

Inner Eurasia as a Unit of World History

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WHAT are the basic units of world history? For those interested in what used to be the Soviet Union, this question involves several others: Are there large units of analysis that are simple but capable of illuminating the history of this entire region over long periods? Can such units also help explain the crisis the region is undergoing today? Can they reveal the larger shape of the region's history? Now is a good time to pose these large questions, for the breakup of the Soviet Union has devalued many old units of analysis. It forces us to look for fresh ways of approaching old questions. This essay is a contribution to what will doubtless be a long and complex discussion. In it I describe a large historical unit that I call "Inner Eurasia." I argue that "Inner Eurasia" constitutes one of the basic units of Eurasian and of world history.¹

Ever since history emerged as a distinct discipline in nineteenth-century Europe, most historians have treated the national state as their main unit of analysis. This is hardly surprising, for history emerged as a scholarly discipline in a period of violent

¹ An essay such as this can defend the use of such a unit only at a general level. I will offer a detailed history of Inner Eurasia in a volume of the forthcoming *Blackwell History of the World*, ed. R. I. Moore. I would like to thank A. G. Frank, Linda Bowman, Harry Rigby, Bob Moore, Stephen Wheatcroft, Bernard Knapp, and two anonymous reviewers for encouragement, bibliographical references, criticism, and comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Of course, none is responsible for the paper's final argument.

national building. But is the national state the best unit of analysis for world history today? Is Russia the most important unit for the historian of what used to be the Soviet Union? A Ukrainian historian, or a historian of Turkmenistan or of Mongolia, will surely argue that it is not. Yet would Ukraine, Turkmenistan, or Mongolia do any better? The emergence of new nations will certainly encourage the writing of new national histories.² Yet these will do little to help us understand the larger history of this region.

The trouble is that the national state is a recent, and often artificial, creation. All too many national states have been assembled mechanically from loose groupings of tribes, peoples, religions, and lifeways. As a unit of analysis, the national state assumes that ethnicity, language, culture, and politics normally coincide. Yet this is rarely true. What is self-evident for the historian of modern Africa is only slightly less obvious for the historian of the former Soviet Union. If there is a larger shape to the history of this region, we must look beyond the national state to find it.

Empires, such as the Mongol or Soviet empires, or those of Kievan Rus' or the Scythians, provide convenient units, but only for limited historical periods. Religions, languages, cultures, and lifestyles are so diverse and so changeable in the area that interests us that they can provide only local and temporary signposts for historical analysis. Residual categories, such as Siberia, Inner Asia, or Central Asia, are no more helpful.³

Recently, historians have taken up a much larger category: the world-system. Immanuel Wallerstein first introduced the concept in 1974.⁴ He argued that since 1500 a system of interacting polities and economies had emerged that was more important than the sum of its parts. Recently, Andre Gunder Frank and Barry Gills have tracked Wallerstein's world-system back to the very begin-

² Examples of influential recent national histories are Orest Subtelny's *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto, 1988) or works by the Turkmen historian, Marat Durdyyev, such as his pamphlet, *Turkmeny* (Ashkhabad, 1991).

³ However, "Inner Asia" or "Central Eurasia," as defined by Denis Sinor, are more useful categories, and are close to the definition of "Inner Eurasia" offered below. See *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor (Cambridge, 1990), "Introduction" and "The Geographic Setting." See also the useful discussion in Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 3-10.

⁴ I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1974).

nings of civilization, some 5,000 years ago.⁵ For historians interested in a particular part of the world, however extensive, the world-system is too large a unit of analysis. Yet we can no longer ignore it. Any regional unit of analysis must now take this larger unit into account and seek a place within it.

In this paper, I propose a large regional unit of analysis based mainly on geography.⁶ I call it Inner Eurasia to contrast its history with that of Outer Eurasia, which includes the rest of the Eurasian landmass. Inner Eurasia includes the lands ruled by the Soviet Union in 1990, together with Mongolia. More hesitantly, I would also include parts of China's most western region, the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. Along the southern rim of Inner Eurasia, mountains form a natural border. The mountains were thrown up during the last 40 million years, as India and Africa collided with Eurasia in their journeys north from Gondwanaland. A few natural gateways breach this border through the Balkans, Persia, and northern China. To the east and west, the flatlands of Inner Eurasia break up less dramatically, and the borders are less clear-cut. Does Poland, Hungary, or Manchuria belong within Inner Eurasia? In a short paper, it is sufficient to describe such regions as borderlands.⁷ They belong partly to Outer Eurasia and partly to Inner Eurasia. To the north, the tundra and the Arctic Ocean form clearer borders.

Within these borders has existed an immense variety of climates, landscapes, lifeways, languages, and religions. The most striking of these divisions is that between the forests of the north and the steppes and deserts to the south. Despite this variety, it is helpful to think of Inner Eurasia as a single, coherent historical unit. To defend this claim, I offer three distinct arguments, politi-

⁵ See A. G. Frank and B. K. Gills, eds., *The World System: From Five Hundred Years to Five Thousand Years* (London and New York, 1992); and Frank and Gills, "5,000 Years of World System History: The Cumulation of Accumulation," in *Pre-capitalist Core-Periphery Relations*, ed. C. Chase-Dunn and T. Hall (Boulder, 1991), pp. 67-111.

⁶ There are superficial similarities between this argument and those of the "Eurasianists." These were a group of historians and geographers inspired by some of the writings of N. Ya. Danilevskii. Their "manifesto" was N. S. Trubetzkoy's emigre work, *Evropa i chelovechestvo* (Sofia, 1920), reprinted in N. S. Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan, and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*, ed. A. Liberman, Michigan Slavic Materials (Ann Arbor, 1992).

⁷ However, R. P. Lindner has argued that at least during the era of pastoral nomadism, the Carpathians marked a very clear ecological border. See his "Nomadism, Horses and Huns," *Past and Present* 92 (1981): 3-19.

cal, geographical, and ecological. Ecology and geography have combined to give a distinctive shape to Inner Eurasian history from prehistory to the present, by posing distinctive problems that required distinctive solutions. As a result, the histories of Inner and Outer Eurasia have run on parallel but different tracks for a very long time. The Paleolithic of Inner Eurasia was dominated by hunting rather than gathering, its Neolithic by pastoralism rather than farming, the era of state formation by pastoral nomadism rather than irrigation agriculture. These ancient contrasts can help us explain the twentieth-century division between a largely capitalist Outer Eurasia and the command economies that dominated Inner Eurasia.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF INNER EURASIAN HISTORY

Political History

The first hint of underlying coherence to this vast region is political. Unlike Outer Eurasia, Inner Eurasia has periodically been united within single, overarching empires. In the twentieth century, the Soviet Union dominated most of Inner Eurasia. Soviet influence also extended to the two regions of Inner Eurasia that were never included formally within the USSR: Mongolia, which was a vassal state of the Soviet Union, and Xinjiang, which nearly became a vassal state. If China had remained divided, the Soviet Union might well have absorbed Xinjiang, as it did the more western parts of Central Asia.

Of course, the emergence of the Soviet empire may have been a historical accident. Perhaps, like the British empire in the late nineteenth century, the Soviet empire was the arbitrary product of imperial wars. What suggests that deeper factors are at work here is the repeated appearance of huge, if fragile, empires in Inner Eurasia.

The Soviet Union did not create an empire; it inherited one. The Russian empire had already united most of Inner Eurasia since the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Russia's empire was not the first, but at least the third woven on this particular loom. In the late sixth century C.E., Türk tribes from the Altai region created the first empire to embrace most of the southern half of Inner Eurasia. For a decade or two, the Türk empire dominated the steppes from Manchuria to the Volga. Though the empire soon

split up, its successor states dominated large areas of Inner Eurasia for two centuries. In the early thirteenth century, the Mongols created the second great empire of Inner Eurasia. For a time, their empire controlled most of the steppes of Inner Eurasia, and its influence extended well into the northern forests. Briefly, the Mongols even added China to their domains. The Muscovite empire was the third polity to embrace most of Inner Eurasia, and the Soviet Union was the fourth.

No other region of the world can boast such a history of huge empires. Of the three largest empires ever created, two, the Mongol empire and the Russian empire (respectively the second and third largest), both emerged in Inner Eurasia.⁸ By measuring the area under a graph plotting size against time, R. Taagepera has argued that the combined Russian-Soviet empire constitutes the most substantial empire ever created. The area under such a graph for Muscovy-Russia-USSR is:

65 million square-kilometer-centuries . . . while the closest runners-up (British, and post-Mongol Chinese, from Ming to Mao) are around 45, followed by Rome, Baghdad, Han China, Sassanid Persia, Sung-T'ang China and the Mongol Empire at 30 to 20 million square-kilometer-centuries. As far as the impact of an empire depends on how much land it controls for how many centuries, Muscovy-Russia-USSR already holds the record in world history. While the combined Chinese empires, from Han to Mao, add up to much more, they are separated by long breakdown periods compared with which Russian times of trouble have been negligible.⁹

Such regularities over 1,500 years suggest that there is, indeed, an underlying coherence to Inner Eurasia. The geography and ecology of the region suggest why this should be so.

Physical Geography

The geographical coherence of Inner Eurasia appears clearly on a physical map of the world. The region is dominated by the largest

⁸ R. Taagepera, "An Overview of the Growth of the Russian Empire," in *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, ed. M. Rywkin (London and New York, 1988), pp. 4–5. The largest empire ever created was the British empire, but it lasted only slightly longer than the Türk empire of the sixth century.

⁹ Taagepera, "An Overview," p. 6, and graph on p. 5.

unified area of flatlands in the world. The ancient habit of treating the Ural Mountains as a border between Europe and Asia has long obscured this point. Yet the Urals offer no serious barrier to movement. As the Slavophile writer Danilevskii asked, what was it about the Urals that could

confer upon them alone, out of all the mountains on the face of the earth, the honor of serving as the boundary between two continents—an honor which in all other cases is granted only to oceans, and rarely to seas? In terms of its altitude, this mountain range is one of the most insignificant of all, and in terms of its traversability one of the easiest. In the middle section, around Ekaterinburg, people cross them . . . and ask their driver: but tell me, brother, just where are these mountains?¹⁰

Between the Yenisei and Lena rivers lies the raised mid-Siberian plateau. East of the Lena and Lake Baikal the land is more mountainous. Yet even here, and in the more broken landscapes of northern Xinjiang and Mongolia, there was enough movement from one area to another to allow for close economic and political ties. Topographically, Inner Eurasia is therefore different from Outer Eurasia, which geography has divided into distinct regions, separated by seas or mountain chains.

The flatness of most of Inner Eurasia had great military and political significance. While land armies dominated warfare, natural features such as mountains or seas were the main barriers to military expansion. The absence of such barriers explains the size of the polities that have emerged in Inner Eurasia. Successful armies met no serious barriers until they reached the western, southern, or eastern borderlands of Inner Eurasia. Hints of this expansionist potential appear as early as the second millennium B.C.E., with the emergence of pastoralist cultures whose influence reached across huge areas of the steppes. From late in the fourth millennium B.C.E. there appears complex but powerful evidence of large, warlike migrations by pastoral nomadic societies. A striking example is the so-called "Seima-Turbino" phenomenon of the mid-second millennium B.C.E. This refers to a series of archaeolog-

¹⁰ N. Ya. Danilevskii, *Rossiya i Evropa. Vzgl'yad na kul'turnye i politicheskie otnosheniya Slavyanskogo mira k Germano-Romanskomu*, 5th ed. (St. Petersburg, 1895), pp. 56–57; cited from Mark Bassin, "Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space," *Slavic Review* 50 (1991): 10.

ical sites that seem to indicate a rapid, warlike migration of an entire people from the Altai region, along the northern borders of the steppes, and into southeastern Europe.¹¹ Migrations such as this prefigure the great eastern invasions of the first and second millennia c.e.

The absence of major barriers to military expansion makes Inner Eurasia a natural unit of military history and hence of political history as well.

Ecology

As the British geographer H. J. Mackinder pointed out, the Eurasian “world-island” divides into two main regions. To the west, south, and east lie the well-watered coastal “promontories” of Outer Eurasia. In the center of this landmass lies the drier, continental “heartland” of Inner Eurasia.¹²

Within Outer Eurasia, I include Europe, the Mediterranean basin, Southwest Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and China. The seas that surround Outer Eurasia provide plenty of rainfall and reduce temperature extremes. Southern latitudes keep climates warm. (Europe is a partial exception, for the waters of the Gulf Stream keep it warm despite its higher latitudes.) Abundant water, moderate climates, and plenty of sunlight make for high ecological productivity in much of Outer Eurasia.

The heartland of the Eurasian landmass is very different. It is, in the first place, “inner.” Interiority condemns Inner Eurasia to aridity and to great seasonal fluctuations in temperature. The frozen seas of Inner Eurasia’s northern coasts can neither moderate its climates nor provide much rainfall. Second, Inner Eurasia is northerly. Northern latitudes mean colder climates and less sunlight, with less photosynthesis and shorter growing seasons. Third, Inner Eurasia is flat. It lacks the broken topography that helps moderate the climates of Outer Eurasia. Flatness, size, and inferiority explain the extreme continentality of its climates.

Aridity, high latitudes, and extreme continentality reduced the

¹¹ See E. N. Chernykh, *Ancient Metallurgy in the USSR: The Early Metal Age* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 215–32.

¹² I use some of Mackinder’s ideas and categories, but my argument differs from his in many ways. The best introduction to Mackinder’s writings is his *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, ed. A. J. Pearce (New York, 1962).



FIGURE 1: A map of "Central Eurasia" or "Inner Asia" from Denis Sinor, ed., *Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 6. Sinor's "Inner Asia," defined here by average January temperatures, is similar to "Inner Eurasia" as defined in this paper. The major difference is that this map includes parts of eastern Europe and northern China that I exclude from Inner Eurasia, and it excludes parts of southern central Asia that I include in Inner Eurasia.

natural productivity of much of Inner Eurasia. This is true of both the main ecological regions into which Inner Eurasia divides: the arid belt of steppe and desert to the south, and the forest and tundra to the north. In the south, aridity makes for a land of desert and grasslands. Average precipitation varies from 25 to

50 centimeters.¹³ The soils are often extremely rich, particularly in the western and central parts of the steppes, where they formed from the composting of grasses over thousands of years. However, erratic and limited rainfall has made farming difficult. In the northern regions, the soils are poorer than in the steppes. Rainfall, though more generous than in the south, is only moderate. Average rainfall exceeds 50 centimeters only in Belarus, northern Ukraine, and European Russia, along the southern parts of the eastern Siberian coast, and in pockets in Siberia. The contrast with Outer Eurasia is striking. There, regions with average rainfall of less than 50 centimeters are unusual, and in many regions average rainfall is well above 100 centimeters a year.

Harsh climates compound the effects of low rainfall. Northerliness and continentality make for greater extremes of temperature than in Outer Eurasia, for long winters and hot summers. Taken together, these factors have depressed the ecological productivity of most of Inner Eurasia. The differential in natural productivity between Inner and Outer Eurasia has shaped the history of Eurasia in profound ways and over long periods. Its effects have been subtle and complex.

Ecology, Geography, and History

The most striking consequence of Inner Eurasia's relatively low ecological productivity has been demographic. Even today, Inner Eurasia is a region of lower average population density than Outer Eurasia. Historically, the concentrations of people that were the foundation for early urban civilizations and early states appeared relatively late in most of Inner Eurasia. It is tempting, therefore, to regard low natural productivity as the main shaper of Inner Eurasian history. It certainly helps explain why agrarian civilizations appeared later there than in Outer Eurasia. And that in turn explains why historians have tended to neglect the region. All too often, they have treated Inner Eurasia as a marginal region, of interest only when its barbarian peoples conquered their civilized neighbors in Outer Eurasia. This view is misleading.

In reality, ecological and demographic poverty has not con-

¹³ R. N. Taaffe, "The Geographic Setting," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. Sinor, p. 35.

fined Inner Eurasia to a marginal role in Eurasian history. Despite everything, Inner Eurasia has played a pivotal role in Eurasian and world history. It has done so because of its geographical position at the center of the Eurasian landmass. Outer Eurasia consists of a series of regions divided from each other by seas and mountain ranges. Before the sixteenth century, the main links between them passed through the southern borderlands of Inner Eurasia, along the routes known as the "silk roads." If the history of the Eurasian landmass has coherence, it arises because genes, commodities, ideas, and diseases have all traveled through the Inner Eurasian borderlands.

Exchanges occurred most freely during those periods when empires controlled large areas of Inner Eurasia. Some of these empires, such as Han China or Achaemenid Persia, originated in Outer Eurasia. However, Outer Eurasian empires never achieved a firm grip over the communication routes of Inner Eurasia, because they lacked the special skills needed to adapt to the difficult terrain of Inner Eurasia. Trade flourished when Inner Eurasian empires emerged that were capable of protecting large stretches of the silk roads. This allowed societies of Inner Eurasia to have a profound impact on the history of Outer Eurasia.¹⁴ As a result, the political history of Inner Eurasia shaped the rhythms not just of Inner Eurasia but of the entire Eurasian world-system.

The emergence of extensive steppe empires coincided with the first appearance of a flourishing trade route across Inner Eurasia. William H. McNeill argued that the second century B.C.E. saw the first "closure of the Eurasian Ecumene."¹⁵ In more recent jargon, it marks the first appearance of a Eurasia-wide world-system. Contacts had been made across the Eurasian ecumene for thousands of years, but this was the first time they were vigorous enough to justify talk of an emerging world-system.

The Türk empire of the sixth century C.E. linked eastern and western Eurasia for a second time. Though the original empire fragmented rapidly, successor states continued to protect the main trans-Eurasian trade routes. As a result, the Türk empire re-created for a while the Eurasian world-system of the classical era.

¹⁴ See A. G. Frank, *The Centrality of Central Asia* (Amsterdam, 1992); and H. J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23 (1904): 421-37.

¹⁵ W. H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West* (Chicago, 1963), p. 295.

In the space of a single generation, the Turks built a vast empire of their own, which covered nearly the entire Eurasian steppe and impinged on the borders of all of the great Old World civilizations, including the Central Asian city-states and India. The Turks made it their first order of business to inform their neighbors to the east and west that they were vitally interested in trade. When the Turks annexed most of the Central Asian city-states—great centers for the east-west and north-south caravan trade—in the second half of the sixth century, they also removed the political obstacles to relatively high volume transcontinental trade.¹⁶

The Mongol empire of the thirteenth century played a similar role. It provided such effective protection for the major trade routes across Eurasia that it created a single economic, cultural, and epidemiological world-system.¹⁷ This in turn contributed to the economic and cultural expansion of the Middle Ages.

For several millennia, then, Inner Eurasia was the pivot of Eurasian history. Inner Eurasia therefore counts as a vital, if neglected, unit of world history. Despite its ecological poverty and its small populations, Inner Eurasia has not been a region “without history,” in Eric Wolf’s phrase.¹⁸

This combination of ecological poverty and a pivotal geographical position has given the history of Inner Eurasia its distinctive shape. As a region of low ecological and demographic productivity, Inner Eurasia might have played a marginal role in world history. Yet because of its position, its societies were touched by, and had to react to, the most powerful currents of Eurasian history. This was particularly true of those societies closest to the borders with Outer Eurasia. To survive in competition with the more productive societies of Outer Eurasia, societies throughout the huge southern arc of Inner Eurasia had to find ways of compensating for low productivity. The distinctive solutions they found to this problem helped shape the history of the lands to their north.

This line of argument suggests an abstract way of defining what is distinctive about the history of Inner Eurasia. *The*

¹⁶ Christopher Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 178–79.

¹⁷ The pioneering study of the epidemiological unification of Eurasia is W. H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976). J. L. Abu-Lughod describes the pivotal role of the Mongol empire in the thirteenth-century world-system in *Before European Hegemony: The World System, A.D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989).

¹⁸ An allusion to the title of Eric Wolf’s superb *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, 1982).

societies that dominated the history of Inner Eurasia did so by evolving distinctive ways of concentrating and mobilizing the scarce human and material resources of a region of relatively low natural productivity. All societies concentrate and mobilize ecological, demographic, and economic resources. In Inner Eurasia, however, low ecological productivity combined with proximity to the more productive societies of Outer Eurasia forced societies to concentrate and mobilize scarce resources to an exceptional degree. This distinguishes their history from that of Outer Eurasia.

A PERIODIZATION OF INNER EURASIAN HISTORY: FIVE ADAPTATIONS

The challenge faced by Inner Eurasian societies, particularly those closest to Outer Eurasia, was to make maximum use of the region's scarce resources. The solutions they found to this challenge affected the history of the region in profound ways, for distinctive cultures crystallized around each successful solution. Each solution generated a distinctive way of life, economy, form of politics, and outlook on the world.

This approach yields a clear periodization for the history of Inner Eurasia. The history of Inner Eurasia was dominated by a series of distinctive adaptations to low ecological productivity. Five dominant adaptations have shaped the region's history: hunting, pastoralism, pastoral nomadism, agrarian autocracy, and the command economy of the USSR.

The First Adaptation: Hunting

The First Colonizers: Before 40,000 B.P. In the long run, to misquote Keynes, we are all Africans. Our hominid ancestors evolved in Africa, and there is little evidence that any left Africa before about 1 million years ago.¹⁹ When the first hominids left Africa, they did so along with many other mammal species, as participants in the periodic migrations caused by the drying of the Sahara.

Early hominids colonized Eurasia in two stages. First they colonized the warmer and more fertile lands of Outer Eurasia that were similar to the African homeland. Only much later did homi-

¹⁹ For a good overview of the migration of hominids out of Africa, see Brian Fagan, *The Journey from Eden: The Peopling of Our World* (London, 1990).

nids colonize the drier, colder, and less fertile lands of Inner Eurasia.²⁰ From 800,000 to 600,000 B.P., there is evidence for the presence of hominids in much of Outer Eurasia: Java, China, Southwest Asia, and Europe. In Inner Eurasia, the evidence for early colonization is much scantier.²¹ Some sites may date to as early as 500,000 B.P., but these are rare and mostly confined to the southern and southeastern borderlands of Inner Eurasia.²² Serious colonization of Inner Eurasia began only during the last Ice Age, within the past 100,000 years.

Here already is a powerful reason for treating Inner Eurasia as a distinct unit of human history. For several hundred thousand years. Inner Eurasia resisted the colonizing activities of hominids, despite their vigorous colonization of Outer Eurasia. The distinction is clear even where the border between the two regions is most elusive, in Europe. John Hoffecker writes, "It is now apparent that the Paleolithic record of the European USSR is profoundly different from that of Western and Central Europe, and the Near East. This is almost certainly a reflection of the harsh environments of the Russian Plain, which discouraged settlement until relatively late in prehistory, and appear to have compelled subsequent abandonment of some regions."²³

Why did early hominids find it so difficult to colonize Inner Eurasia? Hominids evolved in the tropics and semitropics. Like twentieth-century hunter-gatherers in similar climates, they relied for subsistence mainly on the gathering of plant foods. They probably scavenged meat occasionally, but they did not depend on hunting for survival.²⁴ This traditional subsistence strategy did not work in the harsh steppes and deserts of the southern parts of Inner Eurasia. Most of the scanty food energy of these lands was locked up in their huge grasslands. Yet grass is a poor foodstuff,

²⁰ Robert Foley, ed., *Hominid Evolution and Community Ecology* (New York, 1984), p. 195.

²¹ Claims have been made for sites as old as 700,000 years, even 1.5–2 million years, but at present such claims must be treated with skepticism. See V. Larichev, U. Khol'yushkin, and I. Laricheva, "Lower and Middle Paleolithic of N. Asia," *Journal of World Prehistory* 3 (1987): 421–22.

²² Robert J. Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1990), p. 124.

²³ J. F. Hoffecker, "Early Upper Paleolithic Sites of the European USSR," in *The Early Upper Paleolithic*, ed. J. F. Hoffecker and C. A. Wolf, BAR International Series 437 (Oxford, 1988), p. 237.

²⁴ R. G. Klein, "Reconstructing How Early People Exploited Animals: Problems and Prospects," in *Evolution of Human Hunting*, ed. M. H. Nitecki and D. V. Nitecki (New York and London, 1987), p. 17.

low in protein. Besides, hominids could not digest grass, and most of the plants they could eat were unavailable during the long, cold winters.

Thanks to these difficulties, settling Inner Eurasia demanded something of a technological revolution. Hominids had to learn how to exploit the food energy of the steppes indirectly, by living off other animals that could eat grass. Happily, the Inner Eurasian steppes supported large herds of herbivores that concentrated the sparse food energy of the grasslands in their bodies. So, though the steppes offered little to hominids dependent on foraging, they offered plenty to hominids capable of hunting herbivores.

Learning to live by hunting was not easy for animals that were not natural carnivores. To succeed they had to develop hunting techniques that could guarantee regular and reliable supplies of meat, rather than the occasional meat feasts provided by casual scavenging. Hunting was also a difficult strategy in another sense, for it forced humans further up the food chain. This had important demographic consequences, for the amount of food energy available diminishes by up to 90% at each level in the food chain. This means that a given amount of sunlight can support fewer plant-eaters than plants, and even fewer eaters of plant-eaters. As a result, carnivore populations are always much smaller than those of the species on which they prey. The same rules also affected hominids. Meat-eaters had to spread themselves more thinly than plant-eaters. Small, scattered populations found it more difficult to stay in contact and to intermarry with neighboring bands. This increased the danger that entire populations would die out through accidents or diseases. For long-term settlement of Inner Eurasia to take place, technologies based on the exploitation of other animals had to be reliable enough to support populations large enough to survive minor fluctuations in numbers.

Developing reliable subsistence strategies based on hunting was extremely difficult. Indeed, it now appears that lifeways that depended primarily on meat eating appeared only during the last 500,000 years, perhaps as late as 200,000 B.P." In Inner Eurasia hunting was the first adaptation of a type that was to become

²⁵ Lewis Binford, "Were There Elephant Hunters at Torralba?" in *Evolution of Human Hunting*, ed. Nitecki and Nitecki, p. 47.

normal in the region. It was a way of concentrating and mobilizing the scarce food resources of a region of low ecological productivity.

The human history of Inner Eurasia really begins about 100,000 B.P., with the arrival of the species that physical anthropologists describe as *Homo sapiens Neanderthalis*. Neanderthals were clearly different from their *Homo erectus* predecessors. In particular, they had larger brains, which allowed for greater cultural and technological flexibility. That probably explains why Neanderthals were the first hominids to solve the challenges posed by the harsh terrain of Inner Eurasia. They were the first hominids to enter Inner Eurasia with a technology biased toward hunting rather than foraging. The presence of mammoth, bison, horse, and deer bones at archaeological sites shows that Neanderthals used animal flesh for food. They may also have used animal skins for clothing, and some groups may have used mammoth bones as the framework for large tents.²⁶ Hunting techniques remained unspecialized and opportunistic. Neanderthals probably scavenged for dead animals, brought down sick or old animals, or captured young animals. Still, their hunting methods were just reliable enough to sustain the first durable societies of Inner Eurasia.

The aridity and cold of Inner Eurasia thus shaped the earliest human societies of this region in three ways: by limiting hominid colonization for several hundred thousand years, forcing the first hominid colonizers to rely on animal-based foods, and limiting population size because of the reliance on meat eating.

The Upper Paleolithic: 40,000–10,000 B.P. The archaeological record shows a break in Inner Eurasian history between 30,000 and 40,000 B.P. This period divides the middle from the upper Paleolithic. Tool kits become more varied. The first signs of systematic food storage appear. Objects are found that have no obvious utilitarian function; these are presumably the region's first religious or artistic objects. Finally, colonization spreads to the north and east—to the Arctic and to eastern and northeastern Siberia.²⁷

²⁶ R. Klein, *Ice-Age Hunters of the Ukraine* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 69–70. But see Olga Soffer, "Middle to Upper Paleolithic Transition on the Russian Plain," in *The Human Revolution*, ed. Paul Mellars and Christopher Stringer (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 736.

²⁷ See Soffer, "Middle to Upper Paleolithic Transition."

The exploitation of animals rather than plants continued to shape Inner Eurasian lifeways. Hunting became more systematic and more specialized. This appears most clearly among the mammoth-hunting peoples of Ukraine and the Baikal region. In these regions, mammoth supplied meat, fur, and the framework for the large, semi-subterranean tents occupied during the winter. Some of these societies appear to have stored food resources and to have lived at least somewhat sedentary lives.²⁸ Other specialized adaptations also emerged, such as the bison-hunting cultures that spread in southern Ukraine toward the end of the upper Paleolithic.²⁹

Improved techniques of hunting permitted the occupation of the even harsher environments of northern Inner Eurasia, including the far northeast. From here, toward the end of the last Ice Age, humans crossed frozen Beringia and entered the Americas, taking with them the specialized adaptations of their Inner Eurasian homeland. In this way, Inner Eurasia provided the cultural and technological foundations of American prehistory.

The change to the upper Paleolithic coincides with the arrival in Inner Eurasia of our own species of hominid, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Recently, some scholars have argued that the change marks the first appearance of hominids capable of true speech.³⁰ If they are right, the emergence of true speech among early members of our own species explains the greater variety of tools, technologies, and cultures of the upper Paleolithic.

Nevertheless, the basic ecological rules of this region remained the same. Advanced hunting, like the cruder methods that had preceded it, was a way of concentrating and mobilizing the scarce food resources of a region of low natural productivity. Scarcity forced the early populations of Inner Eurasia to lean toward the "hunting" rather than the "gathering" end of the hunter-gatherer spectrum of technologies and lifeways. This pushed them higher up the food chain, which ensured that populations would remain small.

²⁸ See O. Soffer, "Storage, Sedentism, and the Eurasian Palaeolithic Record," *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 719-31.

²⁹ N. D. Praslov et al., "The Steppes in the Late Paleolithic," *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 785.

³⁰ See P. Lieberman, "The Origins of Some Aspects of Human Language and Cognition," in *The Human Revolution*, ed. Mellars and Stringer, p. 391.

The Second Adaptation: Pastoralism

The Neolithic and the Rise of Pastoralism The sharp climatic variations after the last glacial maximum (from ca. 18,000 B.P.) encouraged renewed experimentation by bands of humans throughout the world. In a few regions, ecological experimentation led to the adaptation called agriculture. Agriculture depended on the domestication of a small range of animal and plant species. The emergence of agriculture shaped the entire history of our species, for it encouraged populations to settle in permanent communities. Unlike nomadic communities, settled communities could afford to accumulate material surpluses. These supported the growing populations that eventually provided the human raw material for the first urban “civilizations.”

The neolithic revolution took different forms in Inner and Outer Eurasia. Agriculture probably did not evolve independently in Inner Eurasia. From ca. 6000 B.C.E., neolithic technologies trickled over the southern rim of the Inner Eurasian borders through two of the main gateways into the region. These led from the Balkans into western Ukraine, and from Mesopotamia into Persia and Turkmenistan. The earliest signs of agriculture in Inner Eurasia appear on the well-watered mountain slopes of southern Turkmenistan, where the Djeitun culture emerged ca. 6000 B.C.E. Forms of early agriculture also appear farther west, on the northwestern shores of the Black Sea. This was the home of the so-called Tripolye-Cucuteni cultures. The early neolithic societies of Inner Eurasia occupied either fertile river valleys in southern Central Asia or parts of the wooded steppe of Ukraine. For two or three thousand years the neolithic cultures of southern Central Asia and Ukraine remained isolated regions of farming in a world of mesolithic gatherers and hunters.

The slow penetration of neolithic technologies and lifeways into Inner Eurasia is hardly surprising. The aridity and the climatic extremes of the steppes made plant growing as difficult as plant gathering had been throughout the Paleolithic. However, technologies of the Neolithic, like those of the Paleolithic, offered a choice between plant foods and animal foods. Depending on local circumstances, neolithic farmers could choose to concentrate either on crop growing or on livestock rearing. Not surprisingly, the earliest neolithic societies of Inner Eurasia, such as the Djeitun communities of Central Asia, or the Cucuteni-Tripolye

communities of Ukraine, show the same bias toward the exploitation of animals that had characterized the earlier cultures of Inner Eurasia. Over the next few millennia, this bias toward animal-based foods gave the Neolithic of Inner Eurasia its distinctive quality.

Neolithic technologies spread more widely in Inner Eurasia after the emergence of more intensive ways of exploiting domesticated livestock. These arose ca. 4000 B.C.E., during what Andrew Sherratt has called the "secondary products revolution." Neolithic peoples learned to use domesticated animals not just for their meat but also for their "secondary products" of milk, wool, and hides. People also learned to use the traction power of domestic animals, such as horses and oxen. Eventually, this development transformed transportation and warfare. It also changed crop-growing techniques, for animal-drawn plows could turn over heavier soils than the hand-held hoes or digging sticks of the early Neolithic.³¹

The secondary products revolution allowed people to exploit domestic animals throughout the animals' lifetimes. Accordingly, it raised the productivity of neolithic lifeways that relied mainly on livestock. Equipped with these new techniques, neolithic herders could live almost entirely off their livestock. The neolithic revolution had the greatest impact on Inner Eurasian history in this modified form. Just as hunting was the appropriate paleolithic technology for Inner Eurasia, so pastoralism was the appropriate neolithic technology. Neolithic farmers had been unable to use the arid grasslands of the steppes, but pastoralists, with their huge herds of grazing animals, could live off them perfectly well. From the fifth millennium B.C.E., populations in the steppes began to grow as rapidly as those of the cultivated river valleys. Farther north, reindeer pastoralism allowed more intensive colonization of tundra regions.

Pastoralism and the Challenge of Military Mobilization Like hunting, pastoralism offered a technological solution to the ecological problems posed by the harsh environments of Inner Eurasia. Its success encouraged population growth, and as populations grew, Inner Eurasian communities faced new challenges. To

³¹ Andrew Sherratt, "Plough and Pastoralism: Aspects of the Secondary Products Revolution," in *Patterns of the Past*, ed. E. Hodder, G. Isaac, and N. Hammond (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 261-305.

the challenge of a harsh environment was added the presence of rival communities also intent on survival. As a result, Inner Eurasian communities had to find ways of mobilizing scarce resources both to sustain *and* to defend themselves.

The geography of Inner Eurasia ensured that military mobilization, like ecological mobilization, would be more difficult than in Outer Eurasia. There were fewer resources to mobilize, yet the burden of defense was greater, for the flat landscapes of Inner Eurasia offered few natural defenses. Where geography offered no shield, societies had to assume the entire burden of defense themselves.

Pastoralism offered elegant solutions to both the ecological and the military challenges, for it mobilized scarce resources in two distinct ways. It mobilized the scarce food resources of the steppes by concentrating them in the bodies of domesticated livestock. It also mobilized and focussed the military skills of scattered populations of pastoralists. With the spread of pastoralist societies we find the first evidence of more complex forms of social organization and early forms of organized warfare. The earliest *kurgany*, or burial mounds, that litter the steppes of Inner Eurasia date to the period of the Srednii Stog culture of the fourth or early third millennium B.C.E. They are associated with the emergence of horse-riding cultures based in the steppes. Burials, apparently those of warrior chieftains, show the importance of warfare and the emergence of warrior elites.

Why were pastoralist societies so warlike? Walter Goldschmidt has argued that pastoral lifeways require, particularly in their men, social and even psychological structures that favor warrior cultures. Livestock is a more volatile resource than crops. Disease can swiftly destroy a large herd. So can theft, for animals, unlike standing crops, will follow a thief. Herders must display great vigilance and must be able to react quickly in a crisis. Controlling large animals also requires physical mastery and systematic control of their movements. It requires the physical skills of the rodeo and the logistical skills of the cattle drive. Both encourage martial attitudes and martial skills. "There follows from these circumstances, first, the need to establish a system of military readiness. The military stance is not the protection of territory, but the protection of mobile animals; it has the all-but-inevitable counterpart of institutionalized aggressive raiding. . . . [Further] it requires physical strength, endurance, and the ability

to withstand hardship and requires attitudinal sets that give even young boys a capacity to control animals which are not by nature entirely docile."³²

Goldschmidt argues that these pressures encourage certain types of social structure and even certain types of psychology. "It can readily be seen that these are 'masculine' kinds of behavior, requiring strength and physical aggression. The social structure of pastoral societies is almost invariably based upon a patrikin system."³³ Loose clan structures are particularly appropriate, for they provide the right balance of organization (needed where cooperation is necessary, usually in war) and flexibility (in reacting to the changing needs of each herd) for societies that require both.

According to Goldschmidt, the pressures of pastoralism encourage aggression and a willingness to resort to physical violence; a limited willingness to empathize with the sufferings of others and limited warmth in personal relationships; a high regard for the ability to suffer hardship and pain; limited interest in hard and monotonous labor; a strong sense of machismo; and high levels of anxiety about self, status, and the future.³⁴ Pastoral societies inculcated these martial values in both their men and their women. This may explain why women in pastoral societies are often more assertive than those in sedentary societies and why myths of Amazons persist around pastoral nomadic societies.³⁵

Finally, Goldschmidt argues that pastoral nomads have an ethos of pride in their own way of life:

My own explanation, in capsule, is this: pastoral life demands of its practitioners a greater measure of physical hardship and endurance than most other tribal careers; it demands of them also a readiness to engage in battle and to protect their animals against other men and other beasts. In order to sustain themselves in a situation that has these inherent difficulties and dangers, it is necessary for them to develop a strong personal commitment. This commitment must be developed in the socialization

³² Walter Goldschmidt, "A General Model for Pastoral Social Systems," in *L'équipe écologique et anthropologique des sociétés pastorales* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 20-21.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

process and must be reinforced by various institutional devices, by ritual and religious belief. Without it, they would cease to be pastoralists.³⁶

For these reasons, pastoral societies transformed themselves easily into armies capable of fighting with skill, élan, and great ferocity. The pastoral life concentrated the military resources of small populations and compensated for low populations by providing a natural training in warfare.

Most early pastoralist societies were too small to form “states” or “empires.” While they remained seminomadic, they could exert their power only over limited regions. The earliest clear evidence for fully nomadic pastoral societies capable of projecting military power over large areas of the steppes appears in the second millennium B.C.E. This change led to the rise of the first statelike structures of Inner Eurasia.

The Third Adaptation: Pastoral Nomadism

The Emergence of Pastoral Nomadism Pastoral nomads are pastoralists who have become fully nomadic. The best modern study of such cultures, by the Soviet anthropologist A. M. Khazanov, defines pastoral nomadism “from an economic point of view as a distinct form of food-producing economy in which extensive mobile pastoralism is the predominant activity, and in which the majority of the population is drawn into periodic pastoral migrations.”³⁷

Early pastoral societies were mainly sedentary, though stock breeding forced part of the population to travel seasonally with their grazing herds. Pastoralism, however, used land more extensively than crop farming, and this encouraged greater mobility. In the Srednii Stog cultures of Ukraine, from about 4000 B.C.E., we see the first clear evidence for the domestication, and perhaps the riding, of horses.³⁸ Soon after, the first horse-riding livestock herders appear on the steppes. Though still mainly sedentary, these societies were quite mobile, tracking large herds as they grazed over the steppes. This may explain the emergence of large

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 26–27.

³⁷ A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 17.

³⁸ D. W. Anthony, D. Y. Telegin, and D. Brown, “The Origin of Horseback Riding,” *Scientific American* (December 1991): 44–48A.

and relatively uniform cultural regions. The "Steppe-Bronze" cultures of the second millennium display many similarities right across the steppes from the Black Sea to the Altai Mountains. Here is the first hint of the possibilities for the formation of huge polities, implicit in the geography of Inner Eurasia.³⁹

Although there may have been some fully nomadic pastoralists in Inner Eurasia as early as the third millennium B.C.E., pastoral nomadism became a significant historical force only late in the second millennium. There are no fully satisfying explanations for this momentous change. Increased aridity may have forced pastoralists to travel more widely in search of pasture until they became fully nomadic. A nomadic lifestyle made it possible to exploit more land and also to exploit arid, previously marginal lands. Contacts with sedentary societies of Outer Eurasia may have created new opportunities for trade and predation. The Soviet archaeologist S. Rudenko has argued that the growing demand for horses from neighboring civilizations of Outer Eurasia may have encouraged fully nomadic pastoralism. With the rise of chariot warfare in the second millennium, empires such as those of China or Assyria needed horses for their armies. Since they lacked the pasture needed to support large herds, they had to import horses from the steppes.⁴⁰ Pastoralists of Inner Eurasia could maintain large herds only if they took up a nomadic lifestyle. If this argument is correct, it suggests the beginning of a symbiotic relationship between Inner and Outer Eurasia. Both now belonged to an embryonic world-system.⁴¹ Pastoral nomadism may have been the first fruit of this emerging symbiosis.⁴²

Pastoral nomads moved with their flocks of sheep, horses, and other livestock through regular annual circuits. Constant move-

³⁹ See, for example, E. N. Chernykh's account of the Seima-Turbino phenomenon of the second millennium, in *Ancient Metallurgy in the USSR*, pp. 215-32.

⁴⁰ S. Rudenko, *The Frozen Tombs of Siberia: The Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen*, trans. M. W. Thompson (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), translator's introduction, p. xxvi. On the horse trade on the Chinese border, see the references in S. Jagchid and V. J. Symons, *Peace, War and Trade along the Great Wall* (Bloomington, 1989), p. 189.

⁴¹ See A. G. Frank, "A Theoretical Introduction to 5,000 Years of World System History," *Review* 13 (1990): 155-248.

⁴² The symbiotic relationship between pastoral nomadic societies and the sedentary civilizations of Outer Eurasia provided the main theme of the writings of Owen Lattimore. See, for example, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1951). T. J. Barfield (*The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* [Oxford, 1989]) updates some of Lattimore's conclusions.

ment was necessary to feed their large herds. Indeed, nomadism made it possible to maintain far larger herds than those kept by sedentary pastoralists. Nomads depended for subsistence on the meat and milk of their flocks, but they still needed some agricultural products, such as grain. As a result, pastoral nomadic societies have never been completely independent of farming societies. They have always had to trade, yet in most exchanges they were at a commercial disadvantage. Nomadism made it impossible to accumulate large surpluses of anything except livestock. Pastoral nomads usually needed the grains and the luxury products of agricultural societies more than farmers needed surplus livestock. This unbalanced relationship explains many of the conflicts between farmers and nomads in the borderlands between Inner and Outer Eurasia.

Nomads' homes were mobile, consisting of felt tents or yurts, often carried on ox-drawn or horse-drawn carts. There was usually a clear division of labor between men and women. Men tended the large livestock, while women looked after the yurts. In societies where men had several wives, each wife had her own household. The basic group was the camping group. This included several nuclear families related through the male line, who usually traveled together. Camping groups belonged to complex alliance systems with neighboring camping groups. Ties of kinship bound these networks into larger, tribal groupings that occasionally merged, through alliances of their leaders, into large armies.

To add some color to this account of pastoral nomadic life-ways, here is an unsympathetic description by the English voyager Anthony Jenkinson. Jenkinson traveled in Central Asia in the mid-sixteenth century, as the first official agent of the Muscovite government in the region.⁴³ Describing the nomadic peoples he met east of the Caspian Sea, he said:

They were divided into divers companies called hordes, and every horde had a ruler, whom they obeyed as their king and was called a *murse*. Town or house they had none, but lived in the open fields, every *murse* or king having his hordes or people about him, with their wives, children and cattle, who having consumed the pasture in one place, removed unto another: and when they remove they have houses like tents set upon wagons or carts, which are drawn from place to place with camels, and therein their wives, children,

⁴³ M. Rywkin, *Russia in Central Asia* (New York, 1963), p. 15.

and all their riches, which is very little, is carried about, and every man hath at the least four or five wives besides concubines. Use of money they have none, but do barter their cattle for apparel and other necessaries. They delight in no art nor science, except the wars, wherein they are expert, but for the most part they be pasturing people. They eat much flesh, and especially the horse, and they drink mare's milk, wherewith they be oftentimes drunk: they are seditious and inclined to theft and murder. Corn they sow not, neither do eat any bread, mocking the Christians for the same, saying we live by eating the top of a weed.⁴⁴

Pastoral Nomadic States The emergence of pastoral nomadic societies marks a profound change in the history of Inner Eurasia, for these societies created the first Inner Eurasian armies large and durable enough to support states. As in all pastoral societies, the way of life of pastoral nomads was a constant training for warfare. Indeed, nomadic pastoralism may have increased the amount of petty conflict by increasing the area of pasture used by each tribe and encouraging tribes to encroach on the pastures of their neighbors. The raiding and tribal warfare endemic in pastoral nomadic societies provided regular military training, while a life on horseback added new skills to the military repertoire of the men.

The Mongols mounted an annual expedition for the acquisition of meat to tide them through the hard Mongolian winter. This took the form of a *nerge*, a vast ring of hunters, which gradually contracted, driving the game before it. Any hunter who allowed an animal to escape from the ring, or who killed one before the appointed time, was punished. At the end the khan would loose the first arrow, and the slaughter would commence. A few "emaciated stragglers" would ultimately be spared. Juwayni remarks that "war—with its killing, counting of the slain and sparing of the survivors—is after the same fashion, and indeed analogous in every detail." Or, as Gibbon, in his extraordinarily vivid account of the hunt, sums up: "The leaders study, in this practical school, the most important lesson of the military art: the prompt and accurate judgment of ground, of distance, and of time. To employ against a human enemy the same patience and valour, the same skill and discipline, is the only alteration which is required in real

⁴⁴ Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages and Discoveries*, ed. and abr. Jack Beeching (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 78.

war; and the amusements of the chase serve as a prelude to the conquest of an empire."⁴⁵

Yet the real key to the military successes of pastoral nomads was mobility. They could control subject populations over vast areas. They could also cover huge distances with great speed to attack an enemy's weak point. As hunting concentrates scarce food resources, and pastoralism concentrates the military skills of small populations, pastoral nomadism concentrates limited firepower rapidly over large distances. This explains how societies with such limited material and demographic resources could challenge the wealthy and populous civilizations of Outer Eurasia for some two and a half millennia. They could do so because they had learned to mobilize scarce resources to maximum military effect. As a result, pastoral nomadic lifeways set the tone and shaped the history of Inner Eurasia between 1000 B.C.E. and 1500 C.E.

When organized into large, durable armies, pastoral nomadic societies looked like "states." Yet these were rudimentary states. They lacked complex bureaucracies, for the bonds that held them together were ties of kinship or pseudo-kinship. They were really tribal alliances. This may justify referring to them as confederacies or empires, but they were certainly not nations or national states. Each was a mixture of peoples and languages, as mixed as a modern mercenary army. One of the best modern discussions of the ethnic nature of these early states of Inner Eurasia comes from H. Wolfram's *History of the Goths*:

Words such as *gens*, *genus*/γένος, *genealogia*, and *natio* refer to a community of biological descent. The tribal sagas, however, equate *people* with *army* and thus remain true to historical reality. In addition, the sources attest the polyethnic character of the *gentes*. These *gentes* never comprise all potential members of a *gens* but are instead always mixed. Therefore their formation is not a matter of common descent but one of political decision. Initially this implies not much more than the ability to unite and keep together the multitribal groups that make up any barbarian

⁴⁵ David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 84–85. On the importance of warfare in pastoral nomadic societies, see also Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41 (1986): 14.

army. The leaders and chiefs of "well-known" clans, that is to say, of those families who derive their origins from gods and who can prove their divine favor through appropriate achievements, form the "nuclei of tradition" around which new tribes take shape. Whoever acknowledges the tribal tradition, either by being born into it or by being "admitted" to it, is part of the *gens* and as such a member of a community of "descent through tradition."⁴⁶

The earliest pastoral nomadic empires are associated with the names of the Cimmerians, the Scythians, and the Sarmatians. These names refer to alliances of pastoral nomadic peoples that dominated the regions north of the Black Sea during much of the first millennium B.C.E. The Hsiung-nu established the first large pastoral nomadic confederation at the eastern end of the Eurasian plains from ca. 210 B.C.E. This survived for more than a century in the territory of modern Mongolia. These polities had little stability. Their power was always threatened by tribal conflicts within and outside the regions they controlled. Warfare and raiding were endemic.

The appearance of powerful pastoral nomadic armies altered the currents of Eurasian history. Before the appearance of pastoral nomadism, the main currents of migration in the steppes flowed from west to east, as pastoralists spread to the more marginal steppes of Mongolia or took over the lands of mesolithic peoples farther north. By 1000 B.C.E., peoples speaking Indo-European languages similar to ancient Iranian had penetrated as far east as Manchuria. The emergence of pastoral nomadism reversed the current of steppe migrations. After ca. 1000 B.C.E., warlike invasions from the east dominated the history of the steppes. The reasons for this reversal are obscure. Perhaps the relative poverty of the eastern steppes and the growing challenge of northern Chinese empires generated an exceptionally militant strain of pastoral nomadism in Mongolia. This may explain why pastoral nomads of the eastern steppes managed so often to conquer the richer steppes to their west. Whatever the precise mechanism, it is clear that the emergence of pastoral nomadism increased the scale and scope of warfare in Inner Eurasia.

At the western end of the steppes, a succession of invaders created new tribal confederations. The Huns, Altaic peoples from

⁴⁶ H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, rev. ed., trans. T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 5-6.

the east, formed the first large Turkic-speaking confederation of western Inner Eurasia in the fourth century c.e. The Huns may have been migrants from the great Hsiung-nu confederation of Mongolia. Their appearance ended the domination of the central and western steppes by Iranian-speaking peoples. From that time until the late nineteenth century, Turkic- or Mongol-speaking peoples dominated the Inner Eurasian steppes.

The first empire to embrace most of the steppes of Inner Eurasia was that of the Türk peoples of the Altai. This emerged in the seventh century c.e. Among its successor states were the Uighur empire in Mongolia and the Khazar empire in the Black Sea region. When large empires did not exist, politics in the steppes was a matter of warfare between smaller and looser tribal confederations. These included the Pechenegs, who invaded the Ukrainian steppes in the ninth century, and the Cuman, or Polovtsians, who invaded the same region a century later. The most powerful of all these steppe empires was that of the Mongols, which emerged in the early thirteenth century under the leadership of Genghis Khan.

By the time the Mongols invaded the western regions of Inner Eurasia, powerful agrarian societies were beginning to emerge in the wooded lands of northwestern Inner Eurasia. Earlier agricultural societies of Inner Eurasia had been too weak or too remote to exert much influence on their neighbors. However, the agricultural polities that emerged late in the first millennium c.e. generated enough power to challenge the domination of Inner Eurasia by pastoral nomads of the steppes.

The Fourth Adaptation: Agrarian Autocracy

Difficulties of State Formation in the Forest Lands The military and political forms of mobilization characteristic of pastoral nomadism acquired even greater importance with the rise of the first large-scale agricultural societies of Inner Eurasia.

During the era of pastoralism and pastoral nomadism, the forests of northern Inner Eurasia remained a region of small-scale societies using paleolithic or mesolithic technologies, or modified forms of pastoralism. Forest societies experimented with crop growing as early as 4000 B.C.E. and some even became partly sedentary. However, while farming made limited headway in the forest regions, these societies stayed on the margins of world history.

We have already seen that Inner Eurasia resisted the spread of

crop growing, offering a striking contrast to neolithic Europe. In Europe, agriculture spread from the Balkans to Ireland within 2,000 years, between the mid-seventh and the mid-fifth millennium B.C.E. Neolithic peasant colonizers avoided Inner Eurasia, preferring the warmer and better watered lands of Western Europe. They also avoided the steppes, whose thick turf was difficult to plow, and where erratic and limited rainfall inhibited crop growing. Besides, the spread of pastoral and then of pastoral nomadic societies prevented agriculturalists from settling the steppes until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries C.E. Farming flourished only in specially favored hot spots, such as the oases of Central Asia. Sometimes pastoral nomads encouraged farming among subordinate populations. This was true, for example, of northern Ukraine during the Scythian era and of parts of northern Mongolia under the Hsiung-nu.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the small, scattered communities of the forest belt survived perfectly well with an eclectic mix of mesolithic and neolithic techniques. They gathered, fished, herded, hunted, and sometimes farmed.

Large populations of farmers first appeared in Inner Eurasia in the first millennium C.E. in the woodlands of the far west, where climatic conditions were far more favorable than in Siberia. As farming populations filled Western Europe, population pressures in the borderlands of Outer Eurasia drove a new wave of peasant colonizers to occupy the agriculturally marginal lands of the Inner Eurasian forest belt. This wave of colonization was most powerful along the western borders of Inner Eurasia. It lapped around the edges of the steppes, avoiding areas dominated by pastoral nomads. During the first millennium C.E., Slavic-speaking farmers from the southwest flooded into the forest-steppe and forest lands north of the steppes, into the regions later known as Rus'.

In the first millennium this world must have resembled seventeenth-century Canada. In both regions, peasant colonists from distant lands had begun to colonize a world of mesolithic hunters, gatherers, and crop growers. The farming communities of early Rus' were tiny, often consisting of no more than three or four households in a forest clearing. Their farming methods were extensive. "As late as the sixteenth century, the simple slash-and-burn technique remained widespread. Choosing a promising

⁴⁷ E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko, "The Huns," in *Nomads of Eurasia*, ed. V. N. Basilov (Seattle and London, 1989), p. 50.

patch of forest, the peasants cut down the trees, then created a clearing by burning the logs and underbrush. The resulting ash fertilized the soil and, for a time, the new field would give high yields. When the soil began to show signs of exhaustion, the peasants abandoned the clearing and began the process all over again at a new location."⁴⁸ Most peasants grew rye. Livestock was important, but few peasants owned more than a horse, one or two cows, a pig or two, and some sheep and fowl. They used the wood of the surrounding forests for fuel and building and for implements such as the simple plow, or *sokha*. The forest also provided furs for clothing or trading, and peasants learned to exploit the fish, game, mushrooms, and other river and woodland foods that had been the mainstay of mesolithic diets.

By the end of the first millennium, larger communities had sprung up among these peasant hamlets. These included trading settlements, monasteries, and nobles' estates. Many were fortified, particularly in the southerly regions most exposed to raids from the steppes, and even true towns were little more than fortified wooden settlements. The largest towns, such as Novgorod, had no more than 30,000 inhabitants. These were the only settlements with small artisan populations and some administrative functions.⁴⁹ Their inhabitants included local nobles and their servants and slaves, clerics, soldiers, artisans, and traders. Yet even these were really overgrown villages.

How could a state be built on such shallow foundations? The difficulties were formidable. Farming communities shared the military weaknesses of all agricultural societies. Their villages, farmsteads, and fields offered fixed targets to raiders, and their lifestyle provided little training in combat and military logistics. So crop-growing societies usually had to set aside substantial resources to support specialist warriors. This was a fiscal, educational, and organizational task of great complexity. Though farming societies could use peasant militias, these had limited military value.⁵⁰ Farming societies in Inner Eurasia faced additional difficulties. The land was poor, the climate was harsh, and the sur-

⁴⁸ R. O. Crumney, *The Formation of Muscovy, 1304–1613* (London, 1987), p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–24.

⁵⁰ Nevertheless, peasant militias always had a role to play. I. Ya. Froyanov (*Kievskaya Rus': Ocherki sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* [Leningrad, 1980], chap. 6, "Narod i voisko v Kievskoi Rusi") insists on the importance of armed militias in the Kievan period. Yet it is striking that Kievan armies also operated with a specialized core in the *druzhina*.

pluses available to support specialist armies were small. Further, though forests provided some protection, the flatness of the Eurasian plain deprived its inhabitants of other natural defenses. Finally, farmers faced exceptionally dangerous enemies in the pastoral nomads of the steppes, who enjoyed the offensive and defensive advantage of extreme mobility. They could concentrate their forces rapidly in attack, and when necessary, they could retreat with their entire population.

Still, crop-growing societies had advantages of their own. Being sedentary, they could accumulate surpluses, both material and demographic. Indeed, by the end of the first millennium C.E., the lands west of the Urals already dominated Inner Eurasia demographically (Fig. 2). In contrast, pastoral nomadic societies could not build up large material surpluses. Nomadism subjected them to the rules of portability common to all nomadic societies, while pastoralism, like hunting, could not support dense populations.

Thus there existed a balance of advantages and disadvantages between the farming and the pastoral nomadic populations of Inner Eurasia. In the very long run, the advantage certainly lay with the farming populations, as their populations and resources slowly increased. Eventually, sheer weight of numbers and resources might have countered the greater mobility and military prowess of the pastoral nomads. Yet without a very large demographic superiority, farming societies remained vulnerable. As long as the balance of power was uncertain, the critical factor was organization and political structure. Could farming societies achieve the organization needed to use their superior material and demographic resources to maximum military advantage? Could they create political structures capable of funding and organizing armies strong enough to challenge the armies of the steppes?

For farming societies, political and fiscal organization was the key to success. Leaders had to form alliances that were durable and extensive enough to concentrate and mobilize the economic and demographic resources of large regions over long periods. With less mobile and less warlike populations, they had to build up their military resources over longer periods and from larger areas. This demanded unified and durable political leadership.

These rules applied with double force in the crop-growing regions of Inner Eurasia. Given the relative ecological and demographic poverty of the region, and the lack of natural defensive

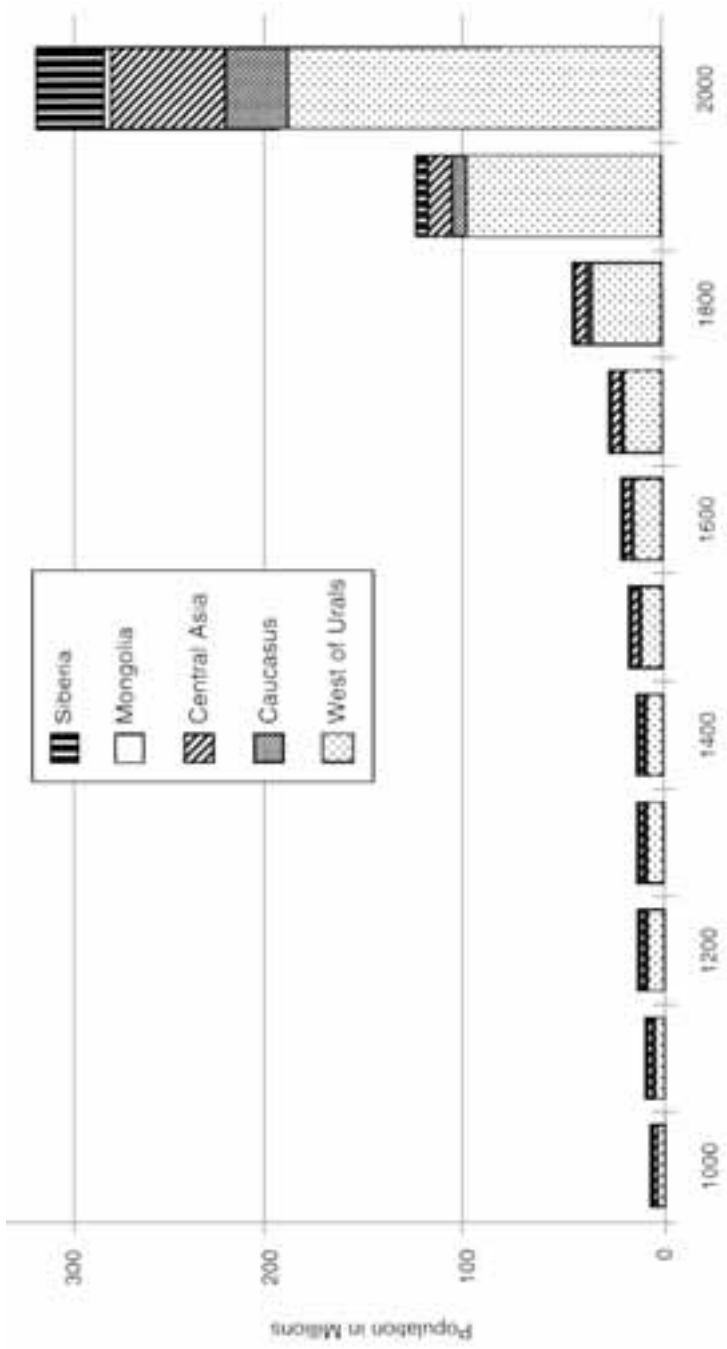


FIGURE 2: Regions of Inner Eurasia: Populations 1000–2000 c.e. Adapted from C. McEvedy and R. Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp. 78–82, 158–65.

borders, leadership structures had to be better able to mobilize material and demographic resources for military ends than those of neighbors in the better favored lands of Outer Eurasia.

The earliest Slavic societies of Eastern Europe lacked powerful structures of leadership and fought constantly among themselves. In the sixth century, Procopius wrote that "the Sclaveni and the Antae are not ruled by one man, but they have lived from of old under a democracy, and consequently everything which involves their welfare, whether for good or for ill, is referred to the people. It is also true that in all other matters, practically speaking, these two barbarian peoples have had from ancient times the same institutions and customs."⁵¹ As in nineteenth-century Africa, prolonged subordination to colonial rulers undermined the authority of local leaders and slowed the emergence of local states. Until local tribes managed to pool their resources under powerful supratribal leaders, they merely provided tempting targets to predatory outsiders. For much of the period between 1000 B.C.E. and 1000 C.E., the forests of the west were, like Africa in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, a sort of quarry for aggressive outsiders. Pastoral nomads, in particular, extracted from them grain, furs, wax, and slaves.

This may explain why state formation in the crop-growing regions of Inner Eurasia began as a symbiotic process. Local populations provided the demographic and agricultural surpluses, while outsiders provided most of the organizational, fiscal, and military expertise. This was true of all the early states of the region, from the fourth-century Ostrogothic empire of Ermanaric to the Khazar empire and its successor states of Volga Bolgharia and Kievan Rus'. In each case, ruling groups including both outsiders and local chiefs appeared in the triple role of merchants, mercenaries, and conquerors. They took tribute from local tribes and used it to pay the military retinues that secured their power.

Kievan Rus' and Muscovy In early states, where kinship provided the strongest social bonds, the success of tribal alliances depended on kinship or pseudo-kinship relations at the very top.⁵² In this sense, Kievan Rus' was typical. Its various princely fami-

⁵¹ G. Vernadsky et al., eds., *A Sourcebook for Russian History from Early Times to 1917* (New Haven, 1972), 1:7.

⁵² The Soviet historian Froyanov has recently stressed the prefeudal and tribal nature of Kievan Rus' society. See I. Ya. Froyanov, *Kievskaya Rus': Ocherki sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii* (Leningrad, 1974); and Froyanov, *Kievskaya Rus': Ocherki sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (Leningrad, 1980).

lies saw themselves as members of a single large clan, each of whose members ruled part of a larger empire. However, rules of succession and precedence within the princely Rurikid clan were complex and confusing. This ensured long periods of instability and conflict between various principalities. Such instability was tolerable as long as Kievan Rus' faced rivals such as the Pechenegs and Cumans who were equally divided. In its formative period, Kievan Rus' also enjoyed some protection from the Khazar empire. When a more united and disciplined steppe polity emerged in the thirteenth century, Kievan Rus' fell, as did the Cuman peoples of the steppes.

Unlike most steppe leaders, Genghis Khan had worked hard to substitute ties of personal loyalty for kinship structures within his armies.⁵³ Many of his closest associates were bound to him by ties of blood-brotherhood, fealty, and service, rather than kinship. The increased discipline and unity these structures created made possible his early successes. Within three generations, however, kinship rules had reasserted their authority among his successors and within the various tribes that composed the Mongol empire. Deprived of strong, united leadership, the Mongol empire fragmented into several smaller "hordes."

The decline of the Mongols provided new openings for polities based in the agricultural regions west of the Urals. The conditions of success for such a polity should by now be clear. Successful state building meant forming durable alliances between local power brokers. In societies where kinship still provided the basic structures, such alliances usually depended on networks of kinship formed through marriage. As Nancy Shields Kollmann has shown, the formation of a durable alliance of elite families, linked through marriage and a powerful tradition of solidarity, explains much about the eventual success of Muscovy.⁵⁴

There was nothing inevitable about the rise of Muscovy. Many other polities might have played the same role. Muscovy succeeded because of a complex system of marriage alliances within the boyar elite, coupled with a widespread acceptance that unity

⁵³ L. N. Gumilev has argued that Khan did so because he was himself an outcast, cut off from the ties of kinship that sustained the power of most tribal chiefs. See Gumilev, *V poiskakh vymyshlennogo tsarstva* (Moscow, 1992), chap. 7. For an analogous account of the career of Tamerlane, see B. F. Manz, *The Rise and Fall of Tamerlane* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 74–78, 83–84.

⁵⁴ N. S. Kollman, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford, 1987).

benefited all members of the elite. What emerged was something more durable than a mere tribal alliance. It was a true ruling class, an alliance that developed traditions capable of preserving its structures over many generations. Demographic accidents helped. A series of competent and long-lived rulers with few heirs limited the opportunities for conflict over the succession. Their successes attracted the support of the Orthodox church. After 1326, when the metropolitan of the Orthodox church settled in Moscow, Moscow became the spiritual capital of Orthodox Christians throughout the Slavic world. Ecclesiastical support gave the princes of Muscovy a degree of popular legitimacy that none of their rivals could match.

In fourteenth-century Muscovy, there emerged an oligarchical structure of boyars and church leaders who in their own interests maintained solidarity around a single ruler. The elaborate rituals of autocracy that so impressed foreign observers, such as Sigismund von Herberstein, in the sixteenth century were the price the Muscovite elite willingly paid for stability in a dangerous world. Muscovy's elaborate rituals of upper-class marriage and its complex rules of precedence (*mestnichestvo*) were the ties that held the ruling class within a single, unified structure. It is only a slight exaggeration to describe the Russian autocracy as the public mask of a successful oligarchy. As B. Meehan-Waters and David Ransel have shown, the oligarchical rules of fourteenth-century Muscovy still operated in the eighteenth century, even as bureaucratic ties began to replace those of kinship.⁵⁵ The central rule was the preservation of a facade of unity, whatever personal, family, or bureaucratic conflicts went on behind the scenes.

Durable and unified leadership allowed Muscovite governments to mobilize the region's increasing demographic and material resources. The growth of serfdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was just one expression of this huge effort. In the fifteenth century, Muscovy overthrew the remnants of the Mongol empire. By the sixteenth century, its armies were strong enough to conquer the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siber. In the seventeenth century the Muscovite armies began to conquer the steppes of Ukraine and to carve out a vast empire in Siberia. The military technologies of the "military revolution," with its reli-

⁵⁵ See B. Meehan-Waters, *Autocracy and Aristocracy: The Russian Service Elite of 1730* (New Brunswick, 1982); and D. Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia: The Panin Party* (New Haven and London, 1975).

ance on gunpowder weapons and infantry troops, may have played some role in Muscovy's successes. But the same weaponry was available to Muscovy's opponents. More important was the capacity to mobilize and pay for modern armies. This depended on the ability of Muscovy's rulers to exploit the increasing demographic superiority of Inner Eurasia's largest consolidated agricultural region. Turning its demographic superiority over the steppes into military superiority was the main achievement of autocracy.

Autocracy, then, was a response to the difficulties of creating an agrarian state in Inner Eurasia. Once powerful leadership structures had emerged, Muscovy could exploit the superior demographic and economic productivity of an agricultural society to grind down the surviving steppeland polities. With the conquest of Siberia and Central Asia, the Russian empire became the first polity to exert direct control over both the steppes and forests of Inner Eurasia. Its superior mobilizational capacity even allowed Russia's armies to challenge those of the ecologically more favored lands of Outer Eurasia to its west and south.

The Fifth Adaptation: The Soviet Command Economy

Muscovy's autocratic political culture offered a solution to the military challenges faced by agrarian societies in Inner Eurasia. In the nineteenth century, however, the problem itself changed. The rise of capitalist societies in Western Europe raised the stakes of international conflict by raising average levels of productivity to new levels. These changes widened the differential in productivity between Inner Eurasia and the capitalist regions of Outer Eurasia. Soon, the capitalist societies of Western Europe began to reap the military benefits of improved technologies. The Crimean War (1853–55) gave the Russian government a first, painful lesson in the changing nature of international politics.

What reaction did these changes require from the dominant polity of Inner Eurasia? At the time, it was difficult to understand the problem or to see any possible solutions. Looking back, however, the situation is clear enough. Russian governments had two options. They could reshape Russian society to imitate the capitalist societies that had defeated it, in the hope of raising Russian productivity levels. Or they could try to bridge the widening gap in productivity by intensifying the mobilizational skills that had served Russian governments so well in the past.

Both options were costly. Opting for the high productivity of capitalism was not just a matter of borrowing technique. As Marx saw more clearly than most, sustained innovation also meant borrowing the social structures of capitalism. Yet these social structures conflicted with and threatened to undermine the very foundations of autocracy. The vigorous pursuit of profits required that entrepreneurs be free to control and dispose of significant economic resources. This flew in the face of Russia's autocratic traditions, which placed control over national resources in the hands of a unified leadership. Capitalism also threatened the landed nobility and peasantry that were the foundation of the Russian state. There was a basic incompatibility between traditional autocracy and modern capitalism.

By the 1905 revolution, after fifty years of half-hearted flirtation with capitalism, the more perceptive members of Russian society were beginning to understand this problem. Liberals began to demand the sacrifice of autocracy in the interests of economic development. They understood that choosing capitalism meant abandoning the social, political, and ideological structures that had worked so well in the past. Meanwhile, a vigorous capitalism had emerged that touched all sections of society, from the nobility to the peasantry.

The alternative was to exploit the traditions of autocracy for one more mobilizational effort. In effect, though not in intent, this was the choice the Soviet government took late in the 1920s. Stalin chose to crush Russia's emerging capitalist traditions. He may have believed that a noncapitalist Russia could generate greater increases in productivity than a dying capitalism. It is now clear that he was wrong. Capitalism did not die, and communist Russia discovered no new levers of growth. So once the Soviet government had banished the profit motive at the end of the 1920s, it could only compete with capitalist rivals through ever more extensive mobilization of existing resources. To achieve this, Stalin's government fell back on Russia's old traditions of mobilization, adding a new intensity of purpose and technologies borrowed from capitalism.

Like the autocratic governments of Russia's past, the Soviet command economy was a device for mobilizing people, resources, and cash. The industrialization drive of the 1930s depended on the Stalinist government's power to mobilize. No wonder Stalin so admired Ivan IV. As recent research has shown, Stalin's govern-

ment, like Russia's traditional autocracy, clothed an oligarchic alliance of central and local power brokers in the symbols of personal authority. Stalin himself described the local alliances of Soviet bosses as "family circles," and he failed to destroy their power.⁵⁶ The ideology of Stalinism, like that of Muscovy, expressed the realistic belief of a successful ruling elite that despite internal differences, unity was essential to survival, given the extreme stresses created by an intensive program of mobilization.

The Stalinist strategy could not have worked without the mobilizational traditions of Russia's autocratic political culture. It also required borrowing modern technologies from abroad. Finally, it could not have worked in a smaller country, for it depended on Inner Eurasia's vast reserves of people, land, energy, and raw materials. Raw materials such as coal and oil had counted for little as long as crop growing was the main productive technology. But in the industrial era, Inner Eurasia proved as rich in raw materials and energy sources as it had always been in land. These advantages explain why the Stalinist gamble on the mobilizational power of the Soviet state succeeded as long as it did.

Yet in the long run these advantages counted for little. Eventually, a strategy of extensive growth had to fail against a strategy of intensive growth. Like the Muscovite system, the Stalinist system was extremely good at mobilizing resources. But neither system used resources efficiently. Both substituted quantity for quality.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, capitalist societies generated waves of innovation that widened the difference in productivity between the capitalist and communist worlds. By the 1980s the Soviet Union was running out of resources. The mobilizational strategy that had worked for Muscovy in an era of slow technological change failed in the rapidly changing world of twentieth-century capitalism. The temporary successes of the Stalinist industrialization drive merely hid this deeper failure.

The Soviet experiment was an unsuccessful attempt to apply traditional solutions to a twentieth-century problem.

⁵⁶ See the analysis in Graeme Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁵⁷ I have argued this more fully in David Christian, "Perestroika and World History," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 6 (1992): 1–28.

THE END OF INNER EURASIA AS A DISTINCTIVE UNIT OF WORLD HISTORY?

The collapse of the Soviet experiment provides a useful symbolic marker for an even deeper change in the historical significance of Inner Eurasia. What failed in 1991 was a traditional strategy of mobilizing and concentrating scarce resources. I have argued that such strategies reflected the geographical and ecological peculiarities of Inner Eurasia. For many centuries they had worked well, but by the twentieth century technological changes had reduced the importance of Inner Eurasia's distinctive geographical and ecological heritage. The strategy of Stalinism no longer reflected the real demands of a rapidly changing world. That is the deeper reason for its failure.

I have argued that Inner Eurasia was distinctive in two main ways: the natural productivity of the region was lower than in Outer Eurasia, and the flatlands that dominate the region deprived its societies of natural defenses against invasion. By the late twentieth century, both factors had lost their former significance. In the capitalist era, productivity depends more on technique than on geography. Technique, in turn, has become a function of economic and social structures. Thus, the ecological differential that divided Inner and Outer Eurasia for so many millennia has lost its importance. Differences of productivity arising out of different social and economic structures and technologies now overshadow natural differences in productivity. They also alter the significance of geography. In the industrial era, abundant raw materials and energy supplies can make up for low agricultural productivity. For better or worse, the technological creativity of the twentieth century has almost erased the ecological differences between Inner and Outer Eurasia.

Meanwhile, the military technologies of the twentieth century have deprived Inner Eurasia's flatlands of their former military importance. While armies moved over the land, the absence of significant barriers to movement had immense and determining significance. In a world of airborne military power, this is no longer true. Bombers, missiles, and satellites ignore mountain and sea barriers. Militarily speaking, the entire world is now a single, vast plain.

For these reasons, the geographical and ecological factors that have shaped Inner Eurasian history as long as human societies have occupied the region have now lost their force. As a result,

Inner Eurasia no longer counts as a distinct unit of world history. Inertia will ensure the persistence of common traditions and problems for many decades. Yet the deeper reasons for treating this region as a distinct unit of world history have lost their force. This line of argument suggests that we should not expect the revival of large Inner Eurasian empires in the future. Instead, we should expect new and unpredictable patterns that ignore the historical fault lines I have described. In the new epoch, the differences that have set the histories of Inner and Outer Eurasia on separate tracks for 100,000 years will cease to count. The first cautious attempts of the new nations of Inner Eurasia to establish closer ties with nations of Outer Eurasia may reflect these deeper changes in the historical geography of the Eurasian continent.

