

Lesson Plan
The Conquest of a Continent:
Siberia & the Russians
W. Bruce Lincoln
Random House, 1994

Introduction:

This unit of study was developed to show how an academic work, in this case by an acclaimed historian who studies Russia, could be used as the basis for a secondary school lesson in a geography class. The book The Conquest of a Continent by W. Bruce Lincoln is a fascinating narrative of the chronology of the “conquest” of Siberia and the forces, physical and cultural, that influenced this spatial diffusion. The book provides a wonderful opportunity for geography teachers to develop geographic concepts and generalizations and to apply geography’s methodological underpinnings of areal distribution and spatial interaction to a region with a rich history and present-day problems and prospects including: 1) resource management, 2) population supporting potential, 3) push/pull factors, 4) potential spatial orientation changes vis-a-vis China and/or the Pacific Rim, 5) political conflict over Sakhalin, 6) influences of area, distance, and latitude, 7) the role of technology in the control and use of places, and many others.

Objectives:

Cognitive:

To gain an understanding of:

- The diffusion (movement over space through time) of the Central Asian peoples to the West and the Russians to the East.
- The push/pull influences on the movement of the Central Asian peoples and the resultant Russian state and her conquests.
- The location of various vegetation patterns, rivers, and mountains as a setting for The Conquest of a Continent.
- The physical and cultural characteristics of Siberia and their influence on the expansion of Russia to the East.
- The role of physical and animal resources in the region covered in this study.

- Importance of governmental policies in the conquest of Siberia and their spatial consequences.
- The influence of cities and outposts to the conquering of Siberia and the influence of distance in their roles.
- The role of technology and transportation infrastructure in the conquest.
- The real and potential wealth of Siberia and the role of technology and the function of distance to its use in the last 100 or so years.
- The misuse of Siberian resources and the reasons for these decisions.
- The modern “development” of Siberia and the social, economic, and environmental errors that have been made.
- Effects of Russian treatment of indigenous peoples and its effects on resource development.
- Russia’s efforts to “conquer” North America.
- Why Russia (and later the Soviet Union) used Siberia as a labor, or concentration camp, for “undesirables”.
- Russia’s relationships with China and Japan and the spatial significance of the long border with China.
- Some of the major problems and prospects of Siberia to Russia and the world in the 1990s.

Affective:

To develop an appreciation of:

- Some of the positive and negative spatial aspects of the size and location of Russia.

The suggestion and limitations of the physical environment on the historical geography of the conquering of Siberia.

- The role a change in the level of technology has on the utilization of resources and the impact of distance on Russia’s conquest of Siberia.

- The fear the historic Russian peoples had of the Mongols and the power they represented in South Central Asia.
- The physical and psychological obstacles the explorers had to deal with as they moved into Siberia.
- The resource waste and degradation that was exhibited by the conquerors of Siberia.
- The trouble the Russians caused themselves by mistreating indigenous Siberian people.
- The development potential of Siberia in the 1990s and its orientation to the Pacific vis-a-vis the Russian West or heartland.

Psychomotor:

The student should be able to:

- Use a current atlas to trace the diffusion of both the Mongols to the West and the Russians to the East.
- Use an atlas to identify the general vegetation regimes of the places/regions discussed in the book.
- Construct a map that shows the three attempted routes to explore Siberia and show which route was most successful and why.
- Show on a map selected important physical features, cities mentioned in the book as well as the routes of Trans-Siberian and BAM railroads.
- Compare a climate map with the map that shows the several attempted Russian exploration routes into Siberia.
- Show on a map of North America the major areas of and the limits of Russian expansion into that continent.

Content:

Generalizations:

- “Nations are born of battle, and conquest makes them great” (W. Bruce Lincoln, Historian.)
- The conquest of Siberia enabled Russia to rise among the great powers of the world and contains resources which can be used to maintain that position.
- Large groups of people move from one place to another for different reasons.
- Political and military control of an area is often based on the control of key locations and resources.
- The physical environment will suggest and limit man’s activities but does not dictate.
- The larger an area is the more difficult it is to maintain political, military, and cultural control.
- Nothing unites a people/tribe(s)/nation(s) like a common enemy.
- Different landscape characteristics present different cultural challenges.
- The time/distance concept is a function of technology.
- The significance of the physical environment is a function of the attitudes, objectives, and technology of people.
- Various climatic and vegetation regions have different population-supporting potential.
- Hard and soft infrastructure is necessary to the establishment of human activity.
- Human groups tend not to naturally conserve resources.
- Dishonesty at every level of public and private organization often accompanies man’s efforts to benefit from natural wealth.

- Wealth and power as well as natural curiosity impact a people's desire to explore and control the unknown.
- The existence of a vast store of natural resources can provide the basis for a high level of living for a land's population.

Selected Concepts:

Siberia	Population supporting potential	Renewable resource base
Eurasia	Spatial push/pull	Trans-Siberian Railroad
Resource base	Infrastructure (hard & soft)	Pacific Realm
Diffusion	Mismanagement of resources	
Time / distance	Sustainability	

Why Large Groups of People Move From One Place to Another:

- Homeland runs out of resources.
- To relieve population pressure on a place.
- To take what someone else has.
- To avoid or escape an invader or local enemy.
- To escape from a physical/biological disaster.
- To fulfill a perceived theological or moral imperative. "Promised Land" "White Man's Burden" "Manifest Destiny"
- Expulsion by central authority (including military.)
- To seek a better life (or a profit.)

**The Conquest of a Continent:
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(Most of the content that follows is either a paraphrase or a direct quote from Lincoln's book.)

Bruce Lincoln says "nations are born of battle, and conquest makes them great."

For Russia, the process of birth and conquest began just before 1400 with the triumph of Moscow over the Mongols. Since then, Russia has fought many major battles against Europe, but the conquest that has defined her greatness has been in Asia.

What has enabled Russia to rise among the great powers of the world and supplied her with the means to maintain that position has been her conquest of Siberia.

Begun in 1582 when the Russian Cossacks defeated the Siberian Tatars near the present day Tobolsk, Russia's. Siberian conquest has extended across 400 years from the days of Ivan the Terrible until the end of the Brezhnev era.

The background of the story goes back more than 3,000 years when the Scythians of Inner Asia moved westward along the great grass plains that lay to Siberia's south. These nomads took the western world by storm as they made their way conquering the grasslands between Siberia and Central Asia. They were the finest light cavalry the world has ever seen, these horsemen of the steppes. They were victors for most of 2,000 years of Asiatic triumphs against the armies of the West and the Near East.

About 700 B.C., the Scythians were the first to cross the steppes in search of grass for horses and cattle which were the center of their daily lives. About 300 B.C., the Sarmatians were some of the cruel people we call barbarians who became known for their terrible treatment of their captives and who drank toasts of human blood drunk from human skulls.

Attila's Huns followed the Sarmatians to build an empire that by the fifth century A.D. reached into central Europe.

The Mongols ruled in Peking, Samarkand, and the lands of the Near and Middle East. Their armies conquered Kiev and were in power as far east as Krakow and Budapest.

To the people of the West in the year 1238, it seemed that the cruel and dark forces of the pagan East stood poised to overwhelm them all.

One historian wrote of the Mongols "no other place and period have known such a concentration of wholesale killing."

As a Catholic Priest wrote "that the Divine vengeance formerly purged the world by a deluge, and now it will be purified by a general depopulation of devastation of the Mongols."

Then, a miracle took place in the eyes of many people. Chingis Khan died in Mongolia and the Mongols suddenly turned away from the battlefields and rode their horses straight for Karakorum, the Mongol capital, south of Lake Baikal.

Even though they could have conquered the cities and fields of Europe, the horsemen from the high plains of Asia retreated as quickly as they came. 1242.

Moscow and Russia:

In the early 1200s Moscow was just a small provincial town, but it became the center of protection for that part of Russia. From Moscow, an army could move along Russia's frozen riverways in the winter in any direction or, if the army was large enough, could advance in several directions at once.

The Mongols understood this and used the rivers as an invasion route to conquer North Central Russia, but in 1238 the weather turned on the Mongols and the ice in the rivers began to soften, and with the thaw turned the frozen river invasion route into death traps.

With this reprieve about 1240, the Russians who were in fact many divided independent groups, realized that they had to work together to defeat the Mongols. In 1240, this was a historic gathering of the Russian lands and by 1500 Moscow had become Russia.

This "gathering of the Russian lands" took nearly 200 years to put into place. One of the major events that encouraged the unity was in 1380 when the combined forces of several Russian bands defeated the Mongols for the first time along the banks of the Dnepr River north of the E. Black Sea.

This was the beginning of the end for the extension of the empire of Tammerlane. This defeat, and the fact that there were problems within the Mongol empire caused the Mongols to pull back into what we think of today as the Central Asia around Samarkand.

This empire which was centered in what later became Uzbekistan was strong enough to keep the Russians from moving south and influenced them to take the northern routes to conquer Siberia.

Tammerlane died in Samarkand and was placed in his own large tomb whose massive sky blue dome still rises above that city.

An additional influence on the Mongol decision not to pursue the Russians to the north was their military decision to conquer China in the early 1400s. Conquering energies shifted south and east.

Under Ivan the Terrible, Russia's first true Tsar, the first step to Siberia became the conquering of Kazan on the Volga River. This defeat of the Mongols was another step in the Mongol decision to push their empire south and east rather than into northern Russia and Central Asia.

By the conquering of Kazan from the Tatars, who had previously been known as Mongols, Russia won control of the various river routes that flowed from the crest of the Ural Mountains to the Volga. With the way to Siberia now open, entrepreneurs took advantage of the opportunity to use the influence of the Tsar to build private empires on the edge of Siberia. The Tsar chose to elevate these businessmen into Russia's nobility.

An interesting, though gory, tale came about when a Mongol aristocrat, seeing the victories of the Russians, decided to cooperate with them. Later the Mongols had an opportunity to arrest him. They treated him as a traitor and executed him by peeling his flesh off in strips, layer by layer, until nothing but his bones remained. His wife continued to cooperate with the Russians and became a very powerful woman, and to commemorate her husband's martyrdom took the name of Stroganov (from the Russian verb strogat, meaning "to peel"). She and her sons founded the family who became the keepers of Siberia's western gateway. The Stroganovs cornered the market on the first mineral resource of Siberia. It was not gold, it was salt. This resource was to become the early cornerstone of the Stroganov's fortune. (What makes a resource? Technology. At this time would oil have been a valuable resource?)

Then, with the development of better military technology in the West, the western defeats and eastern triumphs began to shift. Beginning in the 1580s, the Russians began to move toward the east, but their move to the east was north of the route that the Asians had taken earlier, thereby avoiding the massive battles with the armies of Central Asia that such a campaign in the steppes would have cost.

The Russians cut their way through the various passes in the Ural Mountains. They went north to the shores of the Arctic. They worked their way east across the great rivers and wild forests and tundras of Siberia until they eventually claimed the cold lands to the Pacific rather than the steppes and desert oases to the south.

Bounded by the Ural Mountains on the west, the Arctic Ocean on the north, the lands of Kazakhtan, Central Asia, Mongolia, China, and Korea on the south, and the Bering Sea, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan on the east, Siberia increased the size of medieval Russia more than a hundredfold.

Once they entered Siberia, the Russians moved hesitantly into the valleys of the Irtysh and the Ob.

They faced little opposition from within a land that had a very, very sparse population, a land which was very rich in furs which could be sold in the West, but which had very fierce climate conditions.

By 1620, they reached the valley of the Enisei (Yenisey) and ten years later, the Lena and by 1640 they reached the Pacific, more than 3,000 miles east of their starting point. Within 10 more years the Chukotka Peninsula just about 100 miles from Alaska's westernmost tip.

At least in a formal territorial sense, a handful of Cossacks and trappers advancing and leaving only a scattering of frontier forts and trading posts, Russia conquered Siberia in sixty-six years.

The Russian territory stretched 5,000 miles from the Urals to the edge of the Bering Sea.

By the beginning of World War I, Russia was so large that almost two million square miles of space would be left over if the entire contiguous continental United States were placed into its center.

As rich in resources as it was large in size, Siberia brought the Russians a sixth of the world's gold and silver, a large portion of its platinum, and iron, a quarter of the world's timber and large supplies of coal, oil, and natural gas that are still, in 1990, difficult to estimate.

An interesting physical characteristic in Siberia is Lake Baikal, larger than Belgium and a mile deep, which holds a fifth of the Earth's fresh water. Siberia's navigable rivers are more than long enough to encircle the globe. It is diverse and monotonous, some would say sinister or romantic, rich and impoverished area to this day. It remains a virtual continent unto itself in which history and geography have juxtaposed an endless array of contradictions and opposites.

Almost twenty-five million years before the first humans walked the earth, a series of seismic events created Lake Baikal in the middle of Siberia. Its name, in the language of the ancient Kurykans who lived there in the sixth century, means "much water," and those who have taken their place have called it, similarly, "natural sea" (*baigal-dalai* to the Buriats) and "rich lake" (*bai kel* in the language of the lakuts). Regarded by all who have lived around it as a "holy sea," the islands of which have long been venerated as places of worship, Lake Baikal fills an abyss as long as England, fifty miles wide, and more than a mile deep. The deepest body of fresh water anywhere on earth, Baikal's surface area of 12,162 square miles is larger than Belgium, and its 5,513 cubic miles of water comprise a fifth of the earth's freshwater supply. Something over three hundred rivers and mountain streams pour into it from the surrounding mountains, but only one – the mighty Angara River, which is more than a third of a mile wide where it joins the lake – exits from it. Although more than three and a half million cubic feet of water pour from Lake Baikal into the Angara each minute, Russian scientists estimate that it would take more than five hundred years to drain the lake if all of the water flowing into it could be shut off. According to another estimate, it would take most of the annual flow from all the world's major rivers to refill Lake Baikal, if that could be accomplished.

Siberia's Significance:

Siberia is a large part of the Russian greatness, yet it has been very reluctant to yield her resources to her Russian conquerors.

While historically, conquests came from the west it is still to be determined where development will come from, west, south, or east. (More later)

How was Siberia developed? By controlling access through the Urals, a Stroganov grandson laid the foundation of the commercial empire that made the Stroganovs fabulously rich. The Stroganovs also realized that whoever in Russia possessed the science of the West held the key to the future. That science would help conquer and develop Siberia.

In the middle 1500s Ivan the Terrible leased 9.25 million acres between the Kama River and the Urals near present day Perm to one of the Stroganov's grandsons. Ivan realized that he could let other people do the work and he would collect taxes on the resources they found and developed. These included gold, silver, copper, tin, and the adventurers build forts between the Kama River and the Urals.

About 1580 the Stroganovs sent the first traders across the Urals to collect fur in tribute from the natives and as the Tsar's agents, they now had permission to invade Asia.

Again, distance became important. As the frontiersmen got further away from Moscow, the less attention they paid to directions from the Tsar.

The Stroganovs hired Cossacks to fight their wars. The most prominent among them was one named Ermak who became the man who started the "conquest" of Siberia in the 1580s.

Instead of salt or land or oil or gold they sought fur. A sable sold for ten times what a peasant family could earn in a year and a black fox up to ten times more than that. The most common fur was that of the beaver that were trapped by the 100's of thousands.

Ermak did have to fight Tatars as well as natives and he became a folk hero, who it is said, became Russia's King Arthur embellished.

Ahead of the Russians were fewer than two hundred thousand natives scattered in five and a third million square miles. Some were hunters and gatherers, others were nomads. They occupied the southern tundra and the taiga, a wild belt of unbroken forest that stretched from the Urals to the Pacific.

The Russian Cossacks reached the shores of the Pacific in less than sixty years as they fought mainly against climate, terrain, and distance since the natives did not have firearms or any way to forcefully stop the Russians.

The native Siberians were in a hundred and forty-odd tribes who suffered when the Russians replaced their harmony with nature with a system of exploitation based on greed and arrogance.

“Draining one Siberian resource after another, the Russians over the next four hundred years would turn Siberia into one of history’s greatest ecological catastrophes.”

Added to the previously mentioned fur the conquerors sought the pelts of squirrel, foxes, ermines, and martens, which was altogether called “soft gold”. Still, the sable was the magnet that pulled the Russians across the entire Eurasian continent before 1650.

The first serious building of roads and establishment of cities took place through the southern Urals through Tobolsk to Irkutsk, a city in the southern end of Lake Baikal in the 1760s.

From Irkutsk, people pushed north and east across the Lena River and established the city of Yakutsk and pushed on to Okhotsk on the Pacific. By the time they reached Okhotsk the slender thread of supplies had all but reached the breaking point.

No crops grew in the forest and tundra lands that lay to the north and east. The land had a very low population supporting potential.

Siberia’s wild taiga and the flood plains of the various rivers made fur trapping a very uncomfortable and risky business.

Russians As Conquerors:

As the Russians looked south, they realized the flood plains of the Amur River valley might hold the key to feeding their people.

Here the Russians committed a mistake they were to make over and over again as they found a fertile land and a non military people who preferred farming to hunting. Instead of conquering them and supporting them in return for food, the Russians hunted-them like wild game, “shooting them and roasting their flesh over open fires.” These people remembered the Cossacks’ brutality for centuries to come.

From the victories the Russians had won in Siberia, they became self-indulgent, too reckless, and too arrogant. The reign of terror still seemed the easiest way for Siberia’s vastly outnumbered conquerors to keep its people firmly under control and, in Rasputin’s (the poet) wonderfully evocative phrase to “scoop everything out”.

But because the Russians devastated villages and burned fields they produced a ruined people, not reliable taxpayers and providers of fish and grain. This pattern with all Siberian people has hurt the Russian government into the 1990s.

Around 1600 Russia got into the game of trying to find a new route (Northern) to the Far East. Silk and spices were still very valuable and technology like the mariner's compass made it possible to sail beyond the sight of land. The most vital question remained "were Asia and North America actually separate continents or were they joined somewhere north of China?" Several early attempts were made to get past the Taimyr Peninsula. By 1650 Russians had made it to the Kolyma, which is the easternmost Asian river to flow into the Arctic. While several explorers finally made it into the Bering Sea the currents flowed in the wrong direction and they met with disaster. However, this exploration into the far northeast found another resource, walrus ivory.

It became common for Russians to slaughter thousands of animals more than- they could transport in fur and ivory back to the west.

"Aside from furs, traffic of females was the most lucrative enterprise among Siberia's Russians. They were traded, gambled, mortgaged, and sold as if they were chattel, one writer reported."

The Tsar outlawed indiscriminate killing of animals, selling of women, and Siberian moonshine. However, profits gave birth to the old Russian proverb that "God is high above and the Tsar is far away."

Through the 1700s the southern routes became more popular. Tobolsk emerged as the chief town of Siberia. Tomsk and a string of other towns along the line which was to become the route of the Trans-Siberian Railroad grew up all the way to Irkutsk. Irkutsk became an important trading point with China.

By 1700 Siberia became a "deep net" into which Russia's riffraff and criminals could be dumped. But, it was also a land of opportunity where people who had experienced misfortune in the west could build new lives.

Just before the end of the seventeenth century, rich supplies of iron ore were found in the Ural forests along Siberia's western edge. This gave Russia the capability of waging modern war, and Peter the Great seized the opportunity to use this Siberian resource to help place Russia among the great powers.

In the early 1700s the attraction of European technology and trade brought many people to Russia. Many became interested in Siberia and scientific inquiry found its way there. Botanists, historians, geologists, and above all, geographers, found scientific ground that had never been studied and they became very interested in this area.

By the end of the eighteenth century the Russians' rape of Siberia's fur lands had led to a sharp decline in the number of fur bearing animals all across northern Asia. After several failures Vitus Bering explored the straits (1728) and eventually made the Russian "discovery of America" when he and others visited the Alaskan Coast. They also explored the Kamchatka Peninsula in the northern Pacific.

Then the last of the animals, the sea otter, was found and its pelt was sold to the Chinese. By the end of the 1700s the Russians' greed and persistence had all but eliminated them from the waters around Kamchatka. Trappers then found an abundance of otters on Bering Island and then in the mid-1700s searched for them all across the north Pacific, through the Aleutian Islands to the lonely northwestern shores of North America.

In the early 1800s the Russians moved -down into northern California and even made a brief incursion into Hawaii.

On the Columbia River, in present day Washington state, the Russians built forts and finally build Fort Ross some twenty miles north of Bodega Bay on the coast of northern California. But Russia's interest in building an empire in North America came to a close in 1867 when Seward purchased Alaska for the United States.

By the end of the eighteenth century a government courier could travel the 6,500 miles from St. Petersburg to Okhotsk "in less than" eighteen weeks. (Through eleven time zones)

About 1800, Irkutsk had commercial fairs in which goods from the East and West were traded and by 1800 the value of Chinese and Russian goods moving back and forth through Irutsk passed seven million rubles a year.

"Thievery, bribery, and graft flourished at every level of Siberia's government, and having unlimited power to get at Siberia's great natural wealth corrupted almost every official who wielded it."

In the early 1800s an unusual man, Mikhail Speranskii, became the Russian governmental official in Siberia to clean up much of the criminal, mismanagement, and other unlawful activity that existed in Siberia. He finished his term in 1822.

By 1850 Siberia had 200 years of being used as a labor, or concentration camp for undesirables. These people included honest men who did not get along with the Tsar or criminals of the worst kind. People banished to Siberia included Dostoevskii, as well as Lenin, Trotski, Stalin, and Solzhenitsyn.

Siberia was used as a prison area from approximately 1650 through the 1980s, including the imprisonment of Americans who were captured in Vietnam.

In the Spring of 1858 the boundaries of Russia and China were established as the Amur River from the Argun River to the Ussuri which is the boundary between China and Russia today.

The second half of the nineteenth century many thousands of people were sent from western Russia to the Far East. This gave rise to cities such as Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, and Komsomolsk-Na-Amure.

By the middle of the nineteenth century railroads projected the power of the world's industrialized nations more forcefully than any other invention. But it was finally the railroad that made Siberia's people the subjects of Russian masters. "The invasion of a railroad civilization grasping and greedy."

By 1900 the Trans-Siberian Railroad was built. It was as much a disaster as it was a success due to engineering problems, cost over-runs, and the effort to save money by making curves too sharp and inclines too great. It was stated that the world's longest railroad was a "flawed gem at best." Thousands of people lost their lives and the entire railroad was unsafe from the moment it opened. During the first year in operation, wrecks occurred at the rate of nearly three a day.

"In terms of resources, labor, lives, and treasure, the cost of the Trans-Siberian Railroad proved to be immense."

"After the discovery of America and the construction of the Suez Canal," one of France's future foreign ministers stated with admiration, "history has never recorded an undertaking with greater significance, or one with such profound direct and indirect consequences, 'than the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway.'"

East of Lake Baikal boats on the Shilka and Amur Rivers were used to cover the 1,400 miles to Khabarovsk and then the Ussuri was used to take people and goods south to Vladivostok and in to eastern Manchuria.

1903. Finance Minister to Nicholas II. "Given our enormous frontier with China and our exceptionally favorable situation, the absorption by Russia of a considerable part of China is only a question of time." p. 174, Diplomacy. Kissinger.

In 1905, the first disaster in the Russian Far East was to take place with the end of the Russo-Japanese War with the sinking of the Russian fleet by the Japanese.

During the late 1800s, tens of thousands of Russians moved into Siberia. While some were peasants and runaway serfs and even criminals, many of them were migrants who sought a better life in the frontier area.

Although butter, wheat, timber, and coal all showed Siberia's growing prosperity, by 1910 gold still attracted investors most of all.

During World War I Siberia's greatest contribution was as a supplier of raw materials and as an entry through which its allies could ship weapons and munitions from the Pacific to the western fronts.

After World War I, and encouraged by the destruction in the western USSR during World War II, a significant number of western USSR industrial plants were relocated, or built from the Urals east to Baikal. (See de Blij, Muller pp. 157-164)

After 1917 for a short period of time American advisors took over the management of Siberia's railways with the idea of developing a trading route from Seattle to Vladivostok by ship and then by train to the markets in western Russia. Soviet Siberia became a scientific hunting grounds for resources. Coal, iron, oil, natural gas, tungsten, zinc, uranium, diamonds, and many other minerals were found.

Many of these resources were taken from Siberia at great economic expense. In many cases it cost much more money to bring the material to western Russia than it was worth when it got there.

The cost of developing resources in Siberia is troubled by distance, impossible building conditions on permafrost, and a climate that will keep almost anything from working.

One of the major problems of the leaders of present day Russia is the claims of the environmentalist who protest that Siberia's tundra is a priceless natural treasure.

It has been said Siberia has been exploited for the benefit of non-Siberians, drained of its wealth, and poisoned to a point beyond which complete recovery may no longer be possible. Siberia may bear the burden of that terrible predicament, to develop or to protect a primitive resource.

Much of the route of the Trans-Siberian Railroad through the Novokuznetsk is characterized by pollution such as sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, solid phenols, sulfuric acid, and nitrous oxide. Soaring rates of chronic bronchitis, kidney disease, endocrine system disorders and retardation in children are common.

In the 1990s the question is still who will develop Siberia? Possibly, a better question is first, who will clean up Siberia?

The Russians do not have the money to develop resources of this unique area. Possibly it will be done by the excess profits of the Four Tigers and Japan, as well as the possibility of capital from China, the United States, and other countries. Siberia could become a power of the Pacific Rim.

Nakhodka is a new port just southeast of Vladivostok which has been created as a commercial port for trade with the Pacific Rim countries (basically a military base).

It must be remembered that the most important characteristics of Siberia are its huge area, its high latitude, its vast wealth, and its isolation.

Siberia's future remains tangled in contradictions that are in part the product of the experiences of the past, but also in the dreams of the future.

Suggested Teaching Methods/Activities:

1. Make 2-3 copies of the blank outline map of Russia (Figure 1) at the end of this unit). These will be used later as the instructor has students locate neighboring countries, physical or cultural features related to this unit.
2. Have a pre-lesson discussion of student's concepts of Siberia. Write a list of questions the class would like to answer regarding this large and far away region. (Examples: Where is it? What is it like? Why is it like it is? What is the personality of this place?) (Utilize. Geographic Model for Understanding a Place.)
3. Teacher might go to a world atlas and have maps reproduced on the various physical patterns such as the soil, vegetation, and climate as well 'as cultural features such as roads, railroads, cities, etc. Discuss general statements about the physical and cultural characteristics of Siberia. Emphasize size and latitude in the discussion. (Utilize maps accompanying this lesson.)
4. Discuss the question "Why is the history of a place important to its modern geography or character?"
5. Discuss the question "What is the difference between a conquest and development of Siberia?"
6. What are the problems and prospects of the development of Siberia?
7. Compare the "conquest of Siberia" with the "conquest of the American West."
8. Using a map of the Pacific Realm, discuss the potential for the development of Siberia and its relationship to the Pacific countries.
9. Evaluate the following generalization to Siberia: The existence of a vast store of natural resources assures the people of that land a high level of living. (Discuss geographic ideas such as distance, infrastructure, location, technology of place, etc.)
10. As the occasion arises (depending on show the teacher chooses to develop this lesson) have students test as many of the generalizations in the content section of the lesson as is practical.
11. Make a list of reasons why people move from one place to another. Discuss each of them.

NOTE: These materials are designed to be used in various ways. Depending on grade level, curriculum, etc., small portions may be taught independently, sections may be integrated into other units, or the material could be taught over an extended period.

Materials:

The Conquest of a Continent by W. Bruce Lincoln. Random House. 1994. This book is an important reference/resource for both teacher and student.

Maps included in this lesson with copies made for each student. Wall map and globe to show Russia/Siberia.

Library resources such as encyclopedias, geography textbooks, and other materials on Siberia.

NOTE: Much of the content for this lesson is new to teachers. Do not feel that you need to know all about this topic before you are willing to undertake it with your class. Go into it with your class as a learner. Your authority and expertise come from knowing how to ask questions and how to organize a study of such a problem as opposed to knowing all the answers beforehand. Enjoy the lesson with the class.

Evaluation:

Tests, reports, cooperative efforts to gain information, ability to discuss the problem rationally, presentation of data. Explain how mapping data helps a student understand a region like Siberia.

Relationship to the National Geography Standards:

- Knows and understands how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective. (#1)
- Knows and understands how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on the earth's surface. (#3)
- Knows and understands the physical and human characteristics of places. (#4)
- Knows and understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions. (#6)
- Knows and understands the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on earth's surface. (#9)

- Knows and understands how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of earth's surface. (#13)
- Knows and understands how physical systems affect human systems. (#15)
- Knows and understands the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources. (#16)
- Knows and understands how to apply geography to interpret the past. (#17)
- Knows and understands how to apply geography to interpret the present plan for the future. (#18)

Why This Lesson Is Geographic:

This lesson is geographic because it deals with the location and distribution of physical and cultural characteristics of Siberia. It investigates the interaction of physical and cultural phenomena within the place of Siberia and looks at the interaction between Siberia, Mongolia, and Western Russia, and examines the potential interaction of that area with the Pacific Realm countries.