii in *Rossiiskaia imperia v zarubezhnoi istoriografii*,
2. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*. New York: Cornell UP, 2001, Introduction, 1-27

Readings B:

1. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past. Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of Soviet Union*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Chapter 2, "National Revolutions and Civil War in Russia," 20-83.
2. Terry Martin, "The Soviet Union as Empire: Salvaging a Dubious Analytical Category," in *Ab Imperio*. Kazan' 2002, No. 2, 91-105.