OPENING QUESTIONS

- What one word do you most associate with Europe?
- Who sees themselves as European?
ARGUMENT

- The idea of Europe
  - is a modern idea from the eighteenth century that was a response to an earlier religious idea of Christendom
  - contains a number of ideas from Enlightenment thought, and draws on a range of often competing cultural ideas
  - is based on a geographical area, which was communicated through maps and other visual representations
  - was part of the ideology of colonial capitalist expansion
  - is politically salient today, but contested
THE IDEA OF EUROPE

- Origins in Ancient Greece, but not as an “idea”
- C18 as birth of idea
- Replaced Christendom
- Grew during period of nationalism
THE IDEA OF EUROPE

- Universalist content taken from Enlightenment philosophy: freedom, reason, internationalism

- Shared culture of Europe: does it exist?
  - If so, starting point historically Christianity

- Tension in idea of Europe
EUROPE AS A GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

- Problematic because of Russia:
  - Orthodox, autocratic, economically backward, Slavophiles vs. Europhiles; Bolsheviks as barbarians or Western implant
- The “last handful of European soil”
- Also, Britain frequently saw “the continent” as separate
Maps are part of visual language and influence understandings of power and space.

Medieval T-O map saw Europe as third of the world.

Mercator projection exaggerated size and centrality of Europe.
Peters Projection
The true representation of land area (the "size" of continents and countries)

Mercator Projection
Incorrect/false representation of land area
EUROCENTRISM

- Tendency of (European) authors (i) to regard their civilization as superior, (ii) to see Europe as somehow self-contained, and (iii) to neglect the need for taking non-European viewpoints into consideration

- Early historians of Europe
  - Equation of European history with intentions of God
  - Europe as “universal history”
DISCUSSION: WHAT IS EUROPE TODAY?
QUESTIONS

1. what does Europe mean today?

2. what is the “Other” of Europe?

3. what is the major division within Europe?

4. what role do borders play in making Europe?
APPENDIX
1. Europe in C18

- C18 as period of coalescence of concept of Europe
  - Voltaire, Rousseau, and Edmund Burke
- What are roots of concept of “Europe”?
- Account here draws on Davies (1996)
2. Christendom

- Denoted area during Middle Ages
  - After fall of Roman Empire, before Renaissance
  - Importance of “Civilisation” (Clark, 1969) narrative
- Replaced by Europe C14-C18
- Decisive period 1690-1710
  - Early Enlightenment: Christian heritage embarrassing
  - Wars against Louis XIV
- Treaty of Utrecht 1713
  - Last major public reference to Respublica Christiana
- Religious concept of Europe
3. Geographical

* Medieval: idea that Europe third of the world
* Outline determined by sea coasts and land frontier
  * Latter contested and changing
* **Boundary with Asia**
  * Late C18 Russian government boundary post between Yekaterinburg and Tyumen
    * Tsarist exiles and last handful of European earth
  * Conventional idea, by mid-C19, of Europe “from Atlantic to Urals”
    * Accepted as result of rise of Russian Empire
Traditioanal concept: central role of Christianity
  - Starting point of all other concepts
  - T. S. Eliot (1948)
    - European civilization in mortal peril after dilutions of Christian core
  - Pluralism
    - Pagan
      - E.g. Renaissance and antiquity or Romanticism and nature
    - Non-Christian
      - E.g. Modernism, eroticism, sports, pop culture
  - “Overlapping circles”?
5. Problem case A: Russia

- Central problem case for inclusion / exclusion
  - To extent that concepts problematized
- Modern history
  - Orthodox, autocratic, economically backward, Slavophiles vs. Europhiles
- C19
  - Role of Russia in defeating Napoleon; Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky, Chekov
- 1917
  - Bolsheviks as barbarians or Western implant
  - Lenin: heirs to French Revolution; Stalin: “Socialism in One Country”
- USSR
  - Partition of Europe
6. Problem case B: Britain

- Secondary “special case”
- View of Europe
  - “The Continent”
  - “Great powers” (West) and “small nations” (East)
    - Albert Memorial (1876)
    - Dislike of Dutch...
7. Division: West | East

- Dividing line
  - Catholic (Latin) | Orthodox (Greek)
  - Roman past | no Roman past
  - Ottoman line
  - Iron Curtain
- Promotion of West; denigration of East
  - Link to idea of “Western civilization”
- Alternative divisions
  - North | South (c.f. Protestant | Catholic)
  - Core | Periphery
(Working) definition

- Historical tendency of (European) authors (i) to regard their civilization as superior, (ii) to see Europe as somehow self-contained, and (iii) to neglect the need for taking non-European viewpoints into consideration

Early historians of Europe

- Equation of European history with intentions of God
- Europe as universal history

OUP History of Europe, 1927...