



STUDY GUIDE

HISTORY OF RUSSIA FROM 1689 TO 1964 A. D

PREPARED BY

Dr. C. AMOSE

Associate Professor of History

Head, Department of Public Administration,

Muslim Arts College

Thiruvithancode - 629174

Kanyakumari District.



HISTORY OF RUSSIA FROM 1689 TO 1964 A D

Objective: To enable the students to know about the importance of Russia to the world.

Unit: I

The Ascendancy of Russia:

Ivan IV the terrible – Romanov dynasty –Peter the great (1689 -1725) – Peter’s Reforms – St. Petersburg Russia’ s foreign policy, Catherine the great – Domestic reforms – Administrative reorganization – Economic Policies – Foreign Policy- Paul 1796 -1801 Society and Culture in the 18th Century.

Unit: II

Russia from 1801 to 1881:

Alexander I (1801 – 1825) – Nicholas I (1825 –1855)- Alexander II (1855-1881)- abolition of Serfdom -Judicial reforms –Zemstvos – Polish revolt – Foreign Policy

Unit: III

Russia and the World :

Alexander III (1881 – 1894) – Nicholas II(1894 -1917) Nihilism in Russia – the Russo – Japanese war (1904 -1905) Treaty of Portsmouth – Impact – Revolution of 1905. The Russian Duma (1906 -1941).

Unit: IV

Russia between the First and Second World Wars:

Role of Russia in the First World War – February Revolution of 1917 – Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 – Impact of the Russian Revolution of and the success of Socialism – Russia under Lenin and Stalin – USSR in World War II – The Aftermath of the war.

Unit: IV

The Khrushchev Era (1953 -1964):

Domestic Policies – Agriculture – The Soviet Economy – Foreign Policy of Soviet union – Soviet union and Eastern Europe Sino – Soviet Relation – Soviet Relation with Western Powers – Cold war and military alliances – Effects of the cold War Soviet Impact on the war- Political Impact- Ideological Impact – Impact on International Relations.



Text Books:

1. ManoharR. Wadhvani- “Rise of Soviet to world Power” S.Chand and Company Ltd. Ram Nagar, New Delhi.
2. N.Subramanian –“ History of Russia. As Ennes Publications, 96, NGO Colony, Madurai.
3. Majuumdar R.K and Srivastva A.N – History of Russia.

Books for Reference:

1. Basil Dmytryshyn – A History of Russia
2. Carr.E.H - The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin
3. Chaurasia R.S - World History
4. King’s Publishers - History of Russia and USSR
5. Kristine Bushnell - History of the USSR Vol I and II
6. Rao. B.V - History of Europe 1450 – 1815. Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd.
7. Vidya DharMahajan - History of Modern Europe Since 1789.
8. Vinay Kumar Malhotra – Gorbachevian Revolution in the soviet union.



HISTORY OF RUSSIA, FROM - 1689 TO 1964 AD

UNIT - I

THE ASCENDANCY OF RUSSIA

Politically Russia was a mixed forest zone which was split by the Mongal conquest of 1237- 40. The tsarist rulers ruled in Russia in the beginning and later it became a powerful country. Ivan III Vasilyevich (1440-1505) also known as Ivan the Great, was a Grand Prince of Moscow and Grand Prince of all Russia'. Ivan served as the co-ruler and regent for his blind father Vasily II from the mid - 1450s before he officially ascended the throne in 1562.

Ivan III multiplied the territory of his state through war and through the seizure of lands from his dynastic relatives, ended the dominance of the Tatars over Russia renovated the Moscow Kremlin, introduced a new legal codex and laid the foundations of the Russian state. His 1480 victory over the Great Horde is cited as the restoration of Russian independence 240 years after the fall of Kiev to Mongol's invasion.

Ivan was the first Russian ruler to style himself "tsar", albeit not as an official title. Through marriage to Sofia Paleologue, he made the double-headed eagle Russia's coat of arms and adopted the idea of Moscow as Third Rome. His 43 - year reign was the second longest in Russian history, after that of his grandson Ivan IV.

Ivan IV Of Russia (1530 - 1584)

Ivan IV Vasilyevich was the Grand Duke of Muscovy from 1533 - 1547 and was the first ruler of Russia to assume the title of tsar. His long reign saw the conquest of Tartary and Siberia and subsequent transformation of Russia into a



multiethnic and muticonfessional state. This tsar retains his place in the Russian tradition simply as Ivan Grozny which translates into English as Ivan the Fearsome or 'Thunderous', listern. He is commonly referred to in English as Ivan the Terrible.

Ivan was a long-awaited son of Vasili III. Upon his father's death, he formally came to the throne at the age of three, but his minority was dominated by regents. Initially his mother Elena Glinskaya acted as regent, but she died when Ivan was only eight. She was replaced as regent by boyars from the Shuisky family until Ivan assumed power in 1544. According to his own letters, Ivan customarily felt neglected and offended by the mighty boyars from the Shuisky and Belsky families. These traumatic experiences may have contributed to his hatred of the boyars and to his mental instability. He was known to throw cats and dogs out of the Kremlin windows, among other cruel acts.

Ivan's reign

Ivan was crowned tsar with Monomakh's Cap at the Cathedral of the Dormition at age sixteen on January 16, 1547. Despite calamities triggered by the Great Fire of 1547, the early part of his reign was one of peaceful reforms and modernization. Ivan revised the law code created a standing army established the Zemsky Sobor, the council of the nobles and confirmed the position of the Church with the council of the Hundred Chapters, which unified the rituals and ecclesiastical regulations of the entire country. He introduced the local self-management in rural regions, mainly in the Northeast of Russia, populated by the state peasantry. During his regin the first printing press was introduced to Russia.



Ivan the designer

In 1547 Hans Schlitte, the agent of tsar Ivan, employed handicraftsmen in Germany for work in Russia. However all these handicraftsmen were arrested in Lubeck at the request of Poland and Livonia. The German merchant companies ignored the new port built by tsar Ivan on the river Narva in 1550 and delivered the goods still in the Baltic ports owned by Livonia. Russia remained isolated from sea trade. In 1552 Ivan defeated the Kazan Khanate, whose armies had repeatedly devastated the Northeast of Russia and annexed its territory. In 1556, he annexed the Astrakhan Khanate and destroyed the largest slave market on the river Volga. These gains of tsar complicated the migration of aggressive nomadic hordes from Asia to Europe through Volga and transformed Russia into a multinational and multiconfessional state. He had St. Basil's Cathedral constructed in Moscow to commemorate the seizure of Kazan. Legend has it that he was so impressed with the structure that he had the architects blinded, so that they could never design anything as beautiful again.

Ivan and boyars:

The dramatic change in Ivan's personality is traditionally linked to his near-fatal illness in 1553 and the death of his first wife, Anastasia Romanovna. Ivan suspected boyars of poisoning his wife and of plotting to replace him on the throne with his cousin, Vladimir of Staritsa. In addition, during that illness Ivan had asked the boyars to swear an oath of allegiance to his eldest son, an infant at the time. Many boyars refused, deeming the tsar's health too hopeless to survive. This angered Ivan and added to his distrust of the boyars. There followed brutal reprisals and murders of innocent people, including Metropolitan Philip and Prince Alexander Gorbatiy Shuisky.



Ivan's last days

For twenty-four years the Livonian War dragged on damaging the Russian economy and military but winning Russia no territory. In the 1560s the combination of drought and famine, Polish-Lithuanian raids, Tatar attacks and the sea-trading blockade carried out by the Swedes, Poles and the Hanseatic League devastated Russia. The price of grain increased by a factor of ten Epidemics of the plague killed 10,000 in Novgorod. In 1570 the plague killed 600-1000 in Moscow daily. Ivan's closest advisor, Prince Andrei Kurbsky, defected to the Lithuanians, headed the Lithuanian troops and devastated the Russian region of Velikie Luki. This treachery deeply hurt Ivan. As the Oprichnina continued, Ivan became mentally unstable and physically disabled. In one week, he could easily pass from the most depraved orgies to prayers and fasting in a remote northern monastery.

Ivan gradually grew unbalanced and violent, the Oprichniks under Malyuta Skuratov soon got out of hand and became murderous thugs. They massacred nobles and peasants and conscripted men to fight the war in Livonia. Depopulation and famine ensued. In a dispute with the wealthy city of Novgorod, Ivan ordered the Oprichniks to murder inhabitants of this city, which was never to regain its former prosperity. Between thirty and forty thousand might have been killed during the infamous Massacre of Novgorod in 1570 and many others were deported elsewhere.

In 1581, Ivan beat his pregnant daughter-in-law for wearing immodest clothing, causing a miscarriage. His son, also named Ivan, upon learning of this, engaged in a heated argument with his father, which resulted in Ivan striking his son in the head with his pointed staff, causing his son's (accidental) death. This



event is depicted in the famous painting by Ilya Repin, Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan on Friday, November 16, 1581 better known as Ivan the Terrible killing his son.

Death and legacy

Although it is thought by many that Ivan died while setting up a chess board, it is more likely that he died while playing with little boys along with Bogdan Belsky on March 18, 1584. When Ivan's tomb was opened during renovations in the 1960s, his remains were examined and discovered to contain very high amounts of mercury indicating a high probability that he was poisoned. Modern suspicion falls on his advisors Belsky and Boris Godunov, who became tsar in 1598. Three days earlier Ivan had allegedly attempted to rape Irina Godunov's sister and Fyodor's wife. Her cries attracted Godunov and Belsky to the noise. Whereupon Ivan let Irina go, but Belski and Godunov considered themselves marked for death. The tradition says that they either poisoned or strangled Ivan in fear for their own lives. The mercury found in Ivan's remains may also be related to treatment for syphilis, which it is speculated that Ivan had. Upon Ivan's death, the ravaged kingdom was left to his unfit and childless son Feodor.

House of Romanov

The House of Romanov was the reigning imperial house of Russia from 1613 to 1917. They achieved prominence after the Tsarina, Anastasia Romanova, was married to the First Tsar of Russia, Ivan the Terrible.

The house became boyars (the highest rank in Russian nobility) of the Grand Duchy of Moscow and later of the Tsardom of Russia under the reigning Rurik dynasty, which became extinct upon the death of Tsar Feodor I in 1598.



The Time of Troubles, caused by the resulting succession crisis, saw several pretenders and imposters (False Dmitris) fight for the crown during the Polish - Muscovite War of 1605-1618. On 21 February 1613, a Zemsky Sobor elected Michael Romanov as Tsar of Russia, establishing the Romanovs as Russia's second reigning dynasty. Michael's grandson Peter I, who established the Russian Empire in 1721, transformed the country into a great power through a series of wars and reforms.

The direct male line of the Romanovs ended when Empress Elizabeth of Russia died in 1762, as a result Peter III, an agnatic member of the House of Holstein-Gottorp (a cadet branch of the German House of Oldenburg that reigned in Denmark) ascended to the throne however Peter adopted his Romanov mothers house name thus the House continued in the female line. Officially known as members of the House of Romanav, descendants after Elizabeth are sometimes referred to as "Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov". The abdication of Emperor Nicholas II on 15 March 1917 as a result of the February Revolution ended 304 years of Romanov rule and led to the establishing of the Russian Republic under the Russian Provisional Government in the lead-up to the Russian Civil War of 1917 - 1922. In 1918 Bolshevik Officials executed the ex-Emperor and his family. Of the House of Romanov's 65 members, 47 survivors went into exile abroad.

The Romanov share their origin with two dozen other Russian noble families. Their earliest common ancestor is one Andrei Kobyla, attested around 1347 as a boyar in the service of Semyon I of Moscow. Later generations assigned to Kobyla an illustrious pedigree. An 18th-century genealogy claimed that he was the son of the Old Prussian prince Glanda Kambila, who came to Russia in the second half of the 13th century, fleeing the invading Germans.



Indeed, one of the leaders of the Old Prussian rebellion of 1260-1274 against the Teutonic order was named Glande. This legendary version of the Romanov's origin is contested by another version of their descent from a boyar family from Novgorod.

His actual origin may have been less spectacular. Not only is Kobyla Russian for "mare". some of his relatives also had as nicknames the terms for horse and other domestic animals, thus suggesting descent from one of the royal equerries. One of Kobyla's sons, Feodor, a member of the boyar Duma off Dmitri, wa nicknamed Koshka ("cat"). His descendants took the surname Koshkin, then changed it to Zakharin, which family later split into two branches: Zakharin-Yakovlev and Zakharin-Yuriev. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, the former family became known as Yakovlev (Alexander Herzen among them), whereas grandchildren of Roman Yurievich Zakharyin - Yuriev changed their name to "Romanov".

Feodor Nikitich Romanov was descended from the Rurik dynasty through the female line. His mother, Evdokiya Gorbataya-Shuyskaya, was a Rurikid Princess from the shuysky branch, daughter of Alexander Gorbatyi-Shuisky.

Rise to Power

The family fortunes soared when Roman's daughter, Anastasia Zakharyina, married Ivan IV (the Terrible), the Rurikid Grand Prince of Moscow, on 3rd February 1547. Since her husband had assumed the title of tsar, which literally means "Caesar", on 16 January 1547, she was crowned the very first tsaritsa of Russia. Her mysterious death in 1560 changed Ivan's character for the worse. Suspecting the boyars of having poisoned his beloved, Tsar Ivan started a reign of terror against them. Among his children by Anastasia, the elder (Ivan) was



murdered by the tsar in a quarrel; the younger Feodor, a pious but lethargic prince, inherited the throne upon his father's death in 1584.

Feodor's reign (1584- 1598)

The Tsar's brother-in-law, Bori Godunov, and his Romanov cousins contented the de facto rule of Russia. Upon the death of childless Feodor, the 700-years-old line of Rurikids came to an end. After a long struggle, the party of Boris Godunov prevailed over the Romanovs and the Zemsky sobor elected Godunov as tsar in 1598. Godunov's revenge on the Romanovs was terrible: all the family and its relations were deported to remote corners the Russian North and Urals, where most of them died of hunger or in chains.. The family's leader, Feodor Nikitch Romanov was exiled to the Antoniev Siysky Monastery and forced to take monastic vows with the name Filaret.

The Romanovs' fortunes again changed dramatically with the fall of the Godunov dynasty in June 1605. As a former leader of the anti-Godunov party and cousin of the last legitimate tsar, Filaret Romanov's recognition was sought by several impostors who attempted to claim the Rurikid legacy and throne during the Time of Troubles. False Dmitriy I made him a metropolitan, and False Dmitriy II raised him to the dignity of patriarch. Upon the expulsion of the Polish army from Moscow in 1612, the Zemsky Sobor offered the Russian crown to several Rurikid and Gediminian princes, but all declined the honour.

On being offered the Russian crown, Filaret's 16-years-old son Mikhail Romanov, then living at the Ipatiev Monastery of Kostroma, burst into tears of fear and despair. He was finally persuaded to accept the throne by his mother Kseniya Ivnovna Shestova, who blessed him with the holy image of Our Lady of St. Theodore. Feeling how insecure his throne was, Mikhail attempted to



emphasize his ties with the last Rurikid tsars and sought advice from the Zemsky Sobor on every important issue. This strategy proved successful. The early Romanovs were generally accepted by the population as in-laws of Ivan the Terrible and viewed as innocent martyrs of Godunov's wrath.

Dynastic crisis

Mikhail was succeeded by his son Alexei, who steered the country quietly through numerous troubles. Upon Alexei's death, there was a period of dynastic struggle between his children by his first wife Maria Ilyinichna Miloslavskaya (Feodor III, Sofia Alexeyevna, Ivan V) and his son by his second wife Nataliya Kyrillovna Naryshkina, the future Peter the Great. Peter ruled from 1682 until his death in 1725 in numerous successful wars he expanded the tsardom into a huge empire that became a major European power. He led a cultural revolution that replaced some of the traditionalist and medieval social and political system with a modern, scientific, Europe - oriented and rationalist system.

New dynastic struggles followed the death of Peter. His only son to survive into adulthood, Tsarevich Alexei, did not support Peter's modernization of Russia. He had previously been arrested and died in prison shortly thereafter. Near the end of his life, Peter managed to alter the succession tradition of male heirs, allowing him to choose his heir. Power then passed into the hands of his second wife. Empress Catherine, who ruled until her death in 1727 Peter II, the son of Tsarevich Alexei, took the throne but died in 1730, ending the Romanov male line. He was succeeded by Anna I, daughter of Peter the Great's half - brother and co-ruler, Ivan V. Before she died in 1740 the empress declared that her father, while excluding descendants of Peter the Great from inheriting the throne. Ivan VI was only a one-year-old infant at the time of his succession to the



throne, and his parents, Grand Duchess Anna Leopoldovna and Duke Anthony Ulrich of Brunswick, the ruling reget, were detested for their German counselors and relations. As a consequenic, shortly after Empress Anna's death, Elizabeth Petrovna, a legitimized daughter of Peter I, managed to gain the favor of the populace and dethroned Ivan VI in a coup detat, supported by the Preobrazhensky Regiment and the ambassadors of France and Sweden. Ivan VI and his parents died in prison many years later.

Peter the Great:

The Holstein-Gottorps of Russia retained the Romanov surname, emphasizing their matrilineal descent from Peter the Great, through Anna Petrovna (Peter Ist elder daughter by his second wife). In 1742, Empress Elizabeth of Russia brought Anna's son, her nephew Peter of Holstein - Gottorp, to St. Petersburg and proclaimed him her heir. In time, she married him off to a German princess, Sophia of Anhalt-Zerbst in 1762, shortly after the death of Empress Elizabeth, Sophia, who had taken the Russian name Catherine upon her marriage, overthrew her unpopular husband, with the aid of her lover, Grigory Orlov. She reigned as Catherine the Great. Catherine's son Paul I, who succeeded his mother in 1796 was particularly proud to be a great-grandson of Peter the Great, although his mother's memoris aguably insinuate that Paul's natural father was, in fact, her lover Sergei Saltykov, rather than her husband. Peter, Painfully aware of the hazardd resulting from battles of succession, Paul decreed house laws for the Romanovas - the so-called Pauline Laws, among the strictest in Europe - which established semi-Salic primogeniture as the rule of succession to the throne, requiring Orthodox faith for the monarch and dynasts, and for the consorts of the monarcs and their near heirs.



Later, Alexander I, responding to the 1820 morganatic marriage of his brother and heir added the requirement that consorts of all Russian dynasts in the male line had to be equal birth (i.e., born to a royal or sovereign dynasty). Paul I was murdered in his palace in Saint Petersburg in 1801. Alexander I succeeded him on the throne and later died without leaving a son. His brother, crowned Nicholas I, succeeded him on the throne. The succession was far from smooth, however, as hundreds of troops took the oath of allegiance to Nicholas accession, led to the Decembrist revolt, Nicholas I fathered four sons, educating them for the prospect of ruling Russia and for military careers, from whom the last branches of the dynasty descended.

Alexander II, son of Nicholas I, became the next Russian emperor in 1855, in the midst of the Crimean War. While Alexander considered it his charge to maintain peace in Europe and Russia, he believed only a strong Russian military could keep the peace. By developing the army, giving some freedom to Finland, and freeing the serfs in 1861 he gained much popular support.

Despite his popularity, however, his family life began to unravel by the mid 1860s. In 1864, his eldest son, and heir, Tsarevich Nicholas, died suddenly. His wife, Empress Maria Alexandrovna, who suffered from tuberculosis, spent much of her time abroad. Alexander eventually turned to a mistress, Princess Catherine Dolgoruki. Immediately following the death of his wife in 1880 he contracted a morganatic marriage with Dolgoruki. His legitimization of their children, and rumors that he was contemplating crowning his new wife as empress, caused tension within the dynasty. In particular, the grand duchesses were scandalized at the prospect of deferring to a woman who had borne Alexander several children during his wife's lifetime. Before Princess Catherine could be elevated in rank,



however, on 13 March 1881 Alexander was assassinated by a hand-made bomb hurled by Ignacy Hryniewiecki. Slavic patriotism, cultural revival and Panslavist ideas grew in importance in the latter half of this century, evoking expectations of a more Russian than cosmopolitan dynasty. Several marriages were contracted with members of other reigning Slavic or Orthodox dynasties (Greece, Montenegro, Serbia) In the early 20th century two Romanov princesses were allowed to marry Russian high noblemen - whereas until the 1850s, practically all marriages had been with German princelings.

Alexander II was succeeded by his son Alexander III. This tsar, the second-to-last Romanov emperor was responsible for conservative reforms in Russia. Not expected to inherit the throne, he was educated in matters of state only after the death of his older brother, Nicholas. Lack of diplomatic training may have influenced his politics as well as those of his son, Nicholas II. Alexander III was physically impressive, being not only tall but of large physique and considerable strength. His beard hearkened back to the likeness of tsars of old, contributing to an aura of brusque authority, awe-inspiring to some, alienating to others. Alexander, fearful of the fate which had be fallen his father, strengtheed autocratic rule in Russia. Some of the reforms the more liberal Alexander II had pushed through were reversed.

Alexander had inherited not only his dead brother's position as Tsesarevich, but also his brother's Danish finance, Princess Dagmar. Taking the name Maria Fyodorovna upon her conversion to Orthodoxy, she was the daughter of King Christian IX and the the sister of the future kings Frederik VIII of Denmark and George I of Greece, as well as of Britain's Queen Alexandra, consort of Edward VII Despite contrasting natures and backgrounds, the marriage was considered



harmonious, producing six children and acquiring for Alexander the reputation of being the first tsar not known to take mistresses.

The six crowned representatives of the Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov line were: Paul (1796 - 1801). Alexander I (1801-1825), Nicholas I (1825 - 1855), Alexander II (1855 - 1881), Alexander III (1881- 1894) and Nicholas II (1894 - 1917).

RUSSIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The history of Russia in the eighteenth century is the story of her steady expansion which brought her to the shores of the Baltic in the north, the eastern borders of Germany and the Baltic sea in the south. The phenomenal enlargement of territory was brought about by her two great rulers. Peter the Great at the beginning of the century and Catharine II at the end. Of these two Peter the Great scarcely comes into our picture. Suffice it to say here that he was a man of demonical energy and colossal will power. He wrested the hegemony of the north from Sweden, introduced western civilization among his people who were more Asiatic in manners and custom than European and indicated the line of Russia's future foreign policy. Although there were prominent traits of primal savagery in his nature he proved himself to be a barbarian of genius gifted with considerable constructive ability. He was in every sense the founder of modern Russia.

Peter the Great died in 1725. The interval between his death and the accession of Catharine II in 1762 was spanned by six rulers of mediocre abilities most of whom were females of loose morals. One of them was Elizabeth a daughter of Peter the Great, who ascended the throne in 1740. During her reign Russian influence began to be felt in European politics and both Austria and Prussia were eager supplant for her alliance. But Frederick the Great of Prussia



alienated Elizabeth by making scornful attacks upon her character. This inspired the Czarina with the bitterest hatred against Frederick and she joined Austria in the 'Seven Years' War against Prussia. Her intervention seriously imperilled Frederick's position. The timely death of Elizabeth in 1762 saved him. She was succeeded by Peter III, a weak, half-man ruler and a great admirer of Frederick the Great. He took Russia out of the war and aided Frederick. He was, however, deposed and put to death at the instigation of his wife, a German princess, who ascended the throne and became famous as Catharine II.

CATHARINE II (1762 -1796)

With the accession of Catharine II Russia again took up the policy of Peter the Great and took her rank as one of the leading powers of Europe. The process of Europeanising Russia and magnifying her position in international politics was resumed with vigour and carried out with success.

Catharine was intelligent and energetic and proved herself to be one of the ablest rulers of her time. She had intellectual tastes which she satisfied by intimate correspondence with Voltaire and other French philosophers of the day. She was a prolific journalist and a writer of historical articles and dramas. But she was quite unscrupulous in the prosecution of her aims and profligate in her private life.

Domestic reforms

In her domestic policy she followed in the footsteps of Peter the Great. Being of western birth, she naturally favoured western civilization and even outdid Peter in her zeal found schools, create industries and foster commerce. Thus she opened her country thoroughly to western influences. She passed as one of the



enlightened despots of her time by posing as the friend of higher education and patronising literary men like Diderot, the author of the great Encyclopaedia.

Administrative System

Her administrative system, however, showed little trace of liberalism. Her government was far more efficient than liberal. She continued the system of serfdom and under her rule the lot of the serfs became worse still. To hoodwink the people she discussed many questions of reforms but did nothing to achieve them. She centralised the administration by dividing Russia into forty-four civil "governments" and "districts" and over each of them she placed officers appointed by the central authority. She secularised church property and thereby made the clergy dependent upon the Crown. Her reforms increased the power and efficiency of the monarchy and were thus a development of the policy of Peter the Great.

Her Foreign Policy

The Chief significance of Catharine's reign lies in her foreign policy. She was fully conscious that her position as foreigner, could never be really safe unless she could fully identify herself with the national aspirations of the people. Hence she adopted a vigorous policy of aggrandisement and proved herself a worthy successor of Peter the Great. She took up Peter's idea of expansion towards the west. As noticed before, three countries stood between Russia and Western Europe, viz., Sweden, Poland and Turkey Peter had conquered the first and pushed the Russian frontier to the Baltic Sea.

Catharine devoted her entire life to the abasement of the other two i.e., of Poland and Turkey. The first she succeeded in destroying by infamous means and with rare completeness. But she could not dismember Turkey although she



conquered a considerable portion of Turkish territories on the north of the Black Sea. Turkey, though not destroyed, was brought to her knees. In manipulating foreign affairs Catharine showed great shrewdness and choose her allies with admirable foresight. She knew that Prussia had nothing to fear from Russia's design on Turkey and had much to gain from a partition of Poland. So when Poland absorbed her attention she acted in alliance with Prussia. But when the question of the dismemberment of Turkey occupied her attention she formed an alliance with Joseph II of Austria, who was equally interested in the Turkish question.

It should be noted that the condition of Europe favoured the aggressive policy of Catharine the Great, Poland was in a state of chronic anarchy and her absurd constitution invited foreign intervention. Turkey was well on the road to decline. France, the traditional friend of Poland and Turkey, was too exhausted by the Seven Year's War to intervene with active help on their behalf. The same war had also exhausted Prussia and Austria.

Catharine II and Turkey - The Eastern Question

The emergence of Russia as a great European power coincided with the decline of the Turkish empire in Europe. In the seventeenth century the aggressions of the Turks had been a terror to Europe. But in the eighteenth century the tide of aggression was rolled back. Turkey was no longer the aggressor but became the victim of aggression, It was the gradual decline of Turkey that gave rise to what is known as the Eastern Question. Catharine II sought to take full advantage of the declining power of the Turks and it was against them that her aggressive ambitions were mostly directed. Peter the Great had realised the importance of the Black Sea to the development of Southern Russia



and had made an attempt to extend Russian power to its shores. His attempt though initially successful eventually failed. Catharine took up Peter's idea of southern expansion by declaring that "War against Turkey is my historic mission". It was Catharine's attitude towards Turkey that made the Eastern Question prominent in European politics.

It should be noted that there were reasons both political and sentimental, which led Russia to seek the destruction of Turkey. First, Turkey stood in the way of Russia's natural expansion towards the Black sea and barred her access to the Mediterranean. Secondly, by helping to destroy Poland, Russia had absorbed the interests and responsibilities of that power. Poland had been the bulwark of Europe against Turkish aggression and now Russia felt called upon to discharge the same obligation. Lastly, the religious temper of the Russian people was well suited for the crusading zeal having for its objects the recovery of Constantinople and the protection of co-religionists viz., the Orthodox Christian subjects of Turkey.

Her war with the Turks

Catharine II in alliance with Frederick the Great had forced the Polish not to elect her own nominee to the Polish throne and had thereby made Russian influence supreme in Poland. The Turks viewed the progress of Russian interference in Poland with jealousy and alarm. Moreover, they were incited by France to check Russian designs in order to preserve the balance of Eastern Europe. Hence when Russian troops in pursuit of the fleeing Poles, chased them across the frontier into Turkish territory, the Sultan resented this violation of neutrality and declared war against Russia in 1768. But the Turks were defeated and compelled to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia. This war was brought to a



close by the Treaty of Katchuk-Kainardji in 1774. This treaty is an important landmark in the history of Russian aggrandisement at the expense of Turkey and as such marks a new development of the Eastern Question. By it Russia got Azoff and a number of places which gave her a firm grip on the northern shore of the Black Sea and control of the Sea off Azoff. The Black Sea was also opened to Russian navigation. The Crimea was declared independent of Turkey and this was step to its eventual incorporation in Russian Empire. Turkey agreed to accept Russian consuls in Turkish towns and to allow Russian subjects free exercise of their religion and free access to the holy places of Palestine. These last clauses gave Russia an ambiguous protectorate over the Orthodox Greek Christian subjects of Turkey. Russia thus got the desired opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey. The treaty was thus a great triumph for Russia.

The war with Turkey was renewed in 1787. Catharine had come to an understanding with Joseph II of Austria for the partition of European Turkey. As a step to this project she annexed the Crime in 1784. Three years later the war broke out. The Russians attacked Ochakoff while the Austrians marched upon Belgrade. But the latter were compelled to call a halt by the threatening attitude of Prussia. Hence Russia fought on alone and forced the Turks to come to terms by the Treaty of Jassy in 1792. By it the Turks recognised Russian annexation of the Crime and Ochakoff and thus lost their hold on the northern coast of the Black Sea up to the river Dniester.

The firm foothold which Russia secured on the north of the Black Sea at the expense of Turkey, marks the definite beginning of Eastern Question in the international political of Europe.



Catharine and Poland

Catharine's Polish policy was as iniquitous as it was successful. Taking advantage of the weakness and the distracted condition of Poland Catharine began to interfere in its internal affairs. Her object was to absorb the whole country and not to partition it. But Frederick the Great of Prussia took alarm at the extension of Russian influence in Poland and so formed an alliance with Austria to prevent Catharine from appropriating the whole of Poland. Catharine was forced to share the spoils with Frederick and Austria. These royal conspirators then tore away large fragments from Poland and annexed them to their own territories (1772). The First Partition of Poland, however, did not completely destroy that state. The extinction of Poland as a state was brought about by two other subsequent partitions in 1793 and 1795.

Estimate of Catharine's Work

Catharine II ranks as one of the "enlightened" despots of the eighteenth century. She was intensely interested in the movement of thoughts in France and Western Europe and corresponded with Diderot and Voltaire. But she did not carry out into practice her love for 'philosophic liberalism'. Her administration though efficient, was in no sense liberal. She did nothing to improve the condition of the down trodden serfs. Although she opened her country more thoroughly to Western influences the medievalism of Russian society remained an anomaly which she did little to remove. She, however, did much to promote the material prosperity of Russia.

The importance of Catharine II in Russian history lies in the fact that she made Russia a factor of great importance in European politics, and contributed much to her territorial expansion. Her reign added two hundred thousand square



miles to the Russian territory. "I came to Russia as a poor girl; Russia has dowered me richly, but I have paid her back with Azov, the Crimea and the Ukraine" -it was in these words that she summed up the achievements of her foreign policy. She was mainly instrumental in bringing about the destruction of Poland and her act in this connection was nothing short of downright robbery. But morality in politics is rare, specially in the Europe of the 18th century.

The significance of Catharine in European history lies in the fact that her attitude towards Turkey gave birth to the great Eastern Question which continues to be, even to this day, one of the most knotty problems of European politics. If Peter the Great was the founder of the greatness of Russia. Catharine made that greatness felt among the nations of Europe by the leading power which Russia, under her rule took in the international problems of the eighteenth century. Her alliance was courted both by Prussia and Austria and on occasions even her mediation was sought to annex Bavaria, Frederick the Great opposed him and appealed to Catharine help. The dispute was settled by the Peace of Teschen largely through Russian intervention. Thus, under Catharine, Russia for the first time established her claim to act as arbiter in the politics of Western Europe. Hence forth she was a factor of importance in European politics and this position she owes mainly the energetic policy of Catharine.

Partition of Poland

The partition of Poland is perhaps the most shameful example of successful political brigandage on record. It constitutes a great revolution in the history of Europe and is remarkable proof of that desire of aggrandisement and of that tendency to round off territories, without any consideration of nationality, which is so characteristic of the eighteenth century.



Poland rose to be a powerful kingdom in the sixteenth century and it was the bulwark of Europe against Turkish aggrandisement. Under John Sobieski her greatness reached its zenith. He beat back the invasion of the Cossack horde and saved Vienna when it was besieged by the Turks (1683). Thus Germany, may the whole of Europe, was saved from the danger of Turkish domination. "But in the eighteenth century she was on the road to decline. Her weakness was thoroughly exposed by Charles XII of Sweden during the Northern War and she was marked out as a prey to her neighbours.

Causes of the Partition of Poland

The partition of Poland was the outcome as much of her own weakness as of the greed of the neighbouring powers.

Poland was a big country but a weak state. She had a constitution which condemned her to anarchy and exposed her to the assaults of her neighbours. The monarchy was elective, and the election of every king was disfigured by domestic quarrels and foreign intrigues. Each of the neighbouring powers sought to control Polish policy by seeking to place its own nominee on the throne. This led to international rivalries very disquieting to European peace. The king was a cypher, because all the powers of the Crown had been whittled down by the concessions which it had to make to secure the votes of the nobles at election. Hence all real power was in the hands of the irresponsible nobility who formed the Diet. But by the absurd system of liberum veto a single member of the Diet had the power to veto any proposal and to stop the machinery of government. Hence no constitutional progress was possible without perfect unanimity.



The social system of Poland was equally vicious. It maintained the worst abuses to the feudal system without any of its advantage. It condemned the peasantry to the lowest depth of serfdom and degradation. There was no middle class to connect the ruling oligarchy of nobles with the down trodden serfs. The society thus lacked cohesion and this evil was further intensified by religious differences. The Polish Protestants called Dissidents were cruelly persecuted by the dominant Catholics.

Lastly Poland had no geographical unity being divided into three distinct regions This stood in the way of national cohesion. More over, she possessed no natural boundary and thus offered a very weak front to foreign aggression. The accident of geography placed her in the midst of expanding powers and she was crushed out of existence.

Conflicting motives of the powers

The weakness and anarchical condition of Poland invited the intererence of her ambitious neighbours as well as roused their territorial greed. The idea of a partition of Poland was nothing new. It was suggested by Charles X of Sweden and was contemplated during the great Northern War. Catharine II of Russia and Frederick the Great brought it within the range of practical politics. But their motives differed. Catharine was opposed to partition and aimed at the complete abosorption of the whole of Poland. This would Russia important strategic bases for military operations as well as an extended Baltic front age. Russia would thus be able to make her influence felt in central and western Europe. But Frederick was determined to foil Catherine's plan, for he himself coveted of portion of Polish territory. He wanted to have West or Polish Prussia which lay between Brandenburg and his duchy of East Prussia, so as to secure the territorial unity of



his possessions. Hence it was the business of his diplomacy to force a partition so that he might have a share of the loot. Maria Theresa of Austria condemned the iniquity of the whole affair. But as she could not stay the hands of her greedy neighbours she had to share the spoils in the interests of the supposed balance of power. "She weeps but takes all the same" was the cynical remarks of Frederick the Great

First Partition of Poland (1772)

For two generations members of the House of Saxony had been elected to the Polish throne chiefly, through Austrian influence, Frederick the Great as well as Catharine II of Russia had designs upon Poland and so they sought to exclude the Saxon dynasty which was pro-Austrian in attitude. Their opportunity came in 1763, when Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, died. Both Catharine and Frederick were determined to exclude an Austrian candidate and to place on the Polish throne a king of their own choice. Their combined pressure compelled the Polish Diet to elect Stanislaus Poniatowsky, a Polish noble and a great favourite of Catharine's. The new king was bound by a treaty not to abolish the liberum veto. Poland was thus brought under Russian control and the way was prepared for her partition.

Treaty of Petersburg

But Russian interference was disliked by many patriotic Poles and so they formed a league called the Confederation of Bar to resist Russian influence. Hostilities followed, but Catharine poured troops and suppressed the league. Alarmed at the extension of Russian influence in Poland, Frederick proposed the partition of the ill-fated kingdom but Catharine rejected his proposals, But Frederick's opportunity came when shortly after a war broke out between Russia



and Turkey. Austria feared that the advance of Russia towards the Danube would check her own expansion in the east. Hence she sought to divert the attention of Russia from Turkey by occupying a portion of Poland and threatened Catharine with an Austro-Turkish alliance. At the same time she proposed to provide Russia with compensation in Poland for her withdrawal from the Danube. Frederick supported Austria's attitude and so Catharine was forced to consent to the scheme of Partitioning Poland. The fall from power of the French Minister, Choiseul who all along had done his best to preserve Poland, aided the royal conspirators, and the first partition of Poland was carried out by the Treaty of Petersburg in 1772. By it Russia obtained Livonia and a part of Lithuania and thus advanced west up to the Duna and the Dnieper. Prussia acquired West Prussia, and Austria got Zips and Red Russia (Galicia).

The Second Partition (1793)

The outbreak of the Russo - Turkish war in 1787 offered an opportunity to the Poles to shake off the domination of Russia. They made peace with Prussia and reformed their anarchical constitution making it a hereditary constitutional monarchy. The liberum was abolished, Catholicism was recognised the state religion and toleration was granted to other faiths. Leopold II of Austria was in favour of these changes, as a strong independent Poland would check Russian aggression on the west. But Russia was profoundly irritated at these reforms, while Prussia looked askance at the growth of a strong united Poland in her immediate neighbourhood.

So after the conclusion of the Turkish war, the Russians invaded Poland and were joined by a party of Poles themselves. This division in their own camp paralysed the resistance of the Poles, while the sudden death of Leopold II



deprived them of any chance of assistance from Austria. Stanislaus was compelled to abolish the new constitution. A second partition was then secretly arranged between Russia and Prussia in which the former got the lion's share (1793). Austria became furious but the revolutionary wars in France stayed her hands. The unfortunate Stanislaus was compelled to accept the treaty of Eternal Alliance which practically made him a vassal of Russia.

The Third Partition (1795)

The party of reformers in Poland, led by the patriotic Kosciusko, made a last stand for their independence in 1794. Kosciusko had some success in the beginning but could not cope with the joint operation of Russia and Prussia. He was defeated by the Russians Maciejowice and taken prisoner. War surrendered after a gallant defence and with fall the revolt collapsed. The third partition was arranged between Austria and Russia 1795. It was the object of Russia to balance the two Great German powers and so after appropriating the lions share of the booty she gave a portion to Austria and a very small traction to Prussia. Poland ceased to be a state in Europe.

Remarks on the Partition

It may be remarked that the destruction of Poland was a well-merited punishment for the extreme selfishness of the nobles. They threatened the peasants with extreme severity and these wretched serfs gained by a change of masters. Secondly, the event may be looked at from another angle of vision. The anarchical condition of Poland could not be regarded as a purely domestic matter. because it invited rather compelled, foreign intervention. Its elective monarchy made the crown of poland the diplomtic sport of the neighbouring powers, giving rise to fierce international rivalries. Thus poland was a veritable tinder-box which



might set whole Europe ablaze. Hence it has been held by some that the powers were justified in preventing the conflagration. None the less the partition of Poland remains a "vast national crime". It set that example of open violation of rights and disregard of the sentiment of nationality which Napoleon in later years actually carried into practice. Under him the policy of disregarding national rights initiated by the partition of Poland, "developed naturally into a system of universal conquest".

Again, as observed by Guedalla, the destruction of Poland was the most shameless and barren act of European diplomacy. Shameless, because it was carried out in open disregard of all canons of international morality and justice. Barren, because it brought no accession of strength to the perpetrators of this shameful crime. The poles were never reconciled to the rule of their foreign masters and their disloyalty was a source of constant trouble to Prussia, Russia and Austria. As a matter of fact Poland which might have been a buffer state, increased the military difficulties of Prussia and Russia. The acquisition of Polish territory imposed upon Prussia the necessity of defending a long frontier on two fronts Russian and Austrian; while Russian acquisitions extended Russian frontiers to a position where they were practically indefensible.

Influence of Poland on the French Revolution

The Polish troubles kept Russia, Prusia and Austria busy and prevented them froming an energetic coalition against France. There were two revolutions in Europe, the Polish and the French, and the Polish Revolution assisted the French Revolution to triumph by withdrawing a large measure of the energies and attention of the great powers. It was Catharine II who proited most by exploiting the situation created by the French Revolution, She cleverly



induced prussia and Austria to undertake the task of suppressing the Revolution so that she might be left free to satisfy her increasing appetite for polish territory. Her manoeuver was successful. Both Austria and Prussia marched against France and when their attention was thus distracted Russia invaded Poland. This made Prussia suspicious and a Prussian force was diverted to Poland for a share of the spoils. The result was that the pressure upon the French Revolution was relieved and at the same time the second partition of Poland was effected. Hence it had been remarked that "If Catharine II welcomed the Revolution as a Philosopher, she used it as diplomatist".



UNIT - II

RUSSIA FROM 1801 - 1887

Although Russia had risen into prominence on account of the achievements of Czars like Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great, she was still a backward country as compared with other progressive states of Europe. She remained in that condition right up to the middle of the 19th century. It was only after that she abolished serfdom and started the industrialisation of the country, which brought liberal and revolutionary ideas in its wake. However, this does not mean that Russia did not play a prominent part in the foreign affairs of Europe. The fact remains that she was counted to be a great power and her every move on the chess-board of international affairs was watched with interest, fear and anxiety.

Czar Paul I (1796 - 1801)

Czar Paul I ascended the throne of Russia in 1796 after the death of Catherine II. Immediately after his coronation, many changes were made in the government of the country. An imperial edict declared that the order of succession to the Russian throne was to follow the principle of primogeniture. The costume, manners and occupations of the people were also changed. Military discipline was made strict. Favoured courtiers who formerly attended drill once a year and old officers who never smelt gun-powder, were called out for daily military parades. The dress and accoutrements of the Prussian army were adopted. Important changes were made in the personnel of administration. Efforts were made to remove corruption from the Russian finances. Czar Paul was a born



despot and he possessed the old Russian sense of dignity. Court ceremonial was introduced and enforced with a rigour which made each day's attendance a dangerous ordeal for the trembling courtiers. The princes and ladies were compelled to come down from their vehicles into the snow to salute the passing imperial carriage. At the coronation at Moscow, the Poles saw their king relegated to a side-gallery and ordered to keep standing. A sort of a reign of terror was established in the country.

As regards foreign affairs, Czar Paul recalled Russian forces from Persia and Georgia. He released the distinguished Polish prisoners. He invited Stanislas to St. Petersburg and received him with royal honours. He went to the extent of telling the Polish leader that he did not approve of the partition of Poland. He declared a policy of peace with all. He felt that his country had been fighting since 1756 and consequently was exhausted and yearned for peace. He was prepared to be faithful to Russia's alliances and opposed by all possible means the French Republic and its Jacobinism. The Baltic policy of Catherine was continued and relations of close friendship were maintained with Denmark. Friendly relations were also established with Sweden Paul was as good as his word. The Russian quadron was recalled and the design of despatching a Russian army of 60,000 men to the Rhine was given up. The oppressive system of recruiting was also replaced. However, there was no slackening of vigilance. Hostility to the French Revolution was a religion with him. When in later days he learned towards Bonaparte, it was because he recognised in him the most powerful enemy of Jacobinism. Russian subjects were recalled from western travels. A strict censorship was imposed on the press and the theatre. Frenchmen



entering Russia were required to produce passports attested by a Bourbon prince. In certain cases, Paul's anger against Parisian manners under the new regime was bizarre and even sank to the level of comedy. High collars were denounced as symbols of liberalism. The unhappy wearer of a round-hat was chased by the police in the streets of the capital. Even an ambassador had to change his head-wear.

A ruler with Paul's bent of mental balance could not avoid trouble for long. His first diplomatic failure was with Sweden. He desired to be on good terms with that country, but met with a rebuff. Relations with France also remained unsatisfactory. In 1797, Paul patronised the Knights of St. John. There was a design to knit together all the nobility of Europe into an alliance of loyalty and honour against the invasion of those equalizing ideas which were attacking and undermining all the ranks of society. He was an 18th century crusader. While not sharing Catherine's pseudo liberalism. He had all her willingness to shine in European politics. He was elected by the knights of St. John to the Grand Mastership. Differences began to grow between Russia and England. The joint Anglo Russian expedition to Holland was a failure and the Russians suffered heavily. In 1799, Bonaparte handed over the Island of Malta to Russia as the Czar was the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John. The victory of Bonaparte over Austria at Marengo in Italy filled Paul with admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte publicly recognised the interest taken by Paul in Sardinia, Naples and Rome and Paul must have felt gratified. Negotiations started with Bonaparte in 1800. Malta was captured by the British Government, but was not restored to Czar. Paul's anger found vent in the Second Armed Neutrality (1800).



Russia, Prussia, Sweden and Denmark were brought together by means of treaties. It was agreed that every neutral vessel might navigate freely from port to port and on the coasts of the nations at war. Goods belonging to the subjects of belligerent powers with the exception of contraband of war, were to be free on neutral vessels. Neutral vessels were to be captured only for a just and sufficient cause and were to be adjudicated upon without delay. A uniform, prompt and legal procedure was to be followed. Bonaparte co-operated with the Czar.

In 1801, Paul sent a messenger to Paris. He wrote to Bonaparte suggesting a French invasion of England and Napoleon Bonaparte agreed. He also asked Bonaparte to persuade Spain, Portugal and the United States to collaborate with him against Great Britain. He prepared a scheme for an invasion of India. A Russian army was to leave by way of Bokhara and Khiva. A French army was to move down the Danube. Another French army was to proceed by way of Herat and Kandhar. The Czar did not seem to care for the difficulties of the long journey through wild and hostile lands. No wonder, the British Government also hit back. In 1801, an embargo was placed on all Russian, Danish and Swedish vessels in British ports. A British fleet under Parker and Nelson was fitted out for the Baltic. The threatened powers prepared energetically for resistance. However, the Danes were defeated in the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801 but even before that the Czar was already murdered.

It is pointed out that for many months before his murder, the Czar was showing signs of madness. He had fits of ungovernable and unreasoning rage. There was no consistency in his behaviour. People were promoted or demoted



without any justification. Men of all rank were persecuted on a mere shadow of suspicion. Officers of the guard were kicked and cuffed or confined for the most trivial offences. Ministers were exiled for a chance won. Scores of unfortunates were despatched to Siberia. One by one, he alienated all of his faithful servants. Many high officials were reprimanded, exiled or disgraced. Soldier hated him because he treated their superiors badly. The atmosphere of suspense became unbearable. It was under these circumstances that a conspiracy was hatched and the Czar was brutally strangled in March 1801.

Alexander I (1801 - 25)

Czar Paul was succeeded by Alexander I in 1801 and he continued to rule up to 1825. He was educated by a Swiss tutor and on account of his influence, the Czar came to have liberal ideas which dominated his mind up to 1820 when he came completely under the influence of Metternich. Alexander was an idealist and a visionary. The Holy Alliance was the outcome of his mysticism, idealism and despotism. His ideals were lofty and he sincerely believed that his mission was to apply the principles of the divine faith to the affairs of the states. He would like to play the roles of fathers to their subjects whom he considered as children. No wonder, he prevailed upon Louis XVIII of France to give a liberal charter in 1814 after his restoration. He himself gave a liberal constitution to the Polish territory under his control. A similar constitution was given to Finland which was secured by Russia at the Congress of Vienna.



After the Battle of Friedland in 1807, Alexander entered into the Treaty of Tilsit with Napoleon and agreed to cooperate with him in the enforcement of the Continental system. This state of affairs continued for some time. However, many factors combined to force Alexander to fall out with Napoleon. In 1812, Napoleon attacked Russia. After that Alexander co-operated with other European countries to bring about the fall of Napoleon. After his overthrow, Alexander was a dominating personality in the congress of Vienna (1814-15). He had a huge army under his command and consequently was able to get his point of view accepted from the other powers. No wonder, Alexander was able to secure a lot for his country at the Congress of Vienna.

After the congress of Vienna, the liberal ideas of Alexander began to change gradually. In 1818, he was willing to join hands with Austria and Prussia to guarantee the territorial status quo in Europe. In 1820, he was completely changed. At the Congress of Troppau in 1820, he made a public declaration of his conversion of Metternich and asked the latter to use him in any way he pleased to suppress the liberal force in Europe. He was prepared to lead his troops to crush the revolts in Naples, Piedmont and Spain. Metternich cooled his enthusiasm as he was afraid of the strong military force of Russia. Alexander remained a reactionary for the rest of his life.

When the Greeks revolted against Turkey, there was every possibility of Russia going to their help. The temptation for Alexander was very great and pressure was also put on him for that purpose. However, Alexander was completely under the control of Metternich whose attitude was that the revolt



should be allowed to burn itself out beyond the pale of civilisation. The result was that the revolt of Prince Ypsilanti was a complete failure. Alexander also did not help the Greeks when they raised the standard of revolt in the Island of Morea.

On the whole, Alexander I was a curious mixture of opposites. Mysticism, liberalism, depotism and imperialism were all combined in one and no wonder he was sometimes a liberal and sometimes a reactionary.

The view of Ketelby is that Czar Alexander had neither the diplomatic astuteness nor the cynical persistence of Metternich. There was a little Napoleonic about his character as there was in his appearance, in his huge frame and round face, his irresolute mouth and dreamy eyes. To his contemporaries, he was a riddle. To Napoleon, he was "a shifty Byzantine" and the "Talm of the North". To Metternich, he was "a mad man to be humoured". By nature, Czar Alexander was unstable, impressionable, well intentioned but infirm of purpose, imaginative egoist, and unpracticable, well intentioned but infirm of purpose, imaginative egoist, and unpracticable and inconsistent idealist. He erected incoherency into a system". His contemporaries saw him variously and intermittently incited by liberalism and depotism, mysticism and imperialism and considered him unreliable and dangerous and often a deceiver and a hypocrite. From his Swiss tutor La Harpe, he imbibed the theories of Rousseau and the sentiments of French democracy. From his Russian governor, he acquired a taste for militarism and military display. The murder of his father in a conspiracy to which he himself was privy, bred in his sensitive mind a horror and remorse which



later developed into a settled gloom and made him susceptible to the religious and pietistic influences of the age. In his liberal moods, he granted a constitution to Finland. He planned the regeneration of Poland. He emancipated the serfs of some of the northern Russian provinces. He supported the abolition of slavery and put forward proposals for a League of Nations. His imperialism led him to ambitious schemes for the territorial aggrandizement of Russia, to the conquest of Finland and to an alliance with Napoleon for the partition of Turkey and the subjugation of Asia. He became a prey to disillusionment and the fear of revolution and religious zeal confounded his liberalism.

In the middle and last year of his life, the religious and visionary influences became dominant. As the defeat of his armies appeared to him to be a manifestation of the wrath of God, likewise, the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow was considered by him as a call to a heaven-sent mission. He began to feel that he was the divinely appointed instrument for the defeat of Napoleon. He thought of himself as the "man from the North", "from the rising of the sun, spoken of by Isaiah, who should be summoned to the routing of Antichrist. Czar Alexander attained the height of his power in 1815. He was the conqueror of conquerors, the liberator of Europe, the soldier of God whose sword had been blessed by people and sanctified by the Lord.

Nicholas I (1825 - 55)

Before his death, Alexander I appointed Nicholas I as his successor to the throne in preference to Constantine who was elder to Nicholas I. Nicholas I had



a reputation as a reactionary and no wonder the liberals of Russia revolted in December 1825. Their slogan was: "constantine and the constitution". They demanded the rule of Constantine who was known for his liberal ideas, but the people were signorant that they mistook the consitution for the wife of constantine. Any how, the December revolt was put down with a heavy hand. Nicholas I ruled for 30 years. He was reactionary to the backbone. He was the very incarnation of absolutism. Autocracy reigned supreme over Russian affairs Russia gave the appearance of absolute immobility. Liberal forces were ruthlessly suppressed. All popular manifestations were strictly controlled. Every avenue to freedom of thought and action was completely blocked in 1826, he set up "The Third Section of the Imperial Chancery" for the detection and summary punishment of any one who advocated "political or social novelties".

The record of the Third section is one of the darkest pages in the history of Russia. The chief of police was the head of the Third section and he was given unlimited power of arresting, imprisoning deportng and making away with any one whom he pleased, without any restriction whatever. The Third section "rivalled, if it did not exceed the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition". Nicholas I tried to have his subjects from the infection of the liberal ideas of Western Europe with that object in view, he put restrictions on foreign travel by the Russians Foregin publications were not to be allowed to be admitted into Russians Foreign publications were not to be allowed to be amitted into Russia without a thorough scrutiny by the censors. Students were discouraged to join the universities. The teaching of philosophy was removed from the curriculum of the universities Russian youngmen were not allowed to go to foreign countries for study. The



press in Russia was put under censorship which was rigorously enforced. If anybody was found in possession of a forbidden book or he uttered an unguarded word, there was every likelihood of his being sent to some part of Siberia to live in exile. There was practically no trial or appeal.

After the third partition of Poland in 1795, there was no Polish state as such. All her former territory was annexed by the neighbours. But in spite of this, the national consciousness of Poland continued to be a vital factor in European politics. It was exploited by Napoleon and the subsequent enemies of Russia, Prussia and Austria. It was the inspiration of many Polish attempts to recover independence during the 19th century. Czar Alexander I granted a constitution to that part of the Russian empire which was inhabited by the Poles and himself opened the first Diet in March 1818. However, when he came under the influence of Metternich, his zeal for Polish liberties diminished. The Poles who were not satisfied with the constitution given to them, resented more its infringement and directed all their wrath and hostility against the Grand Duke Constantine, the brother of the Czar, who ruled the Polish territory with the powers of a Viceroy.

Nicholas I and growth of Russia

Czar Alexander died in 1825 and he was succeeded by Nicholas I. There was a rapid growth of secret agitation and conspiratorial societies. The Polish army was particularly infected. On hearing the news of the July Revolution in France in 1830, there was also a military revolution in Warsaw in November 1830. An



attempt was made to murder the Grand Duke but it failed and he was able to escape with his life although he died later on. On 25 January 1831, the Polish revolutionaries declared the throne of Poland vacant. It was a declaration of war against Russia. On 5 February 1831, 200,000 Russians crossed the Polish frontier. It is true that the Poles fought with heroism but they were defeated on account of their disunion and lack of discipline. On 25 February 1831 they were beaten in the bloody battle of Grochow. The situation was made worse by the outbreak of Cholera. In September 1831, the Polish resistance was completely broken.

In February 1832, the Organic Statute was issued by Czar Nicholas I by which the constitution granted by Alexander I was abolished and Poland was incorporated into the Russian Empire though it was to have a separate government. The Organic Statute was followed by harsh disciplinary measures. An amnesty was granted but it was most unsatisfactory. The soldiers who had taken part in the revolt were drafted into remote Russian regiments. The male children of the rebels were carried off to Russia and brought up in Russian military schools. The Polish universities and schools were abolished. Even the national pictures were removed from the museums of Warsaw to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Organic Statute which was not a liberal document at all remained a dead letter. All effective Government was conducted from the Russian capital. There were spasmodic risings in 1833 and they made the situation still worse. After the rising of 1846, the Organic Statute was revoked by the Government.



Foreign policy of Nicholas I

As regards his foreign policy, Nicholas I considered himself to be a champion of autocracy and the enemy of all progressive movements. In 1831, he was prevented by the Polish revolt from interfering in France on behalf of the Bourbon king. In 1833, he formed a close alliance with Austria and Prussia for mutual defence against revolutionary movements and to suppress liberalism. This triple alliance made Nicholas I the Central figure in the European system and raised the prestige of Russia in Europe. In 1849, he sent his troops to fight against the Hungarians who had revolted against Austria and declared themselves an independent republic. They were also accused of oppressing the Croats, Slovaks and Rumanians. He threatened to interfere against the nationalist movement in Germany. It was his hostile attitude that was one of the important factors which forced Frederick William IV of Prussia to refuse the crown offered to him by the Frankfurt Parliament in 1849.

When he came to the throne, the Greek War of Independence was continuing. To begin with he co-operated with England and France to help the Greeks against Turkey. The Russian fleet also participated in the naval battle of Navarino which completely destroyed the combined fleets of Turkey and Egypt. Although after the death of Canning, both England and France left the war, Nicholas continued to support the cause of the Greeks. The result was that in 1829, the independence of Greece was recognised. The importance of the help given by Nicholas I to the Greek cause cannot be minimized.



Mehmet Ali had helped the Sultan of Turkey in the Greek War of Independence. After the war, he was given the island of Crete as a reward for his services. Mehmet Ali considered it to be inadequate and taking advantage of the weakness of the Sultan, he occupied Syria and Asia Minor. When he seemed to threaten Constantinople, the Sultan asked for Russian help. It was in these circumstances that the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was signed in 1833. Russia was to come to the help of Turkey and whenever she was at war, the Dardanelles was to be closed to the Warships of other nations. This treaty made Russia the master of the Black Sea and protected her against invaders. It also opened the way into the Mediterranean for Russia.

In 1840, Russia co-operated with Great Britain, Austria and Prussia to maintain the integrity of Turkey. The four powers met in London and decided to help the Sultan. The Quadruple Alliance was considered to be an insult to France and there was every possibility of a war. However, Premier Thiers of France was dismissed by Louis Philippe. As a result of the concerted action of the European powers, Ibrahim, son of Mehmet Ali, was driven out from Syria and ultimately forced to surrender in 1811. By the Convention of the Straits of 1841, all the powers agreed to recognize the right of the Sultan to give a passage into the Black sea through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus at will. Russia declared to early of 1833 as cancelled.

In 1844, Nicholas I visited London and proposed the partition of Turkey whose fall seemed to be inevitable to him. He proposed to allow England to have Egypt and Crete and himself would like to have control over the Balkans. He



declared that he had to intention to occupy constantinople. The offer was rejected by the British Government.

Finding Great Britain unwilling to interfere in Turkey, Nicholas I declared to act single-handed. He demanded the right of protecting the orthodox christians in Turkey. As the demand was refused, Nicholas I ordered the occupation of the Danubian principalities in 1853. It was in these circumstances that the crimean war started. Great British, France and Sardinia intervened to protect Turkey against Russian aggression. The Crimean war continued from 1854 to 1856. In the midst of the War, Nicholas I died in 1855.

It is clear from the above that Nicholas I followed a vigorous foreign policy and the influence of Russia was felt all over Europe.

About Nicholas I, Ketelbey says that his entire reign was spent in defence of autocracy. The Russian armies were sent abroad to support autocracy as in the case of Hungary. At home, all kinds of measures were adopted to exclude or suppress liberal ideas. "A stringent intellectual quarantine" was maintained on the western frontiers. All foreign intercourse of a political or philosophical nature was excluded. The Russian subjects were not allowed to go abroad. Censorship was imposed on the press in the country. Those writers who were not considered to be "well intentioned", were silenced. The humblest and the most powerful servants of the Emperor were protected from all kinds of criticism. Strict control was maintained on universities. The police was given arbitrary powers of "arresting, imprisoning, deporting and making away with "any one who was



suspected by the chief of the police. Russian literature was encouraged so that the attention of the people might be diverted from politics.

Russian nationalism was emphasized to counteract the influence of international nationalism was emphasized to counteract the influence of international liberalism. The people of Russia were treated as an army which was to be drilled in habits and thoughts. This was the condition when the Crimean war came. The Russian were defeated. The halo of autocracy was removed. The dishonesty and incompetency of Russian bureaucracy was exposed. The whole of the system was condemned. Russian autocracy was shamed and discontentment came into the open. Russian society was stirred by a violent movement. The condition of Russia was as that of France on the eve of the French Revolution.

Alexander II (1855 - 81)

Alexander II ascended the throne of Russia in 1855 in the midst of the Crimean War. It was he who had to negotiate and sign the humiliating treaty of Paris of 1856. So far as the Black Sea was concerned, the Russian influence was completely liquidated for the next fourteen years.

After ending the Crimean War, Alexander II devoted his attention to domestic affairs. There was a lot of discontentment in the country. The people were bitter against the autocratic government which was considered to be responsible for their defeat in the Crimean War and the humiliating peace of



1856. Under the circumstances, it was considered to be desirable to give some concessions to the people with a view to appeasing them.

Abolition of Serfdom:

The most important reform of Alexander II was the abolition of Serfdom in 1801. There were about 45 million serfs in Russia, forming about half of their population. 25 million belonged to the Crown and the rest to private lords, the Church and other institutions. The condition of the serfs on the royal lands suffered from very heavy taxation, from forced labour and from various kinds of tithes which were extorted from them. Restrictions were imposed on the movements and their right to acquire and dispose of property. However, they were grouped together in village communities known as *Mirs* and they enjoyed a certain measure of self-government through elected councils and village elders. The condition of other serfs in private hands varied with the character and views of their owners. They had practically no power of redress against any abuse on the part of their owners. There were many cases of cruelty and oppression.

The law of Russia gave the owner power "to impose upon his serfs every kind of labour, to exact money dues and personal services from them". An owner could sell a serf. He could send him to Siberia. He could hand him over as a recruit to the army "They perished by hundreds in the factories established... to augment the incomes of these great landed proprietors. They were subjected to the most inhuman punishments, imprisoned, in underground cellars, kept in chains of iron, flogged to death with the knout. . . a whole series of such crimes were brought to



light.... on the properties of the highest dignitaries of state men who enjoyed in St. Petersburg the reputation of statesmen and even of philanthropists". The serfs in Russia were more unfortunate than those in France before 1789. They were slaves in the real sense of the term.

Serfdom had its own effects on Russian society. It resulted in the moral degeneration of the owners. There was economic stagnation. There was the constant fear of insurrection. When the nobles were released from their obligation to military service in 1762, the serfs began to demand the abolition of serfdom. It was contended that serfdom was a corollary of compulsory military service among the nobles. There were many revolts during the reign of Nicholas I. Nicholas I himself thought of abolishing serfdom but he did not go beyond the appointment of commissions of enquiry. He died during the Crimean War. When the war was ended and the Treaty of Paris was signed. Alexander II decided to solve the problem of serfs.

Alexander II made definite proposals to the nobility, He addressed them in these words, "You know that the present system of serfs ownership cannot remain as it is; it is better that we should abolish it from above, than wait until it begins to abolish itself from below. Gentlemen, I beg you examine how this reform can be made. Outwardly, the nobility showed that they were in agreement with the king, but practically they did nothing to see their serfs free. The result was that the Government had to take the initiative in this matter. At the end of 1857, the nobles of the Lithuanian Province of the Russian Empire petitioned for a revision of the relations between the nobles and the serfs in their favour. Alexander II



pretended that Lithuanian nobles wanted to emancipate their serfs and called upon the other provinces of Russia to follow the generous and patriotic example of Lithuania. The result was that committees authorised by the Czar were formed "for ameliorating the conditions of the peasants". It was found that there was a conflict of interests and many problems had to be tackled in this connection. It was in 1861 that the edict of Emancipation was issued to abolish serfdom. About 35 million people were set free.

Edict of Emancipation:

The edict of emancipation had both moral and economic importance. It was based on four main principles. The first principle was embodied in the concession of full civil rights to the emancipated serfs. Every serf became a free peasant and he was absolved from bondage to his masters. The second principle was that he was given not only freedom, but also some land and the noble lost thereby not only his labour, but also some of the property. This was done with a view to avoid the problem of the landless labourers which had been faced in other countries previously. The amount of land to be given to each emancipated peasant was to be fixed in each case by magistrate called Arbiters of the peace who were to decide between the nobles and the peasants. It is true that the Arbiters in most cases were local proprietors, but experience shows that they did their job impartially. The third principle was that the land was not given to the peasants as personal property. It was given to the Mir or the village group and the peasant was attached to that land. The Mir held the land and it was collectively responsible for certain yearly payments which were to be given to the Lord in



compensation. The fourth principle was that the Government was to give all the money to the Mirs required for payment to the landlords for the loss of their lands. The Government was to receive six per cent interest for a period of 49 years. Thus, the peasants were not only made free but were also given land for their subsistence. The collective ownership of the Mir was substituted for the private ownership of the lord and the entire peasant body became responsible for the collection of redemption dues.

So far as the effect of the abolition of serfdom on the land-owning classes was concerned it varied in different parts of the country. Generally it resulted in an enforced economy and a more scientific administration of their estates. The landowners were forced to rely upon whatever was left to them and consequently, they had to be very careful not only in spending, but also in finding out ways and means to produce more out of the balance of the land left to them. To quote one nobleman, "Formerly we kept no accounts and drank champagne. Now we keep accounts and content ourselves with beer". As regards the peasants, there was a lot of disappointment among them. Outwardly, the edict of emancipation seemed to be revolutionary, but in actual practice, it did not bring any great change in the condition of the peasants.

After their emancipation they found themselves burdened with new taxes which were often more than the normal rent of their lands. They found the new taxes to be a very heavy drain on their scanty resources. The serfs had come to regard the land they occupied as their own, and consequently, they did not find any justification for making any payment to the landlords. Moreover, the



authority of the Mirs was as much irritating to the peasants as that of their previous landlords. The general feeling among the peasants was that their emancipation was an illusion. The general feeling can be summed up in the following question: "What, then, is this liberty" It is contended that the emancipation of the serfs was a great humanitarian act on the part of the Czar. If Russia was to be a progressive country, serfdom could not be allowed to continue. The abolition of Serfdom freed a large number of persons who were later on employed in the factories of Russia. Thus indirectly the cause of industrialisation of the country was promoted. The area under cultivation increased and the total output of the country also began to rise. The value of land also began to increase. The state was able to get more taxes. There was an increase in export trade. The condition of the peasants also improved.

However, the abolition of serfdom was not an unmixed blessing. Many peasants found themselves in a worse condition than before. The lands allotted to them were so small that it was difficult for them to have a comfortable living. The burden of instalments which had to be paid to the state was very great. If the tyranny of the lords was ended, that of the Mir was imposed. The emancipated peasant were harassed by the tax collectors and police officials of the central Government. The treatment of the state authorities was often harsh.

David Thomson maintains that the decree of emancipation gave the Russian peasants legal freedom and not economic freedom. They became the subjects of the Government. They were not required to pay dues to their former owner either in forced labour or in money. The control of the Mir replaced the



old authority of the gentry. It was the Mir which paid the redemption money collectively, collected it under sanction of forced labour and other exactions and supervised the allocation and cultivation of the land by the members of the village community. Emancipation meant the abolition of personal servitude but the affirmation of communal responsibilities. The committees of nobles which were set up everywhere to carry out the reform were anxious to avoid the evils of the proletariat in the West. The peasant was to be given a stake in the soil and he was not left free to take up, try to migrate to towns. For that purpose, he required the permission of the Mir and that was not always given. The freedom of movement came when the Mir ceased to be collectively responsible for village dues and taxes and that happened only after 1905.

David Thomson is of the view that if emancipation was a mixed blessing for the peasants, it was usually a welcome arrangement for the land owners. The Russian nobility secured nearly half the arable lands. It was relieved of its responsibilities for the serfs. It received the redemption money in place of the serfs. The aristocracy was strengthened but not weakened by the change. Opposition to the measure came not from the aristocracy, gentry of Russia, but from the intellectuals.

The emancipation of the serfs did not bring about any marked change in the methods or output of agriculture. Whatever its object, the authority in the Mirs fell in the hands of ignorant and non-enterprising persons. For the next 40 years, the land was still mostly cultivated in strips. The traditional crops continued to be grown. The progressive and scientific methods of agriculture were not



introduced. Each male child had a right to such land and the land of the Mir had to be divided periodically to provide for the new generation. The growing population made a decline in the size of the number of strips which each peasant held. The peasant had no incentive to improve his land which he was likely to lose at the next redistribution. He found it difficult to live on his holding. In certain cases, the peasants bought lands from the nobles. A few of them moved to the eastern frontier. As the productivity did not keep pace with the growth of population, famines became more frequent. Personal and family misfortunes ruined many peasants. Great inequalities arose and 80% of the redemption money was advanced by the state and repaid by the peasants in instalments spread over many years. The redemptions were collected along with regular state taxes. The additional burden proved unbearable and by 1905, the outstanding arrears were cancelled.

Taking all these factors into consideration, David Thomson has come to the conclusion that the decree of emancipation did little to improve either the economic lot of most of the peasants or the economic prosperity of the country as a whole. It also did not make for a more stable and acceptable political system. Discontentment continued to grow and that provided an opportunity to the extreme Marxists and Anarchists to do their work in Russia. The Czar got neither credit, nor strength from these reforms. He was nearly assassinated in 1856, in 1873 and 1880 and finally killed by a bomb in 1881.



Judicial Reforms

Certain reforms were carried out in the judicial field in 1862. The trial of civil and criminal cases was transferred from the administrative officials to the courts of justices which were modelled after Western Europe. Provision was made for the election of the justices of the peace by the people. There were also to be district and circuit judges. The senate was to act as the highest court of appeal. Instructions were given for the codification of the laws of the country. Prosecuting attorneys were appointed. Criminal cases were to be tried by means of jury. The trials were to be held in public and not in secret. The only exception was made in the case of the political offenders who could still be punished without any fair trial.

Zemstvos

A decree of 1864 provided that district of the 33 administrative provinces or governments into which Russia was divided was to have a local assembly or Zemstvo. The Zemstvo was to consist of landlords and the representatives of the peasants and towns men. It was to have control over public works, churches, schools, prisons, poor relief and public health. It was also given the power of levying taxes. However, the provincial governor was given the power of veto over the action of the Zemstvos. Although their powers and functions were limited, the Zemstvos were to serve as the political training ground of the people. They were an important step in the direction of decentralization and self government.



Polish Revolt (1863)

The reforming zeal of the Czar got a setback after 1863. It was in that year that the people of Poland revolved against Russia. As in the case of Russia, Alexander II had followed a policy of moderation and liberalism towards his Polish subjects. The repressive system of Nicholas I was relaxed. The political exiles were allowed to return. The Polish Council of State was re-established, together with the Commission for the Regulation of Religious Affairs and Education which had been abolished in 1889. A considerable measure of self Government was also given to the Poles. The Polish administration was separated from that of Russia. The civil and military departments were made separate and the former were put into the hands of the Poles.

A system of local Government with elected councils was set up in Poland. Polish education was encouraged. The University of Warsaw was restored. The use of the Polish language was allowed in the schools. In brief, an honest effort was made to satisfy the nationalist aspirations of the Poles. However, this policy failed. The declaration of religious equality was welcomed by the Jews but was condemned by the Roman Catholics who considered it as a device to further the cause of the Orthodox Church. The political concessions were interpreted as a sign of weakness on the part of the Government. Encouraged by the emancipation of the Russian serfs, the extremists among the Poles increased their agitation and raised their claims. They demanded not only the complete independence of a new Polish Republic but also the re-establishment of the old "Great Poland" as it existed before its first partition in 1772. That would have



involved a surrender of territories by Prussia and Austria also. Such demands were reseeded by the Russians and Alexander II himself decided to put an end to them. The Poles replied with intrigue, conspiracy and violence. The conciliatory of repressive measures of the Czar had no effect on the extremists among the Poles who were determined to have a revolution. In the spring of 1863, the Czar tried to put an end to the revolutionary agitation by enrolling a number of political suspects in Russian regiments scattered throughout the Russian Empire. The threatened men fled to the forests and raised the banner of insurrection. The extremists rose at once but the moderates hesitated. For even they joined the revolutionaries when they were given an assurance that Napoleon III of France would come to their help.

It is pointed out that the Polish insurrection of 1863 was not a war between organised armies as was the case in 1830. Trouble arose at one place while the same was being suppressed at another place. It was not a war of regular tactic and pitched battles but of raids and surprises. There was frightful brutality on both sides. There was heat and force but there were no chances of success of the Poles against the Russian army. The Poles were themselves divided. The nobles, gentry townsfolk and the priesthood rose in revolt with enthusiasm but the peasants had their grievances against their lords and refused to join. Only foreign support could have helped the cause of the Poles. Prussia refused to help as she wanted to cultivate friendship with Russia. Bismark is stated to have observed, "It is a matter of life and death to us also". He posted cordons of Prussian troops along the Polish frontier and thereby helped the Russians to crush the Poles. As regards France, Napoleon III took interest in the Polish cause. He was ready with



his proposal of a European congress to help the Poles but England refused to oblige him as she suspected that Napoleon wanted to fisher troubled waters merely for his own advantage. Austria also refused to cooperate because Napoleon III raised the question of Poland along with that of Venetia and this was not liked by Austria. The result was that the Poles were left to their fate.

The struggle in Poland was carried on by a self-constituted body, the secret national government at Warsaw. It terrorised and killed the Poles themselves. The Czar promised an amnesty and preservtion and contitution of reforms but the Poles did not surrender. However, slowly and slowly the insurrection was suppressed by March 1864.

Result of 1863 war:

As a result of the revolt in 1863, Poland was deprived of all autonomy. The Polish kingdom was incorporated into the Russian Empire as the "Ten Governments of the Vistula". The Polish nobility was completely discredited and the Russian Government adopted the policy of winning over the peasants of Poland. A vast scheme of agrarian reform was undertaken in persuance of that policy. All the peasants irrespective of the nature of their tenure, were turned into free holders. However, they were to continue to enjoy their right of access to the forests and pastures of their former landlords. The landlords received compensation, but they were compelled to take it in the form of treasury bonds so that they may continue to have interest in maintaining the credit of the Government. As a result of these decrees, a bod of 1340000 peasant proprietors



was created. More laws were passed to segregate the peasants from the rest of the community. The peasants were grouped in communes with an elected assembly taken wholly from the peasant class. The larger land owners and the clergy were excluded. To the assembly was given the power of regulating all the efforts of village community and the conduct of its relations with the Russian Government. The intention was to keep the happy peasant pure and undefiled by contact with the elements most hostile to Russia; the effect was to deliver him body and soul to the petty tyranny of the local representatives of Russian majesty". A policy of Russification was also deliberately followed in Poland. Every effort was made to remove or repress every stimulus to Polish nationalism and to effect complete organic incorporation of Poland with Russia. As the Roman Catholic Church was the backbone of Polish nationalism, it was deprived of its privileges and the ecclesiastical lands were confiscated and monasteries were suppressed. The Russian language was made the sole medium of public communication in the state and instruction in schools and universities. In course of time, Poles were replaced by Russians in the courts of justice and other official posts. All those who had taken part in the revolt were banished. All movements towards independent political activity were suppressed. Every effort was made to keep people away from politics by keeping them well amused. The social life of Warsaw was encouraged in every way. Large sums were spent by the Russian Government of theatres and the opera. The result was that Warsaw rapidly developed into a cosmopolitan city of pleasure, the Paris of Eastern Europe.

It is pointed out that "on the ruins of the Polish revolution those the work of Bismark and the system of Russification in the Empire of the Czars". This mean



that the Polish revolt enabled Bismarch to when over Russia. This he did by offering help to Russia against the Poles. It was this timely offer of help wich enabled Bismarch to court upon the eutrality of Russia in 1866 and 1870 when he fought against Austria and France respectively. The Polish revolt also made the Czar the enemy of liberalism. He not only became a reactionary but also followed a policy of Russification of the minorities within the Russian Empire. The object was to crish the nationalist aspirations of the subjects and thereby absorb them into Russia.

Foreign Policy:

As regards foreign policy, reference has already been made to the ending of the Crimean War. In 1865, Alexander II encouraged the Greeks of Crete to revolt against Turkey and demand their union with Greece In 1870, he helped the Bulgars to establish anational Orthodox Church of their own, independent of the Greek parriarch at constantinople. In 1870, he was able to repudiate the Black sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. He fortified Sebastopol and also maintained the Russian fleet in the Black sea.

The rule of the Turks over the Christians of the Balkans was extremely oppressive. No wonder, there was a revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was also revolt of the Bulgars in 1875. The revolts were crushed with so much ferocity and ruthlessness that there was a demand to turn out the Turks bag and baggage from the Balkans. Although creat Britain did not come to the help of the Christians in the Balkans. Russia did come to their help and the result was the



Russo Turkish War of 1877-81. After some resistance, the Turks collapsed and Russia was able to impose the Treaty of San Stefano of 1878. A big Bulgaria was created. The Sultan was to carry out radical reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was to pull down all the fortifications along the Danube and open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the free commerce of all nations. The Czar was to get a part of Annemina large war indemnity and a strip of Dobrudja.

The Treaty of San Stefano was not approved by other European powers and both Great Britain and Austria were prepared to go on war against Russia if the treaty was not submitted to a conference of European powers. As Russia was exhausted, she submitted. The result was that the Treaty of Berlin divided Bulgaria into two parts and deprived Russia of all the gains which she had secured by the Treaty of San Stefano.

The liberals of Russia did not approve of the reactionary policies of Alexander II and consequently they continued their propaganda through out the country. The result was that many secret and revolutionary societies came into existence. The industrialization of the country added to the discontentment of the people. The result was that Alexander himself was killed in 1881 by the explosion of a bomb huried by the Nihilists.



UNIT - III

ALEXANDER III (1881 - 94)

Alexander II was succeeded by his son, Alexander III, who ruled for 13 years. He was rough in body and mind and devoid of all polish and sentiments and he glorified in that fact. He was thoroughly devoted to the cause of the Slavs. He was sworn enemy of liberalism and believed whole-heartedly in autocracy. He had two energetic assistants who helped him in his policy; and those were Plehve and Pobedonostsev. Plehve was put in charge of the police department and he organised the Russian police so efficiently that it could be used successfully to carry out the orders of the Czar. Pobedonostsev was a professor of law and a tutor of Alexander III. He was appointed as "Procurator of the Holy Synod" which controlled the Orthodox church of Russia. In his new position, Pobedonostsev ordered the life and thought of the clergymen of Russia in such a way as was in line with the wishes of the Czar. Pobedonostsev's view was that the legislatures were the breeding places of the selfish and ambitious persons. Freedom of the press was anything more than the spread of falsehood. Secular education was immoral and dangerous. Trial by jury was "an invitation to the arts of Casuistry". Limited monarchy was "a vain fancy". His object was to quarantine the people of Russia from the infection of the liberal ideas of the West.

Persons who were in any way suspected to be associated with the murder of Alexander II were severely punished. Systematic efforts were made to crush liberalism and revolutionary ideas within the Russian Empire. The administration of the Mirs or village communities was put under the control of the land



proprietors who were appointed by the Central Government. The powers of the Zemstvos and Dumas were curtailed. Their constitutions were altered in such a way as to give more representation to the nobles and officials and exclude the professional classes altogether. The governors were given greater authority to use their powers of veto. Secular schools were discredited and the church schools were favoured. The state tried to control the curriculum and teaching staff of the universities. Censorship was imposed on all kinds of publication. Even private correspondence could be interfered with. Restrictions were imposed on associations and meetings. The police could arrest any person arbitrarily and also impose any punishment it pleased. Political offenders were liable to be exiled to Siberia or imprisoned in Russia.

Alexander III also followed a policy of Restriction. No language other than the Russian and no religion other than the orthodox, was to be tolerated within the Russian Empire. The minorities were to be crushed. They were required to give up their language, religion, customs and traditions and obey the Czar completely. Probedonostsev persecuted all persons who did not belong to the Orthodox Church. The Czar issued decree after decree, goading on his officials to intensify their campaign of Russification. The Catholics of Poland were very harshly treated. The church was interfered with, Their schools were completely Russianised, Their literature and language were to be taught in Russian. They were excluded from all public offices in Poland. They were not allowed to sell their land to non-Russians.



In White Russia and Lithuania, the Catholics were discriminated against their marriages and their children were treated as illegitimate. In the case of the Ukraine, the use of the Little Russian language was prohibited for printing, reciting or singing. In Latvia and Estonia, Russian was made the official language and the approval of the Procurator of the Holy Synod was required for making any new building for the Protestant Church. German language was not to be used in the university lectures or instruction in the schools. German place names were changed to Russian names. Local law-courts were suppressed. The Jews were also persecuted with great severity. In 1882, it was laid down that the Jews could not buy land. Restrictions were put on their admission to schools and universities. To begin with, their quota was fixed at 10 per cent but it was later on reduced to 3 per cent. It was laid down in 1890 that all Jews living in the interior of Russia were to migrate to the western provinces. If they did not do so, they were to get licences from the government. They were not allowed to own or lease land. They were put under the strict control and supervision of the government. Many Russian officials organised pogroms or wholesale massacres of the Jews. The position of the Jews became intolerable and no wonder about three lakhs of them originated from Russia in 1891 alone. Alexander III vigorously pursued a policy of imperialism. The conquest and occupation of Turkestan was vigorously pushed forward. A military regime was established throughout the Caucasus. Russia influence in Persia became supreme. He interfered in the affairs of Bulgaria and that resulted in a lot of tension.

Prince Alexander of Bulgaria protested against Russian interference and ultimately abdicated. He was succeeded by Ferdinand. While he was supported



by Austria and England, he was opposed by Russia and Germany. The stalemate continued but Bismarck managed to see that it did not result in an open clash between Russia and Austria. Alexander III encouraged the anti-Austrian feeling in Serbia and won over the army State of Montenegro. The Three Emperors' League was continued up to 1887. However, it could not be continued further on account of the Bulgarian crisis and the differences between Russia and Austria. Under these circumstances, the Reinsurance Treaty was made in 1887. This was also allowed to lapse in 1890 by William II after the resignation of Bismarck. Thus, the ground was prepared for a military alliance between Russia and France and it was concluded in 1893.

Nicholas II (1894 - 1917)

Alexander III was succeeded by his son, Nicholas II. He was a weak man and he believed in mysticism and fatalism. He was abstemious. His wife had complete control over him. Unfortunately, she herself was under the influence of Rasputin. She considered him as a friend and divine counsellor. No important appointment could be made without his approval and it was true of any new policy, Rasputin was himself a through going reactionary.

Nicholas II himself believed in autocratic principles and held the view that the lessening of his authority was "a senseless dream". He allowed Pobedonostsev to continue in his old job up to 1905. As regards Plehve, he was appointed in 1902 as the Minister of the Interior and given dictatorial powers. It was under these circumstances that the old policy of Russification, Persecution and



reaction was continued. The Armenian Church was interfered with. The pogroms against the Jews became more and more frequent. Russian officials themselves were involved in them. Russian language was imposed on the Poles, Lithuanians, the Finns, Estonians, Latvians, etc. Pleve was appointed the Secretary of State for Finland to pursue vigorously the policy of Russification in that country.

The industrialisation of the country began to progress with great speed. Coal fields and iron mines began to be extensively worked out. On wells began to be exploited. The factories made their appearance at various places. Shipping industry began to grow, The annual output of pig iron and coil increased tremendously. This wonderful progress was partly due to the flow of the French capital and partly to the cheap labour of the ex serfs of Russia. Railway construction was pushed forward and that also helped the cause of industrialisation, trade and commerce. The building of the Trans-caspian Railways was bound to add to the wealth of the country. However, in spite of this development, Russia remained essentially an agricultural country.

Industrialisation in Russia had progressed under Count Serge Witte who was appointed the head of the department of railways in the ministry of finance of Alexander III. In 1892, he was appointed the minister of communication. Next year, he was made the minister of finance. With held that post for 10 years and during that period big business developed in Russia. Protection was given to the infant industries of Russia by a policy of protection. Foreign investments were encouraged. Bounties were given to the indigenous infant industries.



Russia currency was stabilized and put on a gold basis. State banks were strengthened. Russian labour was made more efficient. This was done by making liquor business a state monopoly and reducing drunkenness among the workers. Workers were insured against accidents. The government started controlling the working of the factories and mines. The growth of industrialisation helped the cause of Russian imperialism.

There was a lot of opposition to the policies of Witte. Industrialisation strengthened the hands of the workers and thereby helped the cause of liberalism. No wonder, Plehve and Pobedonostsev pointed out the dangerous consequences of the policies of Witte. The landlords also opposed him as agriculture was ignored and prominence was given to industrialisation. It was under these circumstances that Witte retired in 1903. However, his policies were continued.

Russian imperialism brought her into conflict with Japan who was determined to check Russian influence and extend her own. In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Russia was defeated by Japan. The war was ended by the Treaty of Portsmouth in September 1905 by which Russia surrendered to Japan Port Arthur, Liaotung and a part of the Island of Sakhalin. Russia also agreed to leave Korea to Japan and Manchuria to China.

In 1907, Russia made up her difference with Japan and in the same year she made the Anglo-Russian Convention. It was agreed that neither England nor Russia was to interfere in the affairs of Tibet. Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was recognised. Russia was to deal with Afghanistan through the British Government.



As regards Persia, Russia was to have her sphere of influence in the north and England in the South.

Nihilism in Russia:

It is desirable at this stage to refer to the growth of Nihilism in Russia and the failure of the liberal experiment in that country. As regards Nihilism, the Reactionary policies of Alexander II created feelings of disappointment and bitterness in the country. The feeling of bitterness passed through many stages. The first phase was the most pessimistic and the people started feeling that there was no room for liberal ideas in Russia. However, after reading the works of radical philosophers and scientists of Western Europe, the intellectuals of Russia became destructive critics and came to be known as the Nihilist. According to Stepniak, "The fundamental principle of Nihilism was absolute individualism. It was the name of individual liberty, of all the obligations imposed upon the individual by society, by family life, and by religion". Turgeniell defined a Nihilist as a "man who submits to no authority and accepts not a single principle upon faith merely, however high such a principle may stand in the eyes of man". The Nihilists were extreme individualists who tested every human institution and custom by reason. As few Russian institutions stood the test, the Nihilists condemned them all.

The Nihilists did not form a party of action, but their reckless criticism of the government, religion, marriage and ethics brought down upon them the displeasure of the authorities and the Nihilists either ran away to foreign countries



or began to work in secret. While in exile, they came into contact with other advanced radical schools of thought. One of those schools was represented by Bakunin who had managed to escape from Siberia and was living in London. Bakunin was an anarchist and believed in the immediate destruction of all these millions of poor human beings who are cheated, enslaved, overworked and exploited . . . may henceforth and for ever breathe in absolute freedom". On the ruins of the old society, a new one was to be constructed on socialistic lines.

Another movement was started in Russia after 1870. Its object was to send educated Russian young men and women to the countryside and to factories with a view to establishing their contacts with them and there by a waken them from their lethargy and indifference to the state of affairs in the country. The members mixed with the people and tried "to found" on the ruins of the present social organization the Empire of the working classes". They worked under the most discouraging conditions with the heroism and self-sacrifice of the missionaries. A typical case was that of Sophie Berdine who got employment in a spinning factory and worked 15 hours a day only with the object of influencing the other workers in the factory. She was arrested for discussing a pamphlet before a group of workers and she admitted in the court that her aim "was to arouse in the conscience of the workers the ideals of a better organization more conformable to justice; to point out the vices of the present organization in order to prevent the return of the same errors". It is estimated that between 1872 and 1878, about two to three thousands of such missionaries were active in this work of propaganda. However, they did not succeed in their mission on account of the opposition of



the police and the arbitrary methods of the government. Many of them were imprisoned or exiled to Siberia.

As peaceful propaganda was found to be impossible, violence was considered to be the only other alternative. It was felt that the only appropriate reply to the tyrannical rule of the Czar was the employment of terrorist methods. The terrorists were not blood thirsty or cruel by nature. They simply believed that no progress was possible in Russia without getting rid of the conspiratorial and reactionary officials. They perfected their organization and entered upon a period of violence. Many high officials were disposed of in that way, but in return many of the revolutionaries were also executed by the government. In the winter of 1878 - 79 nearly 2,000 arrests were made in St. Petersburg, alone. The suspected persons were not given any fair trial and were summarily executed. Thousands of them were arrested and sent to Siberia by simple administrative decrees. Ultimately, the terrorists decided to kill the Czar himself. In April 1879, a schoolmaster, Soloviev by name, fired five shots at the Emperor but all of them were ineffective. In December of the same year a train in which the Czar was supposed to be returning was wrecked, just as it reached Moscow, by a mine placed between the rails. However, the Czar was saved as he had already arrived by an earlier train. In February 1880, another attempt was made to kill the Czar while at dinner in St. Petersburg. The dynamite exploded and 10 soldiers were killed and 53 wounded. The floor of the dining room was torn up but the Czar escaped as he did not go to dinner at the usual hour.



Czar Alexander II

St. Petersburg was thoroughly terrorized. Czar Alexander II appointed Melikoff practically a dictator and the later tried to follow a policy of moderation. He released hundreds of prisoners and commended the death sentence in many cases. He urged the Czar to give the people some share in the government so that the Nihilist movement which was merely the violent expression of the discontentment of the people might be weakened. His view was that concessions should be given without in any way undermining the authority of the Czar. After a lot of hesitation the Czar ordered on 30 March 1881 the publication of the scheme of Melikoff in the official journal. However, on that very day, as he was returning from a drive, a bomb was thrown on his carriage. The carriage was wrecked and many of his escorts were injured, Alexander II escaped as if by miracle but a second bomb exploded near him as he was trying to help the injured. He was very badly hurt and died within an hour. This was the end of the Czar Liberator. Although the hopes of the liberals in Russia were dashed the Nihilist movement did not end. As Alexander III and Nicholas II followed a policy of ruthless repression, Nihilism was the only appropriate reply. Both Plehve and Pobedonostev followed a policy of revenge. There was no peace in the country. There was terrorism everywhere. The liberals gave up all hopes and waited for better days to come.

Liberal Experiment in Russia, in the atmosphere of reaction and repression, certain new factors made their appearance. The Russia Czar encouraged the industrial development of the country with a view to having more armaments for



imperialist purposes. However with the advance of industrial revolution, their came to the front merchants factor owners and bankers who made up their minds to put a check on the unrestricted powers of the Czar. Being affected by the Western ideas of liberals, a group of these intellectuals began in 1902 the publication of a paper called Liberation at stattgart in Germany. In 1904 a liberal political party called "Union of Libertors" was organized. At the same time, anarchist propaganda was making hardway in the country. In 1904, Plehve was assassinated and Russian armies began to suffer defeats at the hands of the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War. Both these factors had their effect in the **Russian Government.**

Nicholas II was in a mood to make a change in his policy and with not object he appointed Prince Mirski, a man of liberal tendencies, as Minister of Home affairs in September 1904. The new minister declared "though the Russian people are as yet unfit for constitutional government the local representative naciutions of the Empire, the Zemstvos, might and given, greater freedom of action and larger opportunities without risk the established system". He referred to the "sincere confidence in the people as the basis of good government. The press was given greater freedom of expression. In November 1904, representatives from the Zemstoves were permitted to meet in St. Petersburg to discuss what they considered to be the needs of the country. Lawyers, learned societies, city councils and other professional and academic organizations pointed out the shortcomings in the existing system and also suggested remedies or it Although there were differences on details, the people seemed to be unanimous with regard to the urgency of some of the problems. They demanded the freedom



of conscience, speech publication, public meetings and associations. They demanded that justice must be administered by judges. Tutorial should be given to all before any one was punished. The people must be given greater control over the affairs of local government. A parliament must be set up for the whole country and given the power and make laws and control the government. A demand for a national constituent assembly was also made.

The czar was not prepared to oblige the people by giving the reforms demanded by them. The result was that discontentment continued. The Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War added to the discontentment among the people. Thousands of solidiers escaped to Germany and Austria. Many others were forced to proceed to Manchuria at the point of the bayonet. Many business enterprises failed on account of war and thousands of workers became idle and added to the ranks of the discontented persons. Harvests were bad officials were found to be enriching themselves at the expense of the county by selling the supplies for profits instead of sending them to the front. Even the funds of the Red Cross society were not spared. On 1 January 1905, Port Arthur surrendered after a long siege. The revolutionary agitation continued. The university students of Moscow and St. Petersburg paraded the streets and shouted the dogans of "Down with Autocracy" and "stop the War". In December 1904, the Czar issued a decree in which he pointed out the reforms which were considered by him to be appropriate for the country. He ordered his ministers to prepare laws giving ellect to those reforms. There was no mention of a National Assembly in those reforms and the people felt that although the Czar was willing to make a few insignificance concessions, he was not preparedto part with power and to admit



the people to participate in the affairs. No wonder, the agitation continued in the country.

On 22 January 1905, there took place what is known as the slaughter of "Bloody Sunday". A large number of workers under the leadership of Father Gapon tried to approach the royal palace in St. Petersburg with a view to putting forward their grievances before the Emperor. Instead of listening to their grievances, they were attacked by the Cossacks and the regular troops and there was an enormous loss of human life. Throughout 1905, disturbances continued in various parts of the country. In February 1905, Prince Mirski was replaced by Buligin and policy of repression was resumed. Deeds of violence and repression were answered by associations and bomb throwing by the revolutionaries. Strikes were organized at various places. The houses of the nobles were burnt down by the peasants. There were mutinies in the army and navy. The Grand-Duke Sursburg, the reactionary uncle of the Czar, was assassinated as he had the audacity to declare that "the people want the stick" Russia on the verge of collapse.

Manifests of Czar Nicholas:

It was under these circumstances that the Czar Nicholas I issued a manifesto in August 1905. In that document he declared that "while preserving the fundamental law regarding the autocratic power, he had resolved to call, not later than January 1906, the State Council of Duma, consisting of elected representatives from the whole of Russia. The manifesto did not satisfy the people as the Duma was going to be merely a consultative body and not a



representative legislature having full authority to make laws. The workers and the professional classes were not given the right of vote. The sessions of the Duma were not to be public an idea of the restricted franchise can be had from the fact that St. Petersburg which a population of more than 10 million was to have only 9 thousand voters.

As the concessions were considered to be inadequate and illusory, the revolutionary parties continued their agitation and made use of the weapon of strike. The beginning was made with the railway strike which spread all over the Russian Empire and cut off all communications both within and outside the Russian Empire and cut off all communications both within and outside Russia. If any person wanted to travel, he had to use the ordinary highways or the water. Commerce was tied up. Merchants could neither ship nor receive goods. Similar strikes took place in other factories. Except the provision stores, all other shops were practically closed. In large towns, gas and electric companies stopped working the bakers refused to sell bread until reforms were given by the Czar. Students of the universities went on strike. Lawyers followed them and Law courts had to be closed. No newspaper could be printed. The whole of the national life seemed to be thrown out of gear.

II Manifests of Czar Nicholas 1905:

It was under these circumstances that the Czar issued another manifesto on 30 October 1905. He granted "the immutable foundations of civic liberty" such as the freedom of speech, conscience and association. Franchise was liberalized. He



declared "as an immutable rule that no law can come into force without the approval of the Duma, and that it shall be possible for the representatives of the people to participate effectively in the supervision of the legality of the acts of the public officials". Pobedonostev was dismissed and count Witte was appointed the Prime Minister.

The revolutionaries were not satisfied with the concessions and demanded the convocation for Russia. As the Czar did not accept the demand, strikes continued throughout November 1905 and other classes such as rickshaw carriers and telegraph operators also joined. There were mutinies in the army and navy. There was a lot of fighting in the streets of Moscow and other places. The government refused to summon a constituent assembly and ordered elections for the new Duma. Some concessions were given to Finland and the people of that country got some peace. However, there was no quiet in Russia where a kind of civil war was going on between the revolutionaries on one side and the reactionaries on the other. Repressive measures were continued in spite of the manifesto of October 1905. In January 1906 alone, 78 newspapers were suspended and 58 editors were arrested. Thousands of people were thrown into prisons or exiled to Siberia. Martial law was enforced in various parts of Russia.

Even before the meeting of the Duma, the Czar issued a decree which set up a Council of the Empire. The new body was largely to consist of the officials and was to act as the Upper chamber of the legislature of which the Duma was to be the lower Chamber. Laws had to be approved of by the Duma and the Council



of the Empire before their submission to the Czar for approval. It is evident that the powers of the Duma were curtailed even before it met.

Elections to the Duma were held in March and April 1906 and a party called the "cadets" came to have a majority. Witte resigned and he was succeeded by Goremykin. The first act of the new Prime Minister was to issue what were known as "Organic Laws" which could not be touched by the Duma.

First Duma (1906):

The Duma was opened by Nicholas II on 10 May 1906. It had a short and stormy life. It expressed its desire to have a thorough reform of Russia along the lines of Western liberalism. However, it had to face opposition from the reactionary forces in the country who had failed to stop the summoning of the Duma but were determined to make it impotent. The Duma demanded an amnesty for all political offenders. "The first thought at the first assembly of the representatives of the Russian nation should be for those who have sacrificed their freedom for their country". In spite of its efforts, only a partial amnesty was declared. The Duma also demanded a change in the composition of the Council of the Empire which was completely under the thumb of the Czar. It also demanded the responsibility of the ministers to itself. The abolition of martial law was also demanded. It was also demanded that the lands belonging to the State, the Czar and the monasteries should be given to the peasants on long leases.

The first Duma lasted for only two months but the members showed a high degree of intelligence. The shortcomings of the government were criticised



freely and scathingly. The attitude of the ministers was contemptuous and there was a lot of heat in the discussions of the Duma. It was opposed throughout by the Czar and the council of the responsibility of the ministers to the Duma. The public was agitated and there were disorders in the country. A radical party among the peasants was in favour of giving the land of the country to the peasants without any cooperation. The Czar tried to resolve the deadlock by dissolving the Duma on 22 July 1906. He declared that he was "cruelly disappointed" and that the representatives of the nation, instead of applying themselves to productive legislation had strayed into spheres beyond their competence had enquired into the act of local authorities established by himself, and commented upon the imperfections of the fundamental laws which could only be divided by his imperial will".

Second Duma (1907)

5 March 1907 was fixed as the date for the meeting of the second Duma. Stolypin was appointed the Prime Minister in Finland and issued a manifesto which was signed by 230 of them. In that manifesto, they protested against the dissolution of the first Duma and called upon the people to stand for the rights of the down-trodden for popular representation. They appealed to the people not to give the government either soldiers or money. All loans contracted without the approval of the Duma were declared to be invalid. The manifesto failed to create any effect among the people who were either indifferent or afraid of the terrorist regime of the Czar.



The second Duma met on 5 March, 1907 but there was to smooth working. From the very beginning there was friction between the Duma and the ministry and it continued to increase with the passage of time. The government arrested 16 members of the Duma and indicted them for carrying on revolutionary propaganda. This action of the government was resented bitterly as an attack on constitutional liberties and which the Duma was preparing to measure swords with the Czar, it was dissolved on 16 June 1907. Orders were issued for the election of a new Duma in September 1907 and it was to meet in November. A manifesto was issued by the government by which the electoral law was radically changed. As a result of the change, most of the members of the new Duma were to be selected by about 130000 landowner. While the people protested, the Czar maintained that "the right of abrogating the law and replacing it by a new law belongs only to the power which gave the first electoral law the historic power of the Czar of Russia". The government was determined to maintain its autocratic control over the country. All kinds of illegalities were committed by the government officials and there was none to challenge them. Reaction was in full swing.

Third Dum, (1907-14)

It was in these circumstances that the third Duma was elected in September and met in November 1907. It was full of big landlords and reactionaries. No wonder, it proved to be a docile assembly. Although the reactionaries demanded the dissolution of the third Duma also. Yet the Government did not accept their point of view. The Duma was allowed to continue but acted merely as a consultative body and not a legislative body. Its voice did not count much. This



state of affairs continued up to 1914. It was in this way that the liberal experiment in Russia during the first two decades failed. The reactionaries came to power and the liberals were discredited.



UNIT IV

RUSSIA BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND WAR

The Russian Revolution of 1917:

When the World War I broke out, there were many groups at work in Russia who were preparing to bring about a change in her institutions. The most moderate among them were the Octobrists who demanded that the Czar must carry out his proclamation of 30 October 1905 in which he had promised that no law would thereafter be considered binding without the consent of the Duma, which consisted mainly of liberal nobles who were in favour of a Duma working in a subordinate position like the Landtag of Prussia. The Constitutional Democrats were definitely more liberal and were drawn chiefly from the professional classes, university men, capitalists and more progressive nobles. They demanded a wider franchise, more power for the Duma and ministerial responsibility like that in Great Britain. These two groups desired to take progressive steps towards constitutional rule but preferred to do so by peaceful means. They believed that the unifying influence of the Czar was necessary for the preservation of national unity.

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

The social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries were more radical in their aims. As regards the Social Democrats, they were mostly urban working men who had absolutely no real voice in the government and were oppressed by the industrial system in the country. They were a fertile field for socialist propaganda. They were dreaming of the time when all factories would be seized by them, capitalists turned out and they would get an opportunity to work under



better conditions with shorter hours of work and more wages. They wanted to capture political power by overthrowing the Empire. In 1903, this party was split up into two parts known as Bolshevik or "majority" and the Menshevik or "minority". To begin with, their differences arose between them on the question of party tactics also. The Bolsheviks were the extremists. They were opposed to any cooperation with the bourgeois parties and the policy of gradual reform. They stood for the establishment of the dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Mensheviks were moderates and they were willing to bring about a socialist regime gradually by educating the people and securing the cooperation of moderately liberal groups.

The Socialist Revolutionaries comprised the mass of the peasant under the leadership of a few radical intellectuals. Their main interest was in land and they wanted to transform the land from private property into "the property of the whole people". The lands in their possession were inadequate to support them. It is true that in 1914 about three fourths of the land in Russia was in the hands of the peasants but they were eager to capture and divide among themselves the remaining estates of the Crown, the Church and the aristocracy. The revolutionaries demanded the destruction of the existing political and social regime in Russia in the interests of the peasants.

Causes of the Revolution of 1917

Before the outbreak of World War I there had been a persistent agitation in Russia against the abuses of the Russia administration. The country was



simmering with discontent which manifested itself in many ways. Both constitutional and revolutionary methods had been tried to improve the state of affairs but all of them had failed. However those failures had not disheartened the patriots of Russia who were full convinced that they would succeed in the long run. The Russian peasants had been clamouring for land and their land hunger had increased on account of an increase in the population of the country. They advocated terrorist methods to achieve their objectives. The Jews, the Poles, the Finns and other minorities were embittered by the policy of Russification and they were agitating for a change in the system of administration in the country. They were willing to join hands with any part which understood for the overthrow of the Czarist regime. Side by side with the industrial revolution in Russia had been going on a revolution in the realm of ideas.

The Czars had tried to seal Russia hermetically against the liberal and radical ideas of the West, but in spite of that, the influence of Western thought and example had filtered into the country and produced a movement which was determined to end the reactionary regime of the Czars. The great novels of Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoevsky had stirred the imagination of the youth of Russia. While the intelligentsia demanded political reforms on the western lines, the radicals who followed Marx, Bakunin and Kropotkin stood for socialism and anarchism. Nihilism aimed at destroying everything in the existing order of Russia. The failure of the liberal experiment in Russia convinced the people that the employment of peaceful methods was not going to bring about the necessary results. The Russo - Japanese War of 1904-5 had exposed the incompetence of the Czarist regime and the World War I completely destroyed it.



When the World War I broke out, there was a long husism and a sense of unity among the people of Russia. That was parily due to the fact that the action of the Central powers in attacking Serbia and Belgium was regarded by the Russians as unwarranted and flagrantly aggressive store over, Russia's alliance with Great Britain and France was considered a happy augury for the future of the Country. However, all hopes were falsified by the subsequent evennts and cooperation anticipated between the Government annd the people did not materialise.

As the war progresed, the entire machinery of Government disintegrated until it fell into a state of complete colapse. The general mobilizaation increased the size of the army to the staggering figure of 15 million strong. The Government was faced with the problem of equipping and provisioning those men. The national resources of the country had not been fully exploited to meet such an unprecedented situation and the acute shortage of labour due to mobilization made matters worse.

The blockade of the Baltic Sea isolated Russia from the rest of the World and food supplies could not be imported into the country. Thus, starvation haunted the country in the midst of war. Profitering and black-marketing flourished and no check was put on them. There was inefficiency and corruption both in the army and civil administration. The Government had also to face financial embarrassments. The Government adopted the stupid policy of prohibition in the country and suspended the operation of a state monopoly of



liquor which ultimately brought to the exchequer more than a quarter of the state revenues.

The Policy of inflation created a vicious circle. Prices were soaring. Food shortages were common. The situation was made worse by the military reverses in the war.

When in 1915, The Russian armies were driven out of Galicia and Poland, the patriotic Russians condemned the incompetence of the military leaders and inefficiency and corruption in the Government. As defeat followed defeat and the number of the killed and wounded mounted to millions, the criticism of the Government became louder and angrier. There was demand that the inefficient commanders and officials must be punished and war must be prosecuted more vigorously. There were riots in the cities and strikes in the munition factories.

Only a sagacious rule could have saved the situation, but Czar Nicholas II was far from being super humanly clever and, with a few exceptions, the people who surrounded and influenced him, whether the ministers who passed in dreary succession across the political stage, the members of his immediate household, or hangers-on at the court were stupid, corrupt and revolutionary. The role of the Czarina was an unfortunate one. She was a neurotic and unbalanced woman and was under the influence of Rasputin, an uneducated, coarse and licentious peasant. The Emperor had implicit faith in Rasputin and regarded him as the "man of God". The appointment and dismissal of the ministers and high officials of the Government rested with Rasputin. Under the influence of Rasputin the



Empress prompted the Czar to assume in person the command of the army. With the departure of the Czar to assume in person the command of the army. With the departure of the Czar at the end of August 1915 began the personal rule of the Empress and Rasputin.

Everything in the Government depended upon the whims of Rasputin. There were frequent reshuffling of the permanent heads of the various departments and that upset the whole of the administrative machinery. In 1916 Rasputin became the undisputed master of the country. Public resentment began to spread throughout the country and even the arch-reactionaries in the country warned the Czar of the impending catastrophe. The missionaries was that instead of profiting from the warnings given by the well-wishers, the Czar rebuked them. On 30 December 1916, Rasputin was associated by Prince Yusupov and other conservatives.

There was a general feeling in 1916 that victory of way was impossible so long as the methods of autocracy prevailed. The army was discouraged and discontented and tired of a futile war. By the Winter of 1916-17, it was already in the process of dissolution. There was unwillingness to fight. There were desertions in the rear. There was a decline in discipline, distrust and suspicion of officers. By the spring of 1917, there was a discontent and unrest among the masses on account of he economic conditions created by the war.

The cost of living had increased by traps and bounds during the war. During the winter of 1916-17 there was a serious shortage of coal and many



industries closed down. The transportation system completely collapsed under the strain of the war passenger traffic had to be stopped for weeks at a time to enable military and supply trains to pass through to the front. Particularly in the larger towns and cities, there was an acute shortage of food. That was partly due to the fact that millions of peasants were recruited in the army to fight on the front and the demand for food increased to feed the fighting forces. The peasants working on the fields were not willing to part with the products for a currency which had practically no value. The collapse of the transport system added to the seriousness of the food situation. The result was short rations and bread lines in the cities and hungry people shouted for "bread".

Riots in Petrograd

On 8 March 1917, spontaneous riots took place in Petrograd. Crowds of people marched through the streets shouting for bread. On the same day, between 80 to 90 thousand workmen went on strike and joined the demonstrating masses in the streets. Red flags and revolutionary placards appeared on the scene. On 11 March 1917, one of the companies of the Petrograd garrison mutined when ordered to fire upon the people and had to be disarmed. The military Governor of Petrograd posted notices ordering the strikers to return to their work and the Dumas was ordered to be propagated. Instead of returning to work, the strikers established the soviet of Workmen and soldiers to their cause. Even the Probrashensky regiment which was the flower of the household troops intuned and shot some of its officers. Many other regiments also mutinied and as many



as 25,000 soldiers joined the workers. By the evening of 12 March 1917, the revolutionary workers were in control of Petrograd.

Provisional Government:

On 14 March 1917, the Czar attempted to reach Petrograd, but his train was compelled to stop because workmen pulled up the tracks. Meanwhile, the czar had sent an army under General Ivanov to take Petrograd but most of his troops went over to the revolutionaries. On 15 March 1917, the czar decided to give way and grant a responsible ministry, Unfortunately, the concession came too late. There was a general demand that the czar must abdicate and ultimately the Czar abdicated with a request that his throne should go directly to his brother Michael rather than to his young son Alexis. The Soviet of Petrograd was demanding a Republic. A delegation of the Duma visited Michael and informed him that the popular demand was that he should surrender all his powers to the provisional Government until a constituent Assembly could decide upon the future. The request was accepted by Michael and all power fell in the hands of the provisional Government which consisted of the moderates representing the land-owning, capitalist, manufacturing and professional classes. The Czar was deposed and later on he along with the members of the royal family was put to death.

The provisional Government mentioned above was not acceptable to the Russian masses and following the example of the workmen of Petrograd, they set up throughout the country local Soviets, chosen in the town by the factory workers, in the rural districts by the peasant communes and in the army by



military units. These Soviets were controlled by Socialist Revolutionaries and the Menshevik social Democrats who were controlled by socialist Revolutionaries and the Menshevik social democrats who were not represent in the government controlling the Soveier stood for a thorough-going revolution in addition to a political change, They demanded the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The peasants particularly demanded that all lands of the landlords must be confiscated without compensation. The workers demanded the expulsion of the capitalists and the establishment of their own control in the factories. All of them were sick of the war and would like to have peace as soon as possible.

Early in April 1917, an "All-Russian congress of soviets" composed largely at Menshevik Social Democrats and moderate socialist revolutionaries met. The Congress demanded thhe abandonment of imperialism, acceptance of the principle of self-determination and conclusion of peace without annexations and indemnities. It voted to continue the war and support the provisional Government if its views were accepted.

However, on 1 May 1917, Foreign Minister Miliukov sent a note to Allied Governments informing them about the determination of Russia to conclude no separate peace and to carry on the war to a "decisive victory" in conformity with her past agreements with the Allies. This was resented by the Petrograd Soviet and there were protest meetings in Petrograd and Moscow. There were hostile demonstrations in which the slogan was "Down with Miliukov". A number of regiments paraded with banners demanding the resignation of the War Minister and the result was that both the Foreign Minister and the War Minister resigned.



Up to this time, the Menshevik leaders in the Petrograd Soviet had not taken any responsibility for the policies of the provisional Government and had refused to cooperate with it. In the reshuffling, of the provisional Government, the Mensheviks and moderate Socialist Revolutionaries were given representation. Kerensky became Minister of War One of the reasons why the Mensheviks and moderate socialist Revolutionaries joined the provisional Government was the increasing activity of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin in the War:

When the Revolution took place in Russia in 1917. Lenin a revolutionary, was in Switzerland. He took advantage of the general pardon of political offenders proclaimed by the provisional Government of Russia and decided to come back to his country. He was not allowed to pass through the territories of the Allies but ultimately was able to secure permission from the Government of Germany to pass through her territory. Lenin reached Petrograd on 16 April, 1917 and immediately began to work along with other Bolshevik leaders. With the freedom of the press, speech, assembly and organisation guaranteed by the provisional Government, the Bolsheviks got an opportunity to agitate for their programme and tactics.

Lenin was able to exploit for his ends the food difficulties of the people, the protracted war and the delay in summoning the Constituent Assembly. He was able to collect around himself doctrinaire fanatics masters of intrigue and propaganda, ambitious opportunists sentimental visionaries, crazy degenerates



and sincere idealists such as Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, Rykov, Chicherin, Kamenev, etc. Lenin occupied the first place and Trotsky the second. The Bolshevik leaders put before the masses a revolutionary programme including the immediate conclusion of a general peace, immediate confiscation of landed estates without compensation and without delay, possession and operation of factories by workmen, national control of production and distribution, substitution of soviets of workmen, peasants and soldiers for all the existing agencies of Government and exclusion of the properties classes from political rights.

War Minister Kerensky was doing everything in his power for a successful offensive against the Central Powers. His view was that a Russian economy would strengthen the hands of the provisional Government and rise the morale of both the soldiers and the civilians. The Russian advance began towards the end of June 1917 and for a few days all went well. Thousands of prisoners and vast quantities of war material were captured. An advance of some 20 miles was made. Wherever the Austrian lines were not strengthened by the Germans, they gave way. On 19 July a heavy concentration of German troops began a drive in the direction of Tarnopol. The Russians fell back under German pressure. Discipline and organisation broke down. Entire regiments show their officers and refused to fight. The whole Russian line in Galicia took to flight and the Russian gains of 1916 were completely wiped out.

On 16 July, 1917 the Bolsheviks made their serious attempt at armed uprising at Petrograd. Later Red flags appeared among the crowd. Kerensky



telegraphed demanding that the government must take active steps to suppress the Bolsheviks after two days of fighting in the streets both the disloyal troops and the Bolsheviks were defeated. As the strength of Bolsheviks were weak in the army as a whole and on the country side. Lenin gave up his programme of the immediate overthrow of the provisional government and decided to make all possible efforts to win over the whole of the army on his side.

The provisional government was in a very difficult position. There were defeats on the war fronts and there was a revolt at the capital. Kerensky took over as Prime Minister. Although he took steps to strengthen the government, difficulties were created for him by the forces of reaction and militant monarchism.

The Bolsheviks had demanded the dictatorship of proletariat but the conservatives demanded the dictatorship of the military. In September 1917, under orders from general Kornilov gave an ultimatum to Kerensky demanding the proclamation of martial law in Petrograd and resignation of the provisional government. Kerensky rejected the ultimatum and got Kornilov arrested. This created a favourable atmosphere for the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks exploited the situation and within a few days the confidence of the people in the provisional government was completely shaken. The Soviet became more revolutionary. The Germans continued to advance. They captured Riga and threatened Petrograd. Bolshevik propaganda, German



Propaganda and separatist propaganda were creating confusion in every direction. The workers wanted to have complete control over industry.

At this time Lenin decided to strike. In October 1917 he held a "Conspiratory Meeting" of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and a decision was taken to have an armed revolt against the provisional Government. The occasion was the assembling of the All-Russian congress of soviets which was scheduled to meet on 7 November 1917. A large majority of those who had been elected to this Congress were Bolsheviks and there was no doubt that the Congress would declare itself in favour of handing over power to the Soviets. On the evening of 5 November 1917, the Bolsheviks make the following declaration: "The current revolution has raised its criminal head. The Kornilovists are mobilising forces in order to annihilate the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly"

During the night, all public buildings of the background were occupied by the Bolshevik troops. They also brought under their control railway stations, telegraph and telephone offices, bridges power and even the Bank of Russia. On the morning of 7 November it was announced by the Bolsheviks that the provisional Government has been overthrown and Kerensky escaped but all other members of the provisional Government were arrested and imprisoned. The same night the All-Russian congress of soviets approved and passed a resolution taking over the Government. On 8 November 1917 the same congress established a new provisional Government called the "Soviet of the People's Commissars" of which Lenin was the chairman and Trotsky the commissar for Foreign Affairs.



Trotsky sent to the foreign diplomats in Petrograd a note in which it was stated that the Soviet Government intended to prepare to all peoples and their respective Governments an immediate truce on all fronts with the purpose of immediately opening negotiations for the conclusion of a democratic peace". The note of Trotsky was ignored by all the Allied Powers but the Central Powers responded to it and negotiations were started for an armistice at Brest-Litovsk on 3 December 1917.

The negotiations were protracted because both the parties tried to go to the maximum. Ultimately the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed on March 1918. The Soviet Union agreed to give up Poland, Courland and Lithuania and to let Germany and Austria-Hungary determine the future status of these territories in agreement with their populations, to evacuate Livonia, Estonia, Finland, the Åland Islands and the Ukraine and to recognize the treaties between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the central powers, to surrender to Turkey the districts of Ardahan, Kars and Batumi and to discontinue all Bolshevik propaganda in the territories of the central powers and in the territories ceded by the treaty.

It is true that while signing this treaty, the Bolsheviks were able to secure peace for Russia, but her size was very much reduced. But this gave the Bolsheviks a free hand to try their experiment of the dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Allied Powers were involved in a life and death struggle with the Central Powers and had no time to intervene in the Soviet Union and the Central



Powers were glad that they could withdraw their troops from the Russian front and utilise the same against the Allied Powers.

The Bolsheviks had to face many difficulties, There were many Russians known as White Russians who believed that Bolshevism was a passing phase and they hoped that by counter-revolutionary measures supported by the Allies, they would be able to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. The Allies were also not opposed to such an idea. Huge stores of military supplies had been landed at Murmansk, Archangel and Vladivostok for use against the Central Powers and the Allies would not like the same to fall into the hands of their enemies. France was particularly eager for the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime as billions of francs had been invested by the French people in Russia. The result was that after the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Allied Expeditionary Forces were despatched to Murmansk, Archangel and Vladivostok. In November 1918, French forces seized Odessa. British troops occupied the various trans-Caucasian republics. Each of the regions seized by the Allied armies served as a rallying ground for the anti Bolshevik Russians who were plotting to overthrow the Soviet Government. With the White armies planning to advance from the East, from the South and from the West, it was hoped in anti-Bolshevik circles that the year 1919 would see the fall of the Soviet Government.

However, the Bolshevik leaders were able to face successfully the situation and for that purpose they depended chiefly upon two agencies, viz., Cheka and the Red Army. The cheka had been organised immediately after the revolution of November 1917 in order to maintain law and order in the capital, but it was later on



transformed into an agency of error which was used to force the population either into active support or passivity. The Cheka was given the power to arrest, try and shoot all those who were considered dangerous to the Government. In August 1918, an organised Red Terror started which was more bloody than the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. Thousands of persons who were sympathisers of the old regime were murdered in cold blood. For some time, the Soviet Government had practically no army to face the situation. However, a voluntary Red Army was organised by Trotsky who was the Commissar for war. During the year 1918, it was developed into a well equipped and well-trained force of more than 1,00,000 men.

In 1919 a simultaneous advance of the White armies began. Some of them actually reached near Leningrad which was a new name given to Petrograd by the Soviet Government on 22 April 1920. However, they were defeated and driven back. The defeat of the White armies was partly due to the fact that the Russian people, particularly the peasants, considered them as the agents of reaction who were trying to restore lands to the landlords and the old privileges to the aristocracy. The Russian peasants were not prepared to be liberated by the armies of the landlords. Moreover, whenever the White armies went, they resorted to looting. The masses of Russia came to believe that out of Bolshevism and extreme military reaction, the former was to be preferred as a lesser evil. Moreover, the conduct of the White armies and the bloody repressive measures of their leaders alienated popular sympathy in the Allied countries.



The result was that by the close of 1919, all Allied forces were withdrawn from European Russia although the Japanese continued to occupy Vladivostok for some time more. The Bolshevik leaders had still the face another danger. The White forces of the South were actively supported by the French Government and during the early months of 1910, they moved northward in the Ukraine. At the same time the Poles invaded the Soviet Union and in May 1920, they were able to occupy the city of Kiev. Once again, the people of the Soviet Union rallied to the support of their Government and the Poles were hurled back almost to Warsaw. It was the French help which saved them from a disaster. By the close of the year 1920, European Russia was cleared of active counter-revolutionary armies.

The Bolsheviks completely altered the political life of the people of Russia. In 1918, a new constitution was framed and that established the Russian Soviet Federated Soviet Republic with Moscow as the National Capital instead of Leningrad. Russia became a federal state in which all power belonged to the workers "united in urban and rural soviets". The new Republic was declared to be a free socialist society of the working people of Russia.

The Russian revolution of 1917 was a great event in world history. It was the mightiest event of the World War I. It set up a novel type of state in which power rests in the communist party as representing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Soviet Union is the dream of Marx given a practical shape. It is socialism in action. The Russian revolution is regarded with blind hatred or blind idolatry.



Lenin and Stalin:

Lenin, Lenin and his follower were able to capture power in 1917, but they had many problems to face. Land was given to the peasants who were expected to cultivate the same, but they were not given full control over the produce of their labours, the whole of which belonged to the state. The peasants were allowed to retain as much as was needed by them, but the surplus was taken over by the state at a price fixed by itself. The result was that the peasants did not grow more than what was sufficient to sustain themselves. As there was no surplus, famine appeared in the towns. The result was that the government had to change its policy and allow the farmers to sell their surplus produce in the open market.

The Russian Government had a two-fold problem - one was to establish communism in Russia and the other was to spread the same throughout of the world. There were many idealists among the Bolsheviks who were of the opinion that communism and capitalism could not live side by side and if communism was to survive in Russia, capitalism in other parts of the world must be overthrown. The leader of this group was Trotsky who was the right hand man of Lenin. Zinoviev was closely associated with him and his duty was to organise communist propaganda in Western Europe. There were many practical men among the Bolsheviks who were of the opinion that they should concentrate all their energy in Russia and make their country so great that the other countries were made to feel jealous of their progress. The leader of this section was Stalin. The struggle between the two groups continued.



Stalin's ruling:

Stalin, Lenin died in 1924 having put communism on a stable basis in his country. His death was followed by a struggle for supremacy between Stalin and Trotsky. It was both a struggle of personalities and ideologies. Both of them were determined to make themselves supreme in the country. Ultimately Stalin won in 1927. Trotsky was turned out first from the Communist Party and then from Russia itself. He ran away to Mexico where he was murdered in August 1940.

The Government of Russia under Lenin and Stalin was essentially a dictatorship where the political opponents had to place. It is true that elections were held but there was only one candidate from each constituency. The very existence of the other parties was not allowed. There was jealousy and suspicion among the members of the communist party itself. The result was that one tried to oust the other. Occasionally there were purges in the communist Party. Those who did not see eye to eye with the communist party were put in labour camps. As communism was opposed to Christianity, the Orthodox Church suffered in Russia. The OGPU or the secret police organisation was always busy to trace out every sign of disaffection or disloyalty to the new communist state in Russia.

If the people in Russia had no liberty as such, they made progress in many ways. Education spread in the country, Both children and adults learned to read and write. Education spread even among the peasants. There was no



unemployment as the state found work for all. The working conditions were improved. Medical and dental treatment was given to all those who were in need of it. Homes were built for the aged. Large blocks of flats were erected in many towns. The general standard of living improved. But the price for all this was to be paid and that was the worker had to be completely subordinate to the state.

Stalin and Five year plan:

After having established his supremacy in the country, Stalin prepared a Five-Year plan for the development of agriculture and industry in the country. In place of the small peasant farms, very large farms were established in the country and the most modern agricultural machinery was installed to produce the maximum. Those who opposed the change were imprisoned and put in labour camps. Some of them were even murdered. But the result was increased production. The important industries, such as mines, railways, steel and textiles were entirely under the control of the state. It was for the state to decide what material was to be used, what quantity was to be produced and what wages were to be paid to the workers. In 1932, it was declared that the plan had achieved in four years what was expected to be achieved in five years. A second Five-Year Plan was announced for the period 1933-38. Stalin Continued to rule till 1953. He led his country to victory in World War II.

Foreig Policy:



The Russian foreign policy had many objectives, viz. security against Japan in the Far-East including ports in Manchuria and trade outlets into Asia, the Russianizing of or acquisition of full rights over the Bosphorus and the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, Pan-Slavism with Russia as a leading member of the Slav family of nations, a belt of subject-nationalities in the West to act as a buffer against the larger nations of Europe. Then came the Revolution of 1917. The Communists were forced to start negotiations and in March 1918, an armistice was signed with Germany and Austria-Hungary at Brest Litovsk. The war was brought to an end in Eastern Europe, but Russia had to surrender vast territories to the Central Powers. She agreed to pay three hundred million gold Roubles as war indemnity. She undertook to set up independent Finland, Estonia and Lithuania.

The communists in Russia had to fight against the interventionists from various countries of Western Europe and the United States who seemed to be determined to uproot the Communist regime in Russia. The old aristocracy in Russia also tried to stage a counter revolution and considerable forces were raised by General Denikin in South Russia and Admiral Kolchak in the North. Great Britain and France also sent assistance to these "White" leaders. People of Russia were asked by the Communist Government to fight what they called a patriotic war against the capitalist countries and it took about three years to drive out the foreigners from the Russian soil. Trotsky played an important part in driving out foreigners from the Russian soil with the help of the Red Army.



To begin with, Russia was regarded as the Pariah of Europe and consequently no country would like to deal with her. However, the situation began to change gradually. In 1921 Great Britain entered into a trade agreement with Russia and thereby recognised the new regime in Russia. In the same year, Russia entered into a treaty of friendship with Germany. This repudiated all previous agreement between the two countries. Both parties agreed to refrain from entering into any hostile agreement against each other. Similar agreements were made with Turkey, Afghanistan and Outer Mongolia. In 1922, Russia and Germany entered into the Treaty of Rapallo by which both the countries gave up all financial claims including war indemnities arising out of the World War I. Diplomatic and consular relationships were started.

The principle of the most-favourable nation was adopted in the treaty which made a tremendous sensation in the world. However, it had not any lasting effect. The fact that Germany had made a bargain with Russia, damaged her case in the United States and Great Britain. There was close cooperation between the German Generals and the Red Army after Rapallo and consequently many alarmist reports were started. In 1922 the Soviet Union was invited to the World Economic Conference at Geneva. The Soviet delegation proposed the consideration of that Article of the Treaty of Versailles which had prescribed general disarmament and also recommended that efforts should be made to implement proposals regarding general disarmament. As her suggestions were not accepted, she herself summoned a disarmament conference of the states bordering on her frontiers. She also recognised the independence of Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Poland.



Treaty of Riga:

The Peace Settlement had fixed the Polish Eastern frontier on a line suggested by Lord Curzon and known as the Curzon Line. That included in Poland territories with a mainly Polish population, but left to Russia lands farther east that were inhabited by Russian-speaking people. The Poles were dissatisfied and in 1920, they made war on Russia. They were defeated and driven back almost to Warsaw. French assistance was sent to the Poles under General Weygand and the tide turned again. The Russians were defeated in the battle of Vistula and driven back into their own country. By the Treaty of Riga, signed in March 1921, Poland got extensive lands to the east of Curzon Line.

In 1924, Russia entered into an agreement with China regarding the Chinese Eastern Railway. In 1924, de jure recognition was accorded to the Soviet Union by Great Britain and she was followed by Italy and France. The United States granted recognition in 1933.

To begin with, the Communists of Russia believed in spreading Communism in every nook and corner of the world and were prepared to adopt any measures to achieve their objective. The Comintern was started in 1919 for that purpose. However, there was a change in Russia under Stalin. To quote Stalin, "The goal is to consolidate the dictatorship of imperialism in all countries". After 1927, the Soviet Union entered into the Proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the overthrow of a series of non-aggression pacts of Paris, but also saw



to it that the countries under her influences did the same. She was in favour of the Pact coming into force at once.

The Soviet union proposed to Poland and Germany the conclusion of a Baltic Pact including the Baltic States for guaranteeing mutual aid and assistance in the event of any signatory state being attacked, but those proposals were not accepted either by Germany or by Poland. The Soviet Union Proposed to Germany the conclusion of an eastern Locarno in which the principles of the Locarno Pact of 1925 were to be applied, but the suggestion was rejected by Germany. Another attempt was made by the Soviet Union to enter into a tripartite mutual assistance pact with Germany and France. However, she was not successful in her attempt. It was under these circumstances that the Soviet Union entered into a Treaty of Friendship with France alone in 1935.

The League and Russia:

The League To begin with, the Soviet Union condemned the League of Nations as "a Holy Alliance of the bourgeoisie for the suppression of the proletarian revolution" and this continued to be her attitude throughout the 1920's. In 1928, a manifesto of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern declared, "The League of Nations, the product of Versailles the most shameless robber treaty of the last decade, cloaks the war-like work of its members by working out projects for disarmament". However, as the danger from Nazi Germany began to increase, there was a change in her attitude towards the League. In 1933, both Molotov and Litvinov spoke favourably of the League and gave a hint that the



Soviet Union would be willing to join it. The initiative was taken by France and the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934. Litvinov, the Soviet representative in the League, was very enthusiastic about the work of the League. He wanted the League to play an important part in world politics. He was particularly emphatic about collective security. His view was that peace was indivisible and he criticised those members of the League who were not prepared to take action against the aggressors. He condemned the attitude of the members of the League on the question of Abyssinia.

Spain and Soviet:

When the Civil War broke out in Spain, France and Great Britain followed a policy of non-intervention and refused to support the Russian efforts to save the Republican regime in Spain. The result was that General Franco and his colleagues were successful in overthrowing the Republican Government in Spain. That was a great defeat for the Soviet Union.

Soviet and Germany:

The Soviet Union expected trouble from Hitler and consequently she left no stone unturned to make her defences as strong as possible. It is estimated that in 1936, the Red Army had 13 lacs of troops, 6000 tanks and 7000 aeroplanes. Every effort was made to increase the output of mechanised armaments.



Soviet and France:

As both the Soviet Union and France were afraid of Hitler's designs, they entered into a Treaty of Mutual Assistance in May 1935. This treaty was linked up with an agreement to be signed with Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic states. As the second part was not realised, the treaty between France and the Soviet Union remained practically ineffective. There is no comparison between this treaty and the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894 which brought the two countries together into the World War I in 1914.

Soviet and Czechoslovakia:

Czechoslovakia On the occasion of the Munich Crisis, over Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union offered to help Czechoslovakia against Germany but nobody bothered about the offer. The things were taken to such extremes that no representative of the Soviet Union was invited to take part in the negotiations with Hitler regarding Czechoslovakia. This was resented by the Soviet Union. It is possible that this treatment might have forced the Soviet Union to come to an understanding with Germany directly and that could be the possible basis of the non-aggression pact of August 1939.

Anglo-Soviet Negotiations:

After the annexation of the rest of Czechoslovakia by Hitler in March, 1939, the Soviet Union was drawn once more to the side of Great Britain and



France. All the three countries joined in the denunciation of the German annexation of Czechoslovakia. The same was the case when Germany began to make territorial demands on Poland and also assumed a hostile attitude toward Rumania. There was the urgent necessity of an immediate agreement between Great Britain and France on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other for collective action against Germany and negotiations were started for that purpose. However, there were certain difficulties in the way which were not possible to overcome. The views of the French and the British Governments differed fundamentally from those of the Soviet Union. Great Britain and France proposed a Three-power Declaration in which the signatories were to announce their readiness to help one another if one or more of them were compelled to fight against Germany, as a result of German attack on Poland or Rumania, but the Soviet Union stood for a binding alliance. The Great Britain was not willing to do because she still hoped to have some peaceful settlement with Germany. Such an alliance was bound to offend Poland which feared Soviet help as much as the German attack. Moreover, neither Great Britain nor France was prepared to commit herself to war in defence of Finland, Estonia and Latvia. The result was that the negotiations dragged on and nothing came out of them.

Non-Aggression Pact

On 23 August 1939, the Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union was signed in Moscow. There was a secret additional Protocol added to the pact in which the parties agreed to divide the territory of Poland among themselves. The pact was a bargain between enemies, each of whom



gained by it. Germany gained through the assurance that she would not face a Soviet attack from the East and she paid for that assurance by granting concessions to a power whom she expected ultimately to fight. However, she was confident that she could choose the time of the conflict and Russia was too weak to begin an offensive war. Russia felt that she was making the best of a bad bargain. She was not sure of the attitude of Great Britain and France and the agreement in a war and increased her prestige in Eastern Europe. There was the possibility of a war between Germany on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other over Poland and all three could exhaust themselves and the Soviet Union could gain thereby. The pact was a gamble which the Soviet leaders were compelled to do. All hopes of Great Britain and France for Three-Power action were ended. For two years from August 1939 to June 1941, there was collaboration between the Soviet Union and Germany, but on 22 June 1941, the German forces invaded Russia and that brought her near Great Britain, France and the United States.

Soviet Union and China:

As regards the relations between Russia and China, the Chinese Government broke off relations with Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. She took part in the Allied expedition to Siberia. She tried to extend her hold on the border areas, notably Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang. It took over the management of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. The situation in China seemed to be favourable for the spread of communist propaganda and hundreds of communist agents were sent to China. In 1923 Dr. Sun Yat-sen asked for Russian



help to bring about law and order in his country. Borodin, one of the top organizers of the Comintern, went to China along with advisers. He helped Dr. Sun Yat-sen in re-organising and building the influence of the Kuomintang. In January 1924, the communists were admitted into the Kuomintang. The Communists hoped to overthrow the Government in China and take possession of the same. General Chiang Kai-shek did not like the Communist influence in China and in 1927, he was successful in turning them out from the country. They were not only expelled from the Kuomintang hundreds of them were killed and many saved their lives by hiding themselves.

Soviet Union and China:

After the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, tension between the soviet Union and Japan increased. In order to meet the Japanese danger, the Soviet leaders strengthened their defences in the Far East and tried to improve relations with China. Diplomatic relations with China were resumed in 1932. In 1935, the Chinese Communists offered to join the Kuomintang in order to resist Japanese aggression in China. From 1935 to 1945, the relations between the Soviet Union and China were technically all right. In August 1937, China and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact. For two years, Russia gave China diplomatic support and considerable war material. After Nazi attack on Russia, the relations between the Soviet Union and China improved again.



Soviet Union and Japan:

Japan, As regards the relations of Russia with Japan, Stalin had a horror of war on two fronts. He was eager to avert war in the Far East so that he could fight effectively in the West. In order to maintain peace in the Far East, Stalin sold the Chinese Eastern Rail Road which had cost Russia 225 million dollars to Japan for 30 million dollars only. He also negotiated fishery treaties on terms favourable to Japan. Stalin would not like to follow a policy which could be taken for cowardice. Consequently, when Japanese troops, in an effort to test Soviet strength, attacked Russian troops in an undeclared war, along the Outer Mongolian frontier, the Soviet army under "General Bluche" routed the Japanese forces. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was considered by the Soviet Union as a direct threat and she condemned it in the strongest possible terms. Between 1933 and 1941, the Soviet Union and Japan were engaged in what is called a semi-war which had all the qualities of a cold war warmed up to the boiling point. The border clashes at Changkufeng in 1935 and at Nomonhan in 1939 were full scale battles and in both cases Japan was defeated. In 1936, Japan entered into the anti-Comintern pact with Germany against Russia. This pact was treated with contempt by the Soviet Union. In 1941, the Soviet Union entered into a non-aggression pact with Japan. In April, 1942, when Japan renewed the anti-comintern pact, the Soviet Union protested and cancelled the Japanese oil and coal concessions in Northern Sakhalin. The Soviet Union did not declare war against Japan throughout World War II.



UNIT - V

THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA (1953 - 1964)

In the USSR, during the eleven-year period from the death of Joseph Stalin (1953) to the political ouster of Nikita Khrushchev (1964), the national politics were dominated by the Cold War. It was a struggle between united states and USSR for the global spread of their respective socio-economic systems and ideology and the defense of hegemonic spheres of influence. Since the mid - 1950s, despite the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) having disowned Stalinism, the political culture of Stalinism - a very powerful General Secretary of the CPSU - remained in place, albeit weakened.

Stalin's immediate legacy

After Stalin's death in March 1953, he was succeeded by Nikita Khrushchev as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Georgi Malenkov as Premier of the Soviet Union. However the central figure in the immediate post - Stalin period was the former head of the state security apparatus, Lavrentiy Beria.

Stalin had left the Soviet Union in an unenviable state when he died. Atleast 2.5 million people languished in prison and in labor camps, science and the arts had been subjugated to socialist realism and agriculture productivity on the whole was meager. The country had only one quarter of the livestock it had in 1928 and in some areas, there were fewer animals than there had been at the start



of World War I. Private plots accounted for at least three quarters of meat, dairy and produce output. Living standards were low and consumer goods scarce. Moscow was also remarkably isolated and friendless on the international stage, Eastern Europe excluding Yugoslavia was held to the Soviet yoke by military occupation and soon after Stalin's death, protests and revolts would break out in some Eastern Bloc countries. China paid homage to the departed Soviet leader, but held a series of grudges that would soon boil over. The United States had military bases and nuclear - equipped bomber aircraft surrounding the Soviet Union on three sides, and American aircraft regularly overflew Soviet territory on reconnaissance missions and to parachute agents in. Although the Soviet authorities shot down many of these aircraft and captured most of the agents dropped onto their soil, the psychological effect was immense.

American fears of Soviet military and especially nuclear capabilities were strong and heavily exaggerated; Moscow's only heavy bomber, the Tu-4, was a direct clone of the B-29 and had no way to get to the United States except on a one way suicide mission and the Soviet nuclear arsenal contained only a handful of weapons.

Beria's First Deputy Premiership

Domestic policy

Lavrentiy Beria, despite his record as part of Stalin's terror state, initiated a period of relative liberalisation, including the release of some political prisoners. Almost as soon as Stalin was buried, Beria ordered Vyacheslav Molotov's wife



freed from imprisonment and personally delivered her to the Soviet foreign minister. He also directed the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) to reexamine the Doctors' Plot and other "false" cases. Beria next proposed stripping the MVD of some of its economic assets and transferring control of them to other ministries, followed by the proposal to stop using forced labour on construction projects. He then announced that 1.1 million non-political prisoners were to be freed from captivity, that the Ministry of Justice should assume control of labour camps, from the MVD, and that the Doctor's plot was false. Finally, he ordered a halt to physical and psychological abuse of prisoners. Beria himself was a non-Russian.

The leadership also began allowing some criticism of Stalin, saying that his one-man dictatorship went against the principle laid down by Vladimir Lenin. The war hysteria that characterized his last years was toned down, and government bureaucrats and factory managers were ordered to wear civilian clothing instead of military - style outfits. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were given serious prospects of national autonomy, possibly similarly to other Soviet satellite states in Europe.

Foreign policy

Beria also turned his attention to foreign policy. A secret letter found among his papers after his death, suggested restoring relations with Titoist Yugoslavia. He also criticized Soviet handling of Eastern Europe and the numerous "mini-Stalins" such as Hungary's Matyas Rakosi. East Germany



particularly was in a tenuous situation in 1953 as the attempt by its premier Walter Ulbricht to impose all-out Stalinism had cause a mass exodus of people to the West. Beria suggested that East Germany should just be forgotten about entirely and there was "no purpose" for its existence. He revived the proposal Stalin had made to the Allie in 1946 for the creation of a united, neutral Germany.

Opposition to Beria

Beria displayed a considerable degree of contempt for the rest of the Politburo, letting it be known that they were "complicit" in Stalin's crimes. However, it was not deeprooted ideological disagreements that turned them against Beria. Khrushchev in particular was appalled at the idea of abandoning East Germany and allowing the restoration of capitalism there, but that alone was not enough to plot Beria's downfall and he even supported the new, more enlightened policy towards non-Russian nationalities. The Poliburo soon began stonewalling Beria's reforms and trying to prevent them from passing. One proposal, to reduce sentences handed down by the MVD to 10 years max, was later claimed by Khrushechev to be a ruse. He wants to be able to sentence people to ten years in the camps, and then when they were freed, sentence them to another ten years. This is his way of grinding them down. Molotov was the strongest opponent of abandoning East Germany, and found in Khrushchev an unexpected ally.

By late June, it was decided that Beria could not simply be ignored or stonewalled, he had to be taken out. They had him arrested on 26 June with the



support of the armed forces. At the end of the year, he was shot following a show trial where he was accused of spying for the West, committing sabotage, and plotting to restore capitalism. The secret police were disarmed and reorganized into the KGB, ensuring that they were completely under the control of the party and would never again be able to wage mass terror.

Collective leadership

For a time after Berias deposition, Georgi Malenkov was the senior most figure in the Politburo. Malenkov, an artistic-minded man who courted intellectuals and artists, had little use for bloodshed or state terror. He called for greater support of private agricultural plots and liberation of the arts from rigid socialist realism and he also criticized the pseudoscience of biologist Trofim Lysenko. In a November 1953 speech, Malenkov denounced corruption in various government agencies. He also reappraised Soviet views of the outside world and relations with the West, arguing that there were no disputes with the United States and her allies that could not be resolved peacefully, and that nuclear war with the West would simply bring about the destruction of all parties involved.

Khrushchev Era

In the post-Beria period, Khrushchev rapidly began to emerge as the key figure. Khrushchev proposed greater agricultural reforms. although he still refused to abandon the concept of collective farming and continued to support Lysenko's pseudoscience. In a 1955 speech, he argued that Soviet agriculture needed a shot in the arm and that it was silly to keep blaming low productivity



and failed harvests on Tsar Nicholas II, dead for almost 40 years. He also began allowing ordinary people to stroll the ground of the Kremlin, which had been closed off except to high ranking state officials for over 20 years.

The late Stalin's reputation meanwhile started diminishing. His 75th birthday in December 1954 had been marked by extensive eulogies and commemorations in the state media as was the second anniversary of his death in March 1955. However, his 76th birthday at the end of the year was hardly mentioned. The new leadership declared an amnesty for some serving prison sentences for criminal offenses, announced price cuts, and relaxed the restrictions on private plots. De-Stalinisation would come to spell an end to the role of large-scale forced labour in the economy.

During the period of collective leadership, Khrushchev gradually rose to power while Malenkov's power waned, Malenkov was criticised for his economic reform proposals and desire to reduce the CPSU's direct involvement in the day-to-day running of the state. Molotov called his warning that nuclear war would end all of civilisation to be "nonsense" since according to Karl Marx, the collapse of capitalism was a historical inevitability, Khrushchev accused Malenkov of supporting Beria's plan to abandon East Germany, and of being a "capitulationist, social democrat and a Menshevist".

Agricultural Reforms

Khrushchev was also headed for a showdown with Molotov, after having initially respected and left him alone in the immediate aftermath of Stalin's death.



Molotov began criticizing some of Khrushchev's ideas and the latter accused him in turn of being an out-of-touch ideologue who never left his dacha or the kremlin to visit farms or factories. Molotov attacked Khrushchev's suggestions for agricultural reform and also his plans to construct cheap, prefab apartments to alleviate Moscow's severe housing shortages, Khrushchev also endorsed restoring ties with Yugoslavia, the split with Belgrade having been heavily engineered by Molotov, who continued to denounce Tito as a fascist.

A 1955 visit by Khrushchev to Yugoslavia patched up relations with that country, but Molotov refused to back down. The near-total isolation of the Soviet Union from the Outside world was also blamed by Khrushchev on Molotov's handling of foreign policy and the former admitted in a speech to the Central committee the Obvious Soviet complicity in starting the Korean War.

Congress of the CPSU

At a closed session of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on 25 February 1956, Khrushchev shocked his listener by denouncing Stalin's dictatorial rule and cult of personality in a speech entitled on the Cult of Personality and its Consequences. He also attacked the crimes committed by Stalin's closest associates. Furthermore, he stated that the Orthodox view of war between the capitalist and communist worlds being inevitable was no longer true. He advocated competition with the West rather than outright hostility, stating that capitalism would decay from within and that world socialism would triumph peacefully.



But, he added, if the capitalists did desire war, the Soviet Union would respond in kind.

De-Stalinisation

The impact of the 20th Congress on Soviet politics was immense, Khrushchev's speech stripped the legitimacy of his remaining Stalinist rivals, dramatically boosting his power domestically. Afterwards, Khrushchev eased restriction and freed over a million prisoners from the Gulag, leaving an estimated 15 million prisoners living in a semi-reformed prison system (though a wave of counter-reform followed in the 1960s). Communists around the world were shocked and confused by his condemnation of Stalin and the speech "...caused a veritable revolution (the word is not too strong) in people's attitudes throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It was the single factor in breaking down the mixture of fear-fanaticism naivety and 'doublethink' with which everyone... had reacted to Communist rule".

Among Soviet intellectuals

Many Soviet intellectuals groused that Khrushchev and the rest of the Central Committee had willingly aided and abetted Stalin's crimes and that the late tyrant could not possibly have done everything himself. Furthermore, they asked why it had taken three years to condemn him and noted that Khrushchev mostly criticised what had happened to fellow Party members while completely overlooking far greater atrocities such as the Holodomor and mass deportations from the Baltic States during and after World War II, none of which were allowed



to be mentioned in the Soviet press until the end of the 1980s. During the Secret Speech, Khrushchev had tried in an awkward manner to explain why he and his colleagues had not raised their voices against Stalin by saying that they all feared their own destruction if they did not comply with his demands.

Pro-Stalin demonstrations

In Stalin's native Georgia, massive crowds of pro-Stalin demonstrators rioted in the streets of Tbilisi and even demanded that Georgia secede from the USSR. Army troops had to be called in to restore order, with 20 deaths, 60 injuries and scores of arrests.

Response from Soviet youth

In April 1956, there were reports that Stalin busts and portraits around the country had been vandalized or pulled down and some student groups rioted and demanded that Stalin be posthumously expelled from the party and his body taken down from its spot next to Lenin. Party and student meetings called for proper rule of law in the country and even free elections. A 25 year old Mikhail Gorbachev, then a member of the Komsomol in Stavropol reported that reaction to the Secret Speech was explosive and there were strong reactions between people, particularly, young, educated people. Who supported it and hated Stalin, others who denounced it and still held the late tyrant in awe and others who thought it was irrelevant compared to grassroots issues such as food and housing availability. The Presidium responded by issuing a resolution condemning "anti-party" and "anti-Soviet" slanderers and the April 7 Pravda reprinted an editorial



from China's People's Daily calling on party members to study Stalin's teachings and honour his memory. A Central Committee meeting on 30 June issued a resolution criticising Stalin merely for "serious errors" and "practicing a cult of personality" but holding the Soviet system itself blameless.

International reception

Some of the communist world in particular China, North Korea and Albania stridently rejected de-Stalinisation. An editorial in the people's daily argued that "Stalin made some mistakes, but on the whole he was a good, honest Marxist and his positives outweighed the negatives". Mao Zedong had many quarrels with Stalin, but thought that condemning him undermined the entire legitimacy of world socialism "Stalin needed to be criticised not killed" he said.

Rehabilitation during this period

By late 1955, thousands of political prisoners had been freed, but Soviet prisons and labour camps still held around 800000 inmates and no attempt was made to investigate the Moscow Trials or rehabilitate their victims. Eventually several hundred thousand of Stalin's victims were rehabilitated, but the party officials purged in the Moscow Trials remained off the table. Khrushchev ordered an investigation into the trials of Mikhail Tukhachevsky and other army officers. The committee found that the charges leveled against them were baseless and their posthumous rehabilitation was announced in early 1957, but another investigation into the trials of Grigory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, and Nikolai Bukharin declared



that all three had engaged in "anti-Soviet activity" and would not be rehabilitated. After Khrushchev defeated the "anti-party group" in 1957, he promised to re-open the cases, but ultimately never did so, in part because of the embarrassing fact that he himself had celebrated the elimination of the Old Bolsheviks during the purges.

Changing toponymy

As part of de-Stalinisation, Khrushchev set about renaming the numerous towns, cities, factories, natural features and kholkozoes around the country named in honor of Stalin and his aides, most notably Stalingrad, site of the great WWII battle was renamed to Volgograd in 1961.

Khrushchev consolidates power

In 1957, Khrushchev had defeated a concerted Stalinist attempt to recapture power, decisively defeating the so-called "Anti-party Group"; this event illustrated the new nature of Soviet politics. The most decisive attack on the Stalinists was delivered by defense minister Georgy Zhukov, who and the implied threat to the plotters was clear; however, none of the "anti-party group" were killed or even arrested and Khrushchev disposed of them quite cleverly: Georgy Malenkov was sent to manage a power station in Kazakhstan and Vyacheslav Molotov, one of the most die-hard Stalinists, was made ambassador to Mongolia.



Eventually however, Molotov was reassigned to be the Soviet representative of the International Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna after the Kremlin decided to put some safe distance between him and China since Molotov was becoming increasingly cozy with the anti-Khrushchev Chinese Communist Party leadership. Molotov continued to attack Khrushchev every opportunity he got, and in 1960, on the occasion of Lenin's 90th birthday wrote a piece describing his personal memories of the Soviet founding father and thus implying that he was closer to the Marxist Leninist orthodoxy. In 1961, just prior to the 22nd CPSU Congress, Molotov wrote a vociferous denunciation of Khrushchev's party platform and was rewarded for this action with expulsion from the party.

Khrushchev's attack on the "anti-party group" drew negative reactions from China; the People's Daily remarked "How can [Molotov], one of the founding fathers of the CPSU, be a member of an anti-party group?"

Like Molotov, Foreign Minister Dmitri Shepilov also met the chopping block when he was sent to manage the Kirghizia Institute of Economics. Later, when he was appointed as a delegate to the Communist Party of Kirghizia conference, Khrushchev deputy Leonid Brezhnev intervened and ordered Shepilov dropped from the conference. He and his wife were evicted from their Moscow apartment and then reassigned to a smaller one that lay exposed to the fumes from a nearby food processing plant, and he was dropped from membership in the Soviet Academy of Sciences before being expelled from the party, Kliment Voroshilov held the ceremonial title of head of state despite his advancing age and declining health; he retired in 1960. Nikolai Bulganin ended



up managing the Stavropol Economic Council. Also banished was Lazar Kaganovich, sent to manage a potash works in the Urals before being expelled from the party along with Molotov in 1962.

Despite his strong support for Khrushchev during the removal of Beria and the anti-party group, Zhukov was too popular and beloved of a figure for Khrushchev's comfort, so he was removed as well. In addition, while leading the attack against Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich, he also insinuated that Khrushchev himself had been complicit in the 1930s purges, which in fact he had. While Zhukov was on a visit to Albania in October 1957, Khrushchev plotted his downfall. When Zhukov returned to Moscow, he was promptly accused of trying to remove the Soviet military from party control, creating a cult of personality around himself, and of plotting to seize power in a coup. Several Soviet generals went on to accuse Zhukov of "egomania", "shameless self-aggrandizement", and of tyrannical behaviour during WWII. Zhukov was expelled from his post as defense minister and forced into retirement from the military on the grounds of his "advanced age" (he was 62). Marshal Rodin Malinovsky took Zhukov's place as defense minister.

Election to Premiership

Khrushchev was elected Premier on 27 March 1958, consolidating his power the tradition followed by all his predecessors and successors. This was the final stage in the transition from the earlier period of post-Stalin collective leadership. He was now the ultimate source of authority in the Soviet Union, but would never possess the absolute power Stalin had.



In 1959, between 27 January and 5 February, the 21st Congress of the CPSU took place; it was an "Extraordinary" Congress, timed so that Khrushchev could consolidate his power over rivals not long after the attempted coup of the "anti-party group" in 1957. It was during this congress that the unusual Seven-Year Plan was adopted, cutting short and replacing the Sixth Five-Year Plan that had been adopted in 1956. The Seven-Year Plan would itself be cut short two years before its completion retroactively becoming the Seventh five-year plan.

The 22nd Congress of the CPSU, which convened from 17 - 21 October 1961, Marked the apex of Khrushchev's Power and prestige, despite there being already mounting doubts about his policies. However, the real opposition to him had yet to come and he glowed in the praise of the CPSU delegates as he read off the general report of the Central Committee and the party program, two monumental speeches that lasted a total of ten hours. Within a decade, Khrushchev declared, the Soviet people would have equal living standards and material comforts with the United States and Western Europe. In addition, the 22nd Congress saw a renewed attack on Stalin, which culminated in the expulsion of remaining Old Bolsheviks like Molotov and Kaganovich from the party. Stalin's embalmed body, which still lay in Red Square next to Lenin, was immediately removed and reburied in the Kremlin Wall.

Khrushchev voted out of office

In October 1964, while Khrushchev was on holiday in Crimea, the Presidium unanimously voted him out of office and refused to permit him to take



his case to the central Committee. He retired as a private citizen after an editorial in Pravda denounced him for "hare-brained schemes, half-baked conclusions, hasty decisions and actions divorced from reality".

Reforms during Khrushchev's administration

Throughout his years of leadership, Khrushchev oversaw attempted reforms in a range of fields Khrushchev initiated "The Taw", a complex shift in political, cultural and economic lie in the Soviet Union. That included some openness and contact with other countries and new social and economic policies with more emphasis on commodity goods, allowing living standards to rise dramatically while maintaining high level of economic growth. Censorship was relaxed as well. Some subtle critiques of the Soviet society were tolerated and artists were not expected to produce only works which had government-approved political context. Still, artists, most of whom were proud of both the country and the Party, were careful not to get into trouble. However, he reintroduced aggressive anti-religious campaigns, closing down many houses of worship.

Impact on the Eastern Bloc

Such loosening of controls also caused an enourmous impact on other socialist countries in Central Europe, many of which were resentful of Soviet influence in their affairs. Riots broke out in Poland in the summer of 1956, which led to reprisals from national forces there. A political convulsion soon followed. leading to the rise of Wladyslaw Goofmulka to power in October. This almost



triggered a Soviet invasion when Polish Communists elected him without consulting the Kremlin in advance, but in the end. Khrushchev backed down due to Gomulka's widespread popularity in the country. Poland would still remain a member of the Warsaw Pact (established a year earlier) and in return, the Soviet Union seldom intervened in its neighbors' domestic and external affairs. Khrushchev also began reaching out to newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, which was in sharp contrast to Stalin's Europe-centered foreign policy and in September 1959, he became the first Soviet leader to visit the US.

In November 1956, the Hungarian Revolution was brutally suppressed by Soviet troops. About 2,500 - 3,000 Hungarian insurgents and 700 Soviet troops were killed, thousands more were wounded and nearly a quarter million left the country as refugees. The Hungarian uprising was a blow to Western communists; many who had formerly supported the Soviet Union began to criticize it in the wake of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising.

Agriculture Reforms

Back in the early 1950s, Khrushchev had defended private plots as part of the collective leadership, which had introduced important innovations in the area of Soviet agriculture. It had encouraged peasants to grow more on their private plots, increased payments for crops grown on collective farms and invested more heavily in agriculture. However, beginning in the late 1950s, Khrushchev spoke of communal farming as inevitable. After Khrushchev had defeated his rivals and secured his position, he set his attention to economic reforms, particularly in the



field of agriculture. "If a capitalist farmer required eight kilos of grain to produce one kilo of meat", he told a farmers' council, "he would lose his pants. Yet if a state farm director here does the same, he manages to keep his pants. Because no one will hold him accountable for it". Khrushchev's administration abolished the Machine Tractor Stations, which were rural agencies to provide farming equipment and had them sell their inventory directly to the farmers, but the latter ended up incurring huge debts buying the farming equipment, which ended up being used less effectively than the MTS had done.

American farming techniques and maize

Khrushchev continued to believe in the theories of the biologist Trofim Lysenko, a carryover from the Stalin era, however, the Soviet leader looked to his country's greatest rival for inspiration. As far back as the 1940s, he had promoted the use of American farming techniques and even obtained seeds from the US, in particular from a cagey Iowa farmer named Roswell Garst, who believed positive trade and business relations with Moscow would ease superpower tensions. This led to Khrushchev's soon to be notorious fascination with growing maize, although most of the Soviet Union outside of Ukraine lacked a suitable climate and much of the infrastructure used by American farmers, including adequate mechanized equipment, knowledge of advanced farming techniques, and proper use of fertilizer and pesticides was in short supply. Although Khrushchev's corn obsession was exaggerated by popular myth, he did nonetheless advocate any number of unrealistic ideas such as planting corn in Siberia.



Virgin Lands Campaign

During the Virgin Lands Campaign in the mid - 1950s, many tracts of land were opened to farming in Kazakhstan and neighbouring areas of Russia. These new farmlands turned out to be susceptible to droughts, but in some years they produced excellent harvests. Later agricultural reforms by Khrushchev, however, proved counter productive. His plans for growing corn and increasing meat and dairy production failed, and his reorganisation of collective farms into larger units produced confusion in the countryside.

Industrial growth

In a politically motivated move to weaken the central state bureaucracy in 1957, Khrushchev did away with the industrial ministries in Moscow and replaced them with regional economic councils. Although he intended these economic councils to be more responsive to local needs, the decentralisation of industry led to disruption and inefficiency connected with this decentralisation was Khrushchev's decision in 1962 to recast party organisations along economic, rather than administrative, lines. The resulting bifurcation of the party apparatus into industrial and agricultural sectors at the oblast (province) level and below contributed to the disarray and alienated many party officials at all levels. Symptomatic of the country's economic difficulties was the abandonment in 1963 of Khrushchev's special seven-year economic plan (1959 - 65) two years short of its completion.



Changs in Military

Khrushchev significantly reduced Soviet defense spending and the size of conventional forces, accusing the army of being "metal eaters" and "If you let the army have their way, they will eat up thhe country's entire resources and still claim it's not enough". Several warships under construction were scrapped as Khrushchev considered them useless, as well as plans for long range bombers. Orders for fighter planes slowed and several military air fields were converted to civilian use. Although he alienated the Soviet military establishment. He insisted that the country could not match the United States for conventional military capabilities and that the nuclear arsenal was sufficient deterrence. There were also practical reasons for this stance as the low birth rate of the 1940s caused a shortage of military-aged men.

The size of the Soviet military was reduced by nearly 2 million men in 1955 - 57, and further cuts followed in 1958 and 1960. These cuts in troop strength were not well planned out and many soldiers and officers were left jobless and homeless. Discontent in the military started building up.

Despite Khrushchev's boasts about Soviet missile capabilities, they were mostly bluster. The R-7 ICBM used to launch Sputnik was almost useless as a workable ICBM and Soviet missiles were launched from above-ground surface pads which were completely exposed to enemy attack. When Khrushchev suggested putting them in underground silos. Soviet rocket engineers argued that it could not be done until he stumbled across an article in an American technical



journal describing the use of silos to house missiles. He admonished the rocket engineers for failing to pay attention to American technical developments and when the first Soviet silo launch took place in September 1959, Khrushchev took it as a personal triumph.

Science and technology

Aid to developing countries and scientific research especially into space technology and weaponry, maintained the Soviet Union as one of the World's two major world powers. The Soviet Union launched the first ever artificial Earth satellite in history, Sputnik 1, which orbited the Earth in 1957. The Soviets also sent the first man into space, Yuri Gagarin, in 1961.

Yugoslavia and the Eastern Bloc

Khrushchev attempted to restore relations with Tito's Yugoslavia with a visit to Belgrade in May 1955, however the Yugoslavian leader was unmoved by an attempt by Khrushchev to blame Beria for the break with Yugoslavia. Khrushchev persisted and began urging the Eastern European bloc to restore ties with Yugoslavia. He also disbanded the Cominform, used as a club to beat Belgrade over the head with. The trip was reciprocated by a visit of Josip Broz Tito to Moscow in May 1956 where he was given a regal welcome and immense crowds dispatched to greet him. The Politburo members attempted to outdo each other in courting Tito and apologizing for Stalin, but the visit had no ultimate effect on Tito's foreign policy stance and he still refused to join the Soviet bloc,



abandon his nonaligned stance, or cut off economic and military ties with the West. Worse than that, Tito began offering his non aligned socialism to other countries, in particular Poland and Hungary.

After Hungarian leader Imre Nagy briefly took refuge in the Yugoslavian embassy in Budapest during the events of October 1956. Tito stayed aloof from the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt and Soviet-Yugoslav relations waned from that point onward. Tito declined to attend the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1957 and continued to actively promote his nonaligned stance at the Yugoslavian Communist Party's congress the following March, Khrushchev refused to send any delegates to the congress and authorized a lengthy denunciation of it in Pravda, Accusing Tito of being a traitor similar to Imre Nagy, Khrushchev ordered the execution of the Hungarian leader, who had been incarcerated for the last several months.

The uprisings in Poland and Hungary during 1956, which coincided with a softening of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin course (he told guests in a reception at the Chinese embassy in Moscow that "Stalinism is inseparable from Marxism") brought about renewed protests from various elements of Soviet society. Aside from the usual complaints from intellectuals, there were student demonstrations and reports of portraits of Soviet leaders in factories being vandalized or torn down, Despite the small scale of this public dissent, the Central Committee quickly approved harsh counter measures and several hundred people were arrested during early 1957 and sentenced to several years in labour camps.



East Germany

East Germany continued to be a sticky situation, Khrushchev had initially hoped to obtain recognition for the GDR from the Western powers, but ended up making things worse. A mass exodus of GDR citizens to West Germany, mostly young, fit adults, continued unabated, which left the GDR's labour force drained of manpower. GDR leader Walter Ulbricht requested the use of Soviet guest workers to make up for labour shortages, a proposal that alarmed Khrushchev as it drew reminders of the use of Soviet slave labourers by Nazi Germany during WWII. On top of this, West German citizens were traveling to the East to buy low cost goods subsidized by Moscow, further increasing the amount of debt money the GDR owed to the USSR.

The problem of signing a peace treaty with West Germany loomed large and posted nearly insurmountable issues. Signing a peace treaty would likely result in an economic embargo of the GDR by West Germany which would require a twofold increase in Soviet assistance, something Moscow could ill afford.

China (Sina - Soviet relations)

Khrushchev ran of China when he proposed a joint Sino-Soviet fleet in the Pacific to counter the US Seventh Fleet. Soviet ambassador to China Pavel Yudin was rebuffed by Mao Zedong in a July 1958 meeting. Mao demanded to talk to Khrushchev in person, so the latter obliged and flew to Beijing. The meeting



proved no more successful than the previous one with Yudin and Mao continued to reject the idea of a joint fleet, allowing Soviet Navy warships to dock at Chinese ports in peace time, and operating joint radar stations as an infringement on Chinese sovereignty. Shortly after Khrushchev went home, the Chinese people's Liberation Army shelled the islands of Kinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu in the Formosa Strait, provoking the US Seventh Fleet to the area in a major show of force. Moscow supported the Chinese shelling of the islands with reluctance and after American threats of force on China, Mao told an appalled Andrei Gromyko that he was more than willing to start a nuclear war with the imperialist powers.

After this, Sino - Soviet relations calmed during the next six months only to worsen again during the summer of 1959 when Khrushchev criticized the Great Leap forward and remained non committal during a Chinese border clash with India. On 20 August, Moscow informed Beijing that they would not give them a proposed sample atomic bomb. When Khrushchev headed to Beijing in late September, just after his US trip, he was given an icy reception and further alienated the Chinese with his warm accounts of Americans and of Eisenhower. A suggestion by the Soviet premier to free American pilots captured by China during the Korean War was rejected as well as Beijing's recent actions in the Formosa Strait and the Indian border. The talks ended after only three days and Khrushchev went home despondent.

Khrushchev visits the United States

In September 1959, Khrushchev became the first Russian head of state to visit the United States. This ground breaking trip was made on the new Tu-114



long range airliner despite still being an experimental aircraft, since the Soviet Union did not have any other plane capable of non stop trans-Atlantic travel. The 13 day trip included meetings with American business men and labour leaders. Hollywood actors, and Roswell Garst's farm in Iowa. Khrushchev became openly dismayed when he was told he could not visit Disneyland because it was too difficult to guarantee his security there.

1960 US presidential election

Khrushchev anxiously awaited the results of the 1960 United States presidential election, preferring Kennedy to Richard Nixon, whom he took as a hardline anti-communist cold warrior, and openly celebrated the former's victory on November 8. In truth however, Khrushchev's opinion of Kennedy was mixed. He knew that the new president was from a wealthy background and Harvard-educated. On the other, Kennedy was the youngest elected US president at 43 and gave off the impression of inexperience and "a boy wearing his father's pants" that Khrushchev assumed he could pounce on and dominate. If however, Kennedy was that weak, there stood the possibility that he could merely be a puppet of "reactionary" forces and the US military-industrial complex. Almost immediately after the polls closed on Election Day, Khrushchev attempted to barrage the president-elect with proposals and the hope of improved US-Soviet relations specifically turning the clock back to the accommodating diplomatic atmosphere of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's time. However, Khrushchev was informed that he was acting too quickly and it would not be possible to have a formal



summit with Kennedy until he took office in January, and even then, arranging such a meeting would still take time.

Kennedy-era

Khrushchev was pleased by Kennedy's inaugural address on 20 January 1961 and immediately offered to release American pilots shot down over the Soviet Union as an olive branch. Kennedy in his turn ordered a halt to US Postal Service censorship of Soviet publications, lifted a ban on the importation of Soviet crab meat, and ordered military officials to tonedown anti-Soviet rhetoric in speeches.

In a report on January 6 concerning a world conference of 81 communist parties in Moscow the previous fall. Khrushchev stated that the triumph of socialism over capitalism was inevitable, but at the same time, a major conflict between the great powers on the scale of the two world wars was now unthinkable in the age of nuclear weapons. He also stated that local wars must be avoided, for they could erupt into major ones as had been the case with World War I. The only acceptable conflicts as Khrushchev saw it were anti-colonial wars of national liberation along the line of Algeria's war of independence against France.

Although Eisenhower would have likely dismissed this speech as so much Soviet bluster, the inexperienced Kennedy became nervous and took it as a call to arms by Moscow. In his first State of the Union or China has given up their desire for world domination, ambitions they forcefully restated only a short time



ago. On the contrary, our aim is to show that aggression and subversion on their parts not an acceptable means to achieve these aims". These remarks were followed two days later by the first test launch of a Minuteman ICBM.

Khrushchev's initial hopes for Kennedy gradually dimmed during the next few months. When Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba was assassinated, Khrushchev blamed it on Western Colonialist forces. Khrushchev's boasts about Soviet missile forces provided John F. Kennedy with a key issue to use against Richard Nixon in the 1960 U.S. presidential election - the so-called 'missile gap'. But all Khrushchev's (probably sincere) attempts to build a strong personal relationship with the new president failed, as his typical combination of bluster - miscalculation and mishap resulted in the Cuban Missile Crises. After the Berlin and Cuba crises, tensions tapered off between the two super powers.

Khrushchev openly wept at the news of Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 and feared that new US President Lyndon Johnson would pursue a more aggressive anti-Soviet stance. Johnson turned out to be more in favour of detente than Khrushchev had assumed, but would end up letting super power relations take a back seat to his Great Society programs and the Vietnam War.

Alexsei Larionov, local party leader in Ryazan, attempted to triple meat production in the province after overall Soviet Meat output for 1958 had been lacking (the grain harvest for comparison had been a strong one). The scheme, which was similar in nature to China's contemporary Great Leap Forward involved setting unrealistic quotas and frantically slaughtering every animal in the



province, including dairy cows and breeding stock, in an attempt to meet them. When the quotas still could not be met, Ryazan farmers tried to steal livestock from neighboring provinces, which took measures to protect their own farms such as police roadblocks. The Ryazan farmers resorted to theft of cattle under cover of darkness and Larionov, growing ever more desperate, made taxes payable in meat. In the end, Ryazan produced just 30,000 tons of meat for 1959, when they had promised 180,000 tons. The disgraced Larionov committed suicide shortly thereafter.

The harvest for 1960 proved the worst since Stalin's death, and the Virgin Lands were especially disappointing. During the fall and winter of 1960-61, Khrushchev embarked on a furious campaign to improve agricultural shortcomings, most of which amounted to criticizing incompetent Kholkoz managers and promoting Lysenkoism and other quack scientific ideas while overlooking the real problem. Which was the fundamental defects of collectivized agriculture.

The harvest for 1961 was disappointing, with agricultural output a mere 0.7% higher than 1960 and meat production actually less than the previous two years. Discontent began building and in the face of it, Khrushchev continued to offer new proposals to improve farm output and condemnation of inefficient farming practices. Despite complaints from farmers that they lacked enough funding for tools and farm equipment, Khrushchev argued that he had no spare money to allot to agriculture. His only solution was to add yet more bureaucracy to the agricultural sector.



Price increases of meat and dairy in the spring of 1962, combined with attempts to convince industrial workers to work harder for the same or less pay, paved the way for a mounting disaster. The price increases went into effect on 1 June and were immediately greeted by strikes and demonstrations in several cities, the biggest and most cataclysmic in the city of Novocherkassk where workers went on strike to protest rising costs of living and poor workplace conditions. The following day, workers at the Budenny Electric Locomotive Factory marched to the central square of the city where army units fired on them, killing 23. Another 116 demonstrators were arrested, with 14 tried for "anti-Soviet agitation" and seven of them sentenced to death. The other seven received 10-15 years in prison. Smaller riots in other cities were also put down with several fatalities. Khrushchev made a speech the same day half-apologizing for the price increases, but insisted that he had no choice. He never fully came to terms with the Novocheerkassk Massacre and did not bring it up in his memoirs.

During 1963, Khrushchev increasingly despaired over his inability to cure the perennial ailments of Soviet agriculture. He accused farmers of needlessly wasting fertilizer, adding that a farmer in the United States would be out of business if he did the same and he also complained about aging kolkhoz managers who should have retired and made way for younger men, but continued to hold onto their jobs. Drought affected a large portion of the west-central USSR during the fall months and overall the 1963 harvest was an object failure with a mere 107 million tons of grain produced and there was serious consideration given to rationing. Khrushchev could offer no solutions other than empty sloganeering



and criticizing incompetent managers. After initially bristling at the idea of importing grain from overseas, he finally gave in after learning that Soviet grain stocks were almost depleted.