

Key Terms in Russian History – The Longue Duree

[To think about: What has changed and what hasn't?]

1. Political structures

- a. *Kormlenie* – “feeding”
 - i. the system of supporting officials at the expense of the local population that existed in Rus’ until the mid-16th century. The prince dispatched vicegerents and other officials to various cities and rural districts, and the local people were obligated to support (feed) them during their term of office. The *kormlenie* system was widely used in the 14th and 15th centuries. Under the reform of 1555-56 the system was officially abolished and the collections for the support of officials were replaced by a special tax paid to the treasury. Peter the Great “abolished” *kormlenie* by paying officials wages. Still, whenever the Treasury ran short of money, they would allow officials to collect special rents. It was also extremely difficult to control this process.
- b. *Dan’* – tribute
 - i. Native peoples, especially of Siberia, were to pay taxes in furs rather than in money
 - ii. Metaphorically, the expectation that the peoples of Russia would pay tribute to their rulers rather than having a social contract based on mutual benefit.
- c. *Votchiny*- landed estates
 - i. Estates given to noble servitors in exchange for service to the tsar
 - ii. Heyday under Ivan III (Grand Prince, 1462-1505)
- d. *Boyars* – noble elites; many, though not all, of princely descent
 - i. Peter the Great abolished the term, leveling the nobility so they were all considered *pomeshchiki*, estate holders.
- e. *Mestnichestvo*- elites’ places defined by social rank and tradition, rather than by ability
 - i. Officially abolished in 1682, but never entirely gone
- f. 19th century – educated classes resisted the creation of *chinovniki*, bureaucrats with neither high social rank nor high attainments
- g. *Gosudarstvenniki/derzhavniki* – top officials committed to creating Russia as a “great state”
- h. Absence of *res publica*
 - i. Underdevelopment of impersonal forms of trust
 - ii. Manipulation of property rights behind institutional facades [see Ledeneva, 2013, 23]
 - iii. Tragedy of the commons; absence of institutional guarantees & protections
- i. Personalized channels of power; personalized politics
 - i. Can be effective, but can also be corrupt
- j. *Proizvol*- arbitrary rule
 - i. The absence of a government of law
- k. Constant instability makes it highly unrewarding to go into power
- l. Preference of administrative methods over economic (market) ones for obtaining change in society

2. Informal structures

- a. *Znakomstvo*/blat/who you know
 - i. Also clans, connections, *kumovstvo*, family nests
- b. Collective responsibility (*krugovaya poruka*)
 - i. Decision making by consensus
 - 1. Democratic centralism in Soviet times
 - ii. But also individuals standing surety for each other
 - iii. A joint welfare system, but also joint responsibility
- c. Disgrace – to be sent far from the tsar’s eye
 - i. In a centripetal system to be sent away from Moscow/St. Petersburg was to lose both economic and political power
 - 1. “winner-takes-all” style of power
- d. Popular perception of a contrast law *versus* fairness [*zakon versus Pravda*]
- e. Exemplary thrashings and show justice
- f. Legal nihilism
 - i. Overregulation and underenforcement [Iedeneva, can Russia modernize, 14]
 - ii. *Pravda* – the truth
 - 1. A notion combining justice and morality
- g. Everyday practices of “beating” the system which reinforce that very system
- h. High level of secrecy
- i. Disdain for own people
- j. Envy – the story of the genie and the neighbor’s cow
- k. Solidarity – willingness to act only if everyone else acts
- l. Band wagons – jumping on whatever organization or individual appears to have power [*vlast’*]

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